

Chronicles of Corolon Volume 1:
Princes of the Apocalypse

Episode 1 - False Start

Written by

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TEASER

EXT. CRAMORE - NIGHT

A small mining village in the snowy mountainous north. Normally a calm and simple place, now it's chaos.

The village has been set ablaze and the villagers run in panic as FROST GIANTS roam the streets striking down people and buildings alike.

One of the giants falls to its knees, clutching its chest as blood pours out of a large slash wound. As the giant collapses, it looks at its killer with disbelief before falling face first onto the ground.

ORRIN KONRAD, a young soldier clad in chain mail bearing the tabard of the COROLON ARMY (blue with a golden ram's head). He has a shield at the ready, his bloody sword held above it ready to strike.

The giant breaths its last and Orrin relaxes, lowering his guard. He's exhausted, barely standing.

Orrin glances over his shoulder, but the sight behind him is gruesome. A group of dead soldiers and civilians, all crushed by giant clubs. He closes his eyes and grimaces.

The ground RUMBLES as another giant approaches. It sees its comrade dead on the ground and ROARS in rage and rushes Orrin.

Orrin raises his shield and sword again. The fight continues.

The giant swings its club in a low arc. It's going to hit Orrin full force, and nothing is going to stop it.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. NORTHGATE FOREST - DAY

Orrin's shaken awake by DARRAK, a rough looking dwarf with a black beard streaked with gray. Both men occupy the front seat of an empty horse drawn cart. The cart's heading down a well maintained paved road. Signs dot every mile and the trees along either side are planted at equal intervals. The KING'S ROAD.

Orrin, still clad in his chain mail but without the tabard, lurches forward and reaches for his sword.

ORRIN
What's wrong?

DARRAK
Oh, nothing, boy. Beautiful a day
as Northgate ever sees. Though I'd
be enjoying it a lot better if the
guard I'm paying good money to keep
me safe wasn't sleeping on the job.

Orrin relaxes but looks away embarrassed.

ORRIN
Sorry.

DARRAK
Don't be sorry, lad. Be awake.

Orrin nods and sits up straighter.

LATER the cart makes its way to the GATES OF NORTHGATE.

The driver pays the entry fee and the pair enter.

EXT. NORTHGATE - DAY

The cart enters the city and travels through the streets.

Northgate is a mix of human and dwarven construction. Stone
and concrete covered in a light layer of sooty snow.
Chimneys blasting out smoke and the ring of hammers on
anvils fill the city.

The cart stops outside the BRASS GAUNTLET GUILD HOUSE.

Orrin hops off and moves to the driver's side.

Darrak digs into his coin purse and hands Orrin nine gold
coins.

ORRIN
We agreed to ten.

DARRAK
We also agreed to you being awake
during the whole trip.

Orrin stares at the money, holding back his indignation, and
nods.

The driver sets his horses moving again and leaves Orrin.
Orrin watches him go then stares at the nine coins in his
hand again.

EXT. KONRAD HOME - LATER

A small single story stone home in a rundown section of the city. The roof is made of thatch turned black from soot and portions of the walls are starting to fall apart. It's still sturdy, but who knows for how much longer.

As Orrin approaches, he sees his mother, SUSANNA (early 50s, plain dress and apron) standing in the doorway, hands on her hips as she listens to a THUG talking to her.

The thug has a dagger sheathed on either hip. His hands rest casually on the pommels.

THUG

Come now, Mrs. Konrad, Gonce ain't asking for much, just a gesture that his good will wasn't misplaced.

SUSANNA

And if I had any money to spare, it would be Gonce's. I don't know what you expect to change just standing here giving me a hard time.

THUG

It's my experience that people tend to realize what they really can do without when reminded of what they owe Gonce. And what they can't.

SUSANNA

Is that a threat?

THUG

No, ma'am. Gonce doesn't deal in threats, just coin.

Orrin steps defensively between his mother and the thug.

ORRIN

There a problem here, Mom?

SUSANNA

No, Orrin. I was just explaining to this man that if he'd come back tomorrow, we'd have the coin he's here to collect.

Orrin glares at the thug, but the thug is unconcerned.

ORRIN

Of course. We make good on our debts.

(leans in)

Come back tomorrow.

The thug grins.

THUG

So you're the golden boy, eh?

The thug looks him up and down, paying particular attention to Orrin's armor.

THUG (cont'd)

Army issue, right? Soldier?

Orrin glares.

THUG (cont'd)

Met a lot of soldiers. They're not so good with money, tend to gamble it away. Chain's good against swords, not so great against a good stab.

For emphasis, the thug pokes a finger into Orrin's chest while his offhand grips one of his daggers.

Orrin's hand goes to his sword.

Susanna grabs Orrin's shoulder.

SUSANNA

Orrin, that won't help.

It takes a beat, but Orrin lets go of his sword. The thug relaxes his posture as well.

ORRIN

How much do we owe?

THUG

Fifteen this month.

Orrin pulls out the gold from the carriage driver.

ORRIN

I have nine. Is that enough to hold us over for the week?

The thug holds his hand out and Orrin gives him the coins.

THUG

Gonce appreciates any effort to settle affairs.

(to Susanna)

This time next week for the rest, Ma'am.

The Konrads watch the thug go, both glaring.

SUSANNA

Well, come inside then. I'll get supper started.

INT. KONRAD HOME - NIGHT

The home is very simple. An open space with four small beds along one wall, a table in the center, and a fireplace and chimney along the other wall.

Orrin has removed his armor and gear, it lays at the foot of one of the beds. He sits at the table.

Susanna cooks a stew in the fireplace. She fills a bowl and places it in front of Orrin before filling one for herself and sitting opposite him at the table.

ORRIN

No Cara?

SUSANNA

(shakes head)

She knew you'd be home today.

Orrin nods and focuses on his food.

ORRIN

Will you be able to get the coin?
If I go out with another caravan, I won't be here when he comes back.

SUSANNA

I'll take extra shifts at the *Wolf*.

ORRIN

I could try one of the smithies, see if anyone needs an assistant.

SUSANNA

(shakes her head)

They're all loyalists. Not one would hire you knowing you deserted.

ORRIN

Then I guess I'll head back to the *Gauntlet* in the morning and look for another caravan.

SUSANNA

You can take a break, dear. I don't want you wearing yourself thin. You look so tired anymore.

ORRIN

This is my debt. I'm going to pay it.

Susanna doesn't say anything, the conversation's old and she knows where it leads.

Orrin takes another bite of his stew before pushing the bowl back across the table and heading to bed.

IN THE MORNING

ROSA (O.S.)

(sing-song)

Little Brother.

Orrin wakes up with a groan. He turns in his bed to see ROSA KONRAD standing over him.

Rosa has the flashy clothes of a traveling bard with a lute slung over her back. She has her hands on her hips and is shaking her head in mock disappointment.

ROSA

Time to get up, little brother.
I've got a job for you.

ACT ONE

EXT. NORTHGATE - DAY

Orrin and Rosa walk down the street together. Orrin is focused ahead. Rosa's head turns to smile or wave to every passerby.

ROSA
Come on, hear me out.

ORRIN
I said no.

ROSA
You don't even know what the job is.

ORRIN
It's a job you want to do, that's all I need to know.

ROSA
That's insulting.

ORRIN
But accurate.

ROSA
I take on plenty of legitimate work I'll have you know.

ORRIN
Bard work, sure. You want me on this job. I'm not a bard.

ROSA
Oh, I know. I've heard you sing.

ORRIN
Which is how I know it's adventuring work. I am not an adventurer.

ROSA
Adventuring is just a very broad form of mercenary work. You're already a mercenary.

ORRIN
Adventurer is just a polite term for *grave robber*.

ROSA
We also slay monsters.

ORRIN
For money.

ROSA
Yeah. Why else would you slay a monster?

ORRIN
To stop it from killing people.

ROSA
Which still happens. It's a job, we deserve to get paid for it.

ORRIN
I'm sorry, Rosa, but I'm not interested.

The pair reach the Brass Gauntlet. Rosa stands indignantly in the street while Orrin makes for the door.

ROSA
How much does mom still owe?

Orrin stops, hand on the door handle.

ROSA (cont'd)
Took a small fortune to heal you after what that giant did. I know you haven't paid it all off. No where near.

Orrin lets go of the door and faces his sister. Now he's listening.

ROSA (cont'd)
One job, and I mean one job, could pay off her debt three times over. You hate adventuring so much, you'd never have to do it again.

Rosa flippantly points to a caravan loading up at the other end of the building.

ROSA (cont'd)
Or you could keep babysitting grumpy dwarves for the rest of your life.

EXT. NORTHGATE FOREST - DAY

Orrin and Rosa walk down the KING'S ROAD. Orrin has all his gear on and they're fit for travel.

ORRIN
So what is the job?

ROSA
Got a sending from an old friend about a week back. Says he has a lead on a treasure worth splitting three ways.

Orrin waits for the rest. There isn't any.

ORRIN
That's it?

ROSA
Yeah. Minor details aside.

ORRIN
Let's say I want the minor details.

ROSA
(shrugs)
He got his hand on something he thinks is a map. It's magic, so he needs help deciphering it. I know people that can pull that kind of spell. I provide my contact for a share of the loot.

ORRIN
And me?

ROSA
Well, I mean, I play a lute and he hides in shadows.

ORRIN
(sighs)
So I'm the muscle.
(beat, thinks)
Wait, which old friend is this?

ROSA
Oh... Ryn.

ORRIN
Ryn? You said "old friend".

ROSA
 Adventure long enough, little
 brother, and every spiteful ex-
 lover becomes an old friend.
 Especially when you have something
 they need.

Orrin rubs his temples.

ORRIN
 What have you gotten me into, Rosa?

ROSA
 (smiles)
 An adventure.

EXT. KING'S CROSSING OUTER CITY - DAY

SEVERAL DAYS LATER Orrin and Rosa approach the city of
 KING'S CROSSING. The city lacks walls, but has a heavy guard
 presence.

Large carts full of goods for trade are heading back and
 forth on the road, leaving Orrin and Rosa to skirt the side
 to avoid being hit.

ROSA
 King's Crossing, the heart of
 Corolon. You ever been?

ORRIN
 Where did you think all those
 caravans I was guarding went?

ROSA
 Westruun maybe.

ORRIN
 (shakes head)
 I didn't bother taking those.

Rosa nods, something's in Westruun they'd both rather avoid.

ROSA
 I wouldn't have either.

ORRIN
 Where are we meeting Ryn?

ROSA
 The *Harlequin's Tankard*. It's a
 favorite spot of his.

ORRIN
I'm going to hate this place,
aren't I?

ROSA
(winks)
Oh, I'm sure you'll love it.

EXT. KING'S CROSSING - DAY

King's Crossing is a merchant city of abundant shops and open markets. Most of the buildings are two stories tall with large windows for viewing product.

Buried among all this bustle is a small tavern with a sign out front showing a harlequin dancing with a tankard raised to the sky.

INT. HARLEQUIN'S TANKARD - DAY

Orrin and Rosa step into the low lit tavern. There's a band in a corner playing some lively, if offkey, music. Patron's are spread out between the bar and a number of tables.

The patrons in this place are rough. Laborers and lower class folk looking for a place to blow off steam between shifts. Old clothes stained with food and ale, patched in numerous places. Conversations are loud. Card games and arm wrestling occupy several tables.

Rosa scans the room looking for RYN. Orrin observes the room, extremely uncomfortable.

ROSA
There he is.

Rosa points to a table near the back where one person sits in a cloak with their hood up, face obscured in shadow.

ORRIN
He's not trying hard to look
suspicious, is he?

Rosa playfully backhands her brother in the arm, then rubs her hand after contacting his chain mail.

She leads Orrin over to Ryn's table. As they approach, Ryn's head perks up and the light hits his face. Dark skin and red eyes with a hint of white hair slipping out from under his hood. A DROW.

He stands and embraces Rosa in a hug.

RYN
Hells, Rosa, took your sweet time
didn't ya.

Rosa gestures to Orrin.

ROSA
Had to go to Northgate first and
grab him.

Ryn studies Orrin. Orrin straightens up and glares.

RYN
Doesn't look like a mage.

ROSA
Cause he's not. This is my brother,
Orrin.

Ryn sits back down. Rosa and Orrin join him at his table.

RYN
If he's not a mage, why's he here?
(to Orrin)
No offense.

ORRIN
I'll take it anyway.

Ryn gives Orrin a thin, rye grin.

RYN
I'm not looking to cut this three
ways, Rosa. I don't mind splitting
with you, especially if we share
the inn fees.

Ryn waggles his eyebrows suggestively. Rosa smiles. Orrin
rolls his eyes.

RYN (cont'd)
But I don't know him.

Rosa puts a hand on Orrin's shoulder:

ROSA
He's here because you don't have
any idea what that map you've got
leads to.

RYN
That's why I brought you in. Don't
see how he fits.

ROSA
 If that map leads to something
 nice, it'll probably be surrounded
 by a lot of not nice things.
 (pats Orrin's armor)
 His armor isn't for show.

Ryn snickers and brings one hand up. With a quick flourish,
 a dagger appears in his hand held by the blade between two
 fingers.

RYN
 I'm plenty capable of killing
 things, thank you.

ROSA
 But can you take a beating.

RYN
 I try to avoid those.

ROSA
 Exactly. My brother excels at
 getting his ass beaten.

There's a beat of silence, then Ryn breaks out laughing.
 Orrin glares at Rosa who just smiles.

ROSA (cont'd)
 (through teeth)
 Trust me.

After a few moments, Ryn starts to recompose himself.

RYN
 Okay, he can stay. Knew there was a
 reason I liked you, Rosa.

ROSA
 (playfully)
 I thought you loved me.

RYN
 Love and like are two very
 different things. If you want I can
 show you the difference upstairs.

Orrin clears his throat.

ORRIN
 I want to see the map.

RYN

Why?

ORRIN

To make sure it's real.

RYN

What? You doubt me?

ORRIN

Based on everything Rosa's ever told me about you, yes.

Ryn shakes his head and reaches into his backpack sitting next to his chair.

RYN

That's a real fun brother you've got, Rosa. Family get-togethers must be a hoot.

Ryn pulls a scroll tube from his bag and passes it to Orrin.

Orrin opens it and pulls out the weathered scroll from within. As he unrolls it, a pale blue light plays across his face.

The scroll is covered in arcane runes. They glow and slide and glide across the page in a constantly shifting mess of gibberish.

ORRIN

And you think this is a map?

RYN

That's what the guy I got it from told me.

ORRIN

Who was that? We might need to question him.

RYN

(hand wave)

Yeah, don't worry about that. He's a little dead.

Orrin eyes Rosa as he rolls the scroll and replaces it in the tube.

ORRIN

Why am I not surprised?

Orrin hands the tube back to Ryn.

RYN

Okay, Rosa, I showed mine, now it's your turn. How you gonna decipher this thing?

Rosa leans in dramatically. Ryn follows her lead. Orrin stays seated straight and watches them with fraying patience.

ROSA

So, turns out you're not the only old friend in town.

RYN

Oh?

ROSA

Silla's got a shop here. I happen to know she's got *Legend Lore* in her book which should be more than enough to decipher that magic map of yours.

RYN

And, being a friend of yours, she won't let me cut you out of the deal.

ROSA

She might even give us a discount.

RYN

Well then, what are we waiting for?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. SILLA'S SHOP - DAY

A pleasant two story cottage with a chimney and modestly sized yard. A small garden just outside the front door is full of various medicinal plants and mushrooms.

A sign above the front door has a wizard's hat above "Enchantments! Potions! Divinations!"

SILLA (V.O.)
Impressive.

INT. SILLA'S SHOP

Silla's *shop* is more like a den, with a small table with chairs. A crystal ball sits in the center of the table. An expensive rug lies under the table and silk drapes line the windows. Shelves line the space between windows with various knickknacks.

SILLA sits at the table, looking over the map. Rosa sits opposite her awaiting her appraisal. Orrin stands near the entrance with his arms crossed watching Ryn. Ryn moves around the room toying the knickknacks, noticing Orrin watching him, then replacing them where he found them.

Silla puts the map down on the table and smiles at Rosa.

SILLA
You always bring me the most interesting artifacts.

Rosa smiles. Ryn, about to poke a strange doll on one of the shelves, stops to glare at the pair.

SILLA (cont'd)
And you're right. *Legend Lore* is our best bet on this one.

RYN
So what, the spell will just make the map readable?

SILLA
No. You'd need the cypher used by the mage who created the map to put it back in order. My spell will trace the physical history of an object, showing us where it's been. If it doesn't lead back to what the
(MORE)

SILLA (cont'd)
map's pointing to, it should point
you to something that can.

RYN
(shaking his head)
That just... that just sounds so
useful.

SILLA
It's the best you're going to get.

Rosa reaches over the table and rests a hand on Silla's.

ROSA
And it's enough. Don't mind him.

ORRIN
How much will the spell cost?

SILLA
Two hundred and fifty gold.

Ryn spins away from the shelf he was examining, a tiny vase
in his hands.

RYN
Are you kidding? Two-fifty? Rosa, I
thought you said we'd get a
discount.

SILLA
That is with the discount.

RYN
And they call me a thief.

SILLA
The spell requires a decent amount
of incense. I'm just requesting
reimbursement for my loss.

ROSA
We can do that, Silla. Just cast
the spell, then-

SILLA
Sorry, Rosa. You're a dear friend,
but I know better than that.
Payment first, then I'll cast the
spell.

Rosa leans back in her chair and crosses her arms like a
rebuked child.

ORRIN
That's fine, Silla. We'll be back
when we have the money.

INT. HARLEQUIN'S TANKARD - LATER

The trio's back at their table from earlier.

RYN
So now what?

ROSA
I don't know. Silla was Plan A.

ORRIN
Really? Plan A was get a friend to
do you a favor for free?

ROSA
Yeah.

ORRIN
We just need to make two hundred
and fifty gold. How hard is that
for adventurers?

Rosa lets out a loud, angry groan and drops her head on the
table in resignation.

Rosa out of his line of sight, Ryn spots a DRUNKEN DWARF at
the bar flaunting a big bag of coin while nearly slipping
off his stool.

RYN
I'm going to go get a drink.

Ryn heads for the bar.

ORRIN
(to Rosa)
You going to be okay?

ROSA
No. I'm poor; and apparently, I'm
going to stay that way.

ORRIN
I mean, we just need to do a little
work-

Rosa begins to mock cry.

Ryn approaches the drunken dwarf at the bar.

DRUNKEN DWARF

Oy, keep'em coming barkeep. I've got a nice bit of coin lined up for ya if ya can get'em to me faster than I can down'em.

RYN

What's the occasion, friend?

The dwarf turns in his seat to face Ryn. He nearly falls over as he does so, but manages to hold onto the bar for support. As he does so, he leaves his bag of gold lying on the bar.

DRUNKEN DWARF

Celebrating, elf. Just landed me a job mining with the Feddic's. Good dwarven boys who know how to sweeten the pot, aye.

(points to coin
purse)

That there's me signin' bonus.

RYN

Nice.

DRUNKEN DWARF

Aye. This time tomorrow, I'll be deep under the Blue Mountains like a proper dwarf. No more of this soft human livin' fer me.

RYN

But what about all that human booze you're downing?

DRUNKEN DWARF

(nods)

Aye, the one thing I'll miss.

The dwarf pulls himself up, belly on the bar.

DRUNKEN DWARF (cont'd)

Barkeep! I want a round of every human drink ye got!

While the dwarf is making a scene, Ryn slyly grabs the coin purse off the bar as he turns to leave. No one seems to notice.

He returns to the table. Rosa still has her face planted on the table while Orrin makes mild attempts at cheering her up.

ORRIN
You could put on a show.

ROSA
People tip like garbage here.

ORRIN
We could guard a caravan.

ROSA
No. Just no.

Ryn sits and plops the dwarf's coin purse on the table.

RYN
Don't worry, I got us started.

Rosa's head perks up and she grabs the coin purse.

ROSA
How much is in here?

RYN
Haven't counted yet. I'd wager a lot.

ORRIN
Where'd you get that?

Ryn leans over the table to grab the purse back from Rosa. As he does, he subtly points to the dwarf at the bar who has seemingly passed out.

RYN
Our dwarven friend there really should learn to keep an eye on his money.

ORRIN
You stole it.

RYN
Yeah. I thought that was obvious.

Orrin shakes his head and rubs his eyes.

ORRIN
Can I see it?

Ryn hands Orrin the purse with a satisfied grin.

ORRIN (cont'd)
Thanks.

Orrin stands and walks to the bar. Ryn's grin quickly transforms into an angry glare.

Rosa covers her mouth to hide her smile.

Orrin approaches the bar and the dwarf who is now snoring. He plops the purse down next to the dwarf.

ORRIN (cont'd)
Barkeep, I think this gentleman
dropped this.

The barkeep glances over and nods. Orrin nods back then returns to the table.

As he sits, Ryn is seething. Rosa is barely holding back a fit of laughter.

Orrin looks at Ryn, feigning ignorance.

ORRIN (cont'd)
What? Man lost his gold.
(beat)
Now how are we going to make ours?

EXT. KING'S CROSSING - DAY

The trio looks over the community bulletin board. Rosa points to one:

ROSA
Oh! Undead in the mountains. Undead
always pay well.

RYN
Yeah, no. I don't mess with dead
things.

ROSA
They're *undead*. It's a whole
additional syllable.

RYN
Is that like a spell or something?

Orrin points to a different notice:

ORRIN
Bandit bounty. Pay per head. If the
group's big enough, could cover all
our expenses.

RYN
I don't know, they might be
friends. Or friends of friends. I'm
not looking to make enemies.

ORRIN
Its them or the undead.

Ryn rips the bounty off the board.

RYN
Let's go make some enemies.

Orrin grabs the bounty out of Ryn's hand.

ORRIN
There's no details on this. We have
to go talk to the Constable.

ROSA
You're not wanted locally, are you
Ryn?

RYN
Of course, but they don't know what
I look like.

ORRIN
Are you absolutely sure about that?

Rosa loops her arm around Ryn's and pulls him away.

ROSA
You handle the details, little
brother. Ryn and I will make sure
we're provisioned.

Orrin sighs and heads in the opposite direction.

EXT. CONSTABLE'S OFFICE - DAY

A small, one story building with a fenced off yard. A sign
out front reads "Office of the Constable" with the symbol of
a sword laid diagonally over a shield under it.

INT. CONSTABLE'S OFFICE - DAY

The constable, ABEL TOMKIN, sits behind his desk filling out
paperwork. He's a gruff, strong man in the early days of
middle age. Gray is starting to creep into his hair, but he
still looks like he'd rather be in armor than official garb.

The office is plain. Tomkin's desk is simple, little more than a table. Papers are scattered about the desk and a few shelves around the room.

A map of the area is hanging on one wall.

The door opens and an AIDE pokes his head in.

AIDE
Constable, someone here to see you
about a bounty posting.

Tomkin motions for the aide to show the person in as he stands. Tomkin moves to the front of his desk, leaning against it and crossing his arms.

Orrin comes in, the bounty notice in hand.

Tomkin holds his hand out and Orrin hands him the notice. After a moment to read it, Tomkin looks Orrin over, measuring him.

TOMKIN
You're not thinking of going after
them alone, are you?

ORRIN
I have a team.

Tomkin nods and puts the notice down on his desk. He holds his hand out again, this time in a friendly gesture.

TOMKIN
Abel Tomkin.

Orrin shakes the constable's hand.

ORRIN
Orrin Konrad.

TOMKIN
Army?

Orrin pauses, caught off guard.

TOMKIN (cont'd)
Armor's standard issue.

ORRIN
Former.

Tomkin nods and lets the matter drop. He relaxes and approaches the map on the wall. Tomkin points out a dot south of King's Crossing along the King's Road.

TOMKIN

This is Colris. You familiar?

ORRIN

I've heard of it.

TOMKIN

It's the main caravan stop between the Crossing and Capital. It's the last place traders check in with the guard before reaching here.

Tomkin runs his finger along the path between Colris and King's Crossing.

TOMKIN (cont'd)

Last few weeks, caravans have been disappearing along the path. We always lose a few. As safe as the King's Road is, it's still wilderness.

ORRIN

But not this many.

TOMKIN

(shakes head)

This many lost caravans in such a short time has to be a concerted effort. I was going to send a team along the road to find and clear them.

ORRIN

Why didn't you?

TOMKIN

Three days ago a merchant made it into town. His caravan had been hit, but his guards managed to hold the attackers off long enough for him to run. He described the bandits. Big, strong, tusks.

ORRIN

Orcs.

TOMKIN

Orcs. Led by a half-orc in plate with a distinctive scar over one eye.

ORRIN

You know him?

TOMKIN

Just by reputation, if it's who I think it is. There was a half-orc named Filge who served during the war. Was a hero to a lot of people back then.

ORRIN

And now he's a bandit.

TOMKIN

A bandit with military experience leading a band of orcs with trained attack dogs.

(beat)

You can see why I thought better of sending my own men.

ORRIN

They'd be massacred. Why call for mercenaries, though. This sounds like a job for the army.

TOMKIN

You'd know better than me that the army decides what is and isn't worth their time.

Orrin nods. He knows that very, very well.

TOMKIN (cont'd)

I put a call out to the local garrison for aid. I got a long letter that basically boiled down to "we'll put it on the list".

ORRIN

They aren't concerned about trade being disrupted?

TOMKIN

The bandits are only targeting smaller, independent caravans. Any merchant with enough coin to have the ear of someone important has

(MORE)

TOMKIN (cont'd)
enough coin to hire proper
protection. And, if it is Filge,
he'd know better than to attack
someone that would draw the army's
attention.

Orrin looks at the map.

ORRIN
That's a lot of land to cover.

TOMKIN
If it helps, the survivor said he
saw some elven ruins nearby before
they were attacked.

ORRIN
It's something to go on. Thank you
for your time, Constable.

Orrin starts to leave.

TOMKIN
Don't you want to know the pay?

ORRIN
Probably should, right?

TOMKIN
Hundred gold per orc head. You can
keep what you find in their camp,
though we'll pay for any returned
valuables that a family member
might wish to claim.

ORRIN
Right... I'm going to need a sack.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. THE KING'S ROAD - DAY

Orrin, Rosa, and Ryn are traveling down the road. Orrin has a large, empty sack slung over his shoulder and leads the group.

Ryn quickly sidesteps as we walks, having just barely missed stepping in something nasty.

RYN

Hey, soldier boy, I got a question for you?

Orrin ignores him.

RYN (cont'd)

I said, "Hey, soldier boy!"

ORRIN

I know, I was ignoring you.

RYN

(rolls eyes)

The army made these roads right?
How come they never clean them?

ORRIN

That's what rain is for.

RYN

No way rain is cleaning up *that* mess.

ROSA

You're fast, Ryn, just step lightly.

RYN

Oh, I'm good, don't you worry. I just think it's kind of bullshit I gotta watch my step on the King's Road unless I want to step in *actual* shit.

ORRIN

Would you rather there be no road? We could all pick our way through forest trails and get killed by bandits or monsters.

RYN
I'd be fine with that.

ORRIN
Of course you would.

RYN
What's that supposed to mean?

Orrin turns on Ryn.

ORRIN
That you're a criminal. Roads like this are made so its easier to stop people like you, so of course you'd like it if they were gone.

They glare at each other for a beat before Ryn cracks a smile. Orrin sighs and moves on.

ROSA
(to Ryn)
Do you need to antagonize him?

RYN
He's the one being a dick to me. I try and help get us some money, he gives it back. I ask a simple question, he acts like I'm as bad as the bandits we're about to kill.

Rosa looks away from Ryn, awkwardly trying to hide her agreement with her brother. It doesn't work.

RYN (cont'd)
Rosa!

ROSA
What? Is he wrong?

RYN
I'm helping you kill the bad guys right now.

ROSA
Because we didn't have another choice... and how many steps did I have to take to make sure you didn't stab us in the back on this job?

RYN
You used to be fun.
(MORE)

RYN (cont'd)
(points to Orrin)
He is a bad influence on you and I
don't like it.

Ryn looks ahead and sees a large pile of horse remains ahead on the path. Orrin hasn't noticed it yet and is heading straight for it.

RYN (cont'd)
You know what, I think you both
need a lesson in what its like to
be down in the muck with your
lessors.

ROSA
Ryn, don't.

Ryn ignores her, and moves up behind Orrin. As they approach the pile on the ground, he moves to trip Orrin with one of his legs.

Orrin stumbles forward but manages to keep his balance. He straightens up on the other side of the pile and glares at Ryn as he realizes what just happened.

RYN
Gotta watch your footing out here.
Lotta loose stones, you know.

Orrin gets right up in Ryn's face and pokes a finger into his chest. Ryn is unaffected, just grinning.

ORRIN
Try that again, and I'll strike you
down where you stand.

RYN
Oh, so scared.

Orrin readjusts his gear and heads forward again.

RYN (cont'd)
I guess I'll just have to get a
giant. I know how well you do
against them.

ORRIN (O.S.)
Fuck off!

Ryn smiles at Rosa, proud of his accomplishment. Rosa walks past, annoyed.

ROSA
You are such a dick.

EXT. PARTY CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The party has built a small fire. Rosa is already asleep on her bedroll while Ryn and Orrin sit across the fire from each other.

Ryn warms his hands. He's already gotten out of his armor and his gear is resting next to his bedroll in a pile.

Orrin is still armored with his sword resting on his lap. His eyes sweep across the forest around them, looking for threats.

RYN
You can settle down. Nobody's going to sneak up on us.

ORRIN
And you're so sure because?

RYN
Two reasons. First, I have amazing hearing.
(points to his elf ears)
Second, I laid out a bunch of sound traps while you were hunting for firewood.

ORRIN
And you don't think anyone could get around some twigs on the ground?

RYN
No one who'd think we were a score worth taking. Someone's desperate enough to rob us, they're probably also stupid enough not to check for a well placed twig.

ORRIN
I'm going to keep watch anyway.

RYN
(shrugs)
Suit yourself. If I was you, I'd want to be getting as much sleep as possible right now.

ORRIN

I'll be fine.

RYN

I'm just saying, I only need four hours to be at my best. You humans need at least six.

ORRIN

So let you take a watch by yourself while Rosa and I split the second.

RYN

Makes a good plan, right?

ORRIN

It would make a good plan, if I trusted you.

RYN

And what do you think I'm going to do? Stab you in the back while you're sleeping so I have to fight all these orc bandits on my own?

Orrin doesn't answer.

RYN (cont'd)

Look, you're going to have to trust me, at least once the fighting starts. Right now, we all want the same thing - getting that map magicked into making sense.

ORRIN

And after that?

RYN

One step at a time, man. One step at a time.

EXT. KING'S ROAD - DAY

The party trudges along the road. Orrin focuses ahead of him, keeping an eye on the tree line for threats. Ryn brings up the rear, cutting up an apple with a knife. Rosa walks between them, the only one watching the horizon.

As they walk, a thin, white tower comes into view, sticking out over the tree tops.

Excited, Rosa catches up with her brother and claps a hand on his shoulder.

Orrin is startled, his hand going to his sword, but he catches himself fast enough that Rosa doesn't notice.

ROSA
(points)
Look!

Orrin looks where Rosa's pointing and sees the tower.

ORRIN
Ruins. Elven?

ROSA
(smiles)
Won't know until we get there.

EXT. RUINS - LATER

The ruins are an open space in the forest. A large mosaic floor surrounded by carved pillars leading to an alter sitting in front of the tower, itself a larger, taller carved pillar.

Almost all of it has been defaced, ruined, or outright destroyed by centuries of neglect in nature. Trees and foliage are growing up right in the middle of the mosaic, vines are wrapping around the pillars that haven't collapsed, and moss covers as much as it can.

The party enters opposite the tower. Rosa rushes in, heading to the first pillar that still has some visible carvings on it. Ryn casually follows while Orrin brings up the rear, keeping a lookout.

ROSA
Oh, this is definitely elven. I've read about these. Sort of an open air temple. They were scattered all over the continent when elves ruled everything.

RYN
That sounds horrible.

ROSA
Ryn, you're an elf.

RYN
Not *that* kind.
(points to tower)
What's the deal with the tower?
Somebody compensating for something?

ROSA

It's probably a giant sundial. If I had to guess, this place was probably dedicated to Sehanine. On a full moon, it'd cast a shadow that played out over the mosaic, maybe as a part of a ritual.

RYN

Why do you know all this?

ROSA

I'm a bard. Elves love to hear songs from the lost glory days. Helps them feel superior.

RYN

Cause we are.

Rosa narrows her eyes at Ryn.

RYN (cont'd)

What? We live nearly forever, we can see in the dark, and I have never met an ugly elf, ever.

Orrin's circling the ruin's perimeter, looking for signs of their quarry. He pauses, turning back to the others:

ORRIN

That's why humans rule almost the whole continent and the elves a single forest in the southern corner.

RYN

I'm not *that* kind of elf.

ORRIN

That's right. You're the kind that got beaten by *those* elves and driven underground.

RYN

... Drow are hotter.

Rosa shakes her head and moves to the main tower.

ORRIN

What is that even supposed to mean?

RYN

It means that even the king of the *Forest of Stars* himself would put me in his harem.

ORRIN

First, the king of the *Forest of Stars* doesn't have a harem. Second, you're a man.

RYN

So? Only a human'd think that matters.

ORRIN

Ryn, I am trying to check the perimeter. There might be a gang of angry orcs camped near this site, and the last thing we want is to be caught by sur-

Six ORCS followed closely by their four trained attack DOGS burst into the clearing, coming at the party from all angles.

Orrin, closest to the tree line, is attacked first. An orc swings its ax at him. It slams into his back, but his armor stops it.

Orrin grunts in pain and the impact sends him to one knee.

The orc follows up with a swing right to Orrin's exposed head. His eyes go wide, he can't recover in time.

A dagger slams into the orc's chest, piercing straight to its' heart, sending it toppling over before it can finish the blow.

Orrin stands, bringing his shield and sword to the ready. Ryn smiles at him and mock salutes. Orrin nods back in appreciation.

Three of the dogs come barking and snapping right after Ryn.

RYN

Oh shit.

Ryn starts running, heading right past Rosa. She's jumped up on top of the alter and is dodging blows from two orcs while keeping them back with her rapier.

Rosa looks to her brother and calls out to him. Her voice RESONATES with magic.

ROSA
*Come on, Little Brother, time to be
 the muscle.*

Orrin readies himself as three orcs and the last dog begin to circle him. Orrin turns with the group, his shield at the ready.

One of the orcs shouts in orcish and the dog leaps forward. Orrin, understanding the command, catches it with his shield and the dog bounces off to the ground.

The orc on Orrin's flank swings downward with its ax. Orrin anticipates the move and sidesteps.

As he sidesteps, Orrin feints to the orc on his right. That orc steps back and the one to his left steps in for an attack. Expecting the maneuver, Orrin blocks high with his shield, then impales the orc in the gut with his sword.

The orc behind Orrin recovers from its miss and swings for his head.

Ryn comes rushing by and stabs the orc in the back of the neck mid-swing. He leaves the dagger in the orc, drawing another as he goes - his three canine pursuers in hot pursuit.

Ryn keeps going, making a big circle around the ruins. As he nears Rosa, he throws another dagger, catching one of her assailants in the back. At the same time, she stabs the other in the eye with her rapier.

Both Rosa's attacker's dead, she hops down to the ground and looks over to Orrin's battle. She cups her hands around her mouth and shouts, the same magical resonance in her voice.

ROSA (cont'd)
*Hey, ugly! Why so angry, your lady
 love the dog more?*

The last orc attacking Orrin turns to Rosa, then grabs its head in pain. Orrin slashes it in the back, sending it to the ground, then stabs the dog on the ground before it can recover.

ORRIN
 Thanks.

ROSA
 I've got your back, little brother.

Ryn, still being chased by three dogs, rushes between them.

RYN
That's great. Help now!

Rosa pulls her crossbow off her back and starts loading a bolt. Orrin rushes to stand in front of her for cover.

ORRIN
Ryn, to me!

Ryn makes another circuit, but he's starting to tire. The dogs are about to catch him before can make it back to Orrin.

From the trees, someone WHISTLES.

The dogs stop chasing Ryn and retreat back to the tree line.

Ryn regroups with the others. Hands on his knees, he pants and struggles to catch his breath. Rosa gently rubs his back.

RYN
(panting)
See... superior.

FILGE (O.S.)
Such confidence.

FILGE, a large half-orc in dark half-plate armor wielding a finely crafted greataxe with a coat of arms depicting three roses growing different directions out of a central point, steps into the clearing. The remaining three dogs follow behind him obediently.

FILGE
My men were savage and undisciplined. Effective against caravan guards. I warned them that adventurers would pose a greater threat, even in smaller numbers. They didn't listen. It's a pity. Training them takes so long.

ORRIN
Filge?

Filge nods and evaluates Orrin.

FILGE
Army I take it. This isn't an official operation if you have him-
(MORE)

FILGE (cont'd)
(points to Ryn)
-on your team. So, you must be
retired or a deserter. Too young to
be retired. Did they burn you too?

ORRIN
That why you're out here killing
innocent people, Filge? Because you
got a raw deal?

RYN
(to Rosa)
Are we talking to the bad guy now?

ROSA
Shh.

FILGE
Of course not. I'm a soldier, like
you. I fight with purpose. I don't
kill for pleasure.

ORRIN
And what purpose is that?

Filge raises his axe with one hand and points it at Orrin in challenge.

FILGE
One that demands my silence. Now,
let's finish this.

Filge barks an order in orcish and the dogs charge the group. Filge follows behind.

Rosa gets her crossbow up and shoots one of the dogs. Ryn hits one with his dagger. Orrin uses his shield to stop the last dog mid-jump and slides his blade along the top of the shield, stabbing into it.

The group has no time to recover. Filge is on them immediately, a wide swing of his axe directed at all their heads. Ryn rolls backward out of the way, Orrin ducks, and Rosa just manages to get her crossbow up in time to take the brunt of the blow.

The impact from the swing sends Rosa flying to the ground. Her crossbow stays embedded on the end of Filge's axe.

Filge pulls his axe in close, but before he can try to remove the crossbow, Orrin pops back up swinging with his sword.

Filge sidesteps the first swing, deflects another with his axe and Rosa's stuck crossbow, then ducks under the last.

Filge grabs Orrin by the collar of his chain and pulls hard, sending Orrin stumbling past him.

Ryn comes rushing in. He's too fast for Filge to dodge, so the half-orc just shifts to make sure his armor catches the blades, then socks Ryn in the face with the crossbow stuck on his blade.

Ryn goes down, nose broken.

Filge grabs the crossbow and rips it off his axe. He sees Rosa starting to recover and whips the crossbow back at her.

She rolls out of the way of the crossbow, but then Filge is on top of her.

He swings down once, Rosa rolls to the side. Twice, she rolls to the other side. He kicks her in the gut, then starts to bring down his axe a third time.

Orrin tackles Filge from the side, launching them both away from Rosa.

On the ground, Filge swings at Orrin. Orrin barely gets his shield up in time, the blow denting the shield, the very edge of Filge's axe piercing through inches away from Orrin's eyes.

Filge pulls his axe back, ripping Orrin's shield along with it. They both stand. Filge readies himself. Orrin takes a two handed grip on his sword.

FILGE (cont'd)

You have my respect, even if you
are a fool.

ORRIN

You're nothing but a bandit to me.

Filge snarls in anger and charges. Orrin takes a guard stance.

A dagger flies in from the side, slamming into Filge's eye and stopping his charge short. Filge drops his axe as both hands go to the hilt sticking out of his head, screaming in pain.

Filge whips around, panicking. He pulls the knife out, blood pouring down his cheek from his eye socket. His remaining eye goes wide as he realizes he lost track of Orrin.

Filge turns around just in time for Orrin to swing his sword. Filge's head tumbles off his body, which topples to the ground a second later.

Orrin stands over Filge's body victoriously, breathing deeply and letting his sword hang low in his grip.

Ryn walks over, holding his nose.

RYN
Never turn your back on the real
threat, right?

Orrin looks at Ryn and shakes his head. He promptly ignores him and moves to his sister.

ORRIN
Rosa, you alright?

Orrin helps her up to her feet.

ROSA
I'm down a crossbow, but I'll live.

RYN
(points to nose)
Rosa, bit of help.

Rosa casts a HEALING SPELL on Ryn while Orrin steps back over to Filge's body.

He picks up the half-orc's axe and examines the coat of arms on it. He regards Filge's body, worry starting to bubble up.

ROSA
Little brother!

Orrin turns to see Rosa and Ryn heading for the treeline where Filge appeared from. Rosa's waving him over.

ROSA (cont'd)
Come on, it's the fun part now.

ORRIN
What?

RYN
She means its time to loot.

Rosa smiles. Ryn looks back at the orc bodies behind them all.

RYN (cont'd)
You can grab the heads.

EXT. ORC CAMP - MOMENTS LATER

The party breaks into another clearing near the ruins. This one is smaller, but more densely packed. Rough tents circle a small, smoldering fire pit.

The camp is next to a large boulder sticking out of the ground. Two caravan carts sit next to the boulder, one on either side, stuffed to the brim with the orc's stolen bounty.

Rosa and Ryn rush to the closest cart in excitement. Ryn jumps right into the cart while Rosa heads to the back and starts sorting through items.

Orrin examines the camp, using his sword to peek into tents and turn over items left by the orcs.

Ryn stands up inside the cart holding so many coins in both hand they're spilling out from between his fingers.

RYN
I'm rich. I'm rich. I'm so fucking rich!

ROSA
Split three ways, Ryn.

RYN
We're rich.

Rosa shakes her head and pulls a wand out of the cart. A black handle ending in a silver spider holding a purple gem. She looks it over and smirks before attaching it to her belt.

ORRIN
Looks like we got them all. Seven heads for seven hundred gold. That's more than enough.

RYN
Oh, we've got more than that.

Ryn tosses coins into the air. Orrin ignores Ryn, looking over the carts, making mental calculations.

ORRIN

Let's head back to King's Crossing.
We'll let Tomkin know where to find
the carts.

RYN

Woah, hey! Who put you in charge?
This is our score, I'm not giving
any of it to the guard.

ORRIN

We have what we need with the
bounty, Ryn. The rest of this might
belong to someone.

RYN

Yeah, me.

Rosa coughs.

RYN (cont'd)

Us.

Orrin looks at Rosa.

ROSA

Little Brother, it is normal on
these sorts of jobs to keep
whatever the ne'er-do-wells
appropriated for themselves.

Orrin considers, glancing between his sister and Ryn. After
a beat he nods in concession.

ORRIN

Just what we can carry.

Ryn smiles and falls back into the loot.

Rosa turns back to the cart and stops as she finds something
of interest.

ROSA

Hey, little brother.

Rosa pulls a metal kite shield out of the cart and hands it
to him. The shield looks neat and polished except for the
final remains of a worn off heraldry.

ROSA (cont'd)

You might need this.

Orrin takes the shield and feels the weight. He turns it over in his hands. On the back runes are etched into the metal.

ROSA (cont'd)
 Enchantment runes. That one will
 take a hit.

Orrin stares at the blank face of the shield, seeing a dull reflection of himself in the surface.

ORRIN
 Thanks.

EXT. KING'S ROAD - DAY

The party is back on the path. Orrin leads with the sack of heads slung over his shoulder, a bit of gore dripping behind him.

Rosa and Ryn follow behind. Both are dragging a bulging sack of loot crafted from the orc's tents. They're struggling and don't look happy about it.

RYN
 Can't believe he didn't even grab
 one thing.

ROSA
 He took the shield.

RYN
 One thing we can *sell*.

ROSA
 He's carrying the heads, Ryn.
 They're worth more than anything we
 grabbed.

RYN
 He's the muscle, Rosa. You said it
 yourself. He could lug more than
 both of us combined.

ROSA
 I'm not exactly sure about that.

RYN
 (ignoring her)
 Instead, he just takes the heads
 and looks down on us.

ROSA

Looks down on you maybe.

RYN

Trust me, that guy thinks we're the scum of the earth. You being his sister just makes him treat you nice.

ROSA

Orrin may be a little... strict with how he views the world, but he's a good guy at heart.

RYN

He's an asshole, and assholes need to be taken down a peg whenever the chance arises.

Ryn glances at the road and sees that there are plenty of horse droppings. He starts to smirk.

ROSA

Ryn, not again.

Ryn shushes Rosa with a finger to his lips then silently closes the gap to Orrin. Waiting for his moment, he sticks his foot in between Orrin's.

This time, Orrin falls forward. Face first into a pile of horse excrement.

Ryn drops his sack and starts laughing.

Orrin pushes himself up off the ground, gagging and scraping the dung off his face.

ROSA (cont'd)

(to Ryn)

You are a piece of shit.

RYN

But I don't have any on my face.

In a burst of rage, Orrin stands, draws his sword, and swings at Ryn.

Ryn dodges out of the way and spirals into another fit of laughter.

RYN (cont'd)

What, can't see with all that shit in your-

Ryn trails off into laughter, doubling over.

Orrin puts a hand on Ryn's shoulder and drives his sword into Ryn's gut.

Ryn falls to the ground, convulsing - dying.

Orrin glares at him. Rosa stares at the whole situation, eyes wide in shock.

Orrin's rage subsides. He grabs his cloak and wipes his face off.

ORRIN
(to Rosa)
Heal him.

Rosa nods and casts HEALING WORD. Ryn gasps for air as he comes back to consciousness. He stares in shock for a moment, then sees Orrin.

He starts LAUGHING again.

It takes everything Orrin has to turn around and ignore him.

Rosa helps Ryn to his feet.

ROSA
Are you happy now?

Ryn gets his laughter in check, but can still only manage to smile and nod at her.

Rosa shakes her head and trails after her brother while Ryn gathers up his loot sack.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. CONSTABLE'S OFFICE - LATER

Constable Tomkin drops a bag of coin onto his desk.

TOMKIN
Seventy platinum well earned.

Orrin nods and takes the pouch.

ORRIN
My people grabbed what they could carry, but there's still a lot of property sitting in their camp.

TOMKIN
Tell the clerk where you found them on the way out, I'll send some boys to bring it back. Maybe we'll be able to return something to a family member.

The exchange over, Tomkin notices Orrin doesn't leave.

TOMKIN (cont'd)
Something else?

Orrin pauses, not sure of himself. He pulls Filge's axe off his back.

ORRIN
Filge had this. It's marked with a heraldry I don't recognize.

Tomkin takes the axe from Orrin and examines the mark. He recognizes it.

TOMKIN
That's the mark of the *Knights of the Three Roses*. They're the lapdogs of Lord Saxton.

Tomkin can see Orrin's unfamiliar with the name.

TOMKIN (cont'd)
Saxton's a new upstart in the Eastlands. Took control of Eastwatch after the Beauregard family was killed. By orcs.

ORRIN

And now an orc is running around
with a weapon bearing his mark.

Tomkin nervously hands the weapon back to Orrin.

TOMKIN

Probably just took it off of one of
Saxton's men.

ORRIN

If you say so.

TOMKIN

That is what I say. Lord Saxton
cares about his reputation and a
great deal less about those that
besmirch it, rightfully or not. Do
you understand?

Orrin stows the axe.

ORRIN

Probably just a trophy.

TOMKIN

Thank you for your service, Orrin.
You've done us a great favor today.

Tomkin returns to his paperwork, making it clear the meeting
is over. Orrin leaves.

INT. SILLA'S SHOP - DAY

The party is gathered around Silla's table. She has a map of
Corolon laid out along with her spellbook and the supplies
for the spell.

Rosa hands Silla the money for the spell and the map.

SILLA

Thank you, dear.

Silla sits at the table. She places the four ivory strips
around the arcane map and lights her incense.

While she prepares, Rosa ushers Orrin and Ryn back away from
the table to give Silla room to work. Ryn rubs his hands
together in excitement. Orrin glares at him. Rosa makes sure
to stand between the two.

Silla begins to recite the spell's incantation.

RYN

What do you think it leads to,
Rosa?

ROSA

Don't care. I just hope whatever's
guarding it smells better than
orcs.

RYN

What about you, soldier boy? Think
it's something you'll make us leave
behind again after we do all the
hard work?

Orrin doesn't respond.

Rosa points at Silla:

ROSA

Here we go.

Silla completes her incantation and her eyes glow white. Her
voice resonates with magic, but a deeper, more powerful
effect than Rosa's.

SILLA

*Upon the deathbed of High Lord
Altenra, three arcanists stole away
a tome of dark deed. Mugrunden
scaled down the Blue Mountains.
Lamlis exiled from the Forest of
Stars. Sheggen, paragon of the
southern orc tribes. Together they
bound the codex where only they
could find it lest the world be
covered in death once more.*

Silla's eyes return to their natural color. As she regains
full control of herself she quickly marks notes on her map
of Corolon.

The party rejoins her. Rosa puts a hand on her shoulder.

ROSA

Are you alright, Silla?

SILLA

(smiles)
Fine, Rosa. I'm used to it by now.

RYN
That's it? We're looking for a
book.

SILLA
From the sounds of the legend, a
codex.

RYN
My mistake. We're looking for a
fancy book.

ROSA
A fancy *magic* book, Ryn.

RYN
So... valuable?

ROSA
Very.

SILLA
And extremely dangerous.

RYN
Had me at "very".

ORRIN
How dangerous?

RYN
Of course he cares about that.

SILLA
It's hard to say. All the codices
from the Delian Empire are
extremely dangerous in the wrong
hands, but based on the spell, I
think we're dealing with the *Codex
Mortis*.

ROSA
Oh... that's bad.

RYN
Not you too.

ROSA
Mortis, Ryn. As in *undead*.

Ryn closes his eyes tightly and chants to himself:

RYN

Think of the payday. Think of the
payday.

Orrin looks at Silla's map over her shoulder. Silla's marked
three locations: The BLUE MOUNTIANS, The FOREST OF STARS,
and the ORCISH ALIENAGE.

ORRIN

So, the codex will be at one of
these locations?

SILLA

Maybe. The spell can't pinpoint a
location, but these are the origins
of the people who created it. You
might find something there that can
lead you to it.

Orrin nods.

ORRIN

The Blue Mountains are just outside
the city, we'll start there.

(to the party)

We'll need supplies and a guide. We
should probably look into this
Mugrunden too.

ROSA

Sounds draconic. Maybe a
dragonborn.

RYN

Gods, not those guys.

ROSA

What do you have against
dragonborn?

RYN

Have you ever listened to one talk?

Silla puts a hand on Orrin's forearm, grabbing his attention
while Rosa and Ryn squabble.

SILLA

If you find the tome, even if its
not the codex, you should take it
to Archmage Barnabas. He was my
mentor long ago and he can keep it
safe.

Orrin studies Silla's face for a second, trying to read how up front she's being. After a beat he nods.

INT. HARLEQUIN'S TANKARD - NIGHT

The party sits at their table in the common room studying the map of Corolon Silla marked after her spell.

ROSA

There's mining guilds operating all up and down those mountains. If anyone's seen something that might have belonged to an archmage up there, it'd be one of them.

ORRIN

Didn't you see a post about undead in the mountains?

ROSA

(nods)

BC Mining posted it. Definitely worth looking into.

RYN

It's probably in there. Undead sprouting up around an undead tomedex-

ROSA

Codex.

RYN

Yeah, that. Anyway, my money's on it being right in there. Sweet and simple, then we sell it to some high and mighty mage for a few solid chests of platinum.

ORRIN

We're going to give it to Barnabas.

RYN

Who?

ROSA

Archmage Barnabas. He was Silla's teacher.

(to Orrin)

She mentioned him to you, didn't she?

ORRIN

Yeah. Whatever this thing is, it's too dangerous to just sell to the highest bidder.

RYN

What if the highest bidder is also the safest person to leave it with?

ORRIN

(shakes his head)

I don't think they will be.

RYN

Okay. How about it's not our problem?

ORRIN

If we get our hands on the book, it becomes our responsibility. Even knowing its out there we should be doing everything we can to make sure it's secured and kept somewhere safe.

Ryn looks to Rosa for backup but she shrugs.

RYN

Fine. How are we going to do this?

ORRIN

We'll need a guide into the mountains. We'll want some healing potions.

RYN

I can cover that.

Orrin eyes Ryn.

RYN (cont'd)

Met a guy before we left for the last job. He loves me. Definitely getting a discount.

ORRIN

Okay. We'll get what we need in the morning then respond to the notice Rosa saw. Then we're heading to the mountains.

Ryn holds his mug up for a toast.

RYN
To doing the right thing!

Rosa and Orrin look at each other wondering what the hell just got into Ryn. They halfheartedly tap their mugs to his.

RYN (cont'd)
This is going to be great guys.

INT. HARLEQUIN'S TANKARD - MORNING

In Orrin's room, he's asleep in his bed when someone KNOCKS rapidly on his door.

ROSA (O.S.)
Orrin? Orrin, are you awake?

ORRIN
No.

ROSA (O.S.)
Orrin, you need to get out here right now.

Orrin sluggishly gets out of bed, rubbing his eyes. He opens the door to his sister, fully dressed for the day.

ORRIN
What is it?

ROSA
Ryn's gone.

Orrin snaps fully awake. He pushes past Rosa to Ryn's room. The door's open (from Rosa) and the room is empty. All of Ryn's gear is gone.

Orrin looks back to Rosa.

ORRIN
The map?

Rosa holds her empty hands out and shakes her head. Orrin looks back into the empty room. He punches the doorframe before walking back to his room and slamming the door shut.

END OF SHOW