

THE ETERNAL COURT

READ-ALOUD DESCRIPTIONS

TABLE MATERIALS



JESSE ALEXANDER

THE ETERNAL COURT
FILE · EC · READAL · EDITION I · MDCCXCIII



Read=Aloud

Descriptions for the City

*Passages to read aloud at the table — the markets, the Castle, the
trenches, the under-streets — already cadenced for delivery.*

KORMOR KIRAK · VIDEK · ANNO 1793

FORMAT	USE	VOICE
<i>Boxed Text · A5</i>	<i>Read at Table</i>	<i>The Narrator</i>

CAPITULUM

THE CLIFF ROAD APPROACH TO THE CASTLE



First Impression

You leave the grey-green fields behind and the stone begins. A wide road, worn smooth by centuries of traffic, winds upward along the cliff face in switchbacks. With each turn, the city below shrinks -- the peaked roofs become a patchwork, the streets become threads. The wind picks up as you climb, carrying scents of distant pine and something metallic that might be iron or blood-memory. Every half-mile the road opens into a small courtyard

where Red Guards maintain watch from stone positions, their crimson surcoats the only color in the grey landscape.

Night Version

The road becomes a ribbon of pale stone against absolute darkness. Your elevation gives you stars, but they feel farther away than they should. The wind carries sounds from the castle above -- not clearly identifiable, but present, deliberate, and aware of your approach. Guard fires burn at the watch stations, and the guards' eyes follow you longer than seems practical as you pass.

CAPITULUM

THE BLOOD GATE



First Impression

Two towers rise before you like teeth, connected by a crenellated wall that rises higher with every step. The gate itself is wrought iron, stained rust-brown by centuries or by design, bound in dark steel inlaid with silver patterns forming a crowned skull impaled on a scepter, surrounded by thorns. Above the gate hang skulls on iron hooks, old enough that time has rendered them nearly unrecognizable, though in certain lights they seem to turn slightly, watching the approach road below. The Knight-Captain at the checkpoint records your

name in a leather ledger, and his courtesy cannot quite hide the calculation behind his eyes.

Night Version

The gate becomes a guillotine silhouetted against candlelit windows deep within the castle. The iron seems to glow faintly red in the torchlight, and the skulls above become definite, present, impossible to ignore. The sound of the gate closing -- should it happen -- would echo for longer than distance should permit. You feel watched not by men but by the gate itself, by the castle's will made manifest in iron and bone.

CAPITULUM

THE GRAND BALLROOM



FIRST IMPRESSION *(During the Treaty Ball)*

The air itself seems to pause as you cross the threshold. Light -- brilliant, merciless light from massive crystal chandeliers -- falls on a floor of polished marble arranged in patterns that seem to move even in stillness. The ceiling rises eighty feet into a vault of impossible curves. Two hundred feet of length, one hundred feet of width, and it's all present at once: the musicians' gallery far above playing something simultaneously triumphant and sorrowful; delegations from both empires moving through the crowd with careful courtesy; the throne's observers on the Upper Balcony, watching everything, expressionless. The music shifts, the dancers turn, and the balance of empires turns with them.

Empty

The ballroom without its crowd becomes something alien. The chandeliers cast geometric shadows that seem too precise, too aware. The marble floor shows reflections that seem to show not just the present moment but glimpses of other times, other dances, other people moving across this same floor. Your footsteps echo with a resonance that doesn't match the distance traveled. The space feels vast and compressed simultaneously, and you carry a persistent sense of being observed by something that isn't made of flesh.

CAPITULUM

THE THRONE ROOM



First Impression

The doors open and the space swallows sound. The ceiling rises impossibly high -- higher than the external walls of the castle have any right to contain. The throne sits on a dais of red stone, raised six feet above the floor, fashioned from black iron inlaid with human bone worked into intricate patterns. The walls are lined with banners of the Veresz dynasty, embroidered in colors that somehow remain vivid despite centuries of age. The figures stitched into the cloth seem to shift when you're not looking directly at them. The air carries a weight of authority that is almost physical, and the acoustics are engineered so

precisely that when the Queen speaks, her voice fills the chamber like a pronouncement from reality itself.

Without the Queen Present

The throne room becomes a tomb. The ambient quiet is profound -- even careful footsteps echo sharply on the polished black marble. The banners seem to hold their breath. The bone inlay in the throne catches what little light penetrates the space, creating patterns that hurt to look at directly. The dais seems farther away than it should be, and climbing it would feel like ascending into judgment.

CAPITULUM

SZERET'S BEDROOM



First Impression

The door is plain wood that could conceal anything. What it conceals is a turret room -- circular, intimate, and suffused with warmth that seems impossible in a castle of stone. A brass telescope on a wheeled stand points toward a north-facing window. The walls are lined so densely with books that spines overlap, each volume marked with careful notes and annotations. Star charts are pinned between the shelves. A small brazier burns constant fire. The room is not just warm -- it radiates intention, defiance, sanctuary. This is a place where

someone lives entirely herself, and it carries the weight of that solitude and that precious privacy.

Night Version

The telescope waits in darkness, angled toward stars only visible from this height. The books surround you like guardians. The fire in the brazier casts moving shadows that make the books seem to shift and lean toward you. A locked journal sits on the writing desk, silent and absolute. The warmth here is the last warmth in a cold castle, and you understand immediately that you're privileged to witness it.

CAPITULUM

KIRALINE'S BEDCHAMBER



First Impression

The iron door is carved with patterns that shift between geometry and faces. Push it open and the temperature rises immediately. Vines grow from the walls themselves, thick as human wrists, covered in glowing thorns that provide light without source. The floor is carved with runes so deeply carved that the stone must be ancient beyond counting, the patterns spiraling outward in designs that hurt to look at directly. A massive four-poster bed dominates the center, fashioned from black iron with carved faces of suffering positioned at each corner. The air is thick and warm, carrying scents of copper and old blood and

flowers left too long in a tomb. Time feels strange here. A few minutes stretches. Gravity seems to pull harder toward the bed.

Night Version

The phosphorescence of the vines becomes the only light. The runes glow faintly, visible only in the corner of vision. The bed becomes a throne or an altar or a trap, depending on how you read the shadows. The warmth is less comfort than warning. Nothing about this space is coincidental. Nothing about it is safe.

CAPITULUM

SZERET'S BEDROOM + KIRALINE'S BEDCHAMBER COMPARISON



Consider how these two spaces -- separated by stone and will -- define the relationship between them. Szeret's room is sanctuary through defiance. Kiraline's room is dominion made manifest. The contrast should be emphasized when one is visited after the other.

CAPITULUM

THE DUNGEONS



First Impression

Smell reaches you first -- old stone, human confinement, and something metallic and sour underneath. The air is damp despite being below the water table. Iron-barred cells stretch in both directions, some empty, some holding prisoners. Those who are chained wear manacles heavy enough that the slightest movement makes them rattle. Water drips constantly, echoing off the vaulted ceiling in a rhythm that sounds almost like a heartbeat. Red Guard patrols move in pairs, their armor gleaming despite the gloom, their faces carefully blank, their discomfort obvious.

Deep in the Dungeons

The oppression deepens. You pass cells whose occupants no one will explain. The prisoners who are not starving seem deliberately maintained, fed regularly, their water fresh. The message is clear: the Queen keeps her assets intact. One old woman has occupied her cell for twenty-seven years. She speaks to people who aren't there and seems surprised by visitors. Somewhere in the darkness below, something wails at irregular intervals.

CAPITULUM

THE FEEDING CHAMBER

First Impression

The door is marked by something in the air itself -- a threshold. Inside, the walls are warm, almost flesh-warm. Bloodstains cover every surface. Walls, floors, even portions of the ceiling. Soap and water have been applied obsessively, but the stains remain, worked into the stone so completely that centuries of cleaning haven't removed them. The centerpiece is a heavy wooden chair, reinforced with iron straps, with manacles mounted to the armrests and legs. A large mirror faces the chair, its frame carved from black wood with symbols worked into every inch. Channels run from beneath the chair to drains in the floor. The room is lit by a single candelabra that never goes out.

What the Mirror Shows

Looking into the mirror reveals not just reflection but something more. The Queen sits here often. The chair shows the shape of her will made physical. The mirror reflects not just light but something darker -- the ability to watch every reflective surface in the castle at once. Those who touch it directly experience a sensory rupture: overlapping reflections showing every room, every surface, the entire castle at once. Most cannot process it without a moment of profound disorientation.

CAPITULUM

THE COMET CHAMBER



First Impression

The passage opens suddenly into a cavern so vast the darkness itself seems to expand. The ceiling is lost far above, visible only when lightning flashes through the space -- lightning without storm, static energy that arcs regularly around the chamber's center. In the center is a crater, perfectly round, thirty feet across, with impact scarring radiating outward in concentric rings. At the crater's center is a stone that shouldn't exist -- dark, almost black, like glass cooled at extreme temperature. The surface is smooth and reflective. It pulses

with faint violet luminescence, coming from within the stone itself, pulsing at irregular intervals.

The Compulsion

Standing near the stone creates a persistent compulsion to approach it, to understand it, to open yourself to whatever power it contains. The air vibrates. The stone radiates a pull that is not physical but something deeper, something answering a frequency you don't consciously hear. The floor is scattered with bones in shapes that don't quite match human anatomy and pieces of metal suggesting no known metallurgical tradition.

CAPITULUM

THE ALBION EMBASSY



First Impression

The iron fence stands eight feet tall, its wrought-iron spikes fashioned as stylized crowns and eagles. Stone pillars flank the gates, carved with the Imperial cipher. Beyond the fence, a small courtyard separates the street from the building's main entrance, the flagstones laid in a precise geometric pattern. Two Imperial Guards stand permanent watch at the gate, scarlet jackets with gold trim, black trousers, tall bearskins, highly polished boots. Each carries a

saber and a rifle. The Embassy flag -- the double eagle in gold on a crimson field -- hangs from a wrought-iron bracket above the main door. Walking past this fence is like stepping sideways through a door into the Albion Empire itself. Inside, the cobblestones are swept clean, the flagstones gleam with beeswax, and Albion servants move with military precision. Outside the fence, Kormor Kirak continues: winding streets, vampire servants on errands, Red Guard patrols in the night air.

Interior Reception Hall

A grand entrance, two stories tall, with a soaring ceiling of white plaster decorated with gilded molding. A crystal chandelier -- a luxury in Kormor Kirak -- hangs from the center. The floor is polished black marble with white veins, creating a subtle chessboard effect. Two sweeping staircases curve upward on either side, meeting at a landing where a formal portrait of the current Emperor hangs in carved mahogany. The portrait is formal and imposing. Every detail announces Albion authority maintained at the edge of the world.

CAPITULUM

ROSS'S CURIOSITY SHOP

First Impression

The facade is a riot of copper patina and dark wood. A painted sign hanging above the street-level entrance shows a clockwork gear meshed with a question mark. Tall windows display rotating collections of mechanical wonders -- astrolabes, music boxes, brass orreries, intricate locks -- arranged with the careful chaos of someone who knows exactly where everything is but would never waste time organizing. Push through the copper-framed door and a small bell chimes -- melodic, charming, nothing threatening. The air carries the permanent scent of machine oil, brass polish, and solder smoke. Clockwork ticking echoes from invisible mechanisms.

The Shop Front

The front room is roughly twenty feet wide and thirty feet deep. Every vertical surface holds something interesting. Glass display cases line the walls at eye level: delicate clockwork songbirds that sing when wound, intricate mechanical puzzles, brass compasses with multiple needles for different purposes, finely-crafted locks, optical lenses ground to precise specifications. The counter is a massive slab of dark wood scored by years of tool marks and small burn scars from soldering work. Behind it, shelves hold specialized oils, packs of gears in various sizes, wooden spools of brass wire. The floor is wooden, worn smooth in traffic patterns, and it creaks in certain spots -- natural warning that tells the proprietor where visitors move.

CAPITULUM

THE KEREKEDO MARKETPLACE

FIRST IMPRESSION (*Arrival*)

The marketplace sprawls before you like a wound that refuses to close -- always bleeding, always restless, always full of people and voices. Hundreds of people pack the stalls and squares on any given day: soldiers on leave spending their wages, merchants arguing with money changers, children darting between legs to pocket dropped coins, beggars singing for food, Red Guards watching from elevated positions, and criminals conducting business in plain sight while pretending to sell winter cloaks. The ground is worn smooth by centuries of footsteps, stained with wine and blood and spilled grain. The noise is constant: the bark of merchants, the clink of coins, the crack of the auctioneer's gavel, the hiss of steam from food vendors, the clatter of carts. The smell cuts through everything -- roasted meat, human sweat, leather, woodsmoke, incense, the sweet rot of spoiled food, horses, and underneath it all, the mineral smell of the Videk Mountains.

The Grand Square

At least two acres of open cobblestone, surrounded on all sides by permanent shops, guild halls, and formal stalls. The center holds an ancient fountain -- a stone structure carved with horses and swords in the pre-war style, dry for fifteen years. No one maintains it. The fountain has become the unofficial center of the marketplace: merchants use it as a landmark ("by the old fountain's north corner"), children play in its dry basin, at night homeless

people sleep inside its bowl. The cobblestones are uneven after centuries of wear, creating natural puddles after rain and pools of stagnant water in the heat. They're grooved in certain directions where foot traffic is heaviest -- toward the guild hall, toward the food vendors, toward the alleyways where most people don't ask questions.

THE ALBION QUARTER *(Eastern Side)*

Military precision dominates. Nearly identical wooden stalls, goods arranged with mechanical efficiency, price lists written clearly. Clerks work the counters with the brisk, no-nonsense manner of a supply depot. This quarter smells of machine oil, fresh-cut wood, and the peculiar metallic smell of industrial production. Conversations are shorter, more transactional. Soldiers mingle with merchants, and everything is reproducible and replaceable. Nothing touches a master smith's hand.

THE TERRASSIAN QUARTER *(Western Side)*

Chaos that is somehow warm and inviting. Stalls decorated with cloth, plants, handwritten signs, personal touches. Merchants call out wares with song-like rhythm. Arguments over prices can last hours, sealed with wine and bread rather than paperwork. The smell is rich and agricultural -- cheese, wine, dried herbs, cured meat, the green smell of fresh produce. Every piece is unique, bearing marks of its maker. Color and personality dominate. This is where the marketplace feels most human.

CAPITULUM

EPPY'S PUB

First Impression

A squat stone building with a slate roof, three stories tall, its grey exterior softened by hanging planters of herbs and flowers that shouldn't survive mountain winters. A weathered sign hanging above the entrance reads simply "EPPY'S" in faded gold letters, swinging slightly in the mountain wind. A thin plume of smoke rises from the chimney almost constantly -- the fireplace never truly goes cold. Push through the heavy oak doors and warmth hits you like a physical thing.

The Common Room

A fireplace dominates the northern wall, large enough to stand in, its opening arched in fitted stone. The fire crackles constantly, fed by wood delivered regularly. Along the eastern wall runs a long bar of dark wood, worn smooth by decades of elbows and coins. Behind it, shelves reach almost to the ceiling, lined with bottles, glasses, and mysterious jars. The walls are original grey stone covered in worn wooden paneling up to waist height. Tables and chairs scatter throughout in various states of honest wear -- nothing matches, but everything is solid and clean. Some tables are scarred from boots propped on them over the years, others stained slightly from spilled drinks that never quite washed out. To the left of the fireplace sits a raised musician's platform, six inches higher than the main floor, three steps leading up to it. Bowls of fresh herbs sit on several tables -- fragrant sprigs of rosemary and mint. A shelf near

the bar holds books: histories of the Videk Mountains, an old herbal guide, love stories and adventure tales. Windows on the western wall are thick and old, tinted slightly blue-green with age, diffusing the light into something soft and underwater-like even on clear days.

THE FIRE CORNER (*Best Seats*)

Not separate but a specific location within the common room. A few tables positioned to catch full warmth of fire, private enough for conversations but open enough to feel part of the pub's community. The warmth here is intense, the kind of warmth that drives winter from your bones and makes you forget what cold feels like. This is where regulars claim tables. This is where the party should gravitate on first visit.

CAPITULUM

HALLASET FIELDS (THE CEMETERY)

First Impression

The grass grows head-high, reed-like stalks fed by soil enriched across a thousand years of human decomposition. The earth itself is literally built from remains of the dead, layered and compressed until the boundary between soil and corpse becomes indistinct. A network of trails cuts through the grass, maintained through constant use and the simple fact that vegetation refuses to grow where human feet have worn the earth bare. These trails connect raised stone plinths spaced throughout the fields at irregular intervals. Each plinths marks a burial site, though the practice is more complex than the term suggests. Bodies are brought here and left, deposited on stone platforms where carrion birds attend to the work of decomposition.

The Scent and the Flowers

Drifting mist hangs perpetually between the reed stalks. The mist obscures sight lines and creates a landscape where distance becomes unreliable, where something fifty paces away might be invisible or might suddenly emerge from the fog as though it had always been present. Memorial stones are scattered throughout, their surfaces carved with names and dates in fading letters. Fresh ward symbols mark the newest graves, painted in red ochre that has not yet faded to invisibility. The air carries the scent of Hallaset flowers, strange blooms that grow nowhere else in Kormor Kirak. The fragrance is perfume-

like on first encounter, sweet in a way that speaks of growth and renewal, but lingering beneath the initial sweetness lies something unsettling -- an organic smell suggesting decay and transformation, the scent of things being unmade and remade into new forms.

Night Version

The mist becomes absolute. Sight lines collapse. The wards on the newest graves glow faintly, marking graves in darkness. The flower scent becomes cloying. Something moves through the reed grass with purpose, something that was not moving this morning. The sky above is starless here, obscured by mist that should have cleared but has not.

CAPITULUM

THE CITY STREETS OF KORMOR KIRAK (GENERAL ARRJDAE)

First Impression

The city rises from a remote mountain valley like a memory carved in stone. Red-tiled roofs catch what little light penetrates the perpetual mountain mist, and cobblestone streets wind through quarters dominated by peaked-roof buildings that crowd against one another as if for warmth. The castle -- Torony Piros -- dominates the skyline, its spires reaching toward a sky that rarely clears, a Gothic architectural excess that seems to defy practical military logic. Craggy mountains loom on every side, their faces sharp with ancient erosion, while the entire city wears the aesthetic of old Europe: fairy-tale walls, defensive lines built when fortifications meant survival, the sensation of stepping backward through time.

The Red Guard Presence

Red Guards patrol the cobblestone streets in polished armor the color of drying blood, each one loyal to the queen and sworn to maintain the fiction of order that keeps tensions between the consulates from erupting into open violence. Ward symbols are painted in fading red ochre on walls and doorframes throughout the city, ancient sigils meant to ward off evil spirits.

Some are old enough that the paint has become barely visible. Others are fresh, hastily applied by nervous hands after dark.

CAPITULUM

PART TWO: CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

CAPITULUM

QUEEN KIRALJNE VERESZ
EROSZAKOS



First Appearance

The ballroom falls silent. Not from sound, but from cessation. The air itself seems to pause. She descends from the upper balcony as though the laws of movement do not quite apply to her, each guest finding themselves on bent knee before conscious thought arrives. Kiraline wears the appearance of a woman in her forties, but this is theater. The truth is older, patient, and lethal. Her wardrobe is a statement of deliberate anachronism: clothing from earlier eras, ornamental couture that predates current fashions by centuries, draped in silks from distant reaches, jewelry that catches light in ways that defy simple geometry. When she moves, there is no weight to her. The dress does not sway so much as flow, as if she walks on currents invisible to others. She crosses entire rooms by means she does not explain, and observers find sudden interest in their feet.

The Reveal

When she speaks, her voice carries the weight of pronouncement rather than conversation. She speaks as though language itself is something she invented. Her speech is precise, musical, utterly devoid of accent or regional inflection. Her presence creates a boundary that everyone acknowledges without discussing. She is power itself, rendered in flesh and silk and something far older that wears both like fashionable clothing.

CAPITULUM

PRINCESS
VERESS

SZERET



First Appearance

She gallops through the castle gate on horseback at night, racing through streets designed for carriages and protocol, and people cheer as she passes. They have learned not to cheer too loudly or for too long, because their faces fall after she disappears, as though her presence grants them something their normal lives cannot sustain. She is in her twenties, with a goth's aesthetic and a child's spirit, dark and menacing in appearance but cheery and delightful in manifestation. The contradiction, rather than confusing those who know her, forms the core of her appeal. She is everything she appears to be, and none of it, simultaneously.

Her Presence

Her garb is carefully chosen to evoke menace and danger; her clothing speaks of shadows and forbidden things. Yet she moves through the world with an impulsiveness and joy that seems incongruous with her appearance. Her immediate attachment to those who catch her interest is intense and charged, running deeper than simple friendship. She has a clarity that sophisticated adults often lack, and she rates people and experiences by food names in a personal taxonomy that seems nonsensical until you realize it is actually quite accurate: Mushroom for earthy things, Tomato for passionate things, Lettuce for boring things, Peach for delightful things.

CAPITULUM

BARRON WHITEHALL



First Appearance

He carries himself like someone who has spent decades learning to exist in spaces where his presence creates discomfort. His eyes are sharp and constantly cataloging threats. He wears his years with the ease of someone accustomed to responsibility, but those who spend time with him notice something else: scarring on his neck in patterns that suggest claws, and a persistent cough that doubles him over at unpredictable intervals. There is something military in his bearing, something that suggests he has commanded and will command again. When he speaks, people listen. Not from fear, but from the sense that he has earned the right to be heard through actions taken long ago and at significant cost.

His Power

His primary weapon is a Spetum that folds into a cane, a marvel of engineering that extends to six-foot length with a central blade flanked by side prongs. In his hands it becomes something alive, an extension of will and training that moves through combat like a dance executed at lethal speed. He carries multiple weapons with the ease of someone for whom violence is a tool, not a surprise. But his real power is something harder to define: the ability to make people want to follow him, even into danger. Especially into danger.

CAPITULUM

VEJVA FAREN



First Appearance

She carries herself with the careful precision of someone for whom numbers matter more than words. Her eyes are sharp and slightly uncomfortable in their intensity, as though she is constantly running calculations that never quite resolve to satisfaction. There is something in her bearing that speaks of clerical work and meticulous organization, but there is also something else: a wariness that suggests she has seen things that numbers cannot account for, and this troubles her. She is competent in ways that are immediately apparent and uncomfortable in ways that are deliberately hidden.

Her Discomfort

She moves through nobility with the ease of someone who understands hierarchy, but there is always a sense that she finds the performance exhausting. She speaks with precision, never wasting words, and when she does speak, people tend to listen because the effort of gathering her thoughts into language suggests something worth hearing has been gathered.

CAPITULUM

JACK WINBOW (JACK
MACKIE)



First Appearance

He is large, rough, watchful in ways that make people instinctively careful around him. His face bears scars that speak of violence survived, his hair is deliberately unkempt, the leather of his clothing worn and honest. There is something in the set of his shoulders that suggests he is perpetually ready for violence, but there is also something underneath that readiness: a profound weariness, as though he carries something that requires constant discipline to contain. When he moves, he moves with precision that contradicts his casual presentation. There is no carelessness in him.

What He Carries

The scars along his back tell their own story, parallel claw-mark lines that no standard weapon could produce. There is something restless underneath his controlled presentation, something that moves with a rhythm all its own. Those who spend time with him come to realize that his casualness is as deliberate as formal dress would be. He wears scars like other men wear medals. Internally, he is learning what it means to exist as something other than human without surrendering his humanity.

CAPITULUM

DEVORGEN ROSS



First Appearance

He is a soldier in the way some people are born to soldiering. His uniform fits him the way skin fits bone. His eyes catalog threats the way weather vanes read wind. He rides alongside others through streets rendered temporary by steam and smoke, his clockwork arm producing a steady click-whir rhythm that becomes almost meditative if you stop resisting it. The mechanical fingers are precise, calibrated, less remarkable in their construction than in how completely he has integrated them into his identity. When asked about the arm, he offers no self-pity, no ceremony. The least remarkable element of my identity, he says, and means it.

His Pragmatism

He speaks with the clipped efficiency of someone stripped of flourish. His clothing is military, even when civilian, with subtle tells of rank and training visible in the way he wears it. There is in his bearing the quality of someone who has lived in war and trained in war and now exists in a provisional peace that feels like a performance everyone has agreed to. He carries about him the conviction that it will not last.

CAPITULUM

EPPY FLINDER



First Appearance

She is younger than she should be, or perhaps timeless in a way that makes age irrelevant. She wears earth tones and natural fabrics, moves through the world with a freedom that suggests she has forgotten most of the petty rules that constrain others. Her ears are her most distinctive feature: uniquely shaped, sleek, pointed, elegant in a way that speaks to ancestry rather than affectation. Not entirely human. There is something in the quality of her attention that suggests she is observing not just what is present but also what has passed and what might come. When she prepares a drink, it is with intention: honey and herbal ingredients arranged in combinations that should not work but do.

Her Knowledge

She whispers to certain people with the casual intimacy of someone who has known them across multiple incarnations. She seems to recognize things about them that they themselves have not yet admitted. Her speech is warm and unhurried, with occasional lapses into older word patterns that suggest languages running beneath her modern fluency. The Bastion Inn is older than it should be, and so is Eppy, and this is connected, and she guards this secret with the kind of care that suggests it is infinitely valuable.

CAPITULUM

ROZJTO VALEJKOZO



First Appearance

He moves through his domain like a merchant working three deceptions simultaneously. He dresses in foreign fabrics and colorful patterns that seem chosen specifically to make him memorable, to ensure that when people think of the market, they think of him. There is something in the quality of his attention that suggests he is constantly calculating, constantly assessing whether you are useful or dangerous or irrelevant. When he smiles, it is charming and entirely false. When he negotiates, his courtesy masks calculation of a high order.

What He Hides

He calls Szeret a friend and claims to be a traditionalist, someone who respects the old ways and the structures that hold society together. When royals approach, he shifts nervously, forces smiles that do not quite reach his eyes. But there is something underneath the performance, something that moves with efficiency and precision when witnesses are limited. He loves his work because work is the only place he feels fully real. He hates the constant performance, hates the feeling of being watched by his own patron, hates the possibility that he is being slowly positioned for some larger sacrifice.

CAPITULUM

ABBODAS AND BOLDOS (THE GATEKEEPERS)



FIRST APPEARANCE (*Aggodas*)

She is tall, lean, and quiet in a way that makes people nervous. She carries a staff topped with a knot of dried herbs that she burns during patrols, the smoke

trailing behind her like a second shadow. The herbs are not ceremonial -- they are a narcotic compound that enhances her connection to the spirit world, allowing her to sense things that ordinary perception cannot detect. Her eyes are bright and penetrating, as though she is seeing into layers of reality that ordinary people cannot access.

FIRST APPEARANCE (*Boldogg*)

He is broad, loud, and perpetually amused by the suffering of others. He wears the old Gatekeeper armor, a mismatched collection of plates and chain that belongs to an era before the Red Guards existed, and he polishes it with devotion that borders on religious. When he speaks, his voice carries the weight of someone accustomed to being obeyed. He can summon minor spirits through rituals involving blood, herbs, and chanting in a language that predates Common, and he uses them freely.

Together

They run protection rackets throughout the city with the competence of predators who have perfected the hunt. They are not aligned with any particular faction -- neither Albion nor Terrassia, neither the queen nor the conspiracy. They are an autonomous remnant of the kingdom's earliest days, and they consider themselves above the petty politics of empires. They move through the city with the easy arrogance of those who understand their power and trust in their institution's ancient prerogatives.

CAPITULUM

**BARRON WHITEHALL
(DEEPER IMPRESSION)**



The Mentor Figure

He meets you with the bearing of someone accustomed to command, but there is warmth in the meeting, a sense that he has assessed you and found something worth his time. His authority is absolute but never overbearing. He speaks to people as though they are capable of understanding difficult things and of rising to difficult challenges. When he coughs, he does not apologize for it. He simply pauses, waits for the fit to pass, and continues. There is something in the way he carries this that suggests he is not diminished by his affliction but merely inconvenienced by it.

CAPITULUM

SZERET VERESZ (DEEPER IMPRESSION)

The Wild Thing in a Crown

She sees you and her entire face lights with the brightness of genuine delight. She does not perform enthusiasm -- she experiences it fully and without filter. She moves with the confidence of someone who has never been told that what she wants might not be possible, or if she has been told, she has simply chosen not to listen. There is in her bearing the lightness of someone who has chosen cheerfulness as an active practice, as a deliberate response to confinement. She loves freely across boundaries that convention considers proper, and this openness is both her strength and a source of constant tension with the world around her.

CAPITULUM

**JACK WINBOW (DEEPER
IMPRESSION)**



The Man Learning to Accept Himself

He dances with surprising grace, moving through a space as though he understands its geometry on an intuitive level. When someone shows him genuine acceptance -- when someone looks at what he is and does not flinch -- something in him softens, becomes almost vulnerable. He speaks about battle in terms both visceral and raw: a scrum of hacking and slashing, barely-grown kids screaming and crying, then going quiet. He has killed. He has watched children die. This weighs on him in ways that he has learned to integrate rather than overcome. He invites people to fear when fear is the appropriate response, and he treats fear not as weakness but as valid wisdom.

CAPITULUM

EPPY FEINDER (DEEPER
IMPRESSION)



The Keeper of Impossible Knowledge

She understands things about people that they have not yet understood about themselves. She tells Jack that she knows what he is, and she tells him this with gentleness that carries no judgment. She knows the nature of necromancy not as theory but as practical craft, learned in quiet moments from someone she loved. Her presence in the narrative is like a map of history that nobody else remembers: the Bastion Inn is older than it should be, the trompe l'oeil ceiling depicts constellations that predate both empires, and her recipes are drawn from languages that have been dead longer than human kingdoms have existed. She bridges old and new in a way that no other character can because she remembers both clearly.

CAPITULUM

PART THREE: USING THESE DESCRIPTIONS

Guidelines for GMs

When to Use Them

Read these descriptions aloud when players first arrive at a location or first encounter a character. Don't read them word-for-word if it feels unnatural -- these are frameworks, not scripts. The language should feel spoken and authentic to your voice.

How to Deliver Them

Speak slowly. Allow pauses for effect. Emphasize sensory details. Let the description hang in the air for a moment before moving into action. These moments set tone. Treat them with the weight they deserve.

Adapting the Text

The provided language is literary but meant to be speakable. If a phrase doesn't sound natural in your voice, change it. If a sensory detail doesn't resonate with your campaign's tone, substitute. These are blueprints for first impressions, not sacred texts.

Revisiting Locations

On subsequent visits to the same location, vary your descriptions. Emphasize different sensory details. Note how the location has changed. The repetition of exact wording will flatten the experience. The location should feel familiar but never stale.

Night vs. Day

Many locations feel fundamentally different after dark. Use this variation to create a sense that Kormor Kirak is not a static place but a living city that transforms with time. A marketplace bustling in daylight becomes dangerous at night. A cemetery that is merely unsettling in mist becomes actively threatening in darkness.

Character Evolution

As player relationships with characters deepen, subsequent encounters can use language that reflects changes. Szeret becomes increasingly confident. Jack becomes increasingly accepting. Kiraline becomes increasingly overt in her predatory nature. Allow the character introductions to evolve as the campaign progresses.

CAPITULUM

PART FOUR: ATMOSPHERE NOTES

Kormor Kiraf's Sensory Signature

Smell

The city smells of woodsmoke, spices, blood, sweat, and the mineral scent of the Videk Mountains. Near the marketplace, these scents intensify and compound. Near Eppy's, they soften into herbs and bread and something green and living. Near the castle, they become strange -- hints of incense, aged stone, and something floral that might be perfume or might be growing things in hidden corners.

Sound

The city is never truly quiet. Even the streets distant from the marketplace carry a constant low hum of activity. The wind through the mountains creates a perpetual sound, almost like distant voices. The Red Guard patrols create a rhythm of armor and footsteps. The castle itself sometimes seems to hum with a sound at the edge of perception.

Temperature

The city is perpetually cool, even in summer, due to the elevation and the mountain winds. But certain spaces offer warmth: Eppy's fireplace, the castle's grand ballroom during the ball, the city's streets in direct sunlight. This contrast should be emphasized in descriptions.

Light

The perpetual mountain mist means light is often diffused and soft. Sunlight penetrates in patches. Night falls quickly. Torches and magical lights become essential early in the evening. This affects visibility and creates shadows. Use it to create mood.

Recurring Sensory Elements

- **MIST**: Present near the cemetery and around elevated locations. Creates disorientation and mystery.
- **WIND**: Constant in the mountains, carries sounds and scents, creates cold.
- **STONE**: Everywhere. Ancient, worn, marked by centuries of human presence.
- **FIRE**: Present in Eppy's, in the castle, in torches throughout the city. Source of warmth and light.
- **MAGIC**: Subtle but present. Not flashy, but woven into the architecture and atmosphere of the city itself.

CAPITULUM

PART FIVE: CAMPAIGN SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

The Treaty Ball

When describing locations in the context of the Treaty Ball, emphasize the tension beneath the courtesy. The ballroom becomes a stage where every movement carries diplomatic weight. The castle becomes a place where centuries of power have gathered in one space. The city itself becomes a backdrop to an event that might determine the course of history.

Necromantic Corruption

As the campaign progresses and evidence of the Queen's true nature accumulates, previously visited locations can be described with new awareness. The dungeons become more sinister when you understand they are feeding grounds. The cemetery becomes more threatening when you realize the dead are being harvested. The castle becomes more alien when you understand what it truly contains.

Party Homes and Sanctuaries

When the party establishes Eppy's as a home base, it should become a location of comfort and safety. Subsequent descriptions should emphasize warmth,

community, and belonging. Contrast this against the cold, threatening, alien nature of other locations.

End of Document

This supplement is designed for quick reference during play. Use these descriptions to make first impressions vivid and memorable. The goal is to help players feel that they are arriving somewhere real and consequential, not visiting a location but stepping into a world that has its own weight, its own history, its own will.

The Eternal Court waits. Describe it with the weight it deserves.

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