

The Calledar Chronicles
Part 3 – A Difference of Opinion
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“Your majesty, we should not be impetuous in following through with your plan to use Minister Alea’s contacts with the Order. Such hasty actions could have terrible ramifications for us all if we do not weigh all the options available to us,” Allyster said to the King later that evening over a cup of mulled wine.

“What is advice then? You obviously have something in mind,” Beregor replied. “But to be fair, I’ve made up my mind. It will have to be something monumental to get me to change it.”

“Well, my king, there are others we could seek to ally ourselves with besides the Order,” Now that he had a chance to speak the Minister of Information didn’t seem too excited to get to the point. “Due to the extenuating circumstances of the war with Gryth and the cult of Those Who Wait, I think that perhaps we should consider making a treaty with The Children of the Everblossoming Arches.”

King Beregor looked at Allyster for several minutes without saying anything. Throughout the silence, the Minister of Information would not meet his king’s gaze.

“They are hedonists, narcissists, seekers of pleasure, who care only for themselves and whatever drives them to be a part of that place. What makes them better allies than the Order.”

Allyster chose his words carefully because he knew that a misstep now might result in his removal from office or worse. Being the Minister of Information he knew where many of the skeletons were buried, but King Beregor knew even more.

“My suggestion is not based on a hypothesis your Majesty,” he said. “I have examined all of the options available to us, and it is clear. No one has successfully conquered or even stolen from the Everblossoming Arches, despite the incredible wealth that is there. We both know that it is not for lack of trying.

“I think that we should send out a group of ambassadors immediately. I will head up the delegation myself. You know that I have connections there that could serve as well as any that Minister Alea has with the Order.”

“My friend,” the king said to the man that had grown up with him, and had known him before he was crowned, “your service to the realm has been exemplary over the years, an example that many other ministers could imitate. Your suggestion, though, is not one I can take.”

“So you will dismiss my plan before you have even heard all of it.” The same haughty, disdainful tone that he had used in addressing Minister Alea in the earlier meeting. My connections...”

“Your connections mean nothing.” The King’s tone carried with it a warning to his minister. “The plan is a hackneyed one. It has been tried so many times before, with connections much the same as yours, that no one even considers working with them anymore. It has always ended badly for those looking to work with the Children of the Everblossoming Arches.”

“Then it is fortuitous that His Majesty has another plan that he thinks better than that of his closest counselor.” King Beregor heard the barest hint of bitterness in his best friend and cousin’s voice for just a moment and then it was. “What makes the Order a better choice?”

“The war is impacting The Order whether we see it or not. The worshipers of Those Who Wait have no use for anything that does not fit their world view, and they deal brutally with those who break the taboos of the religion.

“A return to business, as usual, will benefit the Order, and Minister Alea’s sources have indicated that it will cost us very little to form the alliance. If we were to go the route, you desire and try to make an alliance with the Children of the Everblossoming Arches it will bankrupt the kingdom no matter how good your connections are. Not only must we win this war, but we must be frugal with our resources, in hopes of still having something when it is over.