THE ONCE AND FUTURE NERD BOOK II - MYTH MADE FLESH

Chapter 4 "I've Been Working On The Whale-Road"

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PINK Production Draft for 9-16-17 + YELLOW Production Revisions + GREEN day-of fixes

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PART THREE:

13 EXT. MERCHANT VESSEL (ABOVE DECK) - DAY

NARRATOR

As the crew of the Red Reaver loaded the last bit of Otto Olafsson's cargo onto their ship, Regan and her "court" began to make their way across the, what do you call it...gangplank.

ALF

We're all loaded up, mum. Just waitin' on our new passengers there.

REN

Well-done. What are you lot waiting for?

REGAN

After you, I insist.

REN

No pirate worth her salt is gonna walk a gangplank with her back to a thief she hardly knows.

REGAN

Then why would a thief turn her back on a pirate?

NARRATOR

I believe there's a riddle your kind is fond of. It involves a fox, a chicken, some grain and a rowboat. Do you know the one? This was like that except they were all foxes and all rather cranky. And Jen for one had little patience for riddles.

JEN

(huffing)

Hey, sorry, I don't have a tape measure with me.

She walks briskly across the plank.

JEN

(on the other boat)
But I'm sure both of your dicks are enormous.

REN

I see why you like her.

BRENNEN

I'll go first, Your--HRUK. Your Grace. As a show of--HRUP. Good faith.

REGAN

Nia, help him over. He should be half his weight by now.

YLLOWYYN

I'll help him over. Sir Brennen I am sorry I didn't remember until now but I might have something for your nausea.

NARRATOR

Yllowyyn opened a small pouch on his belt.

A drawstring opens.

YLLOWYYN

Place this between your cheek and jaw.

BRENNEN

Elf medicine?

YLLOWYYN

...Of a sort.

NARRATOR

And as the human cargo one by one transferred from the merchant ship to the pirate ship, Olafsson and his crew were left tied to the mast. In fact, it had been Billy himself who was tasked with fixing the knots on Olafsson himself.

We hear ropes being tied.

BILLY

Sorry dude, you know how it is.

OLAFSSON

You filthy ingrate. I risked life and limb to take you on my ship and this is how you repay me? You're the son of a thousand fathers, each one a bastard like--

--OLAFSSON IS GAGGED.

NARRATOR

But Otto Olafsson managed to slip his gag just as the pirates cast off from his now barren vessel.

OLAFSSON

You salt-drenched sons of a scurvy whore!

He put on quite the show for his crew, yelling and struggling, until the pirates were out of earshot.

OLAFSSON

I swear on my maw's left pap you'll choke on what you stole, every pox-ridden one of you, and you'll deserve it.

OLAFSSON

And as you die, Garedian's rotten hounds will turn you away from the gates of Selbirin for smelling too foul.

NARRATOR

And then Otto's hand found a small, hard object he didn't recognize. As he wriggled it around to his feet, he saw it was a small, retractable knife, with a red hilt and a white cross insignia, and the name "Billy" scrawled on it.

14 INT. RED REAVER (CARGO HOLD) - A LITTLE LATER

NARRATOR

As Olafsson's screams and curses echoed into the wind, the Red Reaver prowled away, towards Armstrungard. Though Regan seemed relatively comfortable on the deck among rogues and thieves, the rest of our party was considerably more cautious and uneasy. So they settled once more in the hold of a ship, surrounded by quite the same cargo as before.

The baby cries throughout this scene. It is jarring and unpleasant.

NELSON

(to Jen)

So we're basically Kiera Knightly on Geoffrey Rush's ship now, right? Or are we Legolas hanging out with Johnny Depp? I can't tell which is the better option.

JEN

As long as no one turns into skeletons at night, I say just go with it. At this point we have to trust Regan that she knows what she's doing. These are her...people I guess.

NIA

As much as I prefer the company down here to that upstairs, I think I must get some fresh air.

BRENNEN

My apologies, Nia. The nausea is fading at last.

^ *

14

NIA

(walking it back)
Oh, no, Sir Brennen. I didn't mean--

GWEN

--The wee one needs a change too, we just haven't had the time.

NIA

Forgive me everyone. These are difficult circumstances but none of you are to blame. I'm going up top lest I continue to be rude.

NELSON

Right behind you.

Off to the side, Arlene rummages through some bags.

ARLENE

Now where did I--oh, confound it.

GWEN

What?

ARLENE

I left one of our bags up there. It had his music box in it. I must go up as well.

GWEN

Not without me you won't.

ARLENE

Yllowyyn, will you tend to the little one for a moment?

YLLOWYYN

What?

Several sets of footsteps on a ladder.

NARRATOR

And so the whole of our party, save Yllowyyn, Sir Brennen, and the infant, ascended the ladder up to the deck...

15 EXT. RED REAVER (ABOVE DECK) - CONTINUOUS

15

NARRATOR

...Where the pirates were celebrating their new haul.

Sounds of drinking and sloshing and merriment.

NARRATOR

Some of Olafsson's precious cargo was a few dozen kegs of ale from Seahold. Ren had tapped four of those, and the whole crew was already a few sheets to the wind, drinking and carousing.

REN

Well, Thief-Queen. Seems you can hold your ale, even if you can't hold a knife!

REGAN

Hey! Where do you get off saying I can't hold a knife?

REN

To start with, the way your hand's hanging there all bandaged.

REGAN

(half-joking)

Well now you've insulted me. And I demand satisfaction.

REN

Care to make it interesting?

THE PIRATE CREW OOHS A LITTLE.

REGAN

Five finger pin-cushion. I win I get your cabin for the night.

REN

And what if I win? Since you already told me you're piss-poor.

A knife is unsheathed and stabbed into the table.

REGAN

A gift. From one of the finest fencing teachers in Armstrungard. You won't see craftsmanship like that robbing a bunch of second-rate bean-counters.

REN

A gift?

REGAN

I resent the implication. Me and this fencing teacher were on very good terms, 'til I realized he just wanted to show me his other sword.

Ren examined the blade for a long, careful moment.

REN

You're on.

PIRATES CHEER RAUCOUSLY.

REN

You're the guest. After you.

The knife is pried from the table.

Footsteps dash toward us.

JEN

Woah woah woah. Bad idea.

REN

Back off, gal. Your friend made a bet.

JEN

She's drunk off her ass.

REGAN

You're drunk off your ass, Mom.

REN

'Course she's drunk! So's my crew, and they've been promised a show. You'd be a fool to leave them frustrated.

NIA

(frantic)

Ah, Lady Arlene, perhaps instead you could regale them with a song.

ARLENE

...Pardon?

NIA

The Lady's voice is famous in some parts. Come now, my lady. Quickly as you please.

Very tentative footsteps.

NARRATOR

Arlene timidly made her way to the center of the gathered ring of raiders, with Gwen beside her practically attached at the hip. She looked at her audience the way a deer looks at a bowman.

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ARLENE
     There were two sisters by the sea. \
     Maidens fair as fair can be. \
     The younger's voice was the purest one. \
     The elder's bright as candle in the sun.
NARRATOR
     The pirates slowly turned to listen to this rather
     clean and proper noblewomen and her small but strong
     voice.
             The magical reverb fades in.
ARLENE
     To town one day there rode a knight. \
     The elder hoped to be his wife. \
     That he'd love the younger this she feared. \
     Soon as her voice he chanced to hear.
ARLENE
     She called out "sister come with me." \
     Let's go walking by the sea. \
     The waves did crash, the wind did churn. \
     But only the elder did return. \
     Returned alone, returned alone. \
     Fa la la la la doe doe.
       Beat of just the ocean waves.
REN
     What in the holy fuck is that racket?
ARLENE
     A...song?
ALF
     What kind of song is that?
REN
     Ha! Trying to bring a landlubber song on this ship.
ALF
     Why don't we teach the lady some of our favorite songs?
PIRATE CREW
     We're the salty sons of no one.\
     Sailing the Red, Red Reaver.\
     Though the seas get rough, she's sticking tough.\
     Gotta see her to believe her.
JEN
     Oh that's cute, they have like a theme song.
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The pirates should now ad lib several verses of the filthiest limericks they can possibly imagine.

JEN

(or ad lib. similar)

Probably should seen that coming.

ARLENE Oh dear.

NIA

Oh dear.

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The limericks probably continue a bit into this scene, but duck under the narration.

NARRATOR

As the pirates completely forgot about the pi-dexterity contest between the two Sovereigns on board, and instead focused on shocking the Lady Arlene, Nelson noticed Billy sitting apart from the merriment, looking overboard at the water.

> As Nelson walks towards us, the singing pans and fades away. We still hear the occasional drunken shout of celebration.

NELSON

Hey.

BILLY

Sup.

NELSON

You all right?

BILLY

Yeah. I quess. I dunno.

NELSON

I never thought you'd turn down free beer.

BILLY

Eh. Not feeling it tonight.

Beat.

NELSON

I never liked parties.

BILLY

Did you go to any?

NELSON

Yes, Billy, I went to parties. (beat)

It wasn't that hard to figure out where they were. There was a way people'd get when they were drinking. You could just, like, hear it in how they laughed. And then I was never sure when some dumb drunk hick was gonna stop being polite. Eventually I just stopped going.

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BILLY

Look man, I know you're trying to be real with me, and I don't wanna just throw it back in your face. But I can't deal with more shit right now. (beat)
I'd just make it worse anyway.

NELSON

You've actually done a lot right while we've been here. I wouldn't say that if I didn't mean it.

BILLY

Stupid, stupid, fuckup. I should just stuck to the plan like Regan said.

NELSON

Didn't you? Seemed like the sailors liked your Styx covers.

BILLY

Look, man...don't tell anybody this. But I steered us further out from shore. I thought it would help.

NELSON

(chuckling)
Wait that's what you're upset about?

BILLY

Yeah, cause now we're captured by pirates, and everything's fucked up.

NELSON

Dude, you weren't steering anything. Yllowyyn disconnected the rudder. Jen was doing all the steering with the wind.

BILLY

...Oh.
(more pissy than ever)
Really? Man, fuck that!

NELSON

What? I thought you'd be glad - it's not your fault. You didn't do anything.

BILLY

Yeah! I never fucking do anything! I'm not even a fuckup, I'm just...dead weight getting dragged around like a big old floppy dick. This morning Jen had to rescue me.

NELSON

Yeah, she loves you. I'm sure she didn't mind rescuing--

BILLY

--Well maybe I mind! (beat)

It's dumb. I know it's dumb. No, actually, I know it's my dad talking. That doesn't mean it doesn't feel shitty.

NELSON

Man, Jen is...something else. Like she's clearly doing things here, we've seen her save lives. And I don't know much about relationships, but anyone can see you keep her on the ground somehow. If that's what you're good at, that's not nothing. I know it's not the most macho-sounding thing, but what's macho ever gotten us?

BILLY

Still feels shitty.

NELSON

Yeah. I get it. But there's a lot of people right now with a lot more to feel shitty about it. So feel shitty, but then get back in the game.

THIS EARNS A CHUCKLE FROM BILLY.

NELSON

You wanna get some beer?

BILLY

I'm gonna hang out here a little longer. You go ahead. Do me a favor and check in on Jen.

NELSON

...Okay.

We hear Nelson start to walk away, but his footsteps are intercepted by Brennen's.

This next bit is panned to where Nelson ended up:

BRENNEN

(strangely bubbly)
Nelson my lad! How do you fare?

NELSON

Uhh...fine?

BRENNEN

I'm going to go look at the ocean!

NELSON

Cool.

*

Nelson's footsteps continue away from us while Brennen's approach.

Now we're back center:

BRENNEN

Ah, William my lad. How do you fare?

BILLY

I'm hanging in. You seem better.

BRENNEN

Aye. That Elf medicine is a blessing from Galadon.

A beat of just the lapping ocean.

BRENNEN

The sea is so large. And we're...so small.

BILLY

Uh. Yeah I guess.

BRENNEN

Sets a man to wonder - what truly matters in life.

BILLY

You sure you're feeling okay?

BRENNEN

We never traveled when I was young. Not sure my father ever saw the sea. But somehow, I doubt he'd have found the beauty in it. Not a manful thing to find beautiful. And a man must always be manful, mustn't he?

BILLY

Man I am not on your level right n--

BRENNEN

--What does it mean to be a man? Is the image of manfulness we strive for truly a Galadon-given ideal? Or do we but tell ourselves that, as we relive the sins of our fathers?

Long beat.

BILLY

You know I think I am gonna get that beer.

17 INT. RED REAVER (CARGO HOLD) - SIMULTANEOUS

17

We still hear some partying above-deck.

The baby fusses a little.

NARRATOR

Meanwhile, below deck...

YLLOWYYN

All right, let's see here. Surely I can figure this out. Just...

Some cloth is unwrapped.

YLLOWYYN

(smacked in the face by smell)
Oh gods. Ohh. Your superior senses are Galadon's gift they said. Proof of your race's destiny to rule they said.

18 EXT. RED REAVER (DOOR TO THE HOLD) - CONTINUOUS

18

The pirates keep yelling and getting continually drunker.

NARRATOR

As the marauders continued their revelry, Gwen found her paramour leaning on the railing observing the merriment.

GWEN

M'lady, come back down to the hold. Think we've had enough songs for one night.

ARLENE

I've had an idea.

ARLENE

They like bawdy, bloody songs. Let us give them one.

GWEN

What? Why?

ARLENE

They travel from port to port do they not? One might presume they spread their songs with them.

GWEN

And Galadon knows what else.

ARLENE

Do you remember the tale of Lady Barnard and little Matty Groves?

ARLENE

Well, suppose that instead of Barnard, the cold-hearted cuckold were called Ardel.

NARRATOR

And for the first time since she had boarded the Red Reaver, the worry left Gwen's face, and was replaced with a mischievous grin.

GWEN

(playful now, has an idea)
And what about little Matty Groves?

ARLENE

What about him?

GWEN

Who said it had to be a him?

19 EXT. RED REAVER (ABOVE DECK) - CONTINUOUS

Pirates shout and rough-house all around us.

One meek set of footsteps walks to the center of it all.

Arlene clears her throat quietly, to no effect.

ARLENE

Beg pardon, I'd like to sing another song.

A few pirates snicker but most don't give a shit.

ARLENE

Day of feasting, day of rest,\
of good will, and good cheer.\
Lord Ardel's wife came down to court,\
the scriptures for to hear.

The pirates actually settle down a bit.

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ARLENE And when the reading it was done,\ she looked around the hall.\ Her eye was caught by Maddy Groves,\ most handsome of them all.
THERE ARE A FEW SPARE CHEERS OF RECOGNITION AND WHISTLES FROM THE PIRATE CREW. THEY KNOW THIS SONG AND KIND OF DIG IT.
ARLENE Come home with me young Maddy Groves.\ Come home with me tonight.\ And let us keep each other warm,\ until the morning light.
OKAY THAT LINE HOOKED THEM.
ARLENE My Lady, I'd love nothing more,\ but o! to think the strife!\ The rings upon your fingers say\ you are my liege's wife.
ARLENE (belts with years of pent-up rage) And what if I am your Liege's wife?\ Your liege is not at home.
BIG CHEERS ON THIS ONE.
ARLENE He is out a-hunting stag,\ and I pray he'll ne'er come home.
ARLENE And she told the servants of the house,\ if you my secret keep,\ My gold and silver and my lace,\ and more besides you'll reap.
NOW THE PIRATE CREW PIPES IN WITH A RESPONSE TO THE CALL:
PIRATE CREW Hay Downe! Hay Downe!\ And more besides you'll reap.\
THE PIRATE CREW CALL AND RESPONSE WILL NOW REPEAT AT THE END OF EACH VERSE.

AND NOW THEY START CLAPPING ALONG.

ARLENE

And none thought twice to take her gold,\
besides one lowly page.\
Thought he no treasure man could count\
was worth Lord Ardel's rage.

So he met his liege as he rode home.\
Lord, I'd ne'er lie to you.\
If you approach most quietly,\
you'll see your wife's untrue.

And so the lord crept through the door,\
and lifted up the sheets.\
The lovers they awoke to see\
him standing at their feet.

What's this my wife, it vexed me so,\
But now I understand.\
All the years you've spurned my touch.\
You prefer a woman's hand.

THIS REVEAL EARNS AN EXTRA RESPONSE FROM THE PIRATES.

NOW THEY'RE **STOMPING** ON THE DECK AND HITTING CHAINS AND GENERALLY LOSING THEIR SHIT.

ARLENE

Man or woman, all the same.\
I must now take your life.\
You've dragged my honor through the mud.\
And ta'en to bed my wife.

Kill me if you wish, my Lord.\
And curse me far and near.\
It's plain to see your Lady wife\
has made her choice most clear.

And if honor, Sir, you wish to claim,\
you'll have to spare my life.\
For you have two fine steel broadswords,\
and I but a pocket-knife.

It's true I have two fine steel swords,\
and dear they cost my purse.\
But you shall have the best of them,\
and I shall take the worse.

So Maddy struck the very first blow,\but little did it do.\When Ardel raised his arm to strike,\it seemed Maddy was through.

But then a blow came from behind, \((MORE))

ARLENE (cont'd)
that neither one foresaw.\
The lady stuck her lover's knife\
beneath her husband's jaw.

MASSIVE CHEERS.

And as Lord Ardel's blood ran out,\
so boldly spake his wife.\
You'd have stole the soul from me,\
had I not stole your life.

And yes it's women I prefer,\
And yes your touch I've vexed.\
But your cruel heart repulses me.\
So far more than your sex.

The undertaker, fetch him quick.\
I smile to pay his toll.\
My husband was of noble blood,\
but Maddy's of noble soul.

PIRATE CREW

Noble soul, hay downe!\
Maddy's of noble soul!

ARLENE FINISHES WITH A CADENZA FLOURISH, AND THE PIRATE CREW MATCHES HER.

ALL FALL INTO RAUCOUS APPLAUSE.

NARRATOR

And Arlene couldn't help but smile with pride, as the heretofore cold-faced brigands cheered for her song.

20 EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE FREEHOLD - NIGHT

Hoofbeats stomp through the night.

NARRATOR

Bryce Riverfell had ridden with Ry'y lo Th'yyt and her retinue some ways away from Freehold, before they set up a small camp in which they could converse.

We hear a small fire.

BRYCE

Far enough ride for ya?

RY'Y

General, we've very sensitive matters to discuss. I'm sure you can appreciate the need for discretion.

BRYCE

Of course.

20

RY'Y

General Brennen of Greyfield was in your camp until very recently, was he not?

BRYCE

He's been knighted, you know.

RY'Y

We've reason to doubt that. Have you any idea where he was headed when he left your camp?

BRYCE

Generally, yeah.

RY'Y

(growing impatient) Well?

BRYCE

Well he told me in confidence, so it's not really mine to start spreading around.

RY'Y

General, this is not a sewing circle. I am ordering you to tell me what you know.

BRYCE

I respectfully refuse.

RY'Y

As a commander of the Civic Guard, you are bound to--

BRYCE

--You know I been thinking it's about time I retired.

RY'Y

Is that your idea of a joke?

BRYCE

Repairs to the outer hold are done and the rest are ahead of schedule. And any one of my Captains is fit and ready to lead the garrison. Clarence is my first choice, the men adore him. But Roy's a brilliant tactician.

RY'Y

Who in Brennen's party have you spoken to? What lies have they told you?

BRYCE

Yeah I'm pretty sure Brennen wouldn't lie to me.

RY'Y

Who else have they spoken to?

BRYCE

No one but me, that I can swear to you. (burps)
'Scuse me.

RY'Y

Listen to me you snide little shit. I don't give a damn if you retire. You will tell me what Brennen's party has been saying, who they've said it to and where they've gone, and you will tell me now.

BRYCE

Agree to disagree. (burps louder)
'Scuse me.

RY'Y

This can be very unpleasant for you if you wish it so.

BRYCE

Believe it was you yourself taught me to resist torture.

RY'Y

Then how about that flea-bitten innkeeper you're sweet on?

BRYCE

(sighs, resigned)
Yeahhh, I knew you'd stoop to going after Maeve. I sure will miss her.

RY'Y

(scoffs, thinks she's got him)
How about we go fetch her, pull out her nails and teeth
in front of you.

BRYCE

You'd cause a whole lotta ruckus and bad will and still not get what you wanted.

BRYCE LETS OUT A HUGE BURP AND HICCUP.

RY'Y

I don't believe your bluff for a second, you--

--RY'Y SNIFFS.

At last, Ry'y's Elvish nose detected a very distinctive odor emanating from Bryce. Only then did she realize that *she* was not the cause of the oily sheen of sweat on his brow.

RY'Y

(frantic)
Oh gods dammit.

WHOOSH TO:

21 INT. BRYCE'S STUDY - SIMULTANEOUS

Papers and drinkware shuffle around.

NARRATOR

And it was almost at that exact moment, back at Freehold, that the Lieutenant Colonel known as the Professor took it upon himself to tidy up his commander's office. As he picked up the drinking glass that Bryce had drained just before leaving...

THE PROFESSOR SNIFFS.

NARRATOR

...his trained herbalist's nose detected the same odor as Ry'y lo-Th'yyt.

PROFESSOR

Oh, gods, Bryce.

22 <u>INT. FREEHOLD STOREROOM - MOMENTS LATER</u>

The Professor sprints down some stairs.

NARRATOR

He raced to his storehouse.

A door flies open and footsteps run in.

NARRATOR

And made straight for a jar in which was kept a particular mushroom known commonly as Lady's Farewell.

Footsteps slow and then stop.

NARRATOR

The Professor closed his eyes and hung his head low. For gone were the mushrooms.

21

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WHOOSH BACK TO:

23 EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE FREEHOLD - SIMULTANEOUS

23

NARRATOR

Ry'y reacted quickly as soon as she realized.

RY'Y

(re-use)
Oh gods dammit.
(shouting to her men)
Grab him! Put your fingers down his throat!

A struggle ensues.

BRYCE

(intense pain)
Too late for that, Lord Commander.

NARRATOR

The Elves restrained Bryce.

BRYCE RETCHES PAINFULLY.

This continues underneath narration for a bit. Puke hits the ground.

NARRATOR

But Bryce was already retching gobs of bile, tarry and crimson, onto the dusty ground.

RY'Y

Don't you do this you gods-damned coward. Don't you die. No. No! Answer my questions you river-filth son of a whore!

NARRATOR

But Bryce had grown motionless and pallid, as his unblinking eyes stared accusingly at Ry'y.

In between every word, Ry'y pounds on Bryce's body with her fists.

RY'Y

Gods! Damn! These selfish! Fragile! Vermin!!

SHE SPITS IN DIGUST, AS SHE PANTS FROM THE EXERTION.

And thus did Bryce Riverfell, one of the greatest and most honorable warriors of his generation, draw his last breath: cursed, beaten, and spit upon, with his sword still sheathed, and laying in a puddle of his own sick. An ignoble death, nobly done. Peaceful be his rest.

We sit with this for a long, contemplative beat.

24 EXT. SHIP DECK - PREDAWN

24

We hear footsteps and some snoring.

NARRATOR

As the eastern horizon began to lighten, Ren walked her deck, surveying the damage the celebration had caused. Overall the ship remained unharmed, but her crew would need some extra time to recover. She was surprised to find some of Regan's retinue slumped over a table along with several of her own.

Footsteps approach.

REGAN

Don't tell me you're bailing on the party too.

REN

No luck with Alf after all?

REGAN

Not in cards it seems. I think he was probably scared little Alf'd be too drunk to stand straight.

REN

That what you're telling yourself?

REGAN

Hey fuck you, all right? I'm not--

REN

--Relax, I'm just taking the piss out. Coulda told you before, you were barking up the wrong tree.

REGAN

Oh. Really? How'd I miss that?

REN

Gal, I've met pirates who like any damn thing you can imagine. But before Alf I never met a pirate who didn't like to fuck.

REGAN

Huh. Okay.

REN

But oh well, ah? If we were like everyone else we wouldn't be pirates. Be glad you only spent one night confused. I spent months not knowing what I was doing wrong.

REGAN

Well. In that case, Ren...

REN

Ohn no. Not when there's business still to finish. (But later...?)
Besides Thief Queen, you couldn't handle me.

REGAN

Well now you've insulted me. And I demand satisfaction.

A frantic bell clangs incessantly.

NARRATOR

Both women looked up at the frantically ringing bell in the crow's nest.

REN

Klaus! Stop your foolishness, you drunk bastard!

KLAUS

Blockade!

REN

What?!

KLAUS

There's a blockade in front of the port!

NARRATOR

Ren pulled a spyglass from her belt and pointed it towards the growing city.

REN

Shit.

There Ren saw five Elven warships patrolling the entrance to the city port.

REN

Well, I'm afraid this changes things.

END OF PART THREE.