

I briefly considered waiting for nightfall and scaling the walls of Castle Kreykaarh, but the Empress's instructions about discretion convinced me to continue onward to Faz-Lygor. I crossed over, still in sight of Kreykaarh's battlements, and within minutes had donned my (now dry) cloak to protect me from the icy wind.

Faz-Lygor was a flat land buried in snow, and the beginning of Yorovash's major chain of mountains. The first mountain in the range was the largest, and reared up in front of me. Perched on its side was Castle Faz-Lygor, an old stone growth bursting out of the snow-covered rock.

I equipped my foot-shields to ease my journey across the soft slush - it was vital that I reach the castle before the sun set. I heard the faint howls of packbeasts on the wind, and would prefer not to make their acquaintance.

Twilight took hold before long, after the dusk cast a magnificent red glow over the mountain before me. Darkness fell as I began my trek up the steep castle road, and my bones had just settled into the deep cold when I arrived at a gated archway.

"Ho!" shouted a woman atop the gate. She waved a lit torch back and forth to get my attention, in case her voice could not reach me over the wind. "Who stands before the First Arch?"

"A weary traveller, seeking a fire and a warm bed!"

She looked me over, then pulled an ice-encrusted lever beside her. "Then enter!"

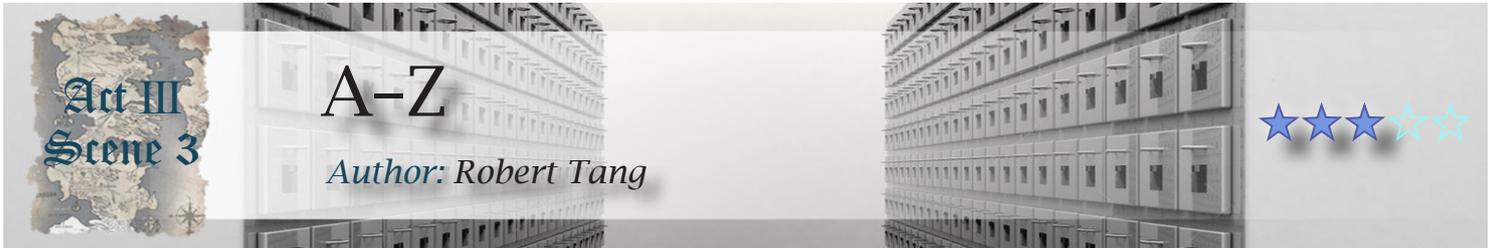
I fought my way past the gusts and passed through the arch. Never in my time in Yorovash - even considering my abduction in Quellshire - had I been happier to step inside an inn.

"Welcome," said the innkeeper, a thin man beneath a thick wrapping of cloaks.

I opened my mouth to ask for a room, but he cut me off with a raised hand. "Before you speak, I have to ask if you were sent by either Lord Angroth or Lord Cillarie. Our ruler has forbade any involvement with their border dispute."

I shook my head. "Certainly not."

He smiled and opened his ledger. "Then welcome. Let's find you a bed."



89 13 95 51 18 33 ... 75 45 111 ? 44 104 62 ... 23 54 70 39 30 40

9 6 10 WAR 3 ... 12 5 ? 4 1

4 8 12 2 1 ? 6 ... 11 10 9

63 142 65 24 59 144 ... 124 140 141 ? 14 115 99 ... 13 70 110 40 145 41

100 200 300 301 302 ... 81 82 83 ? 89 85 86 ... 34 39 35 36 37 38

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--