The Ancient Ones

Chapter 18 – Island of the Ancients

'Seren had visited the great library before leaving the City of the Lost God. Her main area to look up was in the forbidden section, which some called the heresy books. There were well drawn images of the Ancient Ones in some of those books, drawn from memory by those who'd actually seen them. The Ancient Ones had probably been the largest living creatures on the rifts and now one was striding towards her on many very long legs.'

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Emperor Mussaneth Osranetherer, or Muzzie as most knew him; was fondling his partner's shoulders as she fiddled with her hair in the mirror. A glass mirror which was rare, most still used polished metal mirrors. Aeony had a beautiful dressing table made from wood from the far west. The crowning glory of the dressing table was the mirror, which had been enchanted to make it even clearer. It looked as though there were two versions of the dark angel; who'd been his lover for many, many centuries. No maid was allowed to help Aeony with her long black hair; though Muzzie often liked to run his fingers through it.
"Faal is a strange one." Said Aeony. "Tried to talk you out of leading reinforcements to the portals at Nara-Unadaris. Once it was obvious we were going, he's been preparing as if it was a holiday of some kind."
"You know Faal…….He loves a chance to wave at the crowd." Said Muzzie.
Faalŕh Haŕadask the official magician to the emperor, known by just about everyone as Faal. Muzzie had noticed that Faal seemed to be getting increasingly vain with age. Or it had something to do with sharing his bed with Jenda, his young assistant and bodyguard.
"You can't rely on him now." Said Aeony. "Faal is forever saying one thing and then doing another."
Muzzie leant forward and kissed Aeony on the neck, something she loved. They were a strange pair, but Muzzie often wondered how he'd survived before she became part of his life. So many of his close advisers seemed to almost enjoy saying his decisions were wrong, that Muzzie tended to treat it as a sign that he making the right choice. Not Aeony though, she supported him at every turn. He ran his fingers through Aeony's hair; feeling sad that there wasn't time for morning sex. Few things could get in the way of the desires of the emperor, but an army waiting to march out of the City of the Lost God was one of them.
"Come on, the Silver Lady will be in a bad mood if we keep her waiting." Said Muzzie.
"I still can't believe she agreed to come……Did you bribe her ?" Asked Aeony.
"Like Faal, I think she just wants a chance to wave at the crowd." Said Muzzie. "To a surprising number of Dredger Hybrids, the Lady is their family deity."
Not all of the army but a part of the army would already be in position to use the rift gate at the old abandoned village. From there, they could all be in the temple complex of Nara-Unadaris within a few minutes. The ruins of the Algarian freighter had been removed; a few of the metals had even been useful to the local makers of swords and shields. Once the sacred stones had been repositioned, the rift gate was pronounced safe to use. Muzzie liked to be waved at by the crowd, he'd never denied it. Aeony carried him to the front of the reinforcement and the waiting citizens of the City went wild. Many in the army waved and cheered too, even though it was against the rules.

“Five hundred years since Quron fell and they still love you.” Said Aeony.
“Xanash the thirty fourth was never cheered like this.” Said the Lady. “I know, I was with him just before he fell. Popular emperors are rare, Muzzie. You’ve performed a kind of miracle.”
“If I stop being popular, I can go back to running Muzzie’s Bar full time.” Said Muzzie.
The fighters behind him were a mixed bag, from the best hybrid warriors on the rifts, through to some of Ginnda’s children who were very close to being adults. Aeony had added a few of her dark angel sisters to the reinforcements and Muzzie almost felt sorry for any Tandallan soldier who was stupid enough to attack them. A runner approached Muzzie.
“The army are ready to leave, my emperor.” Said the runner.
“Then leave we shall.” Said Muzzie.
Muzzie ordered the drummers to begin one of the battle tunes of the City. Aeony was actually first to use the rift gate, with her sisters behind her. Muzzie entered after them and came out in the centre of the temple complex in Nara-Unadaris. It was strange to appear with yet more cheering citizens waving at him. Someone had obviously told them when their emperor was due to arrive. A runner arrived dressed in the uniform of the greys from Annill.
“Your usual quarters in the complex have been made ready, my emperor.” Said the Grey.
“Lead me to my rooms.” Said Muzzie. “It’s been a while since I was here.”
It really had been at least a hundred years since he’d been there, but even Aeony smiled as though it was a joke. There were times when being considered omnipotent and omniscient appealed to Muzzie; and there were times when he genuinely longed to be a humble tavern owner again. Their quarters in the temple complex had been redecorated in light green, which Aeony loved.

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Seren had visited the great library before leaving the City of the Lost God. Her main area to look up was in the forbidden section, which some called the heresy books. There were well drawn images of the Ancient Ones in some of those books, drawn from memory by those who’d actually seen them. The Ancient Ones had probably been the largest living creatures on the rifts and now one was striding towards her on many very long legs. It made sense, Maya had probably told them to seek out the dark angel, the leader of their group. The huge creature sort of folded up the legs at the front of its body, until its head was almost level with Seren. Oh, that head……There was a lot of the look of Uula Podda there, but mainly it looked like one of the oldest of old Gods. It reminded Seren of the drawing of Tomma-Goran on the ceiling of the dome in the highest of rooms above the great library. Definitely a he judging by the male genitalia. Strangely, Seren felt no fear, she knew the truly awesome beast had come as a friend; or at least she hoped it had. The massive head moved closer to her. What language would it use ? The Ancients Ones were famous for knowing just about all the languages used on the rifts; though no one knew how they’d learned them.
“You must be Seren, leader of this group.” Said the Ancient One. “I was sent to get you; a ship will arrive soon to take you to the Island of the Ancients. I am Nictrax-Farr by the way, elder of our kind.”
Spoken in flawless Old Imperial; with perfect grammar and pronunciation. Seren had been prepared to be impressed by the Ancient One’s use of language, and she was.
“Are Uula and Maya on the Island of the Ancients ?” Asked Seren.
“Yes, they are there and await your arrival.” Said Nictrax.
“Where is this island ?” Asked Adamaz.
The legs of the Ancient One were amazing, sometimes more like tentacles than legs. Nictrax left his front legs folded beneath him, while unfolding an incredibly long rear leg. The leg went out straight, pointing right out above the ocean. A toe the size of a small building was aimed at a certain spot.

“There……The Island of the Ancients is there.” Said Nictrax.
Seren looked and despite there being no horizon on the rifts, she could only see ocean; mile upon mile of ocean. There wasn’t even the glowing shimmer which usually marked the edge of the rifts.
“I can see nothing.” Said Seren.
“The island is huge and not really part of the rifts.” Said Nictrax. “It will take the ship a day to get there. You’ll understand more once you’re there.”
“Is it safe there ?” Asked Dava.
“Ahhh, is it safe anywhere ?” Replied Nictrax. “Look, coming through the mist over the ocean. Not one of our ships; we never use them. You can see the Golden Dawn approaching, last vessel of the once formidable Genova fleet.”
A truly huge vessel to carry many full blood Genova the size of Juliette. Still some way off, it looked to be made of wood; though there had probably been a lot of strengthening spells used on the timbers. Three masts and many yellow sails, which really did glow like gold. As for dawn ? The Genova were said to have arrived on the rifts from a world with a genuine dawn. The ship fired a small deck gun, as if announcing their arrival.
“It’s a beautiful vessel.” Said Adamaz.
“Once…..The ocean was full of such ships.” Said Juliette.
“I love nostalgia as much as the next rather old sorcerer.” Said Pinthrad. “But right now, we need to pack up our things and be on the beach for when they send boats for us.”
“That’s a very good idea.” Said Nictrax.
It took them a while to arrive and there were Genova hybrids in each boat, pulling at several long oars. They also helped get the group’s things into the boats, without getting anything unduly wet. By the time their things had been brought aboard the Golden Dawn, Seren had looked the ship over and had a good idea where everything was; or at least everything that mattered. Itzel had even flown around the top of the masts and spent quite some time peering into the distance; in the direction Nictrax had said would bring them to the Island of the Ancients. Not that Nictrax would be on the ship, it was much too small for a fully grown Ancient One elder. He’d be walking the whole way there, striding along the sea bed, while keeping a watchful eye on the Golden Dawn.
“There’s a permanent mist, as far as the eye can see.” Itzel had told her. “Or there is a lot of magic at work here; it’s often difficult to tell.”
Seren promised herself a long circular flight around the ship, keeping just to within the range where she could see the navigation lamps. There was no hurry though; the vessel was full of interesting creatures to get to know. A few looked best avoided, which was why Seren insisted on them having a watch during the night. There were complaints of course; everyone wanted a full uninterrupted night’s sleep. Seren had a certain look though and no one actually refused. Pinthrad had asked to take a watch with Seren, during the darkest part of the night. She assumed he had questions to ask her.
“Stars again……..The stars even penetrate the constant mist.” Said Pinthrad.
“I knew Tomma-Goran when I was a very young dark angel.” Said Seren. “He told me I was destined to see the stars one day; an entire night sky full of stars. He said every star was the home of one of the truly ancient Gods.”
“Do you think he was right ?” Asked Pinthrad.
“Maybe, he was a God himself and he was right about me seeing a sky full of stars.” Said Seren.
Even in just the light from one lamp and the stars, Seren could see that Pinthrad wanted to ask her something. He’d become far deeper since being healed from a dreadful bludgeoning; far deeper

than she ever remembered him being as clerk to the Guild of Sorcerers. Some were like that though, only reaching their true potential after a brush with death. Seren wasn't sure what his wife would make of the new Pinthrad, she'd always seemed happy with him being quiet and rather timid.
"We were sent out to find Maya and Uula Podda." Said Pinthrad. "Well, we succeeded and found them. Leaving aside the matter of Tejan the assassin, it seems to me that we could all go home now. Yet here we are, beginning another risk to life and limb on the Island of the Ancients."
"Never assume Muzzie can be taken literally." Said Seren. "Our official orders were to find Maya and the young ancient one. But Muzzie tends to assume we'll investigate every interesting pathway and village we find along the way. Be honest, it is fun, isn't it ?"
"I'm loving every minutes of it, but there is my wife to take into account." Said Pinthrad.
"Not likely to be happy with all your adventuring, I suppose ?" Asked Seren.
Poor Pinthrad, he looked beyond simply upset. The Sorcerers Guild had been passing on regular updates, but those had ended once they passed through gateway. Pinthrad's wife was probably trying to get in to see Muzzie every morning.
"She's always wanted me to lead a quiet and fairly risk free existence." Said Pinthrad.
So he'd volunteered to explore the seldom visited part of the rifts, when Muzzie had asked for someone to find Maya and Uula. Seren had a little sympathy for Ezzel Pinthrad, but his main problem did seem to be self-inflicted.
"Think of it this way, Ezzel." Said Seren. "You're already a hero. There are likely to be statues erected of you in the City of the Lost God. If you're part of renewing relations with the Ancient Ones, Muzzie is likely to give you a province to run, maybe even a major city. I'm sure your wife will love that."
"Oh, she will……..She definitely will." Said Pinthrad.

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Rayan had predicted that N'Faddy would develop a special kind of friendship with one of the Kveld shepherds, and she'd been right. A sexual relationship between different species can be difficult, there were cases of it causing dreadful injuries to the genitals. The shepherd who'd noticed N'Faddy wasn't a Kveld; he was a fairly ordinary Dredger hybrid from the City of the Lost God. N'Faddy hadn't given Rayan that many details, but it seemed they'd been very careful at first, and the intimate side of their relationship was now incredible.
"Dynka and Yorn like him well enough." N'Faddy had told her. "But I wasn't looking for a new father for my children. We all have needs and some male companionship is nice on the road."
Rayan understood all too well. Her own relationship with Lanssor was based on physical needs and someone to talk over her problems with, during cold nights on the rifts. Not that sex with Lanssor wasn't truly amazing. Beraan was the shepherd's name, who was once married, but his wife had been killed by raiders near the ruins of Quron City. Of course, Rayan had to ask Lanssor about him once they were in the same bedroll at the darkest part of the night.
"Beraan misses his wife, but rarely talks about it." Lanssor said. "They had no children, but that doesn't mean he won't care for young Yorn and Dynka. Personally, I think N'Faddy found herself a good man."
Rayan tended to agree, but if it all went wrong; it was just sex and companionship on the road. No one was talking about marriage yet, and it might never come to that. And if N'Faddy found herself with child ? The shepherds were a tight community, who looked after one another; N'Faddy would be just fine.
"I make it that we're about five days from Mount Erran." Said Rayan.
"Hmmmmm, probably closer to seven." Said Lanssor.

“Whatever, five days, or even if it’s eight.” Said Rayan. “There will be other groups there, some wanting to join the army of the empire. N’Faddy may get a chance to join one of those groups. She might even be given access to the rift gate. If she wants to join a group heading home to attack Tandalla, we can’t stand in her way.”
Lanssor could take a while to ponder on answers to big questions and the coming war was already creating lots of big questions. Rayan hugged him, as he looked at the ceiling of their yurt; silently for a good half an hour.
“I’m not worried about N’Faddy and her children feeling trapped with us, she’ll always be free to leave and go where she pleases.” Said Lanssor. “She’s a determined woman and my worry is that she might take Beraan with her. Still, wars create some relationships and destroy others. We can only watch and offer help when it’s needed.”
It was Rayan’s turn to look at the ceiling of the yurt in the darkness; like Lanssor she could see almost as well in the background ultra violet wash, as she could at the brightest part of the day. Her thoughts were on gossip that might well be no more than gossip. Still, she wanted Lanssor’s opinion on her thoughts about it.
“I’ve heard Estrin-Okanan is awake and sits on her throne at Mount Erran.” Said Rayan.
“I’ve heard the same, from someone who usually talks sense.” Said Lanssor.
“Then we have to talk to her and offer our services.” Said Rayan.
“Oh, the war…… It will rip everything apart.” Said Lanssor. “I have the shepherds to look after, but you may go where you please; you always have.”
He was angry with her, but Rayan didn’t want an argument while they were naked and wrapped up in their bedrolls. She loved Lanssor, but love and old loyalties had to come second during wars. She kissed him and snuggled up even closer to her lover.
“No more words, not tonight.” She said.
Rayan was pleased that Lanssor’s body responded to her kisses and closeness. Soon the only emotion in the yurt was their passion for one another.

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The things Den-Phraxis-Ohm ate often looked fairly gruesome and unattractive, but he did always offer some of his meal to Nethra. Bugs, carrion and things that slivered underground were his usually diet. Nethra took a sniff at the bundle of something or other he was offering her.
“Trust me, you’ll like this…….I caught it fresh this morning.” Said Den.
His meal looked squashed and ripped apart, to the point where it wasn’t edible. But then again, Den himself was a huge bug; close to being an adult son of the Hive Mother. Nethra had refused his offers so often and the bundle in his hands didn’t smell bad. Some of his offerings would have made a Jangar beast puke. She reached out and took a lump of meat the size of her thumb.
“Thank you.” She said.
It was good, despite the bone in it which looked a strange shape. Nethra was hungry though and ate every bit.
“See…….I told you it was good.” Said Den. “Here…..Take some more.”
Den ate big meals and he still had a large bundle of food after Nethra had taken enough to fill her hands. It was delicious, though she promised herself to never ask what dead creature she was eating. She’d eaten some strange dead things as a tribal child on the rifts, but Den’s meal was a lot more bloody and gruesome looking than those.
“Do you want to know what you’re eating ?” Asked Den.
“No……..Never, ever tell me.”

“Hey, Higgal looks to be heading this way.” Said one of Ginnda’s children.
Higgal, one of the oldest and toughest of the greys out of Annill. It was said he was older than some of the Old Gods, but Nethra thought that was unlikely. Some hybrids lived for thousands of years and no one really knew why. Nethra had hitched a ride in Higgal’s waggon from Annill to the portals of Nara-Unadaris. She wasn’t sure if he was aware of that, so she was determined to smile a lot and be on her best behaviour. He was a living legend and she tried not to annoy living legends.
“Nethra, the very person.” Said Higgal.
He said it in a deep booming voice and she thought he might be about to tell her off, maybe even send for the military police. Chosen allowing her to sleep Higgal’s waggon, didn’t make it legal.
“Sorry, is this about using your waggon as free accommodation ?” She asked.
“No, that’s not a problem.” Said Higgal. “Muzzie received a report on the hostilities in the market area of Tandalla. He’s willing to accept that it was started by Tandalla. He has new orders for the Children of the Hive and I believe you’re now part of their army.”
“Oh yes, definitely one of us is our Nethra.” Said Den.
“They’ve even got me eating bugs……..And enjoying them.” Said Nethra.
“Hmmm……Funny you should say that.” Said Higgal. “Muzzie has decided that the next phase of the start of the war; will be attacking food supplies. No attacking Tandalla City yet, but all food waggons are now to be considered legitimate targets.”
“About time we were allowed to fight with few restrictions.” Said Den.
It was very much Den’s show; he was a child of the hive after all, but she wasn’t. Nethra sat on the ground near the camp fire and listened to Higgal and Den thrash out the details of what could and couldn’t be attacked. It seemed the definition of a food waggon was quite wide and open to spur of the moment interpretation. Muzzie obviously wanted the war to escalate, without actually saying that.
“Any news from Annill ?” Asked Nethra.
“I’ll assume you mean news about your tavern, the Annill Defender.” Said Higgal. “The last I heard is that they’re busy and doing well. Lots of fighters passing through and all of them needing ale to drink and a decent meal.”
It was one of those chance in a million things, but Nethra felt she needed to ask. If nothing else it might convince Higgal that she hadn’t slit her partner’s throat and flung his body into the nearby swamp.
“I know it’s unlikely, but is Merrick one of the fighters heading towards the war ?” She asked.
“Merrick…….No, he’s not been seen, I’d know if he had.” Said Higgal. “Being truthful, many think you sent Merrick hurtling into the land of the dead.”
“Maybe one day, but he was alive the last time I saw him.” Said Nethra.
Higgal accepted a drink, but said he couldn’t stay for a meal. He talked of having lots of Muzzie’s orders to deliver. Nethra thought he didn’t want to risk being given a gruesome looking bundle of unidentified meat. Den fished his meal and gave Nethra a very intense look.
“No time like the present when it comes to attacking food waggons.” Said Den. “Do we fill a few more bottle bombs and scout the main road north ?”
“That sounds like an enjoyable way to spend the remainder of the day.” Said Nethra.
Should hearing that Merrick was kind of officially still alive have left her feeling warm and fuzzy ? It didn’t though; the hatred for him had been driven in too deep. Just thinking of him still wandering across the rifts, gave her the abilities of a full rage. She could carry a lot of bottle bombs and fly faster than Den and his numerous siblings.

“There…….Waggons heavily laden with fresh vegetables.” Shouted Den.
Not all fresh vegetable came in waggons from Aarabash; there were small farms not far to the north of Tandalla. They may have been persuaded to part with their winter reserves by threats, but Nethra considered them valid targets.
“He, who feeds my enemy, is my enemy.” She yelled. “Attack them……Burn every waggon.”
“You heard our Chinnura.” Shouted Den. “Destroy the waggons.”
Over a dozen children of the hive attacked the waggons, with Nethra leading them. It was a very quick and bloody battle; with few of the waggon handlers surviving.

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Tejan rarely described herself and when she did, the term human was almost never used. She might have been born as a human to human parents, but the Menderan Empire had turned her into something else, something tough strong and nearly indestructible. Actually her father was a bit of a mystery, so maybe she never had been totally human from birth. There was no way of telling now and being honest, Tejan didn’t really care. She’d been a member of the Imperial Guard, one of the Damned. She left of her own accord for many reasons, but was still proud to have once been a member of the Damned. Some of alterations to her body had been removed, but some were permanent. Once the Menderan bio-engineers changed your DNA, it tended to stay changed. Not that Tejan complained, those alteration meant she was still faster than most and a very well paid professional assassin.
“How……How did you step backward while Itzel was coming at you ?” Asked Seren.
Many of the crew of the Golden Dawn had come to watch Tejan train with Itzel; and quite a few of the group Seren commanded. Tejan had picked up on the need to make herself useful, so she was doing just that. Training with fighting swords made of various metals could be dangerous; but it kept you alert and was the only real way to learn.
“My Tejan moves faster than a startled rock hopper.” Said Sokkelf.
Not exactly a compliment, but Tejan had to join Sokkelf in his laughter. She’d seen Seren watching her and then practising the moves later on, while everyone was busy with other things. Now there was the chance to actually train with Seren; which was definitely being useful. Seren was heavy though for a creature that flew; she’d have to watch that.
“I can show you……If Itzel doesn’t mind watching for a while.” Said Tejan.
“No, I’d like to see a few moves from a distance.” Said Itzel.
To begin with it was as if Seren had no wings. After a while she began to use one or two flaps to keep her balance. Tejan realised that the Damned were superb fighters, but give them wings and they’d be even better. They danced around one another and the audience grew. The crew of the Golden Dawn were a bloodthirsty lot, constantly calling out one of the combatants to cut the other. They’d obviously never got used to fights sometimes being just for training. Seren’s attention seemed taken by a shouting Screech creature and Tejan took the opportunity. She spun around the back of Seren and literally sliced open her already tiny back skirt.
“Damned, the Screech should be banned from ships.” Said Seren. “First point to you…….Shall we continue ?”
“Yes, why not…….Just one more point, no matter who gets it.” Said Tejan.
The captain of the Golden Dawn came out to watch, though Tejan had yet to learn his name. Seren looked tired though it might well have been an act. Tejan saw an opportunity to step in close to Seren and punch her hard in the stomach. Not that she was sure it was where dark angels had their stomach, but a hard thump there was likely to have the desired effect. Seren’s fatigue was all an act

of course and Seren used those damn wings of hers. As Tejan stepped in, Seren flapped her wings twice and literally flipped over backward. She landed to Tejan's left and used a closed fist to strike the back of Tejan's sword hand. There could be no argument about who had won the point, Tejan had dropped her sword and it was now lying on the ground.
"The Damned fight well……..But you need wings." Said Seren.
"I am beginning to realise that." Said Tejan.
"There…….The Island of the Ancients." Someone up in the rigging was yelling.
Tejan picked up her blade and joined the members of the crew who were staring at the island in the distance. It was a long way off, the earliest they'd arrive there was likely to be the middle of the next day.
"Flying Ancient Ones……Only the golden ones fly." Said Adamaz.
There were three Ancient Ones, flying around the top of a mountain that was almost obscured by clouds. It was a wonderful sight.
"I hope they choose to help Muzzie in the coming war." Said Galla.
"There's a chance they may decide to remain neutral." Said Lilleth. "They've done that before."
"Look at them soaring with the wind." Said Itzel. "Such wonderful creatures."

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Faalŕh Haŕadask liked the temple complex known as Nara-Unadaris. There were portals to just about everywhere and the garrison was large enough to fight off any likely attackers. His quarters were good too, all the comforts of home; but with a slight feeling of danger. His assistant and personal guard, Jenda was lying next to him in the huge bed. The furnishings were good in his quarters; there were rumours that it was where Estrin-Okanan had stayed for a while. If the rooms were good enough for one of the Nine, they were good enough for him. There was a lot of Genova in Jenda and she was wickedly fast with a blade. A trained assassin, he knew she always slept with a blade under her pillow. They were lovers, but he was always very careful how he woke her. Faal gently moved Jenda's hair away from her face and kissed her cheek. Her hair was currently red, but might well be black by the end of the day.
"Are you awake ?" He asked.
"I am now." Said Jenda.
"I hate to say this, but we should get up." Said Faal. "We need to get dressed and be seen on the streets of Nara-Unadaris."
"Or, we could stay in bed until the day is half over." Said Jenda. "It will be fun; I'll make sure it's fun."
It had been her idea to share his bed the first time and now it was as if they were a pair of over sexed youngsters. For some reason he still went through the motions of behaving as though their relationship was a secret. Silly really, anyone who mattered realised they were sharing a bed.
"I hate to ruin the morning, but we really do need to get up." Said Faal.
Jenda stretched and then got out of bed. He'd watched her do it many times, but still enjoyed seeing her put on her fairly diaphanous robe. Faal went to the balcony which overlooked the courtyard where the portals were always busy, night and day.
"Wow, the portals are beautiful." Said Jenda. "I've never seen so many of them being used."
"War is on the way……..Supplies are needed everywhere." Said Faal.
Was he going to tell her ? Muzzie hadn't said it was a secret and anyway, Jenda was someone he totally trusted. Faal put his arms around her, as they watched a long line of warriors enter a portal, heading for somewhere they were needed.
"Can you keep a secret ?" Asked Faal.

“You know I can.”
“I know you can my angel…….The war will arrive soon, everyone knows that. When it is over Muzzie will need someone he can trust to rule Tandalla. He has asked me to be that person.”
“I always knew you were destined for greatness.” Said Jenda.
Would she expect their relationship to develop when they were in the palace in Tandalla. Being truthful he didn’t hate the idea of marriage with her. That was a conversation for another day though, when Tandalla was his to rule.
“Look, the greys are off to defend Aarabash.” Said Faal. “They’ll make sure we don’t go hungry.”
“They look so fierce…….I hope they play their battle drums.” Said Jenda.
It was as if they could hear her, as the drums of the greys began to fill the temple complex with their steady rhythm.

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