



Maud Hart and Delos Wheeler  
Lovelace Family Papers.

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*Simon's get-away*

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The stone-hurling catapults were the Legion's most destructive siege engines. Others shot arrows and hurled javelins and, for close work, there were the rams; but rams had to be set so near their targets that they were vulnerable to counter-attacks, and the arrows and javelins did not smash and shatter as could a single catapult stone.

Each stone weighed half as much as a man and whistled through the air, sometimes for fifteen hundred feet. They whistled against Simon's towers on the day Titus began to test the bandit's strength, while Jared and Eben took Amos's women from Emmaus to Jamnia. The Simonites glared helplessly and those who saw themselves in peril fell flat on their faces.

It was easy to see the peril. Any eye could follow the big stones in flight. Pieces of marble or limestone from the Holy City's tumbled walls were hurled, and the white faces of these gleaming harbingers of doom evoked shouts of warning and terror as soon as they started to sail through the sunlight.

*by Delos  
cut, because this was used  
in earlier war descriptions.*

Long before Titus opened his assault, a superstition had grown up around the great, whirling, whistling stones and the warning of their approach had become as formalized as a call to prayer.

"The son cometh!" the watchers always shouted.

In the beginning the shout had been, "The stone cometh!" but soon awed men, noting the similarity between, "eben," stone, and "ben," son, had said that indeed a son of the Lord might be coming to take vengeance on sinful Israel.

"The son cometh!" the defending Simonites shouted from parapets now as the whistling stones fell on target. Sometimes the shouts were half-joking, sometimes appalled, sometimes defiant, sometimes almost reverent because there were a few who remembered and were awed by the last forty years of recurring gossip about a Messiah, an Anointed One, who was said to have risen from the dead and was reputed to be Jehovah's son.

"We certainly have earned punishment," these said. "We have sinned and sinned again, have robbed, murdered, fornicated."

"The son cometh!"

The son which aroused the latest shout hurtled on the tower of Mirriamme and, when the shouters fell on terrified faces, Simon kicked their bulging backsides in as much scorn as he was able to muster, in these, his fading days.

"A stone can kill you on your bellies easier than it

can on your feet," he said.

*omit*  
 He could no longer summon the vituperation and invective which had flowed in free fury when he was a desert chief, gathering a band with which to cozen his way into Jerusalem. He was a worn leader now, fighting a desire to flee, although he held three almost impregnable towers. Self-doubt had been strong even before Titus had opened this morning's attack of such unexpected proportions. It had been growing ever since he had been unable to stop Eben from pulling his beard. *omit*

Kicking prone bodies after a stone smashed near at hand, he was addressed by the <sup>*Mouse*</sup> candlestick-polisher, who was still clinging to <sup>*his*</sup> the prize he had waved at Jared and Eben.

"Are we safe?" Candlestick asked. He had had the name of Candlestick ever since robbing the Temple, and no one bothered about his real name any more. He was a worrier. He worried over his thefts, over the men he had slain, over the the women other Simonites had taunted him into forcing. Since the attack began, he had followed Simon around like a dog.

"Wouldn't it be better if we got away into the country?" he asked. "Or down into the tunnels?"

"Leave these safe towers?"

Simon tried to sound incredulous.

"There is that tunnel you made ready before you decided to hide here," Candlestick said. "Food and everything! Why

don't we go there?"

"You are a fool," Simon said.

He could not make his hoarse voice convincing, and Candlestick did not seem convinced. As a matter of fact, although Simon had no faith in the open country, he had not given up the possibility of flight to the tunnel he had picked. Food, tools and treasure had been hidden in it long before. But was he not safer where he was? Not much fighting was needed to hold his towers. A single man could repel all the beseigers who might clamber up a scaling ladder. Untouchable behind a parapet, one, alone, could set a stick against the top rung of the ladder and topple it backward. A dozen men could topple all the ladders the Romans could raise. A dozen more could hold the central stairway of Miriamme against the upward rush of a cohort.

Simon tried to make a decision but he felt dazed. Time passed and he did not know it. The gleaming 'sons' continued to crash against Miriamme tower and the towers of Hippicus and Phaesus, which Simonites also held. Shadows fell in the west, disappeared, then fell eastward, and nothing happened to the three strong towers except that stones crashed against them. Now and then, his men came to him and went away, puzzled.

The stones crashed on more than Simon's towers. There

see insert for 212 face to Jerusalem!

were smaller towers and these were battered, too. They held no Simonites but flotsam of the Holy City, too weak and weary to flee.

At last one of these small towers collapsed. Simon went to the parapet of Miriamme and looked out. Men were scrambling out of the tower's rubble like ants out of a dirt heap that a careless foot had kicked. Of course, this tower had not been massive, like the three he held. Time had leached the strength from its mortar, and its stones had simply lost their grip.

"Look!" Candlestick said. "No more than five sons hit that one--I counted--and it fell. How do we know that Miriamme, Hippicus and Phaesus will stand up? Let us get away to your tunnel. Jared and Eben got away, don't you remember?"

Simon glared at the reminder. He heard Jared's cough again. He, Simon, who had tricked his way into Jerusalem, had been tricked by a signal a boy should have anticipated!

And Eben seizing his beard, an agony in Eben's big hands! He cursed.

Candlestick edged away and the leader looked about. For the first time he noted the shadows and saw that it must be afternoon.

A great, vaunting shout went up from the Romans below the three towers. Louder than shouts rose the brazen screams of trumpets. They shocked Simon out of his lethargy and he

went to the parapet.

What he saw puzzled him for a little. Titus and many units of his command were obviously involved but it did not seem to be an attack nor the prelude to an attack. He strained his eyes to make out what was happening. Candlestick came back, like a lonely dog, to stand at heel and look with him.

o-o-o

Deep in Hinnom Valley, twenty Roman trumpeteers were formed in a shallow arc. They twenty were equipped with Egyptian trumpets which, being longer, were not limited to a narrow, unmusical range of notes. Their greater range, in both treble and bass, permitted a wild minstrelsy which fired the blood.

Titus appeared first, thick and imposing, in battle gear: tested helmet, cuirass, greaves and thigh-plates proved in many fights. Cotta rode on his left and, of course, behind. Farther behind, in a magnificent line, rode the subordinate generals, all those whose names had been invoked by the laughing camp women when Jared and Eben raced naked after dropping from the wall of Miriamme.

Riding across Hinnom Valley, Titus passed deep gullies choked with long unburied dead and he reined his horse and raised both hands to the sky.

"Hear me!" he called. "All who march under the Eagles,

witness! And let the gods witness, the gods of battle and wise just Jupiter, also. This misery was not my doing. I deny it."

Some looked impressed. Some betrayed derision. Cotta heard with an impassive face which masked a realistic dissent. Simon and his bandits had, perhaps, prolonged the war, but Rome could not deny that most of the blood of this long rebellion was on her hands. Particularly Vespasian and Titus could not deny bloody hands.

The arc of trumpeteers, as one man, blew again and marching in time to the spirited music sixty legionnaires and auxiliaries paraded in a column of two's and halted before Titus. The sixty had ransacked barrack bags for their best arms and armour. What helmets, breast-plates, shields, swords, spears, javelins, daggers and boots! The gleanings of all the fields on which the Legions had fought and won, all polished and shining.

The sixty were formed in sections, each headed by the Primus Pilus of its own legion. Cotta left Titus, dismounted, and took a place among the other Primi Pilii, not as a Legion commander but as a centurion about to be honored. He was taller than anyone else, hard, lean, erect and formidable.

The sixty advanced, man after man, to receive from Titus's own hands the rewards their valor had earned. Five

received the gold circlet of the Corona Civica of which Cotta already had two. Bestowal of each award was wildly cheered by the Romans. Cotta was awarded a vexillum, his own silver-mounted standard, with pennant, to be flown in all independent formations as evidence of exceptional leadership in battle. He remained as impassive as before but inside he burned with triumph. This honor, he had wanted. He had known only two others who could raise their own vexilla and both were retired. He had a thought.

"I will fly it when I go to Netophah. I will show that woman how high she looked when she claimed me as a friend." He had not forgotten the Inn-woman although Titus had kept him too busy to go to her. Soon, now, he would go and with enough troops to justify raising his own standard.

There were lesser awards--armlets, bracelets and embossed disks to be fastened on breast-plates--to testify that the wearer had been first over an enemy wall, or had been notable in a hand-fight, or had thrown a spear at the right imperilled moment or had thrust home a decisive sword. All would be worn with pride on dress parades and in festivals.

o-o-o

Even before the awards were given out, the parapets were packed with jeering watchers. A few of the Simonites hurled javelins but none came near the target.

Long before the ceremony ended, what was happening had become plain to all.

"Titus halts the push on the towers to decorate heroes," Candlestick gasped. "If he is willing to do that, he must be sure he will win. The tunnels are our only chance."

"What has he gained?" Simon demanded, more to convince himself than anyone else. "His engines have hurled stones for hours and what has he won, beyond one small tower?"

Cotta was recognized. He had not been in every battle of the siege; that had not been possible because often he had had special assignments from Titus, but he had made his presence felt in many bloody engagements.

"Death to Cotta!" one Simonite shouted but most were disheartened. As the Romans cheered the awards, Simon's followers, looking down, fell more and more into sullen silence. How could so confident, so arrogant an enemy be defeated?

Simon made a frantic decision and turned to Candlestick.

"Round up a dozen archers," he said. "Take them to the top of the tower. Aim at Titus. A strong bow might shoot that far." He spoke harshly; he had no intention of allowing anyone to see how fearful he had become.

His order built up optimism in Candlestick who trotted obediently to the best bowmen and led them to the highest

terrace. When they were out of sight, Simon beckoned a few men who were his most intimate followers. They formed a group, close to the stairway which Jared and Eben had climbed, and waited there while everyone else looked up to where the archers were making ready.

The archers began to shoot.

The first volley was wide. Simon watched the second and shouted, "That did it!"

Down below, the Romans raised a different shout as Titus swayed in his saddle, an arrow sticking into his right side.

"In the belly!" men around Simon cried. A belly-hit, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, was the end of a man.

"Titus is stricken!" Romans everywhere took up the cry.

"Follow me!" Simon called softly and led his small group down the stairway. Almost before the second, "Titus is stricken!" they all emerged from the narrow, ground-level exit of the tower of Miriamme.

Fright built up in Simon with every step. He had, however, chosen the right moment. "Titus is stricken!" had spread confusion everywhere. He and his friends got to their tunnel unnoticed, and in the comforting darkness the bandit leader sucked in a big, relieved breath. Here, he told himself,

he would be safe. He and his men would dig in the shaft already started until they surfaced outside the Holy City's farthest broken wall. And that would not be until they were sure the victorious Romans had gone elsewhere. He hoped he had brought enough followers to dig through the rock. That fool, Candlestick, would have dug until he dropped.

o-o-o

Easy, astride his roan, Titus took advantage of the moment of drama, regaining his balance and plucking out the arrow as lightly as Berenice might have drawn a needle from a cushion. He laughed.

"Who says Titus is stricken?" he cried. "Titus is not even scratched."

True enough, after its long flight down from the tower, the arrow had struck only hard enough to lodge in leather which protected the gap between cuirass and thigh-plate. It had not even pierced through.

"Titus is unhurt!"

The Romans shouted in exultation as great as their brief dismay and at once began a furious onslaught, for the disappearance of Simon became quickly known and the defenders of Miriamme, Hippicus and Phaesus said to one another: "We are deserted!" and dropped their weapons and streamed out of the towers, offering almost no resistance to their quickly

massed enemies.

"He did not take me with him," Candlestick kept saying. Hurt and bewildered, he looked like a deserted dog.

Many of the Simonites escaped their foes, and themselves began in the streets of Jerusalem such a slaughter as even depravity had not attempted before. Some, unnatural in their appetites, put on women's clothing, put up their hair as maidens do, smeared themselves with ointments, painted around their eyes, and were guilty of acts that shocked even the Romans. They killed for mere sport. Homeless and orphaned children were pierced through as they roamed the streets, wisps of hay and straw in their starving mouths. Old men and women were stabbed. One bejeweled Simonite, mincing over a stone, killed a boy because he had not moved the stone out of the way. An uncounted number of defenders died thus. Most died at the hands of Simon's deserted followers but the Romans killed not a few. From fire, sword and lust, many men, women and children who had somehow survived the long siege, now died in the last few minutes of the Holy City's end.

A few fled. A few of the Simonites escaped into Hinnom and Kidron Valleys and there hid in caves, behind rocks and trees, in any place of seeming safety. Candlestick fled and his candlestick with him, wrapped to hide its brightness, a heavy, discouraging treasure.

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27

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Unassailed at last, the Romans raised their Eagles and standards on the towers of the ruined city. They could hardly believe that victory had been won so easily, after so much earlier hard fighting. They had taken, in an hour, what they had not hoped to take in weeks. Titus, amazed when he saw the strength of all Simon had abandoned, ordered a paean to Mars.

"Though not Mars, alone, has been with us," he said. "Mercury, too! Who else could have tricked Simon into abandoning such strongholds?"

Privately, to Cotta, he expressed a more practical conclusion. Surrender of such a position, which could have been held until starvation, was proof of a cowardice beyond measure, he said.

Another view was expressed by Josephus, Titus's erstwhile foe and now his captive.

"It is Simon and his cut-throats who brought about the downfall of Jerusalem," Josephus, the captured Jewish leader, said. "The Romans brought about only the downfall of Simon."

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~~now~~

"The Son cometh!" <sup>now</sup> was a different shout.

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Simon's crew had expected nothing equal to the assault that Titus was directing against Miriamne. The final overwhelming attack against the Fortress, ~~and ultimately against the Lower City and the Temple~~ should have warned them that, at long last, they <sup>would be forced to</sup> ~~must~~ set their teeth. <sup>But heretofore</sup> ~~But throughout the siege~~ others had born the brunt of the <sup>in</sup> ~~seige~~ while they ~~had~~ pillaged and raped, <sup>and gorged</sup> and they had come to believe that others always would ~~be the Romans' target~~. So that now, when Roman stones whistled <sup>stet</sup> ~~overhead~~ and they realized that they were the only target, they screamed "The Son cometh!" not in defiance but in terror and fell flat.

"You're better targets on your bellies than on your feet," <sup>Said</sup> Simon ~~told~~ them and kicked their rumps and cursed their ancestors for a thousand years back and their descendants for ten thousand years to come. <sup>But the old bandit chief</sup>

~~But he~~ could no longer call up the vituperative tide which <sup>had run so</sup> ~~had run so~~ full while he cursed and <sup>carried</sup> ~~carried~~ his way and their into Jerusalem. Fear born of self-doubt was growing in him.

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21.

~~had run so full while he cursed and cozzened his way and theirs into Jerusalem. Fear, born of self doubt, was growing in him, also. It had been growing ever since he had not been able to have his beard-puller sliced into chicken feed. It continued to grow as he kicked and as the Toady, still clinging to his treasure, beseeched him.~~

*still clinging to his treasure*  
 "Shouldn't we get ~~out~~ <sup>out</sup> into the countryside," ~~the Toady said.~~ *the Toady said.*  
 "These stones couldn't find us ~~out~~ in the countryside."

*begin fear*

"Leave this high tower ~~for~~ for open fields?"

"Well then, ~~there is~~ <sup>why not</sup> your tunnel. Food! Wine! Water! And ~~we~~ <sup>it has</sup> could pick up women, too. Why did you fix ~~it up~~ <sup>up the tunnel</sup> unless you meant to use it? ~~And~~ <sup>like you</sup> these stones could never reach it. Why not go there?"

"Even your kind ~~of~~ <sup>that</sup> a fool ought to see ~~they~~ <sup>the Romans</sup> can get down to a tunnel easier than they can get up to the top of ~~a~~ <sup>this</sup> tower," ~~Simon said.~~ *Simon said.*

For a fact, however, although he had long before decided against the open country -- those damned auxiliaries could ride you down and not draw a quick breath -- ~~he~~ <sup>to easily</sup> was leaning toward the tunnel, although earlier he had been sure his tower was safer. He gnawed the ~~alternative bones~~ <sup>-- Tunnel, Tower - Tower, Tunnel --</sup> and the stones kept coming, and ~~dazed~~ <sup>stuck all</sup> him.

*End here*

Other followers asked questions and especially pointed out what was ~~befalling~~ <sup>happening to</sup> the nearby ~~towers~~ <sup>of</sup> Hippicus and ~~Phaesalus~~ <sup>These towers</sup>. They were weaker, and held ~~none~~ <sup>few</sup> of Simon's crew, only a ~~feckless~~ <sup>dozelets and dangle</sup> flotsam ~~from the city~~ so unreliable <sup>that</sup> Simon had not allowed ~~one out of the whole lot to~~ <sup>it to them to</sup> stand with him on Miriamne. Hippicus was battered but still whole, but Phaesalus had been pounded down, course after course of strong stones, and its flotsam was packed ~~xxxxxxx~~ into what remained, like rats on the high ~~and dry~~ tip of a slowly sinking ship. And still the catapults battered ~~it~~.

*and*

"Look!" the Toady said, unravelling the argument that others had begun. ~~It~~ <sup>Phaesalus</sup> can't last much longer. And will Miriamne last? ~~Maybe~~

*and*

we could jump and run for the tunnel as Jared and Eben jumped and ran. Remember?"

Simon remembered, hearing again Jared's cough, and ~~shame~~

~~churned him and his beard was again an agony in Eben's big hands~~

~~and then sudden silence blanketed the tower and all around his~~

~~men were shouting in wonder, and beyond the city's western wall,~~

~~down in Hinnom Valley, trumpets screamed a brazen answer.~~

Simon went to the parapet, the Tedy, that forlorn dog,

standing at heel, and both men ~~watched~~ <sup>Jared</sup> while <sup>city</sup> beyond the high wall

into which Miriamne <sup>was</sup> had been set, a score of trumpeteers raised

~~their~~ Egyptian pieces. These, being longer, could sound both

treble and bass ~~not~~ <sup>beyond</sup> the ~~limited~~ <sup>limited</sup>, barely musical range

of Roman instruments, <sup>and make</sup> but a wild minstrelsy that stirred men's

blood.

Out in Hinnom Valley ~~the whole~~ Roman army of the aggression,

~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> leaders in the forefront, ~~were~~ marching into positions as though

on a parade ground--the whole <sup>Roman</sup> army, it seemed, <sup>-- with</sup> legions, auxiliaries,

and on the fringes ~~even~~ servants and camp followers, ~~and~~ <sup>the commanders in</sup>

Titus trotted his mount <sup>forward</sup> out from the other leaders and took

a position alone, behind the trumpeteers. His cloak floated behind

him like a crimson cloud. Boldly colored kilts, by contrast, made

his ceremonial armour brighter.

Cotta trotted into place on Titus's left and, of course, a

pace behind. Still farther back, a shining, <sup>shining</sup> kilt and cloaked ~~the~~

~~of~~ <sup>rang themselves</sup> these generals whose names had been laughingly invoked by the

camp women while they had stared admiringly at stark naked Jared and

Eben, ~~ranged~~ <sup>ranged</sup> itself.

Titus flung an arm skyward, in righteous appeal, it developed,

to his disties.

See insert 22

glared. He remembered all too well and

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omit

Begin here at

"Beyond

Legionnaires and auxiliaries were

the forefront

forward

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righteous appeal

23

"Let the gods witness!" he cried, ~~apparently~~ as much to listeners of Jerusalem as ~~well as~~ to his own soldiers, "Hear! This misery of the Holy City is not my doing."

~~Then he fell silent, as though awaiting corroboration.~~

<sup>Not</sup> Neither Cotta nor any of the generals spoke up to testify to their commander's guiltlessness but, ~~after a little~~, Titus nodded as though <sup>stet</sup> all of them had ~~or, and better, as though~~ ~~had~~ thundered ~~distantly down from~~ out of ~~the~~ <sup>Jupiter's</sup> confirmation of his claim ~~thundered down from Olympus~~ shining ~~Jupiter,~~ <sup>the</sup> heavens ~~and~~

He turned to Cotta ~~then~~, and Cotta signalled and the Trumpeteers blew again and the purpose of this parade ~~of the whole~~ army became clear.

Some sixty soldiers, of all ranks, stepped ~~singly and~~ severally from the various ~~formations and advanced on Titus in~~ ~~formations~~ ~~came together, in a single~~ ~~line and advanced on Titus.~~ <sup>a single line.</sup> Cotta dismounted and joined ~~them~~ the ~~proud~~ formation, not as ~~its~~ leader but as <sup>a</sup> ~~an~~ honored member of ~~an~~ <sup>The</sup> ~~honored~~ array. <sup>proud parade</sup> A gleaming array, <sup>parade!</sup> ~~too!~~ <sup>Polished</sup> There had never been a brighter ~~polish on helmets, cuirasses, shields, weapons and boots.~~ <sup>Immaculate</sup> Tunics and kilts ~~had never been so immaculate.~~

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~~Simon saw but did not understand.~~

Simon saw, but his hurried, frustrated, envious, hating mind did not instantly understand. The <sup>Muse</sup> Tedy did. He <sup>is now managed</sup> was not capable of <sup>idea</sup> much more than a simple single ~~thought~~ <sup>idea</sup> at a time and here the idea was ~~xxxxxxxx~~ <sup>both</sup> as obvious <sup>and</sup> as frightening. <sup>frightening</sup>

"Titus must be sure ~~he~~ of victory," he said.

"We're still up here," Simon said.

"But down there," <sup>Muse</sup> the Tedy said, "Titus is so sure ~~all~~ will go his way that he <sup>does take time out</sup> has halted the attack to <sup>reward</sup> honor the Romans ~~who~~ who <sup>has</sup> won honor in the siege of Jerusalem."

It was true, Man after man, <sup>advanced out of the line</sup> of the sixty-odd, <sup>The fee back to his place having</sup> received from

Titus's almost imperial hands the awards which his valor had ~~learned~~ earned.

<sup>Five men were given</sup> ~~There were five gold circlets, five Coronae Civicae, one of which, for saving Titus in the confusion at Bezetha, Cotta would add to the two he already had.~~ There were armlets,

bracelets and embossed disks, ~~for lesser feats.~~ All would be worn with ~~pride~~ pride at ceremonials and, until the wearers got too drunk, with pomp at Saturnalias.

Every award was cheered and, when the men on Miriamne saw what was afoot, jeered. But the ~~jeers were increasingly unhappy.~~ <sup>they</sup> The jeerers soon ~~came to believe~~ <sup>soon lost heart, seeing what the Muse had seen.</sup> that the Tedy had been right. If Titus ~~halted the push against the Tower to decorate his heroes,~~ <sup>took time out</sup> he must be sure his army would take Miriamne in short order.

"Up here I am like a pig perched on a pole, <sup>Simon lost heart</sup> and I'm not even greased." <sup>he said to</sup> He made a frantic decision.

"Round up a dozen ~~xxxxxxxx~~ bowmen," he said, <sup>to the Muse and</sup> "Take them to the top of the Tower. Aim at Titus. A strong bow will carry that <sup>far</sup> ~~far~~," <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~

~~The others of his crew looked to see what the Tedy was up to and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~were distractedly~~

<sup>when they were out of sight</sup> Simon slipped through the crowd and almost

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25

~~Simon~~

he slipped among them and, unnoticed, ~~elbowed~~ and nudged and drifted to the stairway Jared and Eben had <sup>once</sup> climbed, ~~and then~~ ~~elbowed~~ and nudged. The favorites ~~followed~~ he had ~~elbowed~~ and nudged followed.

The first flight of arrows was launched and now Simon seemed to watch as though they bore his heart's desire. The flight fell short; it was a long shoot. But ~~before~~ Titus's guard could make him draw back the next did better.

Titus swayed from a sudden blow and an arrow was plain in his side. <sup>UP</sup> The Jews on the tower cheered and Titus's

~~his~~ guard shouted in dismay and all around <sup>him</sup> thousands cried out in panic, not <sup>yet</sup> knowing ~~yet~~ what had happened, but ~~panicked~~ <sup>disoriented</sup> because ~~of the shouts~~. Titus's guard had shouted in plain panic, ~~something~~ ~~evil~~ had happened ~~at all~~ to the commander of them all.

"Right in the belly!" one of Simon's favorites said.

"A belly hit is a finishing hit!" another said.

"Titus is wounded!" <sup>UP</sup> the massed Romans cried and broke ranks in confusion.

"Follow me!" Simon said and <sup>led his small group</sup> sped down the stairway, ~~his~~ cronies following. He had picked his moment.

While Roman consternation ~~spread~~ <sup>on Miriamne</sup> over Miriamne and spread confusion, ~~there~~ he and his favorites got to ground level and raced for his tunnel. No pursuit, no snooper, saw and followed. They got underground and ~~to the hideout~~ and grew jubilant, <sup>and</sup>

Simon regained confidence. They would rush <sup>to an end</sup> ~~to an end~~ the digging already begun. <sup>and</sup> They would crawl out safely into Hinnom Valley, although that would not be until Titus was long gone.

He hoped his cronies' jubilation would last through the digging. He regretted that he had had to abandon the <sup>leader</sup> ~~leader~~ who would have <sup>led</sup> ~~led~~ the <sup>dug</sup> ~~digging~~ until he dropped. But he would still be a help. Leaderless on Miriamne, he and ~~all~~ the others <sup>There</sup> would ~~draw~~ <sup>hold</sup> the attention of the Romans, who would have no time for ~~any~~ tunnel diggers while avenging the wounding ~~or worse~~ of Titus.

\*\*\*\*\*

The arrow was, undoubtedly, in Titus's side but harmlessly. Titus took full advantage of the dramatic moment. Erect on his roan, shining and immaculate, his little smile gay, he plucked the arrow free as easily as a <sup>woman</sup> housewife plucks a needle from embroidery.

"Who says Titus is wounded? Titus is not scratched."

It was so. The arrow had stopped in leather between cuirass and thighplate and the army realized it had witnessed a portent and shouted in awe.

Insert  
26 A

On Miriamne, however, dismay swept the ~~Foody~~ and the other leftovers as they looked around and failed to find Simon. <sup>Simon has</sup> Knowing him, ~~they~~ <sup>they</sup> were sure of what had happened, and <sup>many</sup> they tore their beards and

omit

~~"Simon has abandoned us!" They cried and dropped their weapons and~~  
~~streamed out of the towers. Meanwhile,~~  
Meynahile, among the Romans, as they glared up to where the arrow had started awe changed to vengeance and they surged toward the wall, bellowing in anger and shouting for scaling ladders.

"Let's get this thing over," they said and swarmed up onto Miriamne and on either side of the Tower into the Upper City and everywhere there dismay became terror.

And thus Roman vengeance and the Upper City's fear, but chiefly the fear on Miriamne, brought a craven end to what, truly, <sup>been so</sup> had ~~never been~~ valiant. Earlier, up there on Antonia and in the Lower City and at the Temple the defenders, although <sup>some things</sup> unstable, had been men of <sup>gallantry and blazing courage</sup> valor. Here were only the husks and dregs of true ~~defenders~~ defenders; and as the Romans surged <sup>the walls</sup> over, these husks scattered. On Miriamne some tried to get to the highest terrace but were cut to pieces. Others tried to escape down the stairs but as often as not <sup>they</sup> smothered one another in their crowded descent.

Jerusalem's last hours became a horror and some of the worst who made it so were not Romans but Simon's leftovers and other shoddy remnants. These roamed the Upper City in <sup>small</sup> little merciless bands, taking meaningless revenge on ~~add~~ <sup>killings</sup> they met and seizing booty <sup>seldom</sup> they ~~xxxxx~~ would be able to keep.

The worst were unnatural men who put on women's clothing, painted their eyes, shaved their beards and daubed their cheeks, dressed their hair like <sup>as</sup> maidens do and were guilty of acts shocking to everyone save themselves, ~~seizing women, but often men, for sport~~ and callously killing the very old for <sup>sport</sup> no reason at all. A

MSA  
27A  
903 WR

~~xxxx~~  
A few of <sup>the</sup> all these leftovers and remnants got safely to Hinnom and Kidron Valleys. The <sup>Mary</sup> ~~Teedy~~ got safely to Hinnom, his piece of holy vine wrapped to hide its brightness, a heavy, disheartening treasure.

"He should not have left me behind," he said to <sup>whom</sup> whoever would listen. "Why didn't he take me with him?"

The Romans raised their <sup>Eagles over</sup> ~~standard~~ the ruins and Titus was amazed when he saw what a stronghold Simon had abandoned, and in gratitude to ~~the gods~~ <sup>he</sup> commanded a paean to Mars.

"An<sup>^</sup> another to Mercury. Who else could have <sup>fooled him</sup> ~~diddled~~ Simon into yielding so strong a tower?"

Starving men, he told Cotta, could have held the <sup>place</sup> ~~position~~.

"Only cowards in panic would have given us this victory without a fight."

Josephus some years later thought differently about the ultimate victory.

"Simon and his cutthroats brought about the downfall of Jerusalem," he said. "The Romans, only the downfall of Simon."

~~Virginia: types the into MSS,  
offine to MSS  
researched, and not just as a phrase.~~

2 Obscure  
 Rhoda & Abigail  
 Rhoda & Abigail + the wedding  
 — 1 —  
 Rhoda you  
 her pocket  
 put it in the  
 wardrobe I  
 rejected that

+ + + + + + + +

Let's  
 move  
 Let's  
 move  
 Let's  
 move

### CHAPTER SIXTEEN

When the Roman guards rode away, Rhoda and Abigail walked to the door of a house that looked, with its flat roof enclosed by a parapet, much like the other houses in the street, but how different to them! Mother and daughter touched the worn prayer box on the door frame and murmured, according to custom, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might."

Rhoda knocked and drew erect, all the weight she had carried from Jericho falling from her shoulders. She was now the proud mother who had brought a daughter safely home, the <sup>loving</sup> expectant wife anticipating her husband's welcome, the confident matron awaiting a servant it was her right to summon.

A servant came, cried out joyfully, and behind her, <sup>on the cry's echo</sup> beyond the opened door, Amos hurried forward. His face was bright and he <sup>stumbling</sup> stumbled over his robe, <sup>hitching</sup> hitched it up and <sup>hurrying</sup> hurried again.

2  
"Rhoda!" She came first, as always, 246  
although his "Abigail!" followed close behind.

<sup>Rhoda</sup>  
"Amos! Oh, Amos!" All Rhoda's prideful dignity fled  
and she ~~fell~~ <sup>outstretched</sup> weeping into his arms, ~~and Abigail wept too.~~

~~Abigail, too, felt tears rising.~~ She not only re-  
vered her father for his learning and loved him for his  
fond thoughtfulness to her but she was moved, also, by her  
parents' long, almost agonized embrace. She ~~told~~ <sup>stir</sup> herself  
that ~~she~~ <sup>stir</sup> understood their feelings better than she would  
have before meeting Eben.

<sup>Releasing</sup> Still holding his wife, Amos <sup>turned to kiss his daughter.</sup> put out a hand to stroke  
his daughter's cheek, ~~and to stroke her cheek.~~

"My dear wife! My dear daughter! The Lord is good,"  
he said.

Rhoda ~~drew away,~~ <sup>saw that,</sup> wiped her eyes and looked at him.  
His beard was as luxuriant as ever, but he was again starva-  
tion thin. She had it all to do over again, she thought,  
almost laughing.

When ~~embraces were ended,~~ they went through the house  
to a cool courtyard, and the joyful servant hurried there  
with food.

"How did you get past the Roman guards?" Amos asked.

"They have been watching the house. In fact, there have been  
a number of legionnaires around the town, ~~but some have left.~~"

"We were questioned twice," Rhoda said. "The last  
time, at this very door."

-3-

"They must have asked about Jared," Amos said. "And a friend of his, Eben, who seems to have been with you. At least, the guards mentioned him to me."

SEE a checked insert Page 3.  
 She (said) the first part of Jared's story had  
 young man. ~~He helped us almost more than Jared did.~~

~~"I have heard that he was a pillar in the Jerusalem fighting," Amos said.~~ <sup>he</sup> ~~"Where are they now? And what did you tell the guards?"~~ <sup>he and Jared</sup>

"Jared told us what to tell them--that <sup>they</sup> he and Eben had brought us to the edge of Jamnia and then turned back. After questioning us, they rode off at once, along the way we had come."

"But it will do them no good," Abigail <sup>said</sup> cried triumphantly. "They will not find Jared and Eben in that direction."

Her father smiled. <sup>?</sup> "Where are they, really?"

Rhoda, <sup>she had thought of it,</sup> complacent because it had been her strategem, told of the summer house.

"It is a risk, but not too great a risk," Amos said. "The Romans will not expect them to hide in the town."

"Eben would not go away without seeing you," Abigail said. "He wants to talk with you."

"He wants advice," Rhoda put in quickly. She did not mean to have the delicate matter of a betrothal broached until she had prepared her husband.

"Advice?"  
 "Elias left him in charge of a writing. Some Christian writing," Rhoda said.

4- "Elias was a Christian? There aren't many of them. How odd that a Christian should have helped you!" Amos said. 248

¶ Rhoda sighed in relief. He was familiar with the word <sup>"Advice?"</sup> and seemed to swallow it easily.

"He has been given charge of a Writing," Rhoda said.

"Some Christian Writing," Rhoda said.

She saw that Amos was familiar with the word, "Christian," and was glad. The sooner he knew the worst about Eben, the more time he would have to adjust to it.

¶ "He hopes you will be able to tell him to which Christian center he should take it, now that Jerusalem is in such a turmoil," Abigail explained.

"I know next to nothing about Christian centers," Amos said, stiffly. "Why should he think I can help?"

"Because you are wise and kind and always willing to help anyone," Abigail <sup>said</sup> cried passionately. "But also he wants to ask you about something else."

Rhoda's eyebrows lifted, but not within Abigail's range, and Amos perceived a wifely warning to temporize until he and Rhoda could talk privately. He stifled his curiosity.

"Very well," he said with dignity. A dignified manner was always safe. "I shall talk with him, of course."

o-o-o

"It is true that the boy is a Christian," Rhoda said as they went at twilight, through winding streets, to the summer house. She and Abigail had bathed and put on fresh

- 5 -

clothing--Abigail's dress was of green, embroidered at waist and hem in coral--and Rhoda had found time to tell her startled husband how matters stood between their daughter and Eben. She went on: "Many in Judea are something, over and above being Jews--Pharisees, Essenes, Sadducees. <sup>Jared is</sup> Should <sup>one of the Salt Sea Community. Shall</sup> we hold his sect against Eben, especially when ~~it is not~~ likely to last, and in a few years he <sup>may</sup> will return, no doubt, to the old beliefs? Young men are forever going off on tangents."

Amos looked around. He could speak freely; Abigail was walking behind, <sup>with a servant who held a great cloth-covered tray,</sup> as her mother had advised.

"I am slow to hold anything against anyone," he said.

"I believe, as Hillel wrote a hundred years ago, 'If you cannot put yourself in your brother's place, do not judge him.' But a Christian! My <sup>stet see</sup> observation is that Christians <sup>stet see</sup> are a stubborn lot, not likely to turn back from their, as you call it, tangent. ~~Are sure Eben is a Christian?~~"

"He is, and, for the time being, proud of it," Rhoda said. <sup>my husband,</sup> "But I say again, ~~that is not the point.~~ What you and I must keep in mind is that Abigail loves him."

"Since only night before last?" Amos's tone was unbelieving.

"Did we need longer?"

"Abigail is only fifteen<sup>11</sup> and the boy, you say, is young."

- 6 -

<sup>She</sup> ~~she lay under my heart~~ when  
 "Abigail is almost sixteen. ~~I was carrying her when~~  
 I was only a few months older. Eben is eighteen. How old  
 were you when you became betrothed?" ~~Amos looked chagrined.~~

"I was a man grown."

"You were barely nineteen."

Amos ~~looked chagrined but he continued stoutly:~~ <sup>But</sup>  
~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> said. "Not ~~any~~ <sup>of his kinsfolk.</sup>  
 "I have never set eyes on this boy," ~~You tell me he is a~~  
 Benjaminite, and I know Moses spoke well of that tribe, ~~it~~  
<sup>called</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>he</sup> ~~said.~~  
 "The beloved of the lord," ~~Moses said.~~"

"I have told you also that he was orphaned by the  
 Romans and was a shepherd until he went to fight for the  
 Temple. But in this time of trouble which would you choose  
 for Abigail? A ~~youth of clan and family, but not proven.~~  
<sup>bridegroom with</sup>  
 Or one who like Eben has shown himself brave and capable,  
 able to take care of others. You know how he got us out of  
<sup>brought</sup>  
 Jericho."

"I would choose," Amos said, "a young man who, with  
 Abigail, could build a good life. Above all, I pray for a  
 good life for our daughter. Not necessarily one without  
 tribulations. Tribulations test us. But one which, at its  
 end, both <sup>she</sup> Abigail and her husband will call good. But can  
 this boy give her such a life? <sup>Why is he</sup> ~~What is wrong with him that~~  
<sup>the faith of Abraham?</sup>  
~~he is not content with his people's ancient faith?"~~

Amos paused ~~unhappily.~~ <sup>the look</sup> and Rhoda ~~spoke~~  
 soothingly.

<sup>a</sup> "Every father <sup>can find some fault</sup> thinks there is something a little wrong with any young man who comes seeking a beloved daughter," Rhoda said soothingly. "As for your question, I cannot answer it, but do not forget that Jared trusts Eben; so did Elias."

"It was Elias who involved him with this Writing." Amos's tone said that he did not hold a very high opinion of Elias! Another Christian!

"Elias died protecting us," Rhoda said <sup>and</sup> soberly, and her husband was contritely silent. <sup>Then he saw a ray of hope.</sup> She returned to what she knew was the heart of his <sup>misgivings. many forget him.</sup> (SEE line 2 from end.)

mix

"Remember that Eben is a Jew as well as a Christian. He fought for the Temple."

"I have said that I know he was a pillar in Jerusalem."

"No one there held his sect against him."

Amos's face had an harassed expression, foreign to its usual calm benignity.

"Oh, I shall try to advise the boy about his Writing!" he said testily. "And I am very grateful to him; you may be sure of that. But is is my hope that he will soon be gone and that Abigail will forget him and he, Abigail."

Rhoda sighed and fell silent. She knew that, for the moment, she had done as much as she could.

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They reached the summer house, and with a common impulse stopped under the spreading olive tree to wait for their daughter. Abigail joined them, as beautiful in her youth and green and coral dress as another Esther, Amos thought. ~~She looked a question at her mother and, receiving a nod, smiled radiantly although the nod had given much less than whole-hearted encouragement.~~ ~~He~~

Amos knocked at the blue door, spoke softly and a latch was lifted. <sup>While he</sup> Jared and Eben waited in the shadows.

Amos greeted Jared with hearty affection, while Eben and Abigail exchanged quick glances. <sup>He took in the green and coral dress with</sup> His eyes spoke of her new loveliness. <sup>widening eyes, but he kept a discreet distance, Abigail's priestly father with his long flowing beard</sup>

"You were not followed?" Jared asked. <sup>said</sup>

"Everyone knows I walk in the early evening," Amos said. "Tonight, with my wife and daughter, I only conformed to habit. We saw no Romans."

He turned toward Eben and looked at him so searchingly that Eben grew red. Abigail's priestly father with his long, flowing beard seemed a formidable figure.

Amos thanked the young <sup>or</sup> men in a scholar's stately words but his voice was heavy with emotion. He asked about the sounds of battle in Jerusalem which Rhoda and Abigail had reported. When Jared hesitated, Eben described the echoes they had heard.

said a formidable figure.

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"They were certainly from catapults," he said. "So the Romans are attacking. And the end must come soon for, as you know, <sup>Tit is</sup> only bandits <sup>chiefly who</sup> hold the great towers now."

The women had lighted a lamp and put stools in place around a low table, and <sup>the cloth had been removed from the</sup> a servant who had followed the family <sup>tray. It was a</sup> brought in a large, napkin-covered, copper tray, <sup>and had been</sup> a gift to Rhoda at her wedding. In times of peace and plenty, it had been heaped high for festivals. Tonight it held only boiled wheat, spread scantily with melted butter, a little goat's meat, a few loaves of new bread, some pressed figs and a small jar of wine.

It would be a feast, even so, Abigail rejoiced, for Eben and Jared, accustomed to the starvation-diet of the siege.

When the servant was gone, Amos latched the door and Rhoda said <sup>happily</sup> "Come! There is enough for all."

Amos, his face shining, asked the Lord's blessing on the meal.

Abigail had not maneuvered for the place next to Eben. She sat demurely beside her mother, but <sup>then</sup> Eben was just across the table and his rapt gaze upon her, and hers upon him, seemed to weave a web between them.

Jared, knowing what Amos probably thought of this affair, began to praise all his comrade had done in the siege; He told Amos, as he had Titus, how Simon's beard Eben beyond the circumvallation! Eben at his catapult! Eben with his hand in Simon's beard! Eben over the Compound wall! And hearing so much from one he

→ trusted, Amos softened a visible  
trifle. He smiles at Eben.

had been pulled.  
"Jerusalem had bold defenders, but here you see one  
of the boldest," he said.  
Amos looked again at the big, young Benjaminite and  
wished he were not a member of the new, factious sect.

"I am told," he said, "that you wish to talk with  
me about a Writing."

Eben explained how difficult it was to decide where  
to take the treasure, <sup>brought by Elias from Rome and now</sup> entrusted to him by Elias. <sup>I must find a</sup>

"First, of course, I must recover it from Bethel  
where it is hidden," he said.

Amos seemed less formidable now; he was listening with  
kindly interest. Eben noted the broad benevolent brow, the  
luminous gray eyes, like Abigail's, but serene, where hers  
were dancing with life.

P. K.  
8. 27. A  
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ST

End here

end here

"There is a thriving center of your people in Antioch,"  
Amos said. "However, all Jews there are being persecuted.  
<sup>have</sup>  
x ~~only yesterday~~ I heard that the city has asked the Roman  
emperor to permit their expulsion."

"No expulsion order would keep me out," Eben said.  
"But getting in would do no good if everyone I sought was  
gone." He looked at Amos earnestly. "I must find a center  
with Christian Leaders who will appreciate this Writing that  
Elias brought all the way from Rome."

But first, of course, I must recover it from  
Bethel where it is hidden.  
If I could read that writing I might better  
suggest when to take it

- 11 -

found himself liking the  
young man, so

Amos ~~was pleased to have the various claims for Eben~~  
~~so well supported by his words.~~ The young man did seem to  
be full of courage, as well as common sense, and staunchly  
determined to carry out his promise. He was such a one as  
Israel needed now. If only he were not an unscriptural,  
heterodox Christian! Even so, Amos found himself growing  
warm with liking.

"I ought to see your Writing before we try to decide  
on a city," he said. "Recover it in Bethel and bring it  
here."

Relief and gratitude flooded Eben's face and Abigail  
grasped her mother's hand exultantly, <sup>under the table,</sup> Rhoda beamed. Her  
husband was again his usual magnanimous self. His behavior  
did not, of course, mean that he would agree to a betrothal  
now, but since Eben was coming back, and Amos so plainly  
liked him, it might be arranged some day.

<sup>"I would be fortunate"</sup>  
"How fortunate I am to have your help!" Eben said.

"I would not understand a learned Writing. I am not a  
scholar like you, or Jared."

<sup>"Jared,"</sup>  
Amos turned to Jared with a smile. "The Keeper of the  
<sup>Amos</sup>  
Scrolls!" he said.

Eben, for his comrade's sake, was dismayed by the words.

Amos's face fell into meditative lines and he looked

<sup>thoughtfully</sup>  
around the table.

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"In one way or another," he said, "each of us may claim to be a keeper of the scrolls. All who cherish the truth--or what we believe to be the truth--are keepers: You two young men. And I. Rhoda who <sup>turned</sup> taught our daughter <sup>Abigail to the Torahs,</sup> prayers and psalms. <sup>Abigail who will pass them on to her own children, some day." its truths<sup>on</sup> to her sons. And I also, I hope.</sup>

He was about to continue the subject, to enlarge on what, in the Chaste One, would have grown into a commentary, but <sup>a hard knock on the door interrupted him.</sup> Jared's look was so strange that Amos stopped.

"Is something wrong, Jared?" he asked.

Jared did not answer.

An urgent knock fell on the door. Rhoda put her arm about Abigail. Jared and Eben turned softly toward their weapons, <sup>and Amos motioned them to the adjoining room. But</sup> They did not pick them up, however, for an urgent voice followed the urgent knock.

"Amos! Amos!" <sup>It's all right," Amos said.</sup>

<sup>He</sup> Amos hurried, tripping over his robe, to admit a sweat-stained man.

<sup>Good talking knocking so.</sup>  
"You must bring great news, that you knock so."

<sup>"Not good! Not good at all!"</sup>

"Johanen sent me to tell you. I am from Jerusalem.

It is all over."

"All over?"

"The towers have fallen?" Eben cried. <sup>said</sup>

"All three. Miriamme, Hippicus and Phaesus," the

He drew  
 man said, drawing a hand over his sweaty face. "And after-  
 ward, Romans and Simonites roamed the streets like packs of  
 wild dogs. I have ridden all afternoon. I foundered one  
 horse. ~~When you were out at horse, one of your~~  
 SEY VANTS SENT me horse."

"Jerusalem, our Holy City," Amos said slowly, and  
 bowed his head and the others did the same. The real  
 calamity, for devout Jews, <sup>been the destruction of</sup> had taken place when the Temple,  
 was destroyed, but this was an echo of that tragic event.  
 They sat in silence.

Jared got to his feet, and now he did pick up his  
 weapons and his cloak.

"I must go," he said.

Amos thought he understood. The Community <sup>should</sup> ought to  
 know of this at once. The Brothers would need Jared.

"I wish I had a horse to offer you," he said.

<sup>sell</sup> "I shall do all right <sup>on</sup> afoot."

<sup>wait a little</sup> "You should not go yet," <sup>Rhoda</sup> Eben said, <sup>"until it is darker."</sup> "Wait until it

is completely dark. <sup>see me</sup> This news will bring everyone into the  
 streets. <sup>and some Roman may recognize you.</sup>

See  
 insert 13x  
 attached

<sup>cut</sup> "I got into Jamnia. I can get out," Jared said. He  
 touched hand to head and heart <sup>to all</sup> and went quickly through the  
 door.

Eben followed, and they paused in the shadow of the  
 olive tree. Word of events in Jerusalem had not yet reached

and ~~the~~ ~~stars~~ ~~had~~ ~~appeared~~ ~~in~~ ~~a~~ ~~darkening~~ ~~sky~~. <sup>distant</sup> They could hear the boom of the sea. A few stars had appeared in a darkening sky.

"Eben," Jared said, not looking at him, "tell Amos what I told you earlier."

"I will tell him," Eben said. He did not ask where Jared was going. He looked compassionately through the half light into his friend's strained, suffering face.

14A "May the holy spirit guide you!" he said.

They embraced, and Jared, after taking a slow look around, <sup>strolled over to</sup> slipped out of sight ~~in~~ the darkening street.

o-o-o

<sup>begin here</sup> → When Eben turned back to the summer house, he saw that Amos had come out with <sup>the</sup> Johanen's messenger. They were <sup>passed without speaking</sup> talking so earnestly that Eben went past unnoticed. Jared's departure had made his own duty plain and, inside, he took Abigail's hands into his own, while Rhoda looked <sup>with worry at</sup> ~~en-doubt-~~ fully and watched the door through which Amos might come at any moment.

"I, also, must go," Eben said.

"Oh, Eben!"

"~~I must go to Bethel for the Writing.~~ With the towers fallen, Romans and bandits will scatter all over the country. If I do not start quickly, I may not get through."

"Do not go!" Benumbed by love, Abigail hardly knew

what she was asking but, like her mother at the same age, she knew what she wanted.

"I must."

"Then I am going with you." She whirled to her mother.

"My child, you know you cannot," Rhoda said, and Abigail, with a cry, hid her face in her mother's shoulder.

Amos, coming through the door, looked about in gentle concern.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

"Eben, too, feels he should go," Rhoda <sup>said</sup> explained.

"To get the Writing."

"Immediately?"

"Very soon."

"But he will be coming back," Amos said.

↑ Abigail sobbed, not lifting her face. "maybe

"Maybe not! Maybe never!" Abigail sobbed, not lifting her face. "The country is full of soldiers looking for him. I have seen them. Elias, too, was going to Bethel, <sup>but</sup> He <sup>did</sup> not get there. <sup>stay</sup> He was killed and my mother closed his eyes."

"I will not be killed," Eben said, but his heart was wrung by her words.

He braced himself and turned to Amos.

"Before I go," he <sup>said,</sup> began, "I want to ask . . ."

He had meant to ask for betrothal--a more than sufficient boon, it had seemed a moment before--but, since

-16-

Abigail's impassioned cry, it was not enough. Rhoda's softly told story about her wedding night came back, flooding him with longing for Abigail as a bride. He spoke, hardly knowing what he said, but firmly, looking into Amos's eyes.

"I have no father to speak for me. I must ask it myself. I wish to take Abigail in marriage."

"You wish to become betrothed?" Amos asked.

"I must leave before dawn. Give her to me now," Eben said.

Rhoda gasped. Abigail raised her head and looked at him in luminous amazement, then, went to him and put her hand in his.

Amos could not speak. He tried to say, "Impossible!" but he could not get out the word. The sight of Eben, who had brought his daughter safely through so many dangers, standing before him, holding her hand, and both of them looking at him with pleading eyes, seemed to seal his lips.

The love between the two was like a re-enactment of what he and Rhoda had felt and that, he remembered, had lasted through the years; it had blessed their lives. In spite of the grief of not having had a son, he would not have wished any other than Rhoda for a wife.

Eben's proposal was, of course, out of all reason, and Amos would have forced out his, "Impossible!" if one of

Hillel's sayings had not come to him. Strange that it should come at just this moment!

If not now, then when?

He almost said it aloud. Arguments for Eben's cause came pouring into his mind.

No matter what else the boy was, he was a Jew who had fought for the Holy City against a greater foe than Israel had known since Judas Maccabeus had shouted up the tribes against the profane order of Antiochus, a hundred years ago.

Yet Eben must go on his mission; he had given his pledge to Elias, and in these times any journey was full of peril. <sup>And</sup> As Abigail had truly said, he might not come back. Indeed he might not, and then his seed would never spring to life although everywhere Jews should be begetting Jews, especially the Ebens should beget sons to be strong in the next generation as their fathers had been strong in this one.

A grandson!

Amos put aside the unpalatable barrier of Eben's sectarian allegiance. His thoughts took wing.

He and Rhoda, ~~like Abraham and Sarah,~~ had had no son. But with Abigail and Eben, it would be different. Many grandsons with Benjaminite energy would be a sight to

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behold, and their sisters, all favoring Rhoda, would inspire a grandfather to declare afresh the excellence of the Lord who had set his glory above the heavens.

<sup>He</sup> Amos looked at his wife.

"Do you think," he asked, "that there need be delay? You recall what Hillel once said, 'If not now, then when?'"

"I . . ." Rhoda choked on tears. "I do not think we should go against Hillel. If Abigail is ready and if Eben is, then I say, 'Yes.'"

"And I say, 'Yes!'" Eben said, a taste like wine <sup>came</sup> coming into his mouth.

Abigail stood straight.

"Yes!" she said strongly. ~~"As much as Eben I say 'Yes!'"~~

She and Eben looked at each other, overjoyed.

Amos pulled thoughtfully at his beard.

<sup>"You will</sup> ~~"We shall have no gaily garlanded bridegroom coming~~ <sup>friends," he said.</sup> ~~with chanting friends to our house,"~~ he said, <sup>"coming with lamps and singing."</sup> "and no return to his, with a bride surrounded by singing friends of her girlhood. But you and I, Rhoda, will conduct them to their bridal chamber."

"We are in it, this very moment," Rhoda cried and looked all around. The stools. The table. The lamp. A rolled-up pallet in a corner. ~~Nothing was needed that was~~

~~not already at hand. There were even extra coverings for the pallet.~~

And Eben, Amos went on, but only in his thoughts, would leave his seed and then make the dangerous journey into the north.

He pulled his beard again.

"There will be no time," he said, "for excessive ceremony. But long ago, as we all have read, the servant sent by Abraham, the father of us all, asked of Abraham's far-off kin, a wife for Isaac. And if Abigail says only the few words said by Rebecca, she will be as fully a bride as Rebecca was when Isaac went to her in Sarah's tent."

"We must take time for a veil," Rhoda said. "I have my own veil still. And I will weave olive leaves from the old tree outside into a crown, and fix in the leaves this ring which I had from you, Amos, at our wedding."

She caught Abigail's hand and they ran out together into the darkness. Eben stood, confused.

"Sit down," Amos said. ~~"Even when events rush head-~~  
"long, there come moments when a man can only wait."

After the women returned, Amos put Abigail, in her white veil and crown, in the center of the room where she stood, flushed, perhaps much as Rebecca had stood, a little uncertain even though her mind was made up. Eben stood alongside.

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"Wilt thou go with this man?" Amos asked.

Abigail knew the answer to the old, old words.

Daughter of a scholar, she was familiar with the Book. Her eyes glowed with reverence because now she was close to a mystery.

"I will go," Abigail said.

Amos put her hand into Eben's, but then Rhoda <sup>began to</sup> swept <sup>wept</sup> Abigail into her arms and wept. She wept for reasons locked in her mother's heart and because of the terrible times and because there had been no white linen wedding robe for her daughter.

"But you have a veil," she <sup>said</sup> sobbed, "and the olive crown and ring are beautiful."

There could be, indeed, no parade of the groom's friends. Jared was hurrying to whatever goal he sought. No more could there be a parade of the bride's friends of her girlhood, singing.

"I have no dowry to give you," Eben said, wishing he had a prince's fortune. Anything less would have been too little for the prize he had won, yet he longed for even the small sum his father had got together for the father of the girl at Bethel. ~~But~~ the maurauding Romans had found that.

"It will not be long before you two will <sup>soon have</sup> possess what is better than any dowry," Amos said. He meant, of course,

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sons, and daughters. Eben, however, <sup>gave</sup> took the prophecy more practically. <sup>a different twist</sup>

"When the Romans leave Judea," he said, <sup>Palastines,</sup> <sup>"I will go to</sup> solemn but confident, ~~"and they will soon, now that they have won everything, I know what I can do. In Bethel, I have a friend. He will hire me to watch his sheep and I will take my pay in lambs. I know rich, hidden valleys where a flock can drop lambs in fatness and I have learned how to bring every lamb to full growth."~~

Rhoda, eyes dried, was pouring wine. They drank with laughter. But silence fell and all were aware that the moment had come. Amos looked at Rhoda and took a step and tripped and hitched up his robe and took another step, and Rhoda looked toward the door and then toward Abigail.

Now we leave you, the look said. What does it matter that your father was the only friend of the bridegroom? And that there will be no sweet singing by the friends of your girlhood? In this summer house, there will be love.

Eben took Abigail's hand and they walked with her parents to the door. It was deep night now. The sky was rich, with stars.

"There will be no rain on your journey to Bethel," Amos said.

"Let it rain!" Eben said. He would take with him to

Bethel something which would enable him to defy cloudbursts and winds that blew up demons.

He and Abigail stood in the soft, amber lamplight. Now that the others were gone, the room seemed enormous. During the rest of his life, Eben could never remember whether he or Abigail turned first to close the door and Abigail <sup>always</sup> said she ~~never~~ <sup>couldn't</sup> could, either. All he could ever remember was that he and Abigail ~~in her veil and olive crown~~ were alone and that he was moving closer to her and that now they had the right to stand as close as they wished and he had the right to <sup>do</sup> all that he longed to do, but not to hurt or frighten her.

"Take that off," he said, touching her veil, and when she was slow he lifted it, crown and all, and then did not know where to lay so frail a thing but finally tiptoed to a corner <sup>table</sup> and put it down as though it had been a basket of eggs.

Uncovered, Abigail's hair was <sup>flamed in the lamplight</sup> bright, and her eyes were bright and loving. Eben blew out the lamp.

o-o-o

The fumbling of young lovers does not matter, nor their ignorance. What matters is their innocence, so encompassing that they believe what they are sharing has never been shared before since the world began. Eben and

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Abigail looked, touched, embraced, stood close, lay closer. Only the boldness of innocence could have persuaded him that he knew everything when, in fact, he knew nothing. Only innocence could have persuaded Abigail that, yes, yes, yes, Eben, now was the time. Only innocence could have taught him how to lie and she to accept and receive, as the brook receives the rain, the newly ploughed earth, the seed, sure that what was happening was right, was perfect, and that all the rest, through all the years to come, would bring no greater rapture.

Return of Rhoda & Abigail to the Jordan  
x x x x v

No Roman patrol hailed Rhoda and Abigail for questioning. No spy watched along the highway. Among their fellow travellers only Jamnians who knew the family of Amos recognized them and these only showered, "Peace!" "Peace!"

No liar-in-wait leaped out when they reached the courtyard of their home. Nothing there seemed disturbed. The same covered gallery ran around the same courtyard and the same rooms opened into it --dining room, Amos's study, sleeping cubicles, guest ~~room~~ <sup>chamber</sup> and, at the back, the big family room which was also the main entrance. Over all lay the same flat ~~roof~~ <sup>The house</sup> with ~~the~~ waist high parapet. ~~It~~ looked entirely itself and very much like the other houses in the street; though how different to them.

Rhoda had been increasingly doubtful <sup>+</sup> that they would escape being accosted. Abigail's glances, back<sup>ward</sup>, sidewise, around every corner, ~~would~~ <sup>must</sup> make some Roman, or someone currying Roman favor, question a girl so fearful of questions, even if he had no good reason. But no Roman saw, or seemed to.

Undisturbed only by their apprehensions and the joy of homecoming, mother and daughter <sup>Thankfully touched</sup> brushed the prayer box alongside the entrance. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might. And Rhoda knocked and all the weight she had born since Jericho fell from her.

Now she was only the successful mother who had brought a daughter out of danger, the loving wife anticipating her husband's welcome, the confident matron awaiting the servant it was her right to summon.

The servant came, cried out joyfully, and on the cry's echo Amos hurried forward, stumbling over his robe, hitching it up and hurrying again.

"Rhoda!" She came first, as always, although his "Abigail!"

now, for a new reason, ~~especially moved~~. She told herself, ~~that~~ she understood their ~~embrace~~ as she never could have before meeting Eben.

"My ~~dear~~ wife!" Still holding Rhoda, Amos put a hand on Abigail's cheek. "My ~~dear~~ daughter."

Rho<sup>da</sup> wiped her eyes, ~~looked~~ an, saw that she had it all to do over. ~~again~~ Amos was, again, as thin as a rail.

"I knew we could count on Jared," Amos said.

"On Eben!" Abigail said.

Amos looked a question ~~at Rhoda~~ and ~~she~~ explained how Jared's errand had been carried out by his ~~great~~ friend and a stranger, *and how the latter had been slain.*

"By the Eben who was a portent at Jerusalem?" Amos said.

"And just as much a portent at Jericho and after," Abigail said.

"But where are Jared and this Eben now?" ~~Amos~~ said.

Rhoda, complacent because she had thought of it, told of the warehouse.

The servant hurried in with bread, wine and dried figs, *and asked Rhoda if they would eat under the olive tree in the court yard.*

"We haven't time to eat!" Abigail said. "Eben told me they would reach the warehouse before we reached home."

"Eben!" Amos said. "It seems to be always Eben with you, but Jared was also a help."

"Eben was our chief help," Rhoda said. "Besides, he asked Abigail how best to obtain your advice. So there are two good reasons why he is foremost in her thoughts." If she could stop him, Amos was not going to stumble to abruptly into this delicate business of Eben.

"Advice?"

"The stranger who went with Eben left him a Writing. A

I assume that is the Continental Company which demands the endless and, it seems to me, needless detail which AARP requests in insurees' reports. And I am quite sure <sup>it is</sup> ~~that~~ because of these demands that AARP processes these reports in such a cloudy, unsatisfactory fashion. I assume also that my wife and I, who carry your Out-of-Hospital policy are not your only clients who object to both needless detail and cloudy processing.

I wonder, however, if AARP has thought of how many persons now insured in AARP who will look for comparable and simpler protection under Medicare unless AARP induces Continental to be more reasonable?

No Roman patrol appeared after Rhoda and Abigail separated from Jared and Eben. No spy ~~slid~~<sup>pruned</sup> out from among their fellow travellers; they were recognized, and showered with "Peace!" "Peace!", only by Jamnians who knew the family of Amos. No lier-in-wait leaped up from alongside their home which, with its flat, parapetted roof, looked much like the other houses in the street; though how different to them.

*That they would escape being*

Rhoda had been increasingly doubtful of ~~so much good~~<sup>accessed</sup> fortune. She had ~~apprehended~~<sup>grown almost sure</sup> that Abigail's glances, backward, sidewise and around every corner, would make ~~any~~<sup>some</sup> Roman, ~~seeing them~~<sup>or someone carrying papers for</sup> question a girl so plainly fearful of questions, even if he had no good reason.

~~No~~<sup>But</sup> no Roman ~~appeared to see~~<sup>saw</sup>. Undisturbed <sup>only</sup> by ~~no more than~~ their apprehensions and the joy of homecoming mother and daughter brushed the prayerbox alongside their door, murmuring Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might! and Rhoda knocked and ~~sighed in relief~~.

All the weight born since Jericho fell from her ~~shoulders~~.

Now she was only the successful mother who had brought a daughter ~~safely~~ out of danger, the loving wife anticipating her husband's welcome, the confident matron awaiting the servant it was her right to summon.

The servant came, cried out joyfully and behind her Amos hurried forward, stumbled over his robe, hitched it up and hurried again.

"Rhoda!" She came first as always although his "Abigail!" was close behind.

"Amos! Oh, Amos!" Rhoda fell weeping into his outstretched arms. Abigail, too, wept. She revered her father for his learning and loved her mother for a thousand nameless reasons but ~~she was~~

*far quite to*  
would have questioned a girl so plainly fearful of questioning,  
ever if he had <sup>had</sup> known of no good reason ~~for questions.~~

Christian Writing." She felt she had been inspired to use the queer word.

"The stranger was a Christian?" Amos said. "Christians are <sup>few</sup> ~~scarcer than~~ hen's teeth. How odd that a Christian should have helped you."

He was familiar with the word and ~~it~~ had seemed to swallow it easily and Rhoda sighed in relief. When he heard that Eben, also, was a Christian he might not choke on that ~~nor~~ even on Abigail's choice of Eben.

"Eben ~~has~~ promised to take the Writing to some Christian center," Rhoda said.

"He hopes you can tell him the one where it will do the most good," Abigail said. "That is one of the things he wants to talk to you about."

"I know next to nothing about Christian centers," Amos said. "Why does he think I can help?"

"Because you are so wise and kind and are always willing to help people," Abigail said.

~~"And you think I can be so wise and kind and helpful about something else?" Amos said. "What is the other?"~~ *you said this matter of the Christian center was only one thing about which he wants to talk to me*

Rhoda's eyebrows lifted but not within Abigail's ~~range~~ <sup>vision</sup>, and Amos ~~knew~~ <sup>recognized</sup> that he had received a conugal warning. The other thing was one about which he and Rhoda must ~~talk~~ <sup>just</sup> talk privately.

~~"But first things first," he said. He had made his tone dignified. A dignified tone was always safe. "We'll talk about this Christian matter and then we'll see."~~ *to tell Rhoda he accepted her warning*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

"Oh, he is one of them, all right," Rhoda said again as they went toward the warehouse.

She and Abigail had freshened up and Abigail had taken time to put on a different dress --green, embroidered at waist and hem with coral. And while she had made herself pretty for Eben Rhoda had told her husband how ~~that matter~~ stood, *and of Eben's Anointed*

"But," she went on now, ~~as though her startling news had not been at all startling,~~ "Aren't we all something special besides being all Jews? Jews are also Pharisees, Essenes, Saducees, Zealots, Samaritans. A Christian like Eben is surely to be preferred over a Samaritan. And ~~you~~ *you* got on very well with Jared, who is one of the Salt Sea Community. And then there are Galilleans. Any Galillean would be thornier than ~~a boy like~~ Eben, even though a Christian, ~~is~~"

Amos looked around. Abigail was well behind, with a servant who carried a great, cloth-covered tray ~~of food.~~

"Hillel wrote that if you cannot put yourself in your brother's place, do not judge him," he said, *in partial agreement.* ~~"Besides, this boy seems to have won you over."~~ "But are you sure he is a Christian?"

"That is not the point," Rhoda said. "What you and I must keep in mind is that Abigail loves him."

"Since only night before last?"

*tries to tell*  
"I ~~told~~ myself that, ~~in the beginning.~~ But did we need longer?"

"Abigail is only fifteen."

*she lay*  
"Abigail is almost sixteen. I was ~~carrying~~ her under my heart when I was only a few months older. Eben is eighteen. How old were you at your betrothal?"

"Moses spoke well of Eben's tribe," Amos said. "He called Benjaminites the 'beloved of the lord.' But I have never set eyes on the boy. Nor <sup>on</sup> his mother or father."

"He was orphaned by the Romans, and was a fine shepherd for all Bethel until he went to fight for <sup>Jerusalem</sup> the City and the Temple. But in this time of trouble which <sup>sh</sup> would we choose for Abigail? A bridegroom <sup>with</sup> upheld by clan and family but not proven? Or one who ~~stands alone~~ and has shown that alone he is as strong as an oak ~~tree~~. You know how he <sup>brought</sup> ~~got~~ us out of Jericho."

"We should choose," Amos said, "a young man who, with Abigail will build a good life. Above all, I pray that ~~your~~ daughter may have a good life. Not ~~one~~ free of tribulations. Tribulations test <sup>us</sup> ~~her~~. But one which, at its end, she and her husband will call good. But <sup>why isn't</sup> ~~what is wrong with this boy that he cannot be~~ content with <sup>the</sup> ~~his~~ people's ancient faith <sup>of Abraham?</sup>"

"A father can find some fault in whatever young man <sup>a</sup> seeks ~~his~~ beloved daughter. And in every girl ~~who is~~ proposed for a beloved son. But do not forget that Jared trusts Eben. And Elias went willingly with him into Jericho."

"Another Christian?"

"Elias died protecting us."

"~~And certainly no one in Jerusalem threw Eben's sect in his face,~~" Amos said after a long <sup>silence</sup>. "Well, we shall see. <sup>Amos said hopefully</sup> If he goes soon with this Writing Abigail may forget him. After all, she is only fifteen."

"Nearly sixteen!"

~~Rhoda sighed. This had been a long struggle, but she felt there was reason to hope.~~

~~They waited for Abigail to come abreast and ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ to the warehouse. Jared and Eben were waiting, and the street was empty.~~ she looked at

The warehouse was around the next corner and they waited for Abigail to draw abreast, and when Rhoda gave a hesitant nod Abigail glowed although the nod had to be less than whole-hearted encouragement. She looked at Amos. He touched her cheek.

They turned the corner and there was Eben.

"Di\_n't I tell you we'd get here in no time?" he said.

Then he took in the green and coral dress and his eyes widened in admiration. But he kept a discreet distance and waited politely to be named to Amos and he and, he hoped, his future father-in-law touched head and heart.

Jared came up.

"You weren't followed?"

"Everyone knows that I walk each day," Amos said. "Only today with my wife and daughter."

"He turned to Ebenx

"The rescuer of my wife and daughter!" he said, his voice thick with thankfulness and led the way inside and the servant followed.

The warehouse was clean, as the Jamnian school kept everything clean out of respect for its holy purpose, and vast, but almost empty. The Roman aggression had prevented replenishment of supplies. And there were, of course, no furnishings. But the servant made stools of a half dozen bundles in shoddyx papyrus wrapping and a huge bundle in sackcloth was big enough to serve as a sort of table on which he set the uncovered tray.

Abigail watched approvingly. The tray held little, but that little would be a feast for Eben after what had passed for

for food in Jerusalem .

"Come!" Rhoda said and gestured everyone into seats, "There is plenty here for all."

And Amos asked the blessing.

Abigail had not manoeuvred for the bundle next to Eben. Discreetly, she took the one to which Rhoda had unobtrusively pointed. But Eben was seated opposite where his gaze and hers could meet and hardly anyone notice.

Jared, however, noticed and because he had sensed a reservation in Amos's reference to Eben, the rescuer, thankful though that had been, he began a praiseful report to make Abigail's beloved big in the eyes of her father. Eben beyond the circumvallation! Eben at his catapult! Eben with his hand in Simon's beard! Eben off Miriamne's terrace! Eben over the Compound wall!

And hearing so much from one he trusted, Amos softened a visible trifle, for all that this praised young man was a member of the new <sup>doubtful</sup> factitious sect.

"What can you tell me of this Writing that you have been given?" he said.

"I haven't got it yet. And when I do get it, I'll hardly be telling. I'll be asking--where to take it."

"As good a where as I know is Antioch," Amos said. "Even though Antioch persecutes your people and has asked Rome's permission to <sup>expel</sup> ~~drive~~ them ~~out~~."

"No expulsion will keep me away if the right ones are there to accept the Writing."

"If I could read this Writing I might better suggest where to take it."

Abigail began to glow again and squeezed her mother's hand. Amos had not, of course, given Eben any total approval. But would he have offered to read if he had not approved, in part?

"I'd <sup>would appreciate that</sup> probably get little help, myself, from reading the Writing," Eben said. "I'm not like you, or Jared." <sup>should like you + Jared.</sup>

Amos's approving smile lifted Jared up among the wisest scholars.

"The Keeper of the Scrolls!" he said and turned thoughtful and ~~then~~ went on, "But in a way all who cherish the truth are keepers of the scrolls." He nodded. "Both of you! Rho, a who turned Abigail to the Torah! Abigail who will pass on the Torah's truths to her sons! And I, also, I hope!"

A hard knock on the warehouse door interrupted him.

Jared and Eben started up but Amos motioned them back because of a voice which came after the knock.

"Amos! Amos!"

Tripping over his robe, Amos hurried to admit a sweatstained man.

"You must bring good news, knocking so."

"Not good! Not good at all! But Johanen said you must hear. I am from Jerusalem. It is over."

"Over?"

"Miriamne is fallen. And its scum and more like them ravage what is left of the Upper City. No one remains to stand against them. I foundered a horse to bring the news."

Jared and Eben looked at each other and Amos bowed his head.

The fall of Miriamne and the plundering of the Upper City could not be called a catastrophe. The ~~catastrophe~~ catastrophe had been the fall of the Temple. Alongside the seizure and burning of the Holy place this new loss was only catastrophe's faint echo. Only a final ~~straw~~ straw, but its weight bent all three men.

Now Jared did abruptly pick up his sword and reach for his ~~ax~~ cloak.

"I must go."

Amos nodded, ~~thinking he understood~~. The Community should know at once and the Brothers would need their Keeper.

"I wish I had a horse for you,"

"I'll do all right ~~afire~~ <sup>on foot</sup>"

"Wait a little," Eben said. "This news ~~should bring everyone~~ <sup>will fill</sup> ~~into~~ the streets and some Roman may recognize you."

"We got into Jamnia ~~unrecognized~~. I ~~can~~ get out."

Jared ~~made his sheathed weapons firm~~ <sup>made his sheathed weapons firm</sup> ~~and touched hand to head and heart~~ and Eben followed him outside, ~~and they paused in the shadows~~. The streets were not ~~filling~~ <sup>filling</sup> full yet and ~~the quiet was broken only by the distant boom of the sea~~ <sup>in comparison they could hear</sup> ~~Eben~~ <sup>put</sup> ~~put a hand on Jared's shoulder~~.

"May the holy spirit guide you, Jared," <sup>Eben said</sup>

"Only with the will of God shall a man be concerned," Jared said, and they embraced and Jared ~~vanished smoothly~~ <sup>slipped into the doorway</sup>

Eben turned back ~~slowly~~ <sup>two</sup> to where Amos had come out with the messenger, ~~from Jehanan~~. They were talking so earnestly that he passed unnoticed.

~~Jared's departure had made the need for his own departure plain and~~ inside he took Abigail's hands into his own while Rhoda looked on ~~unworried but approving~~ <sup>Jared's departure had made the need for his own departure plain</sup>

"I also must go,"

"Oh, Eben!"

"Tomorrow Romans and bandits will scatter all around. But if I start ~~even~~ <sup>ought to</sup> a little ahead of them I'll get to Bethel and back with no trouble at all."

"Do not go!"

Benumbed by love Abigail scarcely knew what she was asking, but like her mother at the same age she knew what she wanted.

"I must."

"Then I am going with you."

~~Abigail turned to her mother.~~

"You know you cannot, child," Rhoda said.

"Cannot what?" Amos said in gentle concern as he came in.

"~~Eben~~, <sup>too</sup> feels that he must go for the Writing~~s~~," Rhoda said, "An<sup>d</sup> Abigail would help him." So small an evasion, she told herself, was permitted.

"Eben must go now?"

"Now!"

"He will never reach Bethel," Abigail said. "Elias, too, was going there. But he was killed. My mother closed his eyes. Eben will be killed."

"In all the stone and sand between here and Bethel I' ll be only <sup>a</sup> one grain, one pebble," Eben said. "Who will even see me, <sup>Y</sup> <sup>M</sup> let alone be a danger."

He braced himself and faced Amos.

"But before I go, I want to ask..."

~~For hours now~~ he had been bolstering himself to ask (and an instant before it had seemed enough) ~~that~~ that Amos accept him as Abigail's betrothed. But Abigail's <sup>U</sup> cry that he would be killed was in his ears; Moreover, Rhoda's softly told story of her wedding came back and betrothal was not enough.

"I want to ask--<sup>There is</sup> I have no one to speak for me--Abigail in marriage."

~~"You mean betrothed?"~~ Amos said.

"I must leave at dawn. Give her to me in marriage <sup>now</sup> tonight."

Rhoda gasped, and Eben wondered why he was not, himself, gasping at his own boldness. But Abigail <sup>smiled</sup> ~~smiled and stood~~ beside him

and put her hand in his.

Amos started to cry <sup>No!</sup> "Impossible!" But his mouth was <sup>however</sup> sealed by the sight of Eben, who had brought his daughter through great danger, standing before him, Abigail at his side, and both ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~them~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~looking in pleading.~~ <sup>applying</sup>

Their love, he ~~was~~ <sup>had</sup> ~~felt~~ <sup>known</sup> what he and Rhoda had felt at first sight and <sup>that</sup> ~~which~~ had ~~lasted~~ <sup>lasted</sup> through the years blessing <sup>as all</sup> their lives. Rhoda had not given him a son but he would not have had any other than Rhoda for wife. <sup>Margaret</sup> Eben's proposal was, of course, out of all reason and telling himself so Amos was prepared to force out a tardy "Impossible" when Rhoda spoke.

"Hillel himself asked, 'if not now, then when?'"

Amos could not remember when he had rebuked Rhoda. When had she deserved his rebuke? But now, ~~however~~, he was prompted to explain sharply ~~that~~ <sup>what</sup> a woman ~~might~~ <sup>would</sup> not know but ~~what~~ any scholar knew very well. Holy Hillel, ~~when he had spoken~~, had not had in mind the small coming together of a boy and girl, even such a girl as Abigail. Then, however, he asked himself whether this was, after all, so small.

No matter what <sup>Christian</sup> ~~else~~ Eben might be, he was one who had fought against a greater foe than Israel had known since profane Antiochus Epiphene<sup>s</sup>. And now he <sup>was forced</sup> ~~must~~ go on this mission. He had pledged himself to Elias. And as Abigail had said, truly he might not come back.

Indeed he might not and then his seed would never spring to life althogh the Ebens, <sup>Ebens</sup> especially, ought to beget <sup>beget</sup> sons ~~to be strong~~ <sup>for</sup> in the next generation as their fathers had ~~been in this one.~~ <sup>beget the Ebens for the work.</sup>

A grandson!

The "Impossible!" tickled back <sup>down</sup> ~~into~~ Amos's throat and carried with it the last unpalatable taste of Eben's <sup>Christianly</sup> ~~sectitious~~ sect.

A grandson!

Amos's thoughts took wings. He and Rhoda had had no son but

with Abigail and Eben it would be different. Not one grandson! A houseful! And the strong blood of ~~the tribes~~ of Judah and of Benjamin mingled in all of them.

"You are right, as you have often been," Amos said to Rhoda. "Who am I to stand against Hillel?"

"And who am I, being only the silly <sup>wife</sup> ~~daughter~~ of the wisest man in Judea, to oppose it," Rhoda said, welcoming Amos's arms. "If Abigail is ready and if Eben is then I say, 'Yes,' with all my heart."

"If I am ready?" Eben said and ~~licked his lips~~. A taste like unwatered wine had <sup>come</sup> ~~come~~ into his mouth.

"As much as Eben," Abigail said, tall and straight. "I am ~~all~~ ready."

"Well!" Amos pulled thoughtfully at his beard. "Then we had best get back home. No chanting friends will come ~~after~~. None will accompany Eben and Abigail, singing all the way ~~to his~~. But..."

"But you and I," Rhoda said, "will conduct them to their bridal chamber under our own roof."

She smiled in satisfaction. She knew exactly the room she would give them. "The guest chamber! What else?"

Amos started ~~to lead the way~~ <sup>the other</sup> to the street, but Eben stopped ~~him~~.

(1) Eben said "

"I'll meet you ~~all~~ at your house. But I'll go alone. By myself I'll have no trouble keeping out of sight, no matter how many Romans may be hunting."

"There is a little door at the back," Amos said. "It opens into a lane that in one direction leads nowhere. If ~~no~~ one is there to see you leave, no one is likely to be see you ~~afterward~~ <sup>there</sup>."

Hurry!" Abigail said.

*Spoken*

She ~~was~~ fearlessly, ~~confident~~ that one who had brought her and her mother ~~successfully~~ through all the perils between Jericho and Jamnia would escape whatever few cropped up in the short distance between the warehouse and her father's home.

"Look every way before you go out," Rhoda said.

She did not have Abigail's confidence. She had known ~~of~~ bridegrooms cut down on the eve of their weddings.

As ~~thaxzkzaxzkaxkaxk~~ <sup>the little boy</sup> eben started for ~~his~~ door, the three emerged into the street before the warehouse and into a ~~growing~~, *thick* noisy throng, *which*

~~The last disastrous news was spreading fast and the streetful--streetfuls everywhere--cried, wept, cursed and mourned the downfall of a city everyone had believed too thick ribbed, too deep rotted to fall.~~

"Long ago," Amos said, "as we ~~fix~~ have read, ~~the~~ servant sent by ~~Abraham~~, <sup>the</sup> father of us all, asked of Abraham's fa~~r~~-off kin a wife for Isaac. And if Abigail says only the few words said by Rebecca she will be as fully a bride as Rebecca was when Isaac went to her in Sarah's tent."

"We must take time for a veil," Rhoda said, and again smiled in satisfaction. She had just the thing. "And I will weave a crown of olive leaves from the old tree in our court. and in the crown I'll fix this ring which I had, Amos, from you at our wedding."

They ~~some~~ <sup>These</sup> jostled the crowds for a little and they were home, and ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> servant opened the door and they ~~went~~ in and Eben slipped in on their heels.

"You weren't followed?" Rhoda said, ~~sure~~ <sup>sure</sup> she had asked the right question. It was exactly what Jared had asked when ~~he had~~ ~~she~~, Abigail and Amos had reached the warehouse.

Abigail started toward Eben but Rhoda caught her ~~hand~~.

"Have you forgotten the veil and the crown," she said and pulled her from the room.

"Sit down," Amos said. "~~Even when time rushes headlong,~~ there comes a moment when a man can only stand, or sit, and wait."

The women returned and Rhoda ~~put~~<sup>led</sup> Abigail, in veil and ~~with~~ crown, to Amos and ~~she led her to the center of the room. There she~~ stood, blushing, as Rebecca ~~may have stood and blushed.~~<sup>must</sup> Amos motioned Eben to stand alongside.

"Wilt thou go with this man?" he said.

Daughter of a scholar, Abigail knew the words. She knew the whole Book. ~~Her eyes met Eben's who~~ moved closer until their soulders touched.

"I will go."

Amos put her hands into Eben's and ~~then~~ Rhoda began to weep for no better reason than that these were terrible times for a wedding.

"But the veil and olive crown and ring are beautiful," she sobbed.

"I have no dowry for you," Eben said, wishing for ten thousand ~~sheep~~, a thousand bullocks, a hundred emeralds, ~~the~~ grandest house in Bethel, ~~and countless acres nearby.~~ He longed for even the small sum his father had got together for the girl in Bethel. The ~~murdering~~ Romans had taken that.

"You two will soon have what is better than a dowry," Amos said. He meant sons.

Eben, however, gave the prophesy a <sup>Different</sup> practical twist.

"When the Romans leave Palestine," he said, "I ~~know what~~<sup>Rich</sup> ~~go to~~ I'll do. I have a friend in Bethel. He will hire me to watch his

sheep and I'll take my pay in lambs. I know valleys where lambs will grow to fatness and I have learned how to bring fat lambs to full size.

Rhoda, her tears ended, was pouring wine. They drank, Amos and Rhoda in mixed joy and sobriety, Eben and Abigail in silent excitement, ~~half~~ <sup>half</sup> sure ~~as though~~ they shared a secret that, let loose, ~~might~~ would shake heaven.

Amos looked at Rhoda and she nodded and he took a step and tripped and hitched up his robe and took another ~~step~~. Rhoda looked at Abigail.

(What does it matter, the look said, that your father is the only friend of the bridegroom? And that there will be no sweet singing by friends of your girlhood?)

She and Amos set off along the covered gallery and Eben took Abigail's hand and they followed. It was ~~deep~~ <sup>near</sup> night now, and so clear that ~~the spattering~~ <sup>the first</sup> of tiny stars ~~made~~ <sup>spattered</sup> the sky ~~nearly as~~ <sup>with</sup> bright gold ~~as soft blue.~~

"There will be no rain on your journey tomorrow," Amos said.

"Let it ~~rain~~!" Eben said, willing to prove the strength of his new husbandmanship against cloudbursts ~~and~~ <sup>or</sup> winds blowing up demons.

Rhoda opened the door of the guest chamber and made the modestly proud gesture of a housewife ~~who is~~ offering her best, and she and Amos turned ~~back~~ to their own cubicle, ~~and~~ Eben and Abigail went in.

They stood in the thin, amber light of the ~~single~~ <sup>a night</sup> lamp and the room seemed enormous. Eben could never remember whether he or Abigail first ~~turned~~ <sup>moved</sup> to close the door and Abigail always said she couldn't either. Eben could only remember that they ~~were alone and that he~~ moved close and that now he had the right to stand close and to do all that he longed to do but not to hurt or frighten her.

"Take that off," he said, touching her veil, and when she <sup>stood</sup> was slow he lifted it, crown and all and then did not know what to do with ~~such~~ such a frail thing and <sup>he</sup> finally tiptoed with it to a corner table.

Uncovered, Abigail's hair flamed in the <sup>above</sup> lamp light ~~and~~ her loving eyes grew ~~brighter~~. Eben blew out the light and went to ~~where~~ she waited.



\* \* \* \* \*

The fumbling of young lovers does not matter, nor their ignorance. What matters is their belief that what they are sharing has never been shared before, not exactly, since the world began. Eben and Abigail touched, embraced, <sup>grew</sup> ~~lay~~ closer. Only the boldness of innocence could have persuaded him that he knew everything when, in fact, he knew nothing. Only the confidence of love could have persuaded innocent Abigail that, Yes, yes, yes, Eben, now was the time. Only innocence could have taught him to give and she to receive -- as the brook receives the rain -- as the ploughed earth the seed -- sure that what was happening was right, was perfect, and that all the years to come would bring the same rapture.



Memo to M. N. The word dowry used in this chapter + in variant <sup>with paper</sup> may ~~be~~ wrong, ~~the~~ <sup>in</sup> this chapter ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> what the bride for in our usage ~~that~~ <sup>is</sup> what the bride ~~brings~~ <sup>brings</sup> but <sup>in Palestine</sup> the ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> molar is what is given by the groom or his family, father ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> translated 'dowry.' I believe the word molar is used even today. What the bride's father gives has a different but somewhat similar word. The two fathers <sup>double the</sup> translation. R. Lamp in last para. Eben

flaws it out but it  
was certainly for only  
the very poor to blow out  
lamp. They kept me  
burning all night,

- 24 -

FIVE { put in caps

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Confident that at last their Jewish adversaries were no longer able to mount an organized resistance, the Romans moved into Jerusalem early on the morning after the capture of the towers. They came to round up survivors, to bury the dead and generally to put things to rights.

By Titus's orders they did not attempt to clear the rubble-strewn streets but only to make them safe for such movement through the city as might be required. There were fires to be quenched, perilously leaning walls to be pulled down, gaping street holes to be filled.

Their chief business, however, was concerned with the survivors. Titus had ordered that all be made prisoners, but lazy legionnaires killed most of the old and feeble as not worth the trouble of feeding. The strong were herded into the broken Temple's courts. There the best men were offered to the Emperor's agent for the imperial arena, while <sup>attractive young</sup> the women were given to the officers and ~~soldiers~~, according to their degrees of beauty.

~~same~~ favored soldiers.

Captive of  
Roman  
Disorder  
causing (1, 2) death

- 25 -

Of the remainder, all over seventeen were sent to provincial arenas, or to Egypt to grow grain for Rome, or to other farms, olive groves and mines around the Empire. Children were eagerly sought by slave buyers.

The round-up was not <sup>always</sup> easy. Some Jews had to be harried out of hiding places, <sup>and when bound,</sup> despite their hunger, <sup>and when bound,</sup> pulled from tunnels, <sup>and when bound,</sup> cellars and crannies, <sup>and when bound,</sup> they stood with hating eyes, as their captors prepared to march them up to the Temple.

"No!" a Centurion said when one of his men raised a sword against eyes hating too openly; but then he checked <sup>start</sup> himself. You <sup>couldn't</sup> did not tell a legionnaire who had survived the <sup>bloody</sup> siege not to strike a Jew. <sup>kill</sup>

"Don't waste your strength on such poor stuff," he added with a laugh. "Look for better in the holes these came out of."

Mollified, the legionnaire grinned and, when the Centurion signalled permission, was first into the next cellar. He came out triumphantly waving a gold necklace set with amethysts. There was nothing to tell what woman had dropped it, or why.

"I can buy a villa outside Rome, when I retire," he shouted, and thereafter no one wasted blows on feeble prisoners. All were too busy looking for lost treasures.

"Jewels are not everything," the Centurion said. "Remember, also, to look for important persons. You can win up to ten denarii, gold, for some of the ones Titus wants."

End here

start

Such a one suddenly emerged from a tunnel. He was not dragged out; he came of his own accord. Most of those hauled from hiding were filthy, even scabby, and red-eyed from rubbing to see in the dark. This man, somewhere in his hole, had managed to make himself immaculate.

He wore a snow-white robe, his grey stubble of beard was combed and clean, his sandals spotless. He ~~looked like a~~ Temple priest ready for a day's ceremonials. He did not, however, have the face of a priest. He ~~was grossly fat and his~~ little eyes were calculating. It was only the splendid, snow-white linen robe which made him seem, at first glance, holy.

Out of his hole, he stood boldly, and although the Romans had been in Palestine so long that any Jew should have recognized a Centurion, he looked straight through the leader to a common soldier.

"Summon your chief officer!"

He spoke through his grey stubble with such authority that the soldier almost obeyed, remembering barely in time how his Centurion would rage if he did.

"I am, <sup>more than</sup> enough officer for you," the Centurion said, annoyed at the crafty snub. "Or perhaps you want Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus, himself?"

"Yes," the man said. "Take me to Titus."  
"Take me to Titus," the man said. "I claim the hand that he promised to all who surrender unarmed. I wish to join the

27

school of Johanan in Jamnia, as Amos did."

But now the Centurion had looked more closely at the white-robed, almost priestly figure and <sup>he shouted in</sup> his exasperated thumb jerked two of his men into action. <sup>triumph.</sup>

<sup>"Seize"</sup> "Seize this dressed-up pig!" he shouted.

The two <sup>legionaires grasped</sup> had the man's arms, and had twisted him into submission, before he could dart back into his hole.

<sup>9</sup> "It is Simon!" <sup>st 19</sup> the Centurion shouted. "We have caught a prize, a ten denarii prize, at least. This is Simon." <sup>the Centurion said.</sup> <sup>raised his cry again.</sup> "Security!" The bandit chief <sup>cried</sup> bellowed. "Titus pledged it!"

"That was <sup>stet</sup> before yesterday," the Centurion said. He pointed to the flags and banners, flying in triumph from the city's walls.

<sup>Simon looked out his eyes</sup> "Give me security, yourself, Centurion," Simon said <sup>slily,</sup> "and I will lead you to a score of wanted men. <sup>Every one with a price on his head.</sup>" "In your own hole, I suppose?" "Every one with a reward on his head."

"You would sell your own father," the Centurion said. "But why should I send my men into a snake pit when the prize snake is already out?"

He caught sight of Simon's hands, <sup>raw,</sup> ~~They were blistered~~ and raw. <sup>hands and burst into laughter.</sup>

"So you have been trying to tunnel your way to safety! <sup>you found</sup> And the work was too hard." <sup>We must take this one to the Temple,</sup> he said. "Titus. Titus will want to hear his story."

-28  
 Simon covered.

*omit* "Bring him along," the Centurion said to his men. "We won't take this one to the Temple," <sup>he said,</sup> Titus will want to hear his story." *omit*

*no asterisks*  
 Titus → Cotta  
~~The General of the Legions and his right-hand Primus~~

Pilus were in the big double-duty tent which was unchanged except for Berenice's absence. The tiny Herodian princess was preparing for <sup>her</sup> the journey to Sebaste. Gossip had it that the lovers had quarrelled--not an uncommon occurrence. When Titus had given his consent to her departure, he had thought he would be too busy with the siege to miss her; but <sup>the</sup> unexpected collapse of the towers had made him wish her to stay and share his triumph, <sup>but</sup> Berenice, continuing restless, had stubbornly proceeded with her plan and Cotta ~~was~~ found his general disgruntled.

When the Primus Pilus had made his report the night before, Titus had been almost too jubilant to listen. It had seemed unimportant that twenty-six Compound runaways were still at large <sup>even though the twenty-six included Jared and Eben.</sup> He was not concerned, on that glorious night of victory, with two Jews who would make prize gladiators.

This morning, however, his mood was sour <sup>and not only</sup> because of Berenice, <sup>moreover,</sup> the Emperor's agent had inquired especially about the missing pair and, unfortunately, Cotta had brought

new and embarrassing news. Jared and Eben had taken Amos's women safely to Jamnia, but themselves had slipped through the fingers of the patrols surrounding the town.

"Who missed them this time?" Titus asked coldly.

"They were on their own ground," Cotta said, stubbornly, concealing his chagrin. "On my home ground I would have a thousand holes . . ."

"I know, I know." Titus's controlled smile indicated a resolve to be reasonable. "You may think I have small cause for complaint, now that we have Simon's towers, and more prisoners every hour. But the quality is poor for the Circus Maximus. <sup>And if</sup> ~~So I say this!~~" He held Cotta with his sharp gaze.

~~"If ever again you get your hands on Jared and Eben, or either one, remember they are to be taken alive, and do not come back another time saying they got away."~~ <sup>that pair</sup> ~~they got away."~~  
<sup>any of your hunters get their</sup> ~~he had better hold tight. I won't hear again that~~  
<sup>A Cotta's nod was a grim promise.</sup>

"I will remember," Cotta said grimly. He had his own score to settle with the pair, especially with Jared. He was planning to settle part of it today by riding down to Netophah.

Without ever having seen the Inn woman, he wanted to take her away from Jared. The sight of Berenice's empty couch brought memories of the desire she had delighted to provoke in him and desire stirred for Tamar whom he had never seen.

"What are your orders today, Caesar?" he asked, ~~impassive~~  
~~as training had schooled him to do, but~~ hoping the orders would

leave him some free time.

9 "And <sup>that</sup> "Now that we have Jerusalem," Titus said, "I want Masada razed. Prepare a cohort of the Tenth today. March out tomorrow, early." He thought for a little. "And on your way down, scatter ~~the~~ Dead Sea Community. I want no bands of Jews left anywhere--not even monks."

*omit*  
"The Fourth cohort of the Tenth is commanded by Julius Celsus," Cotta said. "He and his men <sup>shall</sup> will go to the Community tomorrow morning, then on to Masada. I shall lead them."

"I remember the Centurion Celsus," Titus said. He prided himself, as his father had, on knowing all his centurions.

*begin here*  
"The Community is, of course, a possible hiding place for Jared," Cotta said. "I have scouts there. <sup>also?</sup> But since he got away at Jamnia, I have been thinking of looking for him around Netophah, where <sup>perhaps</sup> he has his woman. I may do some looking in that direction myself, today."

*omit*  
"I shall want a progress report by sundown."

Cotta's salute was at once an acceptance of the new assignments and a tactful request for dismissal.

A nod granted dismissal but, as he turned to go, a

9 A guard looked in and hesitated at the tent entrance.

"Yes?" Titus said.

"A detail from Jerusalem has brought <sup>A</sup> a prisoner, O Caesar."

"All prisoners are to be collected in the Temple."

look at Cotta showed that he well earned a  
chance to be unreasonable. "If this prisoner  
275  
(go to line 5)

31

begin here → "The Centurion in charge says the General will wish to  
see this one."

"Bring in both Centurion and prisoner," Titus said, <sup>A wry</sup>  
~~welcoming an~~ ~~ambassador~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~camp~~,  
then added to Cotta, "If this is not a prisoner I care to see,  
is not one I care to see,  
there will be another centurion vacancy to fill." <sup>turned</sup>  
~~legionnaire.~~

The tent entrance opened and the white-robed, no longer  
immaculate, Simon, <sup>now soiled from rough</sup>  
<sup>handling,</sup> was shoved in, the Centurion following.  
"By Mars and Mercury!" Titus said.

"By Mithras!" Cotta said.

"He came out of a tunnel," the Centurion said, following  
Simon in. "He tried to pass himself off as a priest," <sup>is</sup> ~~scheming~~  
~~to be let go down to Jamnia to the school of Johanan who was~~  
~~befriended by Caesar."~~

<sup>Simon a Gloria, a priest!</sup> — (go to next page)

Titus grunted. He had never befriended Johanan. He  
had approved the establishment of the school only because it  
seemed a good way to win over a few influential Jews.

"Why did you give up?" Titus asked the prisoner. "In  
your tunnel, you might have been almost as safe as in your  
towers."

Simon was too miserable to reply.

"He planned to extend his <sup>dig</sup> tunnel under Jerusalem and  
come up in open country," the Centurion said, laughing. "But  
his men would not dig unless he dug, and when his hands <sup>began</sup> became  
<sup>to hurt,</sup> raw with blisters, he thought up the priest trick."

32

"Put him in the first consignment for the Circus Maximus,"  
 Titus said to Cotta.  
 "I claim Caesar's hand in security," Simon whined.  
 "You are at least a day late."

omit

→ "With a ring around his neck, he should look well march-  
 at your Triumph goes to  
 ing through Rome, before he is killed in the arena," Cotta said.

He saluted again and followed the Centurion and Simon  
 out of the tent.

"I claim Caesar's hand in  
 security," Simon was wailing now.

"You are a day late," Titus  
 said.

x x x x x actually.

GILBERT  
 SUPERFINE BOND  
 50% COTTON FIBRE

copy of Titus

25 A.

Through Jews

The round-up was not always easy. ~~Some~~ starved Jews fought ~~weakly~~ when dragged from ~~underground~~ hiding places and, when bound, fought on with hating eyes.

"No!" a Centurion said as one of his men raised a sword against ~~eyes~~ <sup>eyes</sup> s hating too openly, but then ~~shrugged~~ <sup>shrugged</sup>. You couldn't tell a legionnaire who had survived this bloody seige not to kill a Jew, if he wanted to.

<sup>teigh here</sup> → "But you'll get no profit out of killing such poor stuff," he said. "You'll do better looking for what they left behind in the holes where you found them."

The legionnaire grinned and was first in the next ~~hole~~ <sup>and waving</sup> ~~and~~ came out with a gold necklace set with amethysts.

"Now I can retire," he said. <sup>They are all here</sup>

"Not bad!" the Centurion said. "But ~~that~~ also for the Jews <sup>He'll reward you well for some of the men on his list.</sup> Titus wants. He'll pay you up to ten times what you'll get for that necklace." <sup>Such a one suddenly emerged from a tunnel.</sup>

One of Titus'd wanted Jews suddenly surfaced. He was not dragged out; He came of his own accord. Most of those hauled from <sup>hidings</sup> their ~~crannies~~ <sup>holes</sup> were filthy, scabby, and red eyed from <sup>stet</sup> rubbing to see in the dark. This one looked more like a Temple priest ready for duty. He had managed a snowy robe, His grey stubble of beard was combed and clean, His sandals were spotless. He did not, however, looke like a priest. He look<sub>e</sub>d more like a pig, grossly fat and with little close-set, vicious eyes.

~~up to the roof. The roof balustrade, by law, was at least 3 feet high. the courtyard. Outside the house, as well as inside, a stairs led gallery running around the courtyard. The various rooms open onto the rooms of a house were built around a courtyard with a covered A dining room is 15 ft square and half as high. A large family room,~~

26A

~~But~~ at first he was as ~~boldly~~ self assured as the chief priest of one of the Temple's ~~daily~~ divisions. ~~And~~ although the Romans had been in Jud<sub>e</sub>a so long that any such priest would have recognized a Centurion, he pretended not to.

"Summon an officer," he said. ~~He spoke~~ with such authority that the Centurion almost obeyed, ~~but caught himself in time.~~

"I am more than enough officer for you," he said, ~~having caught himself~~

"Take me to Titus. I claim the hand ~~that~~ Titus promised in security to whoever surrendered unarmed."

But now the Centurion had looked <sup>more closely at the almost</sup> again and his <sup>priestly figure</sup> ~~offended~~ dignity turned to recognition and he shouted in triumph. ¶ It's

"Simon! Simon of Giora!"

He beckoned a brace of legionnaires.

"Bind this dressed-up pig."

"Security!" Simon bellowed. "Titus pledged it."

"That was yesterday," the Centurion said.

"Give me your own security," ~~Simon said,~~ "And I'll lead you to a score, and every one with a price on his head." ~~Simon said~~

"Why should I send men into a snake pit when the chief snake is already out?"

The Centurion caught sight of Simon's <sup>raw finger tips and</sup> ~~hands,~~ ~~scrapped arms~~

You tried ~~to dig a tunnel to safety?~~ You came out because the work was too hard!" ~~you couldn't take hard work!~~

~~He looked at Simon's raw finger tips and scrapped arms.~~

"We won't take this one to the Temple," he said, ~~to his men.~~

"Titus will want to hear his story."

\* \* \* \* \*

Scrap

Titus was in the big double duty tent which was unchanged

- 29 - A

except for Berenice's absence. The tiny Princess was <sup>away</sup> preparing for her journey. ~~When Titus had consented to that he had thought he would be too busy to miss her,~~ <sup>but</sup> This morning he had <sup>proposed</sup> ~~hinted~~ that she ~~might~~ stay and help celebrate his ~~unexpected~~ victory. Berenice, however, still restless, had insisted that she ~~must find a half dozen~~ <sup>had nothing to wear and must</sup> new dresses.

So Titus's mood was sour, ~~all~~ <sup>it was</sup> the more so because the agent had inquired about the missing pair of prize gladiators and Cotta's latest report had been embarrassing.

Amos's women had reached Jamnia safely, but Jared and Eben, who certainly had brought ~~Rhoda and Abigail~~ <sup>Them</sup> all the way from Jericho, were still uncaught.

"Who missed them this time?" ~~Titus said.~~

"They were still on their own ground," ~~Cotta said.~~ <sup>stet</sup> "On my own ground I would ..."

"I know! I know!" ~~Titus's~~ <sup>re-buler</sup> small smile did not ~~tighten~~. He always got more out of Cotta by being reasonable. ~~"But if ever any of your hunters get their hands on that pair, or either one, he had better hold tight. I won't hear again that they got away."~~

<sup>Cotta's had won a grim promise</sup> "I will remember, Caesar," ~~Cotta said.~~ He had his own score to settle with the runaways, especially Jared, ~~He intended to settle part of it, or try to, in Netophah. The desire for Tamar had been rekindled by the sight of Berenice's couch.~~

<sup>begin here</sup> "And now that we have Jerusalem," Titus said, ~~still willing to be reasonable,~~ "I want Masada. You've looked it over. You take it."

"I'll ~~take~~ <sup>start</sup> a cohort ~~down there~~ <sup>to</sup> tomorrow."

Titus thought a little.

~~"And on your way, clean out that Salt Sea Community. Any I want no bands of Jews left anywhere -- lot of Jews could make trouble--even monks."~~ <sup>scatter</sup> <sup>stet</sup>

"And ~~the~~ <sup>possible</sup> Community is, of course, a ~~hiding~~ place for Jared,"

ful  
and

omit

look it over. 31A

Cotta said. "I'll ~~leave him no cover.~~ And I'll have a look at the inn at Netophah ~~today.~~ That's another place we might <sup>find</sup> ~~find~~ Jared." *him.*

~~As he turned to leave,~~ a guard ~~hesitated~~ <sup>hesitated</sup> at the tent entrance.

~~"Well?" Titus said.~~

"A prisoner, O Caesar."

"Prisoners go to the Temple."

"A Centurion ~~says~~ <sup>says</sup> the general will wish to see this one."

"Send in Centurion and prisoner," Titus <sup>said</sup> and, welcoming an opportunity to be unreasonable, added to Cotta, "If this prisoner isn't worth my time, there'll be another centurion turned legionnaire."

Simon, now soiled from rough handling, was shoved in, the Centurion following.

"By Mars and Mercury!" Titus and Cotta said. ~~together~~

"He came out of a ~~hole~~ <sup>nothere</sup> and tried to ~~palp~~ <sup>palp</sup> himself off as a priest," the Centurion said.

*"I'm a priest, a priest!"*  
~~"Why did you give up?" Titus said. "In any of the City's underground hideouts, a man is safe, almost forever."~~

~~"Most Jews would stay til hell freezes," Cotta said. "But now and then there's a Jew with only the guts of a chicken."~~

*begin here*

"He planned to dig under Jerusalem to open country," the Centurion said. "But his men wouldn't dig unless he dug. And when his hands ~~began~~ <sup>skit</sup> to hurt he thought up the priest trick."

~~"See, he is in the first ship for Rome," Titus said.~~

"I claim Titus's hand in security," ~~Simon said.~~ <sup>skit skit</sup>

"You are a day late."

*March*  
"With a ring around his neck, he ought to ~~look~~ <sup>sent</sup> well in ~~in~~ parading at your triumph, before he is sent to the arena," Cotta said.

*pat to the...*

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

For horsemen in a hurry, Netophah was only a difficult hour and a half from Jerusalem. The desert sand made much of the difficulty; even when a wind did not lift it in gritty clouds, the hooves of the horsemen raised little spurts which found their way under clothing and armor. The road was an ancient, unkempt <sup>Incense</sup> caravan track, broken two-thirds of the way at the village of Beth-basi. South of this desolate place, the track was a mere meandering trace which often vanished among the desert's great motionless yellow waves. These were littered with splinters of bluish stone; as though, Cotta thought, a <sup>giant</sup> Cyclops had stood <sup>crushing</sup> cracking boulders and <sup>hossing</sup> throwing the chips around. ¶ He had brought <sup>any</sup>

Cotta had not, after all, raised his own vexillum. He valued popularity and did not wish the Tenth to think him quick to flaunt new honors. For the same reason he had decided on an escort of <sup>only</sup> six Numidian auxiliaries. He had chosen auxiliaries, the cavalry of Rome's Imperial army, because legionnaires on foot would have delayed his own horse. His escort carried the usual Numidian javelin, light round shield and long sword, but in one

at home they would have ridden bareback, guiding their mounts by voice, heel and a neck rope. They had learned to use bridles and folded blankets but they still guided by touch.

Mommsen, one of the places where the 1000 march... to... the... out upon... 33

omit  
→

omit

omit

omit

SUPRASE BOND

32 A

detail Rome had won them over. In Numidia a warrior rode bare-back, guiding his mount by voice, heel and a neck-rop. The Numidian horses now wore bridles and folded blankets, Roman fashion.

omit

Virginia  
copy  
only  
this  
paragraph  
go to 33  
B.

Cotta wore full armor, <sup>for parties of fleeing</sup> chiefly because enemy Jews

fleeing from the fallen Holy City, might be encountered in the desert, <sup>and tempted into a try against so small a group as his</sup> but in part because auxiliaries were happier under

omit  
here

a leader who looked impressively Roman. He had put on the metal cuirass of a Centurion with complementary helmet and greaves and, besides a dagger, carried the heavy legion spear and the short, heavy, two-edged legion sword. But, not to burden his horse with the massive cylindrical Legion shield, he had chosen a round one, much like the Numidians'. It was not, however, as light. They held theirs comfortably by a hand-grip; Cotta's was fastened by stout arm clasps.

omit

omit

He had left two Numidians at Beth-basi with a spare mount, in case he lingered at Netophah and needed a fresh horse to race the sunset back to Jerusalem. Now, with the other four, he was ending the last few miles, and <sup>just ahead</sup> in the distance a naked village <sup>held up its crumbling walls,</sup> was rising on a naked desert hill.

Netophah! The <sup>heat</sup> glow which Cotta had felt <sup>since</sup> on beginning his ride grew warmer. It was good to be a Primus Pilus, and the right hand of Titus, with the privilege of his own escort, setting out on this amatory adventure. The charms of the

omit

omit

Princess Berenice, teasingly displayed two days before, had roused him, as they always did, although sensibly he had never risked his career by seeking to discover whether they were attainable. The Inn woman's charms would be attainable, after a little enjoyable coaxing. He had not forgotten what the Princess had said:

"She does not give herself lightly. She gives herself for love, and she may give herself for expediency, but she must give herself."

There were such Jewish women, he reflected. He had met Roman women of the sort, and a few elsewhere, but most in Judea. Well, he no longer enjoyed building up the mood which made forcing any woman a pleasure. After all, he was not a callous youth. As he had told Titus, he had been with the Eagles twenty-two years. But there would be no difficulty with Tamar. He recalled her provocative use of his name to the Corporal Valerius. He was curious to see her; and seeking her out had a special piquancy because she was Jared's woman.

Some quality in Jared had made Cotta's hackles rise in the first instant of their meeting, outside the walls of Miriamme. It may have been the monk's stiff-necked air which said, as plainly as though he had shouted, that he was better than any Roman. Cotta had wished then to show him who was better; and he had wished it more after he lost his temper and

~~now~~ after he lost his temper <sup>and</sup> had wished 280  
~~it more~~ after he lost his temper and

ordered that sword hilt smashed against Jared's mouth. <sup>It would</sup> ~~For a~~  
~~have been a satisfaction to prove that unaided he could~~  
~~second, after his order had been obeyed, he had regretted it, but~~  
~~afterward it had made him more wishful to prove himself superior~~  
~~to the arrogant Jew. ~~have~~ shut the mouth of that arrogant Jew,~~

Yes, it would be a special satisfaction to humble Jared  
by taking his woman. Cotta burned with a mingling of lust and  
hate. He looked up at the sun. Midday, he estimated. That  
gave him three or four hours to prove himself the better man  
at Netophah.

He came to the north wall of the Inn and <sup>Saw the</sup> ~~to a small~~  
~~gate, which, he remembered, gave entrance to Tamar's private~~  
~~quarters. That was not for that~~  
first, unexpected visit and <sup>he</sup> trotted his men around to the  
main gate.

This was closed. Cotta had expected it would be. Every  
inn, these days, kept its gate closed, in the hope that marauders  
would turn away from a quarry whose strength--or lack of it--a  
wall concealed. He signalled a Numidian to halloo the gate-  
keeper, probably the watcher now squinting through a peephole.

The trooper raised the high, piercing ululation which  
Numidians seemed to use for every sort of signal. Wait for me.  
Do we eat now? Ride that one down. No matter what a Numidian  
had in mind, he began by raising his screech.

"Lu ah-lu ah-lu ah-lu!" the Numidian screeched. "Lu  
ah-lu ah-lu ah-lu!"

The big gate swung open, two men pushing each wing.  
The gatekeeper had recognized armed Romans. And a Primus  
Pilus! Get that gate open!

The two men struggled frantically, watch-dogs barked,  
and a baldheaded man hurried out, bowing until his naked pate  
sank to his cringing knees.

Cotta eyed his four auxiliaries. His own cause, he  
reflected, would not be advanced if these wild ones harrassed  
such women as Tamar might have in the Inn.

*omit.*  
*Virginia begin here* → "You are not needed here," ~~he told the Numidian whom~~  
he had addressed before. "Ride off! Make a wide circle and  
look for prisoners escaped from the Hinnom Compound. Especially  
look for the tall <sup>black one you all know</sup> Blackbeard you know, ~~from the Jerusalem fight-~~  
~~ing and for the~~ <sup>and the big</sup> young yellow-headed one who always stood at his  
Blackbeard's back." *Continued line 4 of page 35A*

*omit*  
The Numidian started to brandish his javelin, an opening  
move which presaged a ululation, and Cotta held up his hand  
for silence.

"If you do come on Blackbeard and his friend, but  
especially Blackbeard, bring him to me. Do not kill. Do  
you understand? do not kill Blackbeard! And return when the  
sun is there." His arm swung to divide the bright sky into  
four equal sections, and halted, pointing to the end of section  
three.

The Numidian nodded and screeched, "Lu ah-lu ah-lu ah-lu!"

*Virginia copy only this paragraph*

and signalled the others with his javelin and all four raced off, the hooves of their horses spurting sand.

Cotta turned to the gatekeeper. "Take me to the owner of this inn."

"At once, Primus Pilus."

*two*  
A gesturing hand invited--no, begged--the visitor to proceed to the kitchen door on the far side of the Inn's neat courtyard.

"I am Obal. I serve the great ones who come here. Only let me know your wish."

He trotted beside Cotta's horse, then leaped ahead to be first at the kitchen door, opened it and, when Cotta dismounted, beckoned a servant to take the horse, <sup>and</sup> then gestured again--no, begged--the Roman to enter.

"Only let me know your wish," he repeated and sidled like a crab to knock on <sup>the</sup> a door in the kitchen's far wall, then sidled away.

The door opened and Cotta found himself facing a young woman of surprising beauty and assurance. She had flowing dark hair, subtle green eyes that were darkly lashed, a wide, generous mouth, firm breasts beneath a black and scarlet dress.

He was sure she knew who he was. A Primus Pilus was not to be mistaken and she could not have invited many. Nor could she have forgotten her invitation.

Tell the Primus Pilus Cotta that he will be welcome again at the Inn in Netophah any time he chooses to come.

Again! Valerius, that disciplined corporal, had memorized the message word for word. Cotta bowed.

"The Corporal Valerius brought your invitation," he said. "I came, as soon as duty permitted, to enjoy your hospitality again."

He set his shield against a wall of the room to which she had admitted him.

"Not again," Tamar said gravely. Her voice was low, and rich as honey. "Not again." She closed the door behind him. "You never saw this apartment before."

Cotta eased off his helmet, wiped his wet forehead with the back of a gritty wrist, propped his back against the closed door and glanced about the room. He always inspected any strange room for traps but now he was looking also for whatever might explain the room's owner. This room, with its rugs and profusion of cushions, told that she liked comfort and liked to make others comfortable, but it was a puzzling room to find in an isolated desert inn. Those rugs were certainly from Persia, and that low table, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, was not a common thing.

He turned to find that she was studying him as he had

been studying her room.

"You are right," he said, harking back to her last statement. "I have never seen this lovely room before."

"But do you know," she asked, "why I sent that message?"

"I would like to know."

"I am alone in this inn," she said. "I am able to take care of myself but sometimes someone tries to make that difficult."

"Valerius tried?"

"He saw me with no protection except a cheating gatekeeper and a few other servants, and I could read his mind. He had two thoughts."

"I believe I know his two thoughts."

"You know your Corporal."

"A good Primus Pilus tries to know all his Corporals."

"I am sure you are a good Primus Pilus."

"You hoped so, or you never would have risked having me turn up in place of Valerius."

Her eyes searched his. "No one takes the place Valerius thought to sell, or to have, unless I choose."

"Not even when you have only a cheating gatekeeper and a few other servants?"

"I have kept this Inn since my father left it to me. When I cannot keep it on my own terms I shall leave it."

"You might not be permitted to leave."

"I shall leave!"

Cotta knew now what Berenice had meant. Tamar was not slave-minded. She had been born free and would remain so while she lived.

She stood proudly, hands locked before her. Her green eyes looked into his. Unexpectedly, he felt himself more interested than any woman had made him feel in years. This, this was what Jared had had!

"I understand," he said, and Tamar shook back her showering black hair as though relieving her head of the weight of a problem. She made a picture, and Cotta thought she knew it. He hoped so, for he welcomed evidence that he was progressing.

Someone knocked, and she said, "Enter!" and a woman came in and Tamar nodded and the woman went out.

"I always take it for granted that anyone riding this road will arrive hungry," Tamar said and smiled. She had a beautiful smile. It seemed to invite him, almost tenderly, into a mood of gayety.

Cotta smiled in return.

He was hungry, he agreed.

"The woman will bring food."

He moved uncomfortably inside his dust-lined cuirass,

looked at his gritty hands.

"You may wash in there," she said, indicating a smaller, adjoining room. "And take off your armor, if you like."

Cotta found bowl, water and towels, as Jared had, saw the pallet and knew this was where Tamar slept. Warmed by this intimate discovery, even more than his reverie had warmed him on his ride, he rid himself of cuirass, greaves, and neck scarf, loosed the girdle of his tunic, shrugged out of that and, bare down to the loose trousers which protected his knee joints from his greaves, he washed and towelled himself slowly and luxuriously. Then, back in white tunic, fresh that morning and only a little rumped, green scarf, black trousers and boots, he thrust his dagger back into his girdle, and returned to the larger room.

The servant had finished setting out food for him. Tamar motioned him to a seat at the low table and took one opposite, her anklets chiming.

The Inn had felt the general scarcity but there was a steaming pottage of beans and lamb, barley bread, wine, a small pottery plate with a few almonds and an even smaller one with half a dozen pieces of preserved ginger. Cotta ate with appetite.

Manners in Palestine were different from those he had found elsewhere during his years with the Legions but he had

already learned the commonest. Attention to local foibles sometimes enabled a Primus Pilus to reduce friction with provincials. Cotta had learned that a guest never broke off a piece of bread; he cut it; and spilled bread, even a crumb, was picked up. Some Jews feared that, otherwise, demons would occupy the abandoned food and stay in the house to make trouble.

He saw that Tamar was gratified by his familiarity with the ways of her people. She smiled when he carefully picked up a few crumbs.

"I am not one of those who dread demons," she said. "But you are considerate."

"All people have their superstitions," Cotta said. "You would be amazed at some among our Auxiliaries."

She looked at him with such inviting interest that he was impelled to tell her about the Numidians' "Lu ah-lu ah-lu ah-lu!"

"Besides being a signal they use for nearly everything," he said, "that cry is believed to add to their strength in battle by summoning the strength of warrior Numidians who are no more, not only of those who were once with them in the Legions but also of all those departed everywhere, especially in distant Numidia."

"I like to hear about strange customs and distant places," Tamar said thoughtfully.

"And you like things that come from distant places.  
Surely your rugs come from Persia." *"They are so old, I don't know. They*

*grandfather's*  
"My father loved to travel." She touched the table. *glanced toward the old chair.*

*that*  
"He brought this from Damascus."

"I have been admiring it."

*tribes; I'll*  
*write you*  
*more about that*  
*about in meeting*  
*with Tom.*  
*I don't believe*  
*they used*  
*chairs.*  
Laughing, she picked up a piece of ginger. Her laugh  
was as low and rich as her voice.

"And don't overlook this!" she said. "This too comes  
from a strange and distant place. ~~From~~ India. The caravan  
masters who stop at my Inn often bring me small gifts." *such things!*

"I shan't overlook it," Cotta said, laughing, too, and  
took the piece from her fingers.

*begin here*  
~~She~~ She leaned toward him, an elbow on the table, her chin  
~~cupped in her hand.~~ cupped in her hand. "Won't you tell me about some of your  
own travels?" she asked.

"Fighting does not allow carefree travelling," such as  
your father probably enjoyed," Cotta said.

Nevertheless, he could not resist telling some of his  
adventures--in Gaul where forests were vast and deep, rivers  
swift and long, and warriors huge beyond belief, and in  
Cappadocia where countless thousands served the magnificent  
temple of Ma-Enyo, an Earth Goddess, and you found the best  
horses in the Empire. Her interest poured out without words;  
and admiration, too, seemed implicit in her attentive gaze.

How old was she? Certainly older than Jared. Perhaps by three or four years, and much more than that in experience. Even three or four pleased him, however.

<sup>He</sup> Gotta recognized that it was partly Jared's youth which had made his hackles rise. Jared still had that splendid, <sup>he himself had lost, somewhere in the last twenty-two years,</sup> inexhaustible resilience which ~~a man of thirty-eight, after~~ <sup>years,</sup> twenty-two years in the Legions, could not hope to have, not inexhaustibly.

Oh, he still did not need to give ground in a <sup>fight.</sup> ~~melee.~~ <sup>it came to him that somewhere</sup>

But he had lost a little, and lately this had come home to <sup>through those years he had also lost his friends.</sup> ~~him~~ <sup>and lost</sup> because lately loneliness had set him to thinking of how many friends had gone since his days as a sixteen-year-old recruit. Disease, accident, battle--especially battle--had taken most of them. But two had been shamefully executed for robbery, and three had suffered the humiliation of crucifixion. They had murdered. And eleven old friends had died in a decimation after the Legion commander had wrongly charged it with cowardice.

The decimation had come before he had marched into Palestine. Only the luck of the count-off had left him alive then.

No wonder, after so many deaths, that he sometimes felt lonely, sometimes felt old, even though he was still young enough to ask no favor in a fight.

End here

That's fine

end

end

41

He realized that he had fallen into silence, but Tamar had not spoken. She was still sitting quietly, ~~elbow on table,~~ chin in hand. <sup>It came to him that just as he had been</sup> This woman, Cotta thought, was willing to sit silent not only when one talked but when one became lost in thought! She and her charming room put a guest disarmingly at ease.

He surrendered to a desire to tell her of his vexillum. He had not spoken of his satisfaction in it to anyone in the Tenth but now the thought of his new honor swelled in him and he wished to share it with her.

"A flag of your own!" she cried. Her face glowed with pleasure. "And yet, although it is such an honor, you did not fly it when you came here."

"How do you know?"

"I saw you coming up the hill."

"Perhaps I will fly it next time I come."

She did not respond to that but nibbled a piece of the candied ginger.

<sup>judging her, she had been judging him.</sup> Cotta thought he saw where he stood. For her own reasons, she was judging him and, up to now, the judgment seemed favorable. He did not need to await her final judgment. He held this inn in his hand. Whatever he chose to do, he could do, and there was no one to call him to account. But he did not wish to regret an act here, as he had regretted the sword hit against Jarad's mouth.

omit

omit

Victoria  
Pick up  
Love  
↓

sword hilt against Jared's mouth. He did not wish to risk this new relationship which promised so much, promised, in fact, to fill a need he had not known he had until this moment, but now he realized that he was ripe for a woman with whom he might have a relationship less than fleeting.

And Tamar pleased him. He was drawn by everything about her: the lift of her head, her cheeks like soft brown velvet, her green eyes in their nests of lashes, her mellow voice, her repose, so mysteriously mixed with warmth. He wanted her, but not just for an hour, nor a night.

He steadied himself and thought what he should say next.

"You did not answer. Do you wish me to come again, now that there is no Valerius to threaten?"

After a pause she said soberly, "Yes. I think I am looking for something. Perhaps we could look together."

Look for what, Cotta asked himself, and was glad that, if they looked, he could offer more than most. A Primus Pilus of his seniority could do much for her. But what about Jared? Had they quarreled?

He rose and went to her and touched her shoulders but she did not respond to his pressure and he let them go, although their softness and strength stirred him. He walked about the room in silence.

The servant woman came in with a basin and water and

back to 38

cloths, and Tamar dipped her fingers to lave off the ginger sugar. Cotta resumed his seat and did the same.

When they were alone, she asked: "What is the news from Jerusalem?"

"Good news for Titus and the Legions, but bad for Judea. The three great towers have fallen."

"Fallen? We had not heard! Simon surrendered?"

"Yesterday. He was captured this morning."

"He was a coward to give up and he deserves whatever happens to him," Tamar said in ringing tones, and Cotta knew he was hearing another of the remorseless judgments which he had so often encountered in Judea.

"Plenty will happen," he said. "He will go to an arena, to the Circus Maximus."

Her brows drew together sharply. She was thinking, Cotta felt sure, of Jared. She was thinking that, if Jared was captured, he too might be sent to the Circus. Cotta's hatred and jealousy swept back with redoubled strength. It would not be enough now to humiliate Jared by taking this woman. He did not wish to surrender, to yield, to lose any part of her. He was surprised at his rush of feeling but said only:

"Now that Simon and his followers are gone, you will see how much better off Judea will be under Roman rule."

The frown faded and she looked at him with her former

sweetness, yet he felt that her mood had changed. Shortly, she rose in a seeming indication that it was time for him to leave.

He fell in with that.

"I must be back in Jerusalem by sundown," he said, "but I shall come again. Not tomorrow. I will not be free to come then."

"Your general, I suppose, will be sending you on other expeditions, now that he has Jerusalem."

"One will soon bring me this way."

I should not have said that. He glanced at her keenly but his words seemed to have had no special meaning for her and he repeated: "I shall come again."

"If you like."

He moved closer. "Remember," he said, "we are going to look for something. Together. You said it yourself."

She did not answer but smiled, the warm, almost tender smile, and put her hand in his, a free gift. He gripped it fiercely.

In the smaller room, he resumed his armor. Tamar did not offer to help although he pretended to have trouble with his cuirass straps, to see if she would. He picked up his shield and turned to the door by which he had entered. There he paused.

"I am free to resign from the Tenth whenever I choose," he said. "I have served my time, and more. Once I retire, I shall be able to live anywhere. Cyprus, perhaps, or Rome. Have you ever thought of living away from here?"

Tamar's face warped. She was, he saw, on the point of tears but she did not let them flow.

"When you come again," she said tightly, "you can tell me of those cities. I have thought of them and talked of them . . ."

She opened the door but she did not go with him through the kitchen to the courtyard.

o-o-o

The Numidians had not returned. The gatekeeper sidled over to Cotta while several women watched from an alcove. The four men who had opened the big gate opened it again.

*use*  
Riding northward on the old caravan track, Cotta had got down the hill and well away from the Inn, when he pulled up short. There was nothing to stop for in the waste of sand, with its occasional limestone out-croppings, but he was suddenly sure why Tamar had been on the point of tears. She and Jared had talked of living away from Judea. Of course! How much had they talked? What plans had they made? Jealousy stormed through him.

Why had she asked him to come back if she were in love

with Jared? Why had she asked him to come in the first place? For protection only? Or had she and Jared quarrelled before he went to Jamnia and she was looking for a new lover?

He recalled that her mood had changed after he told her of the fall of Jerusalem. Had that been caused by the natural grief of a Jewish woman over the event? Or had it been because she wished to get rid of him, because Jared was coming?

He sat in thought. He could not himself return to the Inn. He was under instructions to Titus to be back in Jerusalem by sunset. He decided that, as soon as he met his

Numidians, he would send two of them--no, four; Jared was a tough fighter--to intercept Jared, if he came. *He would let nothing now come between him and the woman.*

He looked up at the sun. The Numidians were not in sight but they should appear any minute now. With prisoners, perhaps. They might appear with Jared!

Behind him, faint but plain, he heard their wild, "lu ah-lu ah-lu ah-lu!" He looked around. Almost as far back as the foot of the hill on which the Inn was perched, he saw a minute horseman, shrieking and sweeping forward in an unmistakable charge.

One of his Numidians had returned and, if he had not already accomplished his mission, he seemed on the point of accomplishing it, or accomplishing something. He was about to take a prisoner. Cotta wheeled his horse around and kicked it into a gallop.

insert 43  
must

Virginia Pick it up at green arrow  
at 4 lines for end. 33B

For horsemen in a hurry

Netophah was less than a hurried half day from Jerusalem, even when ~~there was a~~ wind <sup>ed</sup> to lift the sand in gritty spurts that bothered a horse, and chafed its rider under armor. The road was the ancient Incense Road, broken two thirds of the distance from the City by the barren village of Beth-basi. South of Beth-basi it was a mere meandering track often all but vanishing among the desert ~~yellow, billowy~~ billows strewn <sup>now and then</sup> with bluish stone splinters.

~~These~~, Cotta thought, must have been tossed around by some ancient cyclops who had stood crushing bowlders and tossing the chips about.

Cotta (had not, after some thought, ordered his vexillum to escort him. He rode ~~at noon~~ with only six Numidians. He ~~had~~ would the cohort next morning, ~~he~~ joined ~~the~~ cohort, but he did not want ~~the~~ to a Primus Plus who put on airs. say he was ~~putting~~

The Numidians, ~~at home~~ would have ridden bareback, guiding their brutes by voice, knee, heel and rope. They had learned to use bridals and folded blankets but they still guided by touch.

Cotta wore full armor, partly because ~~Jews~~, in flight from the fallen City, might be tempted into a try against ~~only~~ Romans, but chiefly because the Numidians followed more willingly after a leader who put up an impressive appearance. However, not to ~~add~~ the

legion's massive shield, ~~to his mount's burden~~, he carried a round, lighter one, much like the Numidians' ~~used~~.

He had left two Numidians at Beth-basi with a spare mount, ~~in case~~ if he lingered at Netophah ~~he~~ might need a fresh horse to race back ~~to~~ Jerusalem. Now, with ~~four~~, he was ending the last, miles and ~~just~~ ahead ~~the~~ naked hill held up its crumbling walls.

Netophah! The ~~glow~~ <sup>heat</sup> which Cotta had felt since beginning his

omit

omit

beginning

with the

34

begin here

ride increased. It was fine to be the right hand man of Titus, and to ~~be~~ setting out with his own escort on this different kind of sortie, ~~he~~ <sup>was aware,</sup> ~~present~~ <sup>present</sup> even though it threatened its own difficulties. He had not forgotten what Berenice had said. ~~what Berenice had said.~~

She does not give lightly. I hear that Tamar makes her own choice.

He had met and, if he had to, overwhelmed such women in his years with the Eagles. Now, however, overwhelming a woman lacked the old rough pleasure. ~~But~~ <sup>And</sup> maybe it wouldn't be needed. After all, she had sent an invitation. ~~And~~ <sup>And</sup> success without roughness would be an extra satisfaction since Jared was involved.

Jared's stiff neck had raised Cotta's hackles at their first meeting, ~~It had~~ <sup>outside the walls of Miriamne. His manner, said so plainly that he</sup> ~~said so plainly that he~~ was as good as any Roman -- better. Cotta had wished from the start to show <sup>him</sup> ~~who~~ was better and <sup>(see insert 34 A)</sup> after the hilt had smashed, shame had made him wish all the more to prove that he, himself, alone, could have shut the mouth. <sup>considered him- self as good as any</sup>

insert 34 a titled

He came to the north wall of the Inn and saw a small gate but decided it ~~could hardly have been meant~~ <sup>could</sup> for strangers. The main gate in the eastern wall was closed. He signalled the Numidians to halloo the gatekeeper probably lurking under the peephole, and all four raised the <sup>high,</sup> ~~piercing~~ <sup>sort of</sup> ululation which Numidians seemed to use for every signal. Wait for me! Do we eat now? Ride him down! No matter what they had in mind Numidians began by screeching.

Lu-ah-lu-ah-lu-ah-lu-ah-lu! ¶ They screeched ~~it~~ now with a will.

~~and~~ The big gate swung and the watchdogs slavered and snarled and baldheaded Obal hurried out, bowing until his naked pate sank to his ~~lower than his fat knees.~~ <sup>cringing</sup> He had recognized the Primus Pilus, Cotta.

¶ Cotta ~~considered.~~ <sup>tried</sup> His own cause, he decided, ~~would not be~~ <sup>that his own cause</sup> advanced if his wild four harrassed Tamar's women, so he waved them

~~off into the desert.~~ <sup>waved his wild</sup> four off into the desert.

35 A

Virginia  
begin here

off into the desert.

"Circle," he said, "and look for the ones who got out of ~~Minnom.~~" <sup>begin here</sup>

One Numidian started to brandish his javelin, and a screech would <sup>start</sup> have followed but Cotta held up his hand.

"Especially look for the tall black one you all know from Jerusalem, and the big yellowhead who always stood at his back." omit

Another of the four started to brandish his javelin but Cotta again signalled for silence.

"If you come on these two, do not kill. Understand? Do not kill. <sup>bring them to me</sup> And whether you come on them or not, be back when the sun reaches there." He pointed.

Now all four flourished their javelins and their lu-ah-lu-ah-lu-ah-lu-ah-lu <sup>then</sup> flowed and ebbed as they raced their mounts into the distance.

"Take me to your mistress," Cotta said to Obal.

"<sup>at once, Primus Pilus.</sup>"

(Obal's hand invited -- no, begged -- the visitor to go to the door at the far side of the courtyard.)

"I serve the great ones who come here," he said. "You know me. Only let me know your wish."

He lumbered to open the door, <sup>then</sup> turned to take the reins of

Cotta's horse and again invited <sup>the visitor</sup> no, begged -- Cotta to enter.

<sup>Seeing Servant women in the kitchen looked up with interest as</sup>  
One of two servant women looked up and shifted her gaze <sup>the tree, lean, erect</sup> Primus Pilus <sup>crossed to</sup> to another door <sup>on the room's far wall</sup> and Cotta walked over and <sup>to</sup> would have knocked but the door opened. Tamar's door and knockid.

Tamar was, Cotta told himself, even more than he had remembered. More golden, <sup>her</sup> with green eyes more darkly lashed, and more of the gleaming black torrent pouring over her shoulders.

She knew him. Seen even only once, <sup>tree, lean, erect</sup> the Primus Pilus Cotta was not likely to be confused with the run of centurions; and she

to set

~~suggestion that~~

36A

~~moved aside in an invitation to enter.~~

"The Corporal Valerius brought your invitation," Cotta said. "I came as soon as I was able, to enjoy your hospitality again."

He ~~propped~~ <sup>dropped</sup> his shield against a wall of the room in which they stood. ~~and smiled~~

"It was the inn's hospitality that you enjoyed before," Tamar said and closed the door. "You are in these rooms for the first time."

Cotta eased off his helmet, wiped his wet forehead with the back of a gritty wrist and looked about. He looked about any new room for snares and traps but now he was looking rather for what might explain this room's owner. His glance crossed hers and he saw that she was studying him as carefully.

"Don't misunderstand my invitation," <sup>Tamar</sup> she said. "When I let Valerius know that I knew someone greater than he was, I was putting him in his place."

And now you put me in mine! The invitation, Cotta realized <sup>with wry amusement,</sup> ~~wryly~~ had been used to take the corporal down a peg; and in making this plain Tamar was taking her present guest, also, down a peg.

"What if he hadn't let you put him in his place? Would a fat gatekeeper and two women servants have <sup>a few other</sup> helped you?"

"I do not need help. When I am unable to stay in this inn on my own terms, I shall leave," she said.

Cotta understood ~~even better now~~ what Berenice had had in mind. Tamar would be difficult to overwhelm. Moreover he knew that he did not <sup>wish</sup> ~~want~~ to, even though she was Jared's. She drew him more than any woman he could remember.

~~On the other side of the door by which he had entered~~

omit this time

omit

cut

37 A

Someone knocked and Tamar said come and one of the women entered, looking a question, and Tamar nodded and the woman left.

"Anyone riding this road arrives hungry. I have told her to bring food," Her smile asked his approval. ~~She said that~~ <sup>Tamar smiled</sup> ~~to soften the earlier smile~~ <sup>soften the earlier smile</sup> ~~sub.~~ <sup>sub.</sup> ~~Cotta smiled in assent~~ <sup>Cotta smiled in assent</sup> and eased gritty hands off his helmet and looked at his gritty hands.

"You will find water and towels in there," she said, indicating a smaller adjoining room. "And take off your armor if you like."

Cotta went in and got out of his ~~armor~~ <sup>armor</sup> and saw the pallet, as Jared had, and warmed by this intimate discovery even more than reverie had warmed him on his ride, he washed, <sup>back in white tunic, first</sup> and then, ~~in rumpled~~ <sup>in rumpled</sup> ~~tunic, scarf, trousseurs and boots~~ <sup>tunic, scarf, trousseurs and boots</sup> returned to the bigger room. ~~he thrust his dagger~~ <sup>he thrust his dagger</sup> ~~returned to the larger room~~ <sup>returned to the larger room</sup>

Tamar was waiting at a table spread with food, and two divans were alongside but when he sat down she did not <sup>at once</sup> suggest eating, but she leaned forward, cupping her chin in one hand.

Begin here

"What is the news from Jerusalem?"

"All bad, for Judea. You know the Temple fell?"

She nodded.

"Well, now the whole City is ours."

"How many from Jerusalem are captured?"

"They can't be counted."

Her brows pulled together and Cotta was sure that she would be relieved to hear ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> Jared had not yet been taken.

"We keep catching more and more, but our prize up to now is Simon of Giora. You know of Simon?"

Her nod was indifferent but her face showed relief, and as though suddenly remembering that she was the hostess she picked up a loaf of bread and a knife, and offered <sup>them</sup> ~~it~~ to him.

Manners in Palestine differed from those Cotta had found

*Virginia  
only this  
paragraph*

38

elsewhere but he knew that a guest never broke off a piece of bread;  
He cut it, ~~And~~ spilled crumbs always were carefully picked up, ~~when~~ *after*  
he cut in ~~turn~~ *now* he brushed up the flecks of crust that had fallen and  
Tamar smiled. ~~he looked amazed and said~~ *smile'd again.*

"You need not be so careful. I am not one of those who  
believe demons find such bits and <sup>then</sup> stay around and <sup>to</sup> make trouble."  
*While they ate he noticed her*  
He looked at her. She was studying him <sup>to</sup> again and, once more  
aware of <sup>how</sup> ~~much~~ strongly she drew him, he studied her. How old was she?  
Certainly older than Jared, <sup>perhaps by three or four years,</sup> and in experience much more.

He wondered if Jared's youth had been what had raised his  
hackles. Jared ~~still~~ had the inexhaustible resilience that he <sup>himself</sup> had lost  
somewhere in these last twenty-two years. And it came to him that  
somewhere in that time he had also lost his friends.

A Primus Pilus could have few friends, even among other  
<sup>centurions</sup> centurions. When you commanded you stood alone. It was not, however,  
merely that he stood alone. He was, he realized, lonely for the  
friends of his youth, ~~He had been lonely for a long time, almost~~  
*-- so many were dead from disease, accidents, battle.*  
without knowing it. But he was sure he would not be lonely with this  
inn-mistress, *woman.*

*Insert*  
Tamar stood up, <sup>hesitated a moment</sup> and he knew she had decided she must be about the  
business of her inn and was inviting him to leave. He <sup>got off</sup> left his  
divan and ~~went close and~~ took her shoulders into his hands, and was  
stirred by their firm softness. ~~When~~ she did not respond he stepped  
back.

"I must return to Jerudalem, <sup>soon</sup> but tomorrow I shall <sup>soon be coming</sup> bring a  
cohort this way. *again.*"

"Rome wants still more?"

"I shall be on a <sup>have an errand</sup> mission, but I could take another road,  
except that I want to see you again."

*Insert*

*edit*

43 a

"A little while ago I would have told you it would do no good to come back. Now I am not so sure."

*He remembered her interest in foreign places.*

"I am free to resign from the legions whenever I choose," he said. "And I'll be able to live anywhere. Cyprus? A soft, green island. Spain? As sunny as Palestine and not all sand."

"At least we could talk of Cyprus and Spain and other places," ~~said tightly~~ she said tightly.

She opened the door and soberly watched him go through. At the kitchen's far door he looked back but hers was closed.

In the courtyard <sup>break</sup> the sun said the Numidians were due. He took his horse from Obal and rode out the main gateway and down the hill ~~and~~ toward Bethbasi. The four would show up soon if they knew what was good for them, and when they did they'd just have to catch him.

*Call*

He had got no great way when he heard a thin "Lu-ah-lu-ah-lu-ah-lu!" He looked to his left and saw a faroff, minute rider. One Numidian! <sup>was he</sup> And the one would not be shrieking merely in greeting? But where were the other three? He wheeled his horse and spurred it into a gallop to find out.

\*\*\*\*\*

omit  
put in insert 437A

omit

*Handwritten scribbles and faint text at the bottom of the page.*

At the bottom of the hill he pulled up short, suddenly sure, or nearly sure, of what had been in Tamar's mind. Something had gone wrong between her and Jared.

She opened the door into the kitchen, and soberly watched him go out. As he reached the outer door he looked back but she had closed hers.

In the courtyard he looked at the sun. It said that the Numidians were due back and he took his horse from Obal and rode through the main gateway, and down the hill, ~~looking impatiently~~ <sup>a clear view to the west.</sup> ~~and~~ ~~and~~ northward until he had cleared the base of the hill so that he could look westward. When he still ~~did~~ <sup>did</sup> not see the four he ~~set~~ <sup>sent</sup> his horse ambling northward. The four would surely ~~come~~ <sup>appear</sup> into sight soon and, ~~seeing him,~~ <sup>would love to catch up.</sup> would catch up.

He had ~~gone~~ not ridden far when, from his left, he heard a faint "Lu-ah-lu-ah-lu-ah-lu!" He looked ~~away~~ <sup>to his left</sup> and saw a far off, minute rider. One Numidian. And ~~he~~ <sup>the one</sup> would not be shrieking merely in greeting. Something was up. But where were the other four. He wheeled, and kicked his mount <sup>who</sup> to a gallop. 1. find out.