

# FROM LONDONER TO LORD

## 8. Aftermath

Inside the Inn, Kivamus' heart was still hammering after the recent scare of having arrows shot at him, along with swordsmen coming to kill him. He didn't know how he had managed to stay alive through this, but he thanked the heavens and whoever else was listening, that he was still breathing!

He and Gorsazo had found empty chairs to sit inside the hall. The young woman they had seen earlier was still scolding Lucem while applying a scrap of cloth on his bleeding arm. An older portly woman, with many white hairs on her head, had come there and taken charge of everything and organized seats for everyone inside.

Pydas spoke up soon, "There are no more sounds coming now, it seems the fight is over."

A gruff voice echoed from outside the door, followed by a knock. Pydas, with a nod from the older woman, unbarred the door and opened it. Hudan came

inside while still clutching his side, and was followed by the younger wagon driver who was injured in his thigh.

"Don't worry, it's not serious," Hudan said to the worried older woman, finding another empty chair to sit on.

"Are Feroy and others okay?" the older woman asked.

"We all are fine, Madam Helga. All but one of them are dead." He said while grunting as Pydas helped him to apply another scrap of cloth as a bandage around his chest.

The older woman said to the young woman, "Sryne, bring this man a bandage too," while pointing to the younger wagon driver, who had been injured.

"Yes, ma," she said and brought another scrap of cloth and gave it to him to tie around his injured thigh.

Kivamus felt his heart pounding in his chest as he watched the events unfolding around him. He had been caught in the middle of his first battle in

this strange new world, and the rush of adrenaline was almost too much to bear even now. It was only through the timely intervention of the inn's guards that he had managed to survive. As he struggled to catch his breath and calm his nerves, he couldn't help but think of his old life back in London. The memories flooded back, and he longed for the familiarity and safety of the world he had left behind.

Watching the way the people here used any cloth scrap as bandages, he felt a surge of relief for his own lack of injury. At the same time, a pang of sympathy struck him for the others who had to make do with whatever scraps they had. Without any modern medicine and a hospital, recovery from wounds here was going to be more dependent on luck than anything else.

As he struggled to steady his pounding heart, he took a moment to survey his surroundings. After spending a restless night in a shabby inn in Cinran last night, he had already anticipated that the comforts of his home on Earth would be far out of reach in this unfamiliar world. But as he glanced further, this inn looked even more decrepit than the previous one. The large hall he was seated in had wooden walls and a scattering of tables and chairs on the right. However, even in the dim light of the two lamps, he could see that only a few of them were in usable condition. The rest were damaged or broken and were pushed aside to create more space in the middle of the hall. The wooden walls were patched with scraps of wood or just old clothes in many places. On the left side of the hall was a rickety wooden bar, with a kitchen that looked like it had seen much better days. Stairs close to the opposite wall led to the upper floor. It was unmistakable that the people living here were struggling.

Soon enough, everyone injured had gotten bandaged and the older woman, now known as Helga, the owner of the inn, asked Hudan, "Where's Feroy?" She glanced at the visitors to her inn for a moment. "I saw the attackers through a window earlier. It's rare for them to attack immediately instead of asking for money or food as they always do. Were they just bandits?"

"Feroy is with the remaining bandit, he'll get all the information out of him soon enough," Hudan grimaced. He looked at Kivamus and Gorsazo for a moment. "Anything you both want to tell us? One of you called someone else a lord earlier..."

Kivamus barely knew these people, but whether it was because of the fading adrenaline or because they had just saved his life, he decided to trust them for now. "I didn't plan on mentioning it, but I think..."

Before he could finish speaking, Gorsazo said to him, "Are you sure...?"

"Gorsazo, they just saved our lives. If they were with those people who want me dead, I doubt we'd be having this conversation in the first place." He looked at all the people around him, and spoke up, "I am Kivamus Ralokaar, and I have been granted the Barony of Tiranat by the Duke of Ulriga. That's where Gorsazo and I are going, along with Pydas who's giving us a ride on his

wagons till Tiranat." It still felt odd to him to call himself a noble, along with the title he had been given.

Pydas and the wagon driver already knew about this, but the inhabitants of the inn seemed struck by this revelation.

The owner of the inn, Helga, recovered first. "What are you all doing? Bow to Lord Kivamus, right now!"

Immediately, Helga, along with her son and daughter bowed in reverence to Kivamus. At the same time, Hudan grunted as he tried to get up from his chair while still holding the side of his chest.

While Kivamus had mostly expected this reaction by now, he still found himself stopping them. "No, no, you all don't need to do this!" Kivamus had stood up himself and tried to make Hudan sit back on his chair. "You are injured, just sit down and get some rest!"

"But..." Syryne and her brother Lucem tried to speak at the same time, while Hudan was looking at him with a sharp gaze.

"It's okay. It is fine." Kivamus took a deep breath. "Just take a seat, everyone."

As others sat down where they were sitting earlier, Helga pleaded, "My lord, forgive all of us for not knowing about you and any disrespect we may have caused. My kids couldn't have known, my lord, it was my fault. Please don't punish them."

"What? Why would I punish them?" Kivamus was again surprised by this strange new world and the even more strange mannerisms of its inhabitants.

"Because..." Helga took a deep breath and said, "Forgive me, my lord, for being presumptuous. The previous baron was... not good towards other people, especially if they weren't of a noble birth. It is very unusual for us to be talking to a noble like this."

"Don't worry about it. I'm just a human being, like all of you," Kivamus commented.

"Excuse me, my lord," Lucem said, "You said your surname was Ralokaar. Does that mean...?" he trailed off.

"Yes, my father is indeed the Duke of Ulriga. But please don't make a big deal of it."

"Uh.. big deal, my lord? What does that mean?" Lucem asked.

Kivamus sighed. "Just forget what I said. It's not important."

"But you are a son of the duke, my lord! Why are you even going to Tiranat?" Syryne asked.

"The only reason I'm going to Tiranat is because I'm a son of the duke!" Kivamus exhaled heavily. "I was sent there basically as an exile. And to the best of my guess, my brothers are the ones who sent those people after me."

"I wondered why the bigger bandit had pointed out to you earlier, telling others to kill you," Hudan mused. "Now it's more clear."

"Also, thank you all for helping me. You and your companion saved my life without even knowing anything about me," Kivamus said gratefully to Hudan.

"It's no problem, my lord," Hudan said. "You must know about how the previous baron and his guards were killed by such people. My cousin was amongst those guards killed by the bandits."

"I'm really sorry to hear that, Hudan. I think that those attackers and the ones whom you killed today might be a part of the same group, likely with my brothers behind them."

"If you say so, my lord. I just hope my cousin's spirit rests easy after today. May the Goddess save his soul," Hudan whispered. He continued, "Feroy will have gotten out everything that the remaining attacker knew soon enough, so we'll hopefully find out more then."

Shortly, the door opened again and Feroy along with the taller wagon driver, who looked pale now and kept giving nervous glances towards Feroy, entered inside. "You won't believe what gibberish he was spouting!" Feroy spoke up loudly, while the two of them took an empty chair each.

Meanwhile, Syryne, along with Lucem who seemed fine by now, brought a few mugs of ale for everyone on Helga's order. Kivamus took a welcome sip after the recent ordeal, even if he wasn't sure he liked the taste of it.

"Tell us Feroy," Hudan said.

"Yeah. So get it, the guy was saying that" he took a big gulp himself from his wooden tankard, "they were after a son of the duke himself!"

"It's true, Feroy," Hudan smirked. He gestured towards Kivamus, "Meet Lord Kivamus Ralokaar, son of our esteemed Duke. He has recently been granted the Barony of Tiranat, where he is traveling to take over as the new Baron."

"You are surely jesting!" Feroy glanced at Kivamus for a second, then said, "Really?"

When everyone else just looked at him, without saying anything, he suddenly stood up and bowed to Kivamus, "Shit! Uh... I'm sorry, my lord! Please forgive this one's moment of insanity," while unknowingly splashing his ale a little in the process.

"It's okay, Feroy. Just take a seat and tell us what you found," Kivamus sighed.

"Uh.. yeah, thank you, my lord. So, where was I," he sat down on his chair and spoke seriously now, with all traces of fun gone from his face. It was the face of a seasoned veteran now. "He said that one of them was following your

wagons from the morning. They didn't know you by sight, so they were told to kill any young person with good clothing amongst the passengers, at all costs, and not to leave anyone else alive if possible."

"Did he tell you how he got this information?" Gorsazo asked. "And, uh... where is he?"

"Don't worry, he won't be killing anyone else in the future," Feroy stated, making others around him grimace at the implication. "And no, he didn't know the name of the person who gave him this information. He just said that it was a contact in Cinran he met a few days ago who always gave them tips about vulnerable targets traveling on the road. That person always met them in a dark alley with their cloak's hood up, so the bandit didn't know his contact's identity." He took another sip from his mug, "However, this time these bandits were caught unprepared because they weren't expecting you to leave Cinran for at least another day, my lord."

"It seems it was a good idea to travel as much as we could in the past few days, Gorsazo," Kivamus interrupted. "Even if my body hates me for it," he muttered under his breath.

Gorsazo nodded, "Indeed, my lord. We could have stopped at inns every night on our journey from Ulriga to Cinran, but I decided not to, so we could leave

early and travel farther each day. I had no idea what could be waiting for us on the road, and it always pays to be more cautious."

"That's certainly true." Feroy continued, "Their original plan, according to the schedule their contact had given them, was for their whole party of more than a dozen men to assemble by tomorrow and leave around the same time as you, whenever you left Cinran, and then ambush you later that day. But they were expecting you to rest for a day or two in an inn there, my lord, as most nobles do if they've traveled as far as from Ulriga to Cinran. They had a scout watching a particular inn as well, where they were expecting you to stay. Though he didn't know why specifically that inn, my lord."

"That was Gorsazo's doing," Kivamus told him. "It was an excellent idea, Gorsazo, that you didn't let us stay in the inn where the wagon driver dropped us in Cinran. Or they would have known about us since yesterday and would have been much more prepared."

"Thank you, my lord," said Gorsazo, accepting the rare praise. "Well, carry on then, Feroy."

"Yeah, so their scout was passing near the gates in Cinran by chance this morning, and recognized you leaving my lord, and so the bandits, or rather, the mercenaries, had to gather whoever they could, and attack you today itself. They immediately sent word to those members of their group who were

living in or around Cinran but only a few of them had reported by around noon. So their leader, the big guy, decided to leave Cinran with just three other mercenaries around noon, not counting the rider they had dispatched earlier in the morning to follow you on the forest road. Since their scout had told him that you only had a single escort, their leader was confident enough to finish his task but because they had left late, their group only caught up with you by the evening when you had reached close to this inn. That's why there were only five of them who attacked us. If they had their full strength, we would have stood no chance, my lord."

"That seems very true. Now I know why my brother didn't send any guards with me since they had planned all this in advance. I was so distraught about leaving Ulriga that I didn't question it then," Kivamus mentioned. "And thank you both again, for saving our lives. It's the first time I'm going to Tiranat, and as you all can guess, I have no power in Ulriga anymore. But still, if any of you need my help in the future, and it's in my power, I will do whatever I can to help you."

"We were only doing our duty of protecting the inn and its visitors, my lord," Hudan said. "And I can already say it was a good decision. You are nothing like that bastard... uh, the previous baron, my lord. Forgive me for saying that, but it's true."

"He's right," Helga said. "In the time you've been here, my lord, the previous baron would have muttered enough obscenities to shame a sailor while

berating others and trying to lay his grubby paws on Syryne. You are nothing like him, my lord."

"After hearing about the kind of person he was, I'm very glad." Kivamus glanced at the others in the hall. "Now would you please serve us all a warm meal, Madam Helga? And as many pitchers of ale as they can handle!" he boomed, his voice ringing through the rafters of the inn, "I'll pay for everything tonight!" and the small inn was filled with the sound of cheers and praises for Lord Kivamus.