

## Selected Endorsments for Callenlas Chronicles

“Hess exhibits a care with words that is too rarely seen – her writing is simply beautiful. *The Dark Star* is for every boy who feels the pull to be something more, and every girl who longs to choose a life of adventure and meaning.”

**Tama Fortner, ECPA award-winning and bestselling writer**

“Your children will want a shelf full of books  
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“A tale of adventure, heroism, love and daring all set in a world that hints at ancient depths and lore. What I love most [about *The Lost Prince*] is that, as you are drawn in to the journey of each character – their joys and struggles, fears and bravery, mistakes and growth – you realise that it is the same journey you are travelling under the tender, guiding hand of God.”

**Michael J Tinker, songwriter**

“Beautifully crafted, compellingly told ... I loved it!”  
**Felicity Carswell, podcaster, Two Sisters & A Cup of Tea**

# THE POET OF THE LEAWOLD



Callenlas Chronicles

Book 4

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H. R. HESS



**Reformation**  
Lightning

Reformation Lightning

[www.ReformationLightning.com](http://www.ReformationLightning.com)

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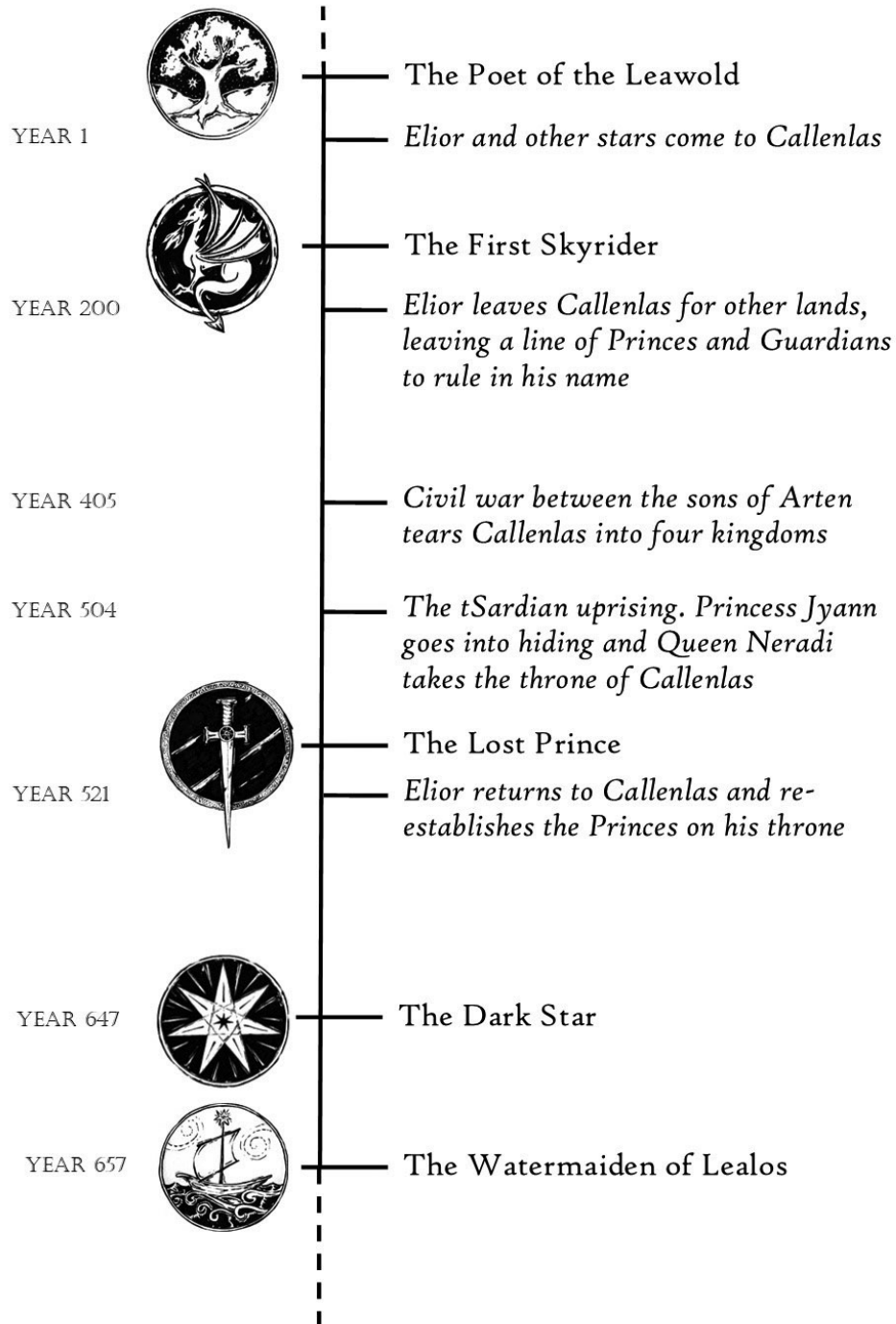
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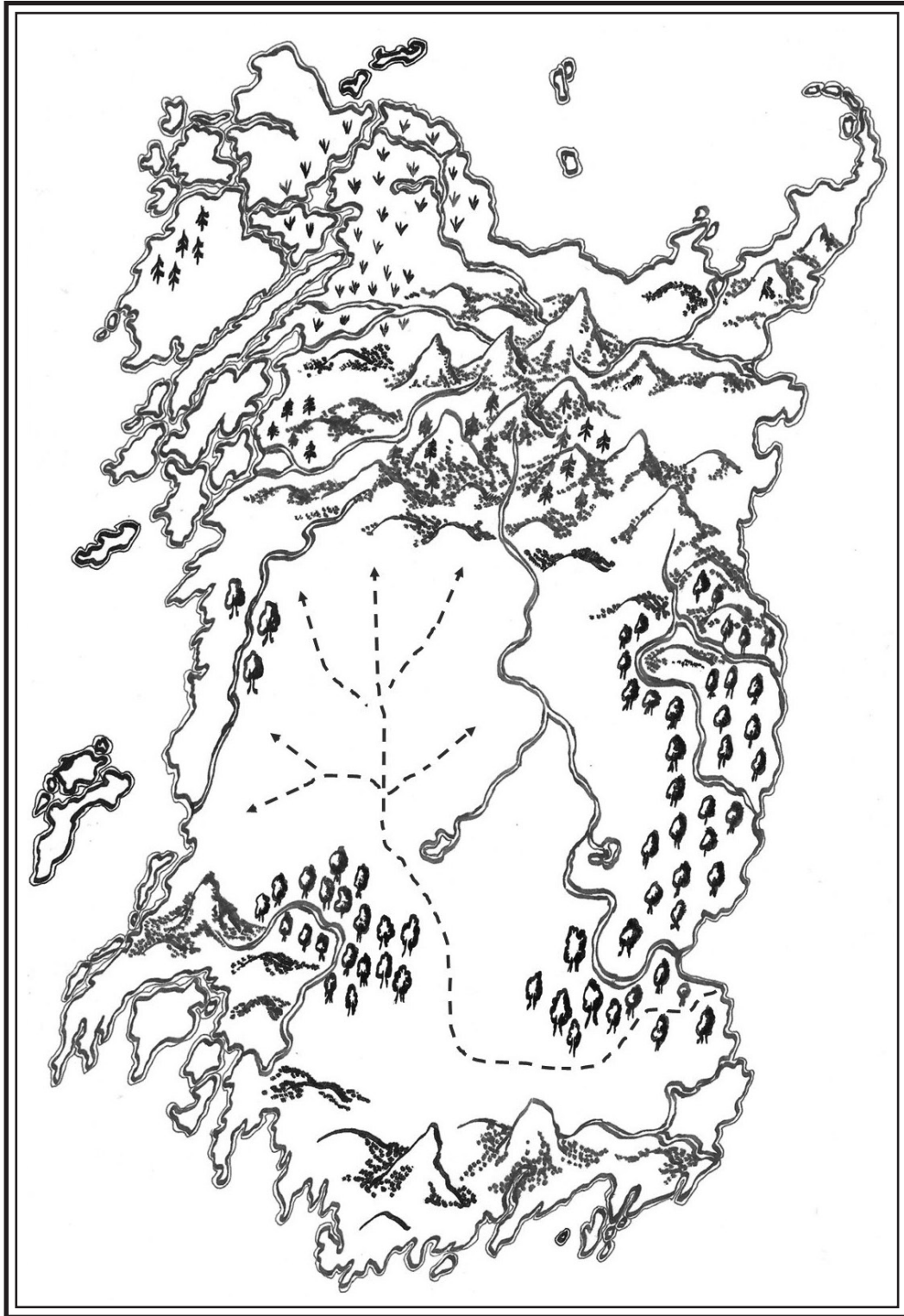
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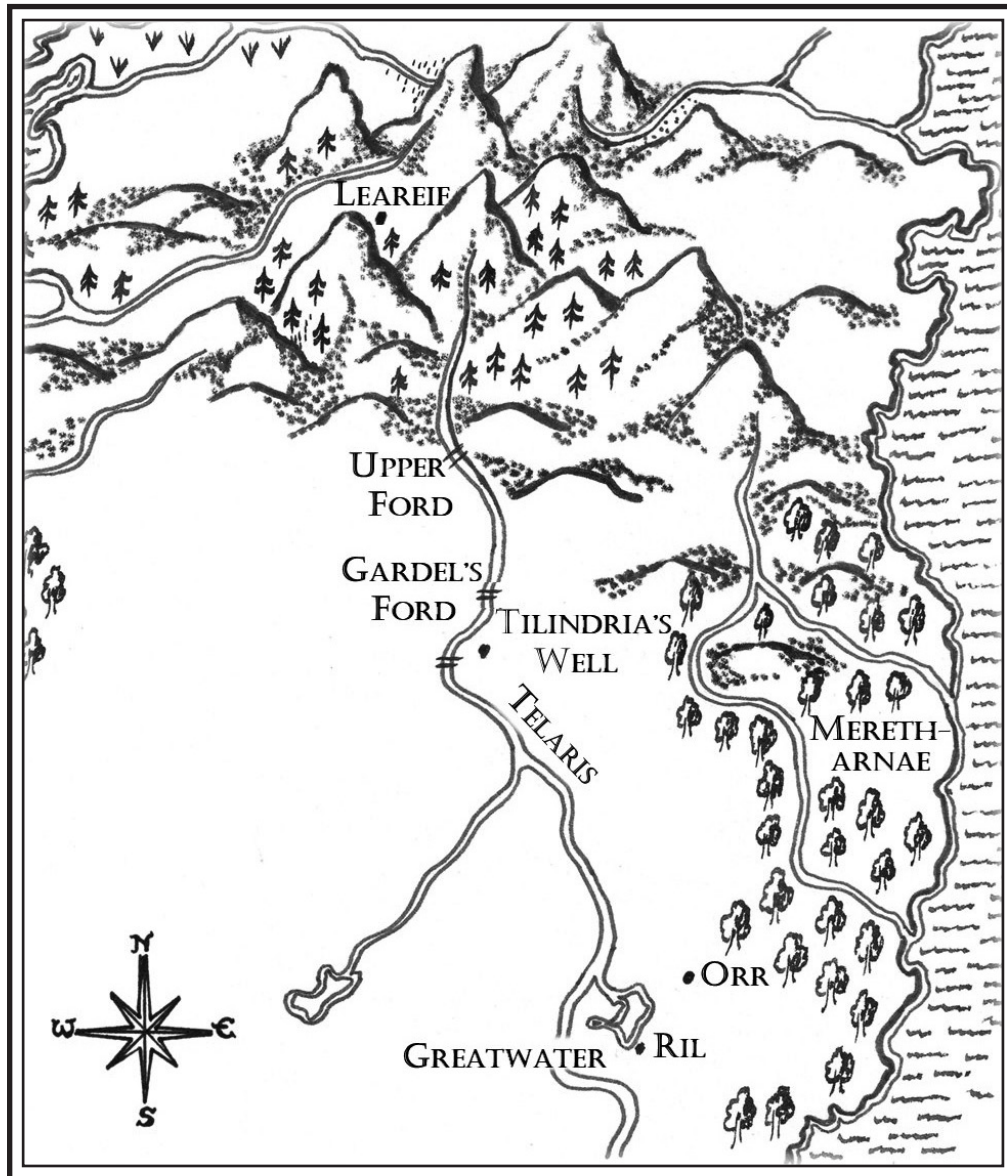
# TIMELINE OF CALLENLAS HISTORY



# THE INVASION OF CALLENLAS

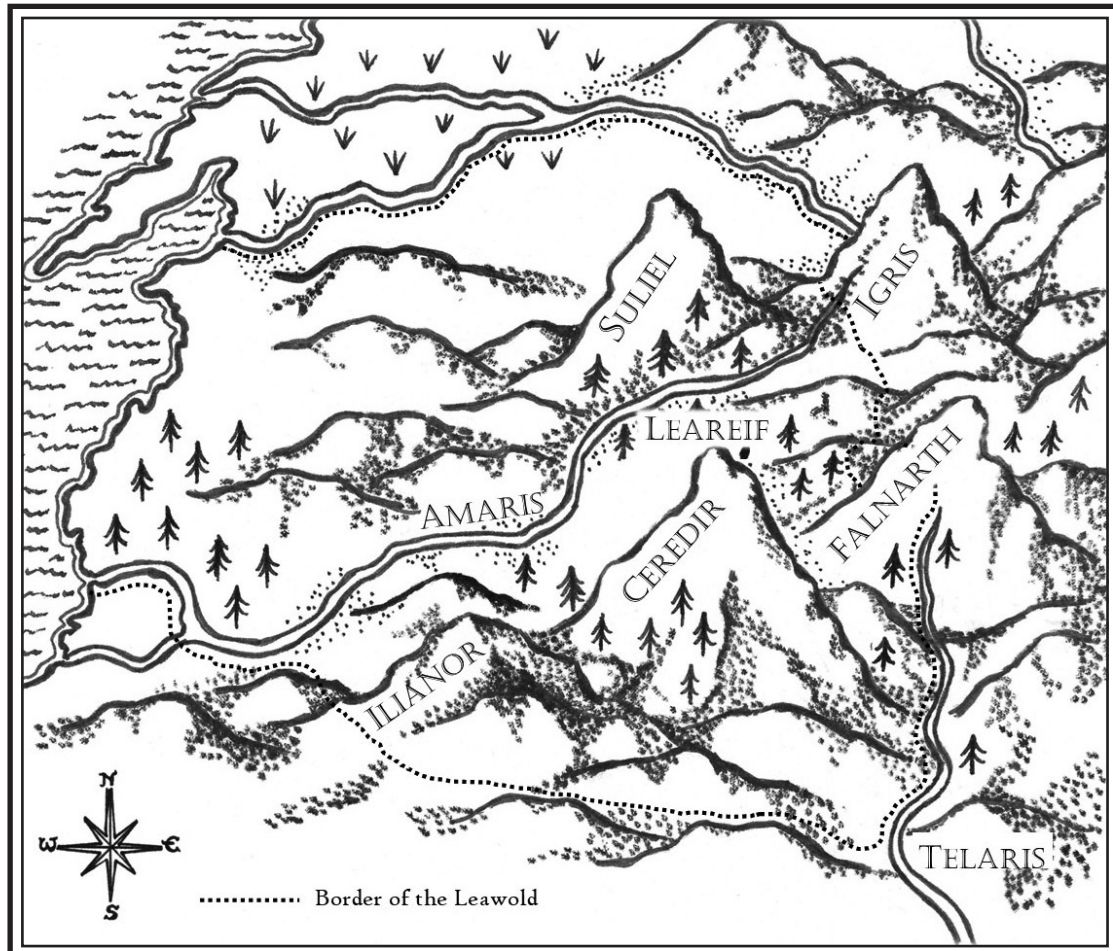


# Callenlas





# THE LEAWOLD





## PROLOGUE

In the long days of summer, when the Day-Star smiled upon the earth and woke the spirits into growing fruit and grain, the Reif of the Leawold took his bow and his knife, and travelled east into the forest, searching for the white stag. Bryn-fys' first wife had taken a rest from childbearing and his second had taken to producing daughters. He wanted to make an offering of the stag to the spirits for more sons, or at least a new wife.

He travelled east and sighted the stag on the eleventh day. He pursued it over hill and glade until the light failed, and he knew himself lost. Being an experienced hunter, and skilled with both blade and bow, Bryn-fys was not much afraid, but he wanted to light a fire to sleep by, so he walked on to find a suitable clearing. He had travelled much further than he realised, and after a time stepped out of the trees onto a beach.

The stars were bright that night, and the moon had just risen above the tips of the trees to admire herself in the rippled mirror of the sea, turning the sand silvery-white. Bryn-fys was about to retreat into the shelter of the trees when he noticed the woman sitting on the sand. She was looking out at the sea, her



knees clasped to her chest. Her hair drifted long behind her, as pale as the moon, so that at first Bryn-fys thought she was old.

When he came near her, he found that her face was young, and very beautiful.

“Lady,” he said, “how came you to be here, all alone?”

The woman turned to look at him. Her eyes were dark blue, like the colour of the sea before them, or the sky just before night falls. They were framed by lashes long and black, and her skin was unblemished and smooth like a child’s. She was wearing only a plain underdress of linen, with no belt or shoes.

She gestured to her mouth, and Bryn-fys came to understand that she was dumb and could not speak.

He could not leave her alone on the beach, for although it was summer, wolves prowled the forest, and sometimes shadow-spirits, and few of the local tribes were honourable. He led her to the edge of the forest and lit a fire. He gave her food and then she slept, covered with his cloak.

Bryn-fys wondered if someone would come to the beach looking for the woman, but no one did. After waiting for two days, he took her home to be his third wife. She had no name, so they called her Garahir: “found”.

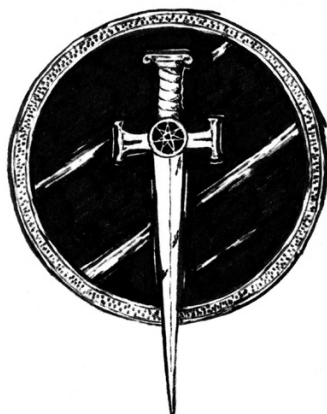
Garahir could neither cook nor spin, but she could sew, creating beautiful designs to edge tunics, cloaks and belts. As news of her skill spread, people from all the reifas of the Leawold and beyond came to commission work from her, and to learn how to recreate the designs themselves, though none could do it so well as Garahir.

At first, Bryn-fys thought she was a gift of the spirits, for she was so beautiful and clever with her slender fingers. But the moon waxed and waned many times and still she remained childless. His heart towards her changed, and he wondered if the spirits intended her for sacrifice, though Oriol and Gedefas both said nay.

And then Garahir became pregnant, two years after her finding, and presented Bryn-fys with a son, Aleifir, and a daughter, Aderyn.

When Aderyn and Aleifir were two, the Telaris broke its banks and flooded their valley, sweeping away crops and livestock, homes and barns in a few brief hours. Afterwards, with his people huddled, sodden, in his hall, Bryn-fys took count of them all. Garahir was not among them and was never found.

She came to him by water and left by water. Some even muttered that she was a sea-spirit, shifting and untrustworthy, and that she had abandoned her husband and children to return to the sea. As she grew older, Aderyn felt anger towards such people; but then, she also felt anger, irrationally, towards her mother, for the gulf she had left behind in her life when she died.



## CHAPTER 1

The prow of the longship hit the wave full force, driving shards of freezing water up into the faces of the rowers. They were fighting the tide, but hunger and thirst drove the men on, gouging the sea with their oars, straining for life. On either side of the ship, four other boats fought a similar battle with the spring squall and the waves. Ahead, the meagre strip of beach slipped in and out of sight behind a veil of drizzle that slicked the handles of the oars and matted the hair of the rowers to their heads.

Arms folded, braced like a mountain against the rocking of the boat, Glarhord Cleaver, the Terror of Habrada, fixed his gaze on the land as if, by sheer force of will, he could drive the boats ashore. As unwieldy as his name in appearance, Glarhord was as fearsome as the storm which had driven them northwest for four days, off-course, to this unknown land. The glint of adventure and greed now flickered in his eyes.

“Row!” he roared, as the men at the front seemed to be tiring. “Row, you weaklings, or you’ll feel the edge of my blade!”

Within an hour, there came the whump of bows against wet sand. Men leaped into the shallows to bring the vessels up

from the greedy tide. Some sank to their knees and filled their fists with sodden sand. Some raised their hands and sent praise to the spirits of the sea and storm. Some simply sat in the rain, dazed by their own unexpected survival.

Glarhord stepped onto the beach, his nostrils flaring as he took in the scent of salt and shore, and the faint undercurrent of green forest from the trees at the beach's end.

"This is a good land," he pronounced.

"Ware to the west, Lord!" cried one of the men.

Dripping heads followed the pointing finger to the trees that rimmed the beach to the west. People were swarming onto the shingle from the trees, bearing weapons and training their longbows on the men sitting, exhausted, by the shallows. The natives wore tunics and cloaks of green and grey, allowing them to blend in with the forest.

"My sword," Glarhord commanded.

A wiry young man of eighteen or nineteen ran to the boat and dragged a mighty longsword from its bows. He staggered through the shallows with it and presented it to his master. Glarhord drew the sword from its sheath and advanced on those descending the beach. Slowly, wearily, his men began picking themselves up off the sand and collecting their weapons from the boats.

The leader of the natives stood before Glarhord. His eyes were grey, like the clouds overhead, watery with uncertainty. He spoke in a language unknown to the warriors. His words sounded like a question.

"I am Glarhord, the Terror of Habrada." Glarhord's voice rumbled in the earth. "I do not make peace with any man. If you value your lives you had better kneel before me ... or run."

Incomprehension flickered on the faces ranged before Glarhord, and their fear and uncertainty drew a growling laugh from his chest.

“They do not understand you, Lord,” mocked one of his own men, and mirthless laughter rippled around the two hundred or so standing behind him.

“They will understand,” Glarhord said softly, a menacing glint in his eye. “I will make them understand.”

With an astonishing agility for a man of his size, Glarhord swept his sword up and around, slicing the head off the leader who stood before him with one stroke. The head rolled down and thudded in the damp shingle at his feet, before the body followed, crumpling slowly.

A woman screamed, and a grin split Glarhord’s face.

A hail of arrows was unleashed from the trees, clinking off the metal plates that Glarhord and his men had strapped over their leather armour and sinking into the sand with barely a whisper.

Within heartbeats the beach was in chaos, the sand and shingle churned beneath pounding feet as some fled and some tried to stand and fight.

“My shield!” Glarhord called, and it was put into his hand. He advanced, crossing the sand in massive strides, carving his way through the fleeing natives with the dedication of a ploughman. To his right and left his men imitated his steady attack. One or two fell to the arrows, but they all had shields and made good use of them. Soon they had advanced almost to the forest, and most of the natives had disappeared into its shadows.

Glarhord wanted to pursue them. He wanted the smell of a burning reifa in his nostrils, and the taste of their pigs and sheep in his mouth that evening. But he called a halt at the edge of the trees. Truth be told, the darkness between the boughs unnerved him. The drizzle was relentless, turning their blades slick, making their hands wet and their grip on their weapons uncertain. They were weary after rowing so far. Better to delay

and win a certain victory. Besides, for the natives, a night fretting by their fires, reminding themselves of the Terror, would only bring him the advantage of fear when he finally did attack.

There was no need to ration out supplies now, so the stores in the boats were shared liberally around a roaring fire of driftwood. As the smoke rose into the sky the drizzle relented, and the storm blew itself out. The cold light of distant stars began to emerge between drifting banks of cloud.

Glarhord grinned, his teeth flashing in the blaze of the fire.

“Yes,” he whispered to himself hungrily, “this is a good land.”