

Of the Sky, Of the Sea, and of the Stones
Chapter 2 - Of the Sky
Part 7 - To the Library

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

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

The crew and myself awoke the next morning after a decent sleep. Most went about seeing what they could do to begin repairs on the ship, though as I dressed and joined most above deck, I saw the captain and first mate on the docks, already accompanied by two well ornamented cyan people. As I approached, I saw that one was Vinea, the green-clad, nature themed Great Advisor from last night. She greeted me with a warm smile and wave, in concert with subtle nods from Roac and Karcharia.

The other individual I did not know, though he wore a great many pins upon his lilac toga. Many were various forms of books, quills, pages, scrolls, and others representing literature in some way. They all glittered, seemingly kept in pristine condition. Though, as I admired them, I briefly noted one that looked to be feline in nature, in the shape of a violet cat's head that shone with iridescence.

Vinea then spoke, introducing me to the stranger, though as she did so I took notice of the height difference. This new individual was a fair bit shorter than the other cyan folk, who were all relatively tall, again, by my standards from living on Orosilla, where people were roughly slightly taller than myself. For I, if you have forgotten, am originally from Euryph, a small island in the southeast Peleca Sea: where people are squatter and darker. Though, I was still a few fingers taller than the polite-looking young man before me now.

“Good morning, Athos! I hope you slept well,” Vinea began, to which I nodded in acknowledgement with a smile. “Please, let me introduce you to Cais, Head Librarian of Temptes Equit's Central Library.”

“Pleasure to make your acquaintance”, the Head Librarian said with a polite half-bow, as I've seen many other city folk doing. His wavy, waist-length navy blue hair was tied in a loose ponytail and shifted in a ripple as he nodded, like a silken waterfall. “I have been tasked to guide you in your search for knowledge within the Central Library. Please, allow me to guide you there personally,” Cais finished

pleasantly. As he smiled, the simple ring in his lower lip glimmered silver in the morning sun.

“I would like nothing more!” I agreed happily. And from there, myself and Cais left the docks together while Vinea led Captain Roac away in a different direction. She, being in charge of many of the city’s agricultural aspects, including matters pertaining to lumber, was chosen to deliver the voucher to Roac, as well as see him to the markets. His main interest was in acquiring supplies to repair the Bitterwind, though there was a hungry glint in his eyes. Karcharia had the run of the ship, in the captain’s absence. We agreed to meet back at the docks by dusk, but then went our separate ways.

As Cais and I walked up the broadest of the city’s white and gray paved stone roads, I noticed that there was little remaining of the black ooze which the titanic red eel spewed upon the city. All that was left were dark stains here and there, in crevices and nooks. Though, many people seemed to be sluggish or dizzy. Cais and I paid them little mind, as no one seemed to be terribly bothered, just groggy. Possibly from many staying up late into the night to aid in cleaning the city of the filth.

Upon our way, Cais engaged me in casual conversation, telling me of places that we passed by, such as the harbourfront, a small hedge-filled park, and a store that sold art supplies and writing equipment.

But when the Central Library came into view, I stopped in my tracks and gasped. It was tremendous! Probably close to ten times the size of the Bitterwind; which was a frigate-class vessel of usual proportions to house about three dozen sailors. The library dwarfed all buildings and structures around it, though it was separate from them, encircled by a heavily flowered garden that bloomed with red, yellow, and blue flowers. As we crossed through the garden, I inhaled deeply at the fresh and fragrant scent. I noticed that Cais, walking slightly ahead of me, was doing the same. The enjoyable moment was accompanied by a summer breeze that caressed the bushes and vines along the path’s edges. The flowers seemed almost to be waving in greeting from the minor wind.

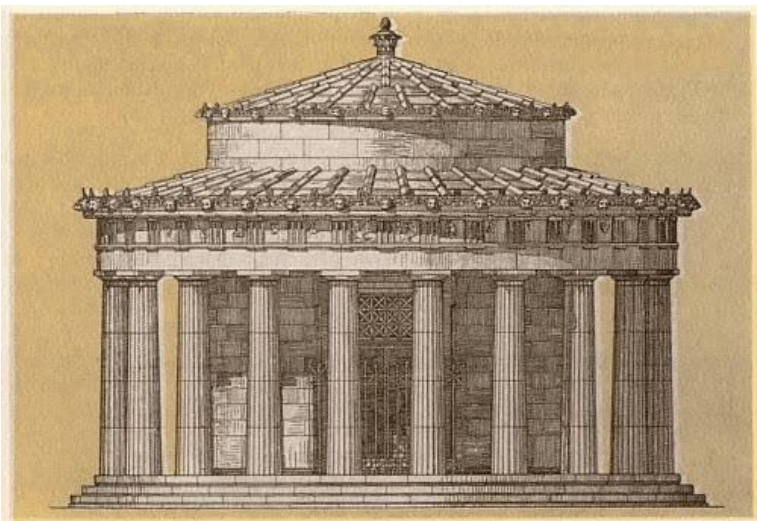


Figure 14. An architectural representation of the Central Library, though this does not do its beauty justice.

Just then, as the breeze passed, Cais paused and he angled his head slightly upwards, sniffing at something unseen. A smile then appeared on his visage as a few small, fuzzy creatures bound forth through the shrubbery and onto the path before us. There were then, in our path, three cats. Though, these felines were unlike any I had seen anywhere else in the world. Cats were common as pets, and in the wild, all over Okeanós. And they varied quite a lot, from island to island. Though, these before me then were of spectacular description.

The one on the left was as green as the grass in the garden, lightly reflecting the sun with a warming near-glow. Their fur were like blades of grass, and their paws and nose, and inner ears were dark brown, like soil.

The one on the right was orange and peppered with black spots all over their body. Each black spot seemed to quiver slightly. This one's eyes were as white and vertically irised as the others, but seemed to burn with a subtle intensity.

The one in the centre was vibrant purple whose fur shone with iridescence in the morning rays, casting rainbows about in subtle streaks as they stretched casually. Their face was remarkably similar to the pin depicting a feline head over Cais' heart.

Cais beckoned to them and they bound forward, rubbing their flanks and faces against his legs while purring happily. He then looked to me with an apologetic grimace before whispering something that I could not hear to the cats. They meowed together in a short chorus before bounding off, ahead of us towards the Central Library. As they ran off, a small gust blew by, shifting Cais river-like hair over his shoulder. Without much effort, he simply flicked his head to the side, flipping the wave of strands back to its proper place upon his back.

With great anticipation and curiosity, I follow the Head Librarian towards the mighty structure, whose massive columns seemed to hold up a gently-sloping, conical roof. Within the ring of pillars were white, stucco covered walls that were adorned with magnificent doors of pale, almost white wood that had deep, ornate carvings in them. I noticed then that the words were simply in stylized Koivan, and read them aloud with relish upon gazing at the nearest one, "Thou who entereth'," read the left, which flowed over to the right, "Open thine mind".