

A graphic with a parchment-like background and a small map icon, containing the text "Act I Scene 2".

Act I  
Scene 2

# Enunciate-y

*Author: Sean Gardiner*



**F**or two long weeks, I picked my way through the thorny, dry shrubbery of inland Erennor and crossed into Skrar. I had traded a day's worth of food to a portly innkeeper for an old Yorovashian map he had hanging behind his stool, but though he assured me it was made just three years ago, I had already found its markings of the Erennor-Skrar border to be grossly outdated.

The one thing the map and I agreed on was Skrar's sheer size. Each trek from one thirsty village took days, often longer. I had endured far worse in my time, but the Empress was certainly getting her money's worth here.

Finally, Castle Skrar appeared, shimmering in the distance. Its clay body was sprawling and flat, and enveloped its city like dried liquid, occasionally daring to rise up into half-hearted clay towers only a few storeys above the rest of the carved-out buildings.

"Don't bother trying to get in, stranger," said a voice.

My blade was out in a flash. The speaker was an old man, sitting in the shade of a towering nest of greatants. I did not relax at the sight of him - in my experience, the wisdom gifted by age outweighed the abilities it took away.

"Why do you say that?" I said cautiously.

He ignored me. "And you are a stranger, aren't you? A stranger to Yorovash. Your clothes are freshly store-bought." He let out a laugh. "You can lower your knife." He lifted his brown cloak to reveal a wooden stilt in the place of his right leg. "Not as fast as I used to be."

I lowered my arm, but was no less ready for a fight. "You have keen eyes, sir."

"Ormedes."

"I take it Skrar is not amenable to foreigners such as myself."

"You could say that," he muttered. "Foreigners, or cripples. The desert demands certain skills, many of which were lost to me. Jealousy's War, they called it. Lord Sordras spent two months fighting Lady Azurem because she had twice as many islands than him, and he picked me up on his march. My lucky day." He sighed.

"I'm sorry to have bothered you, stranger. May you be more fortunate in your travels."

"Good day, Ormedes." I sheathed my blade and kept on walking.

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*plant disease  
sleazy fish  
car manoeuvre regret  
lane zero*

*sicken*



*fish tree  
rival title  
debtor mountain  
sneaky game creators*

*element*



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