

# "A Time of Strife" by Adam Levine

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Based on the world of Tekumel created by M.A.R. Barker

Without the fantastic contributions of the following individuals who played our game, Sokatis would not have become such a real place:

George Hammond aka *Ritlesh hiVravodaya*

Paul Jones aka *Toraz hiShanuka*

Kevin Fisher aka *Epengar hiDaishuna*

Carl Brodt aka *Znayashu hiMaroda*

Jonathan Zamick aka *Qoli hiVu'urtesh*

Shelby Michlin aka *Kotaru hiSerekel*

Unfortunately, with so much time passing, I no longer have the names or a way to contact all of the players who participated. If they will email me, it will be my pleasure to edit in their names, giving them the credit they so richly deserve.

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# Introduction

It was peaceful now as Tuleng, the star around which Tekumel orbited, crested over the horizon to start a new day in Sokatis, the Eastern Jewel of the Empire. The cries of hundreds of different species of birds spiraled upward to welcome the morning, belying the virulent menaces that threatened from the east. The ponderous sandstone blocks from which most of the city was constructed were stained with centuries of humid sweat and the invariable molds and lichens that coursed through cracks and crevices like veins of dark polluted blood to surface in clots of random color. Mist hung over the surrounding Gilreya Forest like a vast gray blanket draped over the shoulders of an army of green Ebzul giants.

A palpable undercurrent of tension ran through the populace creating a fatalistic dread that sapped both energy and joy from life. In the best of times, too many skeins were ripped asunder, too many spirit souls sent to Teretane, Belkhanu's supernal paradises, or into the service of dread Srukaram, Lord of the Dead. These were not the best of times. Death to match the limitless beauty of flowers of every vibrant hue that cascaded from each balcony and terrace, their sweet perfume pervading every clan-house, shop, temple and crypt.

The horrid Ssu, mighty enemies of man, made no distinction between worshipers of the Tlomitlanyal (Gods of Stability) or Tlokiriqaluyal (Gods of Change) in their war with mankind and the other sentient races that had gone on for ages beyond memory. Of late, their attacks and defenses seemed almost coordinated, a fear shared by soldiers as they sought to shed their cares in The House of the Pleasant Hour.

To the south and east, Prince Zhuririlugga, Salarvya's de facto ruler, directed constant forays, testing the Empire's defenses and seizing all that they could lay hands on. The moon Uletl was ascendant presaging renewed attacks from the followers of Black Qarqa, a particularly repellent Salarvyani analog of Sarku, The Worm Lord.

Still, each Sokatis citizen was confident that life would go on as it always had. Fate had yet to prove them wrong. After all, everywhere could be felt the presence of the Omnipotent Azure Legion. New legions had arrived to answer the new threats. The God Emperor Hirkane Tlakotani, The Stone Upon Which the Universe Rests, ruled with vigor in Avanthar to the northwest. Commerce continued unabated.

The year is 2,358 AS of the Second Imperium.

# Character Background Discussion

Group 0 will be used as a filing cabinet for game descriptions, diagrams/maps, administrative details, and each character's viewcast (i.e., first impressions on meeting your character) and any relevant starting history.

## Ritles hiVravodaya

player, 1 post  
Scholar-priest of  
Chiteng  
Sorcery, Alchemy,  
Medicin  
Thu 6 Nov 2003  
at 17:04

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## Ritles

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By way of testing the waters, here's an impression of Ritles hiVravodaya:

Ritles is a young Tsolyani man of average height and heavy build, apparently in his mid-20s. He has the medium brown skin and straight nose common to the people of the drylands around Fasiltum, and there's an old burn scar on his left arm from elbow to his wrist. He wears an orange kilt edged in purple, the garb of priests of the god Chiteng, and often carries a leather satchel.

The young priest a pleasant person to talk to: well-spoken, polite, and friendly. He's a native of Sokatis, but his clan, the Sweet Singers of Nakome, has only a small clanhouse in the city. He is a scholar-priest of the first circle, studying the arts of sorcery, alchemy, and medicine. He's quite enthusiastic about his studies, but regrets that they leave him little time to go bird hunting in the hills.

## Qoli hiyaVu'urtesh

player, 1 post  
Sorcerer Priest of  
Hnalla  
Wed 12 Nov 2003  
at 16:39

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## Qoli

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Here is a little introduction of Qoli, who is a recent arrival in Sokatis:

Qoli hiyaVu'urtesh of Golden Bough is a beautiful young woman at the junction between her late teens and early twenties. Upon which side she falls... who would ask? She is of quite average height, though with wide shoulders and a stronger build than many city women. She is of uncommon beauty. La! Her face is as a paragon. Alas then, so little of that grace seems to have blessed her tongue. She is often silent which turns out to be a boon, for when she speaks you expect her words to mirror her appearance. Thus, even sharper the barb of disappointment at her coarse country accent, and the awkward silence caused by her lack of even basic etiquette. If it were not insulting to Qoli's noble clan, one might call her social skills worse than those of a barbarian from Salarvya. At least they can not be expected to know the proper methods of addressing others! We all have clan cousins who manage farms and country estates. However, they should have the wit to remain away from civilized society.

Moving down from her face and her gauche manners, Qoli wears the white cloth of an acolyte to Hnalla, and for a laugh, the itlang wears the meshqu of a sorcerer. It must be an ill jest by one who wishes to see her mocked. It is almost beyond belief. At least, she is pleasant enough to look at when she maintains her silence.

**Ritlesch hiVravodaya**

player, 2 posts  
Sweet Singers of Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Thu 13 Nov 2003  
at 15:08

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**dissonance**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #4

Ritlesch ponders to himself:

~Fa! it is worthy of Chiteng's most subtle tormentors, that such a beauty could be so deficient, so coarse. Golden Bough is an exalted clan, how could they allow such a travesty? her clan-mothers have much to atone for... ~

**Epengar hiDaishuna**

player, 1 post  
Amber Cloak Clan Merchant  
Follower of Thumis  
Tue 2 Dec 2003  
at 22:00



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Epengar**

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Epengar, a young man just over 20 with dark black hair and equally dark eyes, stands as a testament to the middle of the road, an unremarkable man. He is average in all regards, average height and medium build; even his facial features are apathetic in announcing his origins, though there is an underlying hint present reminiscing of those from the Bey Su region. His aura would indicate that he is a young merchant, a traveling man who has visited many places already. Though nothing extravagant, he sports small trinkets from several lands such as the small travel pack of the pigmy folk that he carries and the brass-banded quarterstaff of the Saa Allaqiyani. He wears the comfortable travel clothing of a merchant fringed and accented with the identifying meshqu of a follower of Thumis. Among the several small pouches hanging from his travel belt, it is noticeable that one contains dice and game pieces belying this young man's enjoyment of an honest wager or a peaceful game of chance. A vice perhaps, or simply a passing fancy, the bag seems well-worn and broken in.

When one speaks with him, it is obvious that he is a well spoken and knowledgeable young man, very polite and soft in tone, for the most part, with a pinch of dry humor in his voice. His mannerisms indicate an extensive training in etiquette, which would not be too out of the ordinary from such a young man of the Amber Cloak Clan in Bey Su. It is no doubt that his profession mandates that he be well versed in many different cultural habits and mannerisms as he travels from region to region.

**Kotaru hiSerekel**

player, 1 post  
Sorcerer Priest- Chegárra  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Wed 3 Dec 2003  
at 05:14



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**On Kotaru**

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Kotaru hiSerekel is a big man, one who walks with confidence. He wears his hair long, although it is often pulled back and braided for formal occasions. Proud and used to privilege, he nonetheless plays the games of etiquette and intrigue very well. He uses his presence to drive towards his goals. Born in the capitol, and from the Golden Bough clan, he spent his time moving in refined circles. He was an excellent student, availing himself of the best schooling and tutors. His education is evident in his speech, as well as in the breadth of his knowledge. The aspect of Chegárra that Kotaru favors is The Sagacious Statesman.



Kotaru reveled in the opportunities offered to him. He is well known in Bey Su, and active in clan politics. Thus far he hasn't made any serious enemies, but that may change. For example, there is the matter of his choice of patron gods. Perhaps things might have gone differently if he'd chosen to follow Hnálla rather than Chegárra. After all, the High Priest of Hnálla is also a member of the Golden Bough clan...

**The Arrival**

It was the end of another long, hot day of travel, and Kotaru's tunic hung heavy and stuck to his body. He eschewed the full robes his station entitled him to, especially while on this abominable journey. He snapped his fingers peremptorily, and a slave hurriedly brought him more fruit juice. He drank deeply, not sparing a glance for the suffering of the man who lived only to serve.

If he stared long enough he thought he could just make out the imposing walls of the city of Sokatis, a dung-colored smear above the jungle haze. If he tarried too long, he could just make out the squawking complaints coming from the litter of his traveling companion and clan cousin, Qoli hiVu'urtesh. While she was pleasant to look upon, Kotaru cringed each time she opened her mouth. She had not eased the journey as he had hoped, and he truly didn't know whether to be grateful or not.

In any case, he did his clan's bidding. He would arrive in Sokatis this evening. Hopefully, he

	<p>could discharge his responsibilities quickly and return to Bey Su from this exile. But how quickly could he turn Salarvya's attention somewhere other than towards Sokatis? Could it be that he would be wasted here, suffering and missing opportunities for advancement and glory?</p>
<p><b>Qoli hiVu'urtesh</b>  player, 4 posts  Priestess of Hnalla  Clan of Golden Bough  Mon 8 Dec 2003  at 22:00</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>On to Sokatis</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #10</p> <hr/> <p>For Qoli, the journey to Sokatis has been a new experience.</p> <p>When Kotaru her clansman passed by her small town, Qoli was exuberant to have a companion for the journey to Sokatis. That he was important and cultured was obvious, especially given how many times he stated the fact... to be fair, usually to ward off Qoli's impolitic questions. Eventually though, even Qoli was able to recognize Kotaru's excellently polite attempts to disengage from gratuitous social interaction.</p> <p>Thus during the journey, given Kotaru's disinterest and distance, Qoli has likewise withdrawn. In the evenings, she can usually be found reading and taking notes between documents. During the days, she has largely abandoned her porters and the Palanquin of Incipient Suffocation as she's come to think of it. Usually, she walks and placidly watches her companions or other groups passing along the various levels of the sakbe road. On one occassion though, she actually got into a prolonged conversation with some Green Forest farmers bringing produce to Sokatis along the lower road! Afterwards, she happily snacked on a ripe dlel tossed up by one of the Green Forest clanmembers.</p> <p>Perhaps her most striking reaction comes at the first view of Sokatis far in the distance. As the road turns to bring hints of the city into view, Qoli pauses, her mouth opening slightly as she drinks in the sight. Those travelling from Bey Su, likely view Sokatis with a bit of relief after travelling for so long, but little more. To Qoli, it is the largest human thing she's ever envisioned, and for that one moment, anyone looking can see it in her face and the hunger in her eyes.</p> <p>(It was pointed out that the old pic of Qoli wasn't working anymore. I've put it up at another site. Lets see how long it lasts this time :)  <a href="http://img.villagephotos.com/p/2003-12/530992/Qoli.jpg">http://img.villagephotos.com/p/2003-12/530992/Qoli.jpg</a></p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b>  GM, 39 posts  Sun 13 Jun 2004  at 22:28</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Beginning character skills</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #13</p> <hr/> <p>In addition to the normal skill development, all characters start with three skills in etiquette. Five in ettiquete will still be the standard for an average person. I'm also going to grant each player 3 skills in anything that can be assigned at any time to any skill that costs &lt; 2000. This will allow you to tweak your backgrounds a bit as you become more familiar with my world.</p>

**SuuShih**

GM, 31 posts  
Sun 13 Jun 2004  
at 20:16



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## Tekumel Background Discussion

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Useful background information for anyone new to Tekumel. Most of these posts were provided by George/Ritlesh in Private Messages.

**SuuShih**

GM, 32 posts  
Sun 13 Jun 2004  
at 20:18



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### Clanhouses

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If you're not a priest or soldier, and sometimes even if you are, you live in your clanhouse. Only a very few wealthy eccentrics have private domiciles. Clanhouses vary from small adobe houses to enormous masonry palaces. Nearly all are walled, with a gated courtyard. Roofgardens and cellars are common. Middle and lower clans (and a few high clans) combine working and living space, so there may be workshops, barns, or storage attached to the clanhouse. Rural clanhouses work like farmsteads, plantations, or manors.

Inside a high status clanhouse like ours are private suites for high lineage families, clan elders, and other important people, smaller rooms for married folk (sometimes shared), and dormitories for singles. There are bathing rooms, a formal reception/dining hall, an informal refectory, probably a small library, shrine, an office/meeting room of some kind for the council of elders (perhaps the center of clan business, with scribes at hand). There are no chairs, Tsolyani sit on mats on the floor, on low benches around the walls, or on daises. Personal status is reflected in one's height above the others. In the formal hall of every clanhouse is a copy of the Seal of the Imperium on the wall, and an empty dais above all for the Emperor.

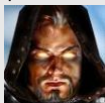
The clanhouse and its members are ruled by a council of elders, who in turn are led by a chief elder. The method of choosing of elders and chief varies among clans, but they are persons of experience and influence. Each clanhouse is fairly independent of others within the clan, and may have its own customs. Only rarely do the elders of the the clan meet in a "Grand Council". Clan elders represent the clan in formal dealings with Imperial officials and other clans as well.

Because the amount of information officially and unofficially (e.g., message boards, The Blue Room) published about Tekumel can be overwhelming, these quick asides are probably the best way to gradually introduce you to this world.

To the extent possible, every effort is made to throw business towards clan members. The Temple of Vimuhla is frequently subcontracted to provide clan security/guards. Similar arrangements exist with different clans for warehouse work, portage and maintenance. These contracts are periodically renegotiated. Every effort is made to set one clan off against another to get the most favorable terms possible for your clan. For servant services, this can be subcontracted, though many higher clans prefer consciously not to.

**SuuShih**

GM, 33 posts  
Sun 13 Jun 2004  
at 20:24



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### Sex and Society

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In the northern portion of the Empire and the states beyond, clans and tribes tend to be matriarchal, descent and inheritance reckoned on the matriline, and marriages matrilocal. Women and men have equal positions before the law, frequently hold rank in the legions and temples, and they may marry as they chose.

In the south, and beyond in Salarvya, however, things can be very patriarchal.

The default condition for women is as "good clan-girls," sheltered wards of their clan who hold no positions outside the clanhouse, and cannot do business on their own. They are usually subject to arranged marriage, and must be monogamous (at least with other free folk, some clans allow these women to take slave concubines).

There is however an ancient custom that allows women to take full independence even in the patriarchal south. Any free adult (over 14) woman can declare herself "Aridani". She then is entitled to status equal to a man. Aridani women serve in the legions and temples, in the Imperial bureaucracy, and can run clan business, make contracts, etc. They have more independence in their choice of spouse (of course clan-members of either sex get lots of pressure from their elders in that regard). The practice is not greatly encouraged, and in the southern provinces only perhaps 15% of women are Aridani, fewer yet in Salarvya. In the north the practice is sometimes more common, though in some places it has lapsed simply because it is irrelevant.

The priesthood of Avante is mostly female, Her Cohort Dilinala accepts only women. Dlamelish and Hrihayal also have more women than men in their priesthoods. The war gods, Vimuhla and Karakan, have many more men than women as priests, though there are a few women. Their Cohorts diverge: Chegarra has a number of northern women in His temples. Chiteng has relatively few.

Sexual fidelity is not expected of men or Aridani women. The root of a common herb ("lisuti") is a reliable female contraceptive, so pregnancies are usually deliberate. Parentage is broad: your biological mother and her sisters (and your father's brothers' wives) are all your "mothers." Your biological father (as best is known), and his brothers (and your mother's sisters' husbands) are all your "fathers." Children of these people are your brothers and sisters. Your true mother's brothers (and true father's sisters' husbands) are your "uncles," and your father's sisters (and your mother's brothers' wives) are your "aunts."

Multiple and homosexual marriages are recognized. Having multiple spouses is not uncommon among high clans: the pattern often is that the first marriage is arranged (while both partners are young, perhaps not even conceived), and subsequent spouses are added for love or politics. Tsolyani do not equate marriage with romance, though folk do sometimes marry for love. The most common matches are across lineages but within clans. Inter-clan marriages also occur, but require more negotiation.

**SuuShih**  
 GM, 34 posts  
 Sun 13 Jun 2004  
 at 20:26



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## Inducements (Bribes) and Shamtlä [edit] | [delete] | msg #4

Bribery and blood-money (called "shamtlä") are fundamental parts of Tsolyani society. It is entirely licit and expected that officers and administrators must be provided with "inducements" in order to get them to do anything. Bribes are the lubrication that allows Tsolyani organizations to run smoothly. (See <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/tekumel/message/16495>)

Similarly, crimes that are not against the Empire, or within the domain of the temples, are often resolved by payment of shamtlä. A person who has been assaulted, or even just sufficiently offended, can demand shamtlä from the offender, and usually, their respective clans will negotiate a settlement. If a mutually agreeable settlement cannot be reached, the matter may go to a civil court, but this is a time-consuming and expensive affair (see inducements, above). Theft, even petty theft in the marketplace, is brutally punished, often by impalement.


Crimes against the Empire (assaulting a soldier or official, theft of Imperial property, interference with Imperial agents) are also harshly penalized. Convicts are frequently impaled, only occasionally imprisoned and set to hard labor for

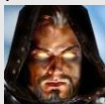


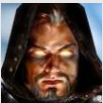
	<p>years. If a convict escapes and flees, his family is punished in his place.</p> <p>In principle, all land, good, and chattel in the Empire is the property of the empire, and the clans and temples hold land only as leases. Consequently, an Imperial official of sufficient authority can confiscate anything, at any time, and have resisters impaled. In practice, the temples and clans have sufficient influence as to prevent overly greedy or arbitrary use of this authority, most of the time anyway.</p> <p>There is a separate Ecclesiastical Court system for dealing with offenses by priests against their religious rules, and resolving conflicts between temples.</p> <p>There is also a dueling code, sometimes preferred by warriors and those who value prestige and honor highly. Duels are fought in the city's gladiatorial arena (every town and city has one). The participants choose the extent of the conflict (to first blood, first one down, to death), and I think the challengee gets choice of weapons and armor (not sure about that). The winner claims only the items on the person of his defeated foe, and if he wishes, may take his opponent as a slave (with the understanding that the loser's clan can ransom him back for a reasonable fee). Additional arrangements between the combatants ("if I defeat you, you must give me your gilded houseboat") are not allowed, and considered ignoble.</p> <p>A couple of additional observations to keep things in perspective. The nation of Tsolyanu on the planet Tekumel is much like India from many perspectives. Having visited that part of the world, a small gift will place you at the head of most lines and result in any number of benefits. The average family might make 200 Kaitar (gold) a year with the poor well below that. There is almost an inconceivably vast economic difference between Very High clans and Very Low. Being Nakome (clanless) and, arguably Very Low, is much like being an Untouchable. At first level, and given your beginning salaries of around 15 Kaitar a month, a gift of 50-100 Kaitar to your boss might be a good investment in your future.</p> <p>As is generally the case, money is a much more powerful demotivator. By this I mean, if you don't get a salary raise, you're more likely to be demoralized radically degrading your performance than that you'll work much harder for more money. Most people won't. In game terms, it would be much worse not to give expected compensation than to give a huge gift. The up-side is limited. Much though is based on expectations. As an example, a much more substantial gift would be appropriate to influence someone of higher rank or status.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 35 posts Sun 13 Jun 2004 at 21:29</p>  <p>PM   rMail   Sheet   info</p>	<p><b>Founts of Tekumel Wisdom</b> [edit]   [delete]   msg #5</p> <p>While there are many more, I believe these to be the best online Tekumel references:</p> <p><a href="http://www.tekumel.com">http://www.tekumel.com</a>  <a href="http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/tekumel/messages">http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/tekumel/messages</a>  <a href="http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tekumel-moderated/messages">http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tekumel-moderated/messages</a>  <a href="http://www.indeterminate.net/~newt/blueroom.php">http://www.indeterminate.net/~newt/blueroom.php</a>  <a href="http://mac9.ucc.nau.edu/pub/Misc/rpg/tekumel/">http://mac9.ucc.nau.edu/pub/Misc/rpg/tekumel/</a>  <a href="http://www.weirdrealm.com/tekumel/">http://www.weirdrealm.com/tekumel/</a></p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 36 posts Sun 13 Jun 2004 at 21:32</p>  <p>PM   rMail   Sheet   info</p>	<p><b>Shops and Markets</b> [edit]   [delete]   msg #6</p> <p>Every city and town has an open-air marketplace, where a wide variety of goods are sold. Cheap jewelry, clothing, Chlen-hide weapons, foodstuffs of all kinds, household goods, all are found here. Order is maintained by special market police, and a market magistrate.</p> <p>Most artisan clans have shops as part of their clanhouse. Here one goes for items of greater value, or to have something made to particular specifications. Generally</p>



<p>info</p>	<p>goods are not out on display in shops. One enters, is suitably greeted, and then one tells the shopkeeper what one is looking for. Suitable items are then brought out for one's consideration. Many of the lower status clans are occupational: each clan pursues a particular business more or less exclusively. Clans with similar businesses are often grouped together in cities, so there will be streets of metalworkers, streets of weavers and clothseellers, etc., with one or more clans controlling that trade.</p> <p>Lower-status traders will have stalls in the marketplace, higher status merchants send children as criers to the clanhouses of the town. Interested potential customers arrange to visit the merchant at their lodgings, or have the merchant bring his wares to their clanhouse.</p> <p>Haggling is the general rule.</p> <p>Some occupational clans:</p> <p>Weeping Stone: medium status, widespread throughout the Empire, makes and sells liquors and wines</p> <p>Victorious Globe: medium, widespread, paper, inks, paints, etc.</p> <p>Red Eye of Dawn: medium, best jewellers in the Empire, clanhouses in major cities</p> <p>Iron Fist, Iron Hand: medium, western but now widespread, smiths and armorers, worship the war gods</p> <p>Azure Eye: Medium, purveyors of antiquities and ancient artifacts</p>
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<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 37 posts Sun 13 Jun 2004 at 21:54</p>  <p>PM   rMail   Sheet   info</p>	<p><b>Etiquette</b> <span>[edit]</span> <span>[delete]</span> <span>msg #7</span></p> <p>A note or two on etiquette since it's obviously so much a part of Tekumel culture. ("Swords &amp; Glory I", M.A.R. Barker [GameScience], pp. 92-93)</p> <p>For a great introduction to those aspects of the Tsolyani language that supports etiquette, go to <a href="http://mush.tekumel.com/tekumel/glossary/glossary.html">http://mush.tekumel.com/tekumel/glossary/glossary.html</a>.</p> <p>Relationships between the classes are rigidly structured. A peasant who is too familiar would be rebuffed as "impertinent." Conversely, an upper class individual who behaves in too comradely a way towards a subordinate will probably make the latter suspicious, rather than endear himself to him. Not only would such an overly-amiable aristocrat become the target for ridicule by his own peers, he would leave himself open and vulnerable to exploitation, flattery, and self-serving social climbing on the part of the lower-class person so favored.</p> <p>Conversation tends to be formal, circumspect, and florid by our standards. Social status is very important, there is no idea of social equality. There are 6 different versions of "I" and 34 different versions of "you", reflecting the relative status of speaker and addressee.</p> <p>Fortunately, the Tsolyani love visual display, and so pretty much everybody wears clothing and ornaments (meshqu) that indicate their clan, temple, social status, etc. Indeed, there is no word for "nondescript".</p> <p>Meshqu plaques are used to display a person's different moods and willingness to receive visitors and guests.</p> <p>"Invitations" to parties, weddings, etc. are usually calligraphed on smallish squares of parchment. They are done in colours and gold ink, using the inviter's clan symbol, a line or two of honorifics, and pretty script.</p> <p>If a superior wants to see an inferior, a clanmaster wants to see a clan-brother/sister, etc., the request is usually penned in black on a rectangle of Hruchan-reed paper. This is delivered by a servant. Plaques for such messages are an innovation in Jakalla and are unknown in other parts of Tsolyanu. In the east --</p>
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	<p>Fasiltum, particularly -- commands/invitations are often simply the clan symbol of the inviter written on a bit of coloured parchment. In Thraya and Jaikalar, a small glass square is sent, inside of which is the clan-symbol of the sender. These are customarily returned to the sender (or rather to his/her servant) when the invitee shows up for the meeting. Some of these symbols are quite beautiful, made of silver, gold, stained glass (in Sokatis), etc.</p> <p>There is no such thing as a Tsolyani" calling card." Society demands that a visitor leave word verbally with a servant. Thus, if I call uninvited at your clanhouse, the clan's door-guard or chamberlain will inquire my business. I then tell him that I have come to see (e.g.) Gayan; he replies formally with regret that Gayan is not present; I then request him to inform Gayan that I had come to visit, and take my leave. If I have a longer message to impart, I can leave a note or letter. If you have something longer to communicate, pen and parchment -- and in the higher houses, formally trained scribes with a palette of coloured inks and paints -- are available so that you can write a note. If you do not wish to come yourself, you can always pen a note and have it delivered by a servant -- saves going out in the midday sun!</p> <p>You greet another person by placing your right hand in front of your mouth (as though you were about to kiss your palm) and bowing slightly. Slaves and low status folk genuflect deeply, and everyone kneels before high superiors. It is an insult to touch someone who is not an intimate friend, unless you have permission or there is an emergency.</p> <p>Soldiers salute by striking the left breast with a clenched right fist. Officers may or may not return the salute. The equivalent of "Yes sir!" is "Aing!"</p> <p>Many temples have special greeting gestures used between fellow worshippers. Vimuhla followers lay the first three fingers of the left hand on the right forearm, signifying the Flame. Hnalla's clergy make a figure 8 with their right forefinger, etc.</p> <p>Applause is by finger-snapping, not clapping, and the crowds snap and cheer in the Hirilakte arena. One summons a slave by extending a hand palm down, and wriggling your fingers back towards you.</p> <p>Insults, even joking ones, towards another person, his clan or temple or legion, are always taken seriously. Only among one's closest friends and lovers is this standard relaxed. To imply or joke that a person is ignoble, dishonest, foolish, weak, or generally less than magnificent is to invite an immediate demand for Shamtla, or a challenge to a duel.</p> <p>One calls a slave or servant by holding out either hand palm down and wiggling the fingers towards oneself.</p> <p>It's a deadly insult to look through the circle made by joining the left thumb and forefinger = clanless/nakome'.</p> <p>Obscene gesture to raise the index and pinky finger upwards.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 38 posts Sun 13 Jun 2004 at 22:19</p> 	<p><b>Ditlana</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a> <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #8</p> <p>From S&amp;G I, p. 36:</p> <p>The great antiquity of life on Tekumel makes it a veritable planet of ruins. An important factor in the development of these subterranean mazes (Tsuru'um) is the custom of Ditlana (lit. "the renewing"). The practice began with the Bednalljan kings more than 10000 years ago and has withstood the test of time. Every city</p>

<p>PM   rMail   Sheet   info</p>	<p>should undergo a ritual purification and a renewal at intervals of 500 years or so, depending upon the city's mundane horoscope, the positions of the transiting moons and the planets, and economic feasibility. The current Ditolana is almost 400 hundred years overdue in most major metropolises.</p> <p>If interested in exploring this further, please go to <a href="http://www.indeterminate.net/~newt/blueroom.php?action=0">http://www.indeterminate.net/~newt/blueroom.php?action=0</a> and search on "ditlana".</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 50 posts Mon 28 Jun 2004 at 08:28</p>  <p>PM   rMail   Sheet   info</p>	<p><b>Chlen and Chlen Hide</b> [edit]   [delete]   msg #9</p> <p>A chlen is a 3 to 5 meter tall, six-legged creature with the disposition and intellect of a cow. It has three eyes, large padded feet like an elephant, and looks like a more heavily padded rhinoceros without the horn. Chlen hide is used as a replacement for metal. It can be cured by a secret process into a substance harder than bronze, but much lighter. A good discussion can be found here:</p> <p><a href="http://www.indeterminate.net/~newt/blueroom.php?action=2&amp;messid=29&amp;srchstr=chlen&amp;searchtype=1">http://www.indeterminate.net/~newt/blueroom.php?action=2&amp;messid=29&amp;srchstr=chlen&amp;searchtype=1</a></p>
<p><b>Ritles</b> <b>hiVravadaya</b> player, 39 posts Sweet Singers of Nakome Scholar-Priest of Chiteng Fri 8 Oct 2004 at 08:33</p> <p>PM   rMail   Sheet   info</p>	<p><b>the region around Sokatis</b> [quote]   [edit]   [delete]   msg #11</p> <p>A little bored and restless today, so thought I'd post some random Tekumélia.</p> <p>As you know, we are starting in the city of Sokátis, on the eastern edge of Tsolyánu, the Empire of the Petal Throne. It is the gateway between Tsolyánu and the feudalistic "empire" of Salarvyá to the south and east. Between the two is a contested region of hills and forests, currently held by Tsolyánu as the Kerunán Protectorate. There are three massive fortified sakbe roads connecting at Sokátis. One runs southeast to the town of Rü, the headquarters for the Tsolyáni control of Kerunán. Another runs west and south along the Ranánga River towards the city of Thráya, and beyond to Jaikalór and Jakállá, the humid southern cities of the Empire. The third goes north, parallel to the river but some kilometers to the west of it. It goes to the town of Ferinára, and then to the great east-west road that goes west to the desert city of Fasiltum, and beyond to the capital, Báy Sü. East the road crosses the river and runs up into the hills and mountains to the rustic mountain town of Hekéllu, and then beyond into the Chaigari Protectorate and barbarian regions.</p> <p>Sokátis sits on mainly on the east bank of the Ranánga. The river valley around it is filled with intensively cultivated farms and groves. Beyond the bluffs to the northwest the land dries out, eventually becoming first dry forest then shading into the Desert of Eyági, home to semi-civilized tribes of herders. North is the river valley, the banks of the river are lined with more farms, towns and villages. Northeast are dry hills that eventually rise into mountains. There are people in the hills, many herders, but only a few barbarians in the mountains. The range of hills run north-south, at the latitude of Sokátis they are some dozens of kilometers to the east. South of the city is the Gilráya Forest, a massive woodland dominated by tall, broadleaf ebzul trees. The clans that live there are a peculiar mix of Tsolyani and Salarvyani influences, with their own odd dialect. Much of the forest is uninhabited wilderness, particularly to the southwest where is shades into the Layoda Swamps. West and southwest of our city, the valley of the Ranánga broadens, forming a wide swath of cultivated lands, riverside marshes, and open grazing lands. Boats work up and down the river. The next major city downstream is Thráya, on the north bank. Thráya is the center for worship of Belkhánu, the god of souls and the afterlife, Traveller of the Planes. There is a massive temple-complex to Belkhánu and his militant Cohort, Qón.</p>

**SuuShih**

GM, 7 posts  
Wed 21 Jan 2004  
at 00:00



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## Chapter 1 - Someone New

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #1

The sounds of the nearby jungle awaken Ritlesh to another day, but one he always looks forward to each week. Today, he goes to study healing from his friend and mentor, Ontéru hiSsavrá. A gentle warm breeze stirs a nearby wall hanging. The snores of one of his clan brothers continue from a nearby mat as Ritlesh rises quietly.

Washing quickly and donning a clean robe with the help of Ka'ó, his personal body slave, Ritlesh descends the clan house stairs from his second floor room for a quick bite of breakfast. Ka'ó had hinted that Mottán, the cook, had prepared his favorite, dlél cobbler. The smells of the pastry wafted through the warm air making his mouth water in anticipation.

The large common dining area used for informal meals was already bustling with activity. On entering, Raimáne hiFa'ásu, the clan elder, motioned Ritlesh over to a small low black lacquered table where he is sitting with a fellow member of your clan, though a stranger.

A cloth is secured to the front of Raimáne's robe to keep it clean. Though balding and of advancing years, he is still in good physical condition and young in spirit. While everyone is on good terms with him, his quick wit and keen insights distinguish him. It is very unusual to be invited to join him in this way.

"Ahh Ritlesh, just the person. Please break your fast with us. I have someone I want you to meet. Ritlesh hiVravodaya, I am pleased to introduce Toraz hiShanuka, a warrior of Vimuhla, who has come here to live with us and take a position at the temple."

**Toraz hiShanuka**

player, 1 post  
Warrior of Vimuhla  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Wed 21 Jan 2004  
at 12:06



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**Re: Someone new**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #2

With some difficulty because of the chlen harness he's wearing, Toraz rises and bows in greeting. While his hands bear the telltale calluses of someone trained in combat, it's hard to gauge his abilities by his unimposing stature. Now that he's standing though, Ritlesh can see two swords in scabbards wrapped in their supporting belt laying on the floor behind where Toraz was sitting. From the cut of his well-made but functional clothing, it is clear that he comes from some cooler climate. Beads of perspiration glisten on his forehead.

"Noble Ritlesh, I am honored to meet a priest sorcerer such as yourself. Your studies and abilities bring glory to all within our clan."

**Ritlesh**

**hiVravodaya**

player, 4 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Wed 21 Jan 2004  
at 14:47



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**Re: Someone new**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #3

"Good morning Elder, I am honored by your attention." Ritlesh bowed deeply to Raimáne, then slightly less so to Toraz in response to the warrior's own greeting. Ritlesh smiled. "Welcome to the clanhouse, cousin. You are too kind. Surely it is the courage of our warriors that is the true heart of the clan." Ritlesh sat and waited for the elder to speak.

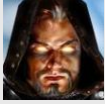
**SuuShih**

GM, 9 posts

**Re: Someone new**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #4

Wed 21 Jan 2004  
at 20:14



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Raimáne nodded his head smiling, indicating with his hands that Ritlesh and Toraz should be seated. Abruptly, he then motions to his personal slave to coordinate serving of the meals for the three of them. "We'll talk as we eat. Today is going to be busy. I must meet with a trade delegation from Tsatsayagga about a consignment of fine pottery that is overdue."

"Toraz is the son of my good friend T'ai hiShanuka. For years, his father and I have successfully partnered on various trading ventures. While his travels have certainly given Toraz a broad view of trade throughout the Empire, his education in other areas requires attention so that he can reach his potential. Ritlesh, you and he share this weakness as so much of your life has been devoted to scholarly pursuits. If you are incapable of behaving in a civilized manner in high society, it is difficult to advance. I speak from painful experience. For this reason, every morning before breakfast, I would have both of you study etiquette from your clan cousin Alía hiTánkolel. It was her third mother many years ago who somehow pounded this training into me."

"Please plan to join my entourage at a party to be held at the Governor's palace in ten days. Alía will help you select suitable garb. She has declared herself Aridani (OOC: equal to a male before the law) and has yet to take a husband."

Smiling to soften any implied criticism, he continues ...

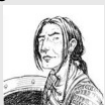
"I would have you two be friends. Toraz, Ritlesh can show you the wonders of our fair city and smooth the way at the temple. In turn, I suspect that he has much to share from his travels that would be good for you to learn."

He next hands a rolled parchment at his side to Toraz. "Here is your letter of introduction to Dirúna hiKáikune, a Kasi in the Vimuhla temple guard. Be sure to provide him with an appropriate gift to place your feet solidly on a path to advancement."

"Do either of you have any questions?"

**Ritlesh**  
**hiVravodaya**

player, 5 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Wed 21 Jan 2004  
at 21:50



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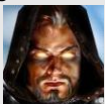
**Re: Someone new**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #5

"Honored Elder, your instructions are clear, and I will of course be pleased to attend you at the party. May we know the occasion for the party at the Governor's palace? Will it be a large event?"[\[Private to GM: What do I know about Alia?\]](#)

**SuuShih**

GM, 11 posts  
Sun 25 Jan 2004  
at 22:48



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**Re: Someone new**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #6

"The occasion is the birthday of Ravítri hiKaloné'i, the esteemed noble mother to Mízhek hiKaloné'i, Governor of Sokatis. The party will be huge by our city's standards, with attendees from various nations. You two are likely to see all manner of entertainment and have the opportunity to mingle with nobles on whose grace our prosperity depends."

This message was last edited by the GM at 23:30, Sun 25 Jan 2004.

**Ritlesh**

**Re: Someone new**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #7

**hiVravodaya**

player, 6 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Tue 27 Jan 2004  
at 10:12



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Ritlesh nods. "The governor is known to hold his mother in high esteem, she is said to be a woman of, ah, great force of character. But this is old news. My studies at the temple have left me little time to keep up with current events in the city. Excellence, is there any particular preparation we should make besides improving our regrettable lack of etiquette? Any persons of rank we should learn more about?

**Toraz hiShanuka**

player, 2 posts  
Warrior of Vimuhla  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Wed 28 Jan 2004  
at 16:48



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**Re: Someone new**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #8

Toraz continues to sit, and listens to the exchange. He is honoured to have been offered a position in the temple, yet is aware of his lack of knowledge of the area, and various families. He is content to listen, and learn all he can. His father taught him long ago that one should listen twice as much as he speaks, lest he is considered a fool.

**SuuShih**

GM, 15 posts  
Sat 15 May 2004  
at 22:56



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**Re: Someone new**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #9

Raimáne favors Ritlesh with a quick grin. "I'll speak with you two again on that subject between now and the party. Time presses. Toraz, Ritlesh will help you with introductions and, I trust, meet you at the end of the day. Though it's slower, please have one of the clan palanquins meet you outside the temple at sunset. There's no telling how much equipment Toraz will be issued. It will make things easier. Good day to you both."

After exchanging courtesies, Raimáne is off.

**Toraz hiShanuka**

player, 3 posts  
Warrior of Vimuhla  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Mon 17 May 2004  
at 12:38



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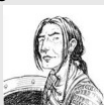
**Re: Someone new**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #10

Toraz waits until Raimáne leaves, before rising. "So noble Ritlesh," he says. "It would appear we are to be both friends and comrades. I am honoured." He bows to show his respect.

**Ritlesh****hiVravodaya**

player, 7 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Tue 18 May 2004  
at 11:10



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) |  
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**Re: Someone new**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #11

Ritlesh bows in return, and smiles. "Thank you cousin, but let us say that we honor each other. Will you join me in in a little more of this excellent cobbler, or perhaps another glass of chumetl? We have a little time before I must leave for the temple. I am an acolyte there, not a full scholar-priest yet." He pauses, and eats a bit more cobbler. "Mm, that is good. You know, I think you will be the first Sweet Singer to serve in our temple guard here in Sokatis. At least the first in recent memory. The guard captain, Diruna, is famous for his strict leadership, and unexpected speed. He's quite a fat man, of considerable appetite. We might stop in the market and get some delicacies to go with your inducement."

This message was last edited by the player at 05:42, Thu 20 May 2004.



**Toraz hiShanuka**

player, 4 posts  
Warrior of Vimuhla  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Thu 20 May 2004  
at 23:21



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**Re: Someone new**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #12

"I am not hungry," Toraz says gracefully, "But the Chumetl would be nice," he smiles. "It is rare that I get the chance for such pleasures these days."

"I have heard about Diruna," he adds, "Though his paunch was never the topic in question. That said, I'm sure a suitable 'bribe' might make my transition a little easier," he grinned.

**Ritles****hiVravodaya**

player, 8 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Fri 21 May 2004  
at 07:54



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[info](#)

**Re: Someone new**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #13

**Toraz hiShanuka typed:**

"I am not hungry," Toraz says gracefully, "But the Chumetl would be nice," he smiles.  
"It is rare that I get the chance for such pleasures these days."

"Really? How have you been spending your time? The clanmaster mentioned that you have been traveling. Long journeys?"

**quote:**

"I have heard about Diruna," he adds, "Though his paunch was never the topic in question. That said, I'm sure a suitable 'bribe' might make my transition a little easier," he grinned.

"I think you must certainly provide Diruna with a gift. He is known in the temple for his love of the rewards of his rank. If you do not want to be drilling all day in the sun, and pulling night watches on the feasts, you had best arrange a good present. If your own means are too limited, you should not hesitate to ask the clan elders. We are a small clan here, so we work together that much more to promote the interests of our own."

**Toraz hiShanuka**

player, 5 posts  
Warrior of Vimuhla  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Fri 21 May 2004  
at 23:54



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**Re: Someone new**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #14

**Ritles hiVravodaya typed:**

"Really? How have you been spending your time? The clanmaster mentioned that you have been traveling. Long journeys?"

"Not so long, yet sometimes it seemed so; in truth I missed my home and clan most of the time, and the journey's did not seem as exciting as they should. I met a few people, companions to share a hearth with, but few and far between. And I'm not inclined to drink by myself."




**Ritles hiVravodaya typed:**




"I think you must certainly provide Diruna with a gift. He is known in the temple for his love of the rewards of his rank. If you do not want to be drilling all day in the sun, and pulling night watches on the feasts, you had best arrange a good present. If your own means are too limited, you should not hesitate to ask the clan elders. We are a small clan here, so we work together that much more to promote the interests of our own."

"I thank you for your advice, and your aid. Come, let us drink some more Chumetl and we can talk perhaps as you show me where I might acquire an appropriate gift; I'm sure there is lots I need to know."



	This message was last edited by the GM at 13:44, Sat 22 May 2004.
<b>SuuShih</b> GM, 18 posts Sat 22 May 2004 at 13:57  <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a>	<b>Milking this</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #15 <hr/> Seeing Ritlesh's signal, a slave quickly takes a pitcher of ChumetI (Hmelu buttermilk prepared with salt and hot spices) from its warmer and scurries over to fill your cups.
<b>Ritlesh hiVravodaya</b> player, 9 posts Sweet Singers of Nakome Scholar-Priest of Chiteng Sat 22 May 2004 at 18:28  <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a>	<b>Re: Milking this</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #16 <hr/> <p>"It sounds like you have travelled a lot! Have you spent much time across the border in Salarvya? Or perhap seen our glorious capital? I'm afraid I am quite provincial, I have rarely left our city."</p> <p>"I'm sure we can find something suitable today. A sword or a pair of daggers perhaps, decorated with symbols of the Flame Lord. Or some adornment, a pectoral or a ring. I assume your appointment to the guard is already made? We are just easing your way into the ranks, not assuring your acceptance, yes? Oh, and something to eat or drink. Some fancy sweetmeats, or a good bottle of wine or brandy."</p> <p>[Private to SuuShih; Toraz hiShanuka: Hmm, I think my character might know more about suitable inducments than I do. Is a modest roll of kaitars not suitable? I suppose it lacks suavity. I also have very little idea about amount, am guessing c. 25 kaitars. A tidy sum, enough for a prosperous family to eat for a couple of weeks, and about a tenth of Diruna's monthly pay (using values from Swords &amp; Glory 2).]</p>
<b>Toraz hiShanuka</b> player, 6 posts Warrior of Vimuhla Sweet Singers of Nakome Mon 24 May 2004 at 00:28  <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a>	<b>Re: Milking this</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #17 <hr/> <p>"I have travelled far, I guess; though I rarely venture over the border. Most of my journeys have been within the bounds of our country, though what I've seen of Salarvya has made me want to se more. I have visited the capital on a number of occasions, though I must admit I am not fond of large cities."</p> <p>"And I have already been accepted as a guard; I merely wish to start my new assignment with as few problems as necessary," says Toraz, smiling.</p>
<b>Ritlesh hiVravodaya</b> player, 10 posts Sweet Singers of Nakome Scholar-Priest of Chiteng Mon 24 May 2004 at 15:12  <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a>	<b>Re: Milking this</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #18 <hr/> <p><b>Toraz hiShanuka typed:</b></p> <div> <p>"I have travelled far, I guess; though I rarely venture over the border. Most of my journeys have been within the bounds of our country, though what I've seen of Salarvya has made me want to see more. I have visited the capital on a number of occasions, though I must admit I am not fond of large cities."</p> </div> <p>"Ah you are fortunate, to have seen such great places. I hope to travel more myself, after I have advanced in my studies. I would like to visit the libraries in Bey Su very much."</p> <p><b>quote:</b></p>

	<p>"And I have already been accepted as a guard; I merely wish to start my new assignment with as few problems as necessary," says Toraz, smiling.</p> <p>"That's good. Perhaps we should go along to the markets and acquire the necessary items. I should report to the temple soon anyway. I have to fetch my satchel, and then I'll be ready to go. If you haven't been assigned quarters yet, you can leave your gear in my space. Come, I'll show you the way."</p> <p>(assuming Toraz comes along...)</p> <p>Ritlesh calls for a porter if Toraz has more than a handful of gear. Then he leads the warrior out of the hall, along a pillared portico covered with carvings, across a courtyard garden filled with trickling fountains, and down a hall towards the back of the clanhouse. "I have a pretty good room, on the second floor, with a window that catches the breeze from the hills." The two walk up some stairs, and down another hall lined with curtained doorways. Snores come from behind a few. Finally stops and Ritlesh draws a curtain, revealing a small room with sleeping ledges and a few shelves built into the walls, and rolled mats stacked here and there. "My roommate, Meshmuyel, is at the temple of Hru'u. He has vigils there twice a month." Ritlesh turns to a slave who is rolling sleeping mats, "Ka'o, take the noble warrior's things." Then the acolyte takes a shoulder satchel from a shelf, tucks a scroll into it, and turns. "Is there anything else you need before we go? I can give you a fuller tour of the clanhouse later if you like."</p>
<p><b>Toraz hiShanuka</b>  player, 7 posts  Warrior of Vimuhla  Sweet Singers of Nakome  Tue 25 May 2004  at 23:46</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Milking this</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #19</p> <p>Toraz shook his head. "No, thank you- I have all I need," he said simply. "Though when we return I need to find housing for my own slaves. I appreciate the time you are taking to aid me; though I hope you are not neglecting your studies on my account."</p>
<p><b>Ritlesh hiVravodaya</b>  player, 11 posts  Sweet Singers of Nakome  Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  Wed 26 May 2004  at 05:46</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>into Sokatis</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #20</p> <p>"Don't worry, I'm not neglecting my studies. Besides, clan-cousins are important, especially those with the favor of the clan-master." Ritlesh grins. "Come, I'll show you a quick way to the Temple, and introduce you to a few people there. On the way we can stop in the market and get your presents."</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b>  GM, 20 posts  Wed 26 May 2004  at 13:09</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>The Eastern Jewel</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #21</p> <p>While it's not the high heat of Pardan (8th month of 12), the month of Fesru (5th month) presages that misery. Humidity hits you like a wall as you emerge from the portal of Komeya, your clan house. As you two pass clan palanquins sitting outside, Ritlesh approaches Charúna hiKorokól of the Scarlet Mantle clan who is responsible for their maintenance and scheduling. Ritlesh explains your need for a palanquin to be at the Temple of Vimuhla at sunset and, once Charúna understands that the Clan Elder considers it a priority, is assured that one will be there. Typically, a palanquin is reserved a few days in advance whenever possible.</p>

	<p>Not lightly is Sokatis called the Eastern Jewel. Flowering vines of every hue descend from every terrace. From building to building and street to street, these terraces interlock so that they cover the walkways and entrances to either side. The din of numerous open-air markets, where hawkers proclaim the merits of goods from many distant lands and clans, can be heard rising and falling as you progress. Music, equally varied, mixes in to create a distinctive cacophony unlike any place either of you have ever been. Slaves bustle to and fro on various errands. While the crowds are thick, gaps can be seen around the occasional shen, moving like armored lizard mountains. Clearly, from all the troops, the city is prosperous and on a war footing.</p> <p>At the Iron Fist clan shop located near the Temple of Vimuhla, you find for a mere 30K a collapsible armor stand that, for an additional 5K, can be fitted with a brass plate that can be quickly inscribed with Daruma's name, clan (Iron Hand) and anything else you might want to say that's short. While they certainly have other items, all people who wear armor must place armor and the gambison padding worn beneath out to dry after it has been worn. Fighters in the field typically do this by laying it out on the ground or perhaps draping it over a makeshift stand or stick. This stand would allow someone to display his or her armor proudly when in the field while still allowing it to dry. Note the red Genki wood inlay depicting the mighty hero Hrugga embattled.</p> <p>"So, if my lord is pleased, please tell me what I should place on the placard." :)</p>
<p><b>Toraz hiShanuka</b>  player, 8 posts  Warrior of Vimuhla  Sweet Singers of Nakome  Thu 27 May 2004  at 23:52</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: The Eastern Jewel</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #22</p> <p>Toraz thought for a moment; whatever he had inscribed was going to be seen by Daruma forever, whatever the nature of their relationship became. Toraz was uncomfortable with inscriptions; they carried a lot of power, and couldn't be forgotten. "Something simple," he said eventually. "Venerable and gracious, and a living legend," he added. It wasn't subtle, but it was polite. He deliberately kept his name off the engraving- seeing his own name carved forever would have made him feel very uncomfortable indeed. Hopefully Daruma would remember forever who sent him the gift, but if not them that was the way of things.</p>
<p><b>Ritles</b>  <b>hiVravodaya</b>  player, 12 posts  Sweet Singers of Nakome  Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  Fri 28 May 2004  at 07:11</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: The Eastern Jewel</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #23</p> <p>Ritles frowned to himself, then nodded, then shrugged. "Not the first words that most would use for Diruma, but at worst they are complimentary, and at best they may stimulate the Kasi's deeper dreams of glory. You are shrewd, cousin. When we are done here, the clanhouse of Weeping Stone is not far, perhaps we can find a good bottle of Másh-fruit or Drónu brandy to add to your gift."</p>
<p><b>Toraz hiShanuka</b>  player, 9 posts  Warrior of Vimuhla  Sweet Singers of Nakome  Sat 29 May 2004  at 00:07</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: The Eastern Jewel</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #24</p> <p>Toraz forced a smile. "To the clanhouse, then," he shrugged. In truth he was getting worried; the armour stand had already cost a lot more than he'd hoped- Toraz was not from a wealthy family by any means. But he figured that it was a good investment in the long run. "Maybe a cheap bottle," he said, smiling.</p>

**Ritles**  
**hiVravodaya**  
player, 13 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Sat 29 May 2004  
at 13:05



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[info](#)

## Re: The Eastern Jewel

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #25

"A cheap bottle? Fah. That low-price Datsu goes down like syrup." Then Ritles glances at Toraz, and comprehends. "Why don't you let me do the buying? Allow me to extend the hospitality of our clanhouse. I have a little experience here, I can pick out something good. I'll get two, one for His Vastness the Kasi, and one for us to share with our cousins tonight. After you've been collecting your salary for a bit you can return the favor. Yes?"

[regardless of who is buying, Ritles takes Toraz to the Clan of Weeping Stone...]

Dodging a squad of soldiers, Ritles takes Toraz down a shaded alley into the next street, under a colonade extending from the Palace of Glorious War, and down a stepped street lined with snack-sellers to the wineshop. A clerk spots their clan badges and attends them briskly. Ritles tells him: "I require two bottles of Mash-brand. None of the Tumissans today, something a bit more modest. Perhaps the Hundra Dawn?"

**Toraz hiShanuka**  
player, 10 posts  
Warrior of Vimuhla  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Mon 31 May 2004  
at 00:07



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) |  
[info](#)

## Re: The Eastern Jewel

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #26

Toraz inwardly cursed, feeling he'd shown weakness in front of his cousin. "It is no matter; I will pay. I have little use for my money anyway," he smiled. "Though I still require your aid in getting a good sample- I'm afraid my life hasn't been to privileged, and my knowledge of vintages has been sadly neglected."

**Ritles**  
**hiVravodaya**  
player, 14 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Mon 31 May 2004  
at 07:26



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) |  
[info](#)

## Re: The Eastern Jewel

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #27

Ritles is a little surprised, this country cousin is stiff. "Ah well," he thinks, "he'll soon learn that in Sokatis there are many more uses for his money than there were on the sakbe-roads."

"Just as you wish cousin, I am happy to share my limited expertise. The Hundra Dawn I mentioned is not so good as the western distillations, but is quite drinkable, and not so expensive. It comes from the foothills southeast of us. One of my fathers, Hotaru hiVravodaya, makes it his regular drink."

**Toraz hiShanuka**  
player, 11 posts  
Warrior of Vimuhla  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Wed 2 Jun 2004  
at 07:18



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[info](#)

## Re: The Eastern Jewel

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #28

Toraz looked around, distracted by the sights. He never got tired of seeing new places, even though the culture was familiar to him. "This is a beautiful city," he said. "my father spoke much of it, but this is the first time I have had the pleasure," he said.

"Tell me- what are the ladies like?" he grinned.

**Ritles**  
**hiVravodaya**  
player, 15 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng

## Re: The Eastern Jewel

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #29

### Toraz hiShanuka typed:

"This is a beautiful city," he said. "my father spoke much of it, but this is the first time I have had the pleasure,"

Wed 2 Jun 2004  
at 15:33



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"Indeed it is." Ritlesh said with obvious pride. "I was impressed by Fasiltum, but I think our city is more beautiful. It is too dry and barren up there in the desert. Some time later I hope I can show you the sights. The view from the bluffs is spectacular."

**quote:**

"Tell me- what are the ladies like?" he grinned.

"Gentler than the firey viragos of the desert, cleverer than those boring Thrayanis downriver, and more beautiful than any others, especially the Salarvyani! Or so they tell us." Ritlesh grinned back. "I'll introduce you to the cousins tonight. Ah, and we have our appointment with Alía tomorrow. Have you heard of her? She is a notable beauty, one of the jewels of the clanhouse, and her lineage, Tánkolel, has high prestige here."

**Toraz hiShanuka**

player, 12 posts  
Warrior of Vimuhla  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Thu 3 Jun 2004  
at 06:39



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Re: The Eastern Jewel**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #30

"That would be a rare pleasure," he smiled. "I have few vices, but women are one of them, I must confess. It often gets lonely on the road," he laughed. "Is it time to return to our cousins? I was hoping to spend a little more time exploring."

**Ritlesh  
hiVravodaya**

player, 16 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Thu 3 Jun 2004  
at 07:19



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**The Temple of the Flame**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #31

"Both choices would be pleasant, but as soon as our business is done here, I must get to the temple. I am to spend the afternoon in the infirmary, working with the physician. You'll have to explore more on your own today, or come with me to the temple and I can introduce you to a few people before you meet with Kasi Dirúna."

**Toraz hiShanuka**

player, 13 posts  
Warrior of Vimuhla  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Sat 5 Jun 2004  
at 23:45



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Re: The Temple of the Flame**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #32

"I will return with you," Toraz said. "I will be here a long time; there is no rush, I guess. Besides, I need to unpack, and see to my slaves."




**SuuShih**

GM, 28 posts  
Sun 6 Jun 2004  
at 21:52

**Re: The Temple of the Flame**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #33

As you departed the shop with the armor stand, you both belatedly feel chagrined that the stress of the moment prevented you from negotiating a better price. Still, Toraz is particularly pleased with the quality and beauty of this gift.

 <p> <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a> </p>	<p>You both avoid the blazing sunlight by keeping to the covered walkways. Because your family is in the business, you are able to acquire an excellent vintage of Hundranu Dawn that would normally cost considerably more than the 3K (K=Kaitar) you actually spend. Gifts now ready, you proceed to the Temple of Vimuhla.</p> <p>The roads along which you travel wind up and down small hills. In the distance, on the side of a larger hill, you can see the temple district. The distinct timbre of different Tonqel Gongs sound in the distance from the many temples to announce morning prayers in approximately 15 minutes. You both immediately focus on your destination: the imposing facade of the Temple of Vimuhla that dominates the entire right side of the hill.</p> <p>Rising in gradual steps, the Temple of Vimuhla is at once imposing and ancient. It has been 800+ years since the last Ditlana. While the sandstone is massively carved, structures made of such stone were not meant to last that period. Everywhere you look, masons and stone carvers are busily at work performing the regular tasks of maintenance and new construction. As you get closer, you can see that the surface of most of the older structures is covered with various molds and lichens. Rain begins to gently fall to be shortly matched by rising fog that gently obscures the furthest structures. Massive pyramids and obelisks are set again blocky cubes and trapazoids that rise to the hill's pinnacle. The many fortified gates of the temple are filled with priests and worshipers coming to observe the morning sacrifice to the ravening flame.</p> <p>Guards with helmets baring flaming crests stand their posts, occasionally answering a question or directing people to their desired destinations.</p>
<p> <b>Toraz hiShanuka</b>            player, 14 posts            Warrior of Vimuhla            Sweet Singers of Nakome            Fri 11 Jun 2004            at 06:04         </p>  <p> <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a> </p>	<p> <b>Re: The Temple of the Flame</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #34         </p> <p>Toraz took it all in: the sights, the sounds. Even the distinctive smells of so many people in one place- Toraz never tired of cities. He smiled with glee, hoping that his temple duties would afford him some time to explore the nightspots and perhaps meet with some of the local women. He doubted it, somehow. "Is Diruna expecting me? What time should I meet him?" he asked Ritlesh.</p>
<p> <b>Ritlesh hiVravadaya</b>            player, 17 posts            Sweet Singers of Nakome            Scholar-Priest of Chiteng            Fri 11 Jun 2004            at 13:49         </p>  <p> <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a> </p>	<p> <b>Re: The Temple of the Flame</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #35         </p> <p>Ritlesh answered as they walked up a ramp. "I don't know, I thought Clan-Elder Raimáne would have told you the details of your appointment. Hmmm. Well, we can at least find out if the Kási is here today, and perhaps get a hint of his mood. We might have to skip the morning ritual, but I think our reasons are good. We can give proper praise to the Flame at the Brightest Gaze ceremony at noon. That is when we give most honor to the Drinker of Blood as well."</p> <p>"Welcome to the House of the Lord of Fire!" he said as they walked through a massive gatehouse and into a very wide paved courtyard. Ahead, a massive low truncated pyramid supports what is obviously the central complex: a great hall and complex of buildings, covered with tile roofs and topped with a high crest of stylized flames. On the far side of the plaza, wide stairs lead up the side of the pyramid to a higher courtyard, and beyond this are the great portals of the main shrine itself. Lesser shrines and halls flank the higher courtyard, and smoke rises in several columns above them all. Many worshippers are headed across the courtyard toward the shrine. Several booths and stalls are set up around the edges where one may buy charms, amulets, animals and other sacrificial items,</p>



and other items. The so-called "gate-priests," in bright orange-red robes like all the clergy, move among the people, attending to persons of rank, giving directions, keeping order. Ritlesh catches the eye of one and calls to him: "Ah, Visan! Good morning!" The man is middle-aged, short and stooped, with startlingly ugly burn scars all over one side of his head, running down his neck and shoulder. The man scuttles over, but Ritlesh greets him first with a bow. "Good morning pious one, I trust you are well?"

The priest bowed back. "As well as can be, thanks to your teacher, young scholar."

"Visan, this is my clan-cousin, Toraz hiShanuka. He has recently arrived in the city, and will be taking a position in the temple guard today. I hope that he may look to you for assistance in finding his way through our glorious temple?"

"Oh indeed, indeed! Welcome to our great temple young sir, and congratulations on your new position." The little man bows. It's clear that the burned arm doesn't quite work.

"Toraz, this is Visán hiTlakán of the Broken Reed clan, one of the Conductors to the Shrine of the Flame. He knows all that passes through these gates, and every shrine, storeroom, and closet in the temple."

"You are too kind, noble one."

"Not at all, not at all. For instance, allow me to demonstrate your expertise... where is the puissant Kási Dirúna hiKáikune? Have you seen him today?"

"Well, haven't exactly seen.... I think I did hear him, ah, er, chastising some guards not long ago on the practice ground."

"Excellent, thank you for gracing us with your assistance, pious one."

"Not at all, young scholar. I am happy to aid the students of the great Ontéru, may Lord Vimuhla take him in his time to the Halls of Ever-Burning Flame."

"Your generosity is a credit to your clan, pious one. Now if you will excuse us we must attend to our tasks."

"Of course, noble youths. Fare well." The priest scurries off, heading to a tangle of sacrificial Hmélu calves that are munching the orange flowers off a vendor's stand...

"A good fellow to know," says Ritlesh quietly to Toraz. "His clan is not high here in Sokatis, and he has a large family to support, so inducements are important to him. But my medical teacher, Ontéru, nursed him after he was burned in an oil spill at one of the alters, and he shows his gratitude to everyone in the infirmary."

Ritlesh leads Toraz across the courtyard. The crowds now are drawing towards the main shrine, but Ritlesh veers to the left. "So Dirúna is here, but perhaps we could learn more of his mood. I wonder if Osuré is on wall-watch..."

They mount a set of stairs leading up the hillside to a wide walkway, lower than the central pyramid.

"The guard barracks are there across the courtyard" says Chitlesh, and waves towards a gateway on the same level as the lower courtyard. The walls and the gate are covered with painted bas-reliefs of warriors of the Flame, with the fiery servants of Vimuhla in the background. "The shrine of my own Lord Chiténg, the



Flame Lord's mighty Cohort, is this way." This building is fronted by more bas-reliefs, many showing the lizard-headed deity devouring enemies and burning cities, and the entrance is topped by Chiteng's symbol, his wavy two-handed sword, 'Bloodsong.'

"I know a temple guard who might know more. I think she has morning watch, and as the rain has lightened, we can consult her." Ritlesh leads Toraz around Chiténg's temple (past more murals of bloodshed and flames), down a long colonnade fronting more buildings ("offices of the administrative priests"), to where the outer temple wall stands over a steep slope. A pair of bastions interrupt the line of the wall, each with a guard standing in full dress. Orange ribbons hang from their ornate halberds, and their elaborate armor is gilded and lacquered with flame and dragon symbols. Ritlesh saunters down the wall to the near bastion, and stops near the guard to look out at the fog-shrouded neighborhood and river below, as if admiring the view. The guard, a remarkably tall and powerful looking woman, stands stiff, watching out over the wall, apparently oblivious to the two sightseers. After a moment, still looking out over the wall, Ritlesh murmurs "Good morning Osuré." Still at attention, without moving her head, the guard answers "Good morning Ritlesh" in a raspy low voice.

"Toraz, this is Temple Guard Changadésha [=Private] Osuré hiZhayárvu, of the Black Stone clan. Osuré and I were in a religious instruction class together. She was kind enough to verse me in some, ah, unarmed combat maneuvers, in exchange for my feeble assistance with some scholarly matters."

Osuré still doesn't move, her eyes still gaze out across the wall, but Toraz can see just a hint of a grin behind the cheekpiece of her helm. "La," she rasps, "you were very clever with your stylus, young scholar, but you'll never be a great wrestler. What brings you out in the damp air this morning? Why are you not sitting with your scrolls?"

"I am introducing my clan-cousin here, the noble Toraz hiShanuka, to the glories of our temple. He is new to the city, and has a letter of introduction to your exalted commander, Kási Dirúna. Toraz is to join your company. But before we approach the mighty Kasi, we thought we might learn a bit about his disposition today. We heard he might not be quite as cheerful and pleasant as usual."

"Ha, 'cheerful and pleasant,' he says." Again a flash of teeth suggests a grin, though the teeth look oddly sharp. "Not to worry, the Kasi was just as pleasant as usual this morning. He had me before he slept, and Sayuncha before breakfast, and that seemed to put him in good humor. He bawled out the second semetl [=a squad of 20] this morning, but that's routine, they have two stumble-bums who are hopeless with halberds. If you are looking for him, he often takes a cup or three of chumétl and puzzles over his accounts in his quarters during the morning service, perhaps you will find him there now."


"Thank you Osuré, you are too kind."

"Think nothing of it, clever scholar. Perhaps I'll have some scribe work that you can help me with later."

"Always happy to assist a fellow servant of the Flame, mighty Osuré."

As Ritlesh and Toraz withdraw, Osuré's grin is wide, and her eyes watch the two men leave with frank appraisal.

As they step back under the colonnade and out of the mist Ritlesh comments. "Quite a unique woman, she is. Not many females can serve with distinction in the temple guard. A very intense person... Well then, shall we go and try to see

	<p>the Kasi? Perhaps he would be pleased to have a distraction from his company accounts. Or if you would prefer, we can hurry and get in to the service and see him after.</p> <p>[Private to SuuShih; Toraz hiShanuka: whew! that was a lot more than I thought it would be when I started. Paul, Adam mentioned you were having a bit of information overload, so I figured I'd just forge ahead. I won't usually crank out such big chunks on my own. A couple of unspoken things Toraz would get: Visan will be eager for monetary tips. Clans are divided into 5 big ranks (Very High, High, Medium, Low, Very Low, and then ordered within ranks. Order within the rank often varies between cities or regions, but big rank level is pretty constant across the Empire). Broken Reed clan is at the bottom of Medium level, not much above peasants. Osure's Black Stone clan is higher, but still Medium, much lower than our High clan. I tried to capture the odd mutual politeness that develops when Tsolyani with differing levels of social and organizational rank interact. Visan has somewhat higher position in the temple than Ritlesh (not by a lot, but Ritlesh is polite), but Ritlesh is of much higher social standing, and his specialty in sorcerer has high prestige. Osure is lower in both rank and standing, so Ritlesh addresses her more directly. You aren't expected to know clan-rank just from the name that's something Adam will have to tell us. I made up these two npc's, if you make some up you can decide their rank too. There is a list of 100+ clans that we can refer to, or make up our own.</p> <p>As to your choice of action, this might be a chance to reveal Toraz's level of piety. A devout worshipper might want to attend the morning service, a less observant member would let it go by. Most of the worshippers (and many of the clergy) of all the gods are pretty slack. They attend rituals, make sacrifices occasionally, the priests perform their duties rotely, but they don't take it all too personally. Much of a person's choice of patron deity is a function of ancient clan traditions and family ties. I left Toraz's background open on this. As a warrior he might take his worship of Vimuhla (the War God of Change) quite seriously. Really serious Vimuhla worshippers usually have a fiery streak in them. A certain intensity, a love of destruction or violent change (or just violence). Or, as a member of a clan that worships Vimuhla and Hru'u, he might just do it out of family tradition. Cheers, George]</p> <p>This message was last edited by the player at 10:53, Wed 16 June 2004.</p>
<p><b>Toraz hiShanuka</b>  player, 15 posts  Warrior of Vimuhla  Sweet Singers of  Nakome  Mon 14 Jun 2004  at 07:52</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: The Temple of the Flame</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #36</p> <p>Toraz frowned as if deep in thought. He was still in awe of Osure, and wasn't quite sure what to make of her. A guard, like he was to become; Toraz doubted he could look as intimidating even if he painted himself in blood. A very impressive woman- he hoped she was a typical example of the women in this city; he was looking forward to finding out.</p> <p>Ritlesh's words dragged him from his thoughts. "I think it would be proper to attend the service first," he said humbly. "I'm sure the Kasi will not be disappointed if we delay the meeting." In truth, Toraz didn't want to attend the service; he preferred to put his attention to more worldly matters. His father had tried to raise him as a devout follower, but his travels had exposed him to a myriad different practices and gods, none of which impressed him. Yet, he was loathe to admit this to Ritlesh; for all he knew Ritlesh might be a religious man, and he didn't want to risk offending the friend he'd made. Being overly-pious rarely offended somebody as much as mocking their beliefs. Besides, he was a little nervous of meeting the kasi. A little delay couldn't hurt.</p>
<p><b>Ritlesh</b></p>	<p><b>Re: The Temple of the Flame</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #37</p>

**hiVravodaya**

player, 18 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Wed 16 Jun 2004  
at 11:32



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~Oh Mighty Chiteng, spare me from pious country cousins~ thought Ritlesh.  
"Very well then, but we'd better walk briskly. I think perhaps we just have time."

**Toraz hiShanuka**

player, 16 posts  
Warrior of Vimuhla  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Sun 20 Jun 2004  
at 00:18



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**Re: The Temple of the Flame**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #38

Toraz smiled. "Well we wouldn't want to be late, my friend," he said. "Lead on."  
Toraz suppressed a sigh- whatever had he been thinking, joining the temple guard?  
Hardly the place for a non-believing hedonist. Still, it had been his father's idea,  
and his wish, and Toraz felt duty-bound to do it. It wouldn't be too bad, he  
figured, as long as the tedious ceremonies were kept to a minimum.

**SuuShih**

GM, 40 posts  
Sun 20 Jun 2004  
at 15:11



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**Re: The Temple of the Flame**



[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #39

Descending from the parapet, Ritlesh and Toraz cross the large cobbled expanse  
to join the crowd now filing into the main ceremonial temple. All of the red bricks  
and larger stones in this area are hand-carved with devices and names of those  
Vimuhla's honored dead. While not a tradition at all temples of the Flame Lord,  
worshippers at Sokatis' Temple of Unquenchable Radiance have latched upon this  
practice, paying hefty sums for more propitious locations. In the far distance, you  
see a number of small groups attended by priests and acolytes laying more stones  
with appropriate pomp and circumstance.

While the main temple here is pyramidal, there are blocky external buttresses  
around the outside with important aspects of Vimuhla atop them. The main portal  
to the temple is composed of massive Tiu wood timbers, cross-lapped for strength  
and covered with real iron studs (OOC: iron is quite expensive on Tekumel). The  
archivolt surrounding the door is beautifully carved, depicting various scenes from  
the great battle on the Dormoron Plain (i.e., Ragnarok) and all of Vimuhla's  
aspects. The temple inside is also pyramidal and reinforced with flying buttresses  
attached to massive sandstone columns. The capital of these columns is carved  
with stylized flames while the base has numerous oil lamps inset. Over the  
centuries this has made these columns and the carvings upon them black with  
soot.


As you enter, you see graduated daises extending from the walls raising upwards  
to your right and left, each containing priests of ever-increasing circle. Lessor  
priests can be found near the walls taking donations for prayers or holy symbols.  
Recessed areas contain various aspects of the Flame Lord. The top-most dais  
remains unoccupied. Before that dais is a circular declivity, at the base of which is  
a huge flame. As hot as it is outside, it is cool compared to the temple interior.  
High above the flame is a heavily ornamented ceiling rising to a hidden small trap  
door at the very apex.

A few minutes after you enter, each of the priests on the daises begins chanting  
and swinging giant clappers together in unison. The reverberating sound of the  
flame joins with these man-made sounds in a concordant echo reminiscent of vast  
troops charging. Bellows blast the flame higher to the beat. Gradually, the many

	<p>worshippers take up the chant, stamping to the beat. The sound builds to a crescendo when, with a whoosh of flame and smoke, the Ritual High Priest appears on the top-most dais. After intoning appropriate prayers, he thanks Kasi Gógma hiKhórsan of The Legion of The Lord of Red Devastation for his generous donation and sacrifice for today's prayer. With that, he offers a prayer for the well-being and victory of that Legion fighting so far away to the northwest in the Chakas against Mu'ugalavya and Yan Kor. With that, the priests begin to chant, a sound taken up by the worshipers in mounting excitement as a trussed and screaming Yan Koryani prisoner is placed on the edge of the steep incline in front of the main dais and, at the appropriate moment, released to slide into the fire and ash below. At the same time, the small trap door at the temple apex is opened. Above it, the Tonkel Gong clapper has been fitted with a fluted log to catch the warm air from below. The gong rings from above signifying Lord Vimuhla's acceptance of the offering and the end of the ceremony.</p> <p>With that, the priests file out and worshipers disburse amidst animated conversation. It's not every day that a human offering is made.</p> <p>Outside the temple, you both partake of the cool water sold by the Well Dipper's Clan. Toraz, padded gambison under his chlen armor now soaked in a gallon or more of sweat, is cursing his decision to attend the ceremony, especially given Ritlesh's less than zealous participation and obvious discomfort from his own sweat-soaked robes.</p> <p>As you walk around an archway on the side of the main temple, you come to a large courtyard with pells and other military training apparatus. Yelling in his best parade ground voice, you find the Kási Dirúna impartially berating a group of halberdiers. Taking the weapon from one of the men, he twirls it with blinding speed executing cut after cut that stops a finger away from one of the objects of his displeasure. Toraz and Ritlesh both recognize the drill, but still are impressed with the Kasi's skill and strength. Admonishing a chagrined Kareng leader to drill harder, he tosses the weapon back to its owner and storms off to a table atop an outside pedestal from which he can view everything. There servants await him with water and chemetl. The table is littered with various scrolls and tablets.</p>
<p><b>Ritlesh hiVravodaya</b>  player, 19 posts  Sweet Singers of Nakome  Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  Tue 22 Jun 2004  at 09:49</p>  <p>PM   rMail   Sheet   info</p>	<p><b>Re: The Temple of the Flame</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #40</p> <p>Ritlesh had actively joined in the worship, chanting with the lesser priests and stamping too, but without the ecstatic energy that some were filled with. He was obviously glad to be out in the relatively cool air of the plaza, and drank deeply of the water from the Well Dippers' clan. "A good omen!" he said to Toraz, after a last drink. "It is unusual to have a war captive for the flames in the morning like this. The Flame Lord will smile on warriors here today." After they crossed the courtyard and watched Diruna, he murmured quietly. "A formidable man, is the Kasi. Will you approach him now? I guess the scrolls and papers are not his first love, he may welcome the interruption." Toraz can detect a certain note of uncertain optimism in Ritlesh's words.</p> <p>[Private to SuuShih; Toraz hiShanuka: Cool! or rather, Hot! I liked the description of the ritual. Evocative, and not verbose (the latter I struggle with especially).]</p>
<p><b>Toraz hiShanuka</b>  player, 17 posts  Warrior of Vimuhla  Sweet Singers of Nakome  Thu 24 Jun 2004  at 07:08</p> 	<p><b>Re: The Temple of the Flame</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #41</p> <p>Toraz nodded, plucking his clinging clothes away from his chest. He was feeling decidedly uncomfortable, and the heat was making him sleepy. He stifled a yawn, and tried to look alert. The smell of burning flesh from the sacrifice victim had done little to relax him and, worse, it had made him hungry. It was best to get the official business out of the way quickly.</p> <p>He walked over to the Kasi, glancing behind him briefly to see if Ritlesh was following. He felt nervous in the presence of authority, especially one who wielded</p>

<a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a>	<p>a halberd so effectively.</p> <p>"Kasi," Toraz said respectfully, observing the correct courtesies. "I am Toraz hiShanuka. I am to join your guard," he added, smiling.</p>
<p><b>Ritles</b> <b>hiVravodaya</b> player, 20 posts Sweet Singers of Nakome Scholar-Priest of Chiteng Thu 24 Jun 2004 at 08:20</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: The Temple of the Flame</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #42</p> <p>As befits a humble acolyte, Ritles stays back, out of the way. Not for him to disturb an exalted Kasi at his work.</p> <p>[Private to Toraz hiShanuka: for what it's worth, in this situation most Tsolyani would state their clan too (Sweet Singers of Nakome in your case). Clan affiliation is a fundamental part of personal identity in Tsolyani culture. In this case, both Diruna and Toraz would know that Toraz's clan is high status, so he has to be treated with at least minimal courtesy, especially as his clan is significantly higher than Diruna's. Most Tsolyani would probably also promptly present his letter of introduction, thus invoking higher authority. Of course you have gathered this, and be playing Toraz this way deliberately. Apologies if I'm pointing out the obvious. :) ]</p> <p>[Private to GM: Hrm, it seems strange that Ritles is still an acolyte, given that he's 26 and can cast spells. Would it interfere with your schemes if he was a 2nd circle priest, as usual S&amp;G chargen would have him? That's still pretty low -- comparable, I think to a private in a legion.]</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 45 posts Thu 24 Jun 2004 at 08:56</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: The Temple of the Flame</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #43</p> <p>The Kasi puts down the tablet he has in his hands with a certain amount of frustration. Evidently, he's far-sighted as he was holding it at some distance. Looking over at Ritles he nods in acknowledgement, "Noble and pious priest-sorcerer of the 1st circle, <i>scion</i> of The Sweet Singers of Nakome, <i>beloved</i> of our Lord of Flame, thank you for showing your clan cousin the path here and giving me the opportunity to organize our various units for drills without the intrusion of his presence. I'm sure you have important business with some of the mighty sorcerers and scholars within our ancient temple. It would be unbecoming for me to keep you from these important duties any further." Ritles might get the subtle hint that he's really desired elsewhere right about now and that the Kasi would prefer to meet his new guardsman without his presence.</p> <p>[Private to Ritles hiVravodaya: Ritles is 1st circle and is not an acolyte. The loose rule of thumb that I go by is one circle per two levels with appropriate inducements. For sorcerers, I generally favor sorcerous levels with some consideration for priestly level when determining circle. It's not precise. You could have been 2nd circle, but you didn't roll well.]</p>
<p><b>Ritles</b> <b>hiVravodaya</b> player, 21 posts Sweet Singers of Nakome Scholar-Priest of Chiteng Thu 24 Jun 2004 at 11:15</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: The Temple of the Flame</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #44</p> <p>Ritles definitely gets the hint. He replies "Thank you, mighty Kasi," as he salutes the guard captain with a deep bow, then departs in haste. ~I hope Toraz remembers the palanquin at the gate this evening~ he thinks as he heads to the infirmary.</p> <p>[Private to GM: 1st Circle? I didn't know that. Ok, cool. fwiw, there are fairly detailed rules in S&amp;G for promotion, if you want to use them. As you get further up the ladder, skill levels don't track circle rank as closely (influence and politics mean more). ]</p>
<p><b>Toraz hiShanuka</b> player, 18 posts Warrior of Vimuhla Sweet Singers of</p>	<p><b>Re: The Temple of the Flame</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #45</p> <p>Toraz watched Ritlash leave, a little un-nerved; diplomacy was not his strongest suit, and he wasn't sure how to behave with the Kasi. He smiled at the Kasi,</p>


Nakome  
Sun 27 Jun 2004  
at 00:11



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hoping that the subject of the gods and Toraz's faith wouldn't become the agenda for conversation. "Quite a display," he said, nodding towards the halberd. He winced inside- not the best small talk he could have thought of. But it was considerable better than 'its hot today, isn't it.'

SuuShih  
GM, 48 posts  
Sun 27 Jun 2004  
at 15:15



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And???
[edit] | [delete] | msg #46

The Kasi stares at Toraz, looking him up and down, focusing briefly on what he's holding. Notably, he says nothing for a bit, making him squirm.


"Have you (Here the Kasi uses the "you of placid indifference", which one would use to social inferiors who appear to be pushing for undeserved respect) no letter recommending you?!"

One of the Kasi's scribes, an old man in orange robes, now scurries forward to take the letter offered by Toraz. Carefully, he opens it and hands it, bowing obsequiously, to the Kasi. Throughout this, the Kasi is watching the old man's sure actions with a look of patience and consternation. With a heavy sigh, he opens the sealed scroll and, holding it at arm's length, reads it quickly.

Rapidly tilting his head left and right, the Kasi again addresses Toraz, "It seems that you (this time, the Kasi uses "you of honorable youth", which one would use when addressing a young man or woman of respectable status, used by an elder) are to be a member of Vimuhla's guard. Your martial skills are not described in your letter of introduction from your Clan Elder. Follow me."

The Kasi lightly jumps down from his pedestal and walks over to a small area where various blunt chlen practice weapons are racked. Though he certainly has a massive girth, his equally massive legs and arms argue for his possessing remarkable strength. "Show me the weapon you are most proficient with." With that, the Kasi dons a helmet and takes up a practice shield and short sword. The stance he takes is uncommon in the military with his shield low in front of his abdomen and legs and his sword pointed straight up from the middle of the top of the shield. Unless one's opponent is blindingly fast or has fantastic combinations that include fakes, this stance provides great lower body protection and maximum visibility of one's opponent. It might be a more common stance for an accomplished fighter in the Hirlakte Arena as it would provide very poor protection against multiple opponents. By taking this stance, it will give the Kasi the best opportunity to assess Toraz's skill and discover if he has what it takes to get through this guard.

SuuShih  
GM, 49 posts  
Sun 27 Jun 2004  
at 22:37



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Ontéru
[edit] | [delete] | msg #47

Ritlesh finds Ontéru hiSsavrá in a small glade within the huge roof-top garden outside the College of the Immortal Combatant. Ritlesh knows that this is his master's preferred place to think through difficult problems and to lecture. Next to him is a small pitcher of water and two cups. One of Ontéru's quirks is that he drinks nothing but water swearing to its beneficial effects. His view, if only in this regard, is not widely appreciated.

Looking up from a particularly large scroll that he is holding flat with two stones, he sees Ritlesh approaching and motions him to quickly sit by him with his hands. Without preamble, Ontéru launches into the lesson. "Before you (Here, your teacher uses " you of irrepressible curiosity" that a teacher would give to a favored pupil) are a number of scrolls and old books. You'll need to study these with me." One, in particular, is a gift that Ritlesh presented to him when he was



taken on as his student: a copy of a famous Engsvanyali tome on mental ailments. Ontéru then launches into the problem at hand. "It seems that Ajay hiKhórsan, the famous scholar of antiquities and Priest Sorcerer of our Lord, is in a coma. He was in the Bednalljan depths of the tsuru'um when a cave in separated him from his expedition. Many in the group were lost and he was feared dead as well. After an earnest two-day attempt to dig him out, the area was deemed too unstable and had to be abandoned. However, he was found in the Necropolis lying atop a crypt in his current state on the same day of the cave in and long before the remains of his expedition exited. He has been here for over a week and is now wasting away. We have sent for one of the greatest telepathic talents, Tselinal (Great Wizard Priest-Sorceress) Choriggáshte hiVriddi in our Temple in Fasiltum. It's our meager hope that perhaps she can penetrate the fog before it is too late. She arrived at Shanshálo, the Golden Bough Clan House, late last night and should be here shortly."

Uncharacteristically, Ontéru appears a bit nervous. "While I will be there, I would like you to meet this Noble Lady and describe the problem to her. Come, study these scrolls with me so that you may present yourself well." This is the first time that Ritlesh's teacher has allowed him to take such an important roll. While he can certainly step in, it's speaks well of his trust that he will not be disgraced.

**Ritlesh**  
**hiVravodaya**  
player, 22 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Mon 28 Jun 2004  
at 09:03



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**Re: Ontéru** [\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #48

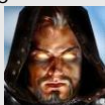
Ritlesh bows deeply. "Master, I am honored by your (the you of the seeking of the spirit" - to a learned elder scholar) confidence. I will do my utmost to fulfill this duty. He quickly produces a tablet and stylet from his satchel. "Has the learned Ajay been examined closely? Were there any indications of physical trauma? Is anything known of his history? Any previous illness that might bear on the situation? Have his companions on the expedition been interviewed? Is anything known of what he might have encountered below? What about..." Ritlesh suddenly stops, his face flushed a bit, then he scrambles to his feet and bows again, very deeply. "I crave your pardon Master, I allowed myself to become over-excited. Please tell me how you wish to proceed. Is there a text I should begin with?"

~Gah! Foolish pup!~ Ritlesh thinks, internally berating himself. ~What has the master always said? "The key to accurate diagnosis is the complete accumulation of facts." Yet you start off in 3 directions at once! Focus, fool!~

Ritlesh takes himself in hand, and attends the further instructions of his teacher. He does his best to work through scrolls efficiently and carefully.

[Private to GM: Does it seem odd to Ritlesh that a very high-ranking Vimuhla sorceress is staying at the Golden Bough clanhouse? I (George) would figure she'd be more likely to be housed in suitable apartments in the temple, or at a clanhouse more sympathetic to the Flame, but I don't know what other clans of suitable rank have houses here in Sokatis.]

**SuuShih**  
GM, 51 posts  
Mon 28 Jun 2004  
at 09:40






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**Re: Ontéru** [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #49

Ontéru smiles indulgently as Ritlesh reigns himself in. "In this case, you are correct to begin with these questions. He was in excellent health. We've confirmed this with his personal slave. While Ajay had some minor abrasions on his head, hands and knees, none were so significant that they would cause profuse bleeding. As you well know, such a wound to the head would be immediately apparent, even if only as major swelling and a bruise. No, what we have here is a mystery, one which may go unsolved without the assistance of followers of the Worm Lord unless we are successful." Here Ontéru chuckles at his jest.



	<p>[Private to Ritlesh hiVravodaya: You're quite right ... Why someone of the Sorceress' status would stay at the clanhouse instead of in the well-appointed accomodations within the Temple is unclear. You may discover that there are a number of very good reasons for this. Golden Bough has worshipers of all faiths, though stability worship is more prevalent.]</p>
<p><b>Ritlesh hiVravodaya</b>  player, 23 posts  Sweet Singers of Nakome  Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  Mon 28 Jun 2004 at 13:10</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Ontéru</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #50</p> <p>Ritlësh smiles a bit nervously in response to Ontéru's jest. There are too many exalted names being discussed for him to risk levity. "What of magical influences, Master? Do we know anything about what Ajay may have encountered? Is it possible that he has experienced some dissociation of his souls? Look, here in this section of Chirigashte's Compendium of Ailments of the Inner Being, is presented a similar phenomenon, attributed to malaise of the spirit-soul. It is slow of onset though, takes days. Hmm. Say, did how did he get in the Necropolis? Did any one see him? Were the tomb police consulted?"</p>
<p><b>Toraz hiShanuka</b>  player, 19 posts  Warrior of Vimuhla  Sweet Singers of Nakome  Mon 28 Jun 2004 at 23:25</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Kasi</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #51</p> <p>Toraz stared dumbfounded at the man. He was to fight the Kasi? He looked around bewildered, seeking sanity, yet the only on-lookers seemed either curious or apathetic. He sighed to himself. How was he to prove his skill to the Kasi? He didn't doubt that if he struck the Kasi down he'd be in a heap of trouble. Surely the Kasi must know that? And Toraz was not the kind of man to let somebody win, even a Kasi.</p> <p>Though that wasn't necessarily the problem- Toraz looked at the man, holding his blade so deftly, with the strength of an ox. He probably wouldn't beat the Kasi anyway.</p> <p>He smiled, then, holding his blade casually, its tip inclined towards the floor. If they were going to do this, he wasn't going to give anything away- adopting a stance would give away his only advantage.</p> <p>He bowed, keeping his eyes on the Kasi, then smiled again.</p> <p>Then he struck, his sword swinging low.....</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b>  GM, 52 posts  Tue 29 Jun 2004 at 00:52</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Kasi</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #52</p> <p>[Private to Toraz hiShanuka: I assume you do mean that you took a practice weapon (which kind is it?) from the rack and that is what you're attacking with? As he's holding a practice weapon, you're reasonably sure that attacking him with a live weapon would be a BAD move. Still, it's your choice. Just seeking clarification. Do you also take up a practice shield? Also, just curious ... where do you lay the beautiful gifts that you bought at considerable expense <i>FOR THE KASI?</i> In the dirt perhaps? =)]</p> <p>The Kasi watches calmly as you prepare to attack him. While it's certainly much more typical for an instructor to pair you off against someone at or a bit above your ability, there are still occasions where there's no substitute for personal experience.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b>  GM, 53 posts  Tue 29 Jun 2004 at 11:10</p>	<p><b>Re: Ontéru</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #53</p> <p>"You now know as much as I about Ajay. He was found and nobody knows how he got out. It took the healthy members of his expedition a full day to return from the depths. They were encumbered. A person running would still have required a few hours. As near as we can determine, he was found within an hour</p>

 <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p>or two of the cave in. As to maladies, that is what you and I will research to the extent possible. See that large scroll to your left, I suggest you start with that. It focuses on creatures of the tsuru'um that can affect one's mind."</p>
<p><b>Ritles</b> <b>hiVravodaya</b> player, 24 posts Sweet Singers of Nakome Scholar-Priest of Chiteng Tue 29 Jun 2004 at 15:12</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Ontéru</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #54</p> <p>Ritles does as he is bid, and pores over the scroll, taking notes as he goes. If he gets a chance, perhaps if Ontéru takes a short break, he will politely ask if Ontéru knows why Tselinal Choriggáshte is staying with Golden Bough Clan, and not in the temple. He won't interrupt the work to ask, he'll wait for an opening.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 54 posts Tue 29 Jun 2004 at 16:27</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Ontéru</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #55</p> <p>Ritles asks his question when his teacher takes a quick break for some water. Uncharacteristically, Ontéru sucks air between his teeth, considering how to respond. After a pregnant pause during which he stares at Ritles, he answers, "Your question is shrewd. You are old enough now to be trusted with a candid answer. Besides, not knowing might cause you to be harmed."</p> <p>"Tselinal Choriggáshte is ... unusually adept. Were she to have been born to a less august clan, then she probably would not have been allowed to survive to maturity or may have disappeared into some hidden OAL enclave. Her problem, privately and candidly, is not strength, but control. Except by great force of will and only now after decades of study, can she prevent herself from invading the minds of all around her. In Fasiltum, she is kept sequestered, breeding Vriddi children and handling more delicate mental maneuvers that are beyond all but, perhaps, the most powerful and knowledgeable sages. Misdirected, her abilities could be used as a terrible weapon."</p> <p>"Her clan understands her strengths and weaknesses, cherishing her. In the temple, her presence could prove an affront to those with secrets to protect. Besides, her clanhouse is more beautiful than the Governor's Palace. No accommodations at any temple could compare. I've had the pleasure of visiting Shanshálo once. The building is ... unusually old and magnificent. It sits atop the prominent eastern hill bordering the Gilreya."</p> <p>"When you meet her, she will immediately know that you know about her. I have told you this so that you will not be offended and take some inappropriate action. She will look deeply into your mind and will know things about you that you have not shared with anyone else. I can assure you that she is discrete and does not look on the fear she engenders in others as something pleasurable. She's also quite beautiful."</p>
<p><b>Ritles</b> <b>hiVravodaya</b> player, 25 posts Sweet Singers of Nakome Scholar-Priest of Chiteng Thu 1 Jul 2004 at 14:52</p>	<p><b>Re: Ontéru</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #56</p> <p>Ritles bends his head again. "Teacher, I am very grateful for your confidence. It will be a great honor to meet with the Tselinal. When will we see her? Is there time for me to dress more properly?"</p> <p>~Zurukh's prick! This woman must be a great power!~</p> <p>thought Ritles as he returned to the scroll. He had a frantic internal conversation</p>

 <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p>with himself as he gazed blankly at the text:</p> <p>~But she'll read *my* mind! See things *no one* knows!~  ~La, young priest, this is a step onto the Great Path. Have you no courage? Where is the flame in your heart?  ~But...~  ~Fa! what will she care of you, a nothing, a humble student in the First Circle? A casual glance and she will move on to Ajay.~  ~True, why should she bother to look in the back of *my* mind? I am not important!~  ~True!~  ~I'm just a lowly assistant.~  ~Yes!~  ~Right then, I can do this.~  ~But wait, she's not just a mind-reader, but a high scholar too! A powerful sorceress! I've got to be ready, what if she asks a question? Zurukh's prick! Where is that section on Marashyaluyal?~</p> <p>Ambition having won out over fear, Ritlesh awaits Ontéru's response, eager to get back to the scrolls.</p> <p>[Private to Toraz hiShanuka: So while Ritlesh is going to get his brains lightly toasted, it looks like Diruna's about to open up a can a whup-ass on poor Toraz. You play a fine rube, colleague, but surely even a jumped up caravan guard like Toraz would show a little more formality to an officer? And what about that variety of brandy I suavely invented for Toraz to buy? My brilliance is so unappreciated! &lt;grin&gt; :)]</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b>  GM, 55 posts  Fri 2 Jul 2004  at 08:16</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Ontéru</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #57</p> <p>"You're dressed adequately. She'll be here shortly. Continue your studies. When we're done here, we'll go down to see Ajay."</p>
<p><b>Toraz hiShanuka</b>  player, 20 posts  Warrior of Vimuhla  Sweet Singers of Nakome  Sat 3 Jul 2004  at 00:40</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>We who are about to die.....</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #58</p> <p>Toraz, after laying his gifts on the ground next to him, grabbed a practice sword. He examined it critically, testing its balance. It was sufficient- it wasn't perfect, a little heavy at the hilt, but it would serve its purpose. Toraz doubted he'd win, but he was eager to at least get a few blows in. Obviously the Kasi was insecure around somebody whose clan was held in such high status- he was trying to prove he was superior. Well, let him; the Kasi could make his stay very unpleasant if he felt threatened.</p> <p>Toraz watched the Kasi's eyes, looking for the moment to strike. When he sensed the Kasi was ready, he attacked.....</p> <p>[Private to SuuShih: Okay- tell me how many limbs I break :p]  [Private to Ritlesh hiVravodaya: I think he's going to hurt me! Yeah, Toraz has a superiority complex, and isn't going to 'grovel' to the Kasi. I'm sure his imminent ass-kicking by the Kasi will teach him a few manners. And you made that brandy up? Shame on you....it cost me a fortune :p]</p>
<p><b>Ritlesh hiVravodaya</b>  player, 26 posts  Sweet Singers of Nakome</p>	<p><b>Re: Ontéru</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #59</p> <p><b>SuuShih typed:</b></p> <p>"You're dressed adequately She'll be here shortly Continue your studies When</p>

Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Wed 7 Jul 2004  
at 08:23



PM | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) |  
[info](#)

we're done here, we'll go down to see Ajay."

"Very good Master. Thank you again for allowing me to serve in this way." Ritlesh does as he is told.

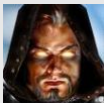
[Private to Toraz hiShanuka: Hey, the brandy I invented was cheap. It's the decorated armor stand that we both neglected to haggle over that cost you dear. :)]

[Private to SuuShih; Toraz hiShanuka:

Still waiting to see how Toraz gets treated <grin>. I think the superiority complex makes sense in the story. Caravan guarding is of only middling prestige: high-ranked clans like ours often contract the job out to lower status clans or fob the job off on clan members from low status lineages. As the son (nephew? I can't remember) of the caravan master, and a competent warrior, he was probably a relatively big fish in rather small pond; perhaps treated with more respect than his experience and skills would necessarily warrant. He wouldn't have a lot of experience with the strict hierarchies and tough discipline of a legion or war-god temple guard unit (there is a fair amount of transfer between the Imperial legions sponsored by the war-god temples, and the guard units for those temples). Most Tsolyani warriors understand discipline to some degree, but Toraz's experience is with small flexible groups, fighting defensively. The massive grinding intensity of the formal battlefield could be a whole other world to him, something he's only heard about in the tales of veterans and trainers.]

**SuuShih**

GM, 57 posts  
Thu 22 Jul 2004  
at 08:21



PM | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) |  
[info](#)

**Beaten like an ugly red-headed stepchild**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #60

The Kasi's stance looks so open that Toraz initially thinks that this is going to be easy. After launching quick snaps at the Kasi's head though, he begins to understand the deceptive nature of the stance. The fakes that he would normally employ against an opponent blinded by their own large shield won't work. The Kasi stared calmly at him, blocking each attack in a casual way. As the practice combat continued, a few of the more senior squad leaders and soldiers released from drills stopped by alternately cheering Toraz's attempts, shouting helpful suggestions (which he can't really discern in his helmet), or laughing as each attempt to hit the Kasi is frustrated. 15 minutes into this practice session, Toraz has tried every blow and combination in his repertoire many times over, is breathing heavily and is covered in sweat. He is painfully aware that as he's been squandering his energy, the Kasi has conserved his; the man only moves far enough to block a blow or make Toraz miss. The spectators are watching this with mounting humor that increases Toraz's humiliation; would these people not leave him to this drubbing in peace! Backing off a bit, Toraz launches a desperate flurry of blows in rapid succession that finally gets beyond the Kasi's guard with a moderate thunk sound. After a moment of satisfaction, Toraz gets a sort of sickening feeling as he sees the Kasi smile inside his helmet. From one of the more senior spectators, he hears the comment, "Here it comes!"

For the first time, the Kasi moves on the offensive. The best way to describe the attacks is total economy of motion. In a horrendous combination that Toraz barely sees, the Kasi hits the unprotected soft inner thigh of Toraz's lead leg hard enough that had it been a real sword, it would have shorn off that limb. It's as though all Vimuhla's holy fire was suddenly ignited in that part of his body. The Kasi's follow-up attack, executed as part of the combination, drops the point of his practice sword into the nasal of Toraz's helmet hard enough to lift the man from his feet.

The Kasi tells him, "Get up, we're not done. Are you going to curl up and die because of some pain?! Again."

	<p>Ten minutes later when the practice session finally ends, Toraz's legs, arms and buttocks are horribly bruised. He may have a mild concussion and his neck hurts. The only good thing about his heavily padded armor is that it has mostly protected his body from the blunt trauma inflicted by the Kasi's practice weapon. Toraz is ready to collapse from exhaustion and dehydration.</p> <p>Toraz is thrilled when he hears the Kasi finally say, "That's enough." Much as he did at the beginning of combat, he salutes Toraz watching critically to see if he will finally return the salute required by good manners and not a pitiful bow.</p>
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**SuuShih**  
 GM, 59 posts  
 Sat 24 Jul 2004  
 at 15:16



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Ajay** [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #61

After reading a few of the scrolls and discussing what he's learned with Ontéru, Ritlesh begins to realize that he's only scratching the surface of a deep body of research into mental maladies. The more he learns, the more he learns just how much he doesn't know. From the beginning, he has more questions than answers and they only compound. What does become clear from the particular scrolls to which he's been directed is that honing of certain telepathic abilities may make it possible to raise someone from a coma. However, this depends largely on the cause and nature of the coma.

Ontéru finally rises from creaky knees, directs two nearby slaves to gather everything and clean up, and says, "Let's go see our patient."

Together they proceed across the garden to a very large trapezoidal entrance. Within, there are a number of lecture halls. Ontéru and Ritlesh proceed past these and then down a number of gentle ramps that switch back and forth, descending into the relatively cool building interior. Religious statuary and iconography are everywhere evident. Much of the top and bottom levels of this huge building are dedicated to patients while the middle levels are dedicated to classes and work areas.

Proceeding to a favored corner room on the upper level, you pass servants and many members of the Red Sword clan. Within the room, kneeling in resplendent armor of the Legion of The Lord of Red Devastation next to his twin brother, you find the Kasi Gógma hiKhórsan. Ritlesh realizes that this is the man who he saw earlier who brought the captive for sacrifice. It says something for his piety that he asked for a prayer for his legion's success as opposed to the health of his brother.




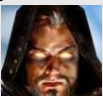
Rising smoothly, the Kasi confronts Ontéru angrily, "So priest, have you come to offer my brother up as a sacrifice or have your studies finally revealed something useful. He's dying while you putter about in your tomes!"

Ontéru breathes in patiently, much like a rock before a high wind, "Noble Kasi, all that can be done is being done. One of our greatest adepts will be here shortly. My protégé, Ritlesh hiVravodaya of The Sweet Singers of Nakome will be assisting me in the care of your brother." The Kasi favors Ritlesh with a look that speaks volumes about his frustration.

**Ritlesh**  
**hiVravodaya**  
 player, 27 posts  
 Sweet Singers of  
 Nakome  
 Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
 Sun 25 Jul 2004  
 at 13:38

**Re: Ajay** [\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #62

Ritlesh bows deeply in recognition of the Kasi's higher rank and status, and then steps back, waiting quietly. He keeps his eyes on Ontéru, awaiting instructions.

 <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 60 posts Sun 25 Jul 2004 at 14:56</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Ajay</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #63</p> <p>Ontéru says to all within hearing, "Please, would all of you step into the hall." With varying degrees of speed and enthusiasm, all within comply.</p> <p>"Now Ritlesh, perform your examination. Perhaps we've missed something." Ontéru's tone indicates that it's unlikely, but wants Ritlesh to use what skills he has. Ontéru waits outside to talk with Ajay's brother and other clan members.</p> <p>Taking the folding screen in the corner, Ritlesh expands it across the entrance. Carefully, he performs his examination. Superficially, all is as his teacher has said except for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Ajay's finger tips and lips are very red and are swollen from some kind of rash. Ajay's fingernails are very dirty.</li> <li>. When Ajay is flipped over, his entire back side is covered in a fine red rash unlike bed sores.</li> </ul> <p>Ritlesh has never seen anything quite like it.</p> <p>[Private to Ritlesh hiVravodaya: By way of examination, if you're doing anything special, please let me know.]</p>
<p><b>Ritlesh hiVravodaya</b> player, 28 posts Sweet Singers of Nakome Scholar-Priest of Chiteng Mon 26 Jul 2004 at 08:06</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Examining Ajay</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #64</p> <p>Ritlesh tries to be very thorough in his examination. He listens to the heartbeat and breathing, he moves the limbs to check muscle tone and reflexes. He very gently opens the eyes, and moves a light to look for pupil response. He pays special attention to the head and neck, checking through the hair, looking for any indications of injury there, even small ones. He's intrigued by the inflammation of the fingers, lips, and back, and wonders if they indicate some kind of poisoning. He tries not to touch the inflamed skin with his bare hands. He uses a tool to open the mouth gently, looks inside, checks the surface of the tongue and throat, smells the breath. He examines the toes to see if the rash is there as it is on the fingers, and looks over the inflamed areas of the back to see if there is any kind of pattern in the rash. Finally, when he's completed his physical exam, he quietly casts Perception of the Energies to look for any magical energies associated with the comatose priest.</p> <p>[Private to GM: I don't have my books with me, so don't recall the limits of the spell. In any case, I'm looking for residual energy from past effects he might have suffered, and any active spells or energies associated with him now.]</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 61 posts Mon 26 Jul 2004 at 11:15</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Examining Ajay</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #65</p> <p>The initial examination reveals nothing. Ajay is very weak. His pupils, though, are responsive to light. There's a large amount of mucus running from Ajay's nose. It hits Ritlesh as odd that Ajay is laying on his back. When Ritlesh opens Ajay's mouth, he sees that his lips and tongue are highly inflamed. Almost immediately, Ritlesh becomes aware that Ajay is not breathing. Soon, he starts convulsing.</p>
<p><b>Ritlesh hiVravodaya</b></p>	<p><b>Re: Examining Ajay</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #66</p>



player, 29 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Tue 27 Jul 2004  
at 07:33



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) |  
[info](#)

As soon as he realized that Ajay had stopped breathing, Ritlesh called loudly:  
"Master, help! He stopped breathing! Help!"

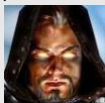
[Private to SuuShih: wow, is Ritlesh ever screwed :). Ok, Ritlesh will do more than just cry out, but I have several questions I need answers to first:  
--did Ontéru mention anything about the rash when he discussed Ajay's condition with Ritlesh?  
--does Ritlesh recognize the rash and other conditions as symptoms of any particular kind of poisoning?  
--what's your idea of what a healing spell does? Does it just mend physically damaged tissue? Or will it restart other kinds of automatic function like heartbeat, breathing?  
--Is Ontéru a sorcerer too, or just a non-magical physician?

I'm a little perplexed by the situation. From what Ritlesh has seen, some kind of poisoning seems like an obvious diagnosis, and an Alleviation spell is immediately called for, with Healing spells and/or application of healing salves to the burns/rashes. But this guy has been treated for a week by experienced healers, so that should have been taken care of already.

So right now R. would be deciding: Alleviation first, then restart the breathing and treat the convulsions? or treat the stopped breathing first? The latter could be via a Healing spell, or non-magical techniques if Healing won't work for that. Thanks. G.]

#### SuuShih

GM, 62 posts  
Tue 27 Jul 2004  
at 20:24



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) |  
[info](#)

#### Re: Examining Ajay

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #67

Ontéru and the Kasi knock over the screen in their haste to come into the room. When Ritlesh turns to look at Ajay, he is breathing normally without apparent problem, very much like nothing had happened.

Both men look to Ritlesh in confusion. Almost together, they both ask, "What's happened?!"

[Private to Ritlesh hiVravodaya: You're absolutely right about the kind of care that Ajay has been receiving. Casting alleviation would have been one of the first things they did. Still, there are many poisons that that spell does not address. The healing spell, especially at your level, only handles superficial damage. At higher level, it does more. Think of revivify as super heal. In other words, I'm playing it very much like Barker's books. As to the rash, perhaps it was an oversight on the part of your master. Perhaps he's testing you. Ontéru is also a sorcerer.]

#### Toraz hiShanuka

player, 21 posts  
Warrior of Vimuhla  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Wed 28 Jul 2004  
at 00:34



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) |  
[info](#)

#### Ow!


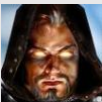
[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #68

Toraz stood staring at the Kasi, in too much pain to allow an expression to reach his face. His limbs ached, and he could feel his nose dripping slightly. He looked around- the crowd were now dispersing, giving him amused looks and laughing between themselves. Toraz felt his anger boil- by the end of the day his humiliation would be a story told in every house in the city.

He gripped his practice sword angrily, forcing a smile onto his face. He was sure the Kasi had humiliated him on purpose- not as a test of his Toraz's strength but in punishment for some injustice the Kasi seemed to have perceived.

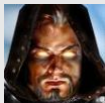
The Kasi's guard was down, and Toraz was sorely tempted to catch him unawares, with a solid blow to his neck. But he doubted the guards would let him get out alive. It would be almost worth it, just to see the smug grin wipe off his face. Almost....



	<p>There'd be time later. Toraz was hardly a violent man....but he would seek vengeance for any dishonour he or his family recieved. The Kali would wait.</p> <p>Toraz gave a very quick salute, as impudent as he could manage, and returned the wooden sword. "Thank you Kasi," he said proudly, though his breath was a little too short for his own liking. "I am humbled by such a display," he said, forcing a smile.</p>
<p><b>Ritles</b> <b>hiVravodaya</b> player, 30 posts Sweet Singers of Nakome Scholar-Priest of Chiteng Wed 28 Jul 2004 at 08:41</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Examining Ajay</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #69</p> <p><b>SuuShih typed:</b></p> <div data-bbox="475 491 1411 653" style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px;"> <p>Ontéru and the Kasi knock over the screen in their haste to come into the room. When Ritlesh turns to look at Ajay, he is breathing normally without apparent problem, very much like nothing had happened.</p> <p>Both men look to Ritlesh in confusion. Almost together, they both ask, "What's happened?!"</p> </div> <p>Ritlesh looks in astonishment at Ajay, then at the soldier and his teacher, then back to Ajay. "He... That is... He wasn't..." Ritlesh closes his mouth, takes a breath, and starts again. "I opened his mouth to examine the tongue and throat, and test the scent of his breath." With a glance at the scowling Gógma, Ritlesh realizes he'd better explain: "It's a standard part of examination. Often an illness reveals its identity when its exhalations mingle with those of the patient. It was especially called for in this case, where the lips are inflamed. I noted no particular scent on the breath, but the tongue is red and inflamed like the lips. While I had his mouth open, I realized he had stopped breathing, and then suddenly he started to convulse. That's when I called out. He stopped convulsing and resumed breathing again as you entered the room. I apologize for disturbing you unnecessarily, but given his weakness, I thought a crisis had occurred. I should report the rest of my findings..."</p> <p>Assuming Gógma or Ontéru don't interrupt, Ritlesh recounts all his other findings: the absence of trauma, pupillary response, the pattern of inflammation of the skin, weakness, mucus production. He ends noting that it seems odd that the man is resting on his back, given the inflammation there.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 63 posts Tue 3 Aug 2004 at 11:47</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Kasi</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #70</p> <p>The Kasi takes in Toraz's disrespectful bow, "You evidently don't understand." Pointing over to the side, he commands, "Stand there and watch." Sore as hell, Toraz hobbles over to where he's directed. The Kasi then turns and calls out the three unit leaders who had been chiding Toraz the most. Toraz sees them blanch, but they each get practice weapons and carefully and precisely salute the Kasi.</p> <p>Against three opponents, the Kasi immediately takes the offensive. As he does a shield pass against the first, he literally lifts him two feet off the ground with a blow to the buttocks that cracks with the force with which it is delivered. This is followed by an anguished squeal from the recipient as he falls to his knees. Had the blow been with a real weapon, his legs would have been useless with death shortly to follow. The other two shortly receive similar attention that leaves them on the ground grunting in pain.</p> <p>Addressing the 50+ soldiers now watching, he bellows, "The lesson today is that excellence is the residual result of continual creation and improvement <i>for its own sake!</i> So ends the lesson."</p> <p>The Kasi then salutes the three soldiers he just pummeled and, receiving respectful answering salutes, comes back over to Toraz. "What have you learned?"</p>

**SuuShih**

GM, 64 posts  
Mon 9 Aug 2004  
at 15:27



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Ajay**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #71

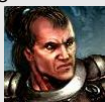
While there is some minor discoloration on Ajay's fingers and lips, it's fading so fast that Ritlesh is certain the others probably didn't see it. Since POE is active, he notices a very faint trace of extraplaner energy in use that's almost invisible except that he's looking for it. It stops at the same time that the rash completely disappears. Ajay is breathing comfortably through his mouth, snoring quietly.

Ontéru comes over to examine Ajay and sees no rash. "Ritlesh, I don't see what you're talking about."

For his part, the Kasi is highly agitated and looks ready to attack at the least provocation. He's absolutely silent watching Ritlesh and his teacher.

**Toraz hiShanuka**

player, 22 posts  
Warrior of Vimuhla  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Tue 10 Aug 2004  
at 04:53



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Re: Kasi**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #72

Toraz salutes the Kasi, his face solemn. "My apologies, Kasi," he says trying to sound sincere. "I meant no offence."

Toraz suddenly smiles. "An admirable display. The lessons I have learnt today are that practice tools hurt almost as much as their real counterparts, and that the Kasi is indeed a bully," he says, laughing to soften the words. In truth, he felt it unfair that a man who could easily take on three experienced fighters would challenge Toraz to a duel, but he kept that part to himself. "I will continue to practice, and take no shame in defeat from a superior opponent," he lies.

**Ritlesh****hiVravodaya**

player, 32 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Wed 11 Aug 2004  
at 12:23



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Re: Ajay**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #73

**SuuShih typed:**

While there is some minor discoloration on Ajay's fingers and lips, it's fading so fast that Ritlesh is certain the others probably didn't see it. Since POE is active, he notices a very faint trace of extraplaner energy in use that's almost invisible except that he's looking for it. It stops at the same time that the rash completely disappears. Ajay is breathing comfortably through his mouth, snoring quietly.

Ontéru comes over to examine Ajay and sees no rash. "Ritlesh, I don't see what you're talking about."

For his part, the Kasi is highly agitated and looks ready to attack at the least provocation. He's absolutely silent watching Ritlesh and his teacher.

Ritlesh paled, and stammered: "Mas-Master, I don't understand it. He showed all those symptoms just as I reported them." As he spoke, he moved to the side of Ajay opposite the Kasi, and gently rolled his shoulders to expose the sleeping man's back. "His entire back looked irritated and red." (If any rash remains, Ritlesh points it out, if not, he gently lowers Ajay again. Assuming this does not wake the priest, he continues). "There was a faint trace of magical energy in the room too, but it ended as the rash disappeared. I am not yet a sufficiently skilled sorcerer to detect its nature or origin." The young priest waits for instructions or other response from Ontéru. After he receives them or if the physician-sorcerer has no comment, then Ritlesh turns to the angry Kási and bows again. His face to the floor, he says. "Master of glorious war, I swear by my clan's honor that my report is true, and I have done nothing to endanger the health of your honored and pious brother. He seems to rest more easily now, and another adept will be here shortly whose skills are vastly great than my own."

**SuuShih**

GM, 66 posts

**Re: Ajay**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #74

Sat 18 Sep 2004  
at 22:46



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Ontéru casts a higher level POE making various inquisitive sounds as he gently moves Ajay about.

The Kasi ignores Ritlesh for the moment, "Master physician, what's happened?!"

Ontéru motions the Kasi and secondarily Ritlesh to come closer, "This is most puzzling. Look here both of you." Ontéru points to the body hair on the bed under Ajay. "Hair loss is common when the body is under great strain. What's odd is that the hair loss is confined to his upper back, chest and face. With certainty, your brother is weak. Hair loss could be normal. But, not like this. Your brother acts like he's been poisoned. One moment he has a raging fever and the next, nothing. My main concern Kasi is that he might have somehow inhaled or ingested mold spores in the Tsuru'um. Such spores usually kill very rapidly though." Ontéru continues his examination saying nothing more.

The Kasi turns to Ritlesh, "I don't doubt that everything happened as you say. My brother is a victim of his own limitless curiosity. He knew that something like this would happen some day. Still, if this is to be his death, then I don't believe he would have wished it to happen any other way. You and your Master please do what you can for him. I will be practicing my weapons in the yard outside if there's any change." The Kasi bow quickly and departs.

Ontéru looks at Ritlesh, "So, my noble student, any thoughts?"

Looking down, Ritlesh notices that there's fresh blood in both of Ajay's nostrils, but it's not leaking out other than in the continued congestion.

**SuuShih**

GM, 68 posts  
Mon 20 Sep 2004  
at 20:43



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**Shamtla for the Kasi**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #75

Hearing Toraz's remark, the Kasi's face goes red in rage. Those few others standing within hearing literally cringe.

"For that impudent remark, I'll have shamtla. I will accept 200 Kaitar to be here at dawn tomorrow morning. If not, you will be out of the guard and I will see your clan on this matter. Is that understood?! Now, get out of my sight!"

[Private to Ritlesh hiVravodaya; Toraz hiShanuka: Your comments, especially in this class-conscious society, made within hearing of the Kasi's subordinates, are a terrible offense. As you do not have sufficient funds to pay this shamtla, you will have to go to your clan or some other source. Though it's very uncommon, they could pay and disown you or refuse to pay meaning that you to be sold into slavery. This is almost unheard of for one of your clan.

In the Tekumel Background thread, one of the posts focuses on bribes and shamtla. Think of shamtla as being sued in a civil dispute.

To be disowned or nakome, is to be without recourse under the law. You would be beneath the lowest of the low, killable at a whim by anyone with a mind to test the edge of their weapon. Slavery is preferable to being nakome. The moral of this experience is that insults and jibes are not well accepted in this culture. Your clan is responsible for your actions.]

**Ritlesh**

**hiVravodaya**

player, 34 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Sat 25 Sep 2004

**Re: Ajay**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #76

**SuuShih typed:**

Ontéru looks at Ritlesh, "So, my noble student, any thoughts?"

Looking down, Ritlesh notices that there's fresh blood in both of Ajay's nostrils, but it's

at 18:14



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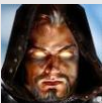
not leaking out other than in the continued congestion.

"Master, I do not recognize the symptoms. One condition or the other might be treatable, but the quick change from one set of indications to another seems very strange. Perhaps he has been inhabited by several disease demons, and they are fighting each other for him? Or, hmm, isn't there some disease that is only contracted deep in the Underworlds, or in places of the Ancients? Something called the City Sickness? I don't know anything about it, it was just listed in an compendium of hazards of the Underworld, in Jutmal the Foolhardy."

[Private to GM: if you like, it could be that Jutmal the Foolhardy is the supposed author of a long tract describing improbably heroic adventures in the Underworlds. Popular among novices, but dismissed as foolish nonsense by their teachers. Ragged copies often passed around in dormitories. Apprentices who bite off more than they can chew might be said to be "reading too much Jutmal." Later Ritlesh would probably be a bit embarrassed for having referred to it, but now he's too wrapped up in the situation to realize his gaffe...]

**SuuShih**

GM, 71 posts  
Sat 25 Sep 2004  
at 21:29



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**Re: Ajay**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #77

Ontéru looks critically at Ritlesh and say abruptly, "Now is not a time to jest. A man's life is in your hands and his clan relatives are outside where I assure you they are listening. Now look in his mouth and tell me what you see or, more precisely, what you don't! I am beginning to suspect that one of your statements might be correct, though not in the way you meant."

Taken aback by his Master's apparent anger, Ritlesh moves forward where his master is holding Ajay's mouth open. He is breathing easily through his mouth and there is nothing in it.

**Ritlesh**

**hiVravodaya**

player, 35 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Sun 26 Sep 2004  
at 14:15



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

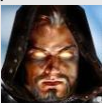
**Re: Ajay**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #78

Ritlesh, quite bewildered, reports: "Learned master scholar, I see nothing in the patient's mouth, and he seems to be breathing easily through it. Might we not see some indication if fungus had infested his breathways? Is that what you mean?"

**SuuShih**

GM, 72 posts  
Sun 26 Sep 2004  
at 20:44



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Re: Ajay**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #79

"The knowledge is like a juicy dlel waiting before your *nose* to be picked."

**Ritlesh**

**hiVravodaya**

player, 36 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Sun 26 Sep 2004

**Re: Ajay**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #80

Ritlesh reflects momentarily. "His nose? Well, there is blood there in the nostrils, where before there was only mucus. Also he has been breathing through his mouth since we arrived, so the nasal passageways must be blocked. Perhaps we might expect blood in the mouth as well as the nose? Do you think there is something in the sinuses or passageways?"

at 21:50



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The physician-in-training is hesitant, and clearly still pretty baffled.

**SuuShih**

GM, 73 posts  
Sun 26 Sep 2004  
at 22:35



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Re: Ajay**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #81

"You now ask the right questions." :)

Peering up the patient's nostrils, Ontéru then turns back to Ritlesh, "As you can see, mucus continue to flow out of his nostrils slightly tinged with blood. This new blood is an important clue given all that you saw during your first examination. If some agent is indeed at work healing him, then this blood must be fresh. Also, our patient is lying on his back and breathing without effort. With the amount of mucus we're seeing, we would normally have to place the patient with his head elevated and turned to the side so that he didn't drown. Why *is* he breathing so effortlessly given all his other symptoms?"

Ontéru tilts his head left and right repeatedly indicating momentary surrender before the problem at hand.

"We must now wait for the Tselinal. As you say, if it were a fungus, we would see some other symptoms and, as I said earlier, we would probably not have a patient to puzzle us."

Ontéru now goes to the portal and, looking to the right, appears startled. He motions to two members of the Black Hand Clan (very low clan that performs menial tasks throughout the empire) who are squatting in a corner away from everyone else. Both stand and bow obsequiously. From their faces, both are in pain and having great difficulty breathing. They're almost faint.

Ontéru addresses Ritlesh, "These men suck the mucus from congested patients here at the temple. Sometimes, it saves lives."

Turning back to the two men who are uncharacteristically silent, he commands them to open their mouths. As they stumble forward into the light, Ritlesh can see why. Their lips are red and horribly swollen as are their tongues. It's amazing that they can breathe at all.

This message was last edited by the GM at 23:24, Sun 26 Sept 2004.

**Ritlesh**

**hiVravodaya**

player, 37 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Mon 27 Sep 2004  
at 08:36



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Re: Ajay**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #82

"Master, would a simple Alleviation be applicable to these?"  
(he gestures at the mucus-drainers)

"It might help us know if the condition is contagious, or if it reflects a simple toxin's action..."

[ooc: bleck!]

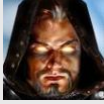
**SuuShih**

GM, 74 posts

**Re: Ajay**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #83

Mon 27 Sep 2004  
at 12:30



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[info](#)

Working closely with Ontéru, you learn that alleviation and a higher level heal cures these Black Hand clan members almost immediately. Both are fawning in their appreciation.

"Blessings upon yous noble ones ... blessings o'the wondroos Flamerlord Vimuchla! Yous blessed mighty sosras! ..." and more until Ritlesh and Ontéru disengage. Both very low clanners are uncomfortably close, though they don't touch you, and they stink.

[Private to Ritlesh hiVravodaya: Though you probably offered to use your extraplaner energy, Ontéru suggested holding it in reserve for the appearance of the Tselinal just in case you must perform for her.]

**Ritlesh  
hiVravodaya**

player, 38 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Thu 30 Sep 2004  
at 11:57



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) |  
[info](#)

**Re: Ajay**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #84

"Yes, yes, that's fine. Now go away." Ritlesh waves off the lowly ones and turns to his teacher. "Master Ontéru, perhaps the noble Ajay has some kind of parasites in his head? Should I check the surgical tools while we wait for the Tselinal?" He turns and looks speculatively at the patient and murmurs to himself: "I wonder, would Zoic Domination allow one to command a parasite to come out through a body cavity?"

**SuuShih**

GM, 77 posts  
Fri 19 Nov 2004  
at 14:38



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) |  
[info](#)

**Re: Ajay**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #85

"The problem is casting your spell upon the target. I'm afraid we must wait. I suspect though that it won't be long now."

**Ritlesh  
hiVravodaya**

player, 40 posts  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Scholar-Priest of Chiteng  
Mon 22 Nov 2004  
at 15:19

[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) |  
[info](#)

**Re: Ajay**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #86

"I hope she is here soon."

**Toraz hiShanuka**

player, 23 posts  
Warrior of Vimuhla  
Sweet Singers of  
Nakome  
Mon 4 Apr 2005  
at 23:00



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) |  
[info](#)

**Ass-Kissing**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #87

Toraz paled as the Kasi spoke- his father had always claimed that his sarcasm would get him into trouble. Genuinely sorry, and terrified about the repercussions, Toraz bowed deeply.

"Forgive my impudence, Kasi, I beg you- I mean to disrespect. Often I speak before I think, it gets me into no end of trouble. My insolence has often gotten me into many fights, and in truth it is one of the reasons my father sent me here-to learn respect and etiquette."

"Please, any punishment will seem to my father like a failure on his part, and he will deem it a major loss of honour. Please give me another chance," Toraz kept his tone respectful, though he was both angry and ashamed at his public



**SuuShih**

GM, 80 posts  
Thu 7 Apr 2005  
at 00:58



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humiliation. "If it pleases you I will give a public apology, for all to see, and place myself in your service."

Gathering his dignity again, he stood tall. "Whatever you decide, I will respect your will. Take these gifts anyway, as mark of my sincerity and respect," he said, gesturing to the packages. He brought them over tot he Kasi for his inspection.

**Re: Ass-Kissing**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #88

[Private to Toraz hiShanuka; Ritles hiVravodaya: *That was exceptional ass-kissing executed with panache. I salute you!*]

The Kasi is taken aback by Toraz's public contrition. Snapping of fingers (i.e., applause) begins in this or that part of the surrounding crowd of soldiers rising to a crescendo. The Kasi looks around with a frown and holds up his hands waving downwards to silence everyone. He then glares at Toraz considering. In a voice loud enough for everyone to hear, he says, "I will accept your gifts in the spirit in which they were given. The shamtla will be here tomorrow morning. And to show that I hold this matter closed, you will report to me here at first light for training, *before drills and your regular duties* until you have a better grasp of weapons, military discipline and etiquette. "




From many in the surrounding crowd there is laughter that turns into cheers and snapping of fingers. He then barks the command, "DISMISSED!"

As everyone departs though, he takes a step forward toward Toraz and says quietly, "Wait a moment."

Once everyone else has gone about his or her business, he says, "My initial impression of you was that you were a headstrong idiot. Your words though, indicate ... something else. I'm giving you enough rope to hang yourself. I have nobody I can assign to a special duty so you're it. This will be your shamtla. Most of the soldiers here are of too low clan and don't have it in them to speak as you just did or find their way out of a difficult situation."

Turning towards the far corner of the practice ground, he continues, "Do you see that man over there practicing in the corner?" Looking in the direction indicated, Toraz sees a man in distinctive red armor striking a pell (i.e., wooden padded practice post) with a vengeance. It's obvious that he has great skill. "*That* is the Kasi Gógma hiKhórsan of the Legion of The Lord of Red Devastation here from the war with Yan Kor (OOC: FARRRRR to the northwest!). His clan is Red Sword. The reason he's here is that Ajay hiKhórsan, his twin brother, is in a coma. Tselinal (Great Wizard Priest-Sorceress) Choriggáshte hiVriddi, from our Temple in Fasiltum, will be here shortly to try to save him. She arrived at Shanshálo, the Golden Bough Clan House, yesterday. She and her entourage have their own guards. You're to respectfully accompany her and see to any of her local needs. If you have not the resources to meet a specific need, then you're to report to me immediately. Others from other areas of our Temple here will be there and will be able to answer most of her needs. While she is here in Sokatis, you're to accompany her and do as she directs. I live there (he points to an area of the temple beyond the practice yard). You're to interrupt me at any time. There are no stupid questions. While I'm expecting you to use some personal initiative, I'm *not* expecting you to know everything or waste time. Don't hesitate to come to me. When this duty is completed, I expect a full report. You are now officially a Kuruthúni (Private). Go to the Quartermaster immediately over there (he juts his chin at a large work area) to be outfitted. I'll write your orders quickly and have them brought to you. Are you up for this?"

[Private to Toraz hiShanuka: This is open-ended duty that will require long hours, but will expose you to a level of Tsolyani society that represents some of the

	movers and shakers in the Empire.]
<b>Toraz hiShanuka</b> player, 24 posts Warrior of Vimuhla Sweet Singers of Nakome Fri 8 Apr 2005 at 00:41  <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a>	<b>Re: Ass-Kissing</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #89 <p>Toraz simply stared for a few moments, shocked at the sudden turn of events. He tried to keep the surprise off his face.</p> <p>"I would be honoured," he said eventually, with determination in his voice. "I thank you for your trust, and I will not let you down," he said. He wished he felt as confident as he sounded; Toraz was out of his depth, he felt, but at least he'd been given a chance to prove himself. He'd just narrowly avoided disgrace, so he was going to do his hardest to prove his worth.</p> <p>He stood, a little ill-at-ease, waiting to be dismissed.</p>
<b>SuuShih</b> GM, 82 posts Sat 16 Dec 2006 at 00:32  <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a>	<b>Re: Ass-Kissing</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #90 <p>A few thoughts come to Toraz. While he's not of exceptionally high clan, he's higher clan than most of the Temple Guard here and that will obviously give him opportunities to operate at a different level. Opportunities to advance or plummet may literally abound. Inwardly, he cringes at his poor knowledge of etiquette. Offending someone of the Golden Bough clan could destroy his own clan! This is something he feels that he absolutely must not do. More than trust, the Kasi has placed him in a horrible position where any future failure will be compounded. Blood literally drains from his face as the nature of this predicament becomes suddenly clear. This could be a fiendish trap!</p> <p>Dismissing Toraz, the Kasi strides quickly away and lightly jumps up to his platform and desk. There, slaves move forward quickly to take his helmet and gauntlets, then to wipe his brow of sweat.</p> <p>Focused on the task at hand, Toraz resolutely moves over to the Quartermaster where he receives his gear. Given his immediate duty, the gear provided is made to fit well. It's considerably cooler and finer than what he had been wearing, though it has an odd musty smell. The armorer working with the Quartermaster grumbles a bit about working this hard for a mere Changadésa until you thank him for the excellent job with a couple of silver Hlash. The Quartermaster then points to an unoccupied corner where Toraz can place his old equipment.</p> <p>While being outfitted, your orders arrive stamped with the Kasi's seal. Toraz hurries to the front gate where he first entered to await the members of the Golden Bough. The orders tersely state, "Changadésa Toraz hiShanuka is hereby ordered to provide escort to the Tselinal Choriggáshte hiVriddi of the Golden Bough Clan and her entourage. Initial destination is the room of Ajay hiKhórsan in the Pavilion of Supernal Healing, 4th level."</p> <p>[Private to Toraz hiShanuka: There are three large temple gates. While it's likely that you'll see the palanquins as they approach, do you say anything to anyone at the gates so that they know your orders?]</p>
<b>SuuShih</b> GM, 83 posts Sat 16 Dec 2006 at 13:09  <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a>	<b>The nose knows</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #91 <p>The world disappears for Ritlesh ...</p> <p>An infinite number of dots of light spanning deeply into the infrared, ultraviolet, and all spectrums in between swim in the sudden darkness. Straining to make sense of what you're seeing, you suddenly realize that the dots are Master Ontéru's face, oddly three dimensional, like a strata drawing in super-thin layers. You're looking up at his face as though he's leaning over you.</p>

	<p>Suddenly, the view shifts and you sense a gray barrier restraining a terror held in check for uncounted eons. You know somehow that you're seeing the future. An odd chiming fills your ears until it is maddeningly loud and the smell of cloying cinnamon assails your senses. Merciless inhuman black shiny orbs try to burn into your mind.</p> <p>You wake swaying on your feet, as though from a dream, yelling the words, "Help us!"</p> <p>Ontéru jerks up from where he's leaning over Ajay inspecting his nasal passages.</p> <p>"What's wrong?" he says to you with great concern.</p>
<p><b>Ritles</b> <b>hiVravodaya</b> player, 41 posts Sweet Singers of Nakome Scholar-Priest of Chiteng Mon 1 Jan 2007 at 10:18 <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: The nose knows</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #92</p> <p><b>SuuShih typed:</b></p> <p>"What's wrong?" he says to you with great concern.</p> <p>"A vision...Master...something came into my mind. First I saw lights, that became your face, then something else..." Ritles does his best to describe what he saw. With others he might be more reticent, but he trusts Ontéru, and is frightened by the experience he just had. Concentrating on a detailed description helps him regain his composure.</p> <p>"Learned One, could my vision have come from Ajay? the first part of it was looking up at your face, just as he would have seen you while you examined him. Oh, and surely the chiming and the scent must mean the Ssu are involved? Perhaps the noble scholar encountered Ssu in the tsuru'um, and they affected his mind?"</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 85 posts Tue 2 Jan 2007 at 19:21  <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: The nose knows</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #93</p> <p>Ontéru's eyebrows furrow, then he casts a longish spell well beyond anything you've seen him cast before. His eyes take on a disquieting inhuman quality as he closely examines you then your patient. Rhetorically, he says, "It's odd. Some agency is at work here ... elusive ... hidden? ... we must wait. Yes, we must wait."</p> <p>He pats your shoulder comfortingly, but with an intense stare and frown that seems to suggest that silence may be called for. While the two of you can talk, he chooses not to share what he cast or any conclusions.</p>
<p><b>Ritles</b> <b>hiVravodaya</b> player, 42 posts Sweet Singers of Nakome Scholar-Priest of Chiteng Tue 2 Jan 2007 at 20:42  <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Waiting for the Vriddi</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #94</p> <p>Ritles is worried, but keeps silent, waiting for the arrival of the mind-reading priestess.</p> <p>[Private to GM: That was a very fine Tekumelani solution that the Kasi employed. Faced with an insubordinate young bumpkin of high clan, he promoted him to his (likely) doom. If Toraz blunders, he's disgraced and no longer Diruna's problem. In the unlikely event he succeeds, there's a good chance he'll be required elsewhere, also no longer Diruna's problem. Heh.]</p>

**SuuShih**

GM, 8 posts  
Wed 21 Jan 2004  
at 16:58



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## Chapter 1 - Transition

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #1

Sweat flew off Epengar's sopping hair, shirt and pants as he bounced with considerable force off the wall of the Quan'ja (OOC: martial arts school). It was only then that the pain erupted from his right cheek where he had been kicked with blinding speed. Silently, he chided himself angrily to never again duck forward as Master Hakái hiSayúncha, his teacher, had repeatedly tried to impress upon him.

"Had I not pulled my blow at the last moment, you would not be getting up! You will perhaps remember next time," his teacher stated critically. "You will not disgrace me on your first mission!"

As the import of what his Master had just said sunk in, Epengar virtually flew to his feet. He couldn't help the huge smile. Finally, his Master thought him prepared to represent his clan. His imagination took flight as he wondered whether he would be asked to fell some mighty General at the heart of his army without leaving any trace. Perhaps some ancient evil sorcerer would meet his fate by his hand.

"Go bathe quickly and return," Master Hakái commanded. "We will eat together and talk."

Never before had his austere teacher honored him with this request. Epengar rushed off to quickly comply.

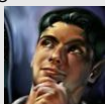
Now bathed and dressed in garb appropriate to his disguise, he approached the Quan'ja and was surprised to hear voices in quiet conversation within. Clapping the two pieces of wood outside the closed door, he was directed from within to enter. Inside, next to his Master at a small table in the middle of the floor was an old man in dark robes. Something about this man and the deference being paid him by his teacher immediately heightened the uniqueness of this occasion.

"Epengar hiDaishuna," said his Master, "I have the honor of introducing Clan Master Gutíshmu." The tired eyes of the Clan Master resting on Epengar let him know that here before him was a heartless killer. Despite his age, he could see muscles like tight cord play beneath the old man's robes.

**Epengar**

**hiDaishuna**

player, 2 posts  
Amber Cloak Clan  
Merchant  
Follower of Thumis  
Thu 22 Jan 2004  
at 17:15



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Re: Transition**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #2

Epengar bows in greeting to Clan Master Gutishmu, with all the respect and caution that the man is warranted. His eyes only leave the man when he turns to greet his own gracious master.

The exuberance welling up inside him is forced to comply and submit to the rock solid façade he is trying to master on the exterior. His mind a flurry of questions, racing through all the possible missions that one of Gutishmu's character could ask of his master, or, of him! He will stand and wait patiently, until he is bade to do otherwise, trying with all his might not to lend any readable sign about himself, as he has been trained, not even the twitch of a finger he reminds himself. "Be a rock, be a rock, be a rock..."




**SuuShih**

GM, 10 posts  
Thu 22 Jan 2004  
at 22:54

**Re: Transition**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #3

In a loud expressive voice, Clan Master Gutíshmu commands, "Epengar

 <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p>hiDaishuna, stand before us and remove your clothing placing them on the ground to your right."</p> <p>Knowing that this is the ritual of Shatii during which many aspirants die, Epengar moves forward and consciously does not close the sliding panel as he normally would. Quickly he complies <i>exactly</i> with the Clan Master's directions removing his clothing and placing them in a pile at his side.</p> <p>"Kneel aspirant!"</p> <p>Epengar does so, conscious of movement behind him. A leather bag is quickly placed over his head and cinched closed around his neck. At the same time, he hears the unmistakable sound of a blade being drawn.</p> <p>This message was last edited by the GM at 20:14, Sat 15 May 2004.</p>
<p><b>Epengar</b> <b>hiDaishuna</b> player, 3 posts Amber Cloak Clan Merchant Follower of Thumis Fri 23 Jan 2004 at 14:42</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #4</p> <hr/> <p>Concentrating on how long it takes for the blade to free itself of its sheath, so as to judge the size and form of the weapon, Epengar then closes his eyes, breaths slowly and calmly and focuses on the sounds and the air around him. His feet positioned under him for quick movement, his ears peaked to try and feel out the slightest sound and its direction, he tries to clear his mind and picture the room and where everything was before the darkness. He focuses on the sounds and places them in their appropriate location in the room and tries to establish a plan of evasion and attack if need be. He places the table in his mind, a possible defensive implement as well as a weapon. He pays close attention to the feel of his skin as well, searching for differences in temperature and the slightest movement of air. His mind searching for the airflow from the open door and whether it is being interrupted and diverted. He listens for the blade...</p> <p>This message was last edited by the GM at 23:26, Sun 25 Jan 2004.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 13 posts Sat 15 May 2004 at 20:39</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #5</p> <hr/> <p>Clan Master Gutishmu's voice erupts from inches before Epengar's face, "Shatii!"</p> <p>"It is an ancient word meaning The Severing. Tonight, you will be severed from your former life. If you fail this test, you will die, severed like an infected finger before that infection can spread to kill the body. If you live, then you leave forever the white rope of an aspirant."</p> <p>"Come now."</p> <p>Hands with rock-hard caluses grasp Epengar on his biceps. The hands to your left you believe to be female while those on your right are male.</p> <p>In a few moments, you hear something being pried up before you. The distinctive smells of the tsuru'um assail your nostrils soon followed by the sound and smell of torches all around you being lit. Clearly, there are more than four people here.</p>
<p><b>Epengar</b> <b>hiDaishuna</b> player, 5 posts Amber Cloak Clan Merchant Follower of Thumis</p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #6</p> <hr/> <p>Epengar gathers his wits as best he can and tries hard to evaluate the situation. He will move along where guided with quiet restraint, not struggling or resisting to the point of disrespect or consternation yet he will make those who escort him</p>

Tue 18 May 2004  
at 16:55



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work a little for their prize. Slowing a bit on his left side and then his right to judge the strength of his porters. He also tries to judge their height in relation to his own. The female should be shorter, but by how much? The size of the male could be varied; he tries to touch shoulders with each to gauge where they stand and to get the angle of their elbows. From this he will determine the likelihood of escape if he is to make a move.

Through this he is also cognizant that there is a naked blade hovering about and part of his estimations on his escorts is to determine how safe his head is. If the blade were to swing, would there be possible intermediate objects he could use, or is he simply a clean shot?

Counting the steps he is taking in measured paces, he will try and log the information away in a map within his mind. Turns and scents are also duly logged, to be replayed in reverse order should he find his way coming back in this direction.

As the unmistakable Tsuru'um odors enter into this event he focuses even harder. To be lost here is to truly be lost forever, and that will not due. He listens hard to determine the number of torches being lit and if there were any before that, which would signify others waiting on the other side of the doorway. He tries hard to listen to the gates and patterns of those walking with him to determine their number and their size. Jingling items or soft covered weapons; groans of bored or complacent participants, or the shuffle of lazy walkers. All the while, still counting and logging away ground texture and the the subtleties of the air against his skin.

As his hands are not bound he will assume that he is simply being guided to where his trial shall begin, but he will not ease off on his preparing for any new obstacle. He rubs his head around inside the bag a bit to find its seam for future reference and to judge its strength.

**SuuShih**

GM, 16 posts  
Wed 19 May 2004  
at 13:55



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**Re: Transition**

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You're wearing a closely-knit gudru cloth sack that barely allows you to breathe. From the sound of the torches and others moving around you, there are at least four others. While you're not being manhandled, the people holding your arms consciously do not allow you to bump into them. You're also reasonably sure that the person holding the sword at your back is your teacher, so in tune are you with the "way" he moves. While your hands are not tied, there is little chance that you could get the bag off your head quickly; it's cinched at the neck.

The lack of spoken words is a bit unnerving, but so far you've managed to restrain your urge to talk and nobody has corrected this. As part of your training, you have learned a secret language called Rosham that is executed mostly with the hands. Perhaps they're using this.

As significant as Shatîi is, your current hyper-awareness focuses on the uniqueness of today's training. Clearly, today must have been planned for some time. You recall that your teacher opened with the fundamental tenet of your clan drilled into every aspirant from a very young age. In fact, it's so fundamental that you literally had not heard it mentioned in the more advanced training you've received over the past eight years. "Q. Why do we exist? A. To serve." You also recall him mentioning another such tenet: "Be obedient to the purpose, not the method." These thoughts crystallize for you during your journey.

After climbing down 100 steps, you reach a flat area. You hear a torch wave. Behind you, you hear a resounding thud as the portal is closed. A breeze that you had been feeling on your chest and arms correspondingly stops.



The sandstone that you're walking on is rutted and obviously quite old. Your feet are bare, so you detect the hint of cool moisture in the rock.

As you move forward, it becomes immediately apparent that you're in a very complex maze. With every step, you know you're moving downward. While you soon lose the exact number of twists and turns overall, your attention has allowed you to detect a very complex repeating pattern to the turns based on the first 5 Fibonacci number (0, 1, 1, 2, 3). These numbers are significant from various perspectives, but in this case, they establish a pattern of open, left, right, left, left, right, right, right. What precisely is being opened is a bit unclear. The lengths of the various straight distances are sometimes short and sometimes long without apparent pattern. After five such patterns though (i.e., the next Fibonacci number), some portal is opened that requires that you crawl through about 20' of rock on your hands and knees. Everyone enters and, with much grinding, the portal is closed.

From the acoustics, you're now in a small room. You can hear water moving swiftly in front of you. It's very difficult to hear anything else in this room. In addition to a smell of mold, there is a pervasive burning smell here.

Epengar feels hands loosening the hood and yanking it off. Gutishmu stands before you. Around you are seven other senior clan members, all highly revered. Each has taught you at various stages. You would hate to face any one of them in combat. In their hands, four carry short spears and three, including your current teacher, bear swords. The blade part of these weapons is steel and, in all cases, glowing.

The small sandstone room you're now in is extremely old. Even though it's closed, the place where the portal is located is obvious from the wear and tear on the rock. However, it's not at all apparent how it might be opened. The walls are without apparent adornment other than one wall that has 10 shelves carved into it. On each shelf are 10 plain funerary jars that are clearly ancient. Some of these have literally worn down where they have been handled over the millennia. The bottom three feet of wall on all sides is wet, as though this room floods regularly.

In the wall opposite the wall with the jars is a small 2'x3' opening into another room.

In the middle of the floor is a 3' wide round opening. Approximately 5' down, you see in the glare of the torchlight moving water. Master Gutishmu goes to the jar on the bottom right, removes it from the shelf and passes it to you. It's quite heavy.

"Open it," he commands. "These are the relics of our brothers and sisters in our clan. You have not seen these before, so you do not know that almost half of these jars are empty. The bodies were lost. We place these jars here to honor their memory."

"Almost all of these individuals were killed by other men. They died in combat, or they were murdered, or they were executed. This is what an Assassin can expect - you are asking to be killed. And yet you want to be an Assassin. You are a fool!"

Gutishmu's statements have a ritual sound to them. While he says these things, the other 7 have gathered around the well

"Empty the urn in your hands into the water that our clan may serve the animals

therein. Those animals will be consumed in turn until, one day, our clan cousin's body will once again serve the people. To be an Assassin is to serve. "

Everyone watches silently and you pour powder and bits of bone into the water.

"Find peace in Teretane."

Pointing at the small opening, Gutishmu continues. "Go into that room. In there you will find a bucket, brush, hammer and broom. In the pit there, you will find the burned remains of a recently killed brother. His name no longer matters. Break his bones to powder. Gather those and the ashes of his body in that urn. Bring the urn, bucket and brush."

You must crawl to get into the room that you're directed to. Accompanying you is your teacher. There, on a slightly concave ceramic slab is the bloody dead body of an Assassin. An arrow pierces his eye. It looks like his body was also hacked a few times with a large sword. You knew him. His name was Aisen, a very accomplished clan cousin who had a great sense of humor. He entered Shatii two years ago and, as is typically the case, was sent elsewhere. It is unusual for an Assassin to stay in the city where he originally trained.

The deadly look in your teacher's eyes lets you know that this is part of the test.

**Epengar**  
**hiDaishuna**  
 player, 6 posts  
 Amber Cloak Clan  
 Merchant  
 Follower of Thumis  
 Mon 24 May 2004  
 at 16:19



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**Re: Transition** [\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #8

Epengar glances at the body, his mind feels nothing for his fallen clan cousin save that in the end he too will most likely be a test for another aspirant. Such is the way for an assassin who has out lived his usefulness or become complacent. He glances around the room as well, never actually taking his eyes off of his mentor or the body, but looks for markings on the walls as indications of something more that what meets the eye. Scrape marks from objects or weapons, holes or slots from which items may protrude. The ceiling is high, low, vented? His mind spins with the multitude of possibilities that present themselves. Is the body itself covering anything, such as a drain or impression?

Epengar retrieves the hammer, the bucket and the rest of the tools and moves towards the head of his slain cousin. He is careful where he steps but careful to not dally in his actions, his task is clear and the tools are present. Is his cousin undead? There is a slight pause when he contemplates that, and during this few seconds he never takes his peripheral vision off his master.

He places the objects on the floor just next to the alter and contemplates the situation present. This body is not burned, yet he was expressly told to pulverize the burned body in the next room. Touching the top of the alter, he is interested that his had feels no resistance and contemplates this strange surface and its purpose. At this point he notices the strange flat spot at the foot of his fallen cousin. It is odd and interesting and he looks at it for a moment.

He glances quickly back at his master to see if he is giving off any hints or signs about this room. He studies quickly the body stance and look of the man as well as his hand positioning and the direction his feet are facing. Noting this he looks more intently at the walls around the alter. Why are there no burn marks or discolorations on this sandstone if bodies are burned here? Two possible answers, bodies are not burned in this area, or the heat of the flame is so intense that all is consumed rapidly and without the possibility of the body oils to float to the walls.

He makes a quick search for any inlets from which flame could enter, just to be sure. Since his master is still with him, he feels that this room would not become completely involved with flame or why would he still remain? His life is far too

valuable to waste on the trial of an aspirant.

Returning to the odd flat part at the foot of his cousin, he feels that this must be the key. In some fashion pressing it or placing something on it will begin a process. He pushes the body very slightly and feels how easily it moves on its bed. He looks around the outside of the alter for a spout that he would need to put the bucket under, if there is none he will do nothing save continue, if yes then he will place the bucket under the spout. He then puts his hands towards the flat, odd surface keeping an eye on his master in peripheral as he focuses on the trigger. He pauses, and looks around the room for a rock or other object, seeing none, he continues until his left hand is pressing lightly on the that spot. Trying to push harder will obviously result in his hand sliding across the surface so he feels around for a possible trigger. Noticing that the surface lights up as his finger touches it, he pauses and then touches it again. Noting that it remains lit for as long as he presses his finger there.

He then goes to the head of the alter, the opposite side, and, placing his hands on the shoulders of his dead clan cousin, lightly pushes him until his heels are touching the pad. He then stops and listens and watches for the light or any other movement, including his masters, that is present in the room.

**SuuShih**  
GM, 21 posts  
Wed 26 May 2004  
at 16:58



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#### Re: Transition

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There is no place where the bucket obviously goes. The surface of the platform is literally frictionless, which you discover when you press a bit too hard on the corpse's shoulders resulting in a quick grab at dried bloody cloth before the body slides off the base; yes, the body is still clothed. That surface is also made of very shiny metal somehow secured to an odd base that looks like seamless jade. While the body initially slides around a bit, it always seems to finally settle exactly in the middle of the platform. No drain or other holes are apparent in the platform, which comes up to waist high. In the ceiling, there is a small hole approximately 6" in diameter. A gentle breeze can be felt blowing out of this room into the other, not upwards. The air must be entering from the hole above.

The plate at the end of the platform is 6" square and is composed of some translucent white substance. When your finger touches this surface, red light appears beneath it, remaining lit for approximately 15 seconds wherever you touch before going out. Therefore, you could draw a line of light that would last briefly.

Pushing the body around on the pedestal has no apparent effect. Throughout your examination of the room and its contents, your teacher watched very much like a statue. However, he now seems to be becoming a bit more tense. You have reached the crux of this test.

**Epengar  
hiDaishuna**  
player, 7 posts  
Amber Cloak Clan  
Merchant  
Follower of Thumis  
Thu 27 May 2004  
at 16:35



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#### Re: Transition



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Because my brain is frazzled at the moment with all the things going on at work, I'll offer you two solutions based on the two possible ways that I just read this post of yours.

With care for his masters patience, Epengar acts quickly, but not hastily nor clumsily, for that would be a mistake or death. He tries hard to remember his masters hands, and those who taught him before. Surly they must have faced this trial themselves, what marks have been left on their bodies that would give him a clue of this trials toll.

One:

Epengar touches the pad again and draws the pattern of a flame with his finger

	<p>and stands back. If nothing he will try again, tapping the pad with the Rosham word and after that he will use symbols he is aware of that would be used for flame or burn or consume, including those used by the flame lords followers. If these don't work, he will try putting his whole hand on the pad and holding it there, perhaps there is something about this pad that needs human, prolonged interaction.</p> <p>He is expecting one of several things to happen. Flames from the hole in the ceiling to cook his cousin, the alter to either heat up or flame up to consume him, or the table top to tip and slid his cousin into a burning pit of sorts.</p> <p>Two: Though less likely. Epengar touches the pad with his finger and then quickly, without lifting his finger, traces a line around the body of his dead clan cousin and back to the pad. Speed is of the essence here as to complete this task before the red fades away.</p> <p>One is the one that he will do first, if noting happens he will try option two. I'm not sure if only the pad lights up or if the red extends beyond the pad and he is thinking and moving as quickly as he can as not to drag this out or upset his master. It should only take him a few seconds to do these things even if his handler is taking days to post it!</p> <p>Aarrrrrrggg! (Bouncing my head off my desk to clear up some thinking room)</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 22 posts Thu 27 May 2004 at 17:12</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #11</p> <p>Though your teacher has many scars, he doesn't look like he was ever excessively scared from burns.</p> <p>The symbols for flame, burn and then consume are drawn approximating those in Rosham, but nothing happens. Unfortunately, on the plate in two dimensions, they look nothing like what they describe. You next try drawing the same symbols in two dimensions as though you were looking at someone executing Rosham, but still nothing happens. Symbols for Vimuhla are similarly unsuccessful. You then try tracing a line around the entire pedestal and are unsurprised when nothing happens.</p> <p>At your attempts, your teacher looks on with mounting interest, his patience almost exhausted.</p> <p>[Private to Epengar hiDaishuna: Hint: While it's likely that one or more symbols are the key, the odds of your guessing what you need is almost non-existent.]</p>
<p><b>Epengar hiDaishuna</b> player, 8 posts Amber Cloak Clan Merchant Follower of Thumis Fri 28 May 2004 at 14:40</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #12</p> <p>Epengar having exhausted most of what is available to him in physical and mental motions looks to his mentor with an expression of thoughtfulness. Running the third dimension through his head but not exactly knowing how he could construct such a drawing on this medium he turns toward the silent man standing in the room with him. Humbling himself only in attitude and posture, not in readiness or attention to the surroundings, he motions to his master.</p> <p>"Noble and most learned master," he starts in the Rosham hand signing. "I am afraid that I lack the knowledge to bring forth the flame. Or if I have the knowledge, I am unaware of how to use it with this situation. Is there any assistance that you can offer? Some guidance to help me in my task?"</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 23 posts Fri 28 May 2004 at 15:30</p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #13</p> <p>See Epengar's question, Master Hakái exhales and some of his tension leaves him. It's a bit surprising when his voice booms out in response.</p>

 <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p>"Aspirant, are you an island facing the storm alone? You are not. You must recognize that to serve best, you must leverage all of the resources available to you in order to succeed. <b><i>This</i></b> is the way of the assassin. An assassin who refuses to heed this wisdom is dead and useless, a danger to us all!"</p> <p>"Draw in the middle of the plate a large circle. At its center draw another smaller circle."</p> <p>With that, Master Hakái leaves the room.</p>
<p><b>Epengar</b> <b>hiDaishuna</b> player, 9 posts Amber Cloak Clan Merchant Follower of Thumis Sat 29 May 2004 at 14:44</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #14</p> <p>Epengar offers his mentor a motion of gratitude and understanding, he feels the message sink in as so many lessons have in the past and find it's place amongst the notable reassesses of his mind.</p> <p>Even as his master is leaving he quickly gathers the tools that he had moved and returns them to the place he first found them. He then surreptitiously looks through the opening where his master has gone to see if the others are still waiting. He will try and make some judgments as to where he needs to go once he has called the flames. He also looks quickly at the wall of the smaller passage way to see if they hold any signs of being touched by flame, and then he will hurry to the foot of the alter and stand before the pad again.</p> <p>Uttering a small prayer he points a finger towards the pad and then commits to his task. Pressing his finger down on the far edge of the pad, he sees the <b>red</b> rise up under it and then draws a circle. Upon its completion he quickly repeats the process within the first circle, creating a second circle within the boundaries of the first. He then pulls back and listens and watches to determine his next course of action.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 24 posts Sat 29 May 2004 at 18:59</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #15</p> <p>You see the other masters meditating in the next room around the hole in the floor.</p> <p>From the pedestal, you hear a series of chimes that rise and fall without apparent pattern. On the pedestal plate, something different than you've seen before happens. The area between the two circles fills with red light so that you have the effect of a large red circle with a small white circle inside, a symbol you've never seen before. A shimmering begins over the body becoming gradually more intense. Suddenly, it's as though the entire body is dessicated and torn to bits at the cellular level. In a period of five seconds it balloons out grotesquely and then explodes into a red haze that is contained completely within the shimmering. The destruction within continues. This haze suddenly settles as you catch yourself before being pulled within the shimmering area. The entire process is basically complete within 30 seconds. At the end of this period, you hear more chiming. The shimmering then stops and a wave of steam and smoke arises to quickly drift into the other room where it is sucked down the hole in the floor.</p> <p>On the metal pedestal now is a smoking charred skeleton with most of the major bones cracked or broken. All of the soft tissue is now powder that is accumulating in a line moving towards the corner of the pedestal next to the plate. If it continues this course, it will be trivial to collect it directly into the urn.</p>
<p><b>Epengar</b> <b>hiDaishuna</b> player, 10 posts Amber Cloak Clan</p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #16</p> <p>Still in a bit of a daze from what he has just witnessed, Epengar quickly picks up the bucket with the urn, brush and hammer within and the broom and rushes to</p>

Merchant  
Follower of Thumis  
Mon 31 May 2004  
at 20:44



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the area where the powder is moving. His desire is to collect it all as requested of him. Placing the bucket and broom down by where he stands, he uses the brush to coax the ash into the urn, trying hard not to let any slip away. He will assume that since the ash is all traveling in a particular direction that there is a place for the urn to be positioned for gathering the ash. If not he will do his best.

Once he has completed this task he will collect the bones into the bucket. If it is possible, he will break as much of the bone as possible with his hands before using the hammer and bucket as a mortar and pestle. If all goes well, and there are no interruptions nor problematic situations, he will finish his task by pouring the crushed bone into the urn and gathering up the materials, he will leave the broom and hammer in the room by the door and only bring the urn, bucket and brush back as requested and return to the room where the others stand waiting.

Once back in the room with the others, he will stand, holding the urn and wait for instructions.

**SuuShih**

GM, 25 posts  
Mon 31 May 2004  
at 23:36



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Re: Transition**

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As you handle the ash and bone, you become aware of an almost burning heat from your waist up. Your eyes begin tearing horribly. You can almost feel your eyelids swelling along with your eyes. Your brown skin, used to the intense Tekumel sun, is distinctly pink and getting redder by the moment. Discomfort turns to ever mounting pain. Blood begins trickling from both your nostrils.

You have gathered the ash, but the bones have yet to be gathered and broken, or broken and gathered. The bones, while cracked, are not easily broken with your hands; it will be necessary to use the hammer.

**Epengar**

**hiDaishuna**

player, 11 posts  
Amber Cloak Clan  
Merchant  
Follower of Thumis  
Tue 1 Jun 2004  
at 13:20



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**Re: Transition**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #18

OOC- [okay, if it got so bad that my skin was burning and the pain became grand enough to have blood come out of my nose, I think I would have stopped and used the broom to sweep the bones off the alter. In fact, I would have reevaluated my actions the moment that I felt the heat. Epengar would have only continued to collect the ash if it would have been lost if he stopped. The bone could continue to bake for all he cares. The more it bakes the easier to crush it.

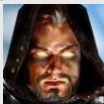
My post was sent as one that was the entire act, from start to finish, one that can be halted and altered at any point. If you prefer, a total GM call, and one that varies from GM to GM, I can post in smaller increments more directly to exactly what I am doing. If we are posting every day, even several times a day, then perhaps that would work. In my game, for example, I have encouraged players to post a bit broader, as they post less frequently and that allows me to take what I need to the point that I need it and allows them to change the rest. ]

IC

Epengar sits back on the floor on the opposite side of the room from the alter. He wants to get as far away from the heat as possible, he checks himself out for injury and admonishes himself for not being more careful. Once his skin has cooled a bit and he has wiped the blood from his face he will return to the alter with the broom and bucket. Perhaps there is a way to turn the heat off as well. He holds his hand over the pad to check for heat there.

**SuuShih**

GM, 26 posts  
Tue 1 Jun 2004  
at 13:45






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**Re: Transition**




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The "heat" has come on more as the sensation of having been burned as opposed to the sensation of being burned. While the bones are initially hot, they are not still heating. The metal top is quite cool. Getting on the floor away from the table has no effect on the sensation. To your point though, as this pain increases, you use the brush to hasten the gathering process otherwise the ash and skeleton will end up on the floor. Carefully, you put down the urn and, as rapidly as



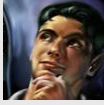
<p><a href="#">info</a></p>	<p>possible, break up the bones sufficiently to place them in the urn as well. With the urn full, you still have quite a large amount of bone in the bucket. The pain is increasing.</p> <p>[Private to Epengar hiDaishuna: Heya :) The pace is just fine. You've been exposed to radiation that, at the time was not painful, but you're definitely feeling it now. What you're now wondering is whether this is a malfunction or part of the test. =)]</p>
<p><b>Epengar hiDaishuna</b>  player, 12 posts  Amber Cloak Clan Merchant  Follower of Thumis  Thu 3 Jun 2004 at 16:06</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #20</p> <p>Epengar's mind is clear and concise. He will endure the frowns and consequences of his actions, but he will no longer remain in this room! Possibly dead either way, he choose death by his mentors that an unknown source.</p> <p>Taking the urn, bucket and brush, along with the hammer if he needs to pound away some more, Epengar slips quickly into the narrow passage between the two rooms, and move hastily to the other side but not before dropping the hammer about half way through. Once there, he will place the urn on the ground next to the bucket and remain on his knees with his eyes fixed on the urn in submission to those in the room. He will, however, remain alert to their actions and weapon and wait to be spoken to for only a few moments out of respect before he alerts those present of what might be a dangerous situation.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b>  GM, 29 posts  Sun 6 Jun 2004 at 22:06</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #21</p> <p>Virtually blind and now in horrible pain, you crawl through to the main room where hands relieve you of the bucket and urn. You recognize the Clan Master's voice in front of you, "Pain is the coin and payment of an assassin. You truly are a fool to want this!"</p> <p>The pain you're feeling becomes more and more intense. It feels like your skin is literally erupting in places. Somehow, you endure this though you gasp to breath through it all. Sweat soaks your brow.</p> <p>You hear and barely see the bucket being emptied into the water, then suffer through the sound of jars being slowly shifted one place over to make room for the jar you just filled on the top shelf.</p> <p>"Stand aspirant assassin," you are commanded. Hands grasp your elbows to lead you forward and around the hole in the floor. The sound of moving water below is somehow clearer. You are lead to a metal ring that you had seen, but paid no attention to and are directed to lift the slab to which it is attached. Grunting and straining, you are unable to do so. Others come forward to apply crowbars and together, you raise some kind of slab in the floor. Eyes swollen shut, Epengar clearly smells mildew from the hole before him.</p> <p>"Climb in," orders the Clan Master.</p>
<p><b>Epengar hiDaishuna</b>  player, 13 posts  Amber Cloak Clan Merchant  Follower of Thumis  Fri 11 Jun 2004 at 15:38</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>  </p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #22</p> <p>Epengar, having little to lose at this point, feels around for a lip or an edge and moves forward. He will try his utmost to comply as quickly as possible and slid, crawl, stumble or fall into what ever he is being commanded to. He will, of course, try to keep from becoming any more hurt, if he can at this point, and listen carefully for the words from his master.</p>

<a href="#">info</a>	
<div data-bbox="175 226 440 430"> <b>SuuShih</b>            GM, 41 posts            Sun 20 Jun 2004            at 16:03         </div> <div data-bbox="259 331 362 430">  </div> <div data-bbox="196 430 440 489"> <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a> </div>	<div data-bbox="440 226 1443 275"> <b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #23         </div> <div data-bbox="440 275 1443 1528"> <p>Climbing in as instructed, Epengar slips a bit on the slimy wet mold covering the sides and bottom. Goose-bumps cover his body as he lays down. Luckily, he's not too tall as the coffin-like stone box is a bit longer than he is tall. Epengar feels various cracks and holes in the sides and bottom as well.</p> <p>From above the Clan Master tells him, "You must stay in that box until I come for you. You may believe you will die if you stay in the box, but know that you will die if you get out. Believe nothing else."</p> <p>Blind and in pain, you hear scraping and grunting from above as the heavy lid is lowered back into place. You are now entombed in pitch-darkness, the only sound that of the distant underground river. So steady is that sound that it gradually amplifies on itself, consuming all.</p> <p>With almost inhuman calm (i.e., you rolled a real challenge maneuver), you assess your current situation, relax and meditate through the pain and fear. Time passes in an imprecise blur. Still, nothing phases you, even when you begin to feel water on your buttocks and shoulder blades. With maddening slowness, the box fills with water. Used to high temperatures as you are, the water is quite cold and actually provides some welcome relief from the burns. Soon though, your teeth are chattering and body shaking uncontrollably as natural mechanisms kick in to keep your body temperature up. All the while, the water is slowly rising. Soon, you float up until your face presses against the lid. Your ears are underwater and you begin to entertain the fear that the water will rise to drown you. It is with a certain amount of relief that you hear the stone grating open above you.</p> <p>Raising your head a bit to clear your ears and looking out through swollen eyelids, you can see Elára hiKharsáma and Do'ónish hiNakkolél, two of your instructors, standing above you leaning on their halberds. You do not see the Clan Master. Elára, a master of poisons, is a stunningly beautiful woman in her early 30's that was always one of your favorite instructors.</p> <p>Like one of the fantasies you've privately entertained since first sitting classes with her, you watch Elára kneels down to take your manhood in her muscular left hand. Playfully, you hear her voice, "That water is surely cold. You've shrunk all away. Come out now. The Clan Master has sent us to retrieve you before you drown." She continues to hold you, gently stroking you to arousal. Above you, she gives you a friendly smile full of promise.</p> <p>Do'ónish comments in good humor, "Part of him is surely complying. Yes, come out now or you'll freeze."</p> </div>
<div data-bbox="175 1528 440 1732"> <b>Epengar hiDaishuna</b>            player, 14 posts            Amber Cloak Clan Merchant            Follower of Thumis            Mon 21 Jun 2004            at 16:21         </div> <div data-bbox="259 1732 362 1831">  </div> <div data-bbox="196 1831 440 1894"> <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a> </div>	<div data-bbox="440 1528 1443 1577"> <b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #24         </div> <div data-bbox="440 1577 1443 1894"> <p>Epengar shivers almost uncontrollably, perhaps even a bit for show, as he listens to the two. His excitement from the touch of Elara's hand is a powerful request indeed for the young man. But why would this offer be made now? In such an unlikely place, in such a predicament? No, she can offer again when the dark is from the night and the bed is soft and warm, where her pleasures can be enjoyed and sampled over and over again. His master told him that until "he" returned, to leave the box was sure death, and those halberds spoke loud enough to remind him of that. With his teeth chattering he squeaks out a few words.</p> <p>"As tempting as it is to leave this fridged stone box and as welcoming as Master Elara's warmth is to me here, I must humbly decline your invitation to leave.</p> </div>

	<p>Clan Master Gutishmu expressly told me to wait for HIS return and to leave under no other circumstances. Unless you are to pluck me from here, I will not leave willingly at this point."</p> <p>He swallows hard after his words and tries to pull some strength from his thoughts of what Elara would be able to do with him and his fantasies, but first he must prove himself so she can respect him, or at least that is what he keeps pulling into his mind for his own sake.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 42 posts Mon 21 Jun 2004 at 20:14</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Chapter 1 - Transition</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #25</p> <p>Do'ónish says, "Epengar, are you so stupid as to follow orders blindly? If you stay in there, you will die. The Clan does not want stupid people. You're not stupid, come out now!"</p> <p>Elára grips your manhood and lifts hard and with considerable strength. Unlike her earlier caress, this seriously hurts. "Yes, come out now. I did not waste my time teaching a creton. Will you waste my time by following an order blindly to your death? Come out now and I will welcome you to our clan with charms you have only been able to imagine!"</p> <p>Do'ónish reaches in to grab your arm and provide purchase so that you can emerge.</p>
<p><b>Epengar hiDaishuna</b> player, 15 posts Amber Cloak Clan Merchant Follower of Thumis Tue 22 Jun 2004 at 13:10</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #26</p> <p>Epengar coughs and very weakly bats at Elara's grasp in almost a none existent movement, his face sinking below the water as he goes limp in her grasp and before Do'ónish can grab hold of him drifting as far away from him as possible in the box and deep enough for him to have to kneel down, all the while trying very hard to look as though he has passed out or slipped away.</p> <p>The plan: Hoping that Do'ónish will reach in after him, hopefully off balance, Epengar will allow him to get his fingers touching his arm and then grab Do'ónish quickly and hard, moving him forward and hopefully off balance. He will then try and pull him in on top of himself as he kicks his feet and legs up trying to lock Elara's head between his knees, and hopefully losing her grip on his little buddy, and continue to cartwheel, (using Do'ónish's downward weight to push off of and spin himself around) head under water, in a clockwise direction until he has Do'ónish in the tub, hopefully head first and Elara on her side along the tub. If she is pulling upward his sudden thrust up should get her off balance enough plus her pulling should help him rise up towards her quickly as well and help him come out of the tank at least part way. The hope is to spin all the way around and pop up headfirst standing on the bottom of the tank. (was there enough play on words there for you?) Or to use the strength of his legs to pry on Elara and force himself onto the stone surface outside the tub, in the hopes of subduing Elara and then wait for Do'ónish to right himself. If this happens Epengar will have something to say, if the attempt fails or only half of the attempt is successful, i.e., only Do'ónish is in the water or Elara is forced on top of Do'ónish or some other situation, then he will post his next actions.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 43 posts Tue 22 Jun 2004 at 18:39</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #27</p> <p>In the spirit of what Epengar is attempting ...</p> <p>The confined coffin-like space that you find yourself in prevents you from sinking far from Elára's firm grip. Do'ónish, while gripping your shoulder, is in a bit more precarious balance. As you relax and surge up, you latch onto Elára's hand to lock it in place against your stomach where the damage she can inflict is</p>

	<p>info minimized. Simultaneously, you jab the thumb of that hand with all your strength between the bones on the back of her hand to force her to release while with the other, taking advantage of Do'ónish's poor balance and shifted attention grab him under the armpit and roll as fast as possible. Elára, evidently expecting such a move, yanked her hand out of your painful grip and jumped out of the way. Do'ónish wasn't quite as fortunate as the master falls forward smacking his knee on the edge of the stone recess and his head on the lid hard enough to draw blood. In truth, his rapid reaction was what caused the injury as all you did was tip him forward, albeit painfully.</p> <p>Livid, Do'ónish grabs his halberd, "You die now you ungrateful retch. Stupid boy, I would not have you as a fellow assassin!" By this time, Elára has picked up her halberd as well. She intercedes saying, "Wait! The Grand Master will find him with a hole in his body and will hold us responsible. Let him drown instead, another victim of Shatíl!"</p> <p>Elára leans down just out of reach to look menacingly at you. "One of my tasks is to tell you the Saying of Power. You were so special that the Grand Master thought you should be given this and I was stupid enough to agree. Very few full-fledged assassins even know this phrase. You must never repeat it to another. I will fulfill my charge knowing that in death, the phrase is safe and I have still complied with the Grand Master's orders."</p> <p>Do'ónish now yells angrily, "You're giving this boy the Saying?! I do not know this Saying. You must tell it to me too!"</p> <p>Elára replies, "No, I may not do this! You have not earned it. The Grand Master will question me when this is done and if I do not follow his wishes exactly, will kill us both!"</p> <p>Do'ónish relents, but he is obviously angry about this additional slight.</p> <p>Whispering so faintly that only you can hear, she says, "We Assassins are demons!"</p> <p>The last words that you hear as they lever the lid back into place above you are, "Good bye stupid aspirant!"</p> <p>Epengar is once again plunged into frigid darkness. The water in the stone coffin continues to slowly rise. By wedging himself into the corner of the box, he is able to barely feel fresh air from the crack. Still, the purchase in the box is precarious resulting in him slipping a number of times. Epengar's training now is all that allows him to stave off fear and focus on survival. Drowning is a very real possibility. He has swallowed or aspirated quite a bit of water. The shaking of Epengar's body from the cold becomes gradually worse increasing the potential for fear and death. Time stretches onward as Epengar finally figures out a way to prop his body against the sides to hold himself in place. Soon, his muscles are cramping.</p> <p>Near the limit of his endurance, Epengar is startled by the grinding sound of prybars being inserted into the lid to lift it away. As it rises, bright light floods into Epengar's narrowed eyes causing intense pain and itching all over his body. Quickly, he shuts his eyes against the light as he feels hands grip him to lift him from the water.</p>
<p><b>Epengar</b>  <b>hiDaishuna</b>  player, 16 posts  Amber Cloak Clan</p>	<p><b>Re: Transition</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #28</p> <hr/> <p>Through his long time in the cramped and cold box, Epengar kept himself from despair by believing that the grand master is someone who he can trust and that</p>

Merchant  
Follower of Thumis  
Wed 23 Jun 2004  
at 14:42



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his words were those that needed to be followed. Elára's and Do'ónish's conversation had convinced him of that fact. Therefore, he felt confident that his choice to defy these other masters and remain where he was told was the right decision.

His body, cold and shivering, welcomed the exitous from the water and the fact that he had no choice in the matter, set his mind at ease that he was not going to have to make that decision again. Unfortunately, he has no idea what is coming next or what choices he will have to make to survive. Is the test over? Will there be some comfort for him now? He thinks for only a second or two and answers no to both questions and so steels himself for what is to come. He will try to stand under his own power though he fully expects to go limp with complete exhaustion. He will try and get his limbs straight to stretch the muscles whether that is by lying on the ground (if he is put there) or by hanging off of those who support him if he is unable to stand. He will keep his head down, and try most desperately to listen to all the sounds that are in the room with him. Trying to assess the number and position of those who accompany the ones who lifted him from his bath. Through the slits in his eyes, he will try and see the feet of those who hold him or those who happen to be around him, to judge who and what they are and which way they are facing. Also, knowing that Do'ónish and Elára might be in the room as well he is sure that they will not fall for the same trick twice, but he will continue to fane weakness while summoning as much strength from his very core if need be. He is not believing that he will need to fight, but he wants to buy as much time a possible to get his body back to at least a functioning level and every second counts here. Even if he is dragged elsewhere, he would like to ensure that as little damage as possible occurs to his person. Be obedient to the purpose, not the method he puts back into his head, this tenet will sing to him if this trial continues. He speaks not a word, nor lets out any sounds at all if possible; he simply tries to keep from scratching and tries to keep alert. At this moment the phrase "we assassins are demons" pops into his mind, and though he does not say it or even lip it he will let it pass through his mind to see if he can gain some strength from it, any thoughts at this moment that will help him to stay alive.

**SuuShih**

GM, 46 posts  
Fri 25 Jun 2004  
at 13:22



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**Assassin**

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Epengar is shivering so violently and has such muscle fatigue that he is, for the short-term, unable to stand. Those aches, which he would normally expect to last for quite some time, seem to be disappearing. Peeking again through slitted eyelids, he suddenly realizes that he's no longer having trouble seeing. In front of him is Clan Master Gutíshmu with a huge grin on his face. With unusual ebullience, he grabs a surprised Epengar in a bear hug and in his ear says with startling clarity, "Whispered Fear now welcomes a new assassin: Epengar hiDaishuna. Let the world tremble!"

With those words, Epengar's five instructors, who he only now realizes are also in the room, give a loud cheer. A warm blanket is wrapped around him with helpful hands rubbing it to dry him off. Elára and Do'ónish stand behind the Clan Master with big grins on their faces.

Where Epengar had pain, there is now such a sense of well-being as he's never felt before. All pain has disappeared. Any physical damage at all that has ever marked Epengar is rapidly fading. A catch in his right knee that had bothered him for years is suddenly missing.

Clan Master Gutíshmu says to Epengar, "Can you lead us out?" The stone that was blocking the exit is now up.

**Epengar**  
**hiDaishuna**  
player, 17 posts  
Amber Cloak Clan  
Merchant  
Follower of Thumis  
Fri 25 Jun 2004  
at 15:51



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## Re: Assassin

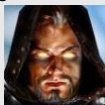
[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #30

Epengar begins with a deep bow of respect to those gathered. At first to his clan master and then to Elara and Do'onish in particular and then to the rest in general. His eyes back on his master he nods and then walks silently to the doorway. He stops there, stands with his arms to his side, though a little out to simulate his escorts who held him, still finding it hard to believe that he is, once again whole and perhaps better, as his knee would offer, he closes his eyes and listens to and smells the air. If he is to lead them out of this place, he will have to try and use what senses he arrived with, and though they were muffled before, now he should have even more precise abilities to discern where he is going. He will use his eyes only to keep him from falling or stepping into danger and will trust the feel of the ground beneath his feet, the temperature and breezes on his skin, the sounds and smells of the surrounding area and his mind to recall, in reverse, the path and notable areas he tried so hard to keep track of on the way down here.

"This is obviously another part of the test," he thinks to himself. "One that if feel I need to pass, yet I will not endanger the rest of these with me." He promises to himself. "I will ask if I need help, "be obedient to the purpose, not the method", " he whispers only to himself.

He then looks to make sure that there is a crawl space similar to the one he remembers entering this room through to make sure he is starting out in the right direction.

**SuuShih**  
GM, 47 posts  
Fri 25 Jun 2004  
at 16:55



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## Re: Assassin

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #31

Epengar hears quiet chuckling behind him and a whispered statement from Do'onish, "By Hru'u's seething chaos, he's doing it!" The path, which had been hidden before, is now revealed by the torches behind him to be extremely old sandstone with remnants of red murals and carvings that, where more visible, are somehow unsettling to look upon.

Knowing the pattern, Epengar quickly come back to the corridor where the stairs should be, but no stairs are visible. He is a bit confused. Had he somehow made a wrong turn?


With a smile, the Clan Master puts a hand on Epengar's shoulder when progress falters. Holding his hand out for a halberd, he takes it and taps out a complex beat on the ceiling, one of a number of coded patterns that each member of your clan must know. Within moments, a section of the ceiling cants down with the stairs ascending.


Above and with much ceremony, Epengar is privileged to put on the black garb of his clan with insignia prominently displayed.



The Clan Master tells him, "While your life will exist in shadow, for tonight, you will celebrate in the light!" Dressed, but still unarmed, lights are extinguished and your group of six exits an innocuous warehouse to jog out of town. It's around 3:00 AM. The few pedestrians and guards moving about watch your group's passage with awe and fear. It's clear from the way that the masters move that here is a group that should remain unhindered. Passing outside of town, you jog off beaten paths to a hidden clanhouse that is impressively fortified. Lining the path beyond the gate, full assassins stand in a line holding torches. As Epengar passes up the line, the assassins to either side begin cheering and falling in behind. Epengar has never been to this clanhouse or known that he had this many clan cousins in the area. What follows is a very impressive party!




At one point during the party, the Clan Master stops the festivities to have everyone gather around. Calling Epengar forward, he is formally presented with



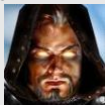
	<p>the weapons of an assassin that he has trained with.</p> <p>[Private to Epengar hiDaishuna: Due to superior workmanship, each weapon is +5%.]</p>
<p><b>Znayashu hiMaroda</b>  player, 1 post  Sat 26 Jun 2004  at 21:56  <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Assassin</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #32</p> <p>At the close of the ceremony, various of his clan cousins step forward to express their congratulations. From among them, a slightly-built man steps forward.</p> <p>"My profoundest respect, clan-cousin. I am Znayashu hiMaroda. May the Gods bless your choice of path."</p>
<p><b>Epengar hiDaishuna</b>  player, 18 posts  Amber Cloak Clan  Merchant  Follower of Thumis  Tue 29 Jun 2004  at 11:12    <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Assassin</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #33</p> <p>Epengar accepts the gifted weapons with the highest of regards, handles them with kit gloves for the moment and bows deeply to the clan master before placing them on his person where they belong.</p> <p>"With weapons such as these, combined with your outstanding training, noble Lord, one surly cannot fail. My deepest gratitude for all that you have offered me, both tonight and throughout these past years. I exist to serve, and so I shall."</p> <p>He bows again deeply to the clan master and then to any of those who trained him who he can see from where he is standing.</p> <p>After receiving his wonderful gifts, Epengar will mill about the party and seek out several persons. First he will search out Do'onish, chiefly to apologize for the crack on the head, though he is sure that Do'onish realizes he could expect such things with what he was doing at that time. Nonetheless, he will make an honest attempt to mend any ill will.</p> <p>He will also seek out Elara to do the same, and though her actions were most likely done as part of his test as he lay in the cold box deep underground, he will test the waters, as it were, to see if there is any inkling or hope for even a brief interlude with the master. Even though he is feeling rather full of himself at this moment, he will stay mild and subtle, boldness here would only be insulting to Elara and her station, and possible cause him some humiliation, but he will proceed, nonetheless, but with caution.</p> <p>(Note: please post as you see fit for each encounter, Epengar will repost if need be for character interplay.)</p> <p>He will then seek out his other masters to thank him for the gifts of his training with all the sincerity that befits the situation upon their encounter.</p> <p>Epengar, at first, is taken in by all the ceremony and flattery, but as he seeks out his masters he looks around the room finally to check things out. Taking into account those who are present and their rank. He is always cautious of large groups, always has been, and his masters have taught him not to be otherwise. So, he takes in as much as he can and looks for anything that he may consider "out of the ordinary". He also tries to stay out of the center of the room, skirting around as close to the walls as is allowable without interfering with others or acting suspicious. He will also make a point not to turn his back to the main entryway, primarily out of habit, but also because it just makes him uncomfortable.</p> <p>As the close of the ceremony arrives and various clan cousins pass by with their congratulations, many he has never seen before, perhaps a few he has and the introduction from Znayashu hiMaroda was no different. A man he has never seen before, an assassin, clan-cousin and so Epengar bows to Znayashu and says.</p>


	<p>"I feel that they have blessed this choice thus far, I hope that they will continue to do so. Thank you for your kind thoughts. I am called Epengar hiDaishuna and it is my pleasure to make the acquaintance of a respected clan-cousin such as yourself. May the gods smile upon your path as well."</p>
<p><b>Znayashu hiMaroda</b>  player, 2 posts  Wed 21 Jul 2004  at 17:38  <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Congratulations!</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #34</p> <p>Znayashu smiles and gestures someone from the rear to move forward. "Marjan, congratulate the newest member of our profession."</p> <p>From the rear, a larger man---not graced by the gods with good looks--moves forward. He softly says, "I congratulate you, clan-cousin. May the gods guide your steps and grant you a good death when it comes." As he bows slightly, his lack of a right arm is apparent. "I am Marjan hiJarash."</p> <p>Znayashu injects, "Marjan is not only a clan-cousin but he has proved a trustworthy friend ... All would be fortunate to find one such as he assisting them when they need assistance."</p> <p>As other clan-cousins crowd in to offer their congratulations, Znayashu pulls back, looks about, and moves back into the crowd. With a troubled look, Marjan follows.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b>  GM, 58 posts  Sat 24 Jul 2004  at 10:04    <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>The booby prize</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #35</p> <p>Do'ónish accepts Epengar's thanks with a smile and bow. In a sad voice, he says, "I have had to dispatch <i>so</i> many. It pleases me <i>greatly</i> that my efforts with you were not wasted. In you, I see the future of our clan. Bring honor to us all! You'll of course need to continue training and I will have a part in that."</p> <p>Elára, much to Epengar's surprise, is feeling no pain evidently due to a variety of intoxicants. This is clearly a side of her that he has never seen. Though she's perhaps in her 30's, her current state and behavior are more reminiscent of someone in their teens. From a purely professional perspective and her specialty in poisons, he can appreciate how this attitude might best position her to be a very lethal social butterfly. Catching her between flits, he's surprised when she moves seductively forward to press her body into him and, almost effortlessly, places him in a very inconspicuous wristlock. She begins to lead him towards the back door. As long as Epengar doesn't fight it, this wristlock is neither painful nor conspicuous. From this position though, she could easily break his wrist. Any inquiries he makes are met with a seductive smile, an occasional nibble at his neck or nearest earlobe, and implacable motion towards the door.</p> <p>Znayashu was preparing a small plate of food when Marjan comes up next to him and places his good hand on his arm, something he almost never does. Following his intent inquisitive stare, he sees Elára, a stunningly beautiful middle-aged assassin, and Epengar moving towards the back of the clanhouse, arm in arm. Marjan comments, "She has him in a wristlock."</p> <p>Zhayashu can't be certain, but now that he's focused on it, realizes that Marjan may well be correct.</p>
<p><b>Epengar hiDaishuna</b>  player, 19 posts  Amber Cloak Clan  Merchant  Follower of Thumis  Sat 24 Jul 2004  at 21:16</p>	<p><b>Re: The booby prize</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #36</p> <p><b>I'll take what's behind door number one, Monty</b></p> <p>"A double edged sword indeed is this situation", Epengar thinks to himself. "On the one hand, she is acting as I had hoped and dreamed, a woman of her beauty taking me off for a private rendez-vous of passion and playfulness. But on the other hand, am I sure that is what this is? She is most lethal and cunning and</p>


 <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p>knows how to use her body in many ways to break and destroy all manner of men, am I just a dalliance? Perhaps I am just one more casual intoxicant she wishes to mix with her evenings revel? In any case, I am smitten by her and am interested to see where she is leading me. This of all places and of all times should be safe for both of us! We are in our clan house, with our brothers, sisters and cousins, what would dare to darken this festive place? Yet, I will try and keep an appropriate amount of guard up, because, after all, we are all assassins and cannot be sure of our lot. Oh my, she smells good! And her touch is very welcome and much more pleasant than earlier."</p> <p>Epengar's inner dialog keeps running as they head towards the door, his mind spinning with a mixture of desire, caution, pleasures to come, possible dangers. Like a metronome swinging quickly at an insane meter he flips from one side of the coin to the other and back again. All the while, his lust for this woman has inserted the nose ring that she seems to gladly be guiding him by.</p> <p>When she answers his inquiries with touch that is sweat and sensual he absorbs these and moans deeply in his throat so only she can hear. He will attempt to meet her lips with his at some point before the door, but is enjoying the closeness of their bodies and this attention.</p> <p>Once at the door, if she opens it, he will pause slightly, coyly with a sheepish look to toy with her just a bit. He is also testing two things, will she give his arm a little twist to move him out with her, and he wants to take a really quick look out the door before heading that way. He will try and be as subversive as possible with the scan as not to insult her or cause suspicion.</p> <p>Of Course, what happens or is seen at the door may change Epengar's attitude and agenda, but of course you know that.</p>
<p><b>Znayashu hiMaroda</b> player, 3 posts Wed 11 Aug 2004 at 16:58</p> <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: The booby prize</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #37</p> <p>"Yes, Marjan, you may well be correct," Zhayashu mutters. "Peculiar. I wonder ..." he says as his voice drifts off. With drink in hand, Zhayashu follows the couple at a discrete distance. Marjan, taking a few steps along Zhayashu's path, watches his friend at a distance.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 65 posts Wed 11 Aug 2004 at 17:20</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: The booby prize</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #38</p> <p>Elára gives Epengar a tug and a smile. The tug makes it clear that stopping would be a bad idea. Still, she says nothing while reaching over to gently bite his nipple almost painfully. Her destination is the nearby forest. Epengar is not sure what to think. At any time over the past decade, she could have harmed or killed him "accidentally" without anything being said. This evening, she could have killed him.</p> <p>Znayashu follows at a discrete distance until a slave comes up to him near the exit indicating that the Clan Master would see him and Epengar. Does he know where he is? Unless Epengar is ready to have his wrist broken, when Znayashu turns back to look, the two he was following have now been swallowed by the jungle.</p>
<p><b>Epengar hiDaishuna</b> player, 20 posts Amber Cloak Clan Merchant Follower of Thumis Tue 24 Aug 2004 at 08:31</p>	<p><b>Re: The booby prize</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #39</p> <p>Epengar, hoping the best for his wrist, goes along with gleeful exuberance. Though in his mind the questions keep spinning around, pleasure and death seem peculiarly linked in his mind with regards to this woman, and though his libido is racing for her as a goal his mind is trying very hard to understand what is going on. He is starting to have some serious doubts as to whether or not this was a good idea, but he will go along unless things become less hospitable.</p>

 <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 69 posts Wed 22 Sep 2004 at 16:39</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: The booby prize</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #40</p> <p>Whirling and twisting, and despite Epengar's best efforts to prevent it, he finds himself with his hands tied behind a small tree sitting on the ground. What follows is a surreal experience. While lecturing Epengar incessantly in her dry academic voice on the psychology of subduing or killing a male opponent using sex as a lure, Elára undresses Epengar using her hands and teeth. With almost preternatural control, she repeatedly takes him to the edge of release and then stops. Throughout this, the lecture continues as she describes and then executes technique after technique, based on a huge variety of sensations. In a fever, Epengar desperately begs her to finish what she started and embrace SILENCE! To this, she smiles, and continues. Epengar is now filthy, shaking and covered in sweat! Eyes closed, he growls in frustrated anger as she once again takes him up the mountain suspending him there at the pinnacle. This time though, Epengar opens his eyes to find Elára gone. Only her natural perfume lingers. Someone is approaching through the underbrush, making a conspicuous amount of noise. Much to Epengar's surprise, Zhayashu steps from between two bushes into the small clearing.</p> <p>[Private to Zhayashu hiMaroda: It's up to you whether the Clan Master sent you or you decided to go looking for Epengar when you heard that the Clan Master wanted to speak with both of you. If the latter, you were probably watching what happened from a distance with some humor. Up to you how you want to play this. Epengar is still tied to a tree, nude, disheveled, dirty, and excited.]</p>
<p><b>Epengar hiDaishuna</b> player, 21 posts Amber Cloak Clan Merchant Follower of Thumis Wed 22 Sep 2004 at 21:15</p>  <p>PM   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: The booby prize indeed!</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #41</p> <p>Epengar, looking rather drawn and embarrassed at his predicament eyes Zhayashu and recognizes him from earlier. In a dry and shaky voice he addresses the man as he steps out into the clearing.</p> <p>"Cousin, I hope that I'm glad to see you, and take no offence for as you can see, not every hope of mine this evening has turned out as I had planned. It would appear that I am still being taught important lessons by my masters, even at such an event."</p> <p>He keeps working at his bound hands, trying to free them as he has been trying to do from the beginning of his lesson with Elára until, with a breath of exacerbation, he looks to Zhayashu and kindly says.</p> <p>"If it would not be too much trouble for you, and if it does not disturb your evening stroll, I would certainly appreciate it if you could assist me in ridding myself of these infernal bindings. As you can see, the passions that I had followed to this place, wound their way through some dark alleys from which I will find it difficult to leave on my own. So, if you would please?"</p> <p>Epengar pushes his bound hands in Zhayashu's direction as much as he can with a sheepish look of inquisition.</p>
<p><b>Zhayashu hiMaroda</b> player, 4 posts Wed 22 Sep 2004 at 22:22</p>	<p><b>Re: The booby prize indeed!</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #42</p> <p>Zhayashu smiles and draws an ugly, oddly designed dagger and approaches Epengar. "Ah, normally, I would suggest that you cut the bindings with your own</p>

<a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a>	<p>sword, but I see that it has grown dull with use. You are fortunate doubly tonight--that it was Elara who accompanied you to this spot and that it was I who found you helplessly tied to this tree. Had you not been so fortunate, your evening might have ended ... badly."</p> <p>With a quick slice, Znayashu cuts Epengar's bonds. "Now we need to find you some water to clean up and to retrieve your clothes. The clan master wishes to see us."</p> <p>With that comment, Marjan appears on the scene and gestures to beckon them both to the clans master.</p>
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<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 70 posts Wed 22 Sep 2004 at 22:55</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Ooby Dooby Booby</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #43</p> <p>As though the Gods were listening to Zhayashu's request, rain begins to gently fall though it gradually increases in intensity. Epengar's clothing is easily retrieved from the ground. Together, the three of you trek back to the Clan House where the party continues unabated.</p> <p>Sitting near the back door, legs dangling off the porch, Elára watches you three approach with a wan inviting smile. To Epengar, she says, "After you talk with Clan Master Gutishmu, please let me know if you'd like to continue our little discussion. I have much more to say on the subject if you're not too tired."</p> <p>In point of fact, Epengar is exhausted, though he does his best to put a brave face on everything. The slave that had originally met Zhayashu and Marjan is waiting by the door. Quickly he bows, but his abrupt nervous manner indicates the urgency that he's feeling for you three to follow without delay.</p> <p>"Please masters, follow me. The Clan Master seemed most interested in seeing you quickly."</p> <p>Taking his cue, you three follow him into the house, across the central courtyard and up some stairs to a well lit corner apartment. As you three are announced and enter, the Clan Master takes in your wet clothing, arching his eyebrows. He directs slaves to bring dry clothing for you. Turning to some of his other quests, he asks them, "Please excuse us."</p>
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<p><b>Epengar hiDaishuna</b> player, 22 posts Amber Cloak Clan Merchant Follower of Thumis Sun 3 Oct 2004 at 20:16</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Feeling like a Booby</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #44</p> <p>Epengar dips his head in embarrassment as Zhayashu cuts his bindings. Not for his predicament but for his helplessness. He should never had let himself get so involved that he didn't keep at least a small blade on him, even in his mouth if need be!</p> <p>He lets the rain wash over him and tries to cleanse himself of the event previous. After vigorously scrubbing himself he dons his clothing and makes sure that his gifts and other sundry items are still with him. He then looks to his two rescuers and walks with them as they make their way back to the clan house. Seeing Elára, his blood runs cold and he almost pauses in mid step, but he catches himself and tries to hide all outward signs of any feelings. He smiles at her and responds in a gracious manner, that even though the experience was interesting, stimulating and one from which he has learned much, he would prefer to entreat a less experienced person for the time being, one more at his stage, and that perhaps, once he has gained some experience and knowledge, he would feel worthy enough to accept her gracious offer.</p> <p>He then turns his attention to the slave and quickly follows him to the chamber where the clan master is waiting. He enters, greeting Clan Master Gutishmu in a silent gesture, but one with much respect for the man. Epengar speaks not a</p>
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	word, accepts the dry clothing when they arrive and waits for the Master to address him before he will utter a tone.
<b>Znayashu hiMaroda</b> player, 5 posts Tue 26 Oct 2004 at 19:03 <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a>	<b>Re: Feeling like a Booby</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #45 <hr/> Znayashu and Marjan also accept the dry clothes from the slave and wait for the clan master to speak.
<b>SuuShih</b> GM, 78 posts Thu 31 Mar 2005 at 13:45  <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a>	<b>A worthy task</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #46 <hr/> Once the room is cleared, Clan Master Gutíshmu goes to a curtain covering a door and, pulling it back, bows elaborately. Through the opening comes a wizened old woman wearing a dark cloak with hood and mask as disguise. For all her obvious frailty, her presence goes before her like the prow of a noble ship.  Favoring each of you with a critical look, she turns to the Clan Master, "These are the ones?"  "Yes, you (here Gutíshmu uses the You of Glorious Splendor that is reserved for the most high nobles below royalty) can be assured that these three will perform the service you've requested with appropriate discretion. They will do whatever it takes to protect their charge." He then formally introduces each of you. From his tone, it's clear that Gutíshmu is putting the clan's reputation on the line.  The woman doffs the mask now. Her gray hair is well aligned with the steely gaze that she now casts at each of you.  "I am Arsála hiSharvóya, Clan Elder of the Golden Bough here in Sokatis. I come to you for help on a delicate matter. I have a clan daughter, Qoli hiVu'urtesh, who has recently come to Sokatis from one of our larger estates to the Northwest. The child is uncommonly beautiful and naïve. She's an Aridani sorceress and may have other abilities that we're only now discovering. Her mother was also such a beauty who drew unwanted attention in Jakalla and had to move with her new husband who was unable to defend his family against a powerful member of our own clan. It seems that history may be repeating itself. Are you familiar with Dardayél hiKhanúma, Kérdudali (Senior General) of the Phalanx of Heretlékka, 34th Heavy Infantry, and his brother Kenéng (General) Nirénu hiKhanúma? No?"  OOC: By his rank, the Kenéng has equal status in his own right to Arsála while the Dardayél is higher, one step below royalty.  "Nirénu is like an envious worm eating the rotten fruit leavings of his noble older brother. Nirénu has already cost my clan considerable shamtla. Though ostensibly a worshiper of Avanthé, he would more nobly honor Chiteng. Qoli, poor child, has drawn this monster's attentions. Also, with her beauty and abilities, she could easily be led astray. I charge you three with protecting my clan's honor by <i>whatever</i> means you feel are necessary. You are not to kill Nirénu though unless there's no other way. If you can consult with me, then please do so. But, your task is to protect Qoli. Will you accept this charge?"  OOC: Understand, if you act against the Kenéng, then you would know that your lives at very least would be forfeit. Theoretically, the assets of your clan could be seized and your clan eradicated. If you act, then you cannot be caught in a way that would tie you back to your clan.
<b>Epengar</b>	<b>Re: A worthy task</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #47



**hiDaishuna**

player, 23 posts  
Amber Cloak Clan  
Merchant  
Follower of Thumis  
Fri 1 Apr 2005  
at 16:39



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Epengar looks calm and collected; he tries not to show any emotion in any direction as he bows to the old woman. He holds his bow below the lever of her head and while staring at her feet (only to judge which way she is looking or moving) he answers "As Master Gutishmu has spoken, so shall it be done; with the appropriate discretion and whatever it takes to protect the young lady Qoli hiVu'urtesh, I will bring your request to fruition as you have requested in a manner which will not be able to be brought back to anyone in this room."

Epengar will keep his head bowed until he is told otherwise or until it becomes appropriate to stand once more erect.

**SuuShih**

GM, 79 posts  
Wed 6 Apr 2005  
at 01:01



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**Re: A worthy task**

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Arsála looks at the three. "Consider well your roles. You will ostensibly be members of the Golden Bough. I will not deceive Qoli; she must know who you three are so that you can play your parts. You are not common guards, nor is what you protect her from a common attack. Be at Shanshalo, our clan house, at first light. Tomorrow will be a busy day for you three! Now, unless there are any questions, leave us so that the Clan Master and I can confer on your fee. You three will be very well compensated for this ruse; compensation commensurate with the risk you take."

**Epengar  
hiDaishuna**

player, 24 posts  
Amber Cloak Clan  
Merchant  
Follower of Thumis  
Wed 6 Apr 2005  
at 08:42



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Re: A worthy task indeed**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #49

With his head still in a deep bow Epengar speaks with much respect and reverence.

"Noble Clan Elder of the Golden Bough, would you have in mind a particular disguise or scenario for the three of us, or shall we concoct one to fit the situation as we find it? I ask only because I do not wish to interfere with any plans that might have already been set in motion. I wish only to make this transition as smooth as possible without implicating a soul or causing concern on anyone's behalf."

Epengar will make no move from his position and awaits either a response or a dismissal.

**SuuShih**

GM, 81 posts  
Fri 15 Dec 2006  
at 22:08



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**Re: A worthy task indeed**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #50

Master Gutishmu's eyebrows furrow and he holds up his callused left hand peremptorily to Epengar cutting him off.

"I have the details," he says. "Now, please wait on the balcony outside. I'll summon you shortly."

Respectfully, you each bow and leave the Master to complete negotiations. Excitement at the prospect of serving your clan in such a distinguishing fashion with one of the most revered clans in the Empire ... a clan that can trace its lineage more than 10,000 years back to the Golden Empire ... is heady stuff! It's also a bit puzzling. The nature of this assignment would seem much more appropriate for clan members with a strong track record for success. You discuss this quietly amongst yourselves reaching no conclusions.

An hour passes, after which you are summoned back into the Master's presence. You file back in. The Master motions to cushions that have been placed on the ground for each of you. Taking the cue, you each sit as instructed as the Master paces a bit. Reaching into his robe, he pulls a note and puts it on the ground before you. On it is written the promissory note of the Golden Bough in the staggering amount of 10,000 Kaitar. This amount is scary to each of you on a number of levels!

**SuuShih**

GM, 4 posts  
Wed 14 Jan 2004  
at 22:10



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## Chapter 1 - Arrival

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Qoli and Kotaru's small caravan arrive at the Sokatis city wall with Boró, one of Kotaru's larger slaves, proclaiming the arrival of noble scions of the ancient Golden Bough clan. The heat in the palanquin is stifling to Kotaru as he waits interminably for some matter between Boró and a well-dressed guard to be resolved. Qoli, walking by the palanquin more comfortably, draws many appreciative stares from all present and receives a small bow, though the guard does not approach. On the second tier of the sakbe road, the press of troops moving in and out along with more affluent merchants and travelers has brought motion on that level to a virtual standstill.

After bowing obsequiously to the guard, Boró approaches the palanquin to talk with Kotaru. Bowing appropriately, he speaks quietly from outside through the curtains while the guard observes haughtily from a distance.

"Master, for a mere two kaitar, the most noble guard Miridán hiNatéla of the Domed Tomb clan has graciously offered to provide one of his men to ease our travels through the various barriers so that we may reach the clan-house as soon as possible. How shall I answer him Master?"

In the distance, you can see another entourage for some other august person approaching on the top tier.

**Kotaru hiSerekel**

player, 2 posts  
Sorcerer Priest-  
Chegárra  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Wed 14 Jan 2004  
at 23:14



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**Re: Arrival**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #2

**SuuShih typed:**

...while the guard observes haughtily from a distance.

"Master, for a mere two kaitar the most noble guard Miridán hiNatéla of the Domed Tomb clan has graciously offered to provide one of his men to ease our travels through the various barriers so that we may reach the clan-house as soon as possible. How shall I answer him Master?"

OOO: Having received guidance from SuuShih, my understanding of the situation has improved. Therefore, please accept the following action in lieu of my prior post.

Kotaru tells Boró the following:

"Let him understand that we feel it magnanimous of the noble guard to assist our passage, and pay him." Kotaru will not speak directly to the man, as he's a bit irked at the request for money. He's also displeased that there is no one from the Golden Bough to greet them at the gate, thus necessitating this crass arrangement.

Once Boró leaves, Kotaru flutters his fan and curses Qoli silently. *Would* the girl not re-enter her palanquin?

**Qoli hiVu'urtesh**

player, 5 posts  
Priestess of Hnalla  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Fri 16 Jan 2004  
at 16:31

[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#)

**Re: Arrival**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #3

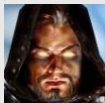
Qoli quietly allows the interaction between Boró and the guard drift by her, assured that Kótaru will deftly navigate the situation to best effect.

Instead, she pays her attention to the milling crowds issuing from and entering

[info](#) into the maw-like gates of Sokatis. The buzzing, cacophonous sounds, and the thick smell of crowded humanity suffuses the area around the gates, causing her to sway back from the edge of the road, while the same colors and sounds draw her back to peer over at the throngs below. Somewhere below a merchant carrying spices adds to the thick, pungent miasma. All these people, and the caravan hasn't even entered the city!

As the delay continues and the mass of humanity continues to boil on the lower roadways, Qoli eventually pales a bit under her country tan, evidently overwhelmed by the crowds. She looks over to see what is happening between Boró and the soldier, then at Kotaru's palanquin. Finally she goes to walk near her palanquin away from the edge of the roadway.

**SuuShih**  
GM, 6 posts  
Tue 20 Jan 2004  
at 23:04



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**Re: Arrival** [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #4

Boró carefully bows and cups his hands below those of Kotaru so that he can receive the two coins without sulying his master with his touch. Speaking through the curtain with a small smile, he says, "Master, you can trust me to handle this walking pile of dlaqo shit." (OOC: Dlaqo beetles are carrion eaters about the size of a VW bug or larger. They are associated with certain Sarku rituals. The guard, by his clan, worships Sarku.)

Turning purposefully, he approaches the guard and bows a bit less than one would consider appropriate. Abruptly, he holds out the two coins in flat palms keeping his eyes down so that they can be taken. "Miridán hiNatéla, my noble master thanks you for your gracious welcome to Sokatis and offer of speed us to our destination. He bids me say that he looks forward to discussing this noble gesture with members of his clan in Imperial service or perhaps the Governor when the opportunity arises." Finished, Boró bows and backs away from the now obviously disconcerted guard.

In a loud voice, Miridán says, "Slave, please thank your noble lord for his generosity and bid him wait a moment please." He then turns with purpose and enters the guard tower.

From below, everyone, but particularly Qoli, hears a raucous tune erupt from one of the soldiers that has a stringed instrument in hand. In an excellent voice, he launches into lyrics that describe a young soldier's repeated humorous attempts to lose his virginity only to fail through one hilarious mishap after another. The final verse finds him booted by an angry chlen accidentally into the boudoir of a wondrous Golden Bough beauty who has him lose his virginity to the high ride for his impertinence. When done, all of the soldiers nearby erupt in applause. He bows low but his eyes rise to meet those of Qoli hoping that she will deign to acknowledge him. While he is fair to look upon, it is unclear what clan the player is.

**Qoli hiVu'urtesh**  
player, 6 posts  
Priestess of Hnalla  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Wed 21 Jan 2004  
at 21:04



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Sitar Strumming on the Sakbe at Sokatis** [\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #5

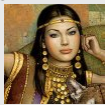
Qoli stepped back from the edge of the roadback and the mass of Tsolyani below, and went over to stand in the shade of her palanquin where she could clear her head and regain her bearings.

While staring at the buildings visible through the open gates, a song started up (on a different level of the sakbe road?) admist a group of soldiers. Drawn by curiosity as much as the jaunty melody, she flowed closer to hear the singer.

The song, with its coarse, daresay peasant lyrics, brought a smile to her face. That is until it introduced the Golden Bough maiden. As the song progressed, Qoli's face took on an ever more placid expression, until utterly dissociated from the music, her attention and self simply drifted elsewhere, away from the soldiers.

	<p>By the time the song came to a conclusion she was distant, staring again at the visible buildings and rooftops of Sokatis, wrapped in the deep shawl of her thoughts.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 12 posts Sun 25 Jan 2004 at 23:21</p>  <p>PM   rMail   Sheet   info</p>	<p><b>Look what I found</b> [edit]   [delete]   msg #6</p> <p>Miridán emerges from the guard tower followed by a guardsman and slave, both in Golden Bough livery. He approaches Kotaru's palanquin and bows deeply and formally. After a brief but obvious struggle to remember your names, he addresses you generically:</p> <p>"Nobles of the Golden Bough, I must return your generous gift. When I went below to assign one of my guards to escort you, I was informed that a separate palanquin with slaves and guards had been sent to deliver you to your clanhouse."</p> <p>Giving the two kaitar to Boró, he then motions the guardsman and slave forward. They approach and bow. The guardsman addresses you in a rolling base voice.</p> <p>"Most noble Kotaru hiSerekel of ancient and noble Golden Bough, I have the honor of welcoming you to Sokatis, eastern jewel of Tsolyanu. I am Ngáru hiChákkena of the White Stone Clan and, for the moment, captain of your guard. At the base of the Sakbe road, we have one of your clan's palanquins. If it is your wish, you may move to this other with any in your entourage so that you may leave the cares of your journey behind you the sooner. Your current palanquins can then follow us. Or, if it is your pleasure, you may wish to continue as you are so that you may reach the wonders of Shanshálo, your clanhouse the sooner."</p>
<p><b>Kotaru hiSerekel</b> player, 3 posts Sorceror Priest- Chegárra Clan of Golden Bough Thu 29 Jan 2004 at 14:37</p>  <p>PM   rMail   Sheet   info</p>	<p><b>Re: Look what I found</b> [quote]   [edit]   [delete]   msg #7</p> <p>OOC: I am making a few assumptions. If I am incorrect, I can edit my post accordingly.</p> <p>IC: Kotaru listens patiently, only his fan moving, as first Miridán and then Ngáru speak. (If they are speaking directly to him, they must be of sufficient status to do so.) When they are done, Kotaru replies.</p> <p>"Captain Ngáru hiChákkena, our gratitude to yourself and your clan. We accept your assistance with pleasure." He nods his head, and then continues. "We thank you for directing us to the palanquin below, and will proceed anon." He turns to the man designated for keeping their entourage organized. "See that everything is brought down to the base of the road, so that we may continue. Do not allow yourselves to become separated." He gestures for four of his guardsmen to accompany him. Then, with his personal entourage, he will move to Qoli's palanquin. "My cousin, shall we descend? We'll endeavor to ignore your admirers, shall we?" Kotaru smiles indulgently.</p> <p>Kotaru plans to descend to the waiting palanquin, and then help Qoli enter. He will join her, and wait for the remainder of their entourage to descend and reorganize. Finally, he will gesture to Ngáru again. "Once more, you have our gratitude. Please be so kind as to proceed, if you are ready."</p> <p>Having enjoyed the brief respite from the confines of his palanquin, Kotaru prepares for a less-interminable journey to the clan house. He will idly note their surroundings as they pass through the streets. Turning to his companion, Kotaru asks "Well, cousin, what think you of splendid Sokatis? Does it meet your expectations? First impressions can be entertaining." His expression is congenial. Apparently, journey's end meets with his approval.</p>
<p><b>Qoli hiVu'urtesh</b> player, 7 posts</p>	<p><b>Back in Sokatis</b> [quote]   [edit]   [delete]   msg #8</p>

Priestess of Hnalla  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Mon 16 Feb 2004  
at 10:10



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Qoli allows her attention to be drawn from the city to Kotaru as he offers to escort her to the clan palanquin below.

For a moment, as she turns her gaze towards Kotaru it seems she doesn't react to his words. Then her attention crystalizes and with a smile she holds her arm out to Kotaru (OOC: or the equivalent), and without another look back, steps down off the Sakbe road into the crowd below.

Once below she examines the members of the entourage and satisfied, she enters and settles herself within the palanquin. As the bearers carry them towards the clan house, she reclines and peers out at the passing city. As Kotaru engages her on their surroundings, her responses in turn become more involved until, out of the blue, she turns to him and responds to some random comment "Really? I haven't visited Bey Su. The style of the carvings on the facades differ to that degree? Interesting. Is it much larger? Bey Su that is. \*laughing\* Sokatis is filled with so many people buzzing about like dri ants in a hive. It almost makes me fear a giant foot coming down to cast the nest asunder."

**Kotaru hiSerekel**  
player, 4 posts  
Sorceror Priest-  
Chegárra  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Sun 22 Feb 2004  
at 23:31



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**Re: Back in Sokatis**

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #9

**Qoli hiVu'urtesh typed:**

As Kotaru engages her on their surroundings, her responses in turn become more involved until, out of the blue, she turns to him and responds to some random comment "Really? I haven't visited Bey Su. The style of the carvings on the facades differ to that degree? Interesting. Is it much larger? Bey Su that is. \*laughing\* Sokatis is filled with so many people buzzing about like dri ants in a hive. It almost makes me fear a giant foot coming down to cast the nest asunder."

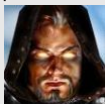
Kotaru's smile becomes genuine as Qoli drops her reserve, and he laughs quietly at her 'outburst.'

"La, cousin, Sokatis reminds me of an insect hive as well, but I wish to cast no aspersions on the insects! I would cheerfully be that heel, yet would consider the effort out of proportion to the nuisance." He chuckles again.

"Very well, I exaggerate of course. All to see your eyes widen. Sokatis is busy, yes, but I have missed Bey Su greatly since I left it. Therefore I must struggle to see this place objectively, for it can never sate the longing in my heart. Thus, I would see Sokatis through your eyes, the better to appreciate it and lighten my mood. I am in your debt, young lady, should you deign to continue sharing your observations with me."

He leans back slightly, and motions towards the newest architectural marvel their path has crossed. "For instance, I see these carvings as simpler than I am used to. Do they convey a sense of strength to you, or boldness perhaps? What are my eyes blind to here?"

**SuuShih**  
GM, 14 posts  
Sat 15 May 2004  
at 22:24





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**Re: Back in Sokatis**

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #10

Not lightly is Sokatis called the Eastern Jewel. Flowering vines of every hue descend from every terrace. From building to building and street to street, these terraces interlock so that they cover the walkways and entrances to either side. The din of numerous open-air markets, where hawkers proclaim the merits of goods from many distant lands, can be heard rising and falling as you progress. Music, equally varied, mixes in to create a distinctive cocophany unlike any place either of you have ever been. Slaves bustle to and fro on various errands. While the crowds are thick, gaps can be seen around the occasional shen, moving like armored lizard mountains. Clearly, from all the troops, the city is prosperous and on a war footing.

	<p>Your palanquin is huge, by any standard, and is at least hundreds of years old. It is well above your station within the clan, but the Clan Elder obviously wanted you two to feel welcome. 40 slaves bear it through the crowd. Beautiful slaves of both sexes move deftly about the interior seeing to your every comfort and need, however jaded. From an exquisite inset magical box, chilled fruit and drinks are provided that are as wonderful as they are distinct. So, it is with some regret that you two finally arrive after an hour at the top of a small fortified hill where you can see the beautiful vistas of Shanshálo before you.</p> <p>After the slaves place the palanquin atop a support designed for that purpose, you descend sturdy steps to approach your clan house. Half-way to the house, as is the custom, another member of the White Stone clan, a well-dressed woman of midling years, waits in appropriate bow to greet you.</p> <p>"Noble Ones, be welcome. Like my ancestors for hundreds of years, I have the honor of being Senechal of Shanshálo. I am Elára hiNaqúma. Clan Elder Arsála hiSharvóya asked that I arrange for your arrival and see to your accomodations during your stay. I trust that my clan cousin has not dishonored us." She favors Captain Ngáru with a smile. Until that moment, you didn't realize he had come up behind you and to your side.</p> <p>She motions to two pairs of slaves, each with a man and woman who quickly come up and kneel on the ground before you. "These slaves will see to your needs while you live here. They will tell you the names that they go by or, if it pleases you, you may rename them. All are skilled and, as you can see, well endowed. In a few hours, after the sun has set and you are bathed and rested, your slaves will bring you to a small clan dinner in your honor to welcome you and introduce you to those clan members who are here this evening."</p>
<p><b>Qoli hiVu'urtesh</b> player, 8 posts Sorceror/Priestess-Hnalla Clan of Golden Bough Thu 20 May 2004 at 16:12</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Back in Sokatis</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #11</p> <p>Qoli waits quietly beside Kotaru as they are greeted by the seneschal then with an indecipherable expression at the slaves.</p> <p>With her normal impassive public face she waits for Kotaru to make the appropriate incantation. As the silence drags on, she decides some response is better than none, and essays to smile to Elara, turns her head to include Captain Ngáru, then returns to face Elara and with a bow of her head, she says</p> <p>"The ride and chilled drinks were great, and your words of a bath.. sound nearly as lovely as some of the heavens of some barbarian tribe or other my oma told me stories of. You've made it a pleasant arrival. Thank you both."</p> <p>With that she stops and once again waits for Koatru.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 17 posts Thu 20 May 2004 at 17:10</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Back in Sokatis</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #12</p> <p>Elára's eyebrows arch upwards the tiniest bit and his head cocks ever so slightly. With a smile that's a bit strained, she bows formally and precisely acknowledging your thank you. "You honor us greatly."</p>
<p><b>Qoli hiVu'urtesh</b> player, 9 posts Sorceror/Priestess-Hnalla Clan of Golden Bough Sat 22 May 2004</p>	<p><b>Re: Back in Sokatis</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #13</p> <p>OOOC: More of an amusing side note. The chilled drink/sorbet dispenser would actually be a new addition in canon Tekumel. I believe one of the professor's players, perhaps Arumel was granted an Imperial patent based on his novel invention :)</p>



at 22:30



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### Kotaru hiSerekel

player, 5 posts  
Sorcerer Priest-  
Chegarra  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Sun 23 May 2004  
at 13:13



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### Re: Back in Sokatis

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #14

#### SuuShih typed:

Elára's eyebrows arch upwards the tiniest bit and his head cocks ever so slightly. With a smile that's a bit strained, she bows formally and precisely acknowledging your thank you. "You honor us greatly."

After having enjoyed the appointments of their palanquin, the young man disembarks at Shanshálo with a better disposition. He favors Qoli with a smile, and the two enter.

Kotaru bows appropriately to the Seneschal, and replies, "Most gracious Seneschal, your attentions are welcome. My cousin, Qoli hiVu'urtesh, and I, Kotaru hiSerekel, are honored by the generosity of Shanshálo and its wise elders. Truly, it is as though we were welcomed by our own mothers and elders." His face displays pleasure, although his movements are stiff and formal. "Captain Ngáru rescued us from an interminable afternoon. It is most fortunate for us that he acted so honorably." He turns to the Captain and executes a slight and correct bow. "You have our gratitude, noble captain."

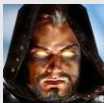
Firmly taking Qoli's arm (as appropriate), Kotaru begs their leave. "We will trouble you no more, then. Until tonight." A final bow, and then Kotaru motions to the slaves to lead the way.

Once out of easy earshot, Kotaru speaks quietly to Qoli. "My dear cousin, regardless of whether I reply quickly enough for you, please allow me to act as a model for your behavior. A good clan girl is not forward."

Having arrived at their quarters, Kotaru addresses the slaves. "Please inform me as to your names, so that we may communicate easily." Turning to the girl, "Please draw a bath," and to the man, "Go you to the entry of the clanhouse and wait upon the arrival of our retinue, then advise them of their accommodations. Return when you have finished."

### SuuShih

GM, 19 posts  
Sun 23 May 2004  
at 16:12



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### Shanshálo

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #15

Elára gives Kotaru a slightly less ingenuous smile than she did Qoli, thanking him for his kind words. Still, from the slight tensing, he's somehow sure that he didn't bow appropriately. "May your stay and that of your clan cousin be as enjoyable and beneficial as the God Chegarra and Goddess Hnalla may grant." Her bow to both of you is precise and beautifully executed.

Shanshálo is quite spacious with numerous courts and verandas, all beautifully appointed. The view from atop this hill is absolutely breathtaking, arguably equal or better than that of the Imperial Governor's palace that you can see rising on a knoll in the middle of Sokatis. The city's beauty contrasts starkly with that of the Ebzul tree forest with its majestic giants. An evening rain shower can be seen approaching on the horizon. Given the small number of clan members and servants that you pass, your clan house is either absurdly unused or most of its residents are occupied elsewhere at this time of day.

Each of you is lead by your slaves to separate apartments that are within easy

walking distance of each other. Particularly for Kotaru, after the closet-like studio that he has had to share in Bey Su, the quarters here are palatial. They are larger and more extravagant than anything that either of you expected.

The house has a number of shared bathing pools at ground level and beneath it. Much to your surprise, because these areas are typically crowded, the pools to which you are lead are small and empty of others, which is a relief after the long trip, heat and noise. While you may use these pools, you are informed that they usually must be reserved and that most choose to use the larger pools where you can share conversation with others.

[Private to Kotaru hiSerekel: The reason that your apartment in Bey Su was so small was that it was located in the Palace of the Realm where real estate is absitively at a premium.]

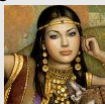
After essentially a Roman bath experience during which you are soaped, rinsed, steeped, oiled, scraped and massaged, you both return to your rooms refreshed and revitalized where your slaves are waiting to prepare you for the evening. From their reactions, the personal slaves that you brought with you are quite excited about everything that they're seeing and experiencing as well. Still, you sense a bit of tension. The two new slaves in both cases let it be known by word and deed that they are eager to help you relieve any sexual tensions or, if they don't please you, will do what's necessary to assure your happiness and health. Both have received special training in this area.

Both of you have modest though appropriate wardrobes. Kotaru, by virtue of growing up in Bey Su, has a few more elaborate outfits. Still, both of you will need to expand your wardrobes over time. The outfits laid out for each of you are not as elaborate as one would wear to a formal occasion, but nicer than you would wear normally. As Tuleng begins to set in the West, a slave comes to each of your apartments to inform you that your presence is requested in the Forest Room. All of your personal slaves accompany you leaving you at the room entrance, but staying within easy sight if you have the need for anything.

[Private to Kotaru hiSerekel; Qoli hiVu'urtesh: Please provide names for your slaves and, if you'd like, flesh out their backgrounds to add a bit of color. Roll or not. The comeliness of Kotaru's two slaves are Female: 99, M: 84, while for Qoli F: 86, M: 98. At this point, you both have the single body slaves that you brought with you and the two new slaves assigned. In Kotaru's case, his personal slave's name is Boro. You both sense a bit of unproductive friction between your slaves as they vie for dominance. You might want to clarify this before more friction develops. The other slaves who traveled with you go into the shared slave-pool to be used by anyone in your clan. Before I take you to the Forest Room, I wanted to give you both an opportunity to let me know if you do anything special prior to going. You each bear letters to various clan members as well as introductory letters to the Clan Elder. Still, is this the right time to pass these letters along? :)]

#### Qoli hiVu'urtesh

player, 10 posts  
Sorceror/Priestess-  
Hnalla  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Mon 24 May 2004  
at 11:30



PM | rMail | Sheet |

#### Re: Shanshálo

[quote] | [edit] | [delete] | msg #16

Qoli allows herself to be led out of Elara's presence, but once alone with only the slaves to lead them to their quarters she removes her arm from Kotaru's grasp.

"Thank you cousin Kotaru. I gratefully cede you the lead, since I barely know the dance. That said, I am no clan girl beholden to do so, nor am I a child to be physically handled uninvited... ever. I enjoy your company, I didn't invite your intimacy, and I expect to be treated with minimal respect, regardless of how it is done in Bey Su."

	<p><a href="#">info</a> &lt;This may lead to a larger conversation, or perhaps not. If not then when she arrives at her rooms.&gt;</p> <p>Qoli will nod to Kotaru</p> <p>"Thank you again for your kindness during the travels, you made the trip much less tedious. Now I'm off to re-discover what color my skin is under this dust. Perhaps we will continue to cross paths during our stay, if so I look forward to your sure step."</p> <p>[Private to GM: In her rooms, Qoli will indeed be enthused to clean off. This has been a long sweaty trip. She will leave her personal slave who knows her preferences, and the male slave to unpack her things and select a wardrobe. She will have the clanhouse's female slave attend to her bath. In her bath, she will alternately splash about and luxuriate lazily. She will also strike up conversation with the slave.. ask her name, ask about the clanhouse, who is who, what they are like, local gossip, etc. Qoli may not have ettiquete down, but she probably knows better than most city bred folk just how much the servants and lower clan workmen know about goings on.]</p>
<p><b>Kotaru hiSerekel</b>  player, 6 posts  Sorceror Priest-  Chegárra  Clan of Golden Bough  Wed 26 May 2004  at 13:30</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Shanshálo</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #17</p> <p>Kotaru's eyebrows arch as he considers Qoli's words. Cocking his head a bit to the right, he nods in both acknowledgement and acquiescence. In a somewhat business-like voice, he simply replies, "Clan cousin, no offense was meant. Shall I then treat you as a fierce Aridani matron? Despite not having a vaunted lineage, I would see one of your obvious beauty and wit meet your potential. You're no longer living in a backward province. Rank, power and position are here like a juicy dlel waiting to be picked." Kotaru smiles to take any edge or implied criticism off of his remarks.</p>
<p><b>Qoli hiVu'urtesh</b>  player, 11 posts  Sorceror/Priestess-  Hnalla  Clan of Golden Bough  Wed 26 May 2004  at 14:37</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Shanshálo</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #18</p> <p>Nods and pauses a moment thinking, then smiles back to Kotaru, "Thank you for the measure of your wisdom, cousin. Luckily, while I may lack grace in the great dance, being a poor farmer as you note, the gathering of fruit is something in which I am well versed. I will well remember your words and offer."</p>
<p><b>Kotaru hiSerekel</b>  player, 7 posts  Sorceror Priest-  Chegárra  Clan of Golden Bough  Thu 27 May 2004  at 21:54</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Shanshálo</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #19</p> <p>On his way to his apartment, Kotaru rolls Qoli's phrase "measure of his wisdom" around in his head. What did that <i>girl</i> mean? Not "his wisdom", but the "<i>measure</i>" of it. About the time that he figures out that she was having a bit of subtle fun at his expense, he immerses himself into hot water for his bath and briefly forgets all of his cares.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b>  GM, 27 posts  Sun 6 Jun 2004  at 21:05</p>	<p><b>Re: Shanshálo</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #20</p> <p>The Forest Room is on the side of Shanshálo facing away from the City. It is octagonal in shape with four sides opening outward onto balconies. Fine nets that</p>



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are almost invisible cover these openings to prevent insects from intruding. A gentle rain drifts down muting the distinct noises of the nearby rain forest that rise up to provide the atmosphere to accompany the meal. To distinguish notable clan members, minor platforms and cushions are set out around centuries old beautiful low tables inlaid with Golden Bough meshqu and filigree. A separate higher dais is set aside near the middle of the central table containing the Kolumel, a representation of the Seal of the Imperium. These tables are set off by intricate carpets, wall hangings and exotic plants to complete the décor. This room could comfortably seat 80 people at its eight tables. For each person in attendance, there are two personal serving slaves.

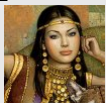
Qoli and Kotaru arrive together. Aside from the slaves, there are a number of distinguished individuals standing and conversing in the Forest Room. Elára hiNaqúma, in resplendent though understated thessun gauze, bows formally and smiles warmly, evidently aware that such introductions are necessarily stressful and trying to somehow blunt this with her own familiar face. In a distinct voice, she announces you to the assemblage:

"Noble Ones of the Shanshálo Golden Bough, I have the honor of introducing Qoli hiVu'urtesh and Kotaru hiSerekel."

A woman who must easily be over 60 years in age steps from behind a distinguished older man in military garb to approach. The other clan members bow graciously out of her way so that she may approach unhindered. She has a pronounced limp in her left leg that she supports with an ornate cane with a golden tree handle. Her smile though is deeply warm, immediately putting you both at ease. Taking Qoli and Kotaru by the hands, you each feel this woman's strength and frailty. "I am Clan Elder Arsála hiSharvóya" To Qoli with a big smile, "Welcome child! You *do* have your mother's beauty. One of such distinguished lineage belongs here; I'll see personally to your future as I would one of my daughters." Turning to Kotaru, "Young man, welcome to my home these past 70 years. Your own august lineage of Serekel does us honor by your presence here." Stepping back, she concluded quietly, "You're both *home*!"

#### Qoli hiVu'urtesh

player, 12 posts  
Sorcerer/Priestess-  
Hnalla  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Tue 8 Jun 2004  
at 23:42



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#### Re: Shanshálo


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[OOC: For posterity, and for reference, I've been asked to incorporate some of Kotaru's roleplaying until we find a new player.]

Qoli is escorted by her slaves to the entry of the Forest Room, where they indicate respectfully that she is to wait with Kotaru before entering and being introduced. They are both well dressed and set out.

Kotaru is resplendent. His clothing is of the finest Salarvyani silk with a wide check pattern of red and white as befits a priest of Chegarra. His hair is oiled and scented with rare oils, and precious bands of fine workmanship sit upon his wrists. He is accompanied and tended by his slaves, one of whom procures a cool drink while he waits, and another who helps to smooth the precise lines of his outfit. He is a son of Bey Su, and his confidence is clear.

Qoli's appearance is different. Her clothes are of commendable material and unusually simple cut, primarily of white cloth, with golden thread and minor details. She is wearing her full meshqu deliniating her family and place, as well as her profession. Her hair has been been coifed into an elegant pattern which has a bit of a foreign feel from the styles of Bey Su, but suites her well. She is strikingly attractive and while she attempts to project an uninvolved demeanor, the effect is mildly ruined by a certain tension in her carriage. Still, she is girded for this first meeting as best she knows how.

	<p>While waiting, Qoli and Kotaru greet briefly, but each is focused on their own thoughts.</p> <p>As they are bid enter, Qoli allows Kotaru to advance before her by a step, allowing him to face the first brunt of whatever is inside the room as she would prefer and he would deem appropriate.</p> <p>This positioning is compromised when the sensechal, Elara hiNaquma introduces Qoli first, forcing her to step forward. Kotaru can not help a very brief glance at Qoli as she steps to his side and he rapidly attempts to re-assess their relative status and remember what exactly he said to her earlier. He regains his bearing quite rapidly. Rapidly enough that it is unclear whether he is abashed, offended or simply surprised.</p> <p>Still, both Kotaru and Qoli have someone more important upon whom to focus their attention, Arsála hiSharvóya. As the Clan Elder Arsála hiSharvóya introduces herself, both of the travellers straighten their backs and fix their undivided attention of her. When she takes their hands, both Qoli and Kotaru startle briefly. When she greets Qoli, the young woman is apparently overcome, her eyes glistening a bit. When she greets Kotaru, he accepts the greeting and responds in kind.</p> <p>"Clan Elder Arsala, you grace me with the gift of hospitality to great Shanshalo, whose beauty is spoken of even in Bey Su. My clan cousins had told me of the marvels to be found, but truly I find reality to their words as the light of Tuleng to the dim glow of the moon Kashi. There is nothing that I might offer to match your welcome. Alas, all I have in turn is this modest gift, though I pray you might look upon it with favor. I am honored to guest in your house." At that, his handslave, brings him a small, beautifully carved box of some form of ivory, which he in turn hands to Arsala while bowing.</p> <p>After Arsala replies to Kotaru (which I'll leave up to the illustrious GM), her attention, and the attention of the others present, turns to Qoli.</p> <p>Qoli seems at a loss for words, then shakes her head and speaks in a somewhat hoarse voice. "My parents were worried for me, and prepared me for most any greeting," Qoli says then pauses briefly and takes a deep breath before continuing. "I expected to find many things in Sokatis, but I didn't expect to find another home." Qoli bows and kisses Arsala's hand. "Thank you Clan Mother. I'm gratified to hear you knew my mother and see her in me. Here is a gift my parents bid me bring you. I'm certain it would please them, as much as it would me if you'd accept it. Thank you. Thank you again for opening your doors to me."</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b>  GM, 30 posts  Sat 12 Jun 2004  at 23:30</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Oooooo .... ahhhhhh</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #22</p> <p>Those nearby gather around to express appreciation for the gifts you two have so nobly given.</p> <p>Inside the ivory case is an ancient scroll written by the famous poet Tuko some 2,000 years ago.</p> <p>Qoli's gift comes in a beautiful white silk sack embroidered in gold thread with the Golden Bough Meshqu and the personal chop of the clan estate her family now oversees. Inside, appropriately padded, is a small bottle of very rare Ngalu liqueur that, by its label, is over 100 years old. There's also a small note inside that Arsala reads and breaks in peels of laughter.</p> <p>"Qoli, your mother warns me that this liqueur is an unsurpassed aphrodisiac and that I should avoid imbibing it near any man I do not wish to send to Belhanu's</p>

paradise with an unsurpassed smile."

Bowing formally to both of you, Arsala continues, "I thank you both for the generous gifts from your families and, again, say that you are both most welcome new additions to Shanshálo."

Arsala goes on to introduce each person. While there are 22 clan members present for this feast, the most notable members in attendance are the following:

Dardayél hiKhanúma, Kérdudali (Senior General) of the Phalanx of Heretlékka, 34th Heavy Infantry, Worships Avanthé

Nirénu hiKhanúma, brother of Dardayél, Kenéng (General) of the Phalanx of Heretlékka, 34th Heavy Infantry, Worships Avanthé

Kacháya hiVaisonér, Qusunchu (High Ritual Priest) of Hru'u

Choriggáshte hiVriddi, Tselinal (Great Wizard Priest-Sorceress) of Vimuhla, visiting from Fasiltum

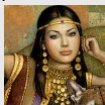
Meshmuyel hiSsaivra, Acolyte of Ksarul, originally from Bey Su, a contemporary of Kotaru sent a year back to study at Ksarul's great temple in Sokatis.

Prior to introductions, Choriggáshte had been hanging back from the others. Perhaps, she's just aloof. When she is introduced, you both have the fleeting impression that she's screwing up her courage to do something that she dreads. During the introduction to Choriggáshte, it's as though your lives flash through your minds in their entirety. It's a flash that comes when she raises her eyes to you, so quickly and gently is it done, almost shocking. Neither of you have ever experienced anything similar so probably do not know what occurred. During this experience, Qoli reflexively shuts down the contact. For her part, Choriggáshte seems embarrassed. Afterwards, Choriggáshte seems to want to say something, but decides against it. She does give Qoli a long strange look as though something is bothering her. However, the moment quickly passes as further introductions are made.

For the feast, Kotaru, Qoli and Meshmuyel are seated at the head table with Arsala and each of the other notables. You're positioned across from Arsala so that you can easily converse with everyone.

#### Qoli hiVu'urtesh

player, 13 posts  
Sorcerer/Priestess-  
Hnalla  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Mon 14 Jun 2004  
at 00:01



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#### Re: Oooooo .... ahhhhhhh

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Qoli smiles and perhaps even giggles with Arsala, who has succeeded at putting her at ease.



This carries over to the formal introductions. Still, the dizzying numbers (at least to Qoli) of clan brethren, do seem to leave her a bit out of breath and overwhelmed as the ceremonial introductions go on.. and on. The introduction to Kachaya seemed to capture her interest, certainly Qoli appraised him intently.

[Private to SuuShih: Given that she has never met a priest (or perhaps even a follower) of Hru'u before. I guess they don't have glowing eyes and sharp teeth.]



In general, Qoli gets the formulas correct, or at least correct enough. She is of course not city born and allowances have to be made.

Things go smoothly for Qoli until the introduction to Choriggáshte. The sudden mental flash is startling, and Qoli's gaze and attention refocus from the dazed and glazed look the extensive formalities have caused. She looks first at Choriggáshte,



	<p>then around the room at Arsala and the other clan members for some cue or clue of what happened or how she should react. In the absence of such, Qoli attempts to return to the ritual greeting and move on to the next notable.</p> <p>For a period after this, Qoli is less engaged, her face showing a bland and indifferent expression, one her companions saw often during their journey. Still after a time, Arsala comes and with a few words seems to put Qoli more at ease once again.</p> <p>By the time, the assembled clan members have gathered for the feast, Qoli has mingled amongst a few of the assembled, smiling, though generally listening more than talking unless asked questions.</p> <p>During the meal itself, she talks to Nirénu hiKhanúma, younger brother to Dardayel, who is sitting to her right between herself and Kotaru, and Nriga hiChrayu (OOC: Figured I'd make up another of the 18 or so unnamed locals), a handsome visaged clan trader who worships Ketengku and dabbles in history as a hobby.</p>
<p><b>Kotaru hiSerekel</b>  player, 8 posts  Sorcerer Priest-  Chegárra  Clan of Golden Bough  Wed 23 Jun 2004  at 17:11</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Oooooo .... ahhhhhhh</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #24</p> <p>The light fog of mental contact begins to clear. Kotaru recovers quickly from his initial consternation to resume an outwardly genial manner, as though nothing extraordinary has happened. He considers inwardly, though, during all the formalities and for some time afterward what has just occurred.</p> <p>Along with the pleasantries of the meal, and the polite table talk, he weighs it. Was the purpose of that contact to read him and the others, possibly to seek out cowans or spies in the group? Perhaps it was meant to call up in each of them a review of their lives as a pleasant remembrance (or stern reminder)? Could the contact have been purely accidental? No. There was the strain of definite purpose, even of a duty performed despite its unpleasant effects. Curious. Possibly it was even done at the behest of the Dlantukoi (tr.: Clan Elder).</p> <p>Kotaru discreetly studies Choriggashte' for signs of any stress or ill effect as he enjoys the excellent meal. He remains engaged in the dinner's conversations flowing about him like so much smoke.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b>  GM, 44 posts  Wed 23 Jun 2004  at 23:17</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Minor violation</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #25</p> <p>In truth, if Kotaru and Qoli had not been so focused on each of your clan cousins as they were introduced, you probably would not have noticed that anything happened at all. You can surely guess that perhaps Choriggáshte is a telepath, but you have no way of being sure. If she is, then you're not sure how to gauge this gross violation of your minds. Surely though, she is held in very high esteem here.</p> <p>Qoli notes that Kotaru's and Meshmuyel's greetings are oddly warm as though reestablishing an old relationship of some kind. What certainly sets it off is that Meshmuyel addresses Kotaru in formal Engsvanyali. Kotaru smiles and bows, responding rapidly in kind. Meshmuyel's reply though is slow and stuttering a bit, indicating that he had gone to the effort of practicing his initial greeting ahead of time in anticipation of this meeting.</p> <p>Your assigned serving slaves respectfully direct everyone to their cushions. The three of you would not normally merit seats at the high table within your clan. This honor is accorded to you as the guests of honor. Meshmuyel's invitation to sit there is an effort to put Kotaru at ease.</p> <p>For her part, Arsala lightly takes the High General's arm, asking that he help her to her cushion. A request he's only too happy to comply with.</p>

<div> <b>Meshmuyel hiSsaivra</b>  player, 1 post  Priest Sorcerer of Ksarul  Golden Bough  Sun 27 Jun 2004  at 09:11  <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a> </div>	<div> <b>Observations</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #26 </div> <p>When Arsala performed introductions, Méshmuyel greets Qoli and Kotaru using tûsmítlévu (the 'you' of the fealty of many, used for respected clansmen and women), but there is more warmth in his voice than for the others. He adds a polite welcome he memorized, in his best Engsvanyali.</p> <p>His eyes narrow slightly upon seeing Choriggáshte, placing her as one of those who use psychic arts to ward nobles from danger.</p> <p>Méshmuyel is garbed simply in kilt, over-tunic, black-velvet skullcap and sandals, but of high quality materials. Designs on his tunic proclaim his clan and lineage.</p> <p>As far as possible, Méshmuyel will engage Kotaru's assistance in correcting his Engsvanyali. When the conversation drifts to other topics, he will lapse into quiet listening to see what he can learn from the others at the table. He also gazes down at the tiers below to try and discern if anyone besides clan-members are dining.</p> <p>(OOC: How many tiers on this dais Adam?)</p> <p>If Méshmuyel picks up on the momentary contact between Kotaru and Choriggáshte, he will take time to study her carefully, trying to note any useful details.</p>
<div> <b>Kotaru hiSerekel</b>  player, 9 posts  Sorcerer Priest-  Chegárra  Clan of Golden Bough  Sun 27 Jun 2004  at 14:33    <a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a> </div>	<div> <b>Re: Observations</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #27 </div> <p>&lt;quote Meshmuyel hiSsaivra &gt;</p> <p>When Arsala performed introductions, Méshmuyel greets Qoli and Kotaru using tûsmítlévu (the 'you' of the fealty of many, used for respected clansmen and women), but there is more warmth in his voice than for the others. He adds a polite welcome he memorized, in his best Engsvanyali.</p> <p>[Kotaru, in Classical Engsvanyali]  "Will met, my friend. May fortune smile upon this meeting and upon us."</p> <p>Listening to Meshmuyel's reply, and deciding that continued conversation in what amounts to a secret language may be impolitic, Kotaru shifts back to Tsolyani, "It is truly good to see you (of honorable youth) again, my friend. Your Engsvanyali has improved. I'm pleased that you continue your studies. All is well with you and your family, I trust?"</p> <p>[clip: Meshmuyel's inward reactions to Choriggashte]</p> <p>Méshmuyel is garbed simply in kilt, over-tunic, black-velvet skullcap and sandals, but of high quality materials. Designs on his tunic proclaim his clan and lineage.</p> <p>As far as possible, Méshmuyel will engage Kotaru's assistance in correcting his Engsvanyali.</p> <p>And Kotaru will reply with some enthusiasm on this topic, being pleased to see Meshmuyel again. He will, as mentioned earlier, enter into conversation with all around as opportunity presents itself. After all, he wouldn't want to be impolite... and there might be much to learn about their present situation.</p> <p>To his lovely clan-cousin he says, "Qoli, you're enjoying yourself well enough. It's good to see you thus after our long journey."</p>

<p><b>Qoli hiVu'urtesh</b>  player, 15 posts  Sorceror/Priestess-Hnalla  Clan of Golden Bough  Mon 28 Jun 2004  at 10:36</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Observations</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #28</p> <p>Qoli smiles to Kotaru.</p> <p>"Thank you clan cousin Kotaru. I'd have to credit the kind hospitality of Shanshalo. And you, I hope your accomodations have been to your satisfaction and you are well settled."</p> <p>Looking between Meshmuyel and Kotaru, "If I might ask, what was the language you two greeted each other with? Was it a foreign tongue or a classical one? The sound reminds me of an archaic prayer."</p>
<p><b>Meshmuyel hiSsaivra</b>  player, 2 posts  Priest Sorcerer of Ksarul  Golden Bough  Mon 28 Jun 2004  at 17:46</p> <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Salutations</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #29</p> <p>To Qoli, Méshmuyel greets her with his best smile as tûsmitléshu (you of gentle glory), appropriate for a lady (or Aridáni) of noble status, and explains: "Friend Kotaru has been kind enough to help guide my stammering tongue in the language of long, lost Ganga. His golden tongue cleaves their impossible verbs with the same skill as mighty Chegárra uses with his sword!"</p> <p>To both his clan-cousins: "Come, what brings the two of you from the splendor of far Bey Sü to the stately "Roofed City" where I have learned one may cross from side to side in any direction without suffering the least ray of sunlight?"</p>
<p><b>Kotaru hiSerekel</b>  player, 10 posts  Sorceror Priest-Chegárra  Clan of Golden Bough  Wed 30 Jun 2004  at 17:31</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Salutations</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #30</p> <p>"My friend draws too grand a picture of me," Kotaru protests to Qoli, "Though I will say that having him to converse with adds much of the color to it." He grins a bit sheepishly.</p> <p>As much to Lady Arsala as to Qoli's query, he replies, "The apartments so graciously loaned to us are truly wonderful. We have much for which to be grateful here at Shanshalo. Whatever else may transpire, we will be comfortable here."</p> <p>Turning to Meshmuyel, he continues almost without pause, "We are here to be of whatever service we may to the clan, of course. I'm sure the reasons and manner of services we may render will become clearer in due course." He pauses to take a sip of the wine, continues, "Perhap later on we can have a game of Denden and talk at greater length? It has been quite a while since we've had a chance to play..."</p>
<p><b>Qoli hiVu'urtesh</b>  player, 16 posts  Sorceror/Priestess-Hnalla  Clan of Golden Bough  Thu 1 Jul 2004  at 01:32</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Salutations</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #31</p> <p>Qoli waits for Kotaru to respond to his acquaintance and take the conversational lead. She listens to Kotaru's modest declination of praise, and she raises an eyebrow as he responds away Meshmuyel's query about the purpose of his travels to another subject.</p> <p>As the slaves begin guiding the three to their seats at the head table, Qoli offers:</p> <p>"I hope to hear more about both of your scholarship and studies in Bey Su. I just wish you had spoken of it during our journey, Kotaru. It might have helped me forget that I was melting like a heated candle in that stifling palanquin."</p>
<p><b>Meshmuyel hiSsaivra</b>  player, 3 posts  Priest Sorcerer of Ksarul</p>	<p><b>The Repast Begins</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #32</p> <p>Smiling broadly, Meshmuyel says, "I look forward to a game, my friend. The players in the temple here have taught me some new stratagems."</p>

Golden Bough  
Mon 5 Jul 2004  
at 07:08  
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Gesturing with his hands so as to take in both Qoli and Kotaru, he adds, "For whatever reason the Weaver brings you here, our Skeins are enhanced by your presence. La! It is time to ascend to our places."

Meshmuyel then gives a small bow and gestures to indicate Qoli and Kotaru should precede him. As they move to the proper mats, he tries to see exactly who is to be seated next to his clan-cousins -- this may provide an additional clue to why they are here.

[Private to SuuShih: At the meal, Meshmuyel will stick to water and Chumétl, declining anything stronger, so his head may remain clear enough that he can pick up tidbits of nearby conversation. (He has tried to school himself to recall surrounding conversations while carrying on his own, albeit shallow, converse).]

**Kotaru hiSerekel**  
player, 11 posts  
Sorcerer Priest-  
Cheqarra  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Sun 11 Jul 2004  
at 09:56



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### Re: The Repast Begins

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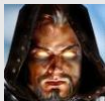
Kotaru sits his now empty cup on the tray of a passing serving girl as he follows Qoli and Meshmuyel to the feast. He notes with some pleasure that more of that excellent vintage is already poured and waiting with the first remove.

Having noted Qoli's raised eyebrow, he explicates, "This dinner should give our esteemed Clan Elder an opportunity to hold forth on the reasons we have been summoned here. Hopefully then much will be made clearer. I meant no offense to either of you - I simply have no wish to overstep what is, to my mind, the Elder's purview here. That, and I may be somewhat ill-informed myself. I would hate to speak amiss." (OOC: my last post was rather hasty, too)

As they take their seats, he asks Qoli, "Perhaps you would like to grace us with your presence at our gaming later on? The games may not amuse you much, but Joyful Sitting Among Friends is always a good thing, ne? I'm sure the three of us could find much to talk about after dinner."

To Meshmuyel, he continues, "I look forward to seeing what I may now learn from you at the game. Last time, as I recall, it was a close contest."

**SuuShih**  
GM, 56 posts  
Sun 18 Jul 2004  
at 20:29



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### A turbulent feast

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Given his station, Kérdudali Dardayél hiKhanúma has the most prominent position at the head table. There are very short stackable daises that create this effect. His brother sits a level below him at the same level as Arsála and Kacháya. The Tselinal Choriggáshte sits a level below them. At the lowest level for this table are Qoli, Kotaru and Meshmuyel.

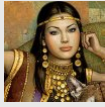
The feast is as sumptuous as anything any of you have ever experienced. With entertainment, conversation, getting up to mingle and look out over the forest, and the time associated with serving, the feast easily consumes four hours. For whatever reason, Qoli and Kotaru find much of the food too unusual or spiced in a way that does not please their palates. Still, there's more than enough food to satisfy their hunger. The wines are wonderful. More of the frozen flavored ices are served between courses. There are many comments about this new invention and that an imperial patent had been granted.

The rules of formal dining assert themselves creating a comfortable environment frequently absent at larger occasions. The best way to describe it is that it's HOME.

Conversation around the room and, particularly, at your table is animated. Still, you each sense undercurrents of tension that Arsála is deftly trying to defuse. One clear source of that tension is Choriggáshte. For her part, she remains largely quiet unless directly addressed, which the others are pointedly not doing.

	<p>This is puzzling.</p> <p>Qoli and Kotaru are of course asked about their trip and plans, while Meshmuyel is asked about his current studies.</p> <p>About three hours into the feast, Kenéng Nirénu surprises everyone with a beautiful extemporaneous poem about a recent pitched battle between the Phalanx of Heretlékka and an invading force from Salarvya. During this rendition, Dardayél breaks into the first smile that you've seen from him all evening. Everyone snaps their fingers in appreciation; it truly was moving! However, comments from Nirénu at the end of the poem indicate the disdain in which he holds his older brother. Throughout the feast, he's made niggling comments that chide certain of his brother's decisions or activities ... things only a brother or someone very close would know. The way they're delivered is carefully not insulting, but taken as a whole certainly are. Dardayél's scowl soon reappears. Soon afterwards, having imbibed a bit too much wine, he launches into a loud attempt to seduce Qoli:</p> <p>"Qoli, my beautiful clan cousin, the swords of the Phalanx of Heretlékka are mighty, but none are so mighty as my own. If you like my poetry, you should allow me to privately demonstrate the poetry of my weapon, which I wield with amazing skill and stamina. For you, it would be dazzling."</p> <p>At this point, seeing Dardayél visibly flushing with anger at his brother's undignified behavior, Arsála intercedes with an angry comment to one of the slaves chiding him for filling Nirénu's wine glass with Qoli's gift. She calls a slave to help Nirénu back to one of the apartments. When he begins to respond angrily, Dardayél steps in with a menacing voice agreeing with the wisdom of the Clan Elder. Nirénu sweeps out of the Forest Room, quickly outpacing the slave.</p> <p>Choriggáshte looks fixedly at Dardayél, who suddenly gets a shocked expression on his face. The general looks at her and, in a hoarse voice, says "He wouldn't!" Angrily, he looks at the vacant spot that his brother so recently occupied.</p> <p>Finding her voice, Choriggáshte speaks to Arsála, "Clan Elder, you know the service request that brought me from Fasiltum. I take great comfort in the support of my clan. It would please me greatly if these three would accompany me tomorrow at the Temple. Their different beliefs will assure that I am not drawn into any official tedium and should, I would think, be interesting to all. That is, of course, if it's not too great an imposition."</p> <p>Arsála gets a contemplative look on her face, then smiles compassionately. "Daughter, I understand your need. Please, will you three perform this service for your clan cousin? You'll no doubt have a wonderful and interesting day."</p> <p>[Private to Kotaru hiSerekel; Meshmuyel hiSsaivra ; Qoli hiVu'urtesh: What Choriggáshte is suggesting is strange on a number of levels. Why, for instance, is she staying here at the clan house instead of in the fine accommodations at the Temple of Vimuhla? Why would she want the presence of those not of her Temple at what is probably Temple business? While it may be exactly as she says, it still hits all of you as odd, but a fantastic opportunity and a tremendous honor that may antagonize some at that Temple.]</p> <p>Arsála carefully guides the feast back to something enjoyable with an introduction of famous dancers from Jakalla. The feast finishes an hour later after dessert and liqueur.</p>
Qoli hiVu'urtesh	<div> Re: A turbulent feast <div> [quote] [edit] [delete] msg #35 </div> </div>

player, 17 posts  
Sorcerer/Priestess-  
Hnalla  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Tue 20 Jul 2004  
at 23:08



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[info](#)

Note: Since it has been quiet, I figured I'd edit my post to pass the time. I added a bit of color and divided into three periods. Pre-Debacle, Debacle, and Post-Debacle. I thought it might make it easier for folk to respond. :)

### Pre-Debacle

-----  
The meal is excellent, though significantly more elaborate than Qoli is used to. It is not just the detail in the preparation and serving of the food, but also in the varied entertainment during and between courses. Qoli is particularly delighted by the puppeteers who perform while the group sips the wine of some fruit or another (Qoli isn't entirely sure.)

Qoli is engaged in the conversation, but Meshmuyel might notice, (and Kotaru is well familiar) that Qoli is a more avid listener than speaker, asking questions of those around her.

Clan Elder Arsala seems to be well skilled at attending, at least in part, to the varied conversations swirling around the table. Her periodic contributions help guide the smooth flow of discussion like the expert she is.

At Arsala' query about the purpose of her travel, Qoli looks up and pauses for a moment to consider her words. "My tale is likely much less interesting than those of most at this table. I've simply come to Sokatis to continue my studies in the temple of the Radiant Hnalla. Still, everything is moving so fast, it feels like fording the Missuma at the height of Spring as rains cause the waters and everything in them to speed downstream. It is hard to imagine I would still be at home, but for the passing of my teacher."

At this, Qoli will look around to see who is answering next. It is quite interesting that of the eight clan members seated at the high table, only two are local to Sokatis, Arsala and the Qusunchu of Hru'u, Kacháya hiVaisonér.

And so the dinner progresses... until

### Debacle

-----  
The meal goes quite well with Dardayél offering formal praise to Arsala and Shanshalo. There is a bit of turbulence in the conversation around Choriggashte. While not wanting to seem rude, Qoli seems reticent to engage the wizard in conversation, even avoiding eye contact. Luckily, Choriggashte seems equally disinclined to engage in conversation.

Still things seem to be going well. Qoli fills her belly by midway through the meal. As the servers continue to bring out dishes, Qoli politely samples small tastes of the food, but most seems to be relaxing and enjoying the conversations flowing around her.

When Nirenu breaks into poetry, Qoli assumes it is more of the same. The poem is very well done, and initially brings a great smile to the assembled faces. As the poem beats towards its end, Qoli glances around the table, unsure if she is misunderstanding Nirenu's implications. By the reactions, she apparently is not.

However, it is when the Keneng begins to coarsely proposition Qoli, that she reacts. Qoli stares at Nirenu, her eyes wide, her face pale. His words are very improper, but Qoli seems even more shocked by his behavior. When she pulls her eyes away, she seems almost ill. She looks around the table to those of higher status, Arsala, Dardayel, even Choriggashte, for some clue how to react, and with a trapped expression. Through all of this she doesn't say a word.



## Post-Debacle

After Nirenu leaves for his rooms, Qoli attempts to excuse herself. It has been a tiring day after a long trip, and she is quite tired. It is clear, she is stressed by what just occurred.

When Arsala 'prefers' for Qoli and the others to remain and continue the dinner, she does so. However, she is generally silent for the rest of the evening, and glances periodically at the hallway as well as Choriggashte. When dinner is over, she apologizes to Kotaru and Meshmuyel for having to miss their game. She is too tired, but would certainly enjoy it they cared to help her make her way to her rooms.

This message was last edited by the GM at 11:32, Tue 03 Aug 2004.

### Kotaru hiSerekel

player, 12 posts  
Sorcerer Priest-  
Chegárra  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Wed 11 Aug 2004  
at 17:30



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

### Re: A turbulent feast

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #36

#### SuuShih typed:

[snip: seating arrangements]

The feast is as sumptuous as anything any of you have ever experienced. With entertainment, conversation, getting up to mingle and look out over the forest, and the time associated with serving, the feast easily consumes four hours. For whatever reason, Qoli and Kotaru find much of the food too unusual or spiced in a way that does not please their palates. Still, there's more than enough food to satisfy their hunger. The wines are wonderful. More of the frozen flavored ices are served between courses. There are many comments about this new invention and that an imperial patent had been granted.

Kotaru's left eyebrow rises as he savors a sherbet, and asks of Lady Arsala, "An Imperial Patent? Perhaps we could meet the inventor later? It especially makes a fine companion to this noble wine. My compliments."

[snip: atmosphere of home/Choriggashte's quietude]

Qoli and Kotaru are of course asked about their trip and plans, while Meshmuyel is asked about his current studies.


"It was thought that, perhaps, I could be better enabled to contribute to the clan's success in commerce from here - an opinion I am beginning to share."

[snip: Nirenu's poem, and his chiding by of Dardayel. Nirenu's Proposition]

"Qoli, my beautiful clan cousin, the swords of the Phalanx of Heretlékka are mighty, but none are so mighty as my own. If you like my poetry, you should allow me to privately demonstrate the poetry of my weapon, which I wield with amazing skill and stamina. For you, it would be dazzling."

Kotaru's eyebrow shoots up, and his hand moves instinctively, seeking an absent sword. He recovers swiftly, however, and reaches for his wine cup instead. A glance at Qoli reveals her discomfort at this most unwelcome advance. He watches intently, steeled for what may come.

At this point, seeing Dardayél visibly flushing with anger at his brother's undignified behavior, Arsála intercedes with an angry comment to one of the slaves chiding him

	<p>for filling Nirénu's wine glass with Qoli's gift. She calls a slave to help Nirénu back to one of the apartments. When he begins to respond angrily, Dardayél steps in with a menacing voice agreeing with the wisdom of the Clan Elder. Nirénu sweeps out of the Forest Room, quickly outpacing the slave.</p> <p>[Private to Qoli hiVu'urtesh: (Sotto voce) "La, Clan cousin, perhaps I should see you safely to your rooms at meal's end?"]</p> <p>[snip: the exchange between Dardayel and Choriggashte]</p> <p>Finding her voice, Choriggáshte speaks to Arsála, "Clan Elder, you know the service request that brought me from Fasiltum. I take great comfort in the support of my clan. It would please me greatly if these three would accompany me tomorrow at the Temple. Their different beliefs will assure that I am not drawn into any official tedium and should, I would think, be interesting to all. That is, of course, if it's not too great an imposition."</p> <p>Arsála gets a contemplative look on her face, then smiles compassionately. "Daughter, I understand your need. Please, will you three perform this service for your clan cousin? You'll no doubt have a wonderful and interesting day."</p> <p>"It is my honor to serve, and my pleasure," comes Kotaru's reply, "I look forward to the day's events." This with a nod to Choriggashte.</p> <p>Arsála carefully guides the feast back to something enjoyable with an introduction of famous dancers from Jakalla. The feast finishes an hour later after dessert and liqueur.</p> <p>Near feast's end, Kotaru turns to Meshmuyel, "Meshmuyel, my friend, will you accompany us? I would see my cousin safely to her lodgings for the evening. Perhaps afterward we could pursue our game?"</p> <p>He moves to accompany Qoli, in the demeanor of a bodyguard or protective escort.</p>
<p><b>Qoli hiVu'urtesh</b>  player, 18 posts  Sorceror/Priestess-  Hnalla  Clan of Golden Bough  Fri 13 Aug 2004  at 12:28</p>  <p>PM   rMail   Sheet   info</p>	<p><b>Ending dinner</b> [quote]   [edit]   [delete]   msg #37</p> <p>Qoli pauses before accepting the invitation to join Chorrigashte, not really understanding what is going on (and still being a bit out of it). Still after Kotaru makes polite acceptance, she too accepts to join Chorrigashte on the morn journey to the Temple of Vimuhla.</p> <p>[Private to Kotaru hiSerekel; SuuShih: Thank you cousin, I would enjoy your company. We are in fair step for this turn. I will explain later in my quarters.]</p> <p>When the dinner finally ends, and Arsala deems it suitable for the clan members to depart, Qoli will have her slaves guide her, Kotaru and Meshmuyel (OOC: I assume Meshmuyel will be joining us.)</p> <p>When they reach her quarters, Qoli pauses and then invites Kotaru and Meshmuyel inside. "Perhaps the two of you would care for a digestive as you reacquaint yourselves with this game you've referred to? If so, perhaps you might be able to teach me its rules, or at least help me understand better what happened this evening."</p>
<p><b>Kotaru hiSerekel</b>  player, 13 posts  Sorceror Priest-  Chegárra</p>	<p><b>Re: Ending dinner</b> [quote]   [edit]   [delete]   msg #38</p> <p><b>Qoli hiVu'urtesh typed:</b></p>

Clan of Golden Bough  
Wed 25 Aug 2004  
at 16:54



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When they reach her quarters, Qoli pauses and then invites Kotaru and Meshmuyel inside. "Perhaps the two of you would care for a digestive as you reacquaint yourselves with this game you've referred to? If so, perhaps you might be able to teach me its rules, or at least help me understand better what happened this evening."

[OOC]

I'm pleased to inform everyone that I start work at Michoud Assembly Facility with Lockheed-Martin on 27 September 2004. Thanks to all for your patience while I have been working feverishly to wrap up projects before the transition from my present job.

[BIC]

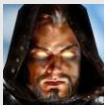
"That sounds like a perfect way to pass the remainder of this lovely evening," Kotaru replies, "but I should probably send for my Den-Den set if we are going to play," then, to Meshmuyel, "What about it, old friend?"

Calling his ever-attendant slave aside, Kotaru bids him fetch the game and return straightaway. The rapid slip-slap of hruchan sandals on the floor promise a swift return.

"He will be back soon - shall we enter and take our ease?" Anyone observing will see that his mood has much improved since leaving the dining hall and reaching their destination.

**SuuShih**

GM, 67 posts  
Mon 20 Sep 2004  
at 18:02



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

**Re: Ending dinner**


[\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #39

Toward the end of the feast, Arsála steps aside with Qoli on the veranda. "Child, our city has many wonders, both good and bad. You need fear nothing in this, your home. Attribute tonight to the misguided dreams of our magnificent wines and think no more on it. On this, you have my assurance."

Arsála looks in a calculating way at Qoli, saying, "I'm a bit surprised that you have not married. It's certainly time. Have you given much thought to this? If you would not be offended, I would look into options on your behalf, as I would for any of my daughters."

Kotaru and Meshmuyel join Qoli and Arsála. With a smile, Arsála continues.

"Kotaru hiSerekel and Qoli hiVu'urtesh, over the coming weeks, you will settle in to the rhythm of our fair city. Meshmuyel, I'm sure you can help smooth the way, especially with our clan resources are at your disposals. However, in two weeks time, there is a major party that I'm hoping you can all attend as part of my entourage. The occasion is the birthday of Ravitri hiKaloné'i, the esteemed noble mother to Mizhek hiKaloné'i, Governor of Sokatis. The party will be huge by our city's standards, with attendees from various nations. You three are likely to see all manner of entertainment and have the opportunity to mingle with nobles on whose grace our prosperity depends. As a clan, we will be presenting a gift to that noble lady, so it should not be necessary for you to present separate gifts,

	<p>unless you choose to do so."</p> <p>After the meal, you three walk back to your apartments. As you cross the central courtyard talking about the evening and Den Den, you're surprised to see Nirénu approaching. An honor guard hangs back at attention. Without preamble, but with great formality, he addresses Qoli, "Clan cousin, I evidently offended you with my banter. I assure you that no offense was intended. Please accept this gift by way of apology and to <i>heal</i> any breach between us." Bowing, he proffers a small ornate wooden box waiting for Qoli to formally accept it.</p> <p>[Private to Qoli hiVu'urtesh: Because I know you'll ask, you sense nothing of Nirenu's inner thoughts.]</p>
<p><b>Kotaru hiSerekel</b>  player, 14 posts  Sorceror Priest-  Chegárra  Clan of Golden Bough  Tue 21 Sep 2004  at 19:25</p>  <p>PM   rMail   Sheet    info</p>	<p><b>Re: Ending dinner</b> [quote]   [edit]   [delete]   msg #40</p> <p><b>SuuShih typed:</b></p> <p>[snip: Qoli and Lady Arsala on the veranda...]</p> <p>Kotaru and Meshmuyel join Qoli and Arsála. With a smile, Arsála continues.</p> <p>"Kotaru hiSerekel and Qoli hiVu'urtesh, over the coming weeks, you will settle in to the rhythm of our fair city."</p> <p><a href="#">Kotaru acknowledges the Clan Elder's directive with a courtly inclining of the head and upper body which verges on a bow without quite getting there.</a></p> <p>"Meshmuyel, I'm sure you can help smooth the way, especially with our clan resources are at your disposals. However, in two weeks time, there is a major party that I'm hoping you can all attend as part of my entourage. The occasion is the birthday of Ravítri hiKaloné'i, the esteemed noble mother to Mízhek hiKaloné'i, Governor of Sokatis. The party will be huge by our city's standards, with attendees from various nations. You three are likely to see all manner of entertainment and have the opportunity to mingle with nobles on whose grace our prosperity depends. As a clan, we will be presenting a gift to that noble lady, so it should not be necessary for you to present separate gifts, unless you choose to do so."</p> <p><a href="#">"Again, it is an honor and pleasure to serve," Kotaru smiles as he replies, "In the matter of gifts, not knowing the matriarch hiKalone'i nor her preferences, I would, of course, defer to the judgement of those more knowledgeable in such things."</a></p> <p>After the meal, you three walk back to your apartments. As you cross the central courtyard, much to your surprise, Nirénu meets the three of you. An honor guard hangs back at attention. Without preamble, but with great formality, he addresses Qoli, "Clan cousin, I evidently offended you with my banter. I assure you that no offense was intended. Please accept this gift by way of apology and to <i>heal</i> any breach between us." Bowing, he proffers a small ornate wooden box waiting for Qoli to formally accept it.</p> <p><a href="#">At Nirenu's approach, Kotaru assumes a position behind and to the right of Qoli in the manner of a dutiful escort, and attempts to convey by his serious demeanor unwillingness to brook further insult to his cousin, but he does not go so far as to speak on the matter, waiting instead silently for Qoli's reply, remaining vigilant the while for any misadventure.</a></p>
<p><b>Meshmuyel hiSsaivra</b>  player, 4 posts</p>	<p><b>Re: Ending dinner</b> [quote]   [edit]   [delete]   msg #41</p> <p>Meshmuyel reflects on the tableau playing out before him ...</p>

Priest Sorcerer of Ksarul  
Golden Bough  
Wed 22 Sep 2004  
at 22:13

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*Qoli's countrified sensitivity ...  
Nerenu's exquisite manners ...*

While he is certainly curious about the gift being proffered, he waits quietly to the side willing his beautiful clan cousin to deftly rescue the General from this awkward situation.

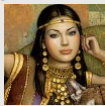
Looking to his right ...

*It's certainly good to see Kotaru's familiar face again. Hopefully, I will quickly trounce him at Den Den so that I can focus on preparations for tomorrow's excursion. The Tselinal's request was certainly odd! My nicest non-elaborate ceremonial robe should set the barb nicely. =)*

*Hopefully, Nye'etha hiSsaivra isn't too tired to entertain guests. Some advice could be useful.*

## Qoli hiVu'urtesh

player, 19 posts  
Sorcerer/Priestess-  
Hnalla  
Clan of Golden Bough  
Mon 27 Sep 2004  
at 19:56



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[info](#)

## Re: Ending dinner

[\[quote\]](#) | [\[edit\]](#) | [\[delete\]](#) | msg #42

[Private to SuuShih:

### SuuShih typed:

Toward the end of the feast, Arsála steps aside with Qoli on the veranda. "Child, our city has many wonders, both good and bad. You need fear nothing in this, your home. Attribute tonight to the misguided dreams of our magnificent wines and think no more on it. On this, you have my assurance."

Qoli looks over the teaming, sprawling, crowded city of Sokatis as Arsala speaks. When the Clan Elder finishes Qoli replies "Sokatis buzzes like a hive, even at night. I've never seen so many lamps. Did you know that along the river there is an insect which makes hives in the clay? They burrow and dig and hunt. The hives are actually very pretty, like some of these buildings. You can make a tea out of the burrowers that is very relaxing and good for aching joints I'm told. Still, they can be quite militant and we lose a child periodically to their stings. Good and bad." Qoli turns to Lady Arsala, "I apologize, I'm wandering. Thank you again Clan Elder for your warm hospitality, it is more than I had reason to expect. Also please give my thanks to the Wizard Chorrigashte as well."

### Suushih typed:



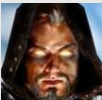
Arsála looks in a calculating way at Qoli, saying, "I'm a bit surprised that you have not married. It's certainly time. Have you given much thought to this? If you would not be offended, I would look into options on your behalf, as I would for any of my daughters."

Qoli seems surprised. "I have not yet considered the opportunity much. My previous position was not optimally auspicious. Perhaps once I have settled into Sokatis, you might offer me some part of your wisdom on the matter."]

### Suushih typed:

Kotaru and Meshmuyel join Qoli and Arsála. With a smile, Arsála continues.

"Kotaru hiSerekel and Qoli hiVu'urtesh, over the coming weeks, you will settle in to the rhythm of our fair city. Meshmuyel, I'm sure you can help smooth the way, especially with our clan resources are at your disposals. However, in two weeks time, there is a major party that I'm hoping you can all attend as part of my entourage. The occasion is the birthday of Ravitri hiKaloné'i, the esteemed noble mother to

	<p>Mizhek hiKaloné'i, Governor of Sokatis. The party will be huge by our city's standards, with attendees from various nations. You three are likely to see all manner of entertainment and have the opportunity to mingle with nobles on whose grace our prosperity depends. As a clan, we will be presenting a gift to that noble lady, so it should not be necessary for you to present separate gifts, unless you choose to do so."</p> <p>Qoli opts for the 'least said' path, not knowing how to best respond, simply accepting Arsala's invitation/instruction.</p> <p><b>Suushih typed:</b></p> <p>After the meal, you three walk back to your apartments. As you cross the central courtyard talking about the evening and Den Den, you're surprised to see Nirénu approaching. An honor guard hangs back at attention. Without preamble, but with great formality, he addresses Qoli, "Clan cousin, I evidently offended you with my banter. I assure you that no offense was intended. Please accept this gift by way of apology and to <i>heal</i> any breach between us." Bowing, he proffers a small ornate wooden box waiting for Qoli to formally accept it.</p> <p>When Qoli notes Nirenu, she glances around the surroundings taking in his guard. She stops, straightens and awaits his approach. In response to his apology. "Lord General, I accept your apology in the spirit in which it was given. Thank you for both word and gift. Let the words spoken at dinner be like a renyu's last meal, already forgotten." With that Qoli will accept the box from Nirenu and looking at her companions continues on to her quarters. When they get to her quarters, she gives the box to one of the slaves to put away and sits to talk with Kotaru and Meshmuyel.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 75 posts Tue 28 Sep 2004 at 12:41</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Ending dinner</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #43</p> <p>Nirénu is apparently frustrated, bristling a bit in contained anger, at the abrupt acceptance of his apology and gift without a statement that all is forgiven. He obviously was hoping that Qoli would open his gift.</p> <p>"Beautiful cousin, I would never mistake you for a renyu. Will you not open the gift in my presence so that I may have the pleasure of your reaction?"</p> <p>Later in the rooms, Meshmuyel wins the Din Din game and then excuses himself to prepare for tomorrow.</p>
<p><b>Qoli hiVu'urtesh</b> player, 20 posts Sorceror/Priestess-Hnalla Clan of Golden Bough Tue 28 Sep 2004 at 14:38</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Ending dinner</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #44</p> <p>"Certainly General, I apologize if I should have opened the gift. I do not often receive such handsome presents, and was not certain if it was appropriate to open or wait till private."</p> <p>With that she'll open the box.</p>
<p><b>SuuShih</b> GM, 76 posts Fri 8 Oct 2004 at 10:39</p> 	<p><b>Re: Ending dinner</b> <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #45</p> <p>Opening the delicate inlaid metal clasp, Qoli sees what looks like a dark green shiny acorn laying in its own recess of purple velvet. The lid has the corresponding recess so that the object within cannot roll about. There is also a small ivory parchment case case about three inches long.</p>



<a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a>	<p>Seeing everyone's inquisitive looks, he says, "It's an Eye of Excellent Healing. Many years ago, I received it as a gift of friendship. I now pass it to you in kind. May it keep you safe through all the tribulations that are to come. I'm told that it has five remaining uses, though I've never used it myself. You merely point the clear end at your target and flick the nub at the other end. The box has straps that would allow you to easily hang it from a belt."</p>
<p><b>Qoli hiVu'urtesh</b>  player, 21 posts  Sorceror/Priestess-  Hnalla  Clan of Golden Bough  Sat 9 Oct 2004  at 08:50</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Ending dinner</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #46</p> <p>"Thank you again for your apology General, and for the gift. I do not know the appropriate reply for such a gift to be truthful." Qoli looks to Kotaru and then back to Nirenu.</p> <p>"It is a noble gift. Again, your words are forgotten. Thank you once more for the apology. Now, please don't think me rude, but it has been a very overwhelming day, and I should retire to my quarters. Good evening General."</p> <p>With that Qoli will close the box and hopefully get underway.</p> <p>In her quarters, she'll ask Kotaru and Meshmuyel what their take was on this.</p>
<p><b>Kotaru hiSerekel</b>  player, 15 posts  Sorceror Priest-  Chegárra  Clan of Golden Bough  Sun 10 Oct 2004  at 14:01</p>  <p><a href="#">PM</a>   <a href="#">rMail</a>   <a href="#">Sheet</a>   <a href="#">info</a></p>	<p><b>Re: Ending dinner</b> <a href="#">[quote]</a>   <a href="#">[edit]</a>   <a href="#">[delete]</a>   msg #47</p> <p><b>Qoli hiVu'urtesh typed:</b></p> <p>"Thank you again for your apology General, and for the gift. I do not know the appropriate reply for such a gift to be truthful." Qoli looks to Kotaru and then back to Nirenu.</p> <p><b>For his part, Kotaru will keep silent and remain in an alert and vigilant posture.</b></p> <p>"It is a noble gift. Again, your words are forgotten. Thank you once more for the apology. Now, please don't think me rude, but it has been a very overwhelming day, and I should retire to my quarters. Good evening General."</p> <p>With that Qoli will close the box and hopefully get underway.</p> <p><b>Kotaru will maintain his stance until Qoli and Meshmuyel withdraw a bit, then, if the General and his companions also withdraw, will move to accompany his cousins to Qoli's apartments.</b></p> <p>In her quarters, she'll ask Kotaru and Meshmuyel what their take was on this.</p> <p><b>"Judging from the generosity of the gift, I would guess that either the General's apology is heartfelt, or that his brother, Lady Arsala, or both of them have prompted him to make this gesture to cleanse the way between you and him. Perhaps he was concerned you might ask for *shamtla* (compensation), and complicate matters between our two branches of the clan.", Kotaru pauses, scratching his head, "I, for one, am glad he chose this path and did not offer further insult. I am not sure I could have bested him in the arena, but was prepared to challenge him for your sake, nonetheless. I hope you don't think me too forward or brash for saying so, cousin. At any rate, if you give him no encouragement, I believe you should have no further trouble from him."</b></p>

**SuuShih**

GM, 84 posts  
Thu 21 Dec 2006  
at 23:43



[PM](#) | [rMail](#) | [Sheet](#) | [info](#)

## Chap 2 - Prequel

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Tired, Qoli, Kotaru, and Meshmuyel retire to their apartments to sleep.

Tuleng still in retreat, Qoli is awoken by sounds outside her sleeping chamber. An obsequious contrite slave comes in with a lamp bowing to inform her that, "Mistress Arsala has arrived in the outer apartment and is requesting your presence. Three men accompany her that I've never seen before, though by their meshqu, they are also of your clan."

Quickly throwing on a robe, a sleep-befogged Qoli emerges to find her obviously tired Clan Elder taking short mincing steps to relieve her obvious tension. Fidgeting themselves are three men in modest garb standing behind her near the entrance to her quarters. As the slave said, all three bear the Golden Bough meshqu on their shoulders, but the cut of their hair, weapons, and modest well-made garb suggest that they are somehow out of place ... perhaps country cousins. Still, there's something more. It's more of an intuitive feeling about these three. All three men appear quite tired, though bearing up well under the strain. One is a young man, while two are a bit older. One of these older men turns towards Qoli a bit self-consciously and she is a bit startled to see that he is missing a right arm.

For their parts, the three men see before them a stunningly beautiful disheveled clan daughter.

Seeing Qoli's concerned expression, Arsala comes over to take her hands in her own. They are bony and cool to Qoli's touch. "Child, I'm sorry for disturbing you, but this cannot wait. These are difficult times in which we live. You would honor me greatly if you would accept the gift of my protection. These men are here to assure that nothing befalls you that you do not mean to. Threat them as close clan cousins from your own province. This should allow them to accompany you from afar, blending into the background where their services will hopefully not be required."

Looking back, she says, "Please introduce yourselves."