



After being predictably refused passage into Castle Skrar, I set my sights on Ankhrete. I was only two leagues over the border when the dry, cracked earth gave way to sprawling sand dunes, and all the stinging gusts and difficult traversal they brought with them.

Castle Ankhrete was a sight to behold: a shimmering glass cone fired from sand, bursting out of the river and dividing the water both around and through it. I was granted entry immediately, and set off across the rocky bridge. The people of Ankhrete wore white hoods, but little else. Their sandstone houses perched around the river, sheltered by unusual fruit-bearing trees.

My attention was caught by a young woman wearing garments more akin to those I'd seen in Erennor. She was arguing with two guards, and I found a place to safely listen in.

“There’s no way I’m going, and you won’t make me,” she was shouting.

“There is, and we will, Solena,” one guard said in a low voice. “Our ruler is not taking guests.”

“Who? Who’s your ruler? I’m so sick of this!” the woman groaned, before waving them away. “Fine. I’ll be back tomorrow.”

I caught her as she was leaving the castle. “You’re interested in the owner of Castle Ankhrete, I take it.”

She looked me up and down in confusion. “Who’re you? Wait, did I see you in Erennor? You were wearing different clothes.”

“Blending in is safer than standing out,” I told her. “Something you don’t seem to have learned, Solena. What are you doing here?”

“Looking for Lady Azurem, but I have no idea where she is, or where she rules. The only thing I know is that her land isn’t next to Lord Angroth’s.” Her eyes narrowed. “Why am I even talking to you? You can’t help me. You’ve been in Yorovash less than a month. Just...stay out of my way!”

She ran off before I could get another word in, out and across the bridge, then disappearing into the Ankhrete streets.

Act I  
Scene 3

# Cancelled

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