

-The Wrath of the Crown-

Battle Standard- A powerful and bloodthirsty king yields nothing on the road to total conquest. Rival lords, mud farming peasants and even followers of the Light taste the bite of his army's blades and are blinded by his banners. As a sign of his iron grasp, His battle standards are emblazoned with a mighty black gauntlet, its knuckles lightly rusted from blood.

Burned Peace Treaty- Seeing the futility of conflict, the remaining lords united under peace and fealty to the relentless warlord. Sent by the lone and treacherous roads to the King's home, the letter was received by the King's young son who rejoiced at the idea of peace after a childhood of war and front lines. Many soldiers knew the boy and loved him, in spite of his dreadful father. But his hopes were dashed as the King seized the parchment and cast it into the roaring hearth and stormed out of the hall, leaving a weeping and furious son behind.

The Sealed Blade- Years had passed after that letter. The son was gone. He had fled from the castle and to the surrounding lands with a single purpose. He trained for nearly a decade with the conquered yet resilient lords who fought against his father. It was on this day, the King's own son returned, to set right the bloodshed of his father's rule. The battle was fierce. Countless fell on the field but at the center clashed the man and his father, his black steel now battered and destitute. At last, the king was bested. But death was not his end. He saw that which he had never known to give others. Mercy. The defeat changed him. At the dissolution of his empire, the old King presented his Blade and his Silver Crown. The crown was melted and the molten silver was used to forever seal away his Blade.

-The Curse of the Cure-

Doctors Garb and Cane - As man and beast alike fled the cacophony of moans and buzzing of flies, a black-clad figure moved into the miasma. Robed in a stiff waxed garb, wielding a plainly ornate oak cane and with a mask like a great bird of prey, she brought cure and comfort despite the appearance of death. Entire cities were saved the ravage of plague by, as she came to be known, the Black Dove.

Warrant for Arrest - Her actions were the envy of prying eyes. As many would be physicians faced nothing but failure, they sought to expose her as a means of absolution. It was brought to the attention of the local magistrate by an unknown source, that the Black Dove was, indeed, not who she claimed to be. Neither a true doctor nor a believer of the Light, she was an outsider. An unwelcome harbinger of death. Or so she was slandered. And thus, a whisper of doubt deafens cries of truth as the Black Dove was arrested and sentenced to hang.

Pickled Ring Finger- No sooner had the great healer been detained that a new victim was befallen by the blackness. The King himself, stricken by plague. His best doctors tried for days to cure him. Bloodletting. Toads. Leeches. His end appeared nigh until a request was sent for the prisoner. At her own behest, as a sign of faith and trust, she treated the King with her own bare hands. Her avian mask let down to reveal the soft hazel eyes of a healer and an angel. It remains unknown what saved the King, but he began to recover from the deadly illness and was soon to be cured. However, the Dove's act came at a great cost, as her exposure to the King led to her own contraction of the illness. It is said she did not suffer long, not like the others.

-The Redeemed and the Reborn-

Rough-Spun Cravat- Life on the road is fraught with peril for an honest man. For an outlaw, it is life or death. With his face obscured by a red lined Cravat, blood stained and threadbare, a nameless bandit takes what he needs to see the sunlight of a new day. Weeks of blustering winds, biting cold and sweltering heat has left the fabric damaged but not destroyed, just like its owner.

-Courtship Letter- But it was not always so. He had someone. A lover once. But those days had faded like a twilight fog. The memory of that terrible morning, hearing his beloveds last gasps at that wretch's hands as he was held helplessly, had not. The blood of 100 innocent men could never hope to slake his thirst from a single drop from the man responsible. He would be found. The words he had shared with his lover still ran through his minds eyes. Tucked in his jacket and still sealed with red wax, the last letter he was to deliver upon arriving home. Perhaps he shall deliver it still, in another life.

-Child's Doll- Through cunning, bribery and perseverance the brigand lay dead at the feet of our wronged highwayman. The revenge was sudden yet nearly silent, a shimmering bolt of lightening before the thunders delayed and deafening rumble. The death took hours, for he would not allow the honor or peace in a quick death nor would he bear a word from this devil. His throat was cut and his tongue pulled out through the wound. The bandit entered the vacant tent to find a chest, rain swollen and rusted. Stolen goods and lives no doubt. But as he opened the chest, its contents clutched his very heart with a clutch of sorrow. Letters of a lover. Blankets. And a small roughspun doll with straw hair and a jade green dress. And underneath, a small child, sleeping in white and with an amulet with a picture of a woman and the man he just killed.

-The Sin of Salvation-

-Frayed Monks hood and Robes- The noble and pious brothers and sisters of the Light were known well for their propriety and asceticism. The simple, unadorned and pure white garb of the faithful were their sigil to all. But one day, a man arrived bearing the robes of the faithful but with no such allure. Tattered, frayed, disheveled and threadbare the prophet of a man entered the village. Claiming a life of deep solitude and worldly disdain had granted him contact with the Very Maker, even the most devout were piqued by such claims. For if a man were to so easily sunder such holy garb, surely the idea to do such must be of holy providence, would it not?

-Promissory Note- The fear of damnation separates men from their wits, separates Kings from their subjects and fools from their coin-purses. It is a fear that gnaws at men's minds, like a great wolf watching with famished eyes beyond the edge of the thickets. But a fear that wiser and more nefarious men can tame for their own pursuits. With the memory of war a plague fresh upon their minds, the simple and loquacious folk often pooled what little money they could for this noble soothsayer. Marked with a simple X, these scrabbled writs represent more than their weight in gold and silver in exchange for a life of salvation proclaimed daily at his fervorous gatherings. . Well worth any cost, it would seem.

-Tarnished Censer and Knout- But soon the soothsayer was exposed. A traveler from a nearby township arrived to expound the lies and deceptions of this vagabond, for not a fortnight ago, he had drained the purses of every man there! Hang him, cried the mob. To the lake, drown him! No feed him to the wolves, return him to his own! The frothing rabble looked as though they had spilled out of the

very tales of the holy books. But over the cacophany, a small boy stepped forth. Without a word and kindness in his eyes, he removed his own cloud white robes. From them he produced a small smoking censer and a knout of dark leather thongs, tipped with black and fiercely sharp obsidian stones. This boy of the faith knew his task. The sins of another shall be his own path to the Light.

-The Honor and the Hatred-

Menials' Dress- As was customary of the land, young house-maidens kept all affairs of the estate, cooking and cleaning and such, in smooth order. A lord should not reside in such a detritus state and those he rules. However this noble house was anything but customary. The lord's personal guard, a shield maiden of raven black hair, a fierce stare and a fiercer sword arm kept the manor safe and protected at all times. Her raven hair adorned with a simple hairpin, carved from the tusk of a great boar. Stoic, loyal and unfaltering she took one of the maidens under her personal watch. A young girl of only 20, the house-maiden was orphaned from a young age and struggled throughout the years. Maybe she saw something of herself in this young girl thought the Shield-Maiden as in secret she trained the young woman in the ways of sword and self defense. Her dress bore the marks of more than usual wear and tear from chores, to which her clumsiness was attributed by the unknowing attendants of the house.

-Bloodied Hairpin- As her door was flung open, the girl saw the shield-maiden enter her chambers, covered in blood. Brigands had attacked late in the night. The guards were dead. Only she remained to defend the lord. Confidently and without hesitation, she presented a simple blade to the girl and ordered her to hide in the nearby wardrobe. As she closed the doors behind her and buried herself in the linens, her eyes failed her and the world dropped away. She awoke alone to the smell of smoke and ash. Crawling through the rubble and ruined corridors, she entered the great hall. Near the hearth lay the lord, beheaded and valuables gone. The shield-maiden lay at his feet. Her raven hair was stained red with blood, sword still in her hand. Reaching forward through the tears and memories, she collected a boar-tusk hairpin from the fallen champion and never looked back.

-Wanted Poster- It had taken many years and many broken men but at last she had him. On this poster in her hands was the face of the man who raided the lords keep. The man who stole everything from her that night. Swarthy, vile, nearly toothless and violent. The blazing embers of the collapsing roof of the manor could not match the raw intensity of the fire burning in her belly for this man's head. Years on the road had hardened her. The deadly arithmetic of combat had tested her and proved her ready. She mounted her horse one frosty morning, the strain and creak of her armor in the cold a symphony of revenge building within. She tore through the village square as peasants could only just catch a glimpse of the woman with the hairpin.