



Maud Hart and Delos Wheeler  
Lovelace Family Papers.

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Mean to be selected  
listed for present 67, 5  
Too bad it was 5 pages  
wrong

Netophah was a naked village on a naked desert hill. All around, sand dunes billowed so high that a man, descending from crest to trough, would drop out of sight; but even in the troughs an approaching visitor could see the Inn's gaunt walls. It loomed on its hill as bare as though dogs had licked it.

This was the most ancient station on the northern end of the Incense Road and its legend ran back a thousand years. Then three alcoves had been made into one for the Inn's most memorable guest. Balkis, queen of Saba, had come in a soft litter to rest there, continuing the next day her skeptical journey to test Israel's upstart king. Five hundred slaves had followed her, and a hundred milk-white camels laden with spices, ivory, perfumes, precious stones, a hundred and twenty talents in raw gold from Saba's mines and a dozen beautiful virgins from Saba's castles.

The hill was a compact, solitary peak. It rose south of the last visible vertebra of the backbone which stretches from end to end of Palestine. Perhaps cracked off by an earthquake, it was more rock than sand and offered boulders against which Jared could brace his staff. The peak rose gradually and at the top flattened out, providing a level walk to the Inn's weathered gates.

These were closed, of course; closed gates discouraged beggars. Jared made a fist to knock but he was still several strides from the gates when a ferocious barking pulled him up.

Dogs! And not a sort he was familiar with. He had never heard such snarling and slavering. The beasts sounded mad. He squared his shoulders and advanced. Wasn't this an inn? Well, then it couldn't mean travellers

to be dog-devoured. He knocked. The barking grew more ferocious and he got a firmer grip on his staff.

A small panel in one wing of the gate grated back to mke a shoulder-high opening. It was so small that it trimmed the face suddenly appearing to two narrow oblongs of fat cheek, a flat nose, brows arching over squinting eyes, almost no fore-

GILBERT

*Supercase*

25% COTTON

at the  
Cap. Judge  
win a + ?

TWO

The inn at Netophah was the most ancient station on the northern end of the Incense Road and mouldering walls sustained the legend that their original rude brick had been improved only once. The walls had been repaired, legend said, and three alcoves had been made into one for the inn's most memorable guest.

The legend ran back a thousand years. Then Balkis, queen of Saba, had come in a soft litter to rest in the new, big alcove, the next day continuing her (skoptical) journey to test Israel's upstart King, son of an ex-shepherd. Five hundred slaves, captured in one of the raids which made Saba notorious (from Damascus to Thebes) followed her, and a hundred milk white camels *caravels?* laden with more spices than would ever again reach Jerusalem and also with ivory, perfumes, precious stones, a hundred and twenty talents in raw gold from Saba's mines and a dozen beautiful virgins from Saba's castles.

*The Inn*  
Netophah was at first only the hard angle of two distant walls meeting on a naked desert hill. Striding from crest to trough and trough to crest of dunes that billowed endlessly Jared lost sight of everything before and behind, but climbing up to each new crest his first view as he halted to check his path was always of the old

inn's rampant wedge.

(The naked hill was more than another of the ubiquitous dunes. A compact, solitary peak, it rose south of the last visible vertebra of the backbone which stretches from end to end of Palestine. Perhaps cracked off by an earthquake, it was more rock than sand and offered boulders against which Jared could brace his staff, outcroppings for a handhold and patches of bare limestone on which his sandals slipped. The peak rose gradually and at the top flattened out, providing a level walk to the inn's weathered gates.

These were in better condition than the mouldering wall. *Madz*  
 Of terebinth planks, their natural oil and pitch had preserved them against wind, sun, rain and age. They were closed, of course. Closed gates discouraged beggars.

Jared slipped from the last limestone patch to the flattened top of the hill and made a fist to knock but he was still several strides from the weathered gates when a ferocious barking pulled him up.

Dogs! And not a sort he was familiar with. He had never heard such snarling and slavering. These beasts sounded mad. He squared his shoulders and advanced. Wasn't this an inn? Well, then it couldn't mean travellers to be dog-devoured. He knocked. The barking grew more ferocious and he got a firmer grip on his staff.

A small panel in one wing of the gate grated back to make a shoulder-high opening. It was so small that it trimmed the face, suddenly appearing in little two narrow oblongs of fat cheek, a flat-ended nose, brows arching over squinting eyes, almost no fore-

head and only a piece of chin below a puckered mouth. For a reason not at once apparent the bony arch<sup>es</sup> over the eyes had something very odd about them. The cropped face jerked in response to an unseen reflex and the barking turned into yelps.

It must have taken a savage kick to silence the brutes even for a little. Jared was sorry for them.

Inside the snarling and slavering resumed but <sup>was</sup> not so loud and the squinting eyes measured Jared's worn garments, touselled black hair and intense dark face.

"What do you want?"

The sour question withheld hospitality from a traveller whose girdle did have a lump in it but too big a lump to mean money and whose staff was stout enough to flatten a gatekeeper, given half a chance. Here might be the worst of beggars.

"To spend the night."

Jared made his reply amiable although what he chiefly felt was embarrassment. For the first time in his life he was about to buy something and he was not sure that the inn would want to bother with so small a purchase. Every Brother claiming knowledge of the world outside said that money was important there above everything else and this gatekeeper might decide that a few mites did not justify opening his gates. But, Jared reminded himself, not all travellers could afford the best. Sourface might be pleased that this one was, at least, not a beggar.

"I can pay."

The dogs continued to snarl and slaver but the face at the peephole tilted down and the dogs fell silent and the face came back to full view. Now it was faintly apologetic.

"I wouldn't stay here long if I opened without making sure it wasn't just a beggar at the gates," the Gatekeeper said.

The gates swung back enough to admit a narrow man, <sup>and</sup> Jared squeezed into a great unpaved courtyard, trying for a casual air (which would not reveal that this was his first visit to an inn).

Two big watchdogs, half black, half gray and, Jared thought, half wolf, muttered. The narrow oblong of fat cheek, nose, mouth, eyebrows, eyes and chin expanded into a man so fat that he seemed to waddle standing still. And now the oddness of the eyebrows was cleared up. They were hairless. So was the gatekeeper's entire face. Even the corrugated skull was hairless. Not a haven! Hairless! Some taint, lack or abortion <sup>prevented</sup> made it impossible for him to grow hair.

<sup>Jared ben Joktan</sup>  
"I am <sup>of</sup> the Brotherhood," Jared said and gestured into the east. "You do know of the Brotherhood?"

"I'd just begun to wonder if you mightn't be," the puckered mouth grew less sour.

~~"I am Jared ben Joktan."~~

"I am Obel. If you are one of them, I know where to put you. In an alcove."

Jared looked around. An alcove would be one of the roofless stalls -- one enormous -- on three sides of the wall.

Over against the fourth wall were the quarters of the inn's household and alongside, under an awning to ward off rain and sun, were two cooking hearths. Large parties of travellers needed more than braziers.

"How much for a little alcove and no wood?" Jared said.

"I'll speak to the mistress."

"Mistress?"

Jared was startled.

"Where is the master?"

"The last master died a little while back and good riddance.

The old master and his son, long ago."

Jared began a solicitous murmur but Obal cut him short.

"The old master and his son left sadness, but their time had come. The last one is where he belongs. Do not mourn for any of the three. The mistress is all we need."

"Tell her I can pay."

"I'll tell her. But she will say. She says as to all things."

Obal looked at Jared with eyes almost kind under the hairless brows.

"In the past no Brother has been asked to pay for anything here."

Jared's heart grew warm.

Someone here has not forgotten the Chaste One.

"I suppose you want food, too?" Obal said.

Jared tapped his girdle cache of cheese and flat loaves and shook his head. He had enough food for <sup>the</sup> this evening and the next day and the next. He had also, folded into his girdle, a frugal sufficiency of money for new scrolls and everything else.

"But I could use water for a bath," he said.

"Oh, I know!"

Obal, along with the whole desert, knew how often the Brothers bathed and <sup>he</sup> was outraged at being asked to encourage so wasteful a practice.

"For a lus--" Jared began. But lustration would mean little to Obal. "A small pitcher <sup>ful</sup> will do."

"Even as to a very small pitcher the mistress will say. But I'll ask when I ask about the alcove."

<sup>both before or from</sup> Jared looked the stalls over as Obal waddled off. <sup>They</sup> Each held bed-straw and firewood. Not much of either; both were scarce in this desert. If more warmth were needed the guest probably would have <sup>his own</sup> charcoal and brazier. Most travellers carried these, he knew. But he would keep warm without them. Any alcove in the north wall would be somewhat protected from the west wind, sure to blow as night came on.

He heard waddling steps and turned to see if Obal had brought water. He hadn't.

"The Mistress says, 'Come!'"

Jared felt a touch of panic at this order to come and stand before a woman of the world outside. He knew nothing of women except for the few wives of married brothers.

"She need not bother with me," he said. "An alcove and a little water are all I need."

"She said, 'Come.'", Obal <sup>r</sup>eppeated. "Here no one keeps the Mistress waiting."

This Mistress, Jared thought, sound<sup>s</sup> almost too quick with orders. But then he rebuked himself. I am the one who is too quick. ~~How can I be when this inn has not forgotten the Chaste One?~~

~~Also he remembered a thing the Chaste One had told him.~~

Within the stranger's gates the stranger's law is the law

How can I be, when this inn has not forgotten the Chaste One?

Also he remembered a thing the Chaste One had told him.

Within the stranger's gates the stranger's law is the law of the guest.

And he followed Obal, trying to decide what a Brother's manner toward a strange woman of the world outside ought to be. He settled on a cool aloofness.

Obal led into an all purpose room where <sup>Jared</sup> he had to duck strings of garlic and figs hanging from rafters. Three women, one young, looked up. The young one, a high-colored girl, was slicing carrots into a pot suspended over a frugal hearth fire. Another was sewing. The third's lap balanced a handmill in which she was grinding grain. All three smiled and Jared flushed but held himself soberly erect and followed Obal across the room to a door on which Obal knocked. His fat knuckles made the barely audible tattoo of one hesitant about approaching authority.

A voice said, "Come," and Jared's testiness washed away in a surge of pleasure. The voices of the hard-worked wives of the Brothers were usually hurried and sharp. This one was leisurely and soft. The Discipline discouraged the Brotherhood from dwelling on women's voices but it could not control thoughts in sleep. And undisciplined sleep had exorcised, for Jared, a phantom of womanhood more satisfactory than any wife of the Brothers, even though in waking hours he had not yielded enough to temptation to rub the lamp of his imagination until it lighted the phantom. <sup>But</sup> Not now, with his loins as well as his thoughts suddenly stirred, he extended the picture

which sleep had exercised.

She will be beautiful.

And he followed Obal through the second doorway.

*The Mistress*

*you cut?*  
She sat across the room in a chair with curved arms that had been shaped to rest old hands. Now they helped to give her a dignity beyond her years. Her own hands rested in the lap of a green dress. Her eyes were a warm green. <sup>set</sup> (A spinning wheel alongside her chair said that the mistress of the inn kept busy.) Her full skirt spread over sandalled feet so that only her toetips showed. Toes, sandals, the dress's embroidered hem and its embossed leather belt all were bright vermillion. And when she stirred a faint tinkling drifted through the room. Tiny bells hung from her sandal straps.

One of the Prophets had written it, Jared remembered. Women mincing along, making a tinkling with their feet.

She was not, of course, to be put in with the haughty daughters of Zion whom the Prophet had rebuked. But, Jared told himself, feeling dimly that he had just clambered off a precipice to safety, she was not beautiful.

She was older than he was although, he decided, not by much. And she was no phantom. She could walk the desert, <sup>he feet,</sup> climb this hill, ride a horse and, faced with her dignity, he understood Obal's, "No one keeps the Mistress waiting." But she was not beautiful. Her brown hair cascaded too stormily over her shoulders, ~~her~~ face was too wide at the cheekbones, her mouth too full and, finally, she was too wind-browned. Although on this bare hill who wouldn't be wind-browned? If she had been a beautiful woman of the world outside

he might have felt panic again. But he was sure he was equal to this brown desert girl (for all that she owned an inn.)

He ~~xxxxxxx~~ touched hand to head and heart.

If the mistress of the inn was not what Jared had expected neither, plainly, was he what she had expected. Her manner had been deferential when she looked past Obal toward the guest he escorted.

But with her first glance the look had changed to surprise and then a mild, amused rebuke.

"You didn't tell me, Obal!"

Then she pressed brown hands against brown cheeks and broke into laughter.

"I expected someone old enough to be a grandfather," she said to Jared. "They all have been."

For a moment Jared struggled for a cool aloofness. But then, considering how unfounded she must have been with his towering black hulk when she expected someone like the Overseer, he had to grin. And Obal could not keep his thick lips from twitching and the inn-mistress rocked with mirth.

But contrition quickly erased Jared's grin. He knew that a Brother ought not to feel such harmony with a woman of the world outside. Moreover, he remembered the Overseer who should have been here but was under a low mound among the ~~xxxxxxx~~ of stones beside the Salt Sea.

The inn-mistress also sobered, perhaps in response to Jared's sobriety perhaps remembering her grandfather in whose chair she sat and who, like the Overseer, was gone. Her ~~xxxxxx~~ hands dropped ~~dropped from cheeks that her fingers had pressed pink under the desert brown and she stood up, the full skirt swirling across tinkling sandals.~~

his black eyes had to smile. (or something like that to fit in with page 118)

Hand 3

dark

from cheeks that her fingers had pressed pink under the desert brown  
 and she stood up, the full skirt swirling across <sup>the</sup> tinkling sandals.  
 Bright tendrils of her hair floated about her head and caught the  
 light. She was slender and firm breasted and she was, Jared saw,  
 taller than he had judged while she sat. The top of her cascading  
 hair would be level with his eyes if they stood close.

"I am Tamar, granddaughter of Gershon and daughter of  
 Amram who are both gone. In their names I welcome one of the holy  
 Community by the Salt Sea," she said.

Nothing that the Chaste One had ever taught Jared helped  
 him to frame a reply but he made a stab at one, the best that came  
 to mind.

"I am Jared. In the name of the Priest of Aaron and of the  
 Brotherhood I thank you and through you Gershon and Amram."

He was half minded to add and your husband. Obal must have  
 meant a husband when he spoke of the one whose passing had been a  
 good riddance. But she had named only the first two. The husband  
 almost surely had been unloved.

Tamar sat down again and looked at Obal and Obal, familiar  
 with all her looks, pushed a second seat near her.

Jared sat down and pretended to look around ~~xxxxxxx~~ on what, with  
 only the caves of the Community and its bare rooms and cubicles to  
 guide him, seemed luxury. Fired bricks, oiled to lay dust, made a  
 floor under scattered, lively rugs left, perhaps, by grateful caravan  
 masters and, also perhaps, because leagues and years had worn them. An  
 olivewood table look<sup>ed</sup> as though expert rubbing under a thousand hands

look like  
 or  
 said

x

x

during scores of years had brought it to its soft gray-green. It was set with dishes for dining.

Taborets and more seats were placed at random and bright pillows were scattered about and on the walls basins and trays of copper had been hung. Lamps stood in two wall niches. A door ajar allowed a glimpse of a smaller room with a pallet.

"This inn has never asked a Brother to pay for lodging or food either," Tamar said. She smiled. "Go with Obal. When you are rid of your travel stains come back. The table will be ready as it has been made ready for all earlier Brothers."

"As I told Obal, I can pay for an alcove," Jared said. He avoided her gaze. "And I brought food. You need not take this trouble."

"If the visits of Brothers troubled us in this inn, I <sup>should</sup> would feel disgraced and a disgrace to my grandfather and father."

The deference with which she had awaited a venerable Brother was all gone now. Her manner was that of a young woman who had learned to deal with men of all sorts -- preemptory caravan masters, bold guards, rude drivers, condescending Jerusalemites, oily Syrians, wily Egyptians, subtle Greeks, truculent Samaritans, volatile Arabs, serpentine Numidians, now and then a blustering Gaul and, of late, imperious Romans. She had schooled herself to smile them all into decorum but hardly with the smile she now turned on Jared. Her changed manner said that he seemed less and less like one of the austere Salt Sea Community.

"Obal tells me you are staying only one night."

Belatedly, it occurred to Jared that he might break the agreeable but forbidden harmony in emphasizing that he was more than an ordinary Brother.

"I am sent as the Keeper of the Scrolls," he said.

"The Keeper of the Scrolls!"

Tamar's tone confessed that she did not know exactly what a Keeper of the Scrolls was. But it also said she had ~~expected her~~ guest <sup>was</sup> to be more than an ordinary Brother.

"It has always been one in authority in the Community who came here, <sup>he said</sup> and I see it is now."

\* \* \* \* \*

A holy washing, the Fifteen said, cleansed spirit as well as body. Obal's pitcherful was not ample but Jared, after his lustration, did feel twice refreshed. It occurred to him that now, <sup>alone in</sup> might be a time to ponder, as the Chaste One had advised, on what he had met up with and what still might come and he could see now that he would meet many women as well as men, <sup>on his journey</sup> and with them the practices of the Community would not be a sufficient guide. So far away from the Brotherhood he ought to find reliable new ones.

Recalling his early touch of panic at the prospect of facing a strange woman of the world outside he decided that he had found--at least might have found --one helpful guide <sup>to present</sup> that might make future panic less likely. The woman, seen close, had turned out to be only a brown desert girl whose green swirling dress certainly held your eye but who was not anyone to confound a man. So! A threat when brought out into the open could be seen in its true

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ok

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known all along  
that he

change last sentence.

7  
2 back

proportions and was, usually, no threat at all, and <sup>back</sup> out in the courtyard he nodded to Obal who <sup>stood</sup> was back with his <sup>couched</sup> ~~grinned~~, muttering dogs and went <sup>restrained</sup> back into the all-purpose room. There he nodded to the three women, but no more than was courteous from a Brother, <sup>and</sup> They <sup>nodded</sup> modded back, smiling as before.

Dodging garlic bulbs and figs, Jared knocked on the opposite door. Not Obal's padded tattoo, nor a preemptory hammer, but a good firm thump to show a man was making it.

No voice said, "Come!" Instead the door opened and Tamar <sup>stood</sup> beyond, her green skirt swirling and <sup>the</sup> bells tinkling ~~kaxskawzshazhadxx~~ ~~kaxristaxx~~ with a vigor <sup>which</sup> that showed she had hurried.

Jared saw that he had misjudged her. She was not at all what his sleep had exorcised but she was warm and vivid and not desert brown. More nearly golden! The harmony returned. He entered and the door closed behind him. <sup>¶</sup>The olivewood table now was spread with food. Jared looked and shook his head.

check 4.

"What do you not like?" Tamar said, but lightly because the headshake had not been disapproving.

"I had thought of eating bread and cheese in a windy alcove."

2

<sup>she</sup> Tamar laughed and gestured toward a basin and even though he had just come from a lustration he washed his hands and so did she. That convention finished, they sat down and he bowed his black head.

"Blessed be he who gives food for all."

Great Moses had given the words to the Tribes and after

more than a thousand years they were still fresh and heartening.

The stew for which one of the women had sliced carrots and another had ground wheat contained also beans and onions. And there were also ripe olives, <sup>on the table</sup> and a pale, soft cheese, preserved ginger, - probably left by some caravan, and wine, and water to thin the wine.

"Our Hebron grapes," Tamar said, "Make a light wine but it builds an appetite."

Jared marvelled.

Here they need wine to sharpen appetite!

When the Brothers had wine they thinned it, five parts water to one of wine. Tamar added two parts water and handed Jared a cup, her sleeve slipping from a golden arm. He sipped to be polite.

Bread was a different matter. He took up a flat, round loaf and prayer came, out of habit.

Blessed be thou who hath brought bread from the earth.

He cut from the best baked side and offered her a fragrant crescent and cut a piece for himself and they bent to the stew. Jared caught a faint odor of fish. It would be dried fish from Galilee.

Accustomed to silence, Jared did not speak but Tamar <sup>he</sup> id.

"The Brothers who came here before you were more like your Overseer who came often."

"Not many of us are that old. Although the Roman aggression keeps novices from joining us."

"Romans!" Her shoulders lifted in condemnation.

"I am on this mission because the Romans killed the Overseer," Jared said.

used later

check off mission, etc.

X

X "What?" Tamar said. "That good old man<sup>?</sup> dead?"

After a moment of sorrowful silence she added: "Death waited a long time for him. But my grandfather used to say that few mind delaying death."

"I never knew anyone who enjoyed life more than the Overseer," Jared said.

"How long <sup>is</sup> you know him?"

"From the day I came among the Brothers. I wasn't quite four years old."

"Then it was not by your own decision that you joined the Community?"

"Well, that came later. But I was brought by my father."

"Your mother did not mind?"

"It was because my mother had died that my father brought me. He had hired himself as a caravan guard along this Road. He said he would come back. But the Chaste One told me later that caravan guards live too dangerously to make their promises anything to count on."

Tamar's hands went to her cheeks. Jared was to discover that hands-to-cheeks meant chiefly excitement or pleasure.

"The Chaste One? My grandfather has been gone a long while and I haven't heard the Chaste One named since he went. But if you know the Chaste One you are twice welcome here."

X "The Chaste One told me to speak of him. But he meant <sup>to</sup> your grandfather, or father, or your father's son. Speaking of him went out of my mind when I found you were the innkeeper."

X "Here," Tamar said, "Whoever is innkeeper inherits the duties and honors of all those who were." She spoke with slow dignity. "And especially I inherit the honor of welcoming any who come in the name of the Chaste One. Do you know him well?"

X "He has been a father, grandfather -- everything -- to me," Jared said. His voice was thick with emotion.

X "My grandfather always said the Chaste One saved his life. He gave help when scores passed <sup>him</sup> by."

X "I was told only that a falling rock hurt your grandfather."

X "Afterward robbers stripped and robbed and beat him <sup>and</sup> later, travellers feared that, if they stopped to help, the same robbers would catch them."

So the Chaste One had risked robbers when he stopped to help her grandfather!

"Did the Chaste One warn you of robbers when you started this journey?"

o.v. "He never doubts I can take care of myself, ~~even though I do,~~" Jared said.

"O, course he doesn't," Tamar said. Her gaze rested on him in admiration.

Jared rose. They had finished their meal. But Tamar told him she wished to speak of Obal. <sup>and</sup> He sat down again.

"That affliction! The lack of hair. He has had it all his life. His own mother and father could not be toward him as they <sup>were to</sup> ~~were to~~ be toward other children. He left his home when he was less than half grown. <sup>But</sup> And out in the world everybody shunned him."

o.v. "Now why?" Jared said. The Community shunned

no one.



*|| Jared said ||*

*03  
this 2 or  
3*

"When you return, you are likely to reach the inn after dark. You will come to this side first, so knock at this door. If you went around to the great gate that would be locked and you would have to rouse Obal, and the dogs would make a clamor, and the whole household would be waked."

"If I come when the great gate is closed, I'll knock here," Jared said.

"Have you food for tomorrow?"

He had plenty, he said, the whole supply that he had brought from the Community.

"No matter how early or late you reach the inn," she said.

"Knock. I'll hear."

"Oh, I'll knock," Jared said.

He went out into the all-purpose room, empty now, and her door closed behind him.

*2  
4/11*

~~He fixed himself for the night in his alcove. The rising wind was soft and he was pleasantly warm, but he did not sleep. In his loins and mind were the memory of her golden arms and soft voice.~~  
*gentle and his alcove*  
~~"When you come back, tell me about Jerusalem," she had said.~~  
*or your return stay and*

X

*0  
7  
7  
7*

Before dawn, and after a brief drowsing, he was up and off. Obal waddled <sup>out</sup> to open the gates and the dogs slept. ~~He~~ Jared ploughed ahead, <sup>descending</sup> through the darkness and the ocean of sand, <sup>then climbing</sup> and reached a hill. From there, looking back, he caught the first light. At the Community this would be the time of First Ritual.

X

X

"We thank thee, Oh Lord!" he chanted softly and flung his arms high. "We thank thee, Oh Lord!" and <sup>he</sup> ploughed on.

*more effective*  
X

The desert birds knew that night was going and began to tell one another. And when the spokes of the wheel of morning were clear, Jared flung himself prostrate ~~for an instant~~, then rose and ploughed ahead once more. ~~The harmony which he had felt throughout his evening with Tamar was still strong.~~

\* \* \* \* \*

*the harmony with Tamar*

Long after he told himself that ~~it~~ had drugged him so that he missed the landmarks which the Chaste One's teaching should have made arresting --the high cave over the little village called Elam, where Samson hid after smiting the Philistines hip and thigh; marshy Bethbasi, a watering place on the Incense Road; great David's Bethlehem, its limestone walls glistening that early among green figs and silver-gray olive trees; and black stubs that would become lush vines and newly ploughed fields, later to turn yellow with waving grain. When he heard a guarded, rebuking voice he turned as though he had been shaken out of a dream.

"Are you trying to draw bandits or robbers? Do you always go as though whipped by demons?"

*stately*

~~A~~ <sup>was</sup> tall, weathered, <sup>stately</sup> watchful man more than twice Jared's age stood in nice concealment against a dune nearly as white as his robe.

Jared blinked at him and came back to consciousness.

"And you go unarmed! Do your elders give no counsel at all?"

He beckoned Jared to share his dune and his gaze marked

the shabby tunic and threadbare cloak.

"You must belong to that Community! Who else would travel around here without sword, spear, dagger or even a sling?"

"I have never touched anything but a sling," Jared said.

"And that just to whack vultures off new lambs."

With only a sling even your size of lamb would find bandits too much vulture. And since the Romans have come, they would be more."

The man's speech had a peaceable deliberation although he had muscle enough for a fighter and was armed. A sword swung from a baldric and a dagger clung to his thigh from a broad belt buckled outside his robe. All this, Jared would learn later, was Roman style.

"I am going just to Jerusalem and maybe Jamnia," Jared said.

"Am I really in much danger?"

"Through here you are. This is robber country and Roman patrols like it, too. But we'll soon be among trees. I know safe paths and I, too, am going to Jerusalem. Let us go together." He

The man smiled.

"I am Heth. My village is Emmaus. Do you know Emmaus?"

Jared had heard of the small village near Jerusalem.

"I am Jared. I am, as you guessed, from the Salt Sea Brotherhood. Your company would be welcome if there were no danger."

They walked along a path plain to Heth although for Jared it only ascended, as it should. Everyone knew you got to Jerusalem only by going up.

Watchful Heth favored low, well-wooded country but now and then he led to some bare ridge which looked away on every quarter

and then Jared glimpsed villages all around and ravines winding down to the fertile coast and the long gash marking the River Jordan, and palm decked, balsam blessed Jericho and his own Salt Sea. And Trees! Trees! Trees! In contrast to the naked desert trees were everywhere. Pine, oak, terebinth, tamarask, ash, elm, sycamore, beech, poplar and that spruce whose sun-firmed flanks made the best spear shafts. Heth pointed them all out and also shrubs --hazel, spicy storach, acacia, sumach, willow and hawthorne.

"You know this country," Jared said.

Oh, somewhat  
"Only fairly. I'm chiefly in Emmaus. I was in Bethlehem

yesterday only to collect a debt. In Emmaus I have a vineyard, sheep and crop land. Do you know Rom, has put a colony in Emmaus?"

"Romans in Emmaus?"

The Cheste One had said Roman colonies sprouted everywhere after Rome's conquering heel but nothing of a colony in Emmaus.

"legion veterans," Heth said. "You must know of Rome's legions, even in your Community."

For all its isolation the Community knew a good deal about the legions which had been a prowl in Palestine for almost four years. It had mourned their successes in Galilee, had rejoiced when Jews routed Roman garrisons and took back the southern stronghold, Masada, and the Fortress of Antonia in Jerusalem.

"I have heard," Jared said. "Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus commands them."

"Vespasianus no longer," Heth said. "His son commands. He is another Titus. There are four legions and many auxiliaries. The Fifth is full of wild former pirates. The Tenth claims a hundred years of unbroken victories. The Fifteenth boasts that on the seventh

of each month it cannot be beaten. Apollo, a Roman god, protects it. Apollo and his twin sister were born on the seventh day of some month, they say. The Twelfth will fight for revenge. Three years or so ago our people drove it from Mount Scopus where it is again encamped."

He looked at Jared apologetically.

"Don't think I got all this from lies scribbled on broadsheets. Men told me who knew what they were talking about. Some are colonists in Emmaus."

"Can only four legions win over us?" Jared said.

"Titus has any many more auxiliaries. Only a few of these are Roman citizens, like the legionnaires. They come from all over. Some from Arabia, some from Lebanon, some Agrippa provided and one lot comes from islands off Spain. They are Balearic slingers."

Jared was thoughtful.

X "Is this son of Vespasianus fit for such a command? A son must be young."

Heth looked at Jared, estimating.

"He is only a few years older than you. He always wants women which is not a sign of strength; lately he has taken up with the Herodian Princess Berenice. But his father trained him and the legions follow him."

"Where is Vespasianus?"

"Back in Rome. To be Emperor! But while he commanded here he set up the Emmaus colony. They are doing well with their discharge bonus. Also they were given our best crop land, vineyards and animals."

Jared looked away not to betray his thought that some must be doing well at Heth's expense. The Discipline discouraged a Brother

from any act or word that might provoke another's resentment.

"And I do well," Heth said. His voice was full of satisfaction. "Our ways with planting, plowing, harvesting and with animals are unknown to the colonists and when they ask I help and am repaid."

"I was told a Roman never pays."

"After I help I ask, in my turn, about Roman ways with weapons. I am no fighter. But my only son and his wife were taken by a plague just before the last Ingathering. He and I had just chosen a kid for sacrifice in thanks for harvests you would never believe had come off so small a farm. Now I am the only security of three grandsons. And although I am no man of war I would fight for my son's sons. So I have asked. And now I know why a Roman grips a dagger to make it a longer finger. Why they thrust<sup>h?</sup> with a sword rather than slash<sup>s</sup>. While the sword arm is <sup>swing</sup> up (or around) to slash, a Roman thrust can get at your vitals."

Jared listened raptly to the martial recital. His Discipline directed him to think no unpeaceful thoughts. But after mastering the sling (You had to cast almost to a hairbreadth and hit just as the lumbering vulture seemed to hang motionless before sinking onto its prey) he had more than once asked himself an unpeaceful question. If it was right to war against vultures, why was it wrong to use the sling or a better weapon against other enemies? He had asked oftener after the slaying of the Overseer. He asked himself <sup>again.</sup> now. He had never before been with anyone who might teach the use of weapons, <sup>yet</sup> he knew he might need to use <sup>than</sup> any time now.

"Did you learn about spears?" he said after a pause.

"I lean least of all to spears," Heth said. "I never carry one. But I asked. Romans use two. One has a broad, double-edged blade and is mainly for thrusting. The other is lighter with a long lean point that goes in easily. It is often hurled. As I said before, the truest of these is made of wood from the side of a spruce tree oftenest in the sun. They carry far, but except when thrown from quite close, they can be dodged. Perhaps not by me! But the colonists say a trained man need only step to one side or, even, just turn or lean a little."

Jared let this sink in.

"And slings? Can Romans sling like a Benjaminite?"

"Who everyone can sling to a hairsbreadth and not miss?"

Heth smiled as he repeated the familiar boast. Generations had smiled, because by no means all of the Tribe of Benjamin could make the boast good. Yet who could be sure which Benjaminite could or couldn't?

"The legions do not take to slings," he said. "Nor do the Numidian auxiliaries who go into battle a horseback curved as supple as snakes behind little round shields and chanting a wild sing-song. But other auxiliaries, from islands off Hispania where the Empire gets its best olives and snails, these throw even with Benjaminites. And I think,." Heth looked Jared over approvingly, "That if you can whack vultures you may too."

"I might not need too much teaching with a sling," Jared said, "But to use any other weapon I'd need everything."

"Your vows do not forbid taking up arms?"

"In a way. But it is never forbidden to stand against Sons of Darkness."

Jared spoke stoutly. The Community had never made its position on fighting plain.

"Sons of Darkness?"

"The Fifteen says any who break the Covenant are Sons of Darkness."

"Well, then, these Romans certainly are."

*After a silence Jared told Heth of the Century*  
Jared was sure the Century which had come to the Community had broken the Covenant and he told how the Overseer had been slain. His (sober) voice *revealed* how much the crime still moved him.

Heth dropped a hand on the younger man's shoulder.

"Let me show you what I have tried to learn," he said.

Jared kindled. The legions had mainly kept to Galilee but might they not come up against Jerusalem? And would the Priest of Aaron then say No to one offering to defend the City and the Temple? Besides, as Keeper, would he not need to go often into the world outside where Romans, as well as other robbers, might be on every hand? Finally, would he ever come on another willing as well as able to teach *him* the use of Rome's own weapons?

"If you have time to teach I have more than enough to learn."

"I have plenty *of time* for the little I have picked up."

"For even a little I'll be in your debt."

"Then you shall have your first lesson as soon as we are

past Jerusalem. And you haven't long to wait or far to go. Look!

*He then pointed and above his*

~~Above Heth's~~ beard his face flamed with color, ~~as he pointed,~~

Jared's eyes, following the pointing finger, ~~glimed~~ grew bright.

In that time for Jews everywhere the City and its holy temple made up for centuries of captivity, exile, defeat and oppression.

They were on a bare ridge, the sun at their backs and deep narrow Kidron Valley before them. At its southern end this met another gentler valley beading eastward for the meeting. In the opposite direction it turned out of sight into the northwest. Where the two valleys met a small road led to a smallish gate of the City and it was filled with men, women, children, horses, camels, asses, cattle, sheep. Jared looked and looked.

Why! It is so close I could run the whole way and hardly draw a quick breath!

Embraced by the valley, locked in a matrix of huge walls begun a millennium earlier the City loomed which, since Solomon, had been Israel's glory. On a plateau split by precipitous Tyropoeon Valley (which was not visible but was suggested) the holy city's steep t<sub>r</sub>aces cascaded and on the plateau's nearest side the golden Temple soared out of the shadow of a bulking fortress. The Holy House, a showy expanse of marble seemed to drift up behind a slender tower at enclosing the Temple. the near corner of a wall ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~. The tower was so lofty that Jared almost thought he was seeing one of the glorious creatures from heavenly realms its folded wings rising to a tip that all but vanished into the blue.

"Here on, y" Heth said, "may Israel make the commanded

sacrifices. On Passover, not far off, we shall come to make them by thousands from all over the world." His voice was hoarse with reverence.

Jared nodded in an excitement too great for words.

\* \* \* \* \*

They scrambled down Kidron, crossed a level open space and Heth pointed ahead.

"All Jerusalem brings its trash through that," he said.

"I know. The Dung gate. Everything unclean under the Law."

The stench came out to greet them from cartloads, sackloads, basketsful that had been dumped to steam and rot under the sun. Jared looked disapprovingly.

No one buries <sup>such stuff</sup> as the Brothers do, with their little shovels.

They got onto the crowded road they had seen from the ridge and Jared noticed that many men, and some women and children, carried chickens and ducks, leg-tied two by two, and hung on the owner's shoulder.

"They think they'll save the price of a sacrifice bought from the priests," Heth said, "but if the priests find a blemish on one of those birds, whoever brought it will have to buy. And some priests can always find a blemish."

The Community did not sacrifice birds and animals but ~~animals~~  
Jared said nothing. He had heard, of course, that there were priests who cheated.

Jostled, elbowed, bumped they got through the gate and

came to a pool, <sup>surrounded by handsome porticos</sup>

"Siloam," Heth said.

Jared knelt and drank from his hand in the wary fashion of Gideon's three hundred. The water was cool and sweet.

"Siloam's water is said to be good for the stomach," Heth said.

"So I have read,"

"I never much liked reading. But I have a friend in Jamnia who is at it all the time. He is in the school there. His name is Amos."

They turned <sup>on</sup> up a narrow street which twisted upward. Men, women, children, little burdened asses and now and then a horse or camel crowded between plaster walls that glittered when the sunlight fell on them. The crowd, whose many-hued tunics, robes, cloaks and dresses made a bright mosaic above dusty cobble stones included strangers from far away, people of the surrounding countryside and citizens of Jerusalem. The Jerusalemites were unmistakable, so assured and nimble eyed. Country folks often seemed ~~xxxxxxxx~~ <sup>bewildered</sup> in the press, ~~so much~~ more confusing than the tangle of their hills and valleys.

Scattered through the mosaic the crippled and diseased and those who pretended to be scretched out begging hands. The pretenders, the pickpockets and tricksters, made covert fraternal signs to one another before sidling off on search of victims.

Heth, who had been mild with Romans, shouldered the cheats unforgivingly. He could not abide them, he said. Jared scarcely noticed them he was so awed by his first sight of crowds. Nowhere else

in all the world, he thought, could there be another city as crowded as Jerusalem\*

"This is only the Lower City," Heth said. They had turned into a narrow street.

In the Upper City, Jared would see, there were princes' palaces and merchants' mansions. Here, however, except for poorer homes and a part set aside for Temple Priests, nearly all was given over to business.

"Everybody certainly seems busy," Jared said. Before their shops, in shade and sunshine, tailors were sewing, iron workers were hammering, carpenters were sawing in full view of passersby.

"Here's what I came for," Heth said. He stopped before a shoemaker. "My grandsons outgrow footwear before it is half worn. The noise of a small boy is terrible to hear when he stubs a toe that sticks out beyond a sandal sole. Jared, you never said what your errand is."

"I need one fine parchment and a few good papyrus scrolls."

They came to a shop which tempted writers with a display of their tools, but the proprietor shook his head when asked for parchment. (As he made more inviting patterns of styluses in ivory and silver, vari-colored little pots and trays of red and black ink and carbon and reeds both pointed and frayed,) his headshake manner expressed pity for the ignorance that that such a request indicated.

"The Roman aggression keeps us short of almost everything," he said. "Or haven't they heard of the aggression where you come from?"

He could, however, offer some papyrus and copper.

Said X papyrus paper

the styluses etc. were not in red ink. I would either cut or arrange for paper as indicated

M to M

and (red) blue pointed and frayed.

M to M. The use of the word aggression should - it seems to me be avoided. History calls what the Jewish rebellion against the Romans the aggression. I want to talk this over.

M D M. The Jerusalem section 4  
changed from old version. More  
detail. Do you find it interesting? The  
part in Jamnia is good -  
relevant to the story.

"You'll probably find better, cheaper papyrus in Jamnia,"  
Heth said. <sup>He</sup> The school there is usually willing to dip into its  
stock."

"We know about the school," Jared said.

"Titus thought he was permitting just another harmless  
place of learning. But it has become, everybody says, a priestly  
Israel  
center that could serve all ~~parts~~ if disaster came to Jerusalem,  
And already the new shops provide what shops around the Temple and  
Jerusalem often can't."

Jared remembered the pleading face of the Master who wanted  
a new, fresh, worthy surface on which to copy the Enoch Scroll.

"I'll look in Jamnia," he said. But he did buy some papyrus  
and one copper strip.

"Hungry?" Heth said. And then not allowing time for an  
answer swept one arm in a half circle that called on Jared to look.  
"You're passing up sights you'll never see outside Jerusalem. All  
these arcades! Stalls! Baazaars! Shops! Their owners offer stuff only  
the rich dare think of buying. Copper, iron, silver and gold smiths!  
Jewelers! Dealers in silks and linens finer than silk! Fabrics from  
Egypt, Babylon, India and farther." Another arm sweep. "Here a man  
can buy anything from a false tooth to an emerald bigger than any  
false tooth. But speaking for myself, I'm ready to eat."

"I could eat," Jared said. He looked at the sun, almost up  
to mid sky. "But I'd rather see the Temple."

"We climb for the Temple. Before we climb let's put strength  
in our legs. Let's eat."

x

Jared did not need to ask where. All around were the places where any visitor to Jerusalem could find food ready to eat and waiting.

"A man can buy a Jerusalem-cooked meal nearly as cheap as he can buy just the raw stuff in Emmaus," Jared said. "The Romans haven't cut off our supply of food or of good Galillean and Judean wine, or a sour stuff called beer." He made a face. "There's beer of Babylon and <sup>Yer</sup>Egypt. I can't down either. ~~Egyptian wine is worse.~~ It's sold hot, cold, sweet and spiced."

They came to a restaurant whose bosomy waitress gestured, showering the scent of a strong perfume."

"Women in restaurants," Heth said, "get themselves up to please customers. They hope!"

"Here every price is low," the waitress said, "and we have perfumed beer."

"Perfumed?" Jared looked at Heth. "You missed one!"

X "I just forgot," Heth said. "He smiled. "Perfumed isn't much different from sweet or spiced."

The waitress gestured again, her necklace and bracelets clinking. The sound brought back to Jared a more inviting chime of little bells and of golden cheeks more pleasing than this painted face and eyes ringed with kohl.

They passed through the doorless, windowless frame which separated restaurant from street to a small table close to a larger one. That stood against the inner wall. It held stone slabs on which food was arranged. One stone, over a brazier half-full of smouldering charcoal, ~~bore platters of fish and vegetables and a small pot of~~ soup. Unheated slabs displayed ~~dried fish and salt, parched grain,~~ dates, figs, sweetmeats, fruitcake and flat round loaves of bread

charcoal, bore platters of fish, vegetables and a pot of soup. Unheated slabs displayed salted and dried fish, parched grain, <sup>dates</sup>, fruitcake, sweetmeats and flat round loaves of bread like the one Jared had cut the night before.

Heth chose soup, lentils, bread and figs. Jared nodded that he would have the same. He <sup>could</sup> did not take his gaze off a ragged papyrus which hung on the wall over the food slabs and was packed with big, bold writing.

It was his first sight of a sensation which travellers had often described. This, Jared told himself, must be one of the broadsheets full of gossip that were hawked to any tradesman who could be made to believe that such stuff drew trade. Scribes who were small credit to their calling wrote them, putting in whatever news mongers had picked up throughout the City, chiefly in the Profane Court of the Temple. Sooner or later everyone went into the Profane Court.

This broadsheet began with an explosive prediction.

TITUS WILL LAY SIEGE TO JERUSALEM!

Jared looked at Heth in dismay. If this was true the Roman aggression was on the verge of a terrible advance, a threat not only to the City but to the Holy Temple.

Heth broke his bread and sipped his soup. <sup>Soup</sup>

"That thing is too old to mean anything," he said. "Look at its flyspecks. Anyway, those sheets say whatever will inflame. Our leaders have denied over and over that Titus will move against the City. So has Titus. Jerusalem has twenty men of valor for every

legionnaires and auxiliaries in Titus's army and thousands more are coming for the Passover."

Reassured, Jared turned to his own food and when they had finished he marvelled at Heth's rugged refusal to pay the first bill that the bosomy waitress presented. He marvelled more when she settled amiably for little more than half.

They walked a way up the street and Heth pointed to a long steep valley appearing on their left. Small houses were clinging to it. Lower down were larger ones which Heth said were dairies.

"Tyropoeon Valley," he said. "It's called the valley of the cheesemakers because it provides Jerusalem with almost everything made of milk. It's the smelliest place in the City next to the Dung Gate. But look across it."

Across, Jared saw terraced streets, splendid houses each inside its own wall and, half hidden by the walls, lawns and gardens.

"Is that the Upper City?"

"We'll be going there after the Temple. To reach the Temple we keep this side of Tyropoeon."

Jared stepped up his pace although the climb was growing steeper. Now, <sup>in the distance</sup> soaring above him though distant, he saw a fortress that <sup>must</sup> be set in a high cliff.

"Is that the Fortress Antonia?"

"It overlooks the Temple from the north," Heth said. "While the Romans held it, they could see everything that went on inside the Temple. They even had their own entrance by the roof of a connecting colonnade.

~~Thanks be to God they do not hold it now. "And eat," Heth said, "I don't see any more of it now."~~

~~Thanks be to God they do not hold it now. "And eat," Heth said, "I don't see any more of it now."~~

Thanks be to God they do not hold it now."

"Amen!" Jared said.

"That gray wall, just coming into sight above the roofs, is the Temple wall."

Jared's heart stirred. Staring, he saw again the slim, vaulting pinnacel, he had seen from Kidron's crest. If wall and tower were so close, must not the greater wonder appear soon?

Heth pointed again, but not toward the Temple.

"The finest synagogue in the City," he said.

Jared looked briefly. The Chaste One had told of synagogues. They had risen with the scattering of the People. They did not replace the Temple; they were not for sacrifice. But men who tried to do right in the eyes of the Lord <sup>and</sup> but were too far off for the prescribed Temple compliances <sup>?</sup> could go into the synagogue of their choice and pray and every Sabbath hear the reading from the five books of great Moses. The Chaste One <sup>had</sup> said they were <sup>these synagogues</sup> wherever the People had wandered, in Egypt, Africa, Spain and farther and that even in Jerusalem each guild and craft had built its own.

Jared could not hold his eyes long from the <sup>Temples</sup> pinnacle and Heth followed his gaze.

"Every dawn a Levite blows a silver trumpet up there," Heth <sup>he</sup> said, "calling us to worship and sacrifice. You know that the greatest Herod built the Temple?"

"I know he began it. But the Temple was finished only a few years ago and Herod has been dead for many."

"He finished the chief work," Heth said. "He wanted a Temple to wipe out Jerusalem's memories of his evils and to prove that an Idumean was as truly a Jew as any Judean or Galilean. He allowed only Temple priests to do the Temple work. (Only such) <sup>These</sup> holy men were commanded to learn masonry, carpentry, stone-cutting and delicate wood work and he would not let them rest until the Temple was finished. Of course he also thought to catch the eye of his master, the Emperor in Rome."

"In the first year," Jared said, repeating what he had been told at the Community, "No rain fell by day to stop the work but at

might it fell for all the crops."

"I have heard that, too," Heth said, "But the Lord makes rain to fall day or night."

Jared pointed to spikes bristling on top of the wall.

"Thieves must have a hard time getting at the Temple's riches."

"More than those spikes stop them," Heth said. "There are guards. And after the Temple is closed at night the Guard Captain names one special guard. <sup>sets</sup> The captain and this assistant close the gates. They close The Beautiful Gate last of all. The key is put in a hole before the gate. A marble slab covers the hole. A chain hangs from the marble and the key is fixed to the chain and the special guard rests on the marble but never sleeps. Even if a thief got past the spikes and all the other guards he could not get into the Temple unless he overpowered the guard on the marble."

They wove their way through an enormous complex of buildings associated with the Temple and as they passed Heth identified many.

But Jared was not listening. Beyond and above them was the Holy House which he had glimpsed from ~~the far side of~~ Kidron. They crossed an open space and beyond that, before his widening eyes, rose the sheer face of the wall that enclosed the Temple area, ponderous, spiked, stretching right and left and, in the center two prodigious <sup>gates</sup> walls, iron frames inset with squares of marble and topped with tile.

"These let directly onto the porch overlooking the Profane Court," Heth said.

~~"How mighty Huldeh was that the Temple gates honor her!"~~

"How mighty Huldah was that two Temple gates honor her!"

"How mighty your teachers to have taught you so much!" <sup>said Heth</sup> Who was Huldah? Why is she so honored?"

"She was a prophetess of Josiah, a king of Judah who did right in the eyes of the Lord. She foretold that, for sins, Jerusalem would burn. But not in Josiah's day. Not for his eyes, she promised, so great a calamity."

The old prophecy recalled the broadsheet of the eating place.

"Heth! Could this be that time of calamity? Is the sheet a true warning?"

"I told you every broadsheet lies," Heth said. He hurried through the Huldah Gates.

Jared followed and came out on a great raised promenade. It ran along the south wall under a roof upheld by massive pillars. Smaller promenades ran along the east and west walls. Forward was a great, cobbled pavement.

"The Court of the Gentiles! The Profane Court," Heth said. He waved at the great, crowded, cobbled space.

Beyond, behind a triple terrace, rose the Temple itself. It seemed at first a snowy expanse of white marble with, off to one side, a slender tower. Then Jared saw that it was a five storied building faced with squares of softly white marble into which, at intervals, bright plates of gold were set. It was partly dimmed by an oily smoke which billowed up from an unknown source and drifted slowly across the terrace clouding also the Profane Court and the ~~jestling crowds. But the smoke only partly clouded the beauty~~

jostling crowds. But the smoke only partly clouded the beauty spread before Jared who stood motionless.

The Profane Court was, as always, packed. It was a sight every visitor to Jerusalem tried to see and today, as usual, it was filled with a human conglomeration from all over the world. Heth could identify some. Huge Gauls sweated in fur breeches; tall Africans stood in little except their black skins; Greeks were extravagantly dressed, as always; Persians were known by their splendid brocades; Egyptians, whose curious religion forbade a woolen garment in any of their own places of worship wore cotton even here to avoid the possibility of sin. Swarming beggars were marked by ragged loincloths.

Even in such a prismatic throng Jews stood out. Not because of a reverent air which the Temple might have inspired but because of their own apparel. Every Jew, of course, wore something white. Beyond that, however, many indulged their fancies -- violet and purple wool from Tyre so costly it was sold by weight; even more costly cloth from a flax grown in only one province in India, so light that wearing it was like wearing thistledown.

The striking apparel of some Saducees, Pharisees, Priests and Scribes almost served as an identification. The Scribes' girdles were obviously fashioned to hold up to public view the inkpot and pen of their calling. The Priests' purple robes were cut conspicuously short to uncover the immaculate whiteness of their trousers. The Saducees' dress was more extravagant than any Greek's. The Pharisees' shawls and phylacteries drew every eye. Shawls, at

each corner, had four white fringes and one of hyacinth. The fringes all but swept the streets and the leather and wood phylacteries were polished and ornamented as though they had been precious metals. Yet none of the overelaborated members of these four groups appeared overly devout.

Money changers sat against pre-empted columns on the porch of the Profane Court, each beside his own little table and his own big box. And all day long, Heth said, they inched around their columns to escape a chill wind or a burning sun. Each box was divided into two compartments. One held Temple coinage, each coin stamped on one face with a chalice and on the other with a lily and the legend, Jerusalem the Holy. The second compartment held a goulash of coins from everywhere but especially from Rome. Roman coins ran from superb specimens honoring a new Emperor to crude disks stamped in Antioch or Caesarea when a new exarch took over some nearby piece of the sprawling Empire.

The moneychangers' chief chore was to supply the half-shekels of Temple coinage which each worshipper must pay yearly. A four per cent commission was lawful and the changers incessantly droned "Just four! No more! Just four!"

"But they often get much more," Heth said.

"How?"

"Watch this!"

The rhythmic "Just four!" had coaxed a gold daric from the hand of a brocaded Persian. The moneychanger's numble fingers had found that the outlines of the coin's archer were mint-fresh. <sup>and</sup> His

X other hand had gestured flatteringly that no further testing was  
X needed. Then the second hand had cascaded coppers over the little  
X table and no sooner had cascaded than had heaped them into the  
Persian's palm.

"Cheated for sure," Heth said. "the Persian should have  
made a true count while the coins were on the table."

Shocked, Jared turned away to priests across the court.  
They were offering fowls, doves and animals for sacrifice. In  
X substitute for the moneychangers' "Just Four! No more! Just four!"  
they were droning "Unblemished! Unblemished!"

Jared took a careful look.

"That isn't unblemished stock!" he said.

"But you'll notice that business is brisk," Heth said and  
motioned to move on.

Pushed and jostled, the two worked across the Profane Court  
to a balustrade before the triple terrance. This was the beginning  
of the true Temple. The snow and gold Holy House rose just beyond.  
No Gentile might pass the balustrade. It bore a plaque on all four  
sides warning in Greek and Roman that any Gentile who did pass  
invited his own death.

But Jared, a Jew, might pass. He might climb the terraces  
steps and go anywhere he chose, except into the Holy Place and the  
Holy of Holies. He and Heth went around to the Beautiful Gate and  
through it into the Court of the Women.

The Court of the Women! Jared saw where his own mother must  
have sat with many other anxious mothers among the thirteen trumpet-

shaped repositories for gifts given to provide a special sacrifice. She had sat, perhaps after dropping her mites, and prayed while he had been redeemed, as every first born had to be, from the service of the Lord.

First his father had taken him and held him while giving the Temple five pieces of silver and only then had returned their son to his waiting wife. Now his mother and father were gone and he was the Brotherhood's Keeper of the Scrolls. It would, he thought have pleased them to know.

He and Heth crossed the blue and white tiled floor of the Court of the Women, passed between the pillars called Jachin and Boaz, symbols of the unassailable strength of the Lord, and went through the lofty Hicanor Gate and into the Court of Israel. That divided the space beyond Hicanor Gate with the slightly raised Court of the Priests.

Now they were looking directly up at the five-storied Holy House of marble snow and bright gold. Twelve more steps would bring them onto the porch of the Holy House. They stared at it through a cloud of smoke rolling from the Altar of Burnt Offerings in the center of the Court of Priests.

The Altar was a pyramid of unhewn rock. Once, late in each year and again before Passover it was whitewashed. But it had not yet received this second cleansing and was grimy as well as reeking.

The priests around it had begun their day in immaculate white robes. Now, however, these robes were stained with smoke and smeared with blood.

Some priests were roping animals for sacrifice, hauling on the ropes until the beasts were against posts, forced to stand motionless awaiting the killing knife stroke. Others, <sup>priests</sup> at big stone tables, were cutting up the butchered animals, washing the portions and tossing them onto hooks set into broad, upright boards until the <sup>white heat</sup> smoking Altar had room for new sacrifices. Another group stood beside channels cut into the floor of the court and with long pushers forced the thickening waste blood toward two openings, like wide nostrils,

"Below these holes it falls into wide chutes that take it into Kidron Valley," Heth said.

At the Altar, more Priests were forking the meat of sacrifice onto either side of a worn red line painted down the Altar's center. The portions to the right of the line would burn away to the honor of the Lord. Those to the left, after <sup>a</sup> little roasting, would be forked clear of the fire to feed the Priests.

Jared was glad the Community did not offer burnt sacrifices. He remembered what Micah had said:

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?

The smoke drifted into his eyes and the grimy, white-robed figures blurred and he walked past them and climbed the twelve steps. Heth followed.

The door of the Holy place was closed. He had known it would be. Only the priest chosen by lot each day might go in and he on the

one day only. And never again in his lifetime might he be chosen again, or enter again.)

X And Jared might never pass the massive gold vine adorning the door which barred him from ever entering. Within, all Jews knew, however, stood a great gold candlestick, and beside it a table on which each chosen priest placed new shewbread and from which he took away the bread of yesterday. And between them was <sup>the</sup> a golden Altar of Incense on which the chosen priest burned precisely measured amounts of stacte, onycha, galbanum, myrrh and frankincense.

Somewhere behind the Holy Place, sealed off by its veil, was the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest might enter there and he only once a year.

X "In the Holy of Holies," Heth said, "is the very Ark that Moses brought out of Egypt." His voice was reverently hushed.

X Jared had heard otherwise, although he did not say so. The Chaste One had told him that, probably, the Ark had been destroyed or carried off centuries before when Babylon's raider king, Nebuchadnezzar, had pillaged Jerusalem. The Holy of Holies, the Chaste One was almost certain, and so were many others, was empty--except for the presence of the Lord.

Jared knelt on the porch and Heth knelt beside him and then they went back down the twelve steps in silence.

They got back to the crowded Profane Court and through the gate in the west wall against a tide still flowing full to take advantage of the remaining hours of sacrifice. They crossed the Tyropoeon bridge, the view lovely to Jared's desert eyes. The towers,

turrets, palaces and mansions, the trembling green foliage above garden walls, the occasional glimpses into gardens ablaze with color...

I'll tell Tamar about this.

Heth pointed out the palace of the High Priest Ananus.

"Every night the poor fill the basement under that overhanging porch. The High Priest invites them in to sleep and he feeds them besides. He is one who tries to do right in the eyes of the Lord."

They went along the crowded street although a narrower way alongside was half empty. But this was for those who had sacrificed and no other Jew would think of using it.

Farther on against the City wall three great square towers rose. Heth pointed, naming them.

"Hippicus, Phasselus and Miriamne. They will be strong bastions if Jerusalem is ever besieged. Herod built them to guard his palace. His great grandson, Agrippa, lives in the palace sometimes now."

Ahead, on their right, a street branched off toward the palace and just short of <sup>it</sup> ~~the street~~ Heth pulled Jared away as a half dozen liveried horsemen trotted out ~~of the branching street.~~

"Agrippa must be coming. Make yourself small. His bodyguard would ride you down and <sup>not</sup> care as much as a mite."

Marcus Julius Agrippa, Herod II, Tetrarch of Betsaba and of Trachonitis with Abila and Tetrarch of Julius, Tiberias and Tarichea <sup>fortyish,</sup> did come. Sitting his mount like a sack of castoff clothes, <sup>pusy,</sup> fortyish and with a face so bloodless that Jared wondered what he ate, he rode with half his main bodyguard before <sup>him</sup> half behind. His horse was a handsome but ambling nag, chosen because it was not too

*Supernatural*

25% COTTON

restive for his ill-balanced body and as he rode his eyes flicked around for enemies.

"I don't believe he trusts even his own guard," Jared said.

"He likes Caesarea better than Jerusalem," Heth said. "and so does his princess sister Berenice." A pause and then he went on. "I know that in Egypt a royal brother and sister lie together but in Judaea such a thing is shameful. Even when they are Idumeans."

Obeying the Discipline, Jared offered no unkind opinion. He found Heth's gossip a puzzle. Hadn't Heth said earlier that Berenice had taken up with Titus? But <sup>such talk</sup> ~~it~~ was all as remote as the vast palace and its towers were, remote from the Community's humble, sundried brick buildings.

When the guards and their treasure were out of sight Jared and Heth set off again and came to the Joppa Gate.

"Well," Heth said. "You've seen the Temple but not all of Jerusalem. You haven't seen what is underground. Down below there's another whole city. Tunnels and caverns that serve as houses and long narrow black passageways that are crowded streets. Thousands on thousands live underground. Of course most of them are starvation poor or else afraid

GILBERT

to risk daylight.

"I've seen enough," Jared said. The oily smoke was in his mind as well as in his eyes. It would be good to get out of the City. "How about the lesson you are to give me?"

"The lesson? Of course!" Heth said.

\* \* \* \* \*

They got through the Joppa Gate and then across the hard Roman road paved with yard-square blocks of stone. It ran all the way northward to Damascus and beyond. Then they climbed the far slope of Hinnom Valley.

Rephaim Valley came next. Giants had once dwelt in Rephaim. The ghosts of the giants still did, Heth said, although you wasted time looking for them unless they were looking for you.

"Maybe we could ~~have the lesson here and risk having them find us,~~ <sup>and have the lesson here,</sup>" Jared said, but Heth shook his head.

Across Rephaim they bore west by north from the Rubin on a trace no better than the one they had followed to Jerusalem. It led to Emmaus and, beyond, toward Jamnia.

"It isn't much travelled," Heth said. "In no time it will turn up a quiet place for your lesson."

When they came to a solitary terebinth spreading its branches tentwise he stopped.

"We shouldn't take too much time," he said, "You ought to get on, and besides a noise kept up too long might draw someone we'd just as soon not meet. But it won't take long to show you what I remember of what the colonists showed me."

He took stock of Jared's hard arms, the width of his shoulders and the solid taper of his sun scorched legs.

"Do you wrestle?"

Younger Brothers, when far away from the eyes of their <sup>sometimes</sup> elders, often tested one another. Jared admitted that he tried a fall now and then.

"How often did someone get you down?"

"I won my share."

"The colonists," Heth said, "Say a good wrestler makes a good swordsman. Both aim to beat an enemy after speed has got him off balance. Of course strength counts, too, and <sup>you're</sup> ~~you're~~ ~~are~~ strong enough."

He nodded.

"You'll learn quicker than I did if you'll pay attention."

Jared was ready to pay attention and the Community's inbred habit of ~~disciplining~~ would help.

discipline would help.

X "The colonists," Heth said, "say go slow when you can until you've got some measure of your man. You'll be going, sooner or later, against legionnaires and auxiliaries and I've watched them all. An Egyptian comes at you like a snake. A Numidian rides as though he and his horse were one. A Bulgarian slinging from a hundred paces is harder to dodge than a club at your head. A Gaul is as big as a Rephaim giant but slow. And, of course, a legionnaire's weakness is that he thinks he's the world's best."

Heth became thoughtful.

"The colonists say one of our weaknesses is staying with the sword's edge. The point, they claim, is faster. Here! I'll try to show you."

They had only Heth's sword, dagger and his smallish, round shield and Heth gave a sword-lesson first.

"The colonists say you almost always have time to draw but you practice drawing against the once-in-a-life time when you haven't. Practice until you draw as you breathe. Like this."

Heth's left hand grasped his scabbard to tilt his sword? *hilt?* hilt for a neat meeting with the right hand which was sweeping over. But <sup>Heth</sup> Heth's grimace acknowledged that even now he wasn't neat enough. He tried a few times more and did little better.

"The colonists say a sword should come out of the scabbard as smooth as butter. You try."

Jared got into Heth's baldric and belt and tried. And ~~tried. Until Heth nodded.~~

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tried! Until Heth nodded.

"You're better already than I," he said. "When we finish I'm going to give you the sword and dagger. Practice whenever you can."

"But you need the m!"

"There are spares in Emmaus," Heth said. He was confident. "An- I've done enough favors so that some colonists won't object to doing me one or two. <sup>more</sup> Now let's try <sup>the</sup> the dagger."

His left hand slapped the dagger sheath against his left thigh. Again the hilt was tilted so that the right hand, sweeping over, closed on it. He drew again, not however as neatly as he would have liked. He drew a dozen times, but always with a head-shake <sup>an annoyed?</sup> of self-disgust.

"You try," he said to Jared.

Jared slapped, fixed, tilted, swept and closed.

"It seems to be a business of timing, rhythm and balance," he said.

"It helps, too," Heth said, "if the inside of the sheath is not too tight, not too loose. And, of course, practice helps."

Jared's mouth set. He would practice. Oh, he would practice!

"Well! The colonists say the next part of the lesson is one of the most important. It is this. Don't fight like a lump on a log. Back up! The colonists say this can mean your life. If it will help <sup>X</sup> back up one step. Or three or four! No matter <sup>of</sup> of somebody thinks you're a coward. The colonists say old soldiers back up but new ones haven't the sense to.

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up but new ones haven't the sense to."

Until now Jared had accepted the colonists thinking, notwithstanding that it turned him away from the Brotherhood's counsel of peace. But now he was being told to turn away from that secret self-portrait which lies deep in the heart of every young man. He had never, consciously, acknowledged the portrait. The Discipline had kept him from that. But how often, imagining the Brothers one day marching against the Sons of Darkness, had he not unconsciously painted himself plunging to victory? Now he was being told to retreat.

But when did Jūsephus's bol. Jew retreat?

And yet! And yet!

"You just might bring an enemy exactly where you wanted him if you backed up a little, at the right time," he said.

"Just 'til you got your chance to gut him or slit his throat," Heth said. "Now I'll try to tell you what they told me about the parry."

High parry! Low! Half! Point up! Down! Advance!

With both sword and dagger.

"But never," the colonists say, "try to parry when your enemy's weapon is a ball and a chain. Th<sub>rust</sub>, then! After his swing passes. Or back up and be glad you're able to."

They practiced parries. Jared learned that, for a parry, the dagger might be held in any number of ways. Except as an extension of the fingers. Then you went in for the kill. For one parry you held the dagger at right angles to the hand to turn an enemy blade or, even, stop a killing thrust with the dagger hilt.

M to M.  
There's much more of this whole section  
than was in O.V.

enemy blade or, even, stop a killing thrust with the dagger hilt.

"An," Heth said, "practice using the dagger in the left hand to help the sword in the right. You'd hardly believe how one helps the other."

"I think I'm getting it," Jared said.

"Now the thrust," Heth said. "It's the meat of everything. And, the colonists say, practice 'til you can thrust just the length of a finger or all the way. Often the shortest little thrust will do the job. Sometimes, though, you have to reach to the limit. But never reach so far, you lose balance."

Balance. That was where the lessons of wrestling would help, Jared thought.

"After thrusting, always try to be sure-footed, ready to sidestep, advance, go back, or farther back," Heth said..

And, as with wrestling, in such shifting, advancing, backing, the hips could be a big help.

"Keep them free to twist, turn," Heth said. "A small twist may be all you need. The colonists say if a man no more than turns at the right time a sword, dagger, spear, javelin or even a ball and chain will miss. And the littlest twist may bring your enemy just when you can stick him."

Heth  
~~xxxxx~~ ran his tongue over dry lips.

"I haven't talked this much in a dozen moons."

But he had finished. And, he said quite confidently, he had told all he remembered from the colonists' lessons. Jared was ready to stop. Now he would like, as the Ghost One had advised, to

said again page 114.

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pender.

"You are a good teacher, Heth."

"The colonists poke fun at me," Heth said. "I'm such a slow learner. Sometimes I felt they were willing to teach me only because they were sure I'd never be able to do much with what they taught. But you will."

"I may get past my first enemy. I'll send word."

"All Emmaus knows where I live. It's only a little town."

Heth stopped. Both had heard a rustle. Jared pointed toward a man who stood somewhat concealed under another terebinth. He seemed big and menacing enough to be a robber chief but he was only a shepherd. Younger than Jared and yellow-haired! And, at second glance, with so cheerful a face that it dissipated the natural first thought of robbers.

Like all shepherds he wore a sheepskin dyed a villainous red. And at his waist, his leather belt was inset with a score of iron studs. It could be a weapon almost as dangerous as a ball and chain. Even panthers retreated from a shepherd's belt. The usual sling and full pouch hung from the belt. The sling suggested that he was a Benjaminite. Benjaminites, at least some, were as good with a sling as a Bulgarian.

The stranger carried the usual staff, crooked to hail <sup>haul</sup> silly lambs out of potholes and heavy enough to do duty as a war club. Shoved inside the studded belt was a dagger, almost a sword.

Heth and Jared knew, however, that the edge of a shepherd's sword was oftenest used on the hard cheese and stale bread

which, probably, filled his pouch.

"Don't stop!" the stranger said. "I was learning a thing or two, I think."

"We've finished," Heth said. "But come on! Come on! If you're going our way we'll go together."

The stranger looked back, another evidence of the caution which had parked him under the concealing terebinth, then raised a hand in cheerful acceptance.

"This may be a good meeting," Heth said to Jared. "If this big yellowhead is going your way he'll be good to have along on a strange road."

Jared was not sure. He knew the dangers of the road to Jamnia, and Heth had especially mentioned Romans. But nonRomans had shown <sup>himself</sup> Nor any bandits, either! And there was an advantage in travelling alone. He was tired of talking.

If Heth, as he had said, hadn't talked so much in a dozen moons, this was even truer of Jared who had begun to see how pleasant the Community's silence could be. Also, he wanted to ponder. All day the Mistress of the inn at Netophah had woven in and out of his thoughts.

However, as the shepherd came forward, he felt that he had seldom seen anyone so ready to be liked--and to like.

Heth touched hand to hand and heart and gave his name and place and Jared's.

"I am of Bethel," the shepherd said. "I am Eben ben Naher."

"The sling said you were, likely, from some Benjaminite place. The

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place. The sling looks used."

"No vulture, eagle, wolf or hyena gets my lambs," Eben said; but he laughed to say they should not take that boast too seriously.

"This morning," he said, "I led a score safely to the Temple. Everyone unblemished." He was sober now, not to seem to make light of so serious a thing as Temple business.

Still serious, he stooped and sketched something with a finger in the dust. Drawing erect, he slid a sandal across the sketch but Heth and Jared had seen. It was a fish.

To Jared the sign, symbol, device --fish or whatever-- meant nothing. But it meant something to Heth. He looked from Eben to Jared and chuckled.

"You!" he said to Eben. "And you!" he said to Jared. "In one day the two of you. It wouldn't happen again in a thousand."

"He must believe you're very different to put you alongside me," Eben said to Jared.

"I am of the Brotherhood on the Salt Sea," Jared said. He was mystified.

"That brotherhood?" Eben said. "Well, a Brother from there might well be called as different as a Christian, I guess."

"A Christian?"

Jared grappled with the word, trying to remember where he had heard it and what he had been told about it. Then he remembered.

Only a little while ago a few Brothers and an overnight

guest had talked of a half-forgotten prophet (forerunner, seer, way-preparer) no one had been sure exactly how to call him<sup>what</sup> who had stirred up Temple leaders many years before.

"Ch<sub>ri</sub>stian?" Jared said. "From Christ, the Anointed one!" "You've changed the Greek of it to describe your prophet's followers!"

"We follow a leader who was crucified but returned and later ascended," Eben said. "And then he sent back one we never have seen but is always our help."

"Why don't you tell him who gave you that Christian?" Heth said.

He dropped down in the shade of the terebinth and the others followed.

"Pagans of Antioch gave it," Eben said. "They are great for nicknames. I have heard that a man is seldom among them for a day before he's got a nickname."

"Just the same," Jared said, "it is strange that pagans of Antioch, given to black magic as all the world knows, have put their nickname on your Anointed."

"It is a strong name," Eben said. "Some of our leaders say that in time we may be called by it all the world over."

"But the fish you drew?" Jared said. "If it was a fish. What has that to do with your Christ or Christians?"

"It is our sign to strangers who may be Christians to make themselves known."

"But you brushed it out before anyone could see it!"

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"Not anyone who is one of us. Those who are not sometimes set upon a Christian. So we brush out the sign before troublemakers can tell too easily."

"What if a troublemaker can tell?"

"Well!" Eben said. "If a troublemaker does come at me, I take his first blow and turn the other cheek for his second. The anointed told us to." His voice was surprisingly cheerful for one planning to take two blows.

"But if a third comes?" Jared said. He was sure that in the Community few except the Chaste One would turn the other cheek.

"Well!" Eben said. "A man shouldn't have to take more than two, do you think?" His question was a plain warning to troublemakers to expect tit-for-tat.

"With that staff, slings and almost sword, who'd expect you to take the second?" Heth said.

He got up. He had, he suddenly realized, left his grandsons longer alone among Romans than he liked.

"I'm off," he said. "I'm overdue at Emmaus as it is."

Jared jumped up and began to take off the sword.

"I told you that was a gift," Heth said. "And the dagger, too. You'll need them more than I before Titus is done with us." ~~Besides the colonists will fix me up. I'll only need to remind two or three of favors I've done them.~~

He smiled in large confidence and set off at a stately walk. But while Jared was still struggling to reply in gratitude he looked back.

"I'll be waiting for that word!"

"He doesn't know it," Eben said as Heth continued toward his grandchildren, "But he thinks the way the Anointed told Christians to."

"How were you led to follow your Anointed?" Jared said. "If he's the one I think he is, he was crucified <sup>long</sup> before you were born, <sup>long</sup> before."

"My grandfather was a follower when the Anointed walked among us."

"Where are you going now?"

"I am Bethel's shepherd. I must replace the lambs I sold. I'm from Sorek and Charishim. The grass has failed on both valleys and the price of lambs will be down."

Jared nodded in satisfaction. He ~~need not travel alone~~ and he was glad. He was <sup>now</sup> quite sure that this shepherd would be a good companion.

"Charishim is out of my way and I must hurry," he said, "To Jamnia. But we can keep together as far as Sorek and I'd like to."

He smiled and, as usual, more with his eyes than his mouth.

Eben tossed his staff into the air and grinned back.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jared and Eben pushed steadily westward. The River Rubin flowed again on their left, now joined by the south branch but still

X But still did not hold enough water to splash over the biggest rocks in the gorge it was following to reach the Great Sea. Trees and shrubs now and then dwindled to almost nothing so that at intervals the two young men had a clear view all the way to the Valley of Sorek dappled by shadows of clouds afloat in the late afternoon sky.

"I think I'm alright with a sling," Eben said, breaking a long silence, "and with a dagger and with this." He swung his staff. "But I watched you for quite a time and you seem to have something special about the way you use a sword. Although how can that be and you one of the Brotherhood?"

"I have only the few things Heth got from the Romans settled in Emmaus," Jared said. "I never had my hand on a sword until today."

His approval of Eben was growing. Heber, long ago, would have blurted out a question about Heth's cryptic mention of waiting for a word; and although that involved no secret Jared liked Eben's reserve. On an impulse he told of the broadsheet back in Jerusalem.

"Although Heth says it is nothing but lies," he ended.

"Just the same, the legions are coming south after pillaging Galilee," Eben said. He spoke slowly and thoughtfully. "They've set up a new camp at Sebaste beside their old one at Caesarea, and a full legion from Damascus has squatted down in Tiberias, ~~on the Sea of Galilee;~~ and everyone says Tiberias could join on two or three days with Sebaste and Caesarea and all three could be at Jerusalem in no time."

They walked on, both considering this.

"These things Heth got from his Romans," Eben said. "What

are they?"

*MR. Brian,  
Substitute  
for your pages  
120 + 121.*

"I'll try to show you if we come to a place with good cover."

They went on, Eben expectantly, Jared keeping his thoughts on his mission. They found no good cover and finally dipped down into Sorek Valley.

Sorek, the Valley of the purple grapes! It was a storied place, familiar to all Jews. Jared paused to look. There was a long, steep drop to the River Reuben.

"In the low lands," Eben said, "it spreads out and what crops it grows!"

Below them a flat-roofed house of sun-dried brick had been built into the slope and, sighting Jared and Eben, the farmer hung a mattock over his shoulder and his wife, in the doorway, reached for a staff propped against a wall of the house.

"They're not very friendly," Jared said. "Or do you think Romans have made them leery of every stranger?"

"I'll ask about lambs. That will warm the man up."

The farmer was lambless. In all likelihood, he said, the whole valley was lambless. Egyptian auxiliaries from Caeserea had galloped through that morning taking nearly everything and giving due bills. But Rome never really paid. The Egyptians had ridden on south after taking all they could uncover. The farmer added, more in scorn than anger, that they had butchered the lambs on the spot.

Eben laughed in comprehension and the woman, when he laughed, put her staff back against the wall.

Eben explained to Jared.

"Auxiliaries, being mounted, do the foraging for the legions. They raid south through one line of villages and towns, then back through another. These Egyptians raid for themselves whenever they dare. They keep butchered bullocks, lambs, goats, fowl --- even eggs --- until they reek. Then they eat everything with onions. But the legionnaires are not meat eaters, not often. They stay with vegetables, bread, wheat, a little lard, some vinegar. What meat they eat they want smoking fresh. So in Caeserea they'll turn up their noses at what was butchered here and carried south and then all the way back north by those yellow sons of Belial."

"How Roman stomachs manage on vegetables is a miracle," the farmer said. "I wouldn't make it through a day on that stuff." His contempt for Romans and scorn for Egyptians having been registered, he grew friendly.

"Don't try to go farther this late in the day. Spend the night here. There's stew with goat meat."

"And I baked today," the woman said.

"I'd get to Jamnia too late today to do any good," Jared said, and Eben nodded to say that he was ready to stop.

"We'll be in your debt," Jared said to the couple. "and if there's any work to do, before the stew or after, we'll be glad to do it."

The farmer, half-apologetically, said that an opening in the roof parapet should have been made long ago. Then donkies, driven off Sorek's slope, could come onto the roof and trample and thresh grain spread out there. But the opening would be a lot

are they?"

"I'll try to show you if we come to a place with good cover."

They went on, Eben expectantly, Jared keeping his thoughts on his mission. They found no good cover and finally were dipping down into Sorek Valley. Below them a flat-roofed house of sun-dried brick had been built into the slope and at first sight of them a farmer hung a mattock over his shoulder and ~~silently awaited their approach~~, and his wife in the doorway reached for a staff propped against one wall of the house. *Both waiters silently*

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The scorn puzzled Jared but Eben laughed in comprehension.

The woman, when Eben laughed, ~~put~~ her staff back against the house wall.

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"How Roman stomachs manage on vegetables is a miracle," the farmer said. "I woul<sup>n</sup>'t make it through a day on yhe stuff. The world knows it takes meat to make muscle."

"The Romans seem to be proving their muscle," Jared said.

The farmer shrugged ~~and~~, his contempt for Romans and scorn for Egyptians having been registered, he grew friendly.

"Don't try to go farther this late in the day. Spend the night here. There's stew with goat meat."

"And I baked today," the woman said. She moved clear of the staff.

"I'd get to Jamnia too late today to do any good," Jared said.

Eben nodded to say that he was ready to stop.

"We'll be in your debt," Jared said to the couple, "and if there's any work to do before the stew or after we'll be glad to do it."

~~"We'll both sleep better for a little work," Eben said.~~

The farmer, half-apologetically, said that an opening in the roof parapet should have been made long ago. Then donkeys, driven off Sorsk's slope could come onto the roof and trample and thresh grain spread out there. But the opening would be a lot of

of work.

"We haven't done a thing all day," Jared said.

"Except walk," Eben said.

After the opening had been knocked into the parapet and the stew eaten, the two stretched out on a grassy place behind the house. The grateful farmer and his wife would have put them in the guest chamber on the improved roof but Jared and Eben wanted to be where their early start next morning would disturb nobody.

"We won't know if the ground is hard or soft," Eben said. His ready laugh was convincing. "~~We've come all the way from Jerusalem.~~ We'll be asleep before we stretch out."

Jared nodded. As a matter of fact, however, Eben started talking at once; and they both talked until the stars began to twinkle out. The temperamental opposite of his new friend, Eben promptly told his whole life story to Jared.

In Bethel he shepherded the village sheep. His grandfather had taken <sup>him</sup> Eben, as a small boy, into Jerusalem to be baptized by Christians there. His parents had spent his eighteenth year trying to find him a wife. A betrothal had been almost arranged when legionnaires raided the village and killed his father and mother. Eben wept, telling how he had discovered their bodies when he came home with his flock. But he became his usual cheerful self in reporting what followed. He had lost everything to the Romans and the father of his almost betrothed had turned off, as a son-in-law, a penniless orphan who was also a member of a dissident sect.

"So I am still unmarried and growing older every day,"

Eben said.

Jared not only was more reticent, but he had less to tell. Still, drawn out by Eben's volubility, he told it, *about his father and the Community.*

"Do you mean you have never been really out of the Community until this journey?" Eben said. "Why, you began that only yesterday."

Jared agreed, but told no more.

Eben finally slept but Jared thought about (golden) Tamar. He ought, he thought, to forget her until he returned to keep his promise and tell her about Jerusalem and, at last, he did, in sleep.

Sleep was short. He was awake before the sun rose and, while Eben slept on, he went off to pray as usual.

As they started away Eben spoke regretfully of the Egyptians' slaughter of lambs but he was sure he would find all he needed in Charashim.

"If this farmer understood the Egyptian lingo," he said, "They weren't planning to return by Charashim."

The countryside continued to descend but the soil which on the previous day had been chiefly sand and shale was now black loam. The trees were bigger and brush more plentiful. The trace they had followed since parting from Heth was a plainer, though narrow, road beaten by many feet, and this morning brought more feet to the task. Eben looked at the thickening procession indignantly.

"I wish we could get in anyway one lesson."

"We need better cover," Jared said. "We don't want to put on an open show and draw a crowd. But can you explain something. Look!

Romans and Judeans all going peaceably to and from Jamnia! But yesterday Egyptian foragers would have butchered us if they had seen us. Why has this bloody aggression left Jamnia untouched?"

"They say that Titus, like <sup>Gr</sup>Vaspasianus, needs Jamnia to receive supply ships from all over. Caesarea isn't enough. Jamnia goes untouched so long as Jamnia leaves Titus's supply ships untouched."

"Probably Jamnia's new school is part of the covenant," Jared said. "As long as Titus permits <sup>that,</sup> he can hope his ships will not be hindered."

"Isn't that our cover?"

Eben pointed.

"It may be the last chance for my meat-strong muscles. I turn off for Charashim in just a little." ~~Soon.~~

Jared came out of his speculation, looked and nodded and they turned toward a pungent cover of spicy storax, fragrant myrtle and waxy azaleas all combining into a shield from the procession along the road.

The lesson went well. Eben was apt as well as eager. A dagger came naturally to him and he had already used a crook somewhat as a sword against wild beasts. Point forward! So that he did not need to break a bad habit in order to improve a thrust.

He and Jared took turns with the weapons as Heth and Jared had.

"This isn't too hard," Eben said. "I expected you'd show me tricks/ier stuff. But I'll tell you the truth, you're better ~~than I am.~~"

"I had a headstart."

~~But, I think you'll always be better. Just as I think you'd~~  
~~preferably, I guess, but least as strong."~~

NO 100 2/32

"No! I think you'll always be better. Just as you'd outwrestle me even though I'm bigger and, I guess, at least as strong."

"Better that we both start thinking about how we can beat Romans. Only lots of practice will let us do that."

Back on the road the traffic grew thicker. They jostled and were jostled down a long slant toward a narrower, north-south road crossing theirs and curving southward out of sight around a hill.

"This way!" Eben said softly and touched Jared and stepped into a thicket. "Armor! Carts! Hear them?"

In his own desert if a jackal howled Jared pretty well knew the beast's direction and distance. He pretty well knew any sound and where it came from. An admiring Brother had once said that if a rabbit hopped on the far side of a dune Jared could tell the <sup>length</sup> ~~distance~~ of the hop. Here, however, hills instead of wastes and trees and brush instead of outcroppings <sup>sand and rocks</sup> sand confused his ear. When Eben touched him he had heard no clink or creak and after they took cover he still heard none.

"From the south!" Eben said. "Listen!"

Jared at last did hear, and as other travellers began to hunt cover he held his breath to hear better.

A horseman trotted from behind the hill and now every traveller scurried. Titus had decreed a little Pax Romana for Jamnia but who dared count on any Roman to be other than merciless and murdering if it suited him? And this armed, armored rider was clearly some sort of soldier of Rome and so, certainly, would be any who followed. And more would follow. Legionnaires or auxiliaries always ran in packs, like wild dogs.

Two more riders trotted from behind the hill and two more and Jared recalled that the Century had come to the Community in much the same formation.

Now something like panic set in as travellers tried to make themselves small. *invisible*

About a hundred horsemen, all told, trotted from behind the hill. Half rode before and half behind a score of carts piled with wineskins, casks, sacks, bags and raw meat. Four men, one naked, stumbled along behind the last cart, their arms jerking with each step because the ropes that bound their wrists were hitched to the cart.

"Why prisoners?" Jared said. "Horsemen want to make speed. Prisoners afoot slow them up."

"Whoever tries to resist foragers is seized for punishment in Caesarea," Eben said. "Look at the naked one. How he must have tried."

Dark streaks criss-crossed the naked man's back. Jared's stomach turned over. He had never before seen blood drawn by a whipping and dried black.

The horsemen rode without saddles but each straddled a blanket. Each had two javelins against his right thigh.

"A socket for javelins is sewn to the strap that holds the blanket," Eben said.

A round shield hung at each rider's back and now and then a horse shied or pranced bringing into view his master's scabbarded sword and thin dagger and, when the sunlight struck right, some of the

yellow faces gleamed as though they had been polished, then dusted.

"They are the Egyptian auxiliaries who yesterday were in Sorek," Eben said and gasped at a flurry behind the last cart. He would have leaped from their thicket if Jared had not wrestled him back.

The four prisoners had slipped their ropes. In a unison which must have been planned they dragged the four nearest riders to the ground, seized and drove four javelins home, then began a dry defiant screaming and set themselves to receive a score of other horsemen who hauled shields into place and rode in.

"Don't just stand and be killed," Eben said. "Run! Run!"

"Running isn't in their plan," Jared said. "They couldn't outrun horses. They know they'll be killed but before they are they'll kill some <sup>of these</sup> snakes."

Egyptians come at you like snakes, Heth had said. And the horsemen, truly, were writhing, spinning, darting like snakes and soundlessly except for the dull beat of hooves in the thick dust of the road.

Jews

Three of the ~~prisoners~~ were ride<sup>n</sup> down but before they fell they struck back. The fourth drove a second javelin under a round shield, whirled clear of the charge<sup>n</sup> slashed a dagger across another rider's belly and was going for a third when half a dozen Egyptians hacked him down and plunged their mounts over his body like so many donkeys threshing grain.

The commanders of the threshers came racing back as they began to reform. He surveyed the dead in silence, gestured furiously

as though asking why a hundred Egyptians could not keep alive while finishing off four Jewish prisoners and gestured again, scornfully, to say that no one of his own inept dead was worth burrying. Then he rode back to the head of his column and signalled; and the carts and pairs began to move forward.

"Four who had been bound got free and killed nine <sup>who had</sup> ~~been free~~ always!" Eben said. "You practice, Jared and so will I. And if the Romans come against Jerusalem and the Temple let's meet there. I'll stand at your back and you at mine. And <sup>and</sup> all Palestine will call us such men of valor as these four who have just died, <sup>or</sup> ~~or even as~~ those of great Joshua."

Jared looked warily after the vanished Egyptians. Horsemen could easily return.

"The Romans will not come against Jerusalem. Everyone says they won't. And you must get to Charishim and I to Jamnia."

"Just the same, Jared, if Jerusalem is attacked I want to stand at your back and I want you at mine."

Jared took fire, liking Eben more and more.

"And if there is fighting I want you at my back," He said. He spoke slowly, to be surely understood. "When the fighting reaches Jerusalem and the Temple we will meet there."

Practical where Eben had been only exuberant I he set a meeting place.

"We will look for each other each noon at the Huldah Gates."

Eben looked eastward as though he could see the Huldah Gates.

"And if we find ourselves inside the Temple and can't get

out," Jared said, "we'll meet at the south balustrade of warning."

Solemnity replaced exuberance in Eben.

"Of old," he said, "so the Book tells us, the greatest oath was when a man placed his hand on a man's thigh and they swore. Abraham swore so. And Jacob. I am ready to swear so."

Jared's dark face flushed. He stepped forward.

"I swear so," he said.

"And I swear so," Eben said.

They drew back as from a sacrifice. But once a thing had been done Eben was always eager for what came next.

"Now," he said, "I must find what farmers of Charishim have spare la-ba."

"An, I must get to Jamnia," Jared said.

They walked down to the blood-soaked cross road and buried their dead, others helping, and Eben took the Charishim turnoff.

*all the preceding pages were greatly changed in last typing*

\* \* \* \* \*

The doorkeeper of the Jamnia school was apologetic, as always, when he had to break in upon Amos. Amos, splendidly bearded, plump and preoccupied, sighed in regret at the interruption to his studies and in guilt at the selfishness which his regret acknowledged. But, of course, he nodded.

"Show him in."

He had never kept the Overseer waiting and no more would he this new Brother <sup>who</sup> undoubtedly <sup>came</sup> seeking something which the poor tools of the straitened Salt Sea Community could not make of its

meager stock supply.

Amos seldom denied himself to any visitor. He was not puffed up because the School had put him in charge of its precious stores. He was humbly aware that he was not of the stuff that makes storekeepers. He had never aspired to be anything but a scholar since the morning his father dripped honey onto his soft, six-year-old lips to sweeten the beginning of learning. But from his earliest days he had tried to serve the Lord with all his heart and all his soul in every way asked. Next he served Rhoda, the wife of his bosom and Abigail, the daughter of his heart. Naturally, Rhoda came before Abigail. It had always been Rhoda and Rhoda and Rhoda and only after that Abigail.

He had never told this to Abigail. She was unwed. Once she was, herself, a wife in whom her husband rejoiced, he would understand without any telling.

Amos had married at nineteen. He had met Rhoda only a trifle earlier and until he turned to her he had scarcely thought of marriage. Abigail was born in their first year. They had hoped for a houseful of children but when the midwife told Rhoda she would never bear another and Rhoda wept, Amos had cheerfully reminded her that they already had each other and Abigail too. He was aware that he was unlike some husbands in this; he would certainly have loved a son; but Rhoda was the center of his life.

When they settled down in their first home Amos had been starvation thin and he remained so for a while. He had always been as indifferent to food as he was devoted to study. A drink of water when he got up in the morning. A few figs, some bread and watered wine later. And toward evening soup with sometimes a little meat,

more bread and watered wine (and, now and then, some dates or more figs---that was about all. Naturally he didn't grow plump.

After Abigail came Rhoda realized that this failure was causing gossip.

"Well! They won't say much longer that I starve my man," she said.

Her mother had made her a cook who did not need to apologize to anyone and they aroused her to rebellion. They were older wives who look for faults in brides and were sure Amos failed to fatten up because he'd got a poor stick for a wife.

Amos continued his meager meals, smiling on the wife of his choice and the daughter of his heart. But while he studied Rhoda slipped in with a tray. She placed this close to his hand and how could his fingers not grope when his nose was so tempted. Pungent bread, savory lamb, succulent chicken, sweetmeats, figs, dates and raisins and, in season, apricots, pomegranates and grapes.

Amos all unknowingly achieved rounder and rounder curves and was not aware that from time to time he needed a larger, longer robe. Rhoda complacently provided a new one whenever her measuring eye warned that his ballooning front was hiking the hem of the old one too far above his samals.

Thus it was a distinctly rotund Amos who rose to greet the Community visitor. Since he was accustomed to the little Overseer he was as shocked as Tamar had been. This long, bardless, black eyed young stranger bore himself less like a Brother than like a new Joshua. He seemed made to swing the sword that hung from a baldric

and strike with the dagger in his belt.

The shock was not, however, enough to delay the nod which told the doorkeeper to fetch what was offered in welcome to every traveller.

"Is the Overseer ill?" Amos asked then, after Jared had named himself.

"Worse than ill."

Jared told soberly of the Optio's blow.

"I cannot believe it," Amos said. "He was too full of life. Sometimes he almost danced for joy over what he found in our warehouse."

"Sometimes he seemed almost to dance when the Community's work went well," Jared said.

"And now you have taken his place?"

"I am only the Keeper of the Scrolls. But today I am on the mission that would have been his."

"You are as welcome."

"Even though, like the Overseer, I come wanting something?"

"Our warehouse doesn't have everything. The Romans keep us short, often of what we most need. But I hope we will have what you are after."

The doorkeeper came back with a basin of water and a towel and later with a heavier tray than he had ever brought for the Overseer. This huge newcomer certainly would have a bigger appetite. When Jared had eaten he told his story and Amos's eyes shone at the Keeper's enthusiasm over the Enoch Scroll.

"We have your parchment," he said. "We will go to the warehouse now. Then to my home. You'll stay the night, of course."

Jared had thought of beginning his return journey this same evening. But a rest and an early morning start might be better, especially since he would be taking an unfamiliar, more southerly road. He accepted with thanks.

"At home," Amos said, "we will be by ourselves. My wife and daughter are ~~are~~ with my wife's mother. She is ill in a town nearby. I am sorry you'll not meet them."

"Perhaps next time," Jared said.

"Make the next time soon."

Rhoda and Abigail, Amos thought, would like this young scholar who seemed also a man of valor.

On the way to the warehouse, through twisting streets, Jared began to feel an uneasiness surprising in a city which enjoyed the peace of Titus. Townsmen and an occasional warrier townswoman, were walking wide of alien seamen straggling up from the harbor.

The seamen had made port so recently that they had not lost their sealegs and rolled along sometimes spraddling almost from gutter to gutter. Their tanned faces, and some so black they couldn't tan, spelled out many origins. All were barefoot with hard soles which clapped noisily on the cobblestones. They wore caps stretched down to their ears. But between ears and soles nothing covered them but sweatrags at their necks and loincloths. These last provided folds for the coins sailors bring for fun ashore.

"I'd expected these fellows would be already at work under

the orders of the Centurion Cotta," Amos said.

"The Centurion Cotta?"

"The Primus Pilus of the Tenth Legion. Titus has it up out of Egypt. He is proving so resourceful that Titus uses him for everything."

"What does an officer of the legions have to do with seamen?"

"These are off newly arrived supply ships. Cotta will divide the cargoes among Roman camps at Tiberias, Sebaste and Caesarea. These seamen want to get into the city, as seamen do after a long voyage. But Cotta wants them for the unloading and to break up the cargoes into three lots."

"Couldn't Cotta put men of Jamnia at the work?"

"Jamnia might be less friendly to supply ships if her own men had to unload them," Amos said. "Titus wants Jamnia friendly. There is Cotta now."

They had come to a wide, central plaza, the town meeting place, Jared decided. At one side, to the right of Jared and Amos, a resplendent mounted Roman ~~walkway~~ <sup>was watching</sup> legionnaires herd reluctant seamen. He was tall and so erect that he seemed taller. His inland armor was polished and its gold and silver gleamed and a crimson cloak floated brightly over his horse's rump.

"Titus's officers wear their best, even a helmet with a ceremonial crest, in Jamnia," Amos said. "I think they try to match the splendor of the dress of the chief Temple priests and of our princes."

It was not the mounted officer's gleaming armor that drew Jared. It was the assurance of his narrow mouth and the resolution of his erect body. He had never seen a man so sure of himself.

"There is a legend among the legions," Amos said, "of a centurion who lived a hundred years ago. The greatest of the Caesars saw so much in that Scaeva that he promoted him over all others. The talk now is that Cotta already has had as much honor from Titus and is sure of more."

Jared studied the Roman who might, himself, become a legend, then looked away to where Cotta had suddenly looked.

Across the plaza a seaman was trying, and pretty successfully, too, to dodge three legionnaires whose spears were pricking him back toward the harbor. He was scrawny and he limped but he dodged and sidestepped foxily and with a fixed, disarming grin.

He was trying to get far enough from the spearpoints to wheel and scurry off to the pleasures for which he ached after so long aboard ship. And, except for the ankle which now and then turned his grin into a grimace, he might have made it. But finally the fox was boxed. Only his eyes had freedom though he still squirmed. At last one exasperated legionnaire reversed his spear to knock the elusive quarry quiet.

The heavy butt did not fall. Cotta had called out. The trio closed and pricked the seaman toward the unloading.

"Now!" Amos said and <sup>he</sup> skipped into an alley while everyone was watching captors and captive, and then into the warehouse.

"Men to unload the ships," he said when safely inside, "are

so needed that you, who could do twice as much as any seaman, might have been questioned and when they found you were not of Jamnia pressed into the work."

Jared shook his head at the prospect which Community ignorance had kept him from foreseeing. The need for men might have delayed for days his return to the Community and to Netophah.

"What did Cotta say to make his three ease up on that dodger?" he said.

"We've put together a language that most of us understand but this time I caught only retiarius."

A retiarius, Jared knew, was a gladiator who fought nearly naked, but with a trident and net, against a fully armored and armed opponent.

"My guess," Amos said, "is that Cotta was telling the three not to risk crippling a man who might be very good with a trident and net."

"Let that ankle mend and he might be <sup>good</sup> great," Jared said.

"Lately," Amos said, "there have been reports that Titus is going to build a compound to pen up the strongest prisoners taken in his aggression. They'll be for a spectacle in Rome to celebrate his victory over Palestine."

"He hasn't won his victory yet."

"Romans believe they never lose."

Jared looked around the warehouse and forgot Rome.

What might seem meager to Amos was richness to Jared. The Overseer, he thought, had had reason to dance. They found parchment

and nearly everything else that Jared needed and started back to Amos's house.

"rest a while, if you like," Amos said. "And then we'll have a quiet meal and you can tell me about yourself. You don't seem the kind that usually turns to the Community."

"There's not much to tell about me," Jared said. "But you should tell me of the School. The Brothers will want to know about the School."

\* \* \*

Jared peered up from the bottom of Netophah's western slope to the little gate in the inn's west wall. The stars all were out and the moon, too, except that it was behind a cloud. In Jamnia he had reckoned that after a night's rest and an early start he would fetch Netophah in two days and a night and part of a second. This moon and these stars said that the second was less than half over.

"The gate will be locked," Tamar had said. "But if you knock I'll let you in. If you went around to the great gate the dogs would wake the whole household."

Thinking of her again, as he had thought almost all the way from Jamnia, he could not doubt that she had meant she would not mind being roused.

He climbed the hill and knocked. No answer! But he had not expected one instantly. He knocked again and heard an inner door open and through a crack in the gate saw a candle come toward him across the small terrace. Tamar was holding it and when she opened

the gate her eyes glowed in the candle light. Her hair hung thick, thick around her shoulders.

"You have come back to tell <sup>be</sup> about Jerusalem's wonders," she said and laughed and Jared flushed in a suddenly mounting excitement.

She put out her free hand and he took it and they went into the room where she had received him before and she set the candle down and their other hands clasped.

"You did not forget," she said.

"How could I?"

*She turned to look at him.*

"You have weapons. But <sup>left</sup> with only a staff."

"A friend taught me a little about using them, then gave them to me."

"They must be heavy. Take them off. And I'll find food."

He laid the sword, baldric, dagger and belt on a table.

"I'm not hungry," he said. But he was --he realized-- starving for the glowing girl before him.

He put a hand on her golden arm and, under the loose sleeve, moved it to her shoulder and she flung both her arms about his neck.

\* \* \*

The bones, blood, flesh and sinews which made up the long body now quietly wide-eyed (an Awakener would be wide-eyed so near dawn) was possessed by two men. One was the Keeper of the Scrolls who would shortly be hurrying back to the Community, his mind closed to everything but his successful mission and the duties ahead. The

other had a mind equally closed to everything but Tamar. And now this other marked, with continuing enchantment, Tamar asleep under a mellow beam from a wall lamp in the adjoining room.

One of the women must have stolen in!

It was impossible, Jared was sure, that Tamar could have roused, risen and gone and lighted the lamp. Even asleep he had been too aware of her not to have known if she had left him even briefly. He had been keeping motionless ~~xxx~~ so that she might not waken but now she turned and touched his face as though to make sure she had not dreamed.

"Don't you ever wear a beard?"

"My wisest counsellor advised me against one."

Her fingers told her that he was smiling.

"All men wear beards! Except you and, of course, some Romans."

"I don't speak for Romans. But I was told not to because long ago a great king told his soldiers not to."

"Why?"

"Shave off the handle by which an enemy may seize you," the king said. "And his soldiers <sup>obeyed</sup> did and went on to conquer the world."

His voice had been merry but now <sup>it</sup> sobered.

"It is time for me to go."

"But you will come back?"

Whenever they had awakened through the night their talk had come around to when he must go and when he would come back. She had had his promise over and over but he gave it again.

"The cave I sleep in has two entrances. I can leave after

after dark. I'll come."

Her hands turned his mouth to hers.

"Do not go."

They kissed.

"I am pledged," he said.

She knew that pledges must be kept. Her ~~glansmen~~ men would not have held this lonely inn if they had broken theirs. She herself was pledged. To Obal, to her three women, in a way to all travellers. She had continued to importune Jared because his voice, even when he refused her, said what she wanted to hear over and over.

She had learned long ago what it was to be desired. Jared, however, desired her as she never had been before. And she had never given herself as she had this night. She had married only because her grandfather had wanted to make her secure.

"I'll see you on your way," she said.

"Lie warm. This is the way I want to think of you."

"No!" She leaped up, laughing, her hair cascading. "I want to think of you striding across the desert, up and down the dunes and up again.....but on your way back to me."

He settled his baldric over a shoulder, buckled his belt and made sure his dagger was firmly sheathed, and they went out to the little gate. He held her close, then turned down the hill, going headlong over limestone patches and outcroppings and up and down wind-ruffled crests. Tamar watched. He waved as he veered east and she waved. The sun got up and he grew small among the sandy wastes.

She would be checked on O.R.

suggest cut to avoid  
recurring ritual.

The desert still slept but the stars were fading.

T H R E E

Twice each year Rome's scattered governors reported on the state of things in their sundry parcels of the vast Empire. Each knew that what he sped by swift courier would not, probably, get past the Imperial secretaries. These were freedmen who had won such power that hereditary Roman nobles grumbled that they would have been better off born slaves. But there was always a chance that a report might reach the Emperor. So each proconsul, procurator, client king, tetrarch, toparch or what not tried to slip in some tidbit too urgent or too spicy to be held back by the most presumptuous freedman. Thus the writer would win momentary notice on the highest level. Preferment had resulted from less.

See 01

Pudgy Agrippa, lonely and, as always, nibbled by secret guilt, was about to begin his own report in the eight hundred and twenty third year after the founding of the chief city of his master. A new stylus, its reverse end spatulated for erasures, lay with the wax tablet on his study table. He found Roman wax more to his liking than Hebrew papyrus, parchment or copper. He had been reared in Rome and mentioned the honor often.

Agrippa was lonely because Nerenice was again away from his palace. It was -- he often counted -- her fourth major absence. Three had been the reasonable consequences of marriage. But a while back she had broken with husband Number Three, King Polemon of bleak Cilicia. She had <sup>married</sup> (taken) him (on) for his <sup>wealth</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ in forests which supplied timber to Egypt an, Syria and in goats which produced hair

?

for half the black tents in desert Arabia. However, she had not been able to take his windy wyries, largely unrepaired since Pompey's army had battered them a hundred years earlier. She had come back to the luxury of Agrippa's palace. But then, untroubled by any guilt about anything, she had taken up with Titus.

Agrippa envied his sister because she never felt guilt. His guilt nibbled him constantly although he never acknowledged it even to himself. Now he was troubled also by worry over the report. That must deal with a problem greater than just slipping in urgent or spicy bits. He must somehow slip in a thing to improve the Emperor's (if the report got that high) opinion of the Emperor's ranking subordinate in Palestine, himself. That opinion was low because of information already in the Imperial hands. The dependability of Agrippa's own spies satisfied him that strait-laced Vespasianus knew of Berenice and himself and certainly by now word had also gone ahead of his sister's affair with Titus and that this had her brother's approval.

"Approval!"

A miniature earthquake shook the corners of Agrippa's mouth. What had begun as an ironical smile became a rictus as he gave in to his own helplessness in the affair. Berenice had not asked his approval any more than she had asked it of her marriages. She had suited her own pleasure. She always suited her own pleasure.

"Even that first time, when she was hardly old enough, I did not go to her. She came to me."

His composure returned and revived vanity, and that inspired

a thought. Mightn't Titus be diverted from this small portion of his Empire by the need to repair the violence of the last twelve months in Rome? That short time had seen <sup>four</sup> emperors toppled wholesale, the ~~least of the total destruction. Four!~~ Three before Vespasianus brought order. And one of the three additionally humiliated after death by being flung down the ignominious Gemonian stairway, the shameful route by which dead criminals were got from the Mamertine prison into the Tiber's tawny, expunging flow.

Moreover, Agrippa encouraged himself, even if Vespasianus were not diverted he would probably do nothing. Any action against the tetrarch sitting in Jerusalem might well make Titus's aggression more difficult.

"I am not just any tetrarch in Palestine!"

What other had grown up in Rome and been first-named by Vestals, Senators, patricians, and even by notorious gladiators and superintendants of exclusive baths? Who but Marcus Julius Agrippa had been tutored by Quintilian? Vespasian <sup>(?)</sup> could hardly <sup>think</sup> think ill of one whose report was couched in Quintilian's polished prose. And hadn't that greatest of rhetoricians said Marcus Julius wrote divinely? Moreover, he had so much to say that the felicitous prose could easily be made to find room for the self-serving bits. No freedman would dare hold such a report back.

Item: The successful unloading of supplies at Jamnia. The Emperor would appreciate that this had been possible as much because of Agrippa's calming rule in the city as because of Titus's peace.

Item: If needed, forty thousand recruits were available in Jamnia. Of

course, if he drafted them Titus would break his sworn peace, but let Titus worry about that, Item: The Jamnia School. Agrippa had had a misgiving or two after encouraging Titus not to oppose the School. But, as <sup>the report</sup> he would point out, it was not curbing malcontents from the chronically malcontent Temple. Oh! There was plenty to report in the exquisite prose taught by Quintilian.

One bit, however, would not be slipped in. Why upset Vespasianus by boasting that his son's guarded secret was unguarded. The bit had only lately reached Agrippa, but though it contradicted what everyone was saying in public -- Titus, his generals, many leading Judeans and Temple leaders -- <sup>Agrippa</sup> he did not doubt it. He had had it from the one person he never doubted.

Jerusalem was, in truth, to be besieged! Agrippa knew the exact time. Titus would invest when the Passover had packed the Holy City with a reverent mob from all over the world. Then undisciplined hordes would make an organized defense impossible. Then they would devour Jerusalem's food. Then Titus would attack, destroy, capture and kill or scatter this stubborn people so that they would never again trouble Rome. Or Berenice! Ungrateful Jerusalemites had burned her palace in absurd resentment against Jerusalem's Idumean rulers. So now let disaster fall -- upon the Holy City <sup>should it be so-called Holy City etc.</sup> and the holier Temple! Upon thousands who would be slain or sent into a captivity worse than Babylon's.

All this would befall, provided, of course, <sup>Agrippa</sup> he had been told the truth. Well, he had! He squinted complacently toward Invisible Rome. ~~Rome~~ Vespasianus! I have a spy in your son's very bed!

Steel

He looked to make sure that wax and taper were handy for his signet ring when he had finished; then, with tongue figuratively as well as actually in cheek he began to write:

Best of Emperors, thank you for all you have done for me, if you and your army are well I am well also....

He wrote with swift assurance and no need of the spatula. He was striking exactly the right, felicitous, Quintilian note.

\* \* \* \* \*

Many days passed while Jared's bones, blood, flesh and sinews strove to accomodate the rivals -- a lover yearning toward Netophah, a Keeper whose thoughts never reached beyond his duties -- each closing his mind against invasion by the other.

On moonless nights, from the cave where an Awakener once had exploded at dawn, the lover slipped out and raced over the cold dark desert to the small gate and a warm Tamar.

cut

Increasingly the Keeper shouldered more responsibilities in a Community where more frequent glimpses of (distant) Roman patrols increased disquiet. No one knew why the patrols were more frequent although later everyone agreed that Titus was sending them so far south to mop up the countryside in preparation for the as yet undeclared siege. None came to the Community. The Centurion whose Optio had murdered so callously had satisfied authority that, indeed, the Salt Sea Brotherhood was not dangerous. But the recurring menace

on the horizon made it hard for the Community to get down to work.

Nevertheless, under Jared, it did follow the established routine, did live by the Discipline, in spite of disquiet and even fear. And Jared found that his respect for the Overseer steadily increased. The fussbudget had not fussed over trifles only. Despite bitter scarcities he had proposed, planned, directed and accomplished on a scale which, Jared reflected admiringly, a successor would be glad to half equal.

At first Jared felt he had scored when he merely found enough workers for the day, since the Community's pattern of daily worship had to be completed ahead of everything else. No workers at all were available until the dawn Rite ended. After that no one might be assigned who was needed for the Thanksgiving hymns or for the chanting of the Law which must go on come sun, come moon, or for the night-long watch of the Heavens.

There was also, regularly, the Banquet, most sacred of Community events. Cisterns might crack, aqueducts leak, walls tumble, but all must attend each Banquet until -- after lengthy chants, prayers and blessings by the Priest of Aaron -- all had eaten the bread and drunk the sweet wine. Once one of the Community's hives of (black-banded) bees swarmed just as the Brothers trooped in to the Banquet. The new queen had got her followers a home high among the cliff-caves before Jared could send after them.

Only after all such holy obligations had been met could Jared tell off enough Brothers to do what could not go undone -- rake and repound dirt floors, sweep pavements, empty latrines, clean

rooms, mend walls, rebuild roofs, repair tools, replace damaged dishes, make clothing, weave linen in which to wrap the most precious scrolls, plant, plough and harvest crops. Sadly, new graves had to be dug and new markers raised.

It helped that <sup>the</sup> ambitious young Attendant proved to be a loyal, industrious <sup>and loyal</sup> helper. The Keeper never failed to make his daily inspection of Scriptorium and Library but after that he could leave them without worry.

A change in Heber helped, too. Happy-natured as always, he had unexpectedly turned diligent, especially when assigned to the oasis. He was a natural farmer, Jared thought, and with the latter rains imminent and Ain Feshka to be sown to barley and flax he put Heber in charge with a sense of relief. [Wheat had been sown in the autumn and was green and growing tall in an adjoining parcel. [With the first rain soft pale shoots thrust above Heber's parcel alongside the older, darker green. ] Pleasant to see when all around was the land that is never sown, the unfruitful desert! ]

Of course after the rains aqueducts had to be inspected along their entire length lest they waste their precious freight. Conduits had to be cleared of mud washed down from the hills. Jared did not deceive himself that he was matching miracles with those of the Overseer, but things did seem to get done. And, finally, he managed a task which had challenged him whenever he walked along the Mall. He replaced the jars shattered by the Overseer's murderer.

He could do this partly because he found two Brothers who, in the world outside, had belonged to the Potters' Guild.

"Jars? Of course we can make jars. We were Master Potters," one said.

"But we will need better clay than you put into plates," the other said.

The clay was not easily come by, but the pair knew where to look and found enough along a brook emptying into the breakneck ravine.

"This works up as smooth as any stuff I ever put my feet into," one said. "Get the pebbles and air out and it's as good as the best in Lachish."

As far back as any could remember, Lachish had boasted the best clay in Judee.

Along with Heber's barley sprouting at Ain Feshka, fresh jars sprouted along the Mall, tall gleaming cylinders whose shining glaze flowed from rose pink to dove gray. The two brothers were, truly, Master potters. Every ringed base was level, every collared neck fitted snugly against its heavy cover. Every cover was moored by cords to rings on each jar's shoulders to keep water out.

Work, crops, jar-making -- along with brief missions to the world outside and visits to Netophah -- left little time for the weapons Jared had brought back, although when he did practice the Fifteen, happily, did not disapprove.

"The stars say clearly that some must face the Sons of Darkness," they agreed.

Scarface, oddly humble, offered to teach what he had picked up while prowling the North Road.

"I mean," the ex-robber said, "if you think I could help."

He avoided Jared's eyes. Jared's Keepership and close association with the Fifteen now and then affected a Brother so.

"You can give a beginner like me a lot of help," Jared said. He was trying to manifest an admiration which would dissipate such excessive deference.

He failed. But Scarface ~~again~~ got his gear from where he had cannily cached it and showed why, once, travellers had fled the very sight of him from Gaza to Damascus.

"You've got that much all right," he said. They had gone through Heth's <sup>sword</sup>/routine, and gone through it again. His gaze was fixed on a spot beyond Jared's shoulder. "Now let's take turns attacking and defending."

"Whatever you say," Jared said. But this try was no more successful than the other in allaying Scarface's humility.

Turn and turn about they whacked away, attacking and defending. And when Jared, acting on Heth's admonitions, showed increasing adroitness Scarface was surprised into astonished approval. After they stopped, however, he stared not at his younger opponent but at a patch of yellow sand.

"Let's try the spear," he said to the patch. "How near can you come to nicking me at thirty paces?"

"The truth is," Jared said, "that I barely know one end of a spear from the other. Here's where I can use a lot of help."

"I was good with a spear," Scarface said.

Recalling his skill he seemed a shade less humble, but

only a shade. "I'll be rusty at first, though."

He cast.

"If that was rusty," Jared said, "I don't want to be your target when you put a polish on it."

He had dodged the flying point, but awkwardly. He did better on the next cast. An<sup>11</sup>, once more turn and turn about, they cast and dodged until Jared looked up at the sun. It would be down before he caught up with the work he had put aside to practice.

"We must do this again soon," he said.

"You're going to be good," Scarface said. His approval was aimed at the row of shining jars in the Mall.

On other days they did it again and again. The teacher never got around to looking squarely at the pupil but finally his praise, although addressed to the horizon, was forthright, especially with the sling. With that Jared was beating his best score against vultures.

"You've got it all. But with slings remember not to throw a lopsided stone. Either with a sling or a catapult."

"I wouldn't know how to start throwing a stone with a catapult," Jared said.

"Well, of course the catapult throws the stone. It's half as big as a man or bigger. You just aim the catapult. A Roman who claimed to be a wonder with a catapult explained it to me."

The scarred face shone with pride because its owner was able to tell a new thing to one almost on the level of the Community's wisest.

"A catapult has a sort of arm that ends in a pocket. Put

the proper stone in the pocket, turn a handle that winds up a cord that pulls the arm back, keep it back with a hook, and when you let the hook go the stone flies. Exactly, the Roman said, where it was aimed if you've done everything right."

"But you see it coming and dodge, the way you dodge a spear!"

"The Roman said you aim the catapult at a swarm of men. They all can't dodge. He claimed he could drop a stone into a square ten paces on each side. Whoever was in the square would be hit and whoever got outside probably would be hit by splinters," the Roman said. Of course he was a liar. All Romans are liars."

"You say you have to start with the right stone?"

"And that's only the beginning. The cord has to be right. The catapult has to be aimed right. It must be level because <sup>if you</sup> tilt it up a little and it shoots high. Tilt it down a little and it shoots short. And just the jerk of the stone flying off will cant the catapult and make it send the next stone to one side. So you have to remain and level after every shot."

"I'll keep to sling, sword, dagger and spear," Jared said.

He proposed more spear practice but Scarface pretended alarm.

*Cut?* "You've got too good. [On your next try, or the next, you'd likely stick me like a pig] Go find yourself a Roman."

"You think I'm doing that well?"

"Well, of course, we've just been playing. It'll be a horse of another color when you and somebody else do this for keeps. And never forget that a spear is a thing for just now and then. For the

*M.A.M.  
is the not  
looking at  
Jared as done  
a little? or  
amusing enough  
to his "space".*

finish you've got to be willing to work in close with sword or dagger or both."

His eyes were fixed on the horizon, but his voice seemed to be full of nothing save pride for his pupil.

\* \* \* \* \*

A Master was waiting when Jared entered the Scriptorium. It was the Master for whom Jared had brought back the Jamnian parchment. He had been intent for days on the business of copying the worn document sent ~~up~~ from Egypt and he jumped up in excitement when Jared came in.

"Keeper! I have a surprise."

"A surprise?"

"The Enoch Scroll! There is a wonderfully new thing in it."

Late as it was, almost time to prepare for the evening service, Jared could not resist delaying to hear.

"What is new?"

"A listing of the whole hierarchy of the Celestial Presences, Jared. The loftiest! The middle rank! The lowest! If we may call low any so much higher than the highest of ourselves!"

"The full listing?"

"Every one!"

Spreading the fingers of one hand the Master began to tick off his rollcall. "Lowest are the Principalities, Authorities, Arch-angels, Shepherds and Angels."

"Angels," Jared said, "are all about us." He knew <sup>they</sup> angels

They were the numberless messengers of the Lord to men. Although, of course, they did not come to all.

"The middle rank," the Master said, ticking reverently, "are Dominions! Rules! Virtues! Glories! Angels Powers!"

Jared had never heard of this five. He nodded, however, in unconscious imitation of the Overseer whom he still copied with profit. The Overseer had nodded in silence whenever he did not know. His nod seemed to say Just let me mull a little and this will come to me.

"Loftiest," the Master said, "are the Thrones, Lords, Seraphim, Cherubim and Guardians."

"Guardians!"

Jared could not hold the word back.

The Master's innocent rollcall had opened a crack in the mind that the Keeper of the Scrolls kept stubbornly closed. Before he could close the crack Hot guilt poured in. The boy he had been was ashamed of refusing place in his thoughts to Israel's great guardian. The man he was could not deny the sinfulness of the rapture at Netophah. The Keeper confessed to vows broken as completely as the Optio had broken the jars on the Mall.

"Great Michael!" he said.

He strode up and down the quiet room, dimmed by approaching twilight and empty except for himself and the Master. The Master stood out, wondering why his discovery about the Enoch Scroll had so moved the Keeper.

Later, at supper, he noted that the Keeper's face was

hard.

By then Jared had closed the crack.

\* \* \* \* \*

The messenger who came crying, "The Priest of Aaron!" could at first only manage the four words. He had come from Jerusalem and when he was better able to talk he boasted that he had run the whole way.

Jared was crossing the Mall when the messenger <sup>March</sup> stumbled onto it.

"I'll take you to the Priest of Aaron," he said. <sup>Jared</sup>

"Jerusalem! Jerusalem!"

The runner staggered and hauled on Jared's arm.

"It is the Priest of Aaron you must tell," Jared said.

His solemn voice tried to make clear that any other action would be improper in the Community but the <sup>Jared's</sup> had had to rid himself of his terrible news. <sup>to escape</sup>

"Titus! He is going to attack!"

The words were so much deafening thunder. Jared thought of the Temple, of Eben, of Netophah ~~but every thought seemed to add to confusing deafness and to clear his mind he hurried off to his cave~~

As soon as he had got the man to the Priest of Aaron, <sup>he hurried off toward his cave</sup>

Titus was to attack Jerusalem! And Jerusalem meant the <sup>with</sup> holier Temple. Every drop of blood <sup>Jared</sup> longed to go on, and on, <sup>across the desert,</sup> until he reached the Holy City, but when he had got only a little way toward his cave he was called back, <sup>by a hurrying brother.</sup>

my change, Right or wrong?

*overwriting*

"Keeper! Keeper!"

He turned back toward a hurrying Brother.

"Keeper! The Priest of Aaron says cong."

When he got to the Assembly Hall <sup>Jared</sup> he found the Fifteen in palpable fear, their juiceless old lips <sup>secretly</sup> puckered in an unsuccessful try for that resolute calm which the Discipline enjoined. They were bunched on benches along the walls. The Priest of Aaron stood before them his shoulders drooping so that the end of his silky, snowy beard fell almost to his knees.

The messenger leaned alone against the rear wall, his bare legs and torso ~~encrusted~~ with sweaty dust. [His full tilt journey had so dried him that the skin of his belly was unnaturally loose and unnaturally wrinkled.] His chest was still lifting and falling from a heart beat not yet back to normal.

The Priest of Aaron looked at Jared with the vague entreaty of old age.

"Jared! We have come to count on you. You must share our bleak tidings."

Jared waited. A Brother of his rank must wait until <sup>all</sup> whoever <sup>had</sup> precedence was surely finished.

"The bitter rumors are true, Jared."

The Fifteen took up the threnody.

"True even though Romans and our own leaders have denied them so often."

"Two legions encamped last night on Mount Scopus."

"And [the frailest of us would find] the distance from Scopus

cut?

cut?

to Jerusalem's wall, <sup>is it</sup> easy!"

"Another camp is even nearer, on the Mount of Olives!"

"And only Kidron lies between that and the Temple."

Now yhey all seemed to have finished.

"But," Jared said, "the City is full of our people come for the Passover. These, with Jerusalemites and the Priests of the Temple, are ten times Titus's army."

"Arms bearing is remitted to Temple Priests," the Priest of Aaron said. Jared had never heard him speak so mournfully. "And even the well disposed who are armed reject any captain. And worse! Idumeans and other robbers of our own clans, among them Simon of Giora and his bloody gang, have tricked their way into the City."

Even in a Community cut off from the world outside all had heard of Simon of Giora and his gang.

"Simon will fight only for his own gain," someone said.

"Better Titus in the City than Simon," another said.

Jared's mouth grew a bitter taste at the <sup>plihgt</sup> thought of the Temple with Titus at the City's gates and Simon inside its walls.

"What of the Holy Temple?" he said.

"It is in its greatest peril since Nebuchadrezz<sup>h</sup>er," the Priest of Aaron said.

(Remembering, in spite of his growing fear, to move carefully not to up-end some frail one of the Fifteen,) Jared pushed forward and knelt before the Priest of Aaron.

"Well now, Jared," the old man said, "whatever you want, can't it w~~stand~~ aside while we finish this business the messenger

as is? or just  
grow bitter at the plight etc

cut? or  
stet?

has put upon us?"

"They are the same."

"Well, but..."

"Everything with which I am charged is in order."

"Well, yes, but ..."

"Let me go to defend the Temple."

His black head bent in supplication.

"But..."

"Everything is in order today, perhaps," one of the Fifteen said, "but what of tomorrow and tomorrow?"

"All that the Overseer did must still be done every day," another said.

"The Attendant in the Library can be counted on there," Jared said, "and in the Scriptorium. And before I am really needed elsewhere, shan't I be back?"

"Will the Romans be beaten off from the City that soon?" the Priest of Aaron said.

~~"Or Simon of Giora brought low?" one of the Fifteen said.~~

"Let me go."

"Well, but ..."

"It will take someone like Jared to deal with Simon," another of the Fifteen said *loudly*.

All the faces brightened.

"Well..." the Priest of Aaron said and slowly dropped a long thin hand to Jared's head. "Well-l-l-l! Well, you have wanted something like this, Jared, ever since you went into the world outside. So! Well, go!" ~~Thin fingers pressed.~~ "And the Lord bless and keep you."

The Fifteen, seeming to gather courage from the words which had

go!" Thin fingers pressed, "And the Lord bless and keep you."

The Fifteen seemed to gather strength from the words which had encouraged Israel for more than a thousand years and continued the first Aaron's benediction.

"The Lord deal kindly and graciously with you."

"The Lord bestow his favor on you," the Priest of Aaron said.

"And grant you peace," the Fifteen said.

Jared stood up humbly and walked through the door of the Meeting Hall [silently repeating to himself, "...and give me peace."]

Out on the Mall Brothers swung close to learn the messenger's news and off to one side Jared saw the Chaste One's grave face. In his own fashion the Chaste One had learned the messenger's news. Jared went to him and knelt.

"Give me your blessing,"

"Always, Jared, always!" the Chaste One said. "You can do nothing that would keep my blessing from you."

"Romans and plunderers are going against the Temple."

"I know. Go! And the Lord attend."

"I will be back."

"The Lord will decide. Concern yourself with nothing but His will."

The Chaste One's fingers brushed Jared's shoulder in love no less than blessing. Jared stood up and layed his head against a frail old breast.

"Go, Jared. Do not wait ~~taxxxx~~ until I weep."

cut? or affected?

Jared turned back to the waiting Brothers and although this was the time for silence he told them what they wanted to know.

He was overwhelmed with whispered advice.

"Find a good man to stand at your back the first thing you do," Scarface said.

"We have never seen you with a shield," one ex-potter said. "Get a good one."

"But not too heavy," the other said. "A quick fighter should not be slowed by his gear."

"If you need help, send for me," Heber said.

Jared turned toward his cave. If he needed help he would have Eben.

Eben will be at the Huldah Gates ahead of me.

Because, before meeting Eben, he must go to Netophah.

With all the Brothers following and the Chaste One watching he trotted, then ran, then raced toward the cliffs to get his arms and the few other things he would take. And the Brothers raced after, crying their prayers, hopes and cautions. The Overseer was not there to rebuke them into silence and in that moment no one thought of the Discipline.

\* \* \* \* \*

This was the vilest morning that Obal could remember at Netophah. Naturally, any morning was vile after a caravan had spent the night at the inn. Obal had had to be up and down, down and up, and the dogs, too. A few men of every caravan, after so many months on the Incense Road, were always tapping hopefully on the women's door. Last night Obal had hardly slept at all and it had been cold and a heavy fog had been the next thing to rain so, besides being sleepy, he was miserable in damp clothing and the dogs were miserable also, sniffing on wet paws when they stretched out to rest from their dusk to dawn snarling.

The caravan was leaving. Its master was at one side of the courtyard where Tamar had taken her usual station. He was thanking her for her hospitality even though he knew she had charged well for that. His men, kicking their beasts through the big gates, were looking back in unwarded admiration.

Tamar had slept warm and away from the fog and was glowing and shortly would start her women at the tidying up which any caravan departure made necessary. A fold of her gray work dress was tucked into her belt to raise the hem clear of courtyard muck and her sleeves were pinned back to her shoulders baring her golden arms.

She was at her station not because she thought to halt any brawl among the caravanners, made edgy by the irritations of their long journey. It was for the caravan master to keep his own peace. She stood there--the Innkeeper--as her grandfather, father and some one of her clan had stood since before questing Balkis, to remind departing guests by her presence of their peculiar obligation to Netophah.

On this last half of the Incense Road between Akabah and Jerusalem there was no other inn and nowhere in Israel was there Netophah's equal. It was up to travellers, therefore, to respect it and to speak well of it at any opportunity so that no one would come to harm where all were dealt with so well. *fairly.*

*2 weeks*  
All travellers complained of the flies, fleas and filth in Palestine<sup>is</sup> inns, except at Netophah. Long ago Tamar's clan had decided that all would profit if caravans found a good place in which to rest before taking their wares into Palestine's cities. Tamar's clansmen and now Tamar offered more than the queen-sized alcove had provided Sheba's inquiring ruler.

*Such as*  
Nothing, of course, up to Persia's caravansaries where royalty unflinchingly found fitting accommodations. But at Netophah there were no fleas except on Obal's dogs. No filth encouraged flies. No guest need bring his own silver tank to boil water; Netophah's well was sweet. Alcove straw was clean. Gutters drained the courtyard after rains.

Now and then, of course, some caravan master would have his little joke. One would tell Tamar that in Babylon guests paid in grain and when an inn-mistress there demanded money she was tossed into the Euphrates, sink or swim. Another, less than half joking, would remind her that elsewhere the word for inn-mistress meant one who was hospitable in the most personal fashion.

*can?*  
Tamar had always been able to take of jokesters and of herself. And now, while Obal shooed the last spitting camel on its way, she eased the caravan master toward the gates and where he had

disappeared she went to collect the three who would tidy up under her direction.

Obal, having miserably sped the departing guests, grew indignant. Damp, stiff and sleepy he had had to go on shoeing while splayed hooves pelted him with clods. He had had to watch sour mouths swill endlessly. Alook told him that the well would hardly be back to normal in a month, and he would not let himself think where it would fall if another caravan came soon.

It was easy to see the low level of the well but Obal sighted only dimly the single traveller approaching from far off, skimming the sand dunes. His first reaction was suspicion. Any solitary traveller aroused suspicion. He poked the dogs until they stood on either side of him, stiff legged and muttering. He got a good grip on his staff.

"If he tries anything" he said, "He'll get you." He was speaking to his staff. "Then the dogs!"

To measure better the approaching brawn and bulk, he rubbed his eyes then bellowed in welcome and relief and waddled through the gates and bellowed again and waited impatiently <sup>with</sup> into the stranger--- no stranger at all, only made to seem one by sword, dagger and belt---came within earshot.

"Jared!"

Next Obal thought to rebuke Jared for his unfamiliar weapons and his lack of the familiar Brotherhood robe. Then he had had a mind to say that if Jared came oftener he wouldn't go unrecognized at any distance or in any clothes or gear.

But, of course, Obal knew Jared had come often. Only he had arrived and left by the inn-mistress's little gate. And since Tamar had never spoken of that Obal couldn't either. A joke might be better.

"Welcome! If you want a bath, one will be made ready."

The well might be low and another caravan would make it lower but Jared's pitcherful, or even more, wouldn't matter.

"I can use a bath," Jared said.

They had come inside the courtyard. Tamar was walking toward them, <sup>(over this unexpected appearance</sup> her excitement/discreetly controlled. She had been sweeping an alcove and, seeing Jared, had dropped her broom. That was the only sign which made her approach more than a customary welcome to a guest. The other women were watching. The youngest -- the girl with such high color -- watched in open approval of Jared.

"Aren't you away from the Community at an unusual hour?" Tamar said.

She spoke easily, and softly not to reveal the fear that his coming now might mean that something was wrong.

"The Roman aggression is turning on Jerusalem," Jared said. "I am going there."

Her eyes blazed with a different excitement at this news but she turned calmly to Obal.

"Is there an alcove ready?"

"In just a little, Mistress,"

"Come inside while you wait," she said. *to Jared*

As she moved off, with Jared she motioned to Obal. Her signals ~~were almost spoken instructions and at this one he put the oldest woman in charge of tidying up. Then, and needing no signal, he stared the youngest down until she smoothed interest in Jared from her face and got back to her work.~~

were almost spoken instructions and at this one he put the oldest woman in charge of tidying up. Then, needing no signal, he stared the youngest down until she smoothed interest in Jared from her face and got back to her work.

Jared followed Tamar through the empty kitchen and into her quarters. There she flung herself into his arms. He held her close and kissed her wet cheeks.

"Oh, Jared!" she said. "You must defend the Temple. I understand! But how long can you stay here?"

"Not long! Titus may attack any time."

"Can you stay tonight?"

"No. But I'll enjoy Obal's bath." His black eyes smiled down. "He promised it almost before I was near enough to hear."

"Obal wants nothing to remind you that once he stood between you and your bath."

"Obal wants to welcome anyone you welcome."

Tamar wiped her eyes.

"I'll have a tray ready when you have bathed."

"Obal hasn't told us yet that the alcove is ready."

"I'll bolt the door."

She came back into his arms.

\* \* \*

Over the savory tray they talked. Tamar had chugged into her green and blue dress and put on the anklets that had tinkled when he first saw her. He told her how they had made him think of the Prophet Isaiah's rebuke to the tinkling daughters of Zion.

"Why did he mind a few little bells?"

She told him how he had looked that day.

phet Isaiah's rebuke to the tinkling daughters of Zion.

"Why did he mind a few little bells?"

She told him how he had looked that day,

"Almost a giant, and I expecting the little Overseer! And all that black hair! And your eyes so watchful, as though I was an enemy."

After they had eaten he repeated all that the Jerusalem messenger had told the Fifteen. She listened and then hurried out and told the women and Obal.

"They are all Judeans," she said. "They will want to pray."

<sup>Returning, she</sup>  
~~She turned in her seat before the tray and stared toward~~  
Jerusalem as though the thick wall were not there.

"This trouble will hardly make a difference at Netophah, at least for a time," she said. "The Romans know the inn is needed. <sup>Know,</sup> And if some come who do not, I will deal with them. Whoever has been Master here has always had to deal with some trouble."

"If the siege runs on, food here may run short."

"Netophah grows nothing, of course. But there are growers in Mamre, Hebron and Tekoa. My father and grandfather dealt with their fathers and grandfathers. And the inn has always kept a hidden reserve."

As in earlier talks, Jared marked her practicality and was grateful for it.

Obal's fat knuckles set up their ~~zzzz~~ hesitant tattoo. There was fresh news. A man from Tekoa, on his way back from somewhere near Jerusalem, had brought it. The Tenth Legion had moved two

cohorts toward the City's north wall.

Jared leaped up.

"Is the man still here?"

"He hurried off to warn Tekoa."

After Obal had gone Jared gathered Tamar into his arms.

"Wait just a little," she said. "You should take some food."

"I am to meet a friend inside the City. He will be waiting since the Romans are closing in."

Both realized that he could not know when or even if ever he would come back.

"I shall pray for you."

Out in the courtyard/<sup>Jared</sup>~~he~~ went to Obal, before the great gates.

"Obal, are there any enemies of the Inn that she doesn't know about?"

Obal's round hairless face seemed to shrink. He was remembering the world beyond Netophah where he had known nothing but enemies. Then he looked toward Tamar's quarters.

"I know of no one. But whoever hurts her is my enemy. And yours, also. The Romans will not be her enemy or mine. She will know how to handle a Roman."

\* \* \*

Brigands of the world! Furious Calgacus had shouted to the accusation from his ravaged island. Now, in the same century and across the world, it rang through Palestine as Rome struck to create another desolation and call it another peace.

MOTTOES

X X X X X

This was an aggression that never should have been. It was the result of the incredible conjunction of a lunatic Emperor, his rapacious governor and implacable procurator on the one hand and on the other of a people who had benefitted so often from miracles that they were sure another would be forthcoming. If these antagonists had not collided measureless destruction would have been averted. And, afterward, mourning men would not have looked across rubble and <sup>to say</sup> said, Here once stood the palaces. There the sacred courts.

\* \* \*

"A thousand auxiliaries would have been <sup>more than</sup> enough," Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus said.

In his headquarters tent on high, level Mount Scopus he doodled with a stylus along a map spread over a wide table.

"Five hundred could have turned the trick." He looked hard until Cotta nodded.

The nod did not mean that Cotta really understood. He knew only that he was being used as a sort of sounding board for his commander's thoughts on the impending siege. Cotta would, possibly, shape these into a plan for criticism by his generals. But for the life of him, Cotta could not see how a job-lot parade of auxiliaries fitted into any plan.

"We ought to have kept our eyes open," Titus said.

He shifted in his seat for an easier fit. He fitted a little too snugly. Dark and medium tell he was, <sup>and</sup> despite the taxing Palestine campaign, a little overweight; his family ran to fat. He was not,

*unsuccessful*

X however, soft and his shoulders were powerful. His round chin ~~butted~~ bespeaking resolution. His Roman nose hooked as boldly as any nose in Judea. His mouth was smallish but its faint, fixed smile suggested a man sure of himself. And why not? He was only thirty but as good, a commander as his father, the ~~new~~ Emperor. He had pretty much crushed Galilee, and the Pharisee and priest-general Josephus who had fought him hardest up there was his hostage and supporter.

In spite of the risk of a setback in the impending siege, a setback always possible before a city so prodigiously walled, a broader smile might have been warranted. In all Palestine the only points of resistance were Jerusalem and a few strongholds to the south. Of course uprooted Jews made desperate by Roman cruelty or, like Simon of Giora, grown inhuman, were a danger, but only as wild animals are dangerous. Once Jerusalem fell, scattered marauders X would be picked up with no trouble at all.

Titus bent over the map. Its lines for streets, axes for towers, triangles for hills, dots for pools and wells, squares for buildings and wriggles for running water represented not only the City but also two flanking valleys, the fashionable new suburb of Bezetha, all the city walls and an ugly hill of possible military value.

South, east and west there was just one wall, (but with many towers.) The same wall bound the City on the north but there it was one of three. Where the single wall sufficed, Jerusalem was made almost impregnable by two valleys and a steep, southern escarpment. The northern approach, however, sloped more gradually and there, over

the years Philistines, Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians and many others had begun their assaults on the summit which Israel's enemies had coveted for a thousand years.

On the north was Solomon's wall with the towers -- Hippicus, Phaesalus and Miriamne -- which Herod had raised to guard his palace. This ran from west to east to the center of the Temple enclosure. A second wall, named for Manassah who had built it, escalated up outside Solomon's wall and enclosed all the Temple area. Here, also, Herod had built <sup>x</sup> This time a tower which was deservedly called a fortress, the mighty Fortress of Antonia. It stood at the Temple's northwest corner and over its connecting colonnade Herod's soldiers, or Rome's, had <sup>x</sup> tramped into the Court of the Gentiles, sometimes the Profane Court, to put down the riots always erupting among cantankerous factions-- Jews against Gentiles, Galileans against Judeans, Pharisees against Sadducees, Samaritans against Jerusalemites, Zealots against anybody.

<sup>5-4-44</sup>  
The third wall lay still farther north, enclosing the new addition to ever growing Jerusalem, Bezetha. This was called Agrippa's wall, Agrippa's father had begun it. Fearing it would encourage eruptions Rome had made him stop. As the Fortress troops had learned, almost anything encouraged some fragment of Judea's hotheads. But despite the Roman stop-order the present Agrippa had completed this third wall while Vespasian and Titus were too busy in Galilee to interfere.

<sup>x</sup> "These rich Bezethans put up the money to finish it," Titus <sup>3</sup> said.

He tapped the map with his stylus. His little fixed smile

<sup>x</sup> see later  
780 no. 21 page

could have meant exasperation or grudging approval.

"These Jews don't miss a trick, damn them." He tapped again. "My father should have sent scouts down. I should have sent scouts down." He looked, only half in jest, at Cotta. "Why didn't you think to send scouts down?"

There were stones in Agrippa's wall as long as three men, taller than two and wider than one, men could straddle. If scouts had seen them being put into place and had reported back, the stones never would have got up. A thousand auxiliaries, or even five hundred, galloping in and out, showering javelins and arrows and whooping their heads off would have brought them crashing down.

Cotta nodded again. At last he understood. This galloping and whooping was where the job lot of auxiliaries would have come in.

"But now we'll have to knock some big holes in the wall before we dare try much else," Titus said. "If we pushed on to the middle wall and then were chased back, Agrippa's would stop us just when we might want running room."

"We might be chased back at that," Cotta said.

"Never for long," Titus said.

His little smile was confident.

"We'll starve them out and thirst them out. The City is packed for this whatever they call it -- Passby, Pass through."

"Passover. It is the Jews holiest observance."

"It's brought them in droves from all over the world. The City can't possibly feed so many very long. And when we break their aqueducts what will they do for water?"

The stylus stopped on heavy wriggles indicating two aqueducts. One from the west ended at a dot near one of the Herodian towers.

"Hezekiah's Pool," Titus said. "It'll drain in no time."

The second aqueduct came from the south, reached half way up outside the west wall, hairpinned back, still outside, turned to cross the south wall and inside the City ascended the Tyroposeon Valley into the Temple."

"And this Temple pool nearly as quickly," Titus said.

"Both are fed by big reservoirs." Cotta said.

"Reservoirs can be broken."

Titus's stylus tapped two more pools.

"But these won't. Springs feed them, even through droughts."

One of the last dots marked the Pool of Siloam which <sup>served</sup> ~~marked~~

the Lower City. The other, above the Temple, lay between the walls of Manassah and Agrippa. It was named Bethesda.

"Both of these pools," Cotta said, "are as fine as any in Rome. Porticos circle them for comfort and privacy. Hundreds at a time undress, bathe, lounge and dress at a time.

"The damned Jews do well by themselves," Titus said.

Titus laid the stylus down.

"I want a closer look at that Agrippa wall. It's the first thing we'll go for. Up close we may see something to help us."

"I'll mount an escort," Cotta said.

"A hundred or so ought to be enough," Titus said.

But he tossed up his hand when Cotta's face showed stubborn

unless there's a sign just at  
would be a good one!

dissent.

"Suit yourself. Take all you like."

He had learned from experience as well as from his father that in minor matters it was a good thing to give subordinates a lot of leeway.

"I'll tell your orderly to fetch your horse," Cotta said.

He meant to take full advantage of the suit yourself. What mightn't Jerusalem's defenders try if they saw only a hundred or two <sup>Romans</sup> so temptingly near and guarding an officer so carefully that the <sup>he</sup> officer just about had to be Titus?

He got to that quarter of the Scopus camp set aside for auxiliaries and to the tent of the Brigadier commanding all the <sup>x</sup> auxiliaries attached to the Twelfth Legion.

"Mount up six hundred," he said. He had explained the mission. "You take command. An' pick a cracking good lieutenant for each hundred. That Agrippa wall has plenty of sallyports. A Jerusalemite swarm could <sup>jump us</sup> ~~swarm us~~ anywhere."

"Once we leave the Damascus Road we'll be riding most of the way through Bezetha's gardens," the Brigadier said. "And they're the lousiest place for horses. Irrigation ditches running every which way! Soft, tilled land all around! Vineyards! Clumps of fruit trees! If we're jumped we'll likely be too mired to fight back."

"Titus would like nothing better than to be jumped. He's <sup>x</sup> said a thousand times that <sup>y</sup> you give a besieged place a good stiff beating at the start you've more than half won."

The Brigadier spat.



"An errand held me back."

"Well, now there's a thing to see."

They went back up two steps at a time and into the Profane Court, then onto the top of the colonnade leading into the Fortress of Antonia and from that to the open, parapetted court around the great apartment on the top terrace of the Fortress.

Halfway along the court's shady side they came to a silent, glowering group. In the center, the leader gave them a surly stare. He was a fat-shouldered man a dozen years older than Eben and almost as big. His beard, a greasy stubble, hid his neck.

Jared and Eben hesitated, looked at each other, then big, big Eben, hand on sword hilt, pushed ahead. The glowering group

LIBERT

looked at Stubblebeard but when he did not signal they gave way. Jared followed and the two left the group behind them.

"Wasn't that Simon of Giora?" Jared said.

"Simon and no mistake."

Jared looked back. After Netophah he had picked up more grim rumors about the greasy, cunning robber chief. In the besieged City where rich and poor, men, women and children were locked together behind walls, in the confusion created by a horde of self-appointed defenders, he was said to be plundering homes and shops, even murdering where he pleased, but so craftily that no one could say, "He did this. And that."

"I was told he has many followers," Jared said.

"An army," Eben said, "but no one knows how big. You seldom see more than a few cronies with him. Don't forget what Simon looks like. You may not see him often. But usually he's just around some corner. Now let's get to where you <sup>can</sup> see the thing I want to show you."

He drew Jared to the north parapet. This overlooked the city's outermost wall, the one Agrippa had built. Bezetha lay inside the wall, its gardens spreading an April greenery. Outside, two small, adjacent hills made a short defile for the Damascus Road. Beyond them Mount Scopus rose and then Judea's hills upheaved as far as they eye could see.

Eben pointed to the hill on the right. On the ugly, barren mound vultures lumbered among a half <sup>a</sup> dozen crucified crosses.

"Titus is already nailing <sup>Jews</sup> us up on Golgotha as a warning," <sup>he said</sup> "Just as the Anointed <sup>was</sup> had been nailed, he thought, but did not say so."

not clear

X Jared knew of Golgotha. The place of Skulls! Men had been crucified there and left as a warning over many, many years. The hill had its name from <sup>the</sup> its long, grisly parade but also because, from a distance, in certain lights, its natural craters and crevices suggested eyesockets and mouth and nose holes.

The lefthand hill was, like Bezetha, springtime fresh, was indeed an extension of Bezetha's gardens, orchards and vineyards. And, again like Bezetha, each garden and grove was enclosed by a stone or mud wall topped by bristling branches of thorn or prickly pear. Whitewashed sepulchres, manmade or rebuilt from caves, dotted this green extension and Eben looked at them and <sup>again</sup> remembered. One, he did not doubt, was the very place of which he had been told by his grandfather who had been told by a witness of the event now forty -odd years old. Somewhere here was the very sepulchre in which they had laid the Anointed and from which He had risen.

"Now what's the <sup>point</sup> of that?" said Eben and Presently Eben pointed toward Scopus.

"~~There is the thing.~~ A Roman legion is camped there, the Twelfth, and as many more auxiliaries. Any day now they all may come at Jerusalem. And the Damascus Road makes the coming ~~easy~~ <sup>easier.</sup> It is paved." south of

The Damascus Road, the portion ~~between~~ <sup>to</sup> Damascus, was indeed paved. Through Syria, Galilee, Samaria, Judea and past Jerusalem into Egypt its smooth tangents never turned aside for mountains or rivers. Five paces wide, more than two deep, its four perfectly calculated layers -- flat rocks, rubble, more rocks mixed with concrete and lastly <sup>of</sup> concrete alone -- composed a minor but important section of the network of highways which helped Rome hold her conquered <sup>lands</sup>

It did not begin at Damascus. It began leagues westward. There, at the azure Aegean sea it was only a yellow stretch of dirt. But it was all Rome needed as she raped and robbed eastward, wresting tribute and taxes from Polemon and his <sup>goats and his</sup> now queenless forests and ~~goats and~~ from other little kings who had not gained a paragraph in history by briefly tumbling a Herodian princess, and from great cities: Antioch, grown rich from scandalous rites honoring Apollo. Ephesus, where rival merchants matched incantations guaranteed to cool boils or warm hearts against statuettes of Diana guaranteed to work <sup>with</sup> countless wonders. Aleppo, where malefactors continued to receive under Roman rule the city's unique punishment for misdeeds, ~~xxxxx~~ <sup>down a</sup> ~~xxxxx~~ tower onto a featherbed of fiery embers.

But here, by what admirers and sycophants might call the genius of the Empire but which Calgacus otherwise defined, the road was hard and level for the Imperial rape and robbery of the richest city of all.

"Look!" Jared <sup>said</sup> said. "You thought they might be coming any day. Did you mean this day? Isn't that part of a legion or a troop of auxiliaries coming now?"

~~Eben~~ <sup>caught his arm and stared.</sup>

A thicket of shining spear points was turning off from Scopus onto the Damascus Road.

"Auxiliaries!" Eben said. "They're mounted."

"Egyptians!" Jared said.

He and Eben remembered the Egyptians they had seen east of Jannia.

By now other men were crowding against the parapet. But not Simon or any of his crew. Jared looked <sup>around for them</sup>. They had not moved.

"He knows his enemies increase every day," Eben said. "He keeps out of crowds."

The troop had advanced so far that its escorted officers could be counted. Three! A trio between the advance guard and the main formation. A small separate detachment kept close to the trio. All, except the trio, rode four abreast. The pavement was that wide.

The troop came out of the defile. The gardens stretched away. And suddenly <sup>as</sup> the crowd <sup>of Jews (but not Simon's crew)</sup> on the parapet, ~~except for Jared and Eben and the Simonites,~~ <sup>from the parapet</sup> began to jostle down to Antonia's ground level.

"They're going out!" Eben said. "Against the Egyptians."

"On that smooth, hard road they cannot face Egyptians," Jared said. "They'll be ridden down."

"Shall we go out?" Eben said. "Standing at each other's back we might show some of these <sup>auxiliary</sup> Egyptians a thing or two."

Jared looked <sup>down</sup> away. At that <sup>me</sup> somebody might show the Egyptians a thing or two, and soon. The terrace mob, now emerging from one of Antonia's postern gates, was not risking the Damascus Road. Bezetha's vineyards, vegetable and flower <sup>gardens</sup> and grain patches, and fruit and nut groves came right up to the road and the mob was vanishing among burgeoning tress, newly draped black grape trunks, and young shoots, <sup>vanishing</sup> into ditches and behind the bristling stone and mud walls. Ants could <sup>have</sup> not scampered more briskly into subterranean tunnels and caverns. A few did not vanish. Their arms and armor <sup>had</sup> but in tunics or loin cloths <sup>they</sup> these now appeared to be harmless gardeners, pruners, tillers.

"But where is the leader?" Jared said.

*Suprase*

"There is no leader," Eben said. "In all the host defending the city there is no real leader. I know."

Jared said someone must be the leader. Without a leader how could the host hope to route Titus, and this mob in the gardens hope to beat the Egyptians?

"I haven't found one leader here, all the while I waited for you," Eben said. "Simon, yes! But he has followers only because they believe he is the cunningest about locating plunder. But among the others there isn't one. Not even among those who have come from far away, although you would think strangers would stand together."

He nodded. He knew. He had seen. In a Jerusalem so threatened that it could not survive unless all stood together, Jews from Alexandria rebuffed those from Antioch. Nica rebuffed Neapolis. Masilia rebuffed Massana. It was no better nearby. Samaria Rebuffed Galilee. Judea Rebuffed Samaria. Jerusalem rebuffed all three.

"If these <sup>men down there</sup> ~~her~~ would stand together and scatter the Egyptians," Jared said, "Titus would see how Jews can fight and might think twice of his siege."

*Something  
omitted  
But David's  
not just  
below*

~~They were the last in the gardens.~~

"Who is the leader here?" Jared said.

H<sub>o</sub> and Eben had come to the first of those <sup>Jews</sup> hidden behind walls, in ditches, plantings and groves.

"Do men of Shiloh need to be led?"

They found another lot.

"Where do we look for the signal that will send us all against the Egyptians?"

GILBERT

*Suprase*

GILBERT

"Where do you come from," one said, "that you think men of Jericho wait for a signal?"

They found a third lot.

"Will you wait for a signal for all?" Jared said.

"We have ears. The horses's hooves will be signal enough."

"But then will all those hidden in the gardens act together?" Eben said.

"I know you," one said. "Is a Bethel shepherd saying men of Sepphoris follow like sheep?"

*Eben turned to Jared.*  
"Didn't I tell you?" Eben said.

*Took it.*  
He turned to Jared, and they slipped into a fig grove. Its broad, leathery leaves were good concealment, but the Egyptians outside could be seen.

The advance was turning into a garden lane. There were several lanes. Bezethans used them to plant, plow, till and harvest. Each wound now close to Antonia's wall, now well away. The trio of officers rode slowly, inspecting towers, gates, every point of strength and weakness.

"That middle one is Titus," Eben said.

"Who else with that nose and chin?" Jared said.

There was hardly anyone in Judea, or in all Palestine, who did not know of Titus's big nose and round chin.

Jared looked at the familiar ~~nose and chin~~ *hated face* then noticed the face along side. *That* It was familiar, too. It was the face of the centurion who had rounded up the seamen at Jamnia. He realized ~~that he had not~~ liked Cotta then. He liked him less now.

why not about chin?  
round chin are not uncommon

X

X