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Lovelace Family Papers.

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"You haven't long to wait or far to go," H eth said.
"Look." Above his beard Heth's face was flooded with color. He pointed.

* * * * *

They had been advancing along a track plain to Heth although Jared was sure only that it ascended intermittently. But that was the proper direction. Everyone knew you got to Jerusalem only by going up.

Cautious Heth favored low, covered ground but now and then he led to some high ridge which looked away on every quarter and then Jared glimpsed villages all around and ravines winding to the great to the fertile coastland and the long gash that marked the River Jordan and at the end of that palm-decked Jericho and his own Dead Sea, And trees, trees.

In contrast to Jared's naked desert trees were abundant, pine, terebinth and tamarack and oak, ash, elm, sycamore, beech, poplar, and the spruce whose sun-firmed flanks made the stiffest spear shafts. and willows. And shrubs, hazel, acacia, sumach, hawthorne, mulberry, spicy storax.

Now they were on another ridge. The still climbing sun was at their backs, a deep narrow slot of valley before them. At their left this joined another which sloped gently westward then turned north, out of sight. Jared looked beyond Heth's pointing arm.

Why, it is so close I could run the whole way and never draw a quick breath.

Embraced by the valleys, and locked in the matrix of huge walls begun a millennium earlier the double glory loomed which, since King Solomon, had been Israel's. On a mountainous plateau split by precipitous Tyropoeon Valley (this was not visible but was suggested) the holy City's terraces cascaded

~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~
cascaded steeply and on the near side of the plateau the golden
Temple ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ^{soared} out from the shadow of a bulking fortress.
The east side of the Temple, solid gold tiles, poured forth a
dazzling shimmer in answer to the sun. The south wall, where
interspersed tiles were eclipsed among great blocks of white
marble, seemed a blinding snowy expanse about to float up to
the slender tower at its nearest corner. The tower was so lofty
that for an instant Jared thought he was seeing one of the
glorious celestial beings with folded wings rising to a tip
that vanished into the blue.

Heth drew a long breath.

"Here only," he said, "may Israel make the commanded
sacrifices. On Passover, not far off, the Chosen will come by
thousands from all over the world for the rite."

Jared nodded but not so much in agreement as in impulsive
decision.

Why not! I can outrun any or all of them.

He got up on his toes, testing his leg muscles for
whatever wild chase might lie ahead.

"I am going!"

"Going? Where?"

"To see the Holy Temple close. I have never once and I
am a man these two summers."

"An risk a Roman patrol?"

"They are all up around Galilee, at least most are."

"Well!" Heth shrugged. "I'd have time to hide the debt
weighed out to me at Bethlehem. And who would want anything else
that I carry?"

"No one ~~will~~ can catch us in this first steep valley
and only a man on horseback in the gentler next."

~~He~~

"If we get down Kidron we don't need to go into Hinnom."

"But isn't Jaffa our gate? And that opens on Hinnom." The Chaste One had described fully the valleys embracing the City and the western gate.

"There's a littler gate nearer, where Jerusalemites come out to get rid of trash and refuse and..."

"I know," Jared said, "of everything unclean under the Law."

Then inclusive everything, perhaps it was that, reminded Jared of Heth's grandsons and belatedly he worried. It would be easy for him to face up to a wild chase but ought he to let his companion risk so much more?

"You ought not go, Heth."

"If you get into a bind, I'd like to be along to help."

"No, Heth!"

"We must go together. How else can I give you a lesson after Jerusalem?"

"Well, if we're chased I'll turn fox and lead them off." Jared, was at least half satisfied, came off his toes.

They scrambled down Kidron and got to the Dung Gate and to a stench. Nearly everyone dropped his refuse, sackload or cartload, anywhere to rot under the hot sun. Only the tidiest few buried it and covered the hole as the Brothers regularly made things clean with little shovels. Stagnant heaps stood all over, mounds were few.

"They're filling Hinnom, too," Heth said. "In time, people say, it will be hardly a valley at all."

Jared found that hard to take. Hinnom had always been a valley. The Chaste One had related its singular history but ~~Jared's~~

Jared put the story aside until after the Temple and, with Heth, picked a way through the Dung Gate and joined the throng inside the massive walls. They came to a pool and Jared took water into his palms and lapped after the manner of Gideon's cautious three hundred. The water was clear and sweet.

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

"So I have read," Jared said.

"Reading never has been a thing I liked to do," Heth said.

They turned into a narrow street twisting upward. Here men, women, children, urdened little asses and now and then a horse or camel crowded the narrow way so that someone was always scraping against plaster walls sun colored in shadow but glittering in sunlight. The crowds, whose many-hued tunics, robes, cloaks and dresses combined into a bright mosaic above the dusty cobble stones, included citizens of Jerusalem, people from the countryside, and far travelled strangers. The Jerusalemites, apparalled chiefly in the showy Greek fashion, were unmistakable, so assured, so nimble-eyed. Countrymen were bewildered in this maze so much more confusing than the simpler tangle of their hills and valleys. Those from far off, sometimes thousands of miles, wore an air of worldly warning to advise that they had seen so many more dangerous, more magnificent cities, that whoever tried to sniggle them would probably end up sniggled himself.

Against the bright mosaic the crippled and diseased, stretching out begging hands, warped along among laborers in soiled loincloths already tired after only half a day's work or, perhaps, still tired from yesterday, and pickpockets and tricksters who made covert fraternal signs to their kind before sidling in to cozzen country people and far travelling strangers.

Heth, for once cold, jostled rogues unblushingly while Jared saw that what he had heard so often was really true. Nowhere else in the whole world ^{could be} ~~was~~ there another city equal to Jerusalem.

"This is the Lower City," Heth said. "Beyond lies the quarter given to the Temple priests. A little farther you will see the Valley of the Cheesemakers, the busiest, most cluttered hole in all Jerusalem. And then across Tyropoeon the mansions and palaces of the Upper City."

In the Lower City there were no mansions, only slums and cramped homes of the poor and shabby shops of butchers, woolcombers, tanners, flaxspinners, makers of catchpenny footwear along with cheap wineroms and restaurants. Wineroms and restaurants were everywhere.

"They go right up to the very walls of the Temple, ~~it~~ itself," Heth said.

"Does even Jerusalem need so many? Can men afford to much food?"

Grain, vegetables, fish, fruit, oil and Galillan and Judean wine and some sour stuff called beer all are cheap," Heth rubbed one lip over the other in memory of a taste. "I tried

beer once. There's Babylonian and Egyptian beer. Some swear by one, some by the other. I can't down either but downing Egyptian beer is harder. It comes every way. Imagine! Hot, cold, sweet, ~~spiced and~~ spiced."

"Spiced beer?" Jared stared. "Must I believe that?"

"It's true. By The Book, it's true."

"Spiced beer! Now wait! Well, if you say so."

They came to another eating place and its bosomy waitress-proprietor gestured in calculated hospitality, seeming to shower scent.

"Here all prices are low," she said. "And we have everything. Even perfumed beer."

"Perfumed?" Jared turned to Heth. "You missed one!"

Heth shook his head vigorously.

"It wasn't much different from the sweet and spiced. I just forgot."

Jared looked at the urgent matron, wondering how with so much scent splashed over her, any at all was left for her beer. He had encountered desert flower

Court where everyone went soon or late and from the priest-salesmen of sacrificial livestock who talked to everyone. Scribes willing to degrade an ancient calling wrote the broadsheets and newsmongers peddled them to any shopkeeper who could be made to believe that the sheets would draw customers. Chiefly they were peddled in wineroms and eating places. Passersby attracted by the sheets were nearly sure to become customers, especially when a sheet was displayed farthest from the street so that passersby had to enter to read. A proprietor had only himself to blame if, once inside, the victim did not buy something. Jared continued to stare.

The broadsheet began with a thunderous item.

"TITUS WILL LAY SIEGE TO JERUSALEM!"

If this was true the Roman Aggression was on the verge of a terrible advance, for did it not threaten also the Holy Temple?

Jared looked at Heth in dismay. Heth also had been reading.

"This thing is too old to mean anything," he said. He was not dismayed. "Locht the flyspecks. ~~Andzkikxaxaryxzkzxxzx~~ ~~snzzixzaxzaxz~~ The men who put these out say anything to inflame, even if they have to make it up. Our leaders have denied this gossip about Jerusalem over and over. Jerusalem always has ten times as many men of valor as Titus has legionnaires and thousands more are coming for the Passover. Will Titus challenge such a host when weaker places where he can do as much harm more easily await him?"

Jared's dismay faded. Those wide-eyed visitors had not said the broadsheets were truthful, had only marvelled

that gossip could be so quickly spread before men's eyes. What was spread here probably was not true at all. He turned away readily when Heth once more said, "Let's hurry."

Their street curved along a boundary of the Lower City and after a little Heth said, "Look!"

* * * * *

On their left, between buildings, Jared espied a long steep valley. Southward it would meet Kidron and Hinnom. Northward it bent out of sight to the west. Narrow streets ran along both slopes and small houses clung to both sides of each street and at the bottom a last street twisted and turned among shops and many shoppers.

"Tyroposeon Valley," Heth said and in instinctive tiny disapproval of urban slovenliness he added, "Just smell that smell!"

"The Valley of the Cheesemakers! But more than spoiled cheese makes that smell. And what is the buzzing?"

Heth's eyes brightened with amusement as he waited while Jared looked down serried streets and past cheese factories and found his own answer and even then shook his head disbelievingly. The faint, incessant buzzing came from flies swarming so far below that they were no more than a thin black spray and were visible only when linen garments of pedestrians made a contrasting background.

"Tyroposeon shopkeepers don't use the Dung Gate enough," Heth said. "Their piles of trash draw those flies."

Across the valleyful of smells and spray the Upper City climbed. More narrow streets but with impressive homes
andzthmzx

and the elaborate wineshops, restaurants, arcades, stalls and bazaars of purveyors of drink and food, of goldsmiths, jewelers, fabricators of ornamental brass and iron, dealers in silk, in linen as fine as silk, in other softer fabrics as often from faraway Babylon and India as nearer Egypt. In these everything from a false tooth to a persian shawl were sold. scattered among and above the shops were the mansions of merchants who, of course, also had suburban ~~villages~~ villas beyond the City walls, of landowners who had country residences also; palaces of nobles and princes and of senior priests as well as the High Priest.

"We'll see all that when we get over the Tyropoeon Bridge after we've been to the Temple," Heth said.

Jared was already looking away. Over a clutter of roofs he had seen a massive gray wall. This would be the one that enclosed the Temple, and to the right of the wall he glimpsed again the vaulting pinnacle of the slim tower he had seen earlier from Kidron's far crest. If wall and tower were so close the greater wonder must appear soon. Alert for his first sight of the Temple he had little interest for either the Upper City or for another prodigy that Heth now pointed out.

"Look. The finest synagogue in the whole City."

In the Community, younger Brothers had gossiped about these new auxiliary houses of prayer and worship.

"This one the merchants of the City built for themselves," Heth said.

The Chaste One had told of synagogues rising in Egypt, Hispania, everywhere ~~that~~ the People had scattered, and that in Jerusalem the fashion was for each craft, trade group and guild to build its own. But Jared still was chiefly interested in the Temple although he did brighten a little when Heth ventured the

the prophecy that if the legions came the strong walls and doors of Jerusalem's synagogues would make good forts, but then he got another glimpse of the Tower and cried out in admiration.

"Yes," Heth said, unexcited by what he had often seen, "Every morning a Levite blows a silver trumpet from up there summoning to worship and sacrifice."

"Every dawn, unfailingly," Jared said. Himself an Awakener he was ready to admire any dependable performance.

More of the wall came into ~~view~~ ^{light}.

"Even down in your desert," Heth said, "You must have heard of the greatest Herod?"

~~Who in Judea had not some sour memory of the dead tyrant?~~ Jared unconsciously rubbed the back of his hand across his mouth ~~and nodded.~~

"Do you know that he built the wall as well as the Temple?"

"Did he build all? I was told the work ended only a few years ~~ago~~ ^{back}. But Herod died long ago."

"He completed the chief work. He wanted Jerusalem's pride in a whole new ~~sanctuary~~ ^{Temple} to wipe out memory of his evil rule. Because only holy man might work on so holy a site he commanded that Temple priests ~~be taught~~ ^{learn} masonry, carpentry and stone cutting and did not let them rest until they finished. Of course he also had it in mind to build what would ~~amaze~~ ^{astound} his master, the Roman Emperor."

"~~For~~ ⁱⁿ the first year," Jared said, repeating what he had often heard in the Community, "No rain ~~fell~~ ^{by day} by day to interrupt the work, but by night rain came for all crops. "The Chest One," he added, "doubts this but some ^{Brothers} in the Community say the Lord ordered it."

"He must have," Heth said. "Natural rain falls in ~~any~~

any hour, day or night."

Jared caught sight of long spikes bristling on top of the wall.

"Is it true that guards await thieves in every hour?"

"The Beautiful Gate is closed last and its key is put into a hole before the Gate. A great square of marble covers that hole. A chain hangs under the marble, and the key is fixed to the chain and a guard lays down on the marble and does not sleep all night. Even if a thief slipped by every other barrier he still could not get into the Temple except he overpowered the guard."

They turned into another street and suddenly there

were no buildings ahead, only a broad, gently ascending open space and beyond that, before Jared's widening eyes, the sheer, ponderous face of the Temple's outer south wall.

Herod had rebuilt only one of the structures with which Solomon had crowded this space-- not Solomon's vast, flat palace, not the bulky, adjacent fort, not the domed Judgement Hall, not the paradisaical harem. Nothing remained of these, not even a lingering perfume of the thousand doves. But Solomon's terraced tenements, split by wide stairways into three sections, had risen again before two ponderous gates which pierced the center of the lofty, spiked wall.

"A few Temple priests live there," Heth said. "Old ones who want to be close to their duty. And a few Levites. But mostly the hangers-on who do the Temple's odd jobs and who are in the Levites' charge. Some guide strangers. Guide? Oftener they swindle? But," Heth's mouth softened. "Maybe they must. They have to live like dogs, on what is thrown them. Guides, porters, hostlers, messengers! All leaping whenever anyone cries, 'Come!'"

Jared's own mouth softened as he remembered, not that the Mistress of the inn at Netophah had fired his indignation by crying "Come!", but what had followed. He looked toward the sorry houses of sorrier creatures who must leap and show no indignation no matter who cried "Come!"

"Those are the Huldah Gates," Heth said misunderstanding. "The four sides of this outer wall have eight gates in all. One on the North, one on the East, four in the West where so many come across the Tyropoeon Valley and these that let into the porch overlooking the Profane Court."

"How mighty Huldah was that two gates here honor her," Jared said.

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

"She was a prophetess in the days of Josiah, a king of Judah who did right in the eyes of the Lord. In his day Judah for the first time became a people of the Law. Huldah foretold that for sins Jerusalem would be burned, though not in Josiah's day. 'Not for his eyes so great a calamity,' Huldah promised.

He frowned. The ancient prophecy had recalled the

Portentuous broadsheet in the eating place.

"Heth!" he cried. "Could this be that time of calamity? Could the broadsheet be a true warning?"

"I told you that every broadsheet lies," Heth said. "Why was not Huldah's prophecy fulfilled when Babylon ruined Jerusalem and carried tens of thousands into captivity?"

"King Jehoichin and many princes, men of valor and craftsmen and the Temple treasure were carried off," Jared recalled. "And the City was broken. But nothing was written of fire."

He began to puzzle over this but when Heth strode through the Huldah Gates he hurried after and found himself among giant columns supporting a roof over a great ambulatory, a porch, reaching end to end of the south wall. Smaller porches flanked the East and West walls, and forward, across a great cobbled pavement the Temple itself rose above a triple terrace. But where were the rapt priests in white purity that he had so often imagined, helping make the Temple of the Lord the wonder of the world, and where were the shining walls he had seen from the far side of Kidron?

The dazzling shimmer and snowy expanse were now obscured by an oily smoke which shrouded priests, too. The pall rose ~~xxxxixkxyzkikaxxvnxkxrx~~ from the Altar of Burnt Offerings and hung heavily, like a vulture, over the Profane Court and its jostling and milling thousands, over the whole Temple. Jared remembered a thing the Chaste One had read to him from one of the Prophets.

"Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or With tens of thousands of rivers of oil?.. What both the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and To love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?"

~~Sharply disappointed, he turned to the Court. It was~~ packed with Jews and Gentiles. ~~Huge Gauls in fur trousers; tall~~

Sharply disappointed he turned to the Court. It was packed with Gentiles and Jews from near and far. Huge Gauls in fur trousers; tall Africans in little except their black skins; Greeks in everything extravagant; Persians in their own rich brocades; Egyptians who, being forbidden by their somber religion to wear any wool in their places of worship, wore cotton everywhere, just in case; Babylonians in vivid mantles; desert folks in gaudy stripes; poor men in abrasive sacking loincloths, or any skin or rag. Jews were ^{often} conspicuous not because of any reverent air that the Temple might have inspired but because of their own apparel. In the main this was dignified, modest and appropriate but many Scribes, Priests, Pharisees and Sadducees dressed far above their stations. The Talmud said that the glory of a man was his dress just as the glory of man was the Lord, but this ostentation went far beyond Talmudic injunction. There was always something of pure white but usually violet and purple wool from Tyre so precious that it was sold by weight, or a soft, light still costlier weave called byssus made from a single variety of flax grown in a single Indian province, and each group tried to make sure that its members were explicitly, so to speak, labelled. The Scribe's girdle was obviously made to hold, and to hold up to public view, the ink and pens of his calling. Priests wore purple robes cut short to reveal the whiteness of their trousers. Sadducees' garments were more extravagant than a Greek's. Pharisees phylacteries and shawls caught every eye. Everyone, naturally, wore phylacteries at wrist and brow and, if he could afford a shawl, a shawl fringed at each corner with four white strands and one of hyacinth. A Pharisee's fringes were twice as long, his phylacteries twice as conspicuous. Yet none of the over-elaborated Scribes, Priests, Sadducees and Pharisees seemed

devout in p^roportion. And ~~an~~ ^{two} other group^s, which stood as much apart, seemed hardly devout at all.

Th_ese were, first, the moneychangers on little stools before little tables and big boxes, _ach alongside his own pillar on the Porch and, second, the p_riests across the way who stood b_efore pens, stalls and crates s_elling cattle, goats and lambs and fowls and doves for th_e sacrifices. Th_e furtive-fingered moneychangers sat, crouched, squatt_ed or sprawled, inching their paraph_enal_ia all day around their columns to avoid a biting wind or a burning sun or to find a wind or sun that was benign. Each box had one compartment for Temple coins stamped on one face with a chalice and on the other with a lily and the legend, J_erusalem-the-holy. A s_econd compartment held a fireign pot-puri of Tyrian, Persian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Lydian, Phoenician, Iduma_ean and other coinages, plus various Roman mon_eys. Th_ese last ra_n from crude pi_eces from the provincial mints in Antioch and Ca_esarea where a new batch was turned out whenever Judea got a new procurator to sup_ubly designed ones honoring a new Emp_eror.

A mon_eychanger's chief services were to _exchange what was not legal tender for what was, to take silver and gold and giv_e back copper handier in making purchases and finally to supply the half shekels of Temple coinage which each Jew was required to pay y_early for the Service of the House. A four percent commission was allowed but slow-witted clients often were t_uicked out of more. Ev_en the sophisticated could be confused by slight of hand or glub talk of counterfeiting, adulber_eationn or sweating. Sur_veying the _ow of men and pillars

Jared was attracted by a squat moneychanger who was droning, as incessantly as the flies buzzed in Tyroposeon Valley, "Just four! No more! Just four!"

A brocaded Persian measured the moneychanger, then drew a gold daric from his rich folds. Furtive fingers closed on the coin, squeezed the mint-fresh edges of the archer stamped on it, gestured offhandedly to say that here tusting and weighing were not needed and in a quick sweep covered the little table with coppers. They were, however, no sooner spread than the furtive fingers heaped them and, expansively courteous, poured them into the Persian's hands. Jared suspected, but he could not say surely, that the seeming courtesy had concealed a short count. Heth's shrug was a reluctant admission that he could not.

"He should have counted himself, while the coins were spread," Heth said. Now, if he claims a shortage, he will be accused of palming coins out of his own hands."

"But only a few coppers could have been held back. Do they cheat for so little?"

"A few coppers every so often all day long add up to more than a little."

Jared looked away to the priest-salesmen. They, too were droning, "Unblemished! Unblemished! Unblemished!" He jostled ahead for a closer look.

I don't know fowls and doves but if those cattle are unblemished I had the wrong teaching.

"Some will call anything unblemished," Heth said. He had followed and read Jared's frown.

Jared looked away from priest-salesmen, moneychangers and the enormous crowds to the balustrade around the triple

terrace. This was the real beginning of the Temple. Here Jews were divided from all others. No Gentile might go farther. A big plaque warned as much under pain of death in Greek, Roman, Hebrew and Aramaic. A similar plaque, he knew, hung on each of the balustrade's other sides.

But Jared, a Jew, might no less than priests climb the terrace, enter by any holy gate, go where he chose excepting the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, even go up to the level of the Priests' Court where, dimly through the oily smoke cloud, priests and Levites sweated through the peak of the sacrificial day. Some were hoisting carcasses onto hooks to hang and drip until given to the crackling, spitting fire on the Altar of Sacrifice. Some ~~pushed~~ ^{shoved} and grunted against broad, reddened pushers to work thickened masses along to drains which led down to Kidron Valley. Some raked clear of the fire that half of the offerings not set aside for the Lord but used to feed priests and Levites at day's end when the kep had been hung under the marble slab and a guard layed down on the slab before the Beautiful Gate.

* * * * *

The drifting smoke made Jared's eyes water and the laboring figures blurred and the desire which has set him racing down Kidron's far slope drained out of him. He did not now wish to mount yj, fourteen steps and then five to the Court of the Women and the fifteen more to the noble gate admitting into the Court of Israel and the Court of the Priests where at last he could gaze onto the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. He turned to Heth but Heth misunderstood.

"You will be close in no time," Heth said. "And in the Holy Place the Golden Altar shines at one end and at the other the Table of Shewbread with two piles of loaves made of fine flour sifted eleven times and between them the outspread golden

Siz saved these just for the ^{information} ~~involvement~~
involved. Page 131 might ~~have~~ be
helpful when I marked it. In places
I've checked

"You will be close in no time," Heth said. "So that when you climb to the great porch you can see the very door of the Holy Place with its pure gold carving, a grapevine, with grape clusters. The carving weighs nearly a talent, more than you or I, and is as tall as you, Jared. Inside the Holy Place is the gold Altar of Incense where morning and night, up to the gate of Heaven, a fragrance ascends for which the High Priest always says he can never find an incense of a suitable fragrance. Across from the Altar of Incense is the gold Table of Shewbread with two piles of loaves, newly baked ever day, of flour sifted eleven times. Between them the gold, seven-branched candlestick stands. And then, behind the Holy Place, is the Most Holy Place. But, of course, you and I will never see that. Only the High Priest may enter the Most Holy Place, and he only once a year, into the very presence of the Lord. The Ark that Moses brought out of Egypt is there.

Holy Place the Golden Altar shines at one end and at the other the Table of Shewbread with two piles of loaves made of fine flour sifted eleven times and between the outspread golden arms of the Seven Branched Candlestick and beyond the Holy of Holies. The Ark that Moses brought out of Egypt is there where only the High Priest may enter and he only once a year, into the very presence of the Lord."

As to the Ark, Jared had been told that it might not be in the Holy of Holies at all. The Chaste One said the Ark probably had been destroyed by Babylon's raider-king Nebuchadnezzar.

"I'd be as glad if we got out of the City now," he said. Heth couldn't believe his ears.

"But you haven't seen the veil, more precious than Tyrian wool or Persian brocade, between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies!"

"Let's be getting on to Jabneel."

Jammia (Jabneel ed name for Jammia)

Heth grew a little exasperated.

"You haven't seen Jerusalem underground. I started a dozen times to tell you. Another whole city. Tunnels all over where thousands eat, sleep, bear and die! Of course," Heth added, "Most are starvation poor or too evil to live up in better places."

"We ought to hurry or we mayn't have time for my lesson." Jared closed his eyes, the blurred forms were growing demonic.

"The lesson? You are right! We must hurry." Remembering his promise, Heth put exasperation aside.

They pushed and bumped through the Profane Court crowds

and got outside the West wall into a plaza facing the Tyropoeon Bridge. They crossed the bridge against a tide still flowing full for the Temple's remaining hours of sacrifice, and trotted past the palace of the High Priest Ananus. On a steeply descending street this had a porch overhanging a basement which was filled nightly by the poor whom Ananus would not leave unfed, he was a High Priest who tried to do that which was right in the sight of the Lord. The towers of a vaster palace loomed on their left, its polished blocks beginning to discolor after more than a century.

"The first Herod built that and the last, the second Agrippa, lives there but he isn't often in Jerusalem," Heth said. "He likes caesarea better and so does his sister Berenice."

Jared nodded. He had heard of Agrippa and his sister.

"I know that in Egypt a royal brother and sister regularly sleep with each other," Heth said, "But it is a shameful habit for our rulers, even though they are Idumaeans."

They were on a narrow descending street of the Upper City reversing the climbing canyons by which earlier they had got to the Temple. This street was darkened by similar overhanging balconies draped with dusty rugs, made similar twists, bends and shews, but there was a difference. Its wine shops were opulent, the waitresses--proprietresses--of the eating places were more elaborately dressed, its meat booths were abundant, the fabric, metal, jewelry, cutlery, perfume, shoe and dress shops fabulous.

Finally, with Jared still unconsciously in troubled flight from what had killed reverence inside the Temple walls they were through the Jaffa Gate, through the tide still flowing against them and there was green Hinnom m_andering down to the

broad highway by which Rome had linked Jerusalem with Damascus and then, beyond the highway, climbed to its western ridge.

"I have read that long ago pagans lived here and sacrificed to a god of flame and smoke called Malek," Jared said. They tossed their children into Malek's fiery mouth and because of this Hinnom is sometimes called the Valley of Slaughter."

"You have read everything, I had never even heard that. But I have heard that you can find here (though who would look for such a thing) an everascending smoke between two palms. It marks the entrance to a pit of eternal pain where the departed wicked are forever punished because when they look up they see in heaven the departed righteous free from any pain at all."

"I know. In The Book the pit is called the place where the worm of the wicked shall never die neither shall their fire be quenched and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh."

The harsh pronouncement silenced them both all down Hinnom's green slope and across the highway and up the western flank. There another valley stretched before them.

"This is Rephaim," Heth said. "And ~~yonder~~ yonder is the north branch of the Rubin River. The south branch joins a little way along and they flow together to the Great Sea just above your Jabneel."

Jared knew Rephaim also. Giants had once dwelt in Rephaim and their ghosts still did but it was useless to look for nobody ever saw ghosts. He turned for a last look at what surely could be seen, Jerusalem's walls, turrets and spires fantastic in the heat waves of afternoon and the now thinning

oily smoke adrift over everything. The Temple and the lofty Levite tower were concealed behind nearer buildings but suddenly he thought he saw something. Something loomed, splendidly vaulting. The tips of folded wings vanishing into the blue? A singing angel? An Angel of the Clouds? Perhaps even mighty ...

He did not let the name pass his mouth or even form in his mind. The mind resolutely closed to the Keeper of the Scrolls must be as closed to his Graidian Michael.

Across Rephaim they bore away from the Rubin on a trace like the one they had followed to Jerusalem but running northwestwardly.

"This leads to Emmaus and it is not much good to one bound for Jabneel," Heth said, "but you can follow it with me a little way."

They came to a solitary terebinth spreading its branches sentinelwise. Heth went on to a pine whose top some storm had snapped long before and dug and uncovered a sackcloth and lifted an unwieldy bundle and pulled the sackcloth off a scabbarded sword, its baldric, and a sheathed dagger linked to a leather belt and handed everything to Jared.

"Now for the lesson," Heth said.

Jared stared at the unexpected accoutrements.

Will the Brothers ever believe? Their Keeper who has never touched, almost never seen any weapon now trying to learn about two!

In spite of his life of peace the sword did not fit Jared's ~~big~~ hand too unfamiliarly. But, did he have a real knack for it? He remembered the legionnaires who had practiced as their Optio worked himself up to murder. Practice had helped that experienced pair; however much or little of a knack you started with practice helped. Well, he would practice now and later, with the best teachers he could find. If practice would do the trick he would become an expert.

"We mustn't take too much time," Heth said. "We both ought to get on the road and besides noise may draw someone we'd just as soon not meet. But I have time to show you what I remember of what the colonists showed me, and I hope I remember the best."

As he might have inspected an animal on his farm he took stock of the solid taper of Jared's sunburned legs, his hard arms, the spread of his shoulders.

"Have you ever wrestled?"

The younger Brothers, when far enough away from their elders, regularly tried a few falls among themselves. More than a few. Guardedly, not because of any real guilt but because the harmless, secret fun somehow bred a feeling of guilt, Jared admitted that he had joined in. He had joined in often.

"How many got you down?"

"Well, I didn't lose every time,"

"The colonists," Heth said, "claim a good wrestler makes a good swordsman. Both aim at disabling an enemy after speed has got him off balance. Of course strength counts, too, and you are strong enough." He nodded. "You'll learn quicker

"Just until you you your chance to gut him or slit his throat," Heth said.

him
The ^{unexpected} such language startled Jared but then it came to ~~him~~ that ^{such words} "gut" and ^{probably} "slit" had been worn meaningless for mild Heth by n_ecessitous killing on his farm, o_f bulls, rams, even lambs. The real Heth must be the ~~more~~ tolerant, ^{then} ~~that~~ ^{em-2} calculating collaborationist, the reverent ~~Temple~~ worshipper, the tender guardian, ~~of grandchildren~~. He was half right, but in fact Heth had been made ^{totally fierce} ~~extremely~~ ferocious by a sudden wish ^{that he} ~~to have his~~ young companion ^{know} win ^{very} fight even if that meant the decimation of a legion or two. ~~His~~ ^{This} ferocity was, however, ^{Heth} brief and unconscious. When ~~he~~ spoke it was in ~~unchanged~~, kindly helpfulness. "Now let me try to tell you what they told me about the parry."

that I did, and more. You need only pay attention."

Jared was ready to pay attention and the Discipline would help and the habit of obedience which The Chaste One had bred in him would help more."

"The colonists," Heth said, "Say go slow until you've got the measure of your enemy. But you'll always be going against Romans or auxiliaries and I think I picked up a beginning of the measure of both. An Egyptian comes at you like a snake. A Mumiian rides at you as though man and horse were one flesh. A Balaric sling at a hundred paces is worse than a club over your head. A Gaul is as big as a Rephaim giant but you can see him. And of course legionnaires think they are the world's best."

"Have they proved it in Palestine?" Jared asked defiantly.

"They haven't proved themselves the worst. And they have proved us wrong in staying with the sword's edge. The point that they like is faster and better."

Heth shook himself to make his own weapons hang more comfortably.

"The colonists say you always, well almost always, have time to draw. But you still practice for the once-in-a-lifetime when you haven't. Practice until you draw like breathing. Try now. Like this."

Heth's left hand grasped the scabbard of his sword, tilting the hilt before his left hip, just enough tilt for a neat meeting with the right hand sweeping over. He grimaced an acknowledgement that even now he was not neat enough.

"The colonists say it ought to come out as smooth as

silk."

Jared tried and tried again and again until Heth nodded.

"Now the dagger!"

Heth's left hand slapped the sheath to fix it on his left hip, again tilting the hilt so that the right hand, sweeping over, closed on it neatly. Not, however, his slow head shake said, as neatly as he would have liked.

"The colonists say that when the blade comes out almost like out of water, you've got it."

Jared slapped, fixed, tilted, swept and closed and at last Heth approved again.

"It is a thing of timing, rhythm and balance," Jared said thoughtfully, "It helps also if the sheath is not too rough. Practice will do it."

He would practice and once he had it he would not forget. He hoped he would not.

"Well," Heth said, "According to the colonists this next thing is important, and I'd better tell you while it is on my mind. It is this. Give way any time it will help. Don't fight like a lump on a log because someone may call you a coward if you back up. Back up even three or four. The colonists say it could mean your life."

Jared's mouth set in stubborn dissent. Until now he had accepted the colonists' ~~thinklike~~ warlike thinking although the Brotherhoods' counsel had always been for peace. But now he was being told to shake off that secret self-portrait which lies deepest 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 himself marching one day against the Sons of Darkness had he unconsciously admitted its presence. It was always the same. It pictured him always pouncing forward in victory. Now he was being told to retreat.

When did Josephus's bold Jew back up?

And yet! And yet!

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

"Just until you got your chance to gut him or slit his throat," Heth said.

The unexpected language startled Jared but then it came to him that, for mild Heth, such words probably had been worn meaningless by necessary killing, of bulls, rams, even lambs. The real Heth would be the tolerant even if calculating collaborationist, the reverent worshipper, the tender guardian. He was half right but in fact Heth had been made briefly but thoroughly ferocious by a sudden desire to have his young companion win every fight even if it meant the decimation of a legion. The ferocity was, however, as unconscious as brief. When Heth spoke it was in unchanged, helpful kindness. "Now let me try to tell you what they told me about the parry."

High parry! Low! Half! Point up! Down! Advanced! With both sword and dagger.

"But never, the colonists say, try to parry a blow when your enemy's weapon is a chain and ball. Thrust after he has swung and passed you. Or back up. And be glad you are

able to."

They practiced parries.

The parry with the dagger seemed to be the chief use of that weapon when it was not, so to speak, an extension of the fingers. For this it was held at right angles to the fingers to turn an enemy's blade or stop it at the hilt. Incidentally, the colonists warned against depending on an Egyptian dagger's hilt of stone. It broke. Metal was what you needed.

"And," Heth said, "Practice using the dagger in the left hand to help the sword in the right. You wouldn't believe how one helps the other."

They practiced dagger-in-left.

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

They came to the thrust.

"The thrust," Heth said solemnly, "is the heart, the meat, of it all."

And you should, the colonists said, practice until you thrust both delicately and boldly.

"Your point needs to go in no more than a finger's length. But you may need to be bold to get it that far. Never so bold, though, that you lose balance."

Here, Jared told himself, is where wrestling would help.

"Always see you are, after thrusting, as light and sure-footed as a deer, able to shift, sidestep, go more forward, go back, and go back again."

And in this shifting, advancing, backing, the use of the hips was outstanding.

More wrestling business.

"Keep the hips supple, to twist, turn. A small twist often may be all you'll need. The colonists say a man if he no more than profiles, at just the right moment, of course, can make a sword, dagger, spear, javelin or even a chain and ball miss. And then you may have brought your enemy just where you can thrust home."

Heth ran his tongue over dry lips.

"Well, I haven't talked that much in a dozen moons."

But he had finished, and he hadn't used up much time, either. He had told all he could recall of the colonists' lessons.

Jared was willing to call it a day. He had heard a lot that he had never heard before. This was a good time to, as The Chaste One had advised, to ponder.

"You are azogā a good teacher, Heth."

"I wish I'd remembered more. The colonists used to smile, I was such a slow learner. Sometimes I felt they were willing to teach only because they were sure I'd never be able to put what they taught to the best use. But you will."

"I hope I'll be able to get past my first enemy. If I do I'll send word."

"All Emmaus knows where I live. Tell your messenger to ask for Heth of the half-farm."

Once again Heth took stock of his pupil.

"You'll get past more than your first. You could be mighty in battle."

"I think my father was and maybe I inherited something from him," Jared said and told how his father had come to leave him in the Community.

"If your father were alive you would make him proud. But practice, no matter how strong an arm and wrist and now quick an eye you may have inherited. All day I have marvelled how your eye picks up even a small thing."

"At least, I can pick up as big a thing as that," Jared said and pointed in warning.

* * * * *

A stranger stood where the overhanging terebinth somewhat concealed him and he was big and menacing enough to be a robber chief. But he was only a shepherd, as young as Jared or younger and with hair as yellow as Jared's was black and, at third glance, so cheerful that he dissipated a natural first thought of robbers and the second of demanding sheep warders who were notorious all over Palestine for agreeing to one wage and then forever trying to get more on the grounds that their lonely and exposed calling attracted, they claimed, wild robbers and wilder beasts.

It was the stranger's apparel and gear which had seemed menacing. Even Jared's Chaste One might have seemed menacing in such attire although it was only normal for every shepherd -- a sheepskin dyed a villainous red (so were most chepherds' sheepskins) and cinched at the waist with a broad belt studded with iron, a thing almost as lethal as a ball and chain; even panthers retreated from a chepherd's flailing belt. A sling and full pouch hung from

the stranger's belt. These last said he was a Benjaminite, and with sling and stones a Benjaminite was as dangerous as a Balearian. The stranger carried the traditional shepherd's staff, crooked to haul silly lambs out of pits and potholes and heavy enough to be used as a handstaff. Shoved inside the studded belt was a long, heavy, naked two-edged dagger, almost a sword. However, Heth and Jared knew that the **daggers** were oftenest used for shaving stale cheese and slicing hard bread, the chief diet of shepherds and which, now, probably helped fill this one's pouch.

"Don't stop," the stranger called. "I was learning a thing or two, I hope."

"We have finished," Hwth called. "But come in. Come in. If you are going our way we'll go together."

The stranger looked back, another evidence of the caution which had made him purk under the terebinth while he got some measure of the pair unexpectedly across his path, then flung up a hand in easy agreement.

"This may be a good meeting," Heth said softly as the stranger trotted forward. "Too many shepherds want only to talk you out of something, at least a meal and wine. But even so this big yellowhead should be good to have along, since you'll be alone on a strange road. If only he is going your way!"

Jared was not sure. He had had the dangers of the road ahead on his mind, and Heth had mentioned Romans often, but none had appeared and maybe there weren't any around, or any robbers either. Besides, with Heth interested mainly in his grandchildren and Jerusalem it had been easy up to now to keep his own thoughts off the previous night and on his mission; but it might be harder with this younger, lustier traveller. Still, he had sometimes wished for a friend as companionable as Heber but less heedless. If this turned

out to be such an one it would be very good. But that would have to be seen.

He watched the stranger advance. Yellowhead? He had never seen a head so like wheat straw just short of ripe. Nor had he seen many faces so open. This shepherd must be one who liked everybody.

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

"And I am from Emmaus."

"I from Bethel. I am Eben ben Naher."

"The sling and pouch told us you were from some Benjaminite place. It looks used."

"No eagle, vulture, wolf, panther, jackal or hyena ever got many of my lambs," Eben said and laughed so that they would not take him too seriously. "This morning I ned a score safely to the Temple. Every one unbleimished." He sobered. They were not to thin he would laugh over so important a thing as unblemished animals for sacrifice. Next, he looked at Heth and Jared, hesitated, stooped and sketched something with his funger in the dust.

As he straightened a sandal slid across the sketch, but that might have been accident as easily as design. He was smiling again and Heth and Jared were left to wonder what, if anything, had been drawn in the dust and --they had had only yhe briefest of lokks-- had it been a fish?

To Jared the sign, symbol, device, token --fish or Heth whatever--meant nothing at all, but ~~Jared~~ had seen some meaning. He looked from Eben to Jared and became humorously reflective.

"You?" he said to Eben. "And you?" he said to Jared. "In one day! It wouldn't happen again in a thousand. Not both!"

~~"Both what?" Jared was completely in the dark.~~

~~Eben, however, understood.~~

~~XXXXXXXX~~

"Both what?" Jared was completely in the dark.

Eben, however, understood.

"He must believe you very different to put you alongside me," he told Jared, although not in objection. Hopeful, rather.

"My Brotherhood beside the Dead Sea is different from the Temple priesthood, if that is what you mean."

"That Brotherhood!" Eben looked at Heth. "Then he is just about as different as I am. Tell him. Or shall I?"

"I know too little of you to try; I only recognized the sign."

"I am a Christian," Eben told Jared said softly.

"A Christian?" Jared had never heard the exact word but as his mind grappled with it he remembered that he had heard one like it, and not long ago.

At a Community dialogue! The talk had been of an obscure prophet (forerunner, way-preparer, Son of the Prophet) no one had been sure what the title should have been, if any. Not too much talk! Prophets who began and ended in obscurity were everywhere in Palestine.

"The Anointed!" Jared said. "That word I have heard. You have changed the Greek of it to fit the prophet's followers." This was natural; in Palestine Greek and Hebrew and Aramaic were ~~xxx~~ often used ~~xxxxx~~ interchangeably. "Christ into Christian! Is that right?"

Eben nodded. "We follow a leader who was crucified but returned to this world and later ascended. But then he sent back one we never see but is always our help."

"Jared did not understand but tried to.

"And the fish?"

"We use that to invite strangers who may be Christians to

make themselves known."

"But you rubbed it out before anyone could have been sure."

"Not anyone who was one of us. But those who are not sometimes set upon whatever Christians they discover. So we brush out the sign quickly before troublemakers can tell clearly."

"What if a troublemaker can tell?"

"Well!" Eben grew more cheerful. "If trouble comes my way, I try to keep clear of it."

"Can you, always?"

"If I can't, then I do as the Anointed said I must. I turn my cheek to the first blow. I turn my other for the second."

"And if trouble still comes?"

"Well," Eben said comfortably. "I try to deal with it. When a man must, he does what he must."

Jared took stock of the shepherd as Heth had taken stock of himself earlier beside the pine copse. Eben was a trifle shorter than himself but a trifle deeper chested, almost burly.

With that staff, sling and naked slicer you'll get along all right whenever you do feel that you must do what you must. Even when you must do against three or four!

"Jared is of the Brotherhood because he was left by his father when he was small," Heth broke in. "How do you come to be a follower of this -- Anointed?"

"My grandfather led me. Ie was a follower when the Anointed walked in the world."

Jared made up his mind. This shepherd would be, at least, as dependable as Heber. They would journey well together.

"Where do you go now, Eben?"

"I am Bethel's shepherd. I must replace the lambs I sold.

I go to

I go to Sorek and Charishim. The grass there has failed and the price of lambs is down."

"Well, you needn't go on alone, Jared," Heth said with satisfaction. "Sorek lies this side of Jabneel and Charashim north of Sorek. If Eben just waits while you do your business in Jabneel, you can help with his new lambs all the way to Bethel and you'll be alone only from Bethel back to the Community."

Jared was pledged to be far south of Bethel so soon that he could not take a roundabout road.

"I can promise only as far as Sorek. But Eben will be welcome that far." He smiled, as usual more with his eyes than with his mouth. Not, however at the prospect of Eben's company. He had had a sudden picture of the Priest of Aaron trying to persuade this shepherd, so content with his Anointed, to join the Brotherhood and of Eben's resolute but easy refusal.

The days in the world outside had changed Jared more than he was yet aware. Thinking now of the Priest of Aaron he did not feel the awe which had moved him in the Community; rather an indulgent affection for a venerable friend grown crotchety where once he had been commanding.

"We needn't decide everything here,"

Eben balanced his staff, ready to start on Jared's terms.

"After Sorek will be plenty soon enough."

"Then I'll be off," Heth said and turned into the Emmaus trace. "I'm overdue as it is." He nodded to Jared. "I'll wait for your messenger."

Jared raised a hand in promise and admiring salute. There went a good man, no matter if the colonists did smile because he was slow to pick up certain of their skills.

Their own faint trace led Jared and Eben steadily westward. The Riber Rubin flowed again on their left, now joined by its south branch but still not enough water to splash over the biggest rocks in the gorge it was following to the Great Sea. As they descended trees and shrubs now and then fell away to almost nothing so that, intermittently, from high ground they had a clear view all the way to the Valley of Sorek dappled by the shadows of clouds floating aloft in the blue of late afternoon.

"I think I'm all right with a sling," Eben said, breaking a long silence, "And with a dagger and this." He brandished his staff. "But you seemed to have something special in th way you used a sword. Although how could that be and you one of your Brotherhood?"

"I've only a few things Heth got from Romans who are settled in Emmaus," Jared said. "I never had my hand on a sword before today. The Brotherhood doesn't even talk of fighting unless we are standing against Sons of Darkness."

His approval of Eben was growing. Heber long ago would have blurted out a question about Heth's cryptic mention of a messenger and although that involved no secret Jared liked Eben's reticence.

"I have heard of your Sons of Darkness. Could they include Romans?"

Jared nodded vigorously and on an impulse rold of the brpadsheet back in Jerusalem.

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

"Just the same, the legions are coming south after pillaging through Galilee," Eben said slowly. "They've set up a new camp at Sebaste b_sides their old one at Caeserea and a full legion from

Damascus has squatted down at Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee and everyone says it could join in two or three days with Sebaste and Caeserea and that all three could be at Jerusalem's gates in as many more."

Eben had not shown noticeable alarm over the broadsheet and he seemed to have added the news of Sebaste, Caeserea and Tiberias principally because it led up to a more meaningful concern.

"These things Heth got from his Romans," he said. "What are they?"

"I'll try to show you as soon as we come to a ~~xxx~~ level place with good cover."

They walked on, Eben expectantly, Jared by steady effort keeping his thoughts on his mission. They found no place that seemed good and finally they were dipping into Sorek Valley, toward a flat-topped house of sundried brick built against the slope. Four or five chickens pecked about a bare yard and a farmer draped a mattock against a shoulder in noncommittal silence and his wife, in the doorway, reached for a thick staff propped against one wall of the house.

"Is Sorek no friendlier than this?" Jared said. "Can't they see we are Judeans like themselves? Or do you think Romans have been here lately?"

"My guess is that Romans have. But I'll ask about lambs. That may warm the man up."

The farmer was lambless. In all probability the whole valley was lambless, he said. Egyptian Auxiliaries from Caeserea had galloped through that morning, foraging and giving tablets as due

bills. But Rome would never pay. The Egyptians had ridden south after stealing all they could, including the lambs. And, the farmer added more in scorn than anger, they had butchered on the spot.

The scorn puzzled Jared but Eben laughed in comprehension.

The woman, who had relaxed at Eben's familiar tongue, tried to smile and did now put her staff back where she had got it.

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

"I see," Jared said. "But the Sons of Belial will feast on what no Roman stomach can keep down."

"How Roman stomachs manage on vegetables and such is a marvel," the farmer said. "I wouldn't make it through a day on such stuff. Everybody knows it takes meat to make muscle."

"Since coming to Palestine the Romans seem to have proved their muscle," Jared said.

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

"You shouldn't try to go farther this late in the day. Spend the night here. There'll be stew with good goat meat in it."

"And I baked today," the woman said, moving trustfully clear of the staff.

Eben looked at Jared.

"I'd get to Jabneel too late today to do any good," Jared agreed.

"And last night I slept in a cave among the lambs that I left today at the Temple," Eben said. "And in a cave lambs reek even before they are butchered." He looked again at Jared. "A thick pallet in this house would probably be better than you had last night, too."

A hot wave flooded Jared but all day he had kept his mind on his mission and he would not allow it to turn away now. The wave receded.

"We'll be in your debt," he said to the couple. "And if there is any work--before the stew or after--I'll be glad to do it."

"And I," Eben cried and then, as though they had not been slogging up hill and down dale all day, he added, "We'll both sleep better for a little work." And Jared, still resisting thoughts of Tamar, added, "Amen."

* * * * *

For all that Jared was an Awakener it was Eben, perhaps because his long servitude to lambs had made him also considerate of men and women, who gave the first nudge well before dawn.

"Let's get along. We don't want to be more in debt to these people than that stew and this good night's sleep has made us."

"I left the door ajar when we came in after work," ~~Jared~~

Jared sat up soundlessly on his pallet.

"They'll sleep through any little sound we'll make."

Successfully outside, they nodded to each other in the darkness, hunching shoulders against the dew-laden cold and trotted away from the roof on which they had toiled until the farmer had protested.

You do much too much. Much.

"This is the thing I did best in the Community," Jared had whispered. "Maybe I'm still back there and only dreaming."

"This couple has two old hands," Eben had whispered back. "My father put me on a roof long before he trusted me with one lamb."

They had packed the roof tight, repaired the gutter that carried rain water to a cistern below, even had made a long desired opening in the parapet so donkeys could be driven off Sorek Valley's slope onto the roof to thresh, when grain had been spread there for nimble hooves.

"I'll find lambs in Charashim," Eben said hopefully when the sun got up. "If the farmer back there understood the Egyptians' mixed Greek, Roman and Hebrew, they didn't touch Charashim going south and they're going back through still more westerly villages."

The countryside continued to descend but the soil was now black where yesterday it had been sand shale and rock. The underbrush thickened and trees were more plentiful and bigger. The trace they had followed from the Valley of Hinnom became a plainer, though narrow road, beaten by many feet and before the sun got high an increasing procession brought more feet to the task.

"I'll go with you a little closer to Jabneel before I turn north," Eben said. "I'm still hoping for at least one lesson."

"We'll need a clump of trees off the road, We don't want to put on a show for all this procession," Jared said.

"The stew isn't lasting the way I hoped it would," Eben said and breathed deep. The salt ~~sxxxk~~ sea smell, strong although the sea itself would not be visible for several miles, was making him hungrier. The going was harder, also. In the night the usual west wind had risen and died, but not before spreading a heavy dew, and their sandals, wetter and wetter, now did not slide easily off heels but clung for an instant, then let go abruptly and uncomfortably. Eben's footgear, lighter, gave off a soft "Thwap! Thwap." Jared's, heavier, "Thwup! Thwup!"

"Little frogs are talking," Eben said

"I wish your frogs, or somebody," Jared said as he made a long, mystified inspection of the passing travellers, "would tell me what this Roman incursion really means. In the Community it puzzled me. Now seeing so many new signs, it doesn't make any sense at all. Look! Romans and Judeans all going peaceably to and from Jabneel. Yet yesterday Egyptian foragers probably would have butchered us if they had seen us. Why has this bloody war left Jabneel untouched?"

"In Bethel," Eben said, "They claim Titus now, like Vespasian earlier, doesn't want to disturb the peace of the port. He needs Jabneel to receive supply ships from everywhere -- Egypt, Africa, Syria, Crete, Cyprus, Greece, even Rome. Caesarea and the others are not enough. This is a very good harbor."

"Then Jabneel remains at peace as long as Jabneel leaves Titus's ships at peace?"

"I am told that Jabneel has a reason of her own. The new school. Judea, Palestine, our people the world over, will need a new center for teaching if the legions overwhelm Jerusalem and the

Temple priests and scholars."

But Heth said that all in authority agree that the Romans will never reach Jerusalem.

"I wish I knew what to think," Jared said.

"No one knows what to think about this incursion," Eben said. "Bethel calls it senseless."

Jared looked away. This widespread violence certainly was senseless. What else, when Eben and himself and hundreds of other Judeans walked peaceably with Romans while southward yellow Egyptians pillaged and northward Romans and Judean died on one another's swords?

* * * * *

"There's what we want!" Eben pointed excitedly ahead. "That may be the last chance for my meat-strong muscles. I'll be turning toward Charashim any time now."

Jared had been soberly weighing Rome's puzzling incursion but he came out of his abstraction and nodded and they got to a pungent canopy of terebinths rising above low, spicy storax, fragrant myrtle and waxy azaleas, all combining into a cover from the procession along the road.

The lesson went well. Eben was apt as well as enthusiastic. A dagger came naturally to his hand. Why not? He had used one most of his life. And he had used his crook somewhat as a sword against wild beasts, point forward, so that now he did not need to break a bad habit not to swing a sword and ~~thrust~~ ^{cut instead} of thrusting.

He and Jared practiced, turn and turn about.

"This isn't so hard," Eben said. "I thought you'd show me ~~trickiszzzx~~

trickier stuff. You haven't. But I'll tell you the truth. You're better."

"I had a head start."

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

"What we both should be thinking about is how better are we than Romans. Only a lot of practice will make us that."

"Practice is certainly what I need."

"We'll try again before you turn toward Charashim. There'll be another good place. And back in Bethel hunt out the best teachers. And practice, practice! Heth says only practice will do it."

"I know one in Bethel who is a portent with a dagger. He crawls into a cave with nothing more and comes out dragging a dead panther. I know another who was a caravan guard, like your father. He puts in hours every day with sword and javelin -- just to keep his hand in, he says. I think both will help me."

They got back to the road and along it to more pungent, whispering terebinths and scented myrtle and storax and stepped aside for the second lesson.

"I'm getting it," Eben said elatedly. "I think I'll do all right, though never as good as you."

"I've used a sling for years but I'll never be half as good with one as you."

"No," Eben agreed with complacent confidence. "I really can sling a stone almost to a hair'sbreadth. Not always, of course, but plenty often."

"You throw without needing to stop and think how," Jared said. "We both need to do all these Roman things without stopping to think. I've tried to give you most of what Heth gave me, but now we've got to practice. And take help from every better man

w ho'll give any."

Back again on they road the other travellers continued to increase and the road began a long slant down to where a narrower north-south road crossed and southward curved out of sight around a hill.

Eben touched Jared's shoulder and said softly, "This way," and stepped into thick azaleas. "Armor! Carts! Hear the clinks and creaks?"

In his own desert, if a jackal howled, Jared could pretty well tell the beast's direction and distance. He could tell where almost any sound came from and what made it. Heber said he could tell the length of a rabbit's hop on the far side of a sand dune. Here, however, hills of rock and dirt instead of sand, and trees and bushes, imparted a confusing color and timbre to every sound. Jared had, when Eben touched him, heard nothing and he still heard nothing much after they took cover.

"Horses! From the south!" Eben shifted toward the hill where the second road vanished.

Jared at last did hear, and as other travellers began to take alarm held his breath to hear better.

A horseman trotted around the hill and now every traveller in sight scurried. Titus might have decreed his own little Pax Romana for Jabneel and around but who dared count on every Roman soldier to observe it? Who dared count on any Roman soldier, except to be greedy, merciless and murdering when it suited him? And this armed, armored rider was clearly some sort of Roman soldier so, certainly, more were following, all dangerous. Legionnaires and auxiliaries always ran in packs, like wild dogs.

Two more riders did follow and then two more and Jared

Jared remembered Heth's Egyptians come at you like snakes; but these were coming at nobody now. They were tired men ending a long, hard ride.

No!

A flurry at the last cart made Jared gasp and Eben would have leaped clear of their cover if Jared had not wrestled him back.

The four prisoners had slipped their bonds and in a unison that must have been planned now dragged the four nearest horsemen to the ground, seized and drove four javelins home, then roared in defiance as a score of horsemen hauled their shields into place and charged.

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

"They won't run," Jared said. "Horses are faster. Besides, running isn't in their plan."

Now the yellow horsemen were truly coming at the four like, as Heth had said, snakes. Soundlessly, except for the dull beat of hooves on the soft road! Like, Jared thought, the horned adder which launches its voiceless attack from a desert hole you hadn't thought held anything, let alone death. They twisted, spun, spurted, writhed, darted.

"Exactly like snakes," Jared said.

"I know snakes that hardly ever twist," Eben said. "They feed ~~kkxx~~ on mice and little lizards."

These snakes were not feeding on mice.

Josephus had called his people Bold. Bold the four were. Three were cut down but the struck back as they fell. Persevering! The fourth drove a second javelin under a round shield, whirled away from charging horsemen, slashed a dagger across another belly and was going for a third enemy when half a dozen thrust, hacked,

and cut him down and then trampled their horses over his still striving body as though they had been donkeys threshing on a roof.

The commander of the foragers came racing back as the tramlers finished and began to reform. He surveyed ~~the~~ ^{the} dead in silence. He gestured furæously, to ask why Egyptians could not keep alive while killing four Jewish prisoners. He gestured again, scornfully, to say that noone, not even his own inept dead, was worth burying and, without having made a single sound, wheeled back to the head of his column.

"Four who were bound," Eben began to whisper in amazement, "Got nine fully armed and free." He leaped into the Jabneel road among travellers who were taking up their journeys only after the last Egyptian had vanished. "Jared! You practice and I'll, too. And if the Romans come against Jerusalem and the Temple let us meet there. I'll stand at your back and you at mine. And all Palestine will know us as men of valor, like these who were like great Joshua."

Jared looked after the valished Egyptians and looked again because horsemen could easily return.

"The Romans will not come against Jerusalem. Everyone says so. But you must get on to Charashim and Bethel. And I have a mission in Jabneel."

"You are right, of course." Eben let out a long, slow breath. "Just the same, Jared, ~~if Jerusalem is attacked, I want~~ ^{if Jerusalem is attacked, I want} ~~to~~ to stand at your back, and I want you at mine."

Jared took fire. He liked Eben more and more. On fire, he spoke so loudly that travellers, now ~~sure~~ ^{sure they were} secure from the Egyptians, felt free to give attention to this pair talking beside the road as though they had been all alone.

"If there is fighting, I want you at my back," he said

slowly. "If the fighting reaches Jerusalem and the Temple we'll meet there." Practical where Eben had been only romantic, he set a meeting place. "Look for me at dawn, midday and sunset at the Huldah Gates."

Eben turned and stared eastward as though even that far off he could see the Huldah Gates. Everybody knew them.

"And," Jared said, "If we find ourselves inside the Temple and unable to get out, we'll meet at the balustrade of warning. The south balustrade," he added, still practical.

"The south balustrade!" Eben, filled with delight, almost chanted. "And until then! Practice!"

"At every chance!"

"Of old," Eben said, reverence abruptly replacing delight, "So the Book tells, the solemnest pledge was made when one placed his hand on another's thigh and swore. Abraham swore so. So did Jacob. I am ready to swear so."

Jared's dark face flushed. Only with the Chaste One had he ever been moved more deeply. This was a great thing. He stepped close.

"I swear so," he said hoarsely.

"And I swear so," Eben shouted.

Eben was the first to step back. Once a thing had been done he always was eager to look for another. He looked toward Jabneel, plainly reckoning how much farther he might go with his oath-brother.

"No, no!" Jared said. "It is I who am going to Jabneel. You are for Charashim and then Bethel."

They had been standing so long, intently close, that travellers had had time, while far off, to observe them and now, coming near, these stared curiously.

"We must be a show," Eben said and laughed. He didn't mind. He looked again toward Jabneel.

"You are for Charashim," Jared said again.

Eben looked once more, then clapped Jared's shoulder and trotted down the long slope and turned off on the north-south road, looking back again and again to wave.

Jared waved back until Eben was only a dot. Let him trot. He won't fail to hear the Egyptians in time and take cover, if he should overtake them. When he could not see even a dot, Jared took his own road.

* * * * *

The doorkeeper of the Jabneel School was apologetic, as always when he had to break in on Amos. As always Amos, splendidly bearded, plump and pre-occupied, sighed. His sigh was both regret at the interruption and guilt at his selfishness which the regret acknowledged. But of course he nodded and said, "Show him in." He had never kept the Overseer waiting and no more would he this new Brother undoubtedly also seeking something which the poor tools of the straitened Community by the Dead Sea could not make or its own meager reserves supply.

Amos did not deny himself to any visitor. He was not puffed up because the School had put him in charge of the procurement and disbursement of its precious stores. He was humbly aware that he was not of the stuff that made good storekeepers. He did not aspire to be anything except a scholar. He had thought of himself as nothing else since the morning his father dripped honey onto his soft, six-year old lips to sweeten the beginning of learning. But from the earliest days every Israelite had had the command to serve the Lord with all his heart and all his soul. So Amos, uncomplainingly except for sighs, took time away from The
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