

Sunday, October 4, 2009

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The Ford of Sovea was a small town. While it was larger than the village where I grew up, it normally would only have been large enough for a Journeyman Mask. It merited the presence of a Master Mask only because so many traders passed through it. If there was something bound for the Central Weald, or traffic coming and going over Goat Pass, it had to pass over the Ford of Sovea. This traffic meant that messages were always coming, going, and waiting for people who would be passing through, and some of those messages were secret enough to merit the services of a Master Mask.

We bumped our way across the shallow water of the ford and threaded our way through the dark streets of the town to a small house where a large red mask hung from the wrought-iron sign yard above the door. A rangy man with a red mask on his face emerged from the house immediately after Lena's father knocked. Without a word, he handed the khasar's Mask several large saddle bags and began leading the wagon into the alley beside the house. Lena jumped clear of the wagon and ran to her father. I watched around the side of the wagon as he raised her face to look at his, stared into her eyes for what seemed like a long time, and then, without a word, turned, mounted his horse, and rode away.

The redface led the wagon around the corner of the house, and unyoked the oxen. I helped him lead them into a small barn where he fed and watered them before leading me back around to the front of the house. Lena was still standing in the street, staring off in the direction where her father had disappeared. She started when I touched her shoulder, and followed us into the house.

Behind the heavy shutters, the yellow glow of tallow candles and a fire on the hearth made the house seem friendly and warm. He led us, without a word, to a table where bread soaked in warm milk, poached eggs, and an oniony cheese waited for us. He spoke in a voice that sounded rusty from long disuse as he pointed. "There are beds in the back room for you." With that, he stumped up the stairs, leaving us to our supper and our thoughts.

I woke early the next morning to the sound of someone rattling around in the main room of the house. I stumbled blearily out of my bed to see the man from the night before stirring something in a pot over the fire. He glance over his shoulder at me. I was surprised to see that his mask was hanging from a cord around his neck, instead of being on his face.

"Morning, boy." His voice didn't sound as gruff as it had the night before. "What's your name?"

"You can call me Gannon." He gestured to a large bucket by the table. "There's water for washing, and an outhouse around back by the barn. Do you know when her ladyship's going to be getting up?"

Shaking my head mutely, I shuffled out to find the outhouse, wondering why Gannon didn't wear his mask, and why he called Lena her ladyship.

Posted by Johnny Elbows in The Apprentice Mask at 13:32

I am sorry but all the masks are starting to confuse me. Would you be willing to do a post that describes all of the masks and their hierarchy to this point? Comment (1)

Anonymous on Oct 6 2009, 10:23

So far, three masks have been mentioned in the story.

- 1) The khasar's Mask--This is Lena's father. He wears a black mask. See episodes 3 & 4 for his introduction.
- 2) An unknown man in a golden mask--This Mask was only seen once. Ian dreamed about him in episode 4.
- 3) The Master Mask from the Ford of Sovea--This is the man called Gannon. In slang terms, he is referred to as "redface" because his mask is red. Comment (1)

Anonymous on Oct 6 2009, 13:01

I'm really enjoying the world-building you have going on here. Comment (1)

Anonymous on Oct 6 2009, 14:23