Iain Alpin

Sir Iain Alpin (born 735) is the Knight Commander of the King's Life Guard and the third son of Sean Alpin, the 7th Earl of Ardmor. A veteran of the Queen's War and a mercenary in Bernicia, he is known for his unwavering loyalty to the Crown and his formidable skills as a warrior. Although of heroic bloodline, which grants him fast healing and heightened reflexes, he has never learned the art of shapeshifting common to others of his lineage.

Stories

They are in the story

- First appears: Arriving at Caer Suibhne as the King's temporary Steward during the winter solstice negotiations.
- Function: He serves as the King’s primary enforcer and protector. He notably defended King Alasdair V by killing the 5th Earl of Uisdean and his brother Fearchar after a dinner at Caer Suibhne, claiming they had attempted to assassinate the monarch. Later, he served as the formal escort for Lady Elizabeth Wallis upon her arrival in Dalreoch.

Description

Sir Iain is 39 years old and possesses an athletic, muscular build that allows him to wear heavy armour for long durations without fatigue. He stands slightly taller than average with pale skin, long black hair usually kept in braids, and blue eyes flecked with gold. Unlike many of his peers, he is clean-shaven, though he typically carries a noticeable shadow.

His military gear is distinctively ornate:

- Armour: Highly polished, green-and-gold enamelled breastplate featuring the gold stag badge of the Life Guard.
- Helmet: Featuring a side-to-side green horsehair brush, marking his rank as Commander.

Divided Loyalty: He is currently estranged from his father, Sean Alpin, having taken up arms against him to support Queen Caoimhe during the civil war. When not in armour, he is a proficient dancer and plays the pipes, a skill he learned while in captivity with the late Queen. He often wears court fashions of green silk edged with gold lace.

Background and Family

Born in 735, Iain is the third son of Sean Alpin, the 7th Earl of Ardmor. Despite his noble lineage, he has a fractured relationship with his family; he is currently disowned by his father for “having changed sides,” presumably referring to his unswerving loyalty to the King over his father's more traditional noble interests. He is a veteran who distinguished himself in battle before taking his current post.

Appearance and Role

He is described as a tall, muscular man who typically wears a green suit decorated with gold braid and the badge of the King's Guard. In his capacity as Commander, he is rarely far from the King, often standing just paces behind him to provide immediate protection. Currently, he also controls the King's cavalry force based in the capital, Dalreoch.

The Massacre at Caer Suibhne

Iain Alpin's most significant and notorious action occurred in 774 at Caer Suibhne. During a private negotiation between the King and the Murchadh brothers - Domnhall and Fearchar - Alpin was the only other witness.

- **The Official Version:** The King asserted that the brothers attempted to assassinate him and that Iain Alpin’s “swift defence” saved his life, resulting in the deaths of both Murchadhs.
- **The Murchadh version:** According to a short account of the event, the “defence” was actually a premeditated execution. In this version, Alpin used a single swift motion to decapitate Earl Domnhall and then pivoted to drive his sword into Fearchar’s chest. To support the King's claim of treason, Alpin allegedly threw the brothers' swords onto the floor near their bodies to make it appear as though they had been drawn first. He then raised the alarm and escorted the wounded King to safety.

Whatever the truth, this event earned him the eternal enmity of Diarmid Murchadh, the current Earl of Uisdean, who views Alpin and the King as murderers who broke the sacred laws of hospitality.

Relationships

People

Notable people

- King Alasdair V: His sovereign, who personally restored Iain to his position in the Life Guard.
- Sean Alpin: His father; their relationship is one of bitter estrangement due to their opposing sides in the Queen's War.
- Diarmid Murchadh: The 7th Earl of Uisdean; the two formed a close friendship during their mutual exile at Southope in Bernicia.
- Iain Black: His bastard son, fathered during his ten years as a mercenary in Bernicia.
- Queen Caoimhe: His former mistress, whom he served faithfully from age 17 until her death.

Places

- Dalreoch: The capital where he commands the garrison and guards the King's Keep.
- Caer Suibhne: The site of his lethal confrontation with the Murchadh brothers.
- Eastport: Where he spent several years working as a mercenary after the fall of Queen Caoimhe.
- Southope: Where Queen Caoimhe's court in exile was until she was executed by Queen Eleanor

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Skyss - Story Background	Characters	Skyss - Places	Pantheons of the World	Other Background

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