

Back in Gwynedd (cont'd)

- To the *keeill*
 - Our heroes tidy up at Nyford, securing their other Byzantine captives and as much of the Greek fire apparatus as possible. Sadly, Nikephoros was careful to keep the hand-carried siphons farther back in the fleet, and the one ship that does not escape is out of fuel for its siphon device. The captives from the crew do not know the formula for the mixture.
 - After a rest and having seen to their own injured folk (as well as a few townspeople also caught up in events), Kelson send dispatch riders to Rhemuth and attempts to contact Richenda and Araxie. He also sends a galley to Laas to bring Duncan and Dhugal back to the capital (or to the nearest Transfer Portal).
 - Teymuraz is secured for transport back to Rhemuth for safekeeping. He is examined by others, and Morgan's initial impressions are confirmed.
 - Once everyone is assembled (including Liam and Kelson, Morgan and Duncan, and the surviving members of the Council), Morgan sits in Camber's Siege and testifies to what he saw in Teymuraz' mind, as well as what he read in the palimpsest about the stasis spell and how Evaine, Joram and Queron reversed it.
 - The book is brought out and the relevant passages are found and studied. It becomes clear that another ritual working like that performed for Camber is required. Much debate follows, particularly regarding the potential dangers and whether or not another death might be required to free the emperor's soul. The complicating factor of Teymuraz' own soul is also considered, especially since his mind seems to be lost in madness. It seems doubtful his cooperation can be secured.

Comments:

- ✓ This outcome fore the secret of Greek fire has basis in historical fact. While some examples and parts were captured, the chemical formula is not entirely known to this day, though some experts have attempted to recreate it. The substance was a closely guarded military secret among the rel-life Byzantines.
- ✓ Sending a galley to Laas can not only bring back Duncan and Dhugal, it can allow the crew to check the seas and be sure no other Byzantine ships are lurking in the area. Only once that's been established would it be prudent for Kelson and his people to stand down from their alert.
- ✓ Securing Teymuraz and keeping him alive is a new problem, in part because of his insanity. Still, no one will want to have the emperor's soul attached to a decomposing corpse, so efforts must be made to keep Teymuraz both securely held and alive, whether he will or no.
- ✓ Morgan finally gets his turn in Camber's Siege, though with a more pressing problem than simply establishing the provenance of the palimpsest.
- ✓ Other people who may or may not be present in the Council Chamber: Warin, Mátyás, Dhugal, Richenda, Araxie, and Rothana. Mátyás might already be a member of the Council, but I think it unlikely he'd accept when he's had to learn statecraft over the past four years. More likely he is there as an adept and as kin to Tyemuraz. Warin might be there so the Councillors can read his mind for themselves, and Morgan might be called upon to demonstrate the blocking again, on him and/or on others. Duncan and Dhugal may be asked to attempt the blocking themselves. Richenda is herself highly-trained, and as Morgan's wife she has another reason to wish to be present. Kelson may bring Araxie in her status as Queen. Rothana may be the least likely of the group to be present.

Back in Gwynedd (cont'd)

- To the *keeill* (cont'd)
 - After the debates, the research, and the preparation, a working is attempted in the *keeill* chamber to separate the emperor's soul from Teymuraz' body.
 - Morgan, Duncan, Mátyás and Arilan are the primary participants. For safety's sake, the others await them upstairs in the anteroom of the Council Chamber (if not the Chamber itself). If possible, the other Councillors might try to use the great *shiral* to monitor the events in the *keeill* below them.
 - For some reason, another death is required, and Arilan, having contemplated this in the weeks of preparation, voluntarily goes. The others try to dissuade him, but he will not be moved, and he practically points out that the others have families and valuable gifts that are still needed. He asks that Duncan get his seat on the Council, and expresses his hope that Morgan gets Laran's. When he dies, he is welcomed to the other side by the souls of other departed Councillors, including his older brother Jamyl, Stefan Coram, Vivienne, Tiercel and Laran.
 - The working is successful in releasing the emperor's soul. If he hasn't already, Teymuraz also dies. Camber briefly appears and bids the others come away from before Uriel, lest they are taken untimely. Together, the remaining Deryni dissolve their warding circle and the bodies are brought out of the *keeill*.
 - At Liam's request, a preservation spell is placed on Teymuraz' body. He wants to bring it back to his capital and have it displayed as Mahael's was years before. Arilan's body is also so preserved, but for the kinder fate of an official funeral in his see (Dhassa).

Comments:

- ✓ I don't imagine the Councillors, or any of the other would want to perform this working in the place where Camber's body still lies (assuming they can even find it). There's also no need to hide their whereabouts from prying eyes, so the *keeill* is an acceptable choice of venue in this instance.
- ✓ Mátyás and Arilan and Arilan are intended to provide experience, while Morgan and Duncan are intended to provide Healing, should it be needed. This also serves as a kind of initiation for Morgan and Duncan into the arcane workings of the Council.
- ✓ I'm not sure just why another death is required to release the emperor's soul. It may be that Teymuraz has died (either just before Morgan put the block on him or in the time since his capture), or that his insanity makes his soul unacceptable in trade for the emperor's.
- ✓ As with Cinhil and Evaine, the souls of people close to the dying person come to greet him when it's time to cross over. Since Arilan had no spouse or children, it seems likely he'd be greeted by his brother and at least some of his Council colleagues. Perhaps the filmmakers will want to include impressions of the earlier members of the Council as well as those I've mentioned, but I don't think that's necessary.
- ✓ Camber's appearance here is also optional, but it might be wise to dissuade any of the others from being led by curiosity into mortal danger. He may also explain the fate of the emperor's soul (and that of Teymuraz, if anyone is curious about it).
- ✓ Liam will want justice to be seen as having been done, hence his request. As for Arilan, perhaps he can openly get the funeral honours Barrett Saw given to Michon all those years ago? At the very least, he should get official rites in his cathedral and burial in his see.

Back in Gwynedd (cont'd)

- Resolutions
 - Warin gets permission to establish a new Gabrielite order patterned on the old one. He begins to wear the square braid, and he also takes regular lessons at the *schola*. He expresses an interest in rebuilding Saint Neot's, but it's agreed that the message left by the unknown monk must be preserved for future generations to experience, so that the memory of the persecutions does not fade.
 - Richenda and Jehana collaborate on a new tapestry for Duncan's study. Its design is based on the cover design of the palimpsest, with some additional figures: sleeping lions, gryphons, and Haldane lions along the borders, and a figure of Saint Camber in the center of the piece. Richenda and Jehana incorporate cording lore in the structure of the work.
 - Liam finally gets his delayed accolade from Nigel, and the experience is as special as he had hoped it would be. Brendan enters Liam's service as squire for a period.
 - Kelson, Liam, and their advisors discuss the advisability of keeping an eye on Byzantium, though emissaries are sent to negotiate large money payments to atone for the damage caused by Teymuraz' attacks.
 - Provision is made to keep the palimpsest in a place of honour, and some are permitted to read it from time to time to replenish its energy.
 - Together, Morgan and Duncan are admitted to the Camberian Council. In their first rapport with their colleagues around the table, their hands are joined in front of Camber's Siege, and Camber himself appears in the seat to place his hands in blessing over theirs. All the Councillors can see him, even Barrett.
 - Roll credits.

Comments:

- ✓ Obviously, some of these matters tie up loose ends from the story.
- ✓ Saint Neot's gets a call back because its ruins figured so prominently in the earlier installments. The place is also well located for a potential second *schola*.
- ✓ The tapestry project recalls a confrontation between Jehana and Richenda in *The King's Justice*; Richenda was working on such a piece in the ladies' solar at the time. She and Jehana have been moving toward reconciliation since Jehana's change of heart in *King Kelson's Bride*; this is merely visible proof of their progress. Other people like Morgan and Barrett can be shown inspecting the work (in progress or when it's hung in place).
- ✓ Liam's accolade was the reason the whole story got started (it provided Teymuraz with a chance to strike at his nephew and brother outside of the security of Torenth), so of course it has to happen in the end. It's also a chance to Nigel again, no doubt with Meraude and Saer in attendance. Brendan's posting at Liam's court was discussed earlier in the series.
- ✓ It may be no bad thing to have a joint project for Torenth and Gwynedd. Perhaps a close collaboration in vigilance against a potential mutual foe will prove useful in strengthening their friendship.
- ✓ Kelson finally gets his Camber relic (indirectly) and the book provides clues to the location of Camber's bier. If time allows, perhaps it can actually be found in the end (perhaps the very end, after the credits finish).
- ✓ The Church may make some official ruling on the numbers of human and Deryni in the hierarchy, (as Torenth has) to ensure no group can outvote the other.
- ✓ At long last, the "half-breeds" get the respect they deserve—for their talents and for their steadfast loyalty to their king and the Light. *Fiat lux!*