

The temple, composed of an unusual blue crystal rock, was a circular stone structure of columns which supported a flat roof. They overheard a man in the crowd telling friends that the gods created the stone structure in memory of Heptarc. The pair followed the throngs of people who pushed to get inside the open structure. The columns used to support the roof had long flutings showing on the outside, and they were painted with gold paint. As they walked up the blue-gray steps, Urith glanced around at the large reliefs of the sky gods carved into the back of the stone columns. Each god of the Sky Realm was looking down in harsh judgment upon the worshippers inside. Even he felt uneasy as if the gods would suddenly reach out to grab them.

Fedelm led the way, pushing through the crowd that milled around while Urith tried to stay up with the determined woman. When they reached the center of the shrine, there was a wooden platform overflowing with various items left as a sacrifice to the gods. Urith caught the glint of silver, bronze and gold trinkets scattered on the platform. He cynically thought about the large number of koinons such items would bring to the priests when the *satgerts* collected the items at sunset. He watched Fedelm lay a small piece of cloth on the table while she began saying a prayer that he did not know. However, he did recognize the fabric. It was a piece of cloth she removed from her father's tunic when they buried Caestia at Durinell.

Urith felt awkward as he watched. He had no prayers to give, so he pulled off his heavy shield and leaving it next to the table. He sat cross-legged beside the kneeling Fedelm. The crowd noise filled the air around them, but Urith focused his thoughts. He quietly thanked the spirit of Caestia for his wisdom and sacrifice. He considered the record keeper to be as brave as any warrior he knew. He patiently waited for Fedelm to finish. He glanced over and saw her quietly crying, the tears falling down her cheeks. It was a sight of tenderness and loss that he remembered as well. Deep inside him, painful memories in the past suddenly welled up, threatening to come out. He tightened the grip on his Clovel Sword, willing the pain of his own losses to go away.

When Fedelm finished, she looked over at Urith. He gave her a slight grin. She smiled, appreciating his presence. They got to their feet with Urith pulling his shield back over his shoulder as they started to move through the crowd. He was about to say something to her when they heard a scream ring out. Instantly, other terrified screams broke out among the crowd. Amid the rising panic, Urith witnessed the cause. Red eyes came alive with the engraved god figures staring down at the crowd. The columns began moving as the whole structure shook back and forth as the ground moved below them. People scattered, trying to run from the temple and Urith felt the eyes of the stone god upon him. He heard a roar coming from the statues around them.

"Bring me the Skool, or you will be destroyed." The words rang out with a bellow.

Urith grabbed Fedelm, joining the mob escaping from the shrine. They nearly reached the edge of the structure when the rumble of the roof collapsing hit them. Large fragments of stone came tumbling down, striking the worshippers who fell to the temple floor with a sickening thud. One column engraved with the figure of Duwdamon toppled toward Urith. He pushed Fedelm hard, and they got through the mass of people. The action kept them from being crushed by the stone. However, the worshippers behind him were not as lucky. The thick stone roof landed on screaming people, and their shrieks were suddenly cut off.

Safely away from the structure, the stunned crowd milled around like panicked erbas. Then, the rumbling almost immediately ceased. Dust filled the air along with the cries and moans of the injured. A few people in the crowd came back to help those pinned under the wreckage. Urith, maddened by what he witnessed, joined the rescue as he pulled away fragments of stone. He cursed at the gods for this destruction. Fedelm sought out other large men in the crowd to help. Near one column, the men found a trapped man dressed in the white robe of a priest. His leg was crushed under part of the massive column. Despite the obvious pain, Urith noticed the man kept staring at him while they worked to extract his leg. It took several men to roll the column away. Fedelm came next to Urith, looking at the priest who was covered in the blue-gray dust that still clouded the area. She bent down and then she recognized the injured man. It was Imenal.