

Excerpt

Copyright © 2019 by [Brandon Lee Barkey](#)

The brothers realized the massive shapes were not mythical sea monsters, but wooden ships with billowing sails. There were twelve of them. Foreign ships approaching rapidly from the west, releasing a hellfire of metal upon the Isle. Ammon had heard stories of pirates before that day. It had all seemed like fantasy before then, though incomparable to leviathans.

He felt a flood of new questions pour into his mind, all concerning the outside world. The first of which was, *Why would they hurt us?*

After several more blasts, there was still no reaction from the Temple. The white structure was ghostly as sand, and flowers fell around it. Dust and strange shouts drifted about, illuminated by the rays of the setting Sun. The brothers couldn't believe the mysticism before them. It was like a scene from Ammon's often-vivid dreams.

As the wreckage ensued and the ships drew ever closer, it became clear to the brothers that they were in real, mortal danger. The entire Isle was in shambles as projectiles continued striking the Temple. Everything seemed ablaze as sunrays lit the scene on fire. All was hazy and red like crimson clouds. All while the Temple stood still.

Finally, the Temple doors fell open. The brothers whimpered with relief. Two lines of Guardians appeared from the bright void, marching out with white robes and blank faces. There was a fluid motion to their step, lacking all impatience. Ammon looked at Mikael as a sideways smile grew on both their faces.

"I can't believe this is happening," Ammon said, turning back towards the violence. The two lines of Guardians were parallel to each other and to the beach, facing the approaching threat. Metals pummeled the sand around them, launching fragments into the air. The Guardians remained untouched.

A great dust storm stirred up, obscuring all shapes into dark-brown shadows. The Guardians stood still as the dust cloud thickened, while the blasts from impacts grew louder.

"What are they waiting for?" Mikael mumbled, tears of anticipation in his eyes. *I don't know*, Ammon thought to himself. *I don't know...*