

Friday 13.10.1307

by Simon Kearns

“God is not pleased. We have enemies of the faith in the kingdom.”

Vincent lowered the text and stared out over the heads of the men assembled in the courtyard. The final shafts of evening sun were colouring the inner walls of the castle a prophetic red. He tried to avoid making the calculation, but his mind had already totalled the men under his command against those of the nearest garrison.

“Fellow soldiers of Christ and the temple of Solomon. This is a warrant for your arrest. Directly from King Philip. Make no mistake, they mean to kill us all.”

It was the gold they were after. The French court was heavily in debt to the Knights Templar; all this talk of faith and divine dissatisfaction was just to cover up the basest of motives. The accusations in the warrant: idolatry, obscene acts, these were the filth of some Parisian lawyer's imagination. Vincent thought it perversely fitting that the incorruptible metal should attract such tainted hearts. The court did not deserve the gold of the Holy Land. Not even the King deserved it, too bright for that dark Prince. Best to return it to its earthen womb.

“We will bury our gold and meet them unarmed.”

No one argued. No one fled. No one gave up the secret.

