

Inheritance Contested ירושה במחלוקת

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It all began in 348, on the island of Sancrist, when Tassin Trueshield of Aleph, was deposed by his cousin Rufier. Together with his company of fifty men at arms they instigated a coup against the rightful lord. Killing Tassin's father Lord Tarcil, his wife and his baby daughter, Rufier sent three men to hunt down his hated cousin and kill him.

Tassin had left his castle early in the morning to go hunting, taking his squire Baut of MarKenin, ten of his household knights and a collection of verderers and warders to bring the animals into their trap of the hunt. Chasing a deer through the forest Tassin became separated from his companions, when the three hunters from Rufier came upon the Lord of Aleph, pulling their daggers they tried to pull the lord from his horse. Tassin used a whip and to keep his attackers at bay. His attackers stabbed in his thigh, missing the arteries and but cutting into his thigh muscles.

Kicking the sides of his horse, the horse barged through the three attackers, one was trampled by Tassin's horse. Galloping down the path, Tassin was panting on as the horse came to a halt. Coming to a halt, he slipped down from his horse. Tying the horse to a tree. Cutting a strip off his undershirt, he wrapped the makeshift bandage around his thigh. Untying his horse mounting his horse, they trotted down the path towards their camp site.

Arriving at campsite belonging to Lord Tassin and his companions.

"Pack up the camp," ordered Tassin, "we are leaving for the UnderHold."

The assembled knights gathered around the wounded lord.

"Sir, what happened," said Baut, his squire, noticing the blood leaking from his wound on his sister.

"I was attacked by three of Rufier's men," replied Tassin. "My father is dead, that is the only reason Rufier would act."

Baut turned and began ordering the knights to pack up the camp. Once the orders were given, Baut turned and examined the wound on Tassin's thigh. Baut cut the blood soaked bandaged away and rewrapped the wound with a poultice and a new bandage. Helping his lord, mount his horse, he another knight came over to Tassin and Baut with Baut's horse. Baut and Tassin mounted their horses.

"Let's go and ride to the UnderHold," said Tassin.

Tassin led his small band of knights, cantering along the bridal paths through the forest towards the caverns of the UnderHold. The UnderHold was built by the first Lord of Aleph, Lord Trasarc Trueshield, with the aid of the gnomes of Mount Nevermind a thousand years ago.

Arriving at the UnderHold, Tassin was taken aback by the over grown state of the opening of the caverns, he could see the opening bearing see the sign of the Knights of Solamnia, with a crown over a kingfisher and a sword clutched in the kingfisher's claws.

"Baut, help me dismount," said Tassin. Baut dismounted and helped Tassin dismount from his horse. Helping Tassin to sit on a broken pillar, Tassin directed his knights and squire to set up the camp, putting up tents and gathering firewood.

In the morning sun, Tassin felt stronger and desired to enter the UnderHold, Tassin called upon Baut and two knights Ansegisel and Helisachar to join their lord in exploring the Caverns. Carrying a cavern and drawing his sword, the ancient sword of the House of Aleph. They strode into the caverns, the caverns were dark and musty, the path of the tunnel led deeper into the hill. Tassin led his companions down the tunnel, watching for bats and other unsavoury creatures.

Wandering down the tunnel, entered the first room off the main passage way, finding it full of broken furniture.

"Baut, have the verderers empty this room. We'll use the wood for the fire," said Tassin.

"Yes, my lord," replied Baut, acknowledging his master's request. Tassin led the small party through the caverns checking every room, until they came across a small chapel dedicated to the Gods Paladine, Kiri Jolith and Habbakuk. Their symbols engraved on the wall behind the altar.

"My lord, the armour on the altar is that plate of Solamnus¹," asked Baut, pointing at the armour on the altar.

"Aye, Baut," said Tassin, "it is, squire. I believe it belonged to Trasaric.

On the altar lay the *plate of Solamnus* crafted for Lord Trasaric, looking at the armour took Tassin's breath away. All his life he had been told the legends of the armour of how Trasaric wore the armour during the War of Ice Tears, when served at the side of Vinas Solamnus. Trasaric was one of the first knights to join the order founded by Vinas, rising to become the first High Warrior of the Knights of Solamnia.

Tassin turned towards his squire.

"Take the armour to my quarters near the entrance of the Caverns," said Tassin, taking the armour from the altar.

Over the next week, several groups of Knights entered the caverns, exploring and turning the caverns into a bastion of exiled knights.

"Baut, I need you to ride to MarKenin, then to Castle Uth Wistan, with these messages to your Uncle Lord Alfred and Lord Gunthar," said Tassin, handing the young squire with scrolls sealed with his crest.

"Yes, my Lord," said Baut, saluting his master and turning and running to where the horses have been tied too.

Baut, saddled his horse and mounted the stallion and cantered out the camp, reaching a dirt road that connected Aleph with the rest of the knightly holdfasts.

Arriving at his family's holdfast, the small town of Markenin. Riding into the bailey of the castle, Baut dismounted and climbed the stairs into the keep of his uncle's castle. Entering the great hall, he spies his uncle talking with several of his knights.

"Uncle, I have message from Lord Tassin Trueshield, Lord of Aleph," said Baut, walking up to his uncle the acting High Justice of the order.

Alfred took the letter from Tassin, breaking the seal. He unrolled the scroll and read the letter.

My lord Alfred,

¹ Hickman, Tracy and Margaret Weis. 1987. *Dragonlance Adventurers*. TSR. Inc. Lake Geneva.

I request the aid of the knights of Solamnia, to aid me restoring me to the holdfast of Aleph. My cousin Rufier has murdered my father, my wife and daughter in violation of the Oath and Measure. I request a Knightly Council² to solve the dispute between myself and cousin Rufier.

Tassin

Lord of Aleph.

Lord Alfred read the letter, his mouth creasing in frown, his moustache quivering in anger.

“Baut,” said Alfred. “I cannot call a knightly council; I don’t have the power. You must talk to Lord Gunthar Uth Wistan.”

“Thank you, Uncle,” replied Baut, “Lord Tassin entrusted me with a letter for Lord Gunthar.”

“Very well, Nephew,” said Alfred, “you may depart for Castle Uth Wistan.”

Seeing that he had been dismissed. Baut bowed to his uncle and walked down the great hall and out the castle. Out of the castle, a groomsman brought Baut mounting his horse rode out of the bailey through the village of Markenin, and took the road towards the Castle Uth Wistan, the de facto capital of Sancrist. Riding for three days, camping in barns and under trees, Baut arrived at Castle Uth Wistan, through the canopy of the forest, Baut could see the spired of the Castle rising above the trees. Baut could see many knights setting up camp in the common ground of the town of Wistan, banners flapping in the wind. Riding towards the camp, guards approach the squire, asking him his business.

“I need to see Lord Gunthar,” said Baut.

The one of the guards, escorted the squire to Lord Gunthar Uth Wistan.

Escorted to the tent of Lord Gunthar, his banner flew on highest pole of the tent.

A guard open the flap of the tent allowing Baut to enter the tent. Entering the tent Baut eyes adjusted to the gloom. Seeing Lord Gunthar sitting straight and proud in his great high-backed throne.

“My lord, I have a letter from Lord Tassin of Aleph. He seeks your aid with a cousin Rufier,” said Baut handing the letter to Lord Gunthar’s squire, who in turn to Gunthar, breaking the seal and unrolled the scroll.

“We are having a knightly council for the next few days,” said Gunthar, upon reading the letter. “You can present your master’s petition at the council.”

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Watching Baut ride down the road on his mission to get aid. Tassin set about preparing to take back his inheritance. In the following days, a small trickle of peasants flowed into the makeshift camp of knights, verderers, and warders. Tassin had his knights, and the peasants build log cabins and raise tents. Land was cleared for farming, as winter was approaching.

Tassin built a small dock on the Sancrist coast, in a small, sheltered bay, where three small boats whom fisherfolk fleeing Rufier, had sailed into the bay. They fled Rufier after he started taxing them harshly. Three days after a storm a larger fishing ship, sailed into the

² Hickman and Weis p20

bay, tying up against the dock. The ship called the Sweet Lady³ Tassin signed a contract with Ziarr Kajirin the captain and owner of the Sweet Lady, to carry trade goods to the city of Merwick on Cristyne and to Palanthus the capital of Solamnia. Part of the contract was to hire adventurers and mercenaries to aid in the defence of the UnderHold.

Tassin organised his forces into an army, beginning with his knights. The ten knights formed his personal guard and to train the soldiers of his army. Tassin managed to recruit the well-known bandit from Cristyne, called Rionet and his fifteen followers armed with scale mail, shield, long sword, spear, long bow. The continued arrival of displaced peasants brought more mouths to feed and workers to build the town of UnderHold. Tassin created two militia companies of infantry, one of twenty infantry, armed with splint mall, morning star, hand axe; and a second company of sixty infantry armed with leather armour, pike, short sword. With the arrival of adventurers and mercenaries, Tassin formed a small company of light cavalry to engage in scouting and skirmishing. This company had twenty cavalry with ring mail, shield, javelins, long sword, hand axe.

Tassin came out of the Caverns, dressed in the plate of Solamnia, since discovering the plate, the young lord had taken to wear the armour. Calling on Rionet to attend him after seeing the former bandit teaching his soldiers archery.

“Rionet,” said Tassin, “I have special mission for you and your people, I need you to scout the town of Aleph.”

“Very well, my lord,” said Rionet, “What do you want me to do?”

“I want to know how many soldiers Rufier has,” said Tassin.

“Do you want me to kill Rufier should the opportunity arise,” replied Rionet.

“No, I need to defeat my cousin in combat,” said Tassin.

“Of course, my lord,” said Rionet, turning he left the Solamnic knight, putting fingers to his mouth he hooted twice like a barn owl.

Fifteen people trotted across the open square towards Rionet, each wearing a green tunic, dark green trousers, and simple leather boots.

“What is it Ri,” asked Freskin, Rionet’s closest companion.

“Tassin wants us to scout Aleph,” said Rionet, “He wants up to date information on the town and Rufier’s soldiers. I will take four of you, Freskin, Renouf, Mique, Hextilda. The rest of you need to keep training soldiers here in UnderHold.” The remaining bandits looked downcast at being left behind. Some of them have been with Rionet from the beginning of his exile from his family’s holdfast on Cristyne, for robbery.

Reaching the outskirts of Aleph, after three days of hard travelling through the forested lands between the UnderHold and the town. Rionet, Freskin, Renouf, Mique and Hextilda overlooking the town. They were shocked at what they saw, the farmlands surrounding the town, were muddy and the crops were growing poorly in the fields. The pastures looked rather threadbare, with animals wandering around searching for grass to eat. From their vantage point they searched the town, noticing that many of the houses of the Aleph had been burnt down leaving much of the town in ruins. People of Aleph wandered around the

³ Frank, Janrae, 1984 *The Sweet Lady*. In *Citybook II: Port o’ Call* pages 92-96. edited by Liz Danforth and Michael Stackpole. Flying Buffalo Inc: Scottsdale, Arizona

town looking despondent picking through the ruins finding half burnt clothes, pots, and unburnt tools.

Slipping through the half-burnt gates of the town, the five would be spies, entered the town, walking down the main street they reached the castle gatehouse. The gates were cracked and burnt, one hung off the gates off its hinges. Two soldiers sat in the shade of the gates pacing a wineskin between each other.

The two guards ignored the trickle of travellers entering the town. For the two guards, it was too hot, and they were too drunk to bother checking the travellers entering the town. Rionet led his four companions down the hill, along the road up and through the gates, the guards ignoring five travellers, and continuing to pass the wine skin between them.

Wandering around the town, Rionet noted the lack of fresh food, and the food they did have was rotting on the merchant's benches.

References

Hickman, Tracy and Margaret Weis. 1987. *Dragonlance Adventurers*. TSR. Inc. Lake Geneva.