Two men appeared. It was just after dawn, when a moment before it had been just after nightfall. Kaspar felt disorientated for a moment, but Magnus pushed him away. Kaspar stumbled and fell, then quickly got to his feet. ‘What is this?’ Magnus said, ‘You are on the other side of the world, Kaspar. This is the land known as Novindus. Here not one living soul has heard of Olasko, let alone of its duke. No one here even speaks your language. ‘Here you have no servants, no army, no subjects, no allies; you have neither power nor wealth. You are at the mercy of others as others have been at your mercy for most of your life. Tal Hawkings wished you to dwell on your errors, to contemplate your sins and what you have lost. Here you may do that every day of your life, however much of it you have remaining.’ Kaspar’s jaw set firmly. ‘This is not the end of it, magician. I will find a way back, and I will regain that which has been taken from me.’ Magnus said, ‘I wish you good fortune, Kaspar of Olasko.’ He waved his hand and the shackles and manacles fell away. ‘I leave you with your wits, your strength and your talents, for they are all you need, if you learn humility.’ He pointed off to the horizon. ‘Those are nomads, Kaspar. Men who will either kill you or enslave you, depending on their mood. I suggest you find a hiding place and consider this your first opportunity to learn.’ Then Magnus vanished, leaving the former Duke of Olasko alone on a dirt road, halfway around the world from home, with enemies advancing. Kaspar looked around and saw a small copse of trees on a distant hill. If he started running immediately, he might be able to hide before the nomads caught sight of him. He looked at the rising sun, and felt a fresh breeze blowing. There was no familiar hit of sea-salt, something that he had grown to take for granted in Opardum, and the air was dry. His skin prickled with anticipation, for he had been plucked from abject failure to a new beginning. His head swam with images, and he new somehow he had been used by forces he didn’t understand. When Leso Varen had died, it was as if a nagging ache in the base of his skull had ceased. He didn’t know what that meant, but he knew that it felt oddly good. Despite being thrown in a cell in his own dungeon, he had slept well, and when he had been taken from there, he had expected to die. Now he was here, wherever here was, free to make his own way. He glanced around. Not much of a world to conquer from what he could see, but Kaspar expected there were better places somewhere around here. Either way, he couldn’t start any sooner. He picked up his chains and hefted them, swinging them as a weapon as the riders came into view. He grinned.