

Legend Reborn



"As an Eagle he'll soar and like an Eagle he'll strike, but he will be the son of the Wolf."

--Prophecy by Master Lexicanum Edward McKenzie



All stories have a beginning. This too. When the Space Outlaws of the Omega Squadron came to save the Imperium in the six-day blitz, they had great help from a man named Rolf Yarrick. He was a young man when he met them, but not unknown. He was already then a celebrated hero, but even he had to start somewhere. Rolf Yarrick wasn't born to celebrity. Like most of his family, he was born far away from all warfare and all strife. None-the-less, many of his family had joined the Imperial Commissariat, just because of the loss of their parents. Rolf had a grand-cousin, a commissar, and when Rolf was born, that old man was the only man of the Yarrick family who at the moment held officers rank in the Imperial Guard. So the Yarrick family had lost some of its former glory when Rolf Yarrick came to the world. And he came to the world on a winter's night, when the full moon blazed its cold rays, and the howls of wolves could be heard from far away.

Despite the weather and the wolves, not much happened when the first-born son of a first-born son was born in the Yarrick family this night. No, things started to happen when Rolf Yarrick was six years old...



"Uncle! Uncle!" Rolf called as he ran up to his grand-cousin. He called him uncle, despite that the old commissar was something else. Caspar Yarrick, a seventy year old, limping man, who once had been a commissar, turned and embraced the boy. Rolf almost knocked the old man off his feet.

"Oh, take it easy, Rolf! I'm not as strong as I used to be." Caspar whispered as he held the young boy in his arms. Rolf was tall for his age, and then again, Caspar was shrunken with age, his body being ten years older than his mind. The profession as commissar was a craving job, and it had in the end cost Caspar his physical health.

Rolf released himself from the embrace. "What did the doctor want with you?"

"He wanted to make sure I'm alright, Rolf, nothing else." Caspar said and limped away to a chair on the veranda to their family home. He sat down with a groan, his legs paining him. He couldn't tell Rolf, but the doctor had been there concerning a test they'd taken on Caspar weeks before. The results had been that Caspar was slowly getting lame on both legs, something that came with age in some cases. Apparently it did so in Caspar's case, and he didn't like it. He knew what the lameness meant. He could augment his legs with bionics, he knew it, but he had a principle not to let any bio-technician ever implant anything on him. That explained his lost left ear and the fact that his hands missed three fingers; two on the left and one on the right. No, to Caspar, lameness meant to be bundled up in a wheelchair. He didn't like it.

Rolf sat down beside his "uncle". He liked the old man. He could always tell such interesting and wonderful stories. Stories about monsters and men, heroes and villains. Rolf loved them all.

"Uncle," Rolf asked after a moment of silence. "Can you tell me the Legend of the Eagle, the Wolf and the Hound of Chaos?"

"You've heard it a hundred times I think, Rolf." Caspar said mildly. "Don't you want to hear something else?"

"Like what?"

"How about a story, which is about..." Caspar made a pause to seek for words. "About just one monster, and one man?"

"What sort of monster?" Rolf asked curiously.

"A werewolf!" Caspar said and grinned a gap toothed smile. Rolf laughed.

"Werewolves aren't for real, uncle. Tell me one about real monsters, like deamons and orks."

"Now, who has said werewolves aren't for real?"

"Mother..."

"Then she is wrong!" Caspar looked tricky and smiled a wry smile. He reached down into his coat pocket and pulled out a long canine tooth. "See, this here tooth belonged to a werewolf. I killed it myself."

Rolf took the tooth carefully. It was big, maybe seven centimetres long. And Rolf knew what werewolves were: once human mutants. It had fit into a human sized mouth, which was why it was big to Rolf. "Wow!" he said silently.

"Now, let's hear that story..." Caspar wheezed. He cursed his frail, old body silently, but instead he tried to remember what had happened nearly half a century ago. It was hard now. "See Rolf, it started with..." Caspar fell silent and froze. He saw the tall, powerful figure clearly. Clad in flowing robes, it stood silent by one of the barns. It was the total lack of movement that had made Caspar notice it.

"What is it, uncle?" Rolf asked.

The figure moved and started walking towards the old man and the boy. Caspar knew that gait. Walking with a stride, but with an air of power around it, the figure came closer. As the man came up to Caspar and Rolf, Caspar tried to bite back an urge to yell the man directly into his face. Rolf hadn't seen the sigil that the man was carrying around his neck, and even if he had, he wouldn't know what it stood for. Caspar had seen the ornate "I" and knew that the man was an Inquisitor.

"Rolf," Caspar said silently. "Go inside."

"But..."

"Go to your room!" Caspar suddenly barked angrily at the boy. Rolf shied away at this, but did as he was told. To get reprimanded by his grand-cousin seemed to Rolf like being bitten by a big, nice, furry dog. It was so surprising that the surprise was worse than any pain.

Caspar turned to the Inquisitor after he'd seen the door bang shut behind Rolf. "What do you want from me now?" he asked the tall man.

The Inquisitor pulled back his cowl and revealed the handsome face of a man in his early forties. Age hadn't fouled him. His hair was already greying, but the eyes were both piercing and genial at the same time. Caspar felt the taste of metal in the air and felt his bowels turn at the fact that he was facing a psyker.

"I am Inquisitor Rovannion," the man said. "I take it you're Commissar Yarrick?"

"Not any more..." Caspar muttered. "I'm retired since nearly ten years back."

"I have read your history. You took well care of the... Wolf child all those years back."

"With all due respect, sir, I had to. He owed me blood. My father's and mother's blood."

"And lives, undoubtedly," Rovannion said as he sat down on a chair before Caspar.

"Of course..." Caspar paused as he shifted his weight on the chair. "But that's not your reason for coming here, right?"

"Exactly. I'm here because of the boy. What was his name... Rolf, am I not right?"

Caspar nodded and Rovannion smiled. "A fitting name, for a son of the Yarrick family."

"Don't start. I didn't choose the name for him. His mother and father did. Besides, what's wrong with being known under a name that means 'Famous Wolf'?"

"You tell me, old man..." Rovannion still smiled.

Caspar scowled. This man was annoying him. "Get to business, already!"

"Ah, let's cut the crap? Right. I like your style, Yarrick." Rovannion's smile disappeared. "The boy has brought me here. Now, you know what he is, Yarrick, there's no hiding it. You have known it since he was born. The mandatory DNA check showed it immediately."

"I know. He's already stronger than me, and he'll probably be able to wrestle down his father when he's twelve."

"Good, very good. You are not denying the facts. Then you are prepared that he will become a great Hero."

Caspar frowned. "Why? What if Rolf chooses to stay here, and become a farmer, like his father? He might not want to become a warrior."

"You know the scriptures, Yarrick. He is destined to become a Hero of the Imperium. Hear me, it is destined to be so!"

"A wise man said once that the only constant is the past."

"But on this point he is wrong, as I take it you're referring to the Death Angel Space Marine's Master Lexicanum? No, Rolf is the Slayer, the Wolf reborn! He is a half-breed Space Marine!"

There was a loud crash from one of the many boxes by the corner of the house. Caspar and Rovannion looked up sharp. Rovannion was fast on his feet and ran over to the collection of boxes, Caspar limping after. Rovannion pulled out a coughing and hacking Rolf Yarrick by the collar of his shirt.

"What do you know? He's eager to find out his destiny!" Rovannion said as Caspar joined him.

"Put him down." Caspar said flatly and Rovannion did as he'd been told. Rolf hid behind Caspar at once. He was afraid of the big Inquisitor. There was something with the man that disturbed him. There was the tang of metal in the air too. He'd called him half-breed too.

"I think you should leave, Inquisitor." Caspar said gently, stroking Rolf's hair.

The tall Inquisitor turned round, but spoke his last words over his shoulder. "He will become a Hero of the Imperium, Yarrick, whether you like it or not. You'd best tell him about the sword." With that, the Inquisitor mentally teleported away from the ownings of the Yarrick family.

"Uncle?" Rolf asked slowly. "What did he mean with half-breed?"

Caspar looked sadly down on the boy. "It means many things Rolf. For once, you were born as it. Secondly, you are half-Space Marine. You know how powerful those super humans are, no? Now, you will most certainly become as strong as them, and you'll live just as long as them too. That's what it means to be a half-breed. But according to the Inquisition, you are also destined to be a great warrior... which I both fear and hope is true..." Caspar was silent for a moment. "Let's go inside, it going late."

Rolf went inside and made himself ready for bed. But he couldn't sleep. He just thought about what his grand-cousin and that Inquisitor had said.

"...Half-breed..." Rolf mumbled to himself as he fell asleep at 3 in the morning.



"Your turn, Rolf." Jacob Howard said as he'd moved his chess piece.

Across the table, Rolf Yarrick sat with steepled fingers, thinking. He was a lanky young man, ageing 14, soon 15, with bluish hair and genial green eyes, but there was a hard note to them. His skin was lightly tanned, just as most Callidussians'. Half a minute after Jacob had made his move, Rolf moved one of his pieces.

"Check mate. I win again." Rolf said simply and sat back in his chair. This had been the third time he'd won over Jacob this day, but the other boy was stubborn. It was an insult to Rolf's tactical intellect. There was only one man that constantly bested Rolf in chess, and that was his grand-cousin Caspar, but the old man had a lifetime of chess playing behind him. And a lifetime of warfare. Rolf frowned as he thought that his favourite relative had played chess with living pieces, so to say. Now, Caspar was bundled up in a wheelchair and needed all help he could get. Rolf often played chess with Caspar on the evenings, when Rolf had gotten home from school and done his homework. It had also been Caspar that had told him of the Yarrickian Sword, a sword that was older than the Imperium itself. A sword that was the bane of deamons and mutants. And Rolf was next in the line to weld it.

"I don't believe it!" Jacob gasped. "How the frekk do you do it, Rolf?"

"Tactics and strategy, my friend." Rolf replied. He threw a glance at his wristwatch. "I'd better go home. It's getting late."

As Rolf got up, Jacob started picking the chess pieces up. "I just have to try to develop a new plan till next time, eh Rolf?"

"Whatever..." Rolf replied. "See you in school on Monday, Jac."

"Yeah, see you."

Rolf left the house of his friend and started the 96 kilometres long travel home. He had a motorised bicycle, but it wasn't much. He would have to stay somewhere over the night if he was delayed. If he weren't delayed, he would be home long after dark.

He kicked the ignitor-switch and the motorbike flared into roaring life. As he drove away, Rolf's head was filled with many things. Amongst them what he would do after graduation. He barely noticed the speedometer reaching 60 kph as he sped down a straight. His bike wasn't meant for higher speed than 40 kph, but Rolf had modified it slightly with the help of one of his cousins.

When he'd travelled for an hour or so, and put 60 kilometres behind himself, Rolf saw something in the horizon that made him puzzled. The sun had already set and the night was dark. The moon lit up the night, but it didn't dull the eerie red glow from the horizon. What the frekk was that? As he came closer and closer, the red glow got brighter and brighter. When Rolf was barely a few kilometres away from home, he came to realize what it was. It wasn't that he was slow-to-catch; it was that his worst thoughts had been confirmed. The enormous flames licking the sky had been a give away too.

Putting his bike to the limit, Rolf sped as fast as he could home. His home was on fire, but why? What had happened? An accident with the petrol tank? The dried oats in the barn catching fire? What had caused the fire?



When Rolf slowed down and stopped at the outside of his home, he was shocked to see it all burning. There were no screams, no pleas for help. No family! Rolf ran as fast as he could towards the main house. The heat hit him like a sledgehammer. Nothing could've survived in there! Running back to the bike to get his water flask, which he always carried with him, he splashed water on a napkin from his pocket and placed it over his mouth before he went into the flaming inferno that was his home.

The heat was enormous, Rolf could almost feel his skin blistering. He slowly made his way to the main hall. By the fireplace, he knew the sword would rest in its rack there. He couldn't place his finger on why, but later; Rolf Yarrick would always wonder why he'd been so determined to get the sword of his family. The next thing he did, as he'd slung the sword case over his shoulder, was to go to the kitchen. Maybe someone was alive. Someone had to be alive!

He walked around, calling for his mother, his brother and his infant sister. His father had died a few months before, fulfilling his duty to the Emperor as an Imperial Guard Sergeant. That had been what the black clad commissar had said when he'd come home with Sylvester Yarrick's remains. Rolf heard a yelp from somewhere by the back of the house. He knew where it was. His grand-cousin's room. Caspar lived downstairs since his legs had given up. Splashing water on the napkin again, Rolf made way for his grand-cousin's room.

He found the retired old commissar lying on the floor, panting hard. Rolf found a piece of cloth and placed it over Caspar's mouth, after he'd dampened it with water just as he'd done with his own napkin. He was talking smoothly to his old relative.

"Calm down, uncle." Rolf still called him uncle, despite the passing of years. "It's me, Rolf."

Caspar looked with tired, grey eyes into Rolf's young green. "Praise be to the Emperor..." the old man mumbled. "The others..."

Caspar tried to speak, but Rolf hushed him.

"I know, uncle. Now, let's get you out of here." With that, Rolf heaved the frail body of Caspar Yarrick up in his arms and carried him with ease. Caspar knew full well of Rolf's strength, and it was all due to his half-Space Marine gene strand. Caspar sent a prayer of thanks to the Emperor, and unorthodoxly maybe, Hrodwulf Le'man.

Rolf went out by the backdoor and walked as far as he could from the house to avoid the heat, but still remaining inside the area where all houses were situated. He put Caspar down on

the ground and removed the cloth from Caspar's face. The old man seemed to be worse for wear. Rolf's worry reflected in his face, because Caspar spoke. "I'm dying, Rolf..." The old man started coughing, and Rolf did his best to stop him.

"The others... they're dead..." Caspar gasped as he stopped coughing.

"I know," Rolf replied, tears burning his eyes. "Uncle, what happened? What the hell happened?"

Caspar tried to rise on his elbows, but failed. "...Dark Lord..." he whispered.

"Dark Lord? Who's that?"

Caspar's voice was barely a whisper. "...listen to me Rolf... Go to Vindaree...leave this behind...and promise to take revenge for this..."

"You've said yourself revenge only deepens the scars, uncle!"

"...oesn't matter... Take the sword...fill your destiny... Heh... The Inquisitor was right... You're destined to become a Hero..."

"Uncle, what do you mean?" Rolf asked as he cradled Caspar's old body. The old man didn't respond. He was already dead.

Rolf tried to hold back the tears welling up in his eyes. He swallowed to get the clump of sorrow out his mouth, but he failed. Rolf hugged the corpse of Caspar Yarrick tightly to himself and wept. With Caspar gone, Rolf knew he was the last surviving member of his family... And it was not a prospect he liked. That's when he heard the heavy tread of armoured feet behind him.

Rolf turned his head to look over his shoulder. A slight gasp left his lips as he saw what was approaching him.

Clad in gore coloured power armour trimmed with brass and gold, a massive power fist pulsating with force and with an enormous axe in his other hand, the Dark Lord was an awe-inspiring sight. And equally terrible. Rolf turned his head back, to avoid looking at the Berzerker Lord any more. Rolf had seen the man's face; high-cheeked, with a powerful jaw, red-blond hair and despicably evil, black eyes. Rolf felt the dark aura emanating from the warrior as he stopped a metre or so from him. The only sound heard was that of the burning and collapsing buildings and the slight humming from the reactor in the backpack of the Dark Lord's armour, as it supplied his armour with power to the electro-reactive plasteel.

"What do we have here?" the Dark Lord cooed, his voice deep and melodious. "One, lone Wolf's son left, isn't it so?"

Rolf finally let go of Caspar's body and stood up. In one swift move, he pulled his sword (it was indeed his now) and aimed the edge at the throat of the Dark Lord. A sneer spread itself over the renegade's face.

"Do you seriously believe that you can injure me, maggot? The mere thought is laughable." As to prove his point, the Dark Lord gave out a short, hard laugh. "You are nothing! And I only fight the best my opponent can offer..."

Rolf felt a tang of hopelessness, but knocked it away. In his mind, he mumbled a prayer to the Emperor to protect him. Rolf didn't reach to the Dark Lord's shoulder even, despite being 1m90. He felt for the first time in his life... feeble.

"I am prepared to let you go, boy, if you promise me one thing," the Dark Lord spoke.

"What might that be?" Rolf replied, gathering strength to his voice through his pain and sorrow.

"Before I kill you, become a great warrior. I'd take much more pride in such a fight, than to fight you here and now. There's no honour in that!"

"I swear so in the name of the God-Emperor of Mankind!" Rolf shouted. As to prove his point, he held forth his right arm, palm open. The Dark Lord took the notion and slashed a scar in the palm with his battle-axe. Then, he smiled.

Rolf turned round and sheathed his sword. Walking away from the flaming inferno that once had been his home. He would have to get to Vindaree. There he could start a new life. A life as a soldier in the Emperor's Imperial Guard. He'd become the greatest amongst them. That, he

promised to himself.



Lord Kevlinn watched the young man leave. He was soon joined by seven of his Berzerker retinue and a figure in fluorescent power armour and robes over it. The helmet of the robed renegade was adorned with long antlers and the eye slits seemed to burn with green-blue fire.

"I thought we had a deal, Lord." the robed one spoke. "All members of the Yarrick family have to die!"

"I just had a second thought." Kevlinn replied. "There was no sport in killing them, Sorcerer Zaraxx. And I find murder a disgusting way of life. To die honourably in battle is more in my taste."

Behind his facemask, Zaraxx scowled. "We had an agreement, Kevlinn!"

"And I had a change of mind!" Kevlinn snapped. He turned to face the sorcerer. It turned his guts to even try to find a pattern in the fluorescent colours of the man's armour. "I am not stupid, despite the fact that most people see me as a blood crazed Berzerker. I can think. The mind is the most potent weapon of all, wasn't that what you said?"

Zaraxx nodded slowly.

"Good. I've been thinking... Why should I kill all the Yarricks? They have always been great warriors, so why exterminate the family which is the only one capable of giving me a worthy opponent?"

Zaraxx nodded again. It made sense.

Kevlinn continued. "Then it came to me: You want them out of YOUR way, because they hamper YOUR plans, not mine! Am I not right, Zaraxx? You were planning on betraying me, you despicable bastard! I was generous when I let you into my horde, and how do you repay me? With guile and deceit, which only serves to strengthen yourself and to please that milksop you call a god? Tzeentch has always bowed down before the mightiest of the Dark Gods; Khorne. And he shall always do so! And you will regret dearly that you tried to fool Khorne's most chosen warrior!"

Zaraxx stepped back, pulling out his force axe. The mutated weapon screamed an unearthly scream as Zaraxx channelled the raw force of the Warp through it. With a roar of anger, he charged the Berzerker Lord, force axe raised above his head. Kevlinn met the attack head on, his own battle-axe, an ancient Eldar weapon, clanging into the force weapon of the sorcerer. For a few seconds, it seemed like the two were an equal match, but suddenly Kevlinn's power fist came flying through the air. Kevlinn grabbed Zaraxx' head with it. Slowly clenching his fist, he caused unbearable pain to the sorcerer, slowly crushing the man's head. The sorcerer dropped his force axe and Kevlinn raised him high into the air.

"Let this be a message to the foul god you worship; Khorne's warriors follows their own path and they don't enjoy being fooled!" Kevlinn hissed.

With that, he closed his power fist completely. The helmet of Sorcerer Zaraxx was crushed with a wet and snapping sound. The beheaded corpse of the sorcerer fell to the ground with an empty thud.

With his power fist slick with blood, Kevlinn turned to his retinue. "Blood for the Blood God!"

"Skulls for the Skull Throne of Khorne!" the seven warriors echoed.

Kevlinn smiled. "Now, aspiring champions, you know how to deal with deceitful members of the lesser gods." Pause. "And how to get good enemies to fight..."

One of the Berzerkers stepped forward. Kevlinn recognised him as Egrimm Bloodmauler. What his Imperial name had been was forgotten since long, but the Berzerker name fit him well. Egrimm was equipped with a pair of power fists. "Milord, why did we let the boy go? Excuse my blasphemy, but the sorcerer might have had a point... "

Once again, Kevlinn smiled. "Egrimm, know this: When a man loses his all; his family and everything he has loved, all emotions fade away into dust, more or less. The only feeling left is hate, and it is hate that our God feeds upon. Hate, blood, battle and the smoking pyres of our enemies bodies."

Kevlinn looked after the boy again. "We have destroyed his life. And he will hate us for it. But the hatred means he won't be in complete control of his feelings, which I believe is a coming asset to us in his future..."



It was dawn now. Rolf had walked the entire night, and the night before, and the night before that. For three days he'd been trodding along the road that went to Callidus's capital, Vindaree. For three days he hadn't met a single truck or car. This was futile. Banishing the thought in an instant, Rolf focused on his task at hand. He had to get to Vindaree. He'd heard there was a reforming of the Callidussian 27th, and he was intent on joining. There was only one problem: Vindaree was more than 15,000 kilometres from his home. To walk would take ages.

Rolf had given a damn in his motorbike when he'd left home. It would've run of petrol after a few kilometres anyway.

Rolf pulled of a long, vivid curse as he walked. It was in the middle of summer, and the sun was burning him. He had to ration the little water he had, but the hot sun was killing him.

Rolf had walked a further five kilometres, when he collapsed by the roadside. It was noon now, and the sun burned worse than ever. Rolf concluded it must've been more forty degrees above the freezing point of water.

Water...

Rolf took out the water flask from his motorbike and squirted some water into his mouth. It was almost empty. Not good.

"Oh, fudge..." Rolf thought darkly to himself. He was going to die here, unless someone was going to come by. But the odds were against him, that he knew, being just a farmer's son.

Something in the back of his head nagged at him. What was he doing, giving up like this? Was he not the first-born son of a first-born son in the Yarrick family? Was he not the welder of the Deamonlayer sword? Was he not the last of his line and a half-Space Marine, come to that? With an enormous strength of will, Rolf heaved himself up and onto the road again. He was not going to fail his mother, his sister and brother, his father, Uncle Caspar and last but not least, his great ancestor Hrodwulf Le'man, a Saint! He was not going to fail them! He was not going to fail his family or the Emperor. The leader of humanity needed him; Rolf knew it! He walked into the middle of the road like a drunkard, the heat almost overcoming him. He didn't see the 150 tonnes heavy truck speeding down the MC1 road...



Dan Gregor was nothing more than a trucker. He'd been a trucker for a long time. At eighteen years of age, he'd joined the Guard and ended up as munitions driver for a tank company. He'd left the Imperial Guard at 27 and started driving trucks on Callidus instead. Now he was in his late forties, and he still enjoyed the calm, uneventful life he led. He was a man of average height, but the many years behind the steering wheel of a truck had made him rather fleshy. Still, there was nothing wrong with his eyesight, nor was there with his reflexes. Despite his corpulence, he was fit as a fiddle, according to the medical diagnostics. Gregor new full well he had perfect eyesight, despite his age, but he couldn't believe what he saw this day, as he drove down the MC1.

He thought he saw a young man stagger out in the middle of the road, as if dazed by liquor. But Gregor knew it was because of the heat outside. When he sounded the horn of his truck, the young, bluish haired man just turned his head, barely aware of the truck. Gregor pulled the brakes the hardest he could, well-oiled pistons and brakes screaming in agony as the huge vehicle came to a stop, centimetres from Rolf's head.

Gregor almost threw himself out of the huge vehicle, grabbing a water flask instinctively as he did so. He got to Rolf quickly and helped the boy to get some water over his lips and down his throat. Gregor pulled the silent conclusion that this boy had been walking these roads for days probably, with almost no protection from the summer sun of Callidus. Rolf was burnt on many places by the sun, despite his tanned skin.

"Great God-Emperor!" Gregor stammered. "What the frekk has happened to you, boy? And what are you doing out here?"

"Ran away..." was all Rolf managed. Gregor knew the signs of sunstroke when he saw them.

He helped the boy into the cabin of his truck and back to the sleeping cabin. His truck was meant for long trips like the one he was on: Shorewood to Vindaree, nearly 15,000 kilometres of nothing but crops. Gregor told the boy to lie down on his bed and went to get some ice cubes and something for the boy to drink.

In Gregor's eyes, Rolf appeared to him a 16-17 years old man from Invas County, judging by his dialect. Gregor was spot on about the heritage, but he missed Rolf's age by two years. Neither did he have any idea of what had happened to the Yarrick family.

He came back in to Rolf with a cup of cold water in his hands. "Rest now, lad. You've been out in that sun too much," Gregor said as he gave Rolf the water.

Rolf tried to mutter thanks, but his lips were so dry, nothing came over them. Gregor understood this. He turned his bulk around quite swiftly and removed himself from the sleeping cabin. As he came back into the driving cabin, he closed the door to the sleeping room after himself, sat down by the driver's seat and ignited the engines. He was soon on his way for Vindaree again, with his eight wheeled truck with its three trailers, each trailer carrying nearly fifty tonnes of oats.



Rolf woke in the sleeping cabin nearly ten hours later. As he rose, he felt his head swim and his face burn. Lying down again, he felt his face. His skin was peeling off on his nose and forehead. The sun had taken its toll on him. He saw the half-full glass on the bedside stand next to him, and finally remembered where he was. He was on one of those great trucks that travelled his land regularly. He remembered a portly man who'd helped him off the hot road and into this truck. Rolf took the glass of water and swigged it down. He was so thirsty, and so hungry. It struck him he hadn't eaten for a few days.

Rolf staggered up, the swimming feeling in his head gone now, and out of the sleeping cabin. He dropped down on the seat on the right, next to the driver. The sun was setting, Rolf saw. He must've slept the day away. And still he was tired.

Rolf heard a strange guttural sound from beside himself and snapped his head to the left. He saw that the man that had helped him was asleep, snoring, which drew Rolf to the simple conclusion no one was driving.

"Mister!" Rolf shouted in shock. "Wake up!"

The man awoke with a snort and looked at Rolf, bewildered. "What? What is it, son?"

"Who's driving?" Rolf's voice was still full of shock.

The man looked confusedly at Rolf for a second and then started to laugh. "Take it easy, boy." He pointed on the control board. "The cogitator takes care of the driving while I'm sleeping, frekk, it takes care of the driving most of the time."

Now it was Rolf's turn to look confused. The man saw this and explained. "This is not any truck like the ones you have home at your farmstead, son. This truck is powered by a nuclear isotope, and is meant to travel great distances, without any need for fuel. If you listen, you won't hear the diesel chatter."

Rolf did as the man had told him, and he seemed to be right. There was no diesel sound, no distinct 'chugchugchug' like most motors. There was just a distant hiss or something. Rolf couldn't put his finger on what.

"But..." Rolf wondered. "That still doesn't explain how you can keep this thing on the road, without steering."

"As I said, a cogitator unit has care of this sweetie while I catch some well deserved sleep, or eat my dinner. I only steer while I'm in cities, if I'm right."

The two fell silent. Then the man stuck out his hand. "Dan Gregor, trucker, and you are?"

"Rolf Ya..." Rolf stopped. No, he wouldn't give his name away, what if this man knew what had happened at the grounds of the Yarrick family? No, he had to take another name. Nothing came to mind but an autonym...

"Rolf what?" Gregor asked.

"Rolf Kaleen." Rolf said. Kaleen was a small, cat-like creature that lived on Callidus. It lived

alone, and was the main prey for the wolfhounds of Callidus, along with sheep, deer and other cattle. Despite that the wolfhounds preyed on the farm animals, they were respected animals throughout Callidus. The kaleen, on the other hand, were devious little critters. They were inhumanly sly, probably a total of their exposure to the Empyrean long ago, as was the case with the wolfhounds' lifespans. The kaleen weren't satisfied with taking farmhouse rodents; they took chickens' eggs, small piglets and much more.

"Rolf Kaleen, eh?" Gregor said and smiled. "Betcha you're hungry, eh?"

Rolf nodded. Gregor got his bulk out of his chair and moved to the back of the cabin, to something the apparently was the kitchen of this trailer/truck/caravan.

He came back with a plate with steaming bacon and eggs. "Hope it suits. It's all I can do right now, but when we arrive at Threas Town tomorrow, I'll get you something better."

"Thank you." Rolf said as he tucked in on the food. It was truly delicious. Three days, nearly four, without food had given him a ravenous appetite.

When Rolf had finished his plate, Gregor spoke again. "I just want to know, Mr. Kaleen, where are you going?"

"Vindaree." Rolf replied simply.

"Good, that's where I stop. Crops for Ichar." Gregor gestured backwards, meaning his load. "May I ask why?"

"To join the reforming Callidussian 27th."

Gregor looked shocked. "The Guard?"

"Yes."

"Lord Emperor... You'll be in for a life of war-fare, ya know."

"I know."

"But... why? I mean, there are plenty of... non-violent things for a young man like you to do."

"Not for me..."

"Kaleen?"

"Hmm?"

"I don't doubt you'd come in with the Guard, but... Don't go for a simple Guardsman. Something inside me says that you'll go far, very far, if you just don't settle down on basic foot-slogger."

Rolf looked back at the portly man. "I wont'." Then Rolf smiled for the first time since he'd left his friend's house four days earlier.

He looked back out the window of the cab after that, his thoughts in the distance along with his gaze. A good twenty minutes passed before Rolf spoke again. "How long will it take to Vindaree?"

"Oh, a week, if we'd be going non-stop. But we aren't. So, about ten days." Gregor said. He was silent for a while, and then smiled. "Well, boy, you'll have to stand me for ten days."

"No problem in that," Rolf replied, his gaze still at the horizon.

Gregor decided to ask something he'd been dying to ask for a long time now. "Boy, what is with the sword of yours?"

Rolf knew what he meant. The sword lay by the bed now, at the back. "Family heirloom," he replied.

"Oh." Gregor went silent. He'd never heard of the Yarrickian Deamon Slayer Sword, and thus couldn't understand the underlying truth in Rolf's statement. He didn't even know Rolf's true name. "It's a fine piece of work," Gregor said and then decided not to bother Rolf any more.

Rolf, on the other hand, fell asleep an hour later, still looking out at the square kilometres of

crops.


As predicted, ten days later Rolf and Gregor arrived at Vindaree. Being the good-natured man Gregor was, he dropped off Rolf outside the Adeptus Munitorum building in central Vindaree, before heading for the freighter port to the north of the city. Rolf had thanked him heartily and wished Gregor luck in his truckings.

Neither Rolf, nor Gregor knew, that the latter would a week later find out what had happened to the Yarrick family and recognise the face of the one missing member of the family.

However, Rolf was now walking the hallways of the vast Munitorum building. It was an enormous sight. The place was just as big on the inside as the outside, Rolf concluded. The Adeptus Munitorum of Vindaree was a huge gothic-style building, its highest peaks reaching more than five hundred metres into the air. Before Rolf went inside, he stood a while to gawp up at the building, almost wringing his own neck off in the process. The many gargoyles up there looked to him like deamons frozen in motion.

"Nice..." he said silently to himself and went inside.

The main hall was a huge place. The high, arched windows allowed oceans of light to filter in through coloured glass depicting glorious moments in Imperial History. Rolf passed one that showed a great grey wolf battling a gore coloured Chaos Hound, with a broken eagle lying between them. Rolf stopped and studied the fine piece of work for a moment and then walked on.

He was far from alone. People had come from all over Callidus to join the reformed Callidussian 27th. It was a prestigious regiment. Rolf remembered his father had talked a lot about its commander, who apparently was a wise and good man. Rolf couldn't remember any face or name of him right now, but he thought he would see him some day. But now he needed to sign up. But where? He stopped a lean man wearing the uniform of the Callidussian regiment and a peaked cap bearing the insignia Rolf immediately recognised as the 27th. Rolf was taller than the man, who seemed to be in his early forties.

"Excuse me, sir, but where do I sign up?" Rolf asked.

The man looked Rolf over, raised an eyebrow and then smiled. "Right over there, boy." he said, pointing towards a long line of men. "It must be umpteenth time I say that today... But unlike the others, you look promising." The officer studied the sword slung over Rolf's back. "But I'm not sure you'll be allowed to keep that, boy."

"It's all I have got... Thank you, sir." With that, Rolf joined the other young men at the long line.

The officer stood watching him for a while. There was something wrong with the boy, but he couldn't put his finger on what. Rolf was in heads height with the tallest of the other men, and still there was something over him that said he wasn't done growing. The officer watched as Rolf signed up and entered through the door that lead to where they'd be issued their uniforms. As he turned, the officer stared right at the glass picture showing Saint Le'man holding the head of the foul Deamon Karzhan aloft, his sword in his right hand. When the officer saw the sword, he snapped round to look at where Rolf had gone, but the young man was gone from sight.



"When I call your name, you report to Clerk Terh, Clerk Inan, Clerk Ungd or Clerk Ornock here and they will write down your names, birth dates, heights, heritage and other information."

The lieutenant spoke with a clear voice, and Rolf had no trouble hearing him. He was standing in a big yard, still on Munitorum ground, but wearing the green and yellow camouflaged uniform of a Callidussian Guardsman. His sword was still hanging over his back, but it was joined by a lasgun: the Imperial Guardsman's best friend. On his head was a green/yellow "baseball cap". Due to his sword, Rolf felt the looks of the other men burn in his neck. He felt like turning and giving them an acid stare, but refrained from it, knowing it was bad to begin his career by been reprimanded.

"Know also," the lieutenant spoke again. "That some of you will be taken out for NCO training, but only the most promising will actually receive command capabilities, and it will rarely be more than sergeant!"

"Alright! Abranh, Adarn, Celi and Drorr!"

The four recruits whose names were Abranh, Adarn, Celi and Drorr moved up and away to the Munitorum clerks. They stood there for a few minutes, the clerks taking down their personal information. Rolf made the silent conclusion that he should've stuck to his old name: Yarrick. Kaleen meant he'd go earlier. Frekk, this would be the first, last and only time he would ever lie. Never again, he promised to himself. Never, ever again!

"Dsurt, Earn, Frigg and Hunt!"

Another four recruits moved up and walked to the clerks. A stocky commissar had joined the clerks now. The first four moved away, towards the billeting they would have while here, chatting. Rolf swallowed. This was not good. They weren't many in this group, just thirty-two.

"Imiak, Isil, Jorunn and Kaleen!"

Rolf closed his eyes, swallowed again and moved up to the clerk. Here goes, he thought.



Commissar Hendrik Irwin wasn't a big man. He was a short, squat figure with dark brown, almost black hair and dark eyes. He was in his mid-thirties, but he was already rounding out around the waist, the results of five years of staff service and good living. His colleagues, not to mention the Commissar General, often joked about his well-fed state, but Irwin knew they weren't meaning any evil with it. But there was one thing he couldn't stand; the heat, the inexorable heat of Callidus in the summertime. All other commissars complained about what the heat did with them and their black uniforms, most doing the highly undignified move of removing dolman's jacket and undershirt to walk around stripped to the waist in their dress breeches. Most sported scars caused by the foul enemy. With Irwin, it was different; he had scars, of course, but not the body to dare walk around like that. He'd look silly. He'd had a black, bushy moustache until the time he started rounding out, and then his round cheeks had made him seem rather silly with it, so he'd shaved it off. Now he was clean-shaven, like most his comrades.

And then there was that with the sun and his bulk. He was warmer than most people because of his state, and this wasn't improved by the fact that he didn't want to walk around as the other politicians, stripped to the waist. So instead he retreated to his office and the air-conditioning there, which was where he spent most of Callidus summer, when he was here.

Wiping sweat from his face with a white handkerchief, Irwin walked down and out to the forming grounds. He looked at the many groups of Guardsmen to be. They all seemed very promising, but it would take its time to get used to the new faces. He'd been a friend with so many of the other soldiers, in the last forming of the Callidussian 27th. He would miss them all. It was against common rule for commissars to acquaint themselves with Guardsmen, but Irwin didn't care.

He stopped by one of the grounds, resting his back against a wall, which was thrown in shadow. It was a bit cooler, but not much. He watched Lieutenant Kamer call up the names of four young men and they stepped forward, ready to put down their information to the Administratum clerks.

Adarn, that is a good family. Knew his father, Irwin thought.

As Adarn and his three friends moved away, Irwin stepped up to join by the clerks, to just watch what was happening.

He watched the next four sign up. Dsurt was also a fine family. Irwin remembered a very old sergeant in the old 27th. Probably the lad's grandfather, Irwin thought to himself.

Another bunch of young men moved up. Amongst them was a tall, lean tanned man with bluish-black hair. He was carrying a non-regimental sword on his back. Irwin tried to remember something the Commissar General had said about people with bluish-black hair, but he couldn't recall it. Not now. The young man seemed... younger than the rest. Irwin walked up beside the clerk the boy was talking to.

"Name?" the clerk asked coldly.

"Rolf Kaleen," the boy simply replied.

Irwin felt perplexed. "Now there's a contradiction in terms."

The boy named Rolf and the clerk looked at him. "Why so, commissar sir?" the clerk asked.

"Kaleen is a catlike creature, and this boy doesn't seem so feline in his approach. Perhaps lupine. Besides, the kaleen is a cat native to Invas County and I can't recall it as a Callidussian surname at all.

"I think you're lying to us, boy. Tell me your real name." Irwin said softly.

Rolf swallowed hard. Not good. "It's Yarrick, Rolf Yarrick, commissar."

Irwin looked bewildered for a second and then got to senses. "Now you're lying again. Your real name!"

"I'm telling you sir, my name is Rolf Yarrick, first born son of Sergeant Sylvester Yarrick, grand-cousin of Commissar Caspar Yarrick!"

Irwin was taken aback. What in the name of the Throne would bring a Yarrick here? Of course, the lad's father had died just a few months earlier, but still... He had a family, didn't he?

"Come with me boy," Irwin said and gestured Rolf to follow him. "Lieutenant, go on, I take care of this one!" Irwin called over his shoulder. This was truly amazing!



Irwin closed the door to his office behind himself and told Rolf to sit down. Rolf sat down in a chair after removing the sword sheath and the lasgun from his back. He looked patiently at Irwin. Irwin sat down in the chair on the other side of the desk, opposite to Rolf.

"My name, boy, is Imperial Commissar Hendrik Irwin. And I take it you're Trooper Rolf Yarrick, from now on."

"Sir." Rolf couldn't with himself to say more. Irwin was so different from his loving and charismatic grand-cousin. To Rolf, Irwin appeared a bit too young to be as round over the belly as he was.

"Try to relax, I mean no harm, none at all." Irwin said and raised his hands. He removed the cap from his head and tried to wipe the sweat out of his hair. "You're wondering why you're here, right?"

"Yes, sir, I am." Rolf replied, a tad of anxiety in his voice. Irwin heard this and chuckled.

"I said relax..." Irwin said and leaned back in his chair. "Now, the reason I brought you here is you trying to go into the Guard under a false name. It wouldn't have worked long, even if I hadn't caught you. Humph! Never trust clerks and officers to do a commissar's job, that's what I say. Problem with them is that they never question, in any other sense than literally. They do what they do, and naught more. That is why we commissars are, but I believe your grand-cousin already told you this, didn't he?"

"You're testing me, sir. But yes, Uncle Caspar told me." Rolf replied, his voice full of his Invas County dialect. It went in stark contrast to Irwin's flawless Low Gothic.

"Uncle? I thought he was your grand-cousin?"

"He w..." Rolf stopped himself from saying 'was'. "He is, yes, but I refer to him as 'uncle'."

"I see..." Irwin said as he drifted into thoughts. A new Yarrick, eh? But he seemed so young, too young for Guard. "How old are you, Rolf? You can't be over eighteen, that is for sure."

"I'm to be fifteen in a few weeks, sir." Rolf replied truthfully.

"I see... But still you try to join the Guard. Why?"

"I don't want to reply to that, sir, with all due respect."

"Why not?"

Rolf's eyes darkened. "I think you ask too many questions, sir..."

Irwin got up, a slight tone of anger in his voice when he spoke. "I ask as many question as there are needed until you give me a straight answer!"

"And all I say to you, sir, is that you don't want to know!" Rolf snapped.

Irwin stomped round the desk to face Rolf. "Now listen you little-"

In a flash, Rolf had pulled the Yarrickian Sword and aimed its tip towards Irwin's throat. The rotund commissar looked down the glittering length of adamantine, monomolecular-edged

steel and swallowed. This wasn't something he'd counted on. But he didn't show his fear to the young boy. That would be stupid.

"This is a capital offence, trooper!" Irwin growled after a moment of silence. "Give me one good reason not to have you drummed and disgraced on the spot!"

"I'd give you two good reasons, commissar sir," Rolf replied, his hand kept steady as he held the sword and Irwin at arm's distance. "One; this here sword could cut your head clean off before you could say 'whizzmagnit'. Two; I am a Yarrick."

"Why does the fact that you're a Yarrick matter, eh?"

"An inquisitor once told me that I was destined for glory and greatness. He also revealed to me that I'm more than human-

"You're a mutant then!" Irwin snapped, his hand tracing for his holstered bolt pistol. Rolf thrust the sword forward a bit, to encourage Irwin not to do so. Irwin understood and calmed down. "If you're not mutant, then what are you?"

Rolf sheathed his sword and bent close to Irwin's ear. "I'm a half-breed Space Marine," he whispered. "Don't tell anyone."

Irwin looked shocked. "I won't," he said silently. There was a moment of silence between the two. Then Irwin went over to his desk and pulled out a drawer. He picked up a tiny piece of brass and a book. He handed both to Rolf, sticking the pins to Rolf's collar.

"I think the inquisitor was right about you..." Irwin said. "There is something about you, Rolf, that says to me you will go far, very far. Here, I give you the rank of Sergeant. We need promising young men like you in the Guard. And also take this book. As a sergeant, you'll have to learn how to command your men."

Rolf took the book appreciatively. "Thank you, sir. But, wasn't I too young?"

"Sergeant Yarrick; I may seem like a plump, mid-thirties commissar, but for that, I'm not dumb and in this regiment, I have incredible pull. Things like age can be altered." Irwin smiled. "Now, it's nearly noon, so off you go and acquaint yourself with the men you are to command and eat a good lunch."

Rolf bowed, picked up his gear and left, reading from the book Irwin had handed him.

Irwin sat by his desk for a few minutes before he decided to get up and get something to eat he too. As an officer, he had better rations than the common soldiery, but he didn't feel too sorry for the men. He would enjoy another stodgy meal and then go to rest a few hours on a couch in his office, only to be awoken from his afterdinner nap by the unfeeling slap of his immediate superior; the Commissar General himself, being not-so-happy over his indolent comrade-in-arms.



Rolf progressed quickly. He found many new friends in the company he served with and they seemed oblivious to the fact that he now was their sergeant. But what happened a week later, he could never believe. He was drilling a unit of Guard, when he saw Commissar Irwin watching. Rolf ignored him, and kept on with his drill. He had to keep focused. As he kept shouting orders to the soldiers, the men following them flawlessly, he remembered what some older Guardsman had said about Irwin. Irwin was the kind of man who had to do everything twice; to be sure he got it right. He wasn't dumb, just leisurely in his ways, never stressing too much, or at all. He had also been told that Irwin wasn't overblessed with imagination, making him a man that used feelings sparingly. Rolf had suffered one of Irwin's few bursts of anger. Irwin would be easy to like, Rolf concluded.

When Rolf finished the drill, Irwin had been joined by Lieutenant Kinal Kamer. Kamer was a tall, tanned man, very much like Rolf himself, but Kamer was brown-haired where Rolf had bluish-black hair and Kamer was also in his early thirties. The yellow/green camouflage uniform of the Callidussian regiments fitted him. The two officers joined the group of Guardsmen Rolf was drilling. Rolf called attention and ripped off a salute.

"At ease, Yarrick. Quite a show there, sergeant," Kamer said, a smile on his lips. His voice had some Invas County dialect left, but not much. "You're the sole man who've progressed as far as you have. Can you explain why?"

Rolf shuffled his feet. "I was given this book by Commissar Irwin, sir. Most interesting."

"Don't give me that!" Irwin snapped, but it was with a smile. "Tell Kamer the truth; your grand-cousin Caspar taught you a great deal of it, right?"

"Sir."

"Now," Irwin said, wiping his brow with the handkerchief. The heat hadn't abated at all these last days. But they were promising rains. "I would like you to meet someone. Come with me sergeant."

As Irwin tried to leave, Kamer gripped him by the arm. "Hendrik, is he really a Yarrick?"

Irwin looked back at the lieutenant. "Yes, he is. If you're in doubt, go to the Munitorum Main Hall, and check the tenth picture window on the left."

With that, Irwin left Kamer to his thoughts.



Rolf followed the short commissar up through the levels of the huge Munitorum building. It was damned luck that the lifts were working, or else Irwin would've had a heart attack. That was something he concluded to himself as he wiped his brow yet again. He had to lose weight.

"Where are we going, sir?" Rolf asked as he followed in tow.

"To someone who I'd like you to meet," Irwin simply replied. The two stepped out of the lift and walked towards a flight of stairs. The lifts didn't go all the way up, and Irwin cursed his commander silently. Why couldn't he have his office on the lower levels?

"Stay here," Irwin panted as they got to the top of the stairs. Rolf sat obediently down on a couch nearby and Irwin approached a door and knocked on it lightly. There was a moment of silence before a voice replied.

"Come in!" It was muffled by the trithwood door, but Irwin knew the tone despite that. He just took a few deep breaths and walked inside, gently closing the door behind himself.

"I hope this is important, Hendrik," Commissar General Amadeus Chomaki growled at his aide. Chomaki was sitting, leant forward, watching the vista-slate. News-sending, Irwin concluded. Chomaki never missed them.

"I think it can wait, sir," Irwin replied, sitting down on a chair, wiping his brow one more time. This was just silly! He HAD to lose weight. The heat was unbearable with the black uniform, but Irwin stoically refused to walk around stripped to the waist... Like for example his commander.

Amadeus Chomaki was a tall man, nearly two metres, in his mid-fifties with grizzled, cropped hair. He was lean and powerful, not letting the fact that he was a general destroy his physique. His face was lean and aquiline, his eyes a light grey in colour, his skin in a lighter shade of the tan that Rolf sported. Irwin knew Chomaki was Callidussian in his heritage, that explaining his skin tone. At the moment he was wearing dress trousers with his immaculately polished jackboots underneath the trousers. Just like most of his breed, he had taken off the black great coat, peaked cap and dolman's jacket, sitting in an armchair in just his white undershirt. There was a print on the shirt, Irwin noticed. He could just make out the text "Suck my...", the rest being lost, luckily perhaps.

"Undignified..." Irwin muttered to himself as he leant as much forward as his lunch would allow him to, catching a glimpse of the news.

The reporter's voice reached him. There were pictures from what seemed like a burnt-out military camp. But the report was from Invas County.

"...The reason to this catastrophic fire is unknown. The Adeptus Arbites are working on it as we speak. There have been rumours of that the Inquisition is involved as well. Once again we must say it: The Imperium has suffered a great loss. The famous Yarrick family's ownings ravaged by a very destructive fire. As far as investigation has gone, twenty-five bodies have been found, of which only four have been identified. Amongst these is the body of retired Imperial Commissar Caspar Yarrick and the be-headed body of a Traitor. The Inquisition has already been here, removing any evidence of the Traitor's presence. Rumours are spreading that the Dark Lord himself have trod this soil, but such thoughts are dismissed as lunacy."

Now they showed the face of a young man. Irwin recognised it at once.

"However, having had a count, not all Yarricks have perished. There is, according to the Arbiters, only one surviving Yarrick left: Rolf Yarrick. There have been no traces of the young man, but if you see him, report to the Adeptus Arbiters. It should also be noted, that the famous sword that has passed through the Yarrick family since time immemorial is gone. It is unclear as to who could have taken it, but the facts point to that the missing boy..."

There, Chomaki turned of the vista-slate. "I can't believe it! One of the Imperium's greatest families... Gone!" He leant back in his armchair and sighed. "Can you believe it, Hendrik? Four months ago, I visited Sylvester Yarrick's wife personally, with the bad news her husband had gone. It was the first time in a great while I hugged a woman... And Caspar... Dear old Caspar... My mentor. Gone too! Although he was old, and bound to a wheelchair, he was still my mentor! This was no accident..." Chomaki lapsed into silence. Irwin thought he saw a tear streaking down Chomaki's cheek. "I knew them so well, Hendrik, I knew them so well... And Emperor knows were young Rolf is..." Chomaki looked at his friend for the first time since he'd entered. "You look like a nesting-box, Hendrik. What's the matter?" Chomaki got out of the armchair and strolled over to a tray of drinks he had. He poured himself a shot and knocked it back. Then he looked at Irwin again. "Speak out, man! What's the matter?"

Irwin shook his head and got out of his shocked state. "Nothing..." he lied.

"Oh, well then, want a drink to ease up the digestion, eh? I know you, you eat until your stomach is almost distended, greedy-guts."

"Thanks but no thanks, sir." Irwin replied, ignoring the insult. Chomaki often made fun out Irwin's weight problem and his living. Irwin just had problems regaining from the initial shock. What could he say, how could he put it to Chomaki that the last living Yarrick was waiting outside, with the famous sword on his back?

"There's a boy outside... I'd like you to meet him, sir." Irwin said at final.

"I don't have time to talk to a boy, Hendrik. The reforming is taking up all my time. Besides, have you found a replacement to the first sergeant in Kamer's platoon? We are in need of one." Chomaki said as he toyed a bit with the shot glass in his hand. Should he take another drink?

"That's why I'm here," Irwin replied, unbuttoning his dolman's jacket, giving in to the heat. He unbuttoned it over his chest at least, showing his white undershirt covered in sweat patches. "See, this young man, he's very promising, and I'd like to suggest him as first sergeant for third platoon."

"I thought you said he was just a boy, Hendrik?"

"Ah, see he is. And that is why I want you to meet him, Amadeus."

Chomaki looked nonplussed. Now what? he thought. "Alright, send him in, Hendrik." With that, Chomaki decided to have another shot of whiskey. He was pouring it up as Irwin went outside and told Rolf to come in.

Chomaki had the glass at his lips as he turned and looked straight at the tall, lanky young man with bluish hair next to his chunky second-in-command. What the frekk?

"May I present," Irwin said awkwardly. "Sergeant Rolf Yarrick, along with the Yarrickian sword, my suggestion for third platoon's new first sergeant." Irwin indicated the sword on Rolf's back. Chomaki said nothing.

His shot glass hit the floor and was split into a thousand pieces.