

Domestic Gwynedd subplots(cont'd):

- The Old Portal
 - Duncan McLain travels with an aide (a young Deryni priest) in the vicinity of Sheele, an old manor house now held by a human family.
 - He learns that someone in the manor house is dying and goes to offer last rites personally. His aide goes along to assist.
 - Duncan and his aide are conducted to the master bedroom. While he's there, Duncan notices a slight tingling sensation in the floor similar to that of a Transfer Portal, but his aide (also Deryni but no relation to him) does not notice anything.
 - He recounts this strange affair to Morgan, who is the head of a commission investigating Deryni titles and land claims at Kelson's request. Morgan agrees to add the manor at Sheele to his list of properties to investigate.
 - A Deryni Portal expert (possibly Arilan) is also brought into the picture. This person reveals that Portals themselves can be keyed so that only blood relatives can find them (much like the Veil protecting the library annex Portal in Kelson's palace only admits blood relatives and those given permission to pass). Further physical examination is proposed and perhaps made.
 - Title research by Morgan and his committee shows that Sheele was once owned by Rhys and Evaine Thurn, and Evaine was Camber's daughter!
 - If it hasn't happened already, the Portal is definitely investigated at this point. Hands-on testing confirms that Duncan and Morgan can sense the Portal (very faintly, for it hasn't been used in two centuries), while Arilan and/or other Deryni cannot. Arilan reports this to the Camberian Council.

Comments:

- ✓ This is more foreshadowing of Morgan and Duncan's heritage. Since merit has not been enough to help them rise in the estimation of all the Councillors, I propose to reveal their bloodline as part of a two-pronged effort to get the cousins some recognition.
- ✓ The land commission and Morgan's place on it are in the *Codex*. This group has the delicate task of compensating Deryni landowners for their losses without making human landowners feel unfairly treated or deprived of what they deem rightfully theirs. In some cases, Deryni do not get their ancestral lands, but land elsewhere of comparable worth. (Per the *Codex*, Barrett de Laney is created Baron Barstowe during this period, in part to make up for the loss of his lands in the Purple March fifty-odd years earlier.)
- ✓ It's known from earlier books in the timeline (and also the *Codex*) that Rhys and Evaine lived at Sheele, and that Evaine set the Portal for blood kin only before leaving the manor for the last time.
- ✓ I describe the Portal as "faint" in part to tease both the characters and the viewers (Did he feel something? Is it there or isn't it?) and partly to acknowledge that such Portals can grow faint from disuse (which I think is covered in *DeryniMagic*).
- ✓ This scenario also offers another potential conflict between Kelson and the Camberian Council. Sheele has been held by a human family for a long time (I don't recall their name or the date from the *Codex*). The Council will want to exert control over this Portal, and they may be inclined to be a trifle high-handed in their dealings with the human twelfth-century owners. Kelson takes his mandate to be king for both human and Deryni very seriously, and he won't want the human family to feel abused. There may even be a dispute over how much to tell the human family, or how openly the Council should act. Is the time for secrecy over?

Largely Foreign Plots:

- The Return of Warin de Grey
 - Azim makes inquiries about Warin de Grey (the rogue Healer and self-styled holy man from *Deryni Checkmate* and *High Deryni*) in a meeting of the Camberian Council.
 - When asked why he wishes to know about Warin, Azim explains that a stranger has arrived at the Anvillers' base, and he particularly wants to know if anyone recalls what Warin looks like.
 - Only Arilan was in Kelson's camp at Llyndruth Meadows, so he shows Azim what memories he has of the man. His sketchy memories are not enough to be certain.
 - It is pointed out that Morgan and Duncan have rather more extensive experience of the man, but the Councillors are divided over whether to ask their help, especially in such a matter as a rogue Healer who may well be dead. Someone observes that a decade or so has passed since that time, and the man may be dead.
 - Azim contacts Morgan and Duncan, and he learns from them of the Healing demonstration in Coroth Castle (see *High Deryni*). He asks them to accompany him to the Anvillers' base to meet this man. If it is Warin, Azim hopes they might persuade him to join them at the *schola*, or at least allow mental probes so they can see the mind of a Healer from a different bloodline.
 - Morgan isn't so sure they can convince Warin of anything; Warin did destroy many of Morgan's manors and threatened to kill him, so perhaps Warin would find him intimidating. Duncan thinks that together they might persuade him to cooperate.
 - Morgan and Duncan do agree to go with Azim to meet this man, and they travel there by Transfer Portal.

Comments:

- ✓ This plot has several purposes.
 - ✓ It provides an excellent reason to visit the Knights of the Anvil, making it a treat for the fans.
 - ✓ It's a call back to the *Chronicles* trilogy.
 - ✓ It's a bridge to another subplot from the *Heirs of Camber* trilogy (more on that later).
 - ✓ It can both underline the tensions between the de Corwyn cousins and the Council, as well as provide another opportunity for a newer, more open-minded member (namely Azim) to build a better relationship with the two "rogue half-breeds". Kelson has suggested one or both men for Council seats before, but the idea has been dismissed in the past. Azim was not on the Council then, and he may be more willing to at least assess them more fully (and indeed he may have been doing so since the events of *KKB*).
 - ✓ It's another chance to bring up the vexed question of a Transfer Portal for Coroth. So far as anyone knows, Coroth has no Portal, despite the fact that Morgan's Deryni ancestors have held the place for centuries. At the same time, it's mentioned in *KKB* (over seven years since Kelson's coronation) that Coroth still has no Portal, evidently because the Council has not permitted it. The lack of a Coroth Portal actually hampers the efforts to cope with Teymuraz. Morgan and Duncan may help Azim in identifying this stranger in order to get the Council to approve a Portal for Morgan's Council.
 - ✓ Azim might be playing his own game here. He could get the aid of Morgan and Duncan even if the Councillors themselves don't care to find out who the stranger is by convincing them the Council *does* want to know.

Largely Foreign Plots(cont'd):

- The Return of Warin de Grey (cont'd)
 - Azim brings Morgan and Duncan to the Anvillers' base via Portal, so Morgan isn't away from Coroth too long (everyone is still on the lookout for some move from Teymuraz). They first observe the stranger from a distance, but Morgan and Duncan are not sure; it is noted that the man looks much changed from the Warin they knew. A direct meeting is set up, without Warin's knowledge.
 - At the meeting, the man admits he was once Warin de Grey, but he was so ashamed by the results of his actions a decade earlier that he went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to seek a fuller sense of absolution. He has also been wrestling with his confusion since that night in Morgan's castle: Morgan, Duncan and Kelson all read Warin's mind and did not recognize him as Deryni, despite his having the Healing and a slight ability to use Truth-Say. Without the anti-Deryni crusade, indeed without a purpose in his life, Warin has been searching for divine guidance while doubting his own faith (after all, he convinced he was divinely inspired before, and look where that led him).
 - Morgan and Duncan explain to Warin about some of the changes in Gwynedd, particularly their largely unsuccessful search for other Healers outside their own bloodline. They ask Warin to accompany them back to Rhemuth and the *schola*, suggesting he might be a student there if he wishes. Warin is reluctant to return to Kelson's capital, feeling he behaved badly towards his half-Deryni king, and he asks for time to consider.
 - Morgan and Duncan agree to stay the night, though both men are anxious to get home. Warin assures them they will have his answer by morning.

Comments:

- ✓ Going on a religious pilgrimage or retreat was then a fairly common and socially accepted behaviour, both in-universe and historically in the real world. (Per the *Codex* and *The King's Justice*, Jehana went to the convent of St. Giles in Shannis Meer several times in her own efforts to cope with her fears and guilt over her Deryni heritage.) Warin himself was depicted as a devout man, for all his fanaticism. Thus it is both characteristic of the man and appropriate to the setting that he should disappear in this fashion for so long.
- ✓ I'd be inclined to give this version of Warin long hair and a beard, mostly to distinguish himself from the rebel leader of yore, though I also have a particular reason for the long hair besides the contrast with the short military look of Morgan, Nigel and others. More on that later...
- ✓ It's hard to say how Warin feels about the Torenthi. In canon, he knows of Wencit's brutality first hand (being among those who saw the fate of Duke Jared's army), but he may not know how things have begun to change under Liam-Lajos. Much depends on how long he's been back from the Holy Land and how much contact he's had with Torenthi since. The Torenthi menace is also a long-standing problem; two or three centuries of rivalry, distrust and war won't disappear overnight. Besides, the old Warin was intemperate in his hatreds; at this stage it'll be hard to tell how much he's changed.
- ✓ While it's likely understandable that Warin would want to have a bit of time before he decides to accept the offer to return to Rhemuth, there's more to it than that. There's a secondary reason for Keeping Morgan and Duncan overnight with the Anvillers': they have to find more than just Warin, they have to find a particular book...

Largely Foreign Plots(cont'd):

- Joram's Palimpsest
 - To while away the evening, Azim offers to show Morgan and Duncan some items of Michaeline origin that the Anvillers have preserved since the Michaelines were dissolved by King Alroy Haldane's Regency Council two centuries ago.
 - Morgan and Duncan retire to a room for the night. Duncan has his personal breviary with him and plans to read a bit before going to sleep. Morgan has no book with him, so he makes a joke about wanting to read the Song of Songs, and Azim offers him the use of the library.
 - Morgan is curiously drawn to an old codex volume that seems to be a military-flavoured breviary. Azim tells him it isn't quite as old as the known Michaeline items in their collection, and it was only known to be in their collection since about the year 950. Duncan observes that all four archangels are represented on its cover, but two (Michael and Uriel) are equal in size and large than the others, Michael's symbol at the top of the cover and Uriel's at the bottom. Morgan is satisfied with his choice, and everyone goes to bed.
 - As Morgan is reading, he begins to see faint lines of text running at right angles to the lines he's been reading. He calls Duncan's attention to this, and at first Duncan thinks the book is a palimpsest, with the faint text a residue that wasn't fully scraped off before the parchment was re-used. Morgan doesn't recall seeing the lines when he skimmed the book earlier in the library, and he turns the book ninety degrees and moves it closer to a light source in an effort to read it. As the once faint lines grow darker and the newer text fades, Morgan calls Duncan over for a closer look.

Comments:

- ✓ This is a big connective device between several plot threads: Morgan and Duncan's Camber connection, Warin (and others) being Deryni all along (more on that below), Teymuraz and how to deal with him (also below). You could call it the spine of the whole structure.
- ✓ It's also intended as a tribute to books generally and Kurtz' books in particular. For myself, I find I cannot take one of her books to bed, read a chapter or two, close the book and go to sleep, particularly the first few times I read one. You could say that by giving this book such power, I'm trying to salute the power of books generally and hers in particular. (Forgive the indulgence; perhaps I've been reading too much Alberto Manguel.)
- ✓ The palimpsest has an historical basis (people really did reuse parchment that way), and it harkens back to the letters within letters used elsewhere in Kurtz' works (notably the note Alyce received from her father after his death in *ITKS*).
- ✓ This device is also intended to recall plots from the *Legends* and *Heirs* trilogies. This is in part an effort to encourage people to go back and read the rest of the books, but also to tie the twelfth-century characters to the tenth-century ones. Specifically, Rhys' discovery of his ability to block Deryni powers (from *Camber the Heretic*) and the baptism cult the Camberian Council of the time devises as a cover story (*The Harrowing of Gwynedd* and *King Javan's Year*), and the stasis spell Ariella and Camber both tried to use, as well as Evaine's completion of her father's work (*Saint Camber*, *Camber the Heretic*, and *The Harrowing*). Knowledge of these things seems to have been lost since the time of those books; no one on the recent Camberian Council seems to know what their earliest predecessors did, though one of their number does suggest that there may be more Deryni than anyone knows.

Largely Foreign Plots(cont'd):

- Joram's Palimpsest (cont'd)
 - Morgan and Duncan are seated side by side on Morgan's bed, and they each are holding the book open with the spine running horizontally instead of vertically. One of them catches a fingertip on the point of Saint Michael's sword on the front cover; the blood triggers the magic of the book, so that the older text becomes readable and Father Joram MacRorie speaks again to his kin.
 - Joram's text describes how they discovered Cinhil Haldane and why Camber finally sought to put him on the throne. He tells of Camber's decision to die to the public and take the shape of Alister Cullen, as well as the trap of sainthood that their secret and subsequent events made. Another chapter recounts how his brother-in-law Rhys Thruyn accidentally discovered his talent for blocking Deryni powers, how Camber and the others tested this new ability and sought to understand it, and how the first Camberian Council later devised the baptism cult that allowed them to block the powers of so many Deryni over the course of a year or more. Finally, they learn of the death stasis spell and it's hand gesture, how Ariella tried to use it and failed, how Camber at last used it and partially succeeded, and what Evaine had to do to finish the work.
 - The illuminated capitals hold memory visions of key scenes in these events, some of them fainter than others, perhaps because they were obtained second hand.
 - An epilogue explains Joram's careful preparation of this book so that his knowledge would be available to his descendants. He expresses his hope that his readers can reverse the blocks on the hidden Deryni and live freely.

Comments:

- ✓ This scene is a giant Exposition Beam for the characters and the audience, but it's highly appropriate, given how often Deryni use their powers to fill each other in on events they've missed.
- ✓ Additional information they should get from this book: Jerusha Thuryrn's ability to Heal (which should ring a bell for Morgan), King Javan and Joram creating the Transfer Portal that's now in Kelson's library annex, the origin of the Lion Brooch and its first use in an empowering ritual (hearkening back to Kelson's ritual), how Joram extracted a promise from someone at the chapter house to use this book in his devotions daily for a year, so that the magic could draw and store enough power to last a long time (a promise kept, with no ill effects to the user, for far longer than a year).
- ✓ By carefully selecting which scenes associated with the capitals survive intact and which ones are reduced to fuzzy images or sound only, the filmmakers can get around having to cast too many additional parts. Rhys dealing with Gregory's head injury and the flying crockery could be fairly sharp (it would likely leave a vivid impression), as would Camber taking Alister Cullen's shape with Joram's aid (shot from Joram's perspective to avoid having to cast a younger Joram). Other scenes, like the arguments about camber's sainthood, or perhaps Joram convincing Camber to get ordained before becoming a bishop, might be in audio only, with a shot of Morgan and Duncan reacting to what they're hearing.
- ✓ Joram lived until the year 948, so he had plenty of time to prepare this book, and he was involved with all the relevant events either first or second hand. He's also described and meticulous and cautious, so planning and designing a book such as this would also be characteristic of him.

Largely Foreign Plots(cont'd):

- Joram's Palimpsest (cont'd)
 - Morgan and Duncan confer with Azim about their discovery. They are joined by the Grand Master of the Order. It is observed that a number of Anvillers used the book for their meditations over the years, including Sir Sé Trelawney (?bonus points if he's still alive for the adult Morgan to meet again?).
 - It is agreed that it should be brought to the attention of others outside the Anvillers, and Azim suggests it may help their standing with the Camberian Council. Morgan is not optimistic about that prospect, but Duncan does wonder if any known descendants of Camber might be found; if they also can read the book and get the same information from it, it might help prove their case.
 - Further speculation follows about “recharging” the book by using it in meditation or other devotions; by now the book has reverted to its original state, with Joram's memoirs invisible and the secondary texts visible again.
 - Warin interrupts to say he's prepared to accompany them back to Rhemuth. Azim and his Grand Master take charge of the book and tell Morgan and Duncan they will contact them soon about presenting it to the Council. Morgan and Duncan take Warin back to Rhemuth via Transfer Portal, arriving in Duncan's study.
 - While Duncan helps Warin to settle in at the *schola*, Morgan seeks out Kelson to tell him of their discoveries. Kelson is pleased to hear of Warin's return, but far more excited by the tales of the palimpsest.
 - Azim seeks permission from the Council to bring his Order's Grand Master to the Council Chamber, but does not explain the reason or even mention the palimpsest.

Comments:

- ✓ I don't specify it, but Sir Sé Trelawney could well be the Grand Master of the Order. The Codex makes no mention of this, but it only covers event through the year 1130. It could be that he has been elected to this post after that date, and these events could also take place between that year and 1132. He would be a proper age for the post at this time (near age sixty or so). Having him in this part would be another treat for the fans.
- ✓ If there is such a turnover, an inventory of the Order's holdings might turn up this item, or bring it to the attention of Azim and the new Grand Master. Alternatively, it may still be in use as a special prerogative item for ranking members of the Order, perhaps on special occasions.
- ✓ In positing that its use as a breviary of sorts provides energy to sustain the magic and Joram's information, I'm recalling the occasions when characters have noted the psychic residue left in other rooms (the small Camber chapel off Duncan's study) and items (Duncan's bishop's ring, once worn by the martyred Istelyn and made from altar plate associated with Camber). You could say I'm following the author's lead in treating these things as psychic batteries, even if this culture's technology hasn't invented more mundane batteries as yet. I've also taken a step forward in having such residual energies put to a specific purpose, rather than just being a result of use over time.
- ✓ By the way, I chose to highlight both Michael and Uriel on the cover because in the works (such as “Healer's Song”), Joram typically took Michael's position when casting a ritual circle, while Camber took Uriel's.
- ✓ Azim asks permission of the Council to bring an outsider to meet them,, in part because there's no great hurry about this (unlike Arilan's case, when time was pressing), and because he once said, “Courtesy is prudent among magicians.”

Largely Foreign Plots(cont'd):

- Joram's Palimpsest (cont'd)
 - Azim and the Grand Master present themselves to the Camberian Council, along with the palimpsest. The Councillors do establish that the item is magical (some are convinced blood magic is involved), but none of them can make it work.
 - The Councillors want to have Morgan and Duncan summoned before the Council, both to see if they can make the magic work again and to submit to being read regarding their initial experience. The discussion is rather acrimonious, with some insisting that they should be grateful for what the Council has done (including the Coroth Transfer Portal) and they should at any rate be bound by the Council's demands regardless. Azim and to some extent Sofiana do not wish to treat the pair as if they were criminals, and another member responds that witnesses also sit in Camber's Siege to testify, so the summons need not be delivered in a high-handed way.
 - After a further objection is raised about the timing, with Liam's arrival in Gwynedd fast approaching and anxiety about a possible move from Teymuraz, it is at length agreed that two of their number (other than Azim) will visit each of the men separately for a preliminary discussion and then request that they attend the Council Chamber for reading and perhaps demonstrate what they did with the book to see if it works again. Sofiana and Laran agree to visit Coroth, while Arilan and Sir Sion Benet are set to see Duncan (and Warin, if possible).
 - Azim is chided for not ensuring Morgan and Duncan keep the matter secret, even from Kelson. Azim is sure they will be discreet and sees no harm in Kelson knowing of it..

Comments:

- ✓ Must double check that none of the current Councillors are themselves descendants or other blood kin of Camber. If any of the members are, they should be absent from this discussion.
- ✓ Note that the twelfth-century Councillors do not seem to know anything about the ability to block Deryni powers, much less the nearly four year long baptism cult their predecessors devised as a cover story. There would be much animated discussion of the consequences if such a revelation were in fact true. It would shed a new light on Warin de Grey as well. Someone may even work out that Morgan and Duncan (and Dhugal) might attempt to find out if any of them have this ability. Someone else is likely to cut short such speculation and advise investigating the palimpsest first (to ensure it is legitimate) before worrying overmuch about the information it contains.
- ✓ If the Council have continued to resist allowing a Transfer Portal in Coroth, (which is possible, but less likely than before), the Councillors could hold out the promise of permission and assistance as a reward for the cousins' cooperation in the matter of the palimpsest. That offer might well rub Morgan the wrong way, but that would be understandable.
- ✓ Sofiana and Laran should visit Coroth because Sofiana is related to Richenda, while Laran is both a hard-line critic of the cousins and needed in Coroth for another plot (see below). Likewise, Arilan's at times tense relations with Duncan are to be somewhat neutralized by the presence of Sion. Barrett might take Sion's place, since he is married to Kelson's mother by this time.
- ✓ Azim has already spoken on the subject of Kelson knowing about the Council and its actions (in *KKB*); he reasons that since the Council thinks well enough of Kelson to consider him for a seat, they shouldn't worry overmuch about his discretion.