

Of the Sky, Of the Sea, and of the Stones
Chapter 2 - Of the Sky
Part 5 - A Sharp Supper

Written by Athos Angion
Loremaster of the GLRU - Mount Oros Chapter

Illustrated by Elador Loam
Novice of the GLRU - Mount Oros Chapter

As Captain Roac and Karcharia led the rest into the captain's quarters for supper, Senexa's companions introduced themselves. All three were young women, who, by Orossian standards, looked to be between twenty and thirty years old. The first wore a lilac toga adorned with pins in the shape of strange metallic instruments and introduced herself as Tibia, a Great Advisor in service to Senexa. The next to introduce herself was Vinea, who was garbed in a pale green robe which bore symbols of plants and trees. Lastly, the most vibrant one, clad in a crimson, knee-length toga that was more akin to dress, announced her presence.

"Greatest of the Great Advisors, at your service," she spoke boldly as she thrust her hand towards Roac, attempting to initiate a handshake, which surprised everyone in the room. Except for Karcharia, who simply continued to scowl. "My name is Voxia, and if you ever need anything taken care of while in Temptes Equit, I'm the one you should speak to," she winked, and I translated as best I could.

Chuckling at her boldness, Roac clasped her hand firmly, which made Voxia wince slightly, though she recovered almost instantly. "Upon my ship, lass, I am at YOUR service. Should you need anything, that is," Roac replied with a devilish grin that was equal parts intimidating and charismatic. Partially distracted by the charm, I converted the words into Koivan for our guests.

Senexa then cleared her throat, which immediately made the three younger city advisors stand straighter and drew their attention. "Thank you very much for inviting us to supper, Captain, we are most grateful," Senexa spoke elegantly while tying her long, black hair up into a bun behind her head. She fixed it in place with one of the many pins from her toga. "We will try to be courteous guests..." she continued, but then diverted her gaze towards Voxia and paused, during which I translated for the Captain before she spoke again. "...who will not overstay our welcome or ask for any trouble." The tone she finished with made the loquacious Voxia's mouth tighten into a hard line.

The three younger women quietly tied their hair up as well, in response.

I deigned to translate this last bit, but reluctantly spoke the words quietly to the captain, who simply smirked in response. Just then, I heard the door leading up from the galley open and turned to see the ship's cook, a lopsided giant named Akbor, enter carrying a massive plate crowned with a veritable feast. He placed it with little grace upon the large, round table at the centre of the room. It clattered and spread some yellowish liquid about the wooden surface, though most of the contents stayed in place. "Enjoy! But watch out for the razor clams, these ones are feisty!" shouted Akbor before returning below deck while licking at a few cuts on his tiny, left hand.



Figure 12. The captain's quarters were refined, yet modest.

Roac and Karcharia pulled out the chairs and offered seats to everyone, before seating themselves. Though, myself and the advisors all did so warily, as supper was fresh to the point of still being capable of locomotion. Just as Roac was about to speak, though, one of the razor clams that Akbor warned of got loose and made a break for it. It hopped towards Tibia, who let out a small shriek. Thinking quickly, though, Karcharia promptly slammed a fork into it with great force, pinning it to the table while sending small pieces of shell flying about the room.

The captain let out a sigh, which drew Karcharia's gaze. He simply shook his head from side-to-side in disapproval, but said nothing. In an attempt to ease the situation, Karcharia seemed to attempt to smile at Tibia to assure her that all was fine, though since the first mate's teeth were all filed down to wicked points, it simply came off as frightening. Tibia smiled back weakly, but had to cover her mouth in alarm as Karcharia then shoved the impaled clam, shell and all, into her jagged maw.

Scratching his forehead in annoyance, Roac handed plates and cutlery out to everyone before capturing all of the remaining razor clams. He placed them into a single, large bowl and then handed this to Karcharia, who accepted eagerly.

Thankfully, at this point, Senexa initiated conversation, “Might I ask what is for dinner? I don’t recognize this...” she began before trailing off, as she seemed to realize that she did not have a word for what was before us on the smorgasbord.

For upon the platter at the centre of the table was the body of a metre-long, grilled cephalopod. Around its dark red form, its severed tentacles coiled in twisted rings. Among the fried corpse’s limbs were various citrus fruits and small wooden bowls full of different sauces.

Squid such as these were only found in the open sea, and was considered a delicacy on Orosilla, so I was eager to dig in. But, I noticed that Roac had not moved to take his share, he was simply staring calmly at the advisors. I took from this that he was waiting for them to begin eating first, out of courtesy, but the finely clothed women seemed, understandably, nervous about the food.

Taking it upon myself to assist in relieving this social awkwardness, I picked up my fork and skewered a nearby tentacle. I brought it to my plate and began cutting it into segments with my serrated knife. I then placed a morsel into my mouth and began chewing with relish. The texture was chewy, yet rough. It had a briny taste, though also that of the grill on which it was cooked. The seasoning was subtle, yet brought out the true flavours of the sea. Akbor was a strange fellow, but was a savant at preparing anything that the crew provided him.

After consuming the first segment, I offered a few of the other pieces to the advisors of Temptes Equit. They each took a single morsel with their respective forks and exchanged glances with one another before the eyes of the three younger women rested upon Senexa. With the slightest of sighs, she placed the tentacle segment into her mouth and began chewing. Soon, her eyes widened slightly and a smile appeared at the corners of her mouth. She nodded to her subordinates, who all exhaled in relief before digging in.

The rest of the meal went on with veritably no tension whatsoever. Everyone began eating and conversing in a relaxed manner, which, I admit, was a bit challenging for me. Eating while acting as translator and diplomat was tedious and odd, but not wholly unenjoyable.

After the main course, Karcharia brought up a bottle of wine from the captain’s private reserve, at his request, and poured everyone a glass. Sated and at ease, I realized that this was when the real matters would be discussed. Matters of what we wished to know of Temptes Equit, and undeniably what the advisors wished to know of our reason for coming here. Especially during a time of such upheaval for the city.