Hearts in Glorantha

Issue 1 Summer 2008

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Darran for the fantastic cover.

Further Information

Visit **D101games.co.uk**

For updates on upcoming issues & forums for discussion about the fanzine.

Submission guidelines

All submissions should be made to the Editor at

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Authors

First off write a short synopsis of your article, five hundred words maximum, and send it to me.

Then if I like your idea I'll ask you to submit the full piece.

Submissions should be in Microsoft Word or text format with plain formatting. By all means include a formated version to give me some idea of how to lay it out, but I must also have the plain text only version.

Artists

Submissions should be 300dpi images. While I accept unsolicited submissons it is also useful to contact me before hand to see what is planned for the next issue.

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Editorial

You hold in your hands, or on your hard drive if you have bought the Pdf version, the first issue of our humble fanzine.

It's come together amazingly quickly and I'd like to thank the contributors – the authors and artists – who rallied to my call to arms three months ago.

Since this is the premier issue, this editorial will provide an outline of what I'm setting to out to do.

Firstly this is a Fanzine for the fans by the fans. Although we support the publishers and conventions, this fanzine is about getting people's gaming ideas about the world of Glorantha out to gamers. It's also about new voices emerging from the void. While we will have some authors that will be familiar to you, you'll also see some new names in this and coming issues.

The plan is to have two issues per year, a Summer and a Winter release. I'm going to keep the contents of the 'zine as varied as possible. Geographically this issue explores lands as far flung as Ralios and Kralorela as well as the familiar Dragon Pass and Prax settings. Content wise we've got Games Master's advice, fiction, new character generation rules and setting information. Systemwise this issue has stats for HeroQuest and BRP (in its RQ3 guise). I intend to keep up this variety of content in future issues. As much as I enjoy theme issues, I think that diversity is what makes Glorantha such a great game setting.

Everything in this fanzine is rooted in actual play. Even the fiction that we have in this issue was inspired by, or illustrates, in game action. Hearts in Glorantha is about inspiring the Games Masters and players to go out and play in Glorantha. While this is unashamedly a fanzine for Gloranthaphiles, the aim is to remain accessible to newcomers too.

This issue sees us do a Mythology and Glorantha feature. It wasn't planned, but several of the contributors came forward with submissions that gelled into this idea. Jane and David both give very different takes on how to use Mythology in game, while Jeff gives us an account of an actual in game HeroQuest.

Talking about Mythology, there's a myth doing the rounds that the Fan Publication Policy killed off Gloranthan Fandom. Despite what certain Angry Agaraths would claim its very much alive and prospering.

Hearts in Glorantha is evidence of this.

Toddle pip!

Newt

July 08

God Fall

By John Ossoway

I. Introduction

God Fall is designed to be a location of interest with an associated cult which can easily be slotted into an existing campaign. It could provide the basis for a scenario seed, something for adventurers lost in the wilderness of North-Eastern Prax to stumble upon. Some descriptions and location details are kept deliberately brief, to allow GMs to customise God Fall as they see fit for their own campaigns.

II. History.

A century ago, a new star appeared in the heavens over Prax. It blazed across the skies for three days and three nights, and when it finally came down to earth in the wastelands north-east of Pavis it was hailed by many as a falling god. When those in the vicinity eventually summoned enough courage to investigate the site, they discovered a large crater, inside which the sand had turned to glass. The fallen star itself had come to rest in a cavern beneath the crater, and fresh water now sprung from where it had struck the ground. A fortuitous omen indeed.

The falling star was believed by some to be the wounded body of one of the many nameless sky gods who fought during the God Wars. These believers named the crater *God Fall*, and in the intervening years, an organised religion has grown up around the site, worshipping the unnamed Fallen God and waiting for the day when, wounds healed, he will awaken and reward his loyal congregation.

Word has spread of the prophetic visions received by some who sleep in the crater, and pilgrims travel from far and wide to bend their knee at *God Fall Temple*, especially during the *Hundred Lights Festival*. It is during this festival that the most devoted worshippers are chosen to accompany the brown-robed priests into the caverns beneath the crater, to the inner sanctum of the Fallen God himself. There they are allowed to touch his prone form, and receive his blessings.

III. The Cult in the World

In the lands of North-Eastern Prax, God Fall is a well known location, but outside of this region few have heard of it. Pilgrims regularly pass through Pavis on their way to offer worship at God Fall Temple, and the brown robed priesthood with their attendant white-robed acolytes have become a common site in the city.

Sorcerers and priests of other cults contemptuously refer to the pilgrims as *Stone Kissers*. They do not believe the legends attached to the site. To these people God Fall represents little more than the final resting place of a chunk of unremarkable star-rock.

Shamans know better. God Fall is a natural focus for earth-magic. Those attuned to the spirit world recover Magic Points at double the normal rate when in close proximity to the site. Those who know the correct rituals are sometimes able to control and channel these forces, bleeding off small amounts of the primal energies that infuse the locale.

The cult has one major holy festival, the *Hundred Lights Festival*. This annual festival celebrates the arrival of the god, and lasts 3 days and 3 nights, during which thousands of pilgrims flock to God Fall. Many of the most devoted pilgrims fast, flagellate and offer gifts to the priests in an effort to display their dedication to the cult.

IV. Location

God Fall lies a week's travel north east of Pavis, in the wastelands. The going is hard, and there are no watering holes along the route.

The Crater

The crater that marks where the nameless sky god came to rest is more than 300 yards across, and most of the interior has been fused into yellow-green silica glass by the intense heat that accompanied his arrival. The amulets worn by the priesthood are carved from this glass and there is a roaring trade in Pavis for jewellery made from God Fall Glass.

During the Hundred Lights Festival, thousands of pilgrims crowd into the crater. The crater has steep sides, and it is not uncommon for people to be injured or even fall to their death while attempting to climb down.

At the bottom of the crater is God Fall Temple, constructed around and over the entrance to the cavern containing the Fallen God. At night an unearthly glow emanates from the entrance to this cavern, bathing the interior of the temple, and to some extent the crater, in pale blue light.

The Tent City

Surrounding the crater is a tent-city of pilgrims, hangers-on, hawkers, beggars and chancers. The size and population of this city waxes and wanes during the year, peaking during the Hundred Lights Festival. Stalls crowd the crater edge, selling food and water and other essentials, as well as trinkets made from God Fall Glass. Tribes congregate to haggle and trade, and to make some money from the gullible pilgrim.

One of the most famous of the regular visitors is the shaman *Tipi of Storms*. Rumour has it that Tipi of Storms communicates with the Fallen God, and knows when he will finally awaken. Tipi of Storms has neither confirmed nor denied this rumour. The priesthood themselves say it is untrue. There is always a commotion when the wizened shaman and his self-appointed bodyguard *Eleven Frowning Hyenas* appear.

The Leaping Sky Warriors

One local tribe have taken it upon themselves to guard the crater against wrongdoers and interlopers. The *Leaping Sky Warriors* are named after Leaping Sky, one of the first visitors to God Fall. These painted warriors prevent any except priests and their attendant acolytes from entering the temple.

God Fall Temple

At the bottom of a flight of steps cut from the glass crater (*The Good Path*) lies God Fall Temple. The temple is built over and around the entrance to the subterranean resting place of the Fallen God. It is a squat, plain structure constructed of slabs of basalt and painted animal hides. The entrance is covered in animal hides, and guarded at all times by Leaping Sky Warriors.

The temple has several inner chambers, mainly for use by the priesthood and their attendant acolytes as living and working quarters. At the centre of the temple is the entrance to the caverns – a hole in the ground 30' across, surrounded by a ring of bizarre and disturbing glass sculptures, formed at the moment of impact a century ago. There is a lift, powered by the muscle of acolytes and initiates, which raises/lowers people into the cool shadows of the crater. There are also several rope ladders for the more agile.

The Caverns

The caverns beneath the crater are numerous, and as well as containing the God Chamber, there are caves containing supplies and quarters for the most senior of the priesthood.

The God Chamber

This is the resting place of the Fallen God. The god resembles a giant chunk of misshapen rock, approximately 15' high and 30' across, black, with myriad golden flecks. It is still hot after almost a century sat in the earth. It gives off a strange magical aura that has caused those that spend a lot of time in close proximity to lose their hair (i.e. the priesthood).

Fresh water flows from an underground aquifer which was breached when the Fallen God came to earth a century ago. It bubbles from the earth in the God Chamber and pools in an adjacent cavern.

Whether an actual sky god or not, the Fallen God is most definitely imbued with some magical properties. In addition to being a focus for Spirit Magic, the body of the Fallen God is cut through with meteoric metals, which if smelted make excellent weapons. Only the High Priest can sanction use of this metal.

V. Initiate Membership.

Anyone can become an initiate of the God Fall cult, providing they are accepted by the priesthood. To do this they must first find a sponsor (usually an acolyte or if lucky a priest) and prove they have the requisite abilities.

Requirements

Make skills rolls in: First Aid; Human Lore; Plant Lore; Orate.

Benefits

Upon acceptance, Initiates are taught 1d3 points of cult spirit magic and then gain 1 pt per 5 years afterwards. The temple at God Fall teaches the following spirit magic: Control (Mundane Animal); Heal; Detect (Water); Protection; Repair; Soulsight; Spirit Screen.

VI. Acolyte Membership.

Acolytes tend to the everyday needs of the priesthood, and assist in religious ceremonies. Acolytes are easily distinguishable by the plain white flowing robes that they wear.

Requirements

Would-be acolytes must have been an initiate in good standing for at least a year, and must take a vow of celibacy; Acolytes are only seen outside of God Fall in the company of one or more priests. They must pass the Test of the Devoted (a POWx3% check).

Benefits

Acolytes gain 1pt of Spirit Magic per year, and have access to special cult spirit magic. The priests at God Fall Temple teach two special Spirit Magic spells to the acolytes: Bless (item) and Suppress Magic. Details are given below.

Bless (item)

Touch, Passive, Stackable, Special Duration

1 Point

This spell takes a full 10 minutes to cast, and lasts for one week or until its effect is dispelled (per point of the spell). The spell grants a temporary bonus of +1AP and +5% to all skill or resistance rolls made

using the item. This effect is dispelled if the user fumbles (although any effects of the fumble are cancelled), or if the extra AP is destroyed by damage. A side effect is that the Blessed item will stay in the same state of repair it was in when the spell was cast; armour remains shiny and new, clothing is difficult to soil.

Suppress Magic

Ranged, Passive, Stackable, Temporal

1 Point

If the target of this spell fails to resist, their chance of casting magic is reduced by 5% per point of spell.

VII. Priesthood.

The priesthood of God Fall are an enigmatic bunch. They keep their own counsel, and on the occasion when they have business to conduct with the outside world, it is usually done by one of their acolytes. All priests of the cult are bald and have an emaciated caste to their features. They steadfastly refuse to name their god, stating that when he finally awakens he will tell them his true name.

In Prax, where the cult has the most worshippers, it is considered bad luck to harm a priest of God Fall. In the city of Pavis, crimes against one of the brown robed priesthood are usually punished harshly.

Requirements

Must have been an Acolyte in good standing for at least 5 years; must have at least 75% in the following skills: First Aid, Human Lore, and Plant Lore. Must

have 10 points of Spirit Magic.

Benefits

The priesthood of God Fall have good relations with the Animal Nomads and followers of Waha. All are welcome at God Fall, and as such Spirit Magic available to these cults is also available to the priesthood. Priests of God Fall have close ties with local shamans, and sometimes teach these individuals special Spirit Magic spells such as Channelling.

Channelling

Ritual Ceremony

This Ritual allows the priest to channel Magic Points from God Fall. For every hour spent performing the ritual, the Shaman can channel 1d6+1 Magic Points from the ground. This can be used to replenish Magic Points, or fill a Magic Point Matrix. The caster can only channel as many Magic Points as their total POW in one 24 hour period.

Godfall in the 2nd Age

Its easy enough to have the God Fall, fall to Earth seven hundred years earlier in the Imperial Age. This in itself brings new opportunities for adventure.

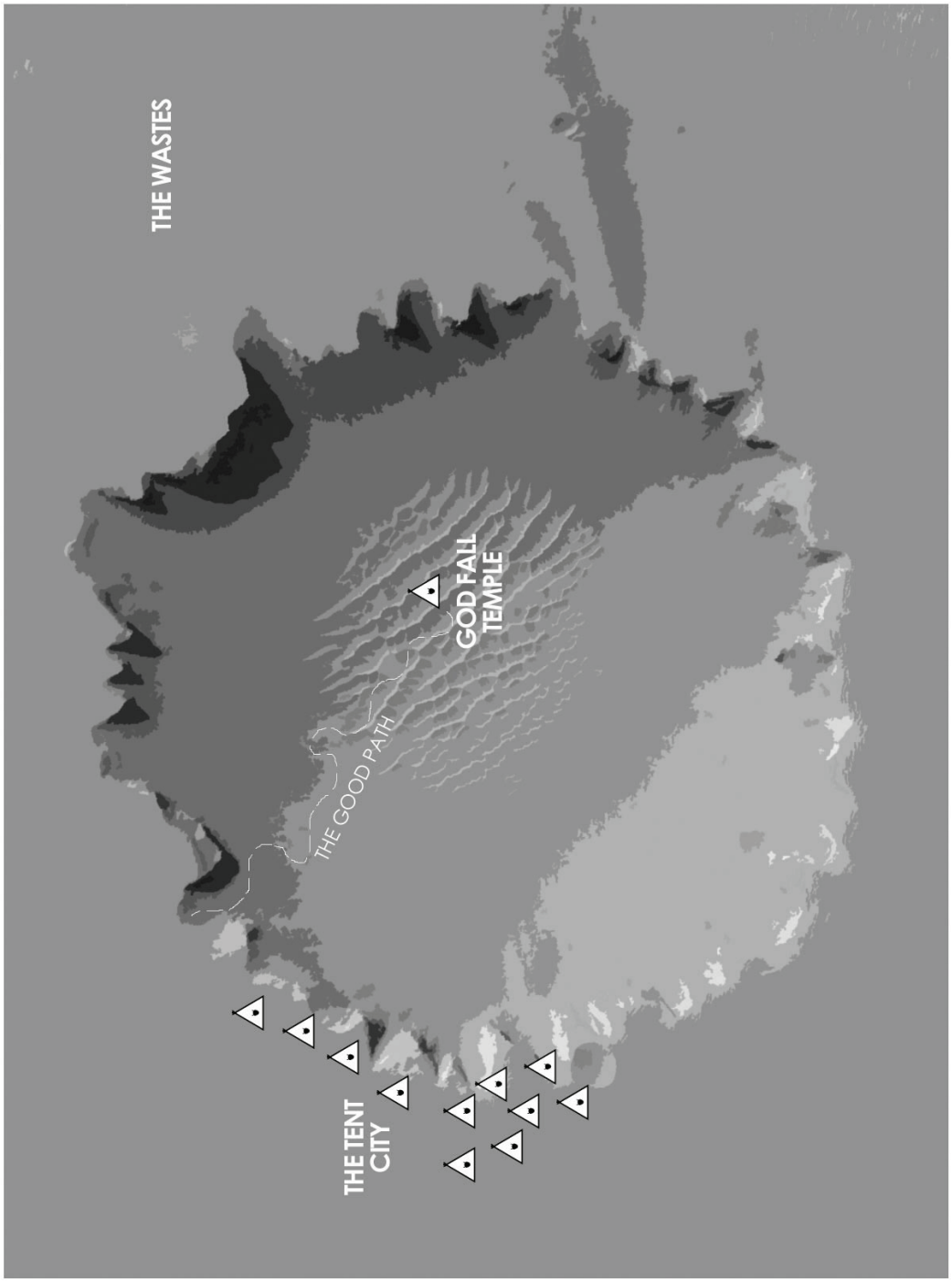
The God Learners would definitely be interested in analyzing the Fallen God and accumulating its power into their body of work. Rival expeditions of God Learner archeologists could race up the River of Cradles and with animal nomad guides struggle through the Wastes.

The Empire of the Wyrm's Friends' leadership sends out its own expedition. Convinced that it is a sign of the Great Dragon to come. Perhaps its a flaw in their master plan that must be destroyed.

Meanwhile in Pavis, the Council start hiring adventurers to find out the truth. Is there a guilty secret the Council is hiding? Uncanny that the star fell when the Council was completing one of its magical rituals towards the great city project. What implications does this have for the future of the city?

God Fall

SCALE: Crater is Approximately 300 yards across



Prologue method for character generation

By Newt Newport

This method is really a mash up of the 'as you go' method with some of the structure from the 'list method'. The idea is that the players play out key points of their background before the game starts in earnest.

To illustrate how this works I'll be using the character generation we did as part of our Black Horse County campaign. This is the pitch I gave the players

"I'm planning a mini-campaign around Black Horse County. Its going to be very grim, over the top heroic and very Heavy Metal, with elements of Twin Peaks. The heroes will be dealing with the movers and shakers of Black Horse County (Sir Ethilrist and his Bishops) digging into the how and whys Black Horse County works the way it does and a plot so foul and terrible that threatens to drag the whole area into Hell, literally.
Since Black Horse County is not very well defined in any of the Gloranthan publications we shall be detailing the setting as we go along.

Character generation will be using the 'make it up as you go along' method along with a short 'prologue' of the characters detailing them growing up. This will introduce players to the setting and get them involved from the word go. While the Black Horse Knights themselves will obviously play a large part, other character options are available such as the wizards of the Church of Saint Atrox and even the Black Demon Horses that the knights ride.

I'll be using the old Hero Wars write up for Black Horse County for inspiration during character generation, which is on-line here

http://www.glorantha.com/hw/P03Keywords3.html

1. Childhood

The characters started at age 10. I give a quick preamble about their homeland, after which we focused in on their community. I described what it is like to grow up there and the players tell me who their parents are. At any point they can add detail to the community, so it's not just me telling them what their community is like. It's a two way discussion with me asking questions, summarising and asking for elaboration. In this way we ended up with a fully detailed border town on the edge of Black Horse County called Thanpole, which was mainly generated by the players. This gave the players an attachment to their home community as well as having it as a relationship on their character sheet.
At this stage all they have on their character sheet is Homeland keyword at 13. I ask them to write down five traits, emotional or physical, which make them stand out from their peers. These start at 17. I then ask them choose one Flaw that starts at 17.
Then we played out a memorable incident from their childhood. All ability rolls were based off their homeland, or their traits. For the Black Horse County players the incident was stealing horses from a neighboring Grazer clan. I then gave 1-5 points dependant how much they contributed to the story.

2. Rites of Passage.

Play then fast forwards a couple of years to the characters' coming of age, where they pass from childhood and into adult hold. At this stage I explain the homeland's coming of age ritual. For Black Horse County its a festival called 'the Choosing', were the young adults go to one of three buildings in the town to show which trade they want to become an apprentice in (BHC is a very western medieval setting). If you go to the Blacksmiths you become a crafter or farmer, if you go to the Abbey you join the priesthood, if you want to be a Knight you turn up at the Lord's manor. Once I had explained the basic's we roleplayed it out as an incident in the heroes lives, with the heroes going against their parent's wishes and going off to be Knights.
At this stage we wrote down the relevant occupation and magic keyword and any abilities that came off that at the default of 17.

3. Early experience.

Fast forward a couple of years and the heroes have been in their chosen occupation for a couple of years. At this stage the players get to distribute 20 points amongst their abilities. If they add new abilities they start at 13, and the player gives a quick story of how that ability was obtained. Once again I play out an incident. This gets the players into character and familiar with their occupations at a time when the characters would just be getting used to them. Too many times have I seen players start out with expert characters only to to bumble around as

they, as players, get used to what the character can do.
In our Chronicle of Black Horse County our heroes are members of their local footman militia. Although they all aspire to be knights, Black Horse County law says that all aspirants must start off at the bottom with the rest of the peasants. However since the pcs are marked by destiny, they take control of the squares of pikemen and lead them against raiding Grazelanders. After the Grazelanders are successfully repelled, I give the players another 1-5 points depending on how much they contributed to the story.

At this point we do any finalisation, such as noting of equipment and then play continuesfrom there.

I find this method is very useful in easing the players into Glorantha. Background and setting is explained in play, and character choices are as a result of what happens in game. This means that the characters produced by this method are ones that the players actually want to play, because they have already been playing them! Also the players are not swamped by setting detail since I only have to explain what they directly encounter and they have an equal part in establishing the starting community.

Flora of Glorantha.

By Stuart Mousir-Harrison

Aweke. Somewhat rare, but found across the entire of Pralorela, much of Wenelia and in some portions of the Holy Country this herb has a preference for dry, semi-shaded un-grazed locations, such as on the fringes of upland woods. A low-growing ground plant, it is distinguishable by its delicate fragrance and orange star-shaped flowers. Deer, pigs and other grazers will swiftly eat it, should they find it. However, it is too useful to be used as animal fodder, and has a number of properties that make it valuable. Powdered, the roots can be used as the active ingredient for a potion to increase endurance. The leaves, steeped in hot water as a herbal infusion, (also known among the hsunchen as *aweke tea*) act as a mild stimulant, fending off tiredness and aiding concentration and night vision. Besides these it smells pleasant, and honey with a sizeable proportion of aweke pollen is particularly potent, and usually reserved for the chieftain's, or the king's, table. The seeds themselves are pleasant in taste, but offer no unusual benefits.

Recognition: Use *Herbalism*, *Identify Plant*, or similar means with a target 12W, -5 in the Holy Country, -2 in Wenelia, per half day of searching, +4 for preferential locations.)

Cultivation: Given its properties there are benefits to attempting to cultivate aweke. This, however, is a notoriously difficult task. For each ten aweke seeds planted twice-weekly attention is required over a period of 8-10 weeks (target of 15W3 to be achieved weekly) in a dry semi-shaded environment protected from grazing animals. Successful care will result in D4+1 usable plants. A more sure method would be to cause a cutting to take root, but this has never succeeded without magical intervention.

Homeland: Kralori

by Mark Galeotti

Eternal Peace, Peerless Tranquility and Bounteous Prosperity be upon you, for even unwashed and brutish barbarians have their own mean and unrewarding place in the Great Order of the Cosmic Dragon!

Kralorela teems with inhabitants, crammed into tiny huts clustering upon the sides of the much-irrigated rivers or the stone, brick and rice-paper tenements of the teeming cities. Temples stand on sacred places, monasteries and dojos among them. Government towns link villages to huge cities that swarm with official business, internal trade and religious administration. Atop it all the Imperial Dragon oversees peace, safety and serenity, through his huge and ubiquitous bureaucracy, dominated by coteries of palace eunuchs and courtiers, the mighty lieutenants known as exarchs and the countless mandarins and aristocrats across this huge land.

Kralorela occupies the eastern portion of Genertela. Colonies of Kralori are often found in cities overseas in Melib, Teshnos and much of the Eastern Isles.

Kralorela Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available: Entertainer (Dancer, Musician, Shadow-Puppeteer, Singer), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Spearman, Swordsman, Crossbowman), Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Petty Noble, Sailor, Scholar, Thief, Warrior.

Native Abilities: Enduring, Geography of [Home Province], Know Place in Society, Kralori Customs, Peace with Dragons, Speak Kralorelan.

Typical Personality Traits: Conservative, Nationalist, Obsequious to higher authority, Pious, Polite.

Typical Relationships: to Ancestors; to Family.

Magic: Common magic, Kralori Pantheon (theism).

Native Flaws: All abilities relating to Outside World 6. This indicates the extreme isolationist attitude of the common Kralori people.

Common Names: Names are a very significant indicator of social status. Commoners will generally have a single name reflecting their birth, such as Hong ("Farmer") or Kao ("Soldier"), as well as a nickname to distinguish them from all the other people in their village with the same name. Two names denote someone born or appointed to a petty office, such as Hong Ba ("Farmer Elder-Brother," a village headman) or Hong Zhang ("Farmer Protector," the head of the village militia). Three names are the sign of an aristocrat or hero, and four of the mightiest mandarins and generals and their families -- such people typically use only their more esteemed names. Thus, Duzhe Shu Chuan Jian ("Reader Clerk Boat-Master"), the fabled designer of the Kralori turtle-barges, is universally known only as Chuan Jian. Women will generally have one fewer name then equivalent menfolk (and it is not unknown for peasant women to be known purely by a nickname or as "Hong the Unfortunate's Second Daughter" until marriage confers the name "Hong the Drooplip's Second Wife" or the like), but exceptions, while a minority, are not rare.

Origin

Kralorela is the Kingdom of Splendor, and all Kralori know it is where all wisdom, virtue and enlightenment reside. Since the shattering of the original Divine Solar Empire of HeenMaroun in order to recreate the world, Kralorela has been progressive and unchanging in its virtue, notwithstanding brief and transitory emergencies such as the tyranny of Sekever and the 352-year reign of ShangHsa-may-his-name-be-cursed.

Common Religions

The Little Mandarins

The most widely-practiced common magic among the Kralori is centered around the so-called "Little Mandarins," local village totems and ancient ancestors. This is magic of the peasantry, and it would be inappropriate and undignified for anyone of higher rank to practice or even affect to notice it.

Charms -- Escape Foreman's Attention, Frighten Bandit, Know Way Home, Light Fire Quickly, Move Quickly Through Mud, Pacifying Kowtow.

Two-Jade Ring

The two-named Kralori represent a very varied social order, ranging from the most important peasants to lesser bureaucrats. They include many who are not following in their parents' footsteps so much as trying to exceed their ancestors' achievements, and their optimistic, aspirational and ambitious views are at once a useful engine of progress within Kralorela and at the same time viewed with mistrust by com-

moners and aristocrats alike. This is also reflected in their relative lack of ancestor magic: how can you revere a figure whose path you are no longer willing to tread? Many have turned to the Two-Jade Ring, a philosophical movement which uses as its symbol and focus a ring made of the very cheapest kind of jade (co-called "gray foreigners' jade") given a rim of the best variety the individual can afford (which is thus replaced if and when he has prospered and can buy better), representing the transition from base roots and constant reinvention. The increasing political militancy of several members of the Ring has begun to displease the authorities, especially since the Great Defenestration of Laonan Tao, but only in Puchai Province are members required to register on the Roll of Disharmonious Souls.

Charms -- Resist Tradition, Think Different Thoughts.

Feats -- I Know My Worth, Locate Own Property.

Six-Sixes-Passed-On

Noble houses pay strict attention to their lineages, and it is regarded as a matter of pride to be able to chart "six-sixes" (a doubly harmonious number) of mandarin ancestors. These are all carefully noted in gold leaf on the Ledgers of Passed-On Excellency in the house's inner sanctum. Many also carve these genealogies into stones which are then worked into ornamental gardens. Through contemplation in these gardens, Kralori may attain a near-mystic understanding of their ancestors' virtues, and from this understanding derive common magic.

Feats -- Beat the Rebellious, Elegant Gesture, Ignore Foreigner, Know Relative's Age, Remember Family History.

Spells -- Grow Nails, Harmonious Blossom, Locate Appropriate Stone, Shame Underling.

Specialized Religion-Kralori Pantheon

The dominant religion of Kralorela is founded upon the great dragons, from whom everything else flowed. The ultimate goal of Kralori mysteries is to become a dragon, but for most this is an abstract concept, and instead the center of their faith is Right Action and observance of their just and proper place in the world. The Kralori religion is inextricably tied to the political system. The Emperor is both just and enlightened despot and also himself a dragon, albeit in human form. All Kralori practice the Imperial Adorations, channeling their worship and reverence towards the Emperor, through the officials known as exarchs, who rule provinces, marshal armies and dispense justice in his name. They also worship powers appropriate to their rank and profession, whether peasants calling upon their ancestors for help and comfort or mandarins learning to emulate former Dragon-Emperors.

The dragons of Kralorela do not recognize distinctions in otherworlds, seeing a more fundamental and significant division between Right and Wrong Action. Kralori may mix magics freely without penalty, so long as it is appropriate to their social rank and role. Thus, a mandarin could practice common magic deriving from the Six-Sixes-Passed-On, including spells, even if a devotee of Vashanti. However, this would not apply if he also used spirits of the commoners' Little Mandarins tradition.

Kralori Pantheon Keyword

Abilities: Know Kralori Pantheon Myths, Talk to Dragons, Worship Kralori Pantheon.

Virtues: Philosophical, Revere Dragons.

Magic: Divine aid.

Other Side: Worshippers travel to the somber court of the Udam Bagur, Archexarch of Hell. There, they are judged: those who have practices Right Action travel to the Excellent Palace of Pleasant Reward to await the Passing On of His Supereminence the Dragon Emperor, at which time their souls will accompany him to the next stage of existence. The rest face appropriate and measured terms being tortured by devils to purify their souls until they are deemed worth of appointment to menial positions within the Excellent Place or, worse yet, rebirth as a barbarian or other animal.

Sample Deities of the Kralori Pantheon

Entertainer: Sav Hual, the Great Harmony

Affinity -- Dance.

Grimoire -- Divine Movements Classified (sample spells: Know The Next Step, Many Moving as One, One Moving Like Many, Perfect Tone).

Farmer: Ebe and Okerio Tradition

Spirits -- Ancestor, Farming, Rice.

Foot Soldier: Imolo Wen the Swordsman.

Affinities -- Discipline, Know Your Place, Soldiery.

Healer: Serelaloon.

Serelaloon is a total pacifist goddess.

Affinities -- Absolution, Compassion, Healing.

Hunter: Hunters will generally be members of the Ebe and Okerio ancestor worship tradition, although the particular ancestral spirits they contact will often be hunters themselves.

Merchant: Tun Dai, the Factor.

Affinities -- Merchant, Organize.

Petty Noble: Han Majang, the First Minister.

Affinities -- Administration, Authority, Politics.

Sailor: Thrunhin Da, the Blue Dragon of the Deep

Affinities -- Appease Sea Dragon, Shiphandling.

Scholar: Vashanti, Emperor of Sacred Nine

Affinities -- Administration, Literacy, Precedent.

Thief: Chuman Kalasak [Sedsaru]

Affinities -- Escape, Hide.

Warrior: Heseroon Marn, Faithful Dragon Fighting School

"Warrior" in Kralorela indicates a dojo-trained martial artist. Heseroon Marn is worshipped as a common religion, as well as a source of the skill of Dragon-Style unarmed combat (although he also encourages other schools).

Feats -- Block and Riposte, Bone-Shattering Kick, Soaring Sky Leap, Sudden Raking Blow, Twist and Strike.

Reasons to Have Left Home

Kralorela is rigidly caste oriented and anyone not content with their father's lot in life risks being branded a troublemaker and disgrace to the family. Such people are often driven out through violence or being ignored or leave voluntarily out of hope or desperation. Sometimes soldiers and others learn there is more to life and get wanderlust. Many people roam about as monks or seeking training in martial arts.

True Paths to Perfection: the Four Yesses and the Four Nos

Truly, it is written, that the Kralori are the finest of all people: respectful, virtuous, diligent and happy in our reverence for Godunya, our Divine Dragon Emperor, and his perfect and just rule. While immeasurably superior to the unfortunate souls not blessed by Kralori birth, we must nonetheless always heed the Four Yesses and Four Nos.

Yes to Reverence, No to Novelty. Reverence is a step backwards into our eternal future. We have much to revere. First and last are the dragons. Second and there are the Emperors, now dragons themselves. Third and everywhere are our ancestors, who lovingly scorn our failures that we may improve and defend us from spirits and devils who would steal our hearts and livers in the night. Fourth and ever are our traditions, which show us Right Action that we may serve the Emperor after our deaths in the Excellent Palace of Pleasant Reward. Bodkartu the Hidden Death protect us from forbidden lore, Bei Feng the Muter chastise the unruly mind!

Yes to Obedience, No to Disorder. Just as Ebe the Wild Man was tamed by Okerio, and from his lusts and passions came Aptanace the Sage, the father of the civilized arts, so too we must curb our disorderly natures and kowtow to the heavenly order of fate. Of course, there is impious novelty and there is an acceptance of our destiny -- if we appear to make something new that works for the good of Kralorela, then this must mean that we were guided by draconic inspiration, and all is as it should be.

Yes to Pride, No to Uncertainty. The humblest Kralori ox-driver is nonetheless greater than a king of the barbarian outsiders, for they are so corrupt that they have become devils, even if they do not know it. This is a blessed land, and it is not right or fitting for us to doubt that or be curious about the ways of the barbarians. Even our mariners prefer to sail the Harmonious Waves, the waters which wash our shores. That way they remain within ear-shot of the great brass Presence Bells which dot our coastline and can remind them of their homeland even when becalmed in the fogs of the Kahar Sea.

Yes to Manners, No to Impertinence. Know your place -- give appropriate respect to those placed above you in the Eighty-Nine Rungs of Precedence, whether bowing to your local Block Warden or Village Elder or performing the Three-Heron Kowtow to an exarch. Even foreigners are to be pitied, not mocked for their stunted souls, false gods and distressing standards of personal hygiene. If they are possessed of the appropriate chop to travel in our blessed land, then do not call them "barbarian devils" or nail them up in the ox-sty without good reason.

Karia

by Newt Newport

Karia is a frontier country in the Eastern Wilds of Ralios. It lies between the Orlanthi Kingdom of Delela to the South, the strange land of Vustria to the west, Dorastor Land of Doom to the east, and the Dragon Newt land of Ormsland to the North.

Only the southern third of the country, known as Lower Karia, is settled. The upper two thirds are left deserted, long haunted by the dead of the Gbaji war that ended over a thousand years ago. It has a fearsome reputation since it was once a province of Dorastor Land of Doom. Karia lies adjacent to that chaos net via the haunted Kartolin Pass.

Lower Karia is settled by three groups.

Settlers from the Kingdom of Delela. Barbarian worshipers of the Storm Gods and Earth Goddess. Fifty years ago their king, who had just united their Tribes after a civil war, commanded the settlement of the area by his people. Their major settlement is around the old Watcharkat fort which has grown into a fair sized city during this time. They are the most numerous, having villages and farms all over the settled area, which they call New Delela in honour of their homeland.

Exiles from the Dukedom of Naskorion. These followers of the new religion of the Church of St. Orlando have split with the old ways of their homeland. They have settled in a quarter of Watcharkat acting as merchants, artisans and builders in stone.

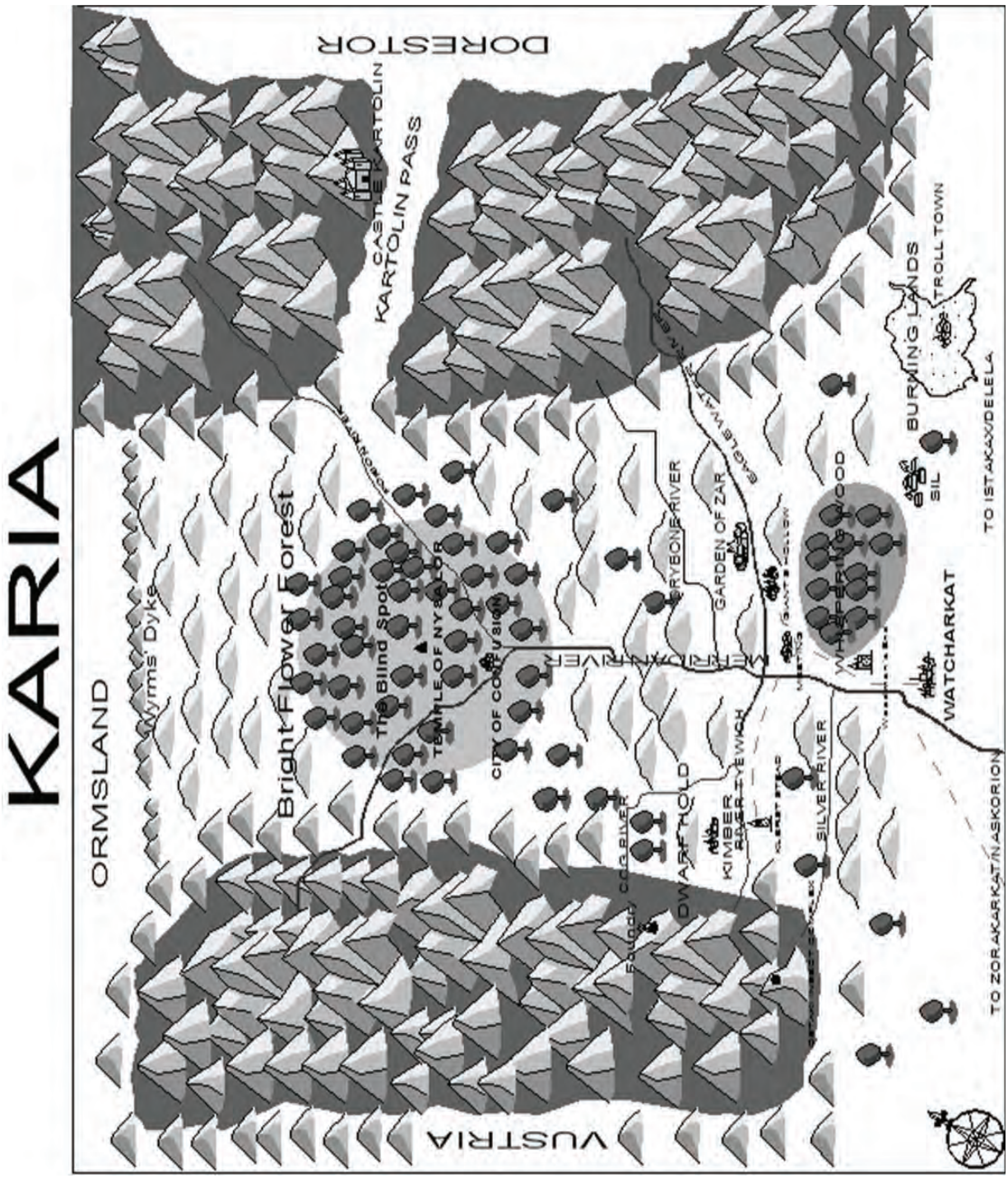
Trolls from the Queendom of Halikiv. They live uneasily alongside the Humans in the Burrows quarter of the city of Watcharkat, and in the remote and isolated town of Troll Town.

Upper Karia is believed to be uninhabited except by the ghosts of the Nysalor's Bright Empire. Occasionally bands of Broos and other mindless chaos monstrosities come out of Upper Karia, but it is well known that they come from the land of Dorastor.

Lower Karia is predominately hilly with settlements along the river valleys. Upper and Lower Karia is split by the River Tyewich and Silver Water, which meet up in the mighty River Meridan which cleaves the land in two. It is presumed that Upper Karia is also hilly, although nobody has been there for a thousand years, but it is known that two Mountain ranges exist there The Breath Mountains, a minor range which separates Karia from Vustria to the West, and the mighty Rockwood Mountains, which forms the boarder between Karia and Dorastor.

Climate wise Karia is temperate, although strange storms are often seen in far off Upper Karia on perfectly clear days in Lower Karia.

Karia's local grain goddess of the same name lies sleeping poisoned by a chaos God during the Gods war. The Delelarite Settlers have had to call upon Delela or even Ernalda to bless their crops. It is widely known that while Karia is not barren, it will not produce large crops or sustain herds outside the limited influence of the buhrs. Thus if the region's population carries on growing at the present rate good trade links with food producing areas will have to be established and maintained.


KARIA
ORMSLAND
Wyms' Dyke
Bright Flower Forest
The Blind Spot
TEMPLE OF NYSALOR
CITY OF COOPUSION
DORESTOR
CASTLE KARTOLIN
KARTOLIN PASS
MERIOLANA RIVER
ERYBON RIVER
GARDEN OF ZAR
EAGLE WATCH RIVER
WHITE WOOD
BURNING LANDS
TROLL TOWN
SIL
TO ISTAKAX/DELELA
WATCHARKAT
TO ZORAKARKAT/NASKORION
VUSTRIA
DWARF HOLD
Foundry of Gold
KIMBER
SILVER RIVER

Lower Karia

Burning Lands

Humans are discouraged from visiting Troll Town by this burnt land. New growth is burnt every Sea season, which the Trolls call "Burning Time". The chewed and hacked up remains of those who came to close to Trolltown are hung in gibbets at the edge of Burning Lands as a warning to trespassers.

Meeting (Population 600, Town)

This is farthest Delelarite settlement at present in Karia. Surrounded by a wooden stockade Meeting is built on a hill, overlooking the convergence of the rivers Meridian, Tyewich and Silver water. The town is famous for its Chalana Arroy Hospital that serves the surrounding rural communities. While the town serves mainly the local isolated farmsteads, there is a growing number of treasure seekers whom the authorities barely tolerate.

Meridian River

The Meridian River splits Karia in two. Its River God is Meridian, the Divider. His worshippers believe in the principle of duality and the balance achieved through living in harmony with nature.

Troll Town (Population 80 Dark Trolls, 800 Trollkin, Town)

Centred around three hills. One on which a Temple to Kygor Litor is built and in the other two a mine and troll dwellings. There is a guesthouse for the very occasional non-troll visitor, usually merchants or troll friends. However even trolls are kept in virtual isolation from the locals during their stay. Whatever the Trolltown trolls are up to they make it clear that it's their business alone.

Watcharkat (Population 4000, Medium city.)

Centred on the original Delelarite outpost of Watcharkat Fort, the city is rapidly growing. It is also the meeting point of three cultures. The straw thatched wattle and daub halls of the Delelarites. The tiled roofed stone houses of the Naskorions. The Trolls in their rickety slum named the Burrows.

The Lord Marshall Gillgarth Ironbeard rules it. He theoretically rules in the name of the King of Delela. In practice he harbours dreams of an independent Karia, which is boosted by the increasing Naskorion presence and the King's preoccupation with Troll raiders from Halikiv and Naskorion invaders in southern Delela. The Lord Marshall is primarily a military leader, responsible for law and order as well as foreigners, Naskorions and Trolls, while the Tribal elders look after the affairs of their tribes.

Whispering Wood.

Once part of Great Wood, this wood has strong connections with the spirit world. It contains burial mounds dating back to the earliest Orlanthi chieftains in Karia. Considered sacred by Delelarites, who prevent grave robbers from entering the Wood.

Upper Karia

Bandit Town

Not everyone exiled by King Aruzban of Delela was a political exile. Outlaws, bandits, thieves and murderers all gathered in this ramshackle town just north of the joining of the three rivers. Ruled by a foul Bandit King, and worshiping a savage Outcast god, this settlement preyed upon the newly establishing settlements south of the river until very recently. Now that the Lord Marshall in Watcharkat has opposed order on the Karian clans, Bandit Town moves uneasily between opportunistic raiding and establishing permanent trade routes.

The Blind Spot

"And so will the eyes of God and mortal alike, be blinded by the Brilliance of Nysalor the Bright One!"

The End of the Ritual used by Telith to create the Blind Spot.

The Blind spot is a circular area 80 km diameter, centred on the Temple of Nysalor. Within the Blind Spot any chaos feature is concealed and even Broos and the heavily mutated appear as beautiful and charming humans. Also detect chaos spells do not work in the Blind Spot. However certain skills and spells employed by Arkati are unaffected. Calls for Divine intervention and divination from any other god other than Arkat or Nysalor is not heard since other gods cannot see into this area.

A sign of the area's enchantment is that everything seems so much brighter in it and pleasing to the eye and the sky is permanently cloudless.

The Breath Mountains

A bizarre mountain range that is more part of the weird land of Vustria than Karia. Hot steam issues from the ground and the region is subject to regular earthquakes. Explanations put forward for the strange conditions include everything from underground Kingdom of Water elementals, a trapped volcano god to a sleeping Dragon. It is said only the Dwarfs of Foundry know for sure, but they class the information as a "Trade Secret".

Bright Flower Forest

A remnant of Great Wood, the Bright Flower Forest is inhabited by a group of elves who are allied with the Nysalori of the City of Confusion. Many bright and terrible flowers flourish in the forest, giving its name, the like of which not found anywhere else in Glorantha.

The City of Confusion

This was the old provincial capital of Karia during the days of the Bright Empire. Originally called the City of Harmony, during the early part of Nysalor's reign. It soon gained its twisted name as the Riddler nature of its inhabitants became clear during the Gbaji War. Its ruins, now made whole and beautiful by the illusion of the Blind Spot, are home to a group of modern day Illuminates of Nysalor.

Cog River

A dwarf made canal to remove waste materials from the forges and mines of Dwarf Hold. Most present day Karians are unaware of its ancient purpose consider it a river not knowing the difference. It is named after the giant cogs that occasionally wash down the river from the temple.

Drybone River

Dammed at both ends by Nysalor in the Dawn Age to isolate the Karn inhabitants of River town, therefore it is nothing but a dry riverbed.

The spirit of the river is either dead or dormant. The Nysalori claim that their god drank its essence during the Dawn Age after capturing it between a rock fall from the mountains and a dam constructed by his worshipers. The Inhabitants of Rumble's Rock however maintain however that the river is trapped underneath the rock fall and one day the river's son, Rumble, will free him and destroy all the blasphemous Nysalori in the water's release.

Dwarf Hold

During the Dawn age, the Second Council invited a group of dwarfs from Nidda to establish an Enclave in Karia. The fortresses, forges and mines of Dwarf Hold were the result. The enclave was wiped out by Elf plant warfare during the Gbaji Wars. However the ruined facilities hold many Dwarf secrets that expeditions from Nidda have repeatedly tried to regain without success.

Eagle Peak Mountain

This mountain is sacred to the Orlanthi. Here Orlanth is said to have addressed the Ralian tribes during the Gods war.

Foundry

Established by the survivors of Dwarfhold, this small conclave of Dwarves has until recently existed independently of Nidda. In exchange for falling back in line with the Niddan led plan to fix the world machine, the dwarfs of Foundry are allowed to keep their individuality. There is a limited trade in iron and potions with the local humans, conducted through the 7th Dwarfen Embassy in Watcharkat.

The Garden of Zar

The tower stronghold of a dawn age warlord surrounded by a walled maze and protected by elemental pacts.

Kimber

Within the ancient sturdy walls of this old dwarfen fort, is a new human settlement. Kimber is the focus of an overspill of settlers from Lower Karia, who have crossed the River Tyewich in search of land and prosperity. Unfortunately although there is an abundance of the former, the barrenness of the land and roaming chaos worshipping tribes men makes the latter unlikely. Kimber is run by a powerful Issaries merchant, who is unaware of the dwarfen tunnel complex beneath the town.

Poison River

A chaos polluted river that has its source in the mountains in Glani's spring. It is the "blood" gushing out of the dormant Chaos Demi-god Glani, wounded and driven deep into the ground by Humath during the Godswar. A secret temple to Glani exists near the entrance to the underworld spring. When the river enters the Meridian River, its foul waters are purified by the balancing action of the God Meridian.

The Temple of Nysalor

This magnificent looking temple is clearly identifiable as a Temple of Nysalor. It is a faithful reconstruction of the Dawn Age complex that Arkat raised to the ground during the Gbaji Wars. It was built by a former Godlearner called Telith who was part of the expedition to Dorastor during the Second age

She discovered the ruins and recognising them for what they where, elected to stay and study them. By doing so she avoided the doom that her colleagues befell in Dorastor. She also more importantly found an entrance to the Heroplane and encountered the Shade of Nysalor a thousand years before the Red Goddess!! She became illuminated by it but embraced the dark side and became a Gbaji prophet, creating the "Blind Spot" using a power gained from Nysalor. All this goes unnoticed by the rest of the world. The other Godlearners believe Telith lost in

Dorastor with the rest of her group.

Her newfound powers allowed her to avoid the Godlearner's Doom, and quietly rebuild the Nysalor cult over the years. She now sits like a spider at the centre of a giant web of agents spread throughout Karia. Her aim is the resurrection of the Bright Empire, with her as the Empress. She currently hides behind the illusion of the Blind Spot and the benevolent lies that her red-robed Riddlers tell of a religion of peace and prosperity. It is only a matter of time before she makes her play for power in Ralios.

Wyrm's Dyke

An impressive raised mound fortification that completely seals the northern boarder of Karia. Built during the Bright Empire, to keep out rebellious and irrational dragonnewts in Ormsland.

Karia Mythology and History

By Newt Newport

Dear Lord Morago

As requested I have scoured the Lhynkor Mhy Library and sources that are personally available to me to produce a brief but pertinent history of Karia. I have chosen documents that shed light on the myths and legends that shape this land that you and your household now find yourselves in. I hope that the information within will enable you to effectively trade with the Delelan clansmen as effectively as your Naskorion peers.

Yours in Knowledge

Dolindor

Grey sage of St Lankor Mhy

The God Time

I begin my bundle of scrolls with a brief selection of myths from the country. From these you should better understand the religious practices of the area. - Dolindor

The Young Gods

In the Godtime, the Great Wood covered all of Ralios. In the Land of Bounty the Goddess Karia and her brothers Meridian and Glani came up from the earth to play. Wise Meridian tiring quickly lay down as a long watery form that divided the land. Excitable Glani talked with the elves who lived there, teaching them all about the beautiful plants that grew there. Karia danced with the Animal people, playing with their great spirits, teaching them the secrets of the earth.

Then Yelm, killed by a rebellious Storm god, fell into the underworld. Trolls unable to bear the fire of the dead sun, poured upwards into Great wood. A troll is ever hungry and all around them was a feast. The Animal people and Elves fought for survival against the hungry dark ones. Zorak Zoran stole fire and Great Wood burnt. Many of the animal people became extinct. Worse still some choose to be eaters rather than eaten, and joined the Tribe of Darkness.

Karia grieved for the loss of Great Wood. Meridian became withdrawn, his waters frozen without the warmth of the sun. Glani became angry. His thoughts and very blood became poisonous. Where once his footsteps caused flowers to grow, now his very touch poisoned the earth.

His poisonous anger attracted the attention of Rashkoran the Deceiver. Rashkoran whispered in Glani's ear saying that it was all Karia's fault. She had called the Trolls up from the Underworld because she had wanted to play with them. Enraged Glani went looking for Karia. He found her in a secret glade in Bright Flower Forest that she had preserved in the Land. He warmly greeted her and gave her an apple. This apple was shiny and juicy and innocent Karia could not resist it. Greedily she bit into it, chewed and swallowed. Too late did she realise that the apple was poisoned by Glani's anger. She fell as if dead. Glani satisfied with the fruit of his vengeance left the glade, and went high into the mountains to brood in solitude.

The elves of the Glade realised the Goddess was not truly dead, only sleeping. For the poison was fermented from anger. In time all anger and its effects disappears. So they carefully buried the Goddess in the glade, and although much diminished the Land continued to bear fruit. In honour of the sleeping Goddess they renamed the Land of Bounty, Karia.

Humakt Saves the World

Glani's poisoning of his sister Karia brought Chaos to the Land of Bounty. Rashkoran the Deceiver now reigned in the land where the Young Gods once played. Never acting directly he used the mindless hordes of chaos, and his deceptive followers to attack the surviving Elves and Animal folk from within as well as from without.

Into this mess rode Humakt, lord of the Storms, looking for his lost people. He found the hordes of Chaos, who he blew aside with his great winds. He found the Trolls who he blew back to their mountain lairs. He found the pitiful remains of the animal people and with his winds guided them.

Eventually he found his lost Storm Tribe, wandering lost and forgotten in Karia. They had forgotten their laws and traditions. The dead and the living mixed freely. Dead Husbands copulated with their living wives. No children where being born. Using the Sword Death Humakt separated the living from the dead. He gave the living homes above the earth, and the dead homes below in the underworld. In the halls of the dead he taught the skills of the living, so they could be reborn into the world. In the halls of the living he taught them the nature of death, so they could be prepared for it when their time was ready. Thus the dead where reincarnated and the living lived a righteous life. The circle of life was completed once more through the action of death.

Zorak Zoran's Graveyard (A troll myth)

It is the end of the world.

The Troll God, Zorak Zoran sat on his throne of the dead. Atop a pile of skulls above the grave of the dead Goddess of the Land, he surveys the slaughter. All around him were the bones of his dead enemies. His vengeance was total. It had burnt the land and destroyed the Elves. He had skinned the Great Animal Spirits and his children had eaten their children.

Into this dark desolation strode Humakt, once master of the power of death, who had carelessly lost it to Zorak Zoran.

"I know why you have come," growled Zorak Zoran.

"Yes I seek the Sword Death," returned Humakt.

"A sword no more it is" replied Zorak Zoran savouring the irony, raising his burning Club of Death and placing on the ground between them.

"I have killed everyone else," continued the Troll Lord of Mayhem.

"You have misused the power of Death, to serve your own lusts," Humakt replied grimly.

"I'm bored, let's fight for it," grined the Zorak Zoran

"Aye," replies the Lord of the Storms.

Thunder crashed, the earth shook, and the air was filled with the sound of the conflict

Two gods fight fought for the possession of Death.

It is the end of the world.

Orlanth Raises the Buhr

Humakt had once again abandoned his people and shown himself unfit to rule. He had lost the Sword Death, and had rode off on a wind to find it. Still the people where surrounded by enemies. Many of them were killed in hidden places in their hilly land as they hunted for food or overwhelmed in their camps by sheer weight of numbers of foe.

Humakt's brother Orlanth heard the cries of the lost over in Dragon Pass. He flew over the Rockwood Mountains from the sacred mountain Kero Fin. Landing in Karia he saw the leaderless people of the storm there. He landed on a small mountain called Eagle Peak, and addressed them.

"You need a strong hold." He said to the mass of people, "Somewhere were you can be safe from your enemies. A place where you can live, learn, have children and trade with your neighbours". The people nodded in agreement for it made sense. Then he flew down to the hills below.

Choosing a hill that rose above its peers, Orlanth made a start. With the dead bodies of the Great Wood Trees he started to build houses, granaries and houses of the Gods. Around all these places he raised a wooden stockade with watchtower and sturdy gates.

Then to help him he invited the other Gods of his Storm Tribe.

Issaries came and marked out the market place and showed men how to use it to trade with one another.

Lhynkor Mhy gave instruction on how to build the Lore hut. On the bark records held within wrote the first laws so men can live peacefully side-by-side.

Ralfnal the Fox ceased his frolicking in the wild, and taught men manners enough to talk to his children. This is how Foxes came to protect men's homes and their livestock, in return for shelter and food.

Then Ernalda revealed herself, as the hill itself was the goddess's belly, and all around was her fertile land. She taught man the arts of farming and husbandry.

Finally Orlanth created the Fryd saying that he shall have two armies one in the fields one on the Battlefield.

His work done he turned to the people, "This is your Buhr. From here you will rule all the lands that you can see from the top of your Watchtower. Its walls

will keep you safe from marauding enemies. Its Moot hall shall be the centre of your family life."

The Law of Half-rule.

Humakt eventually returned from his business with the Trolls. He looked up at the Buhr that Orlanth had raised on the first hill.

"What is this little brother, have you usurped me while I was away on my important business? Have you become a tyrant over my people and stolen my wife?" the God of the death bellowed, pointing his Sword at the trembling clansmen and then at Ernalda the Earth Wife.

"You left your people undefended and your wife alone. Is this the way that a Chieftain and a husband behaves?" replied Orlanth.

"I have duties in the Realm of Death," Humakt answered.

"Which means that you neglect the living!" was Orlanth's thunderous response.

The two brothers stood there speechless, each glaring at each other, storm clouds gathering over head. Then Lhynkor Mhy stepped forward, encouraged by Ernalda.

"Perhaps I have the answer," the bearded sage nervously. The two Storm Gods glared, but nodded for him to continue.

"A compromise. Humakt obviously has duties in the Land of the Dead, but must also teach men how to die. He is also the original Chief of the Tribe, who has proved his worth as a leader. However his duties will sometimes take him away from the Tribe. Also since he spends so much time in the halls of the dead, can it be said that he truly knows the art of living? For this Orlanth is a much better guide. So this is what I propose. Orlanth will be King of the Living, and Humakt will be King of the Dead. Each shall rule the tribe in turn. Orlanth's fresh wind will push forward the Tribe, taking it to new pastures and new ways. Humakt's death winds will see the return to established tradition and the culling of ways that have not worked during Orlanth's reign. During their reign of the tribe the Chief will be married to Ernalda. At the end of the reign they will forfeit their right to lie with her, and undergo a divorce."

To this the two brothers agreed, for they knew that Lhankor Mhy's wise solution was preferable to the war that would occur otherwise.

"Since this agreement further separates the Land of the Living from the Dead, I will make my home outside the walls of the Buhr," said Humakt. He gestured to a dark gully at the base of the Buhr and continued, "there shall I build my Hall of the Dead, and that field next to it shall be the fields of the dead where I shall plough their bones."

The breakdown of the Land of Logic

(a Malkoni Myth)

A first Malkon was one with everything. The undeniable Lord of Logic. He performed Five Actions on the world that he created.

First Action: Creation

Second Action: Manifestation.

Third Action: Multiplication.

Fourth Action: Duplication

Fifth Action: Destruction.

It was in the fifth action that the land of logic disintegrated. It had already began in the Fourth Action, when people stared to sway from the Laws of Malkon. Malkon became a human being to bring them back into righteous and is murdered. This action leads to a rebellion of the Gods; misappropriate beings who had taken the individual powers of the creator for themselves. They were led by Worlanth, the wind lord. As the Land of Logic disintegrated further Krjalki, entropic monsters, were unleashed.

In Greatwood, Worlanth ran rampant. The people of Malkon were in disarray; in some places the very land was broken and illogical. Rivers ran backward up hills, ancient plants grew back into seed and animals were born twisted and chaotic. In what had been the glade of contentment the Sorcerer who had lived there eternally contemplating the perfection of the Invisible God, had been poisoned by the illogic of an upstart godling that put pleasure over austerity. The glade collapsed and many Krjalki were brought into the world by this error. An error which was only corrected by the Shining Ones, ancient sorcerers made manifest locally, who embodied the principals of manifestation, law, order and truth. It was they that cleansed the glade and returned order to the land.

The Flaming Eye

Very obscure myth, almost forgotten except to those who witnessed it or lost ancient text.

Tower of Flame a giant god of fire, a sacred holder of the flame remained neutral after the sun fell from the sky.

"If I don't hold up the sky, who else will?" he reasoned in his steady way.

To avoid trouble with the Kygor Litor, Mother of Trolls who had devoured the sun, he hid his fire in his right eye under an eye patch made out of the night sky and continued to hold up the sky dome as the trolls ravenously rampaged on the surface world.

Thus he became known as "Pillar of the Sky Dome with Flaming Eye".

Around his feet a secret city called "Refuge" grew. Here all those who had no quarrel with the Trolls but wished not to be eaten by them came and settled. Guarded by the Flaming eye of the Pillar God and hidden by his night sky eye patch.

Eventually the tide of Chaos killed and brought down the Pillar of the Sky Dome, but his body hid Refuge, which disappeared from the world.

Protected by the dead god's body it survived into time, and during the chaos of the Gbaji War was a place of safety for those who didn't want to take sides. The entrance to the city is guarded by the Keeper of the Flaming Eye, the eye of the dead god, whose baneful gaze burns would be desecrators of Refuge.

Orlanth Loses His Shadow

Orlanth the Windlord is a bully and a braggart. Always fighting and boasting that he should be king of the gods, he caused all sorts of trouble.

He quarrelled with his brother Humakt over who should be chief of the storm tribe.

He drove the winged eagle people away with his boisterous winds, even though they had done no harm.

He demanded that Ernalda should provide him with many sons and tend the hearth, thus reducing women of the storm tribe to little more than slaves.

He belittled the achievements of Lhankor Mhy and Issaries, saying that only the achievements of warriors were worth boasting about.

Worst of all he planned the death of the Emperor of Light.

Crafty Orlanth turned to his shadow, "I want you to go down to Hell for me and get the Sword of Death".

Silence was his reply, since his shadow grown weary of the troublesome god had already slid off into the dark places of the world.

Orlanth enraged by this sent Ralfnal the Fox off hunt down his Shadow. However even after a long hunt the Shadow could not be found. After awhile Orlanth's shadow became a god in its own right, Black Tarl of Shadows.

Ralfnal Catches Black Tarl

Ralfnal the Fox was charged by the king of the gods with hunting down the miscreant Black Tarl. Although given the slip by the shadow lord many times Ralfnal was reluctant to give up the hunt. Panting and tired he stopped and considered the problem. How to catch someone who had no scent, did not leave any trail, blended in with the landscape and who had friends and allies everywhere? Then the cunning fox remembered that the shade was friends with Argan Argar the Troll trader. So off he ran to Argan Argar's Shadow and found the great fat troll slumbering under that great rock.

"I will trade you my fine shiny pelt if you tell me where I can find Black Tarl" said the cunning fox.

Impressed by this deal, which appeared to be such a simple thing for such a good trade, Argan Argar replied, "He has taken the form of a rat and is over at Orlanth's buhr eating his grain."

"Aha the last place that I would look," said the jubilant fox as he sprang up and dashed over to the hill which Orlanth's buhr was built upon.

"Oi! What about your part of the deal?" shouted the troll after him.

"Have the dust kicked up by my paws instead!" laughed the deceitful fox as he sped away.

There in one of the granaries on Orlanth's hill just as Argan Argar had said was Black Tarl as a rat munching Ernalda's bounty. The fox dashed up and caught the rat in his maw. There was a struggle and a tussle, but the prince of darkness was well and truly caught. Happy was the fox that brought the captive Black Tarl into Orlanth's Hall before the King of the Gods.

"So my shadow you have been brought home, how shall we bring you back into our society?" asked Orlanth.

"You might have caught me, but there are many other parts of me. Since I slipped away from you I have grown in the darkness," replied the aptly named Lord of Shadows.

Outside the buhr an army of shadows slid up the hill, snuffing out the light looking for their lost brother. Behind them was an angry Argan Argar who had bought his brother the death lord Zorak Zoran, looking for Ralfnal and demanding payment.

Faced with such an overwhelming army of darkness, Orlanth was forced to let Black Tarl go. However Ralfnal's hunter's joy was undiminished.

As the shade was escorted out the gates of Orlanth's Buhr he told him, "Remember rebellious one, I have caught you once I can catch you again!"

Banola Saves Orlanth from Chaos

As the darkness that had griped the world after the death of the Sun intensified, Orlanth the Windlord found himself alone in the wilderness. In the burnt

remains of Great Wood he faced a gibbering horde of chaos. He ran like the wind to escape it, but it kept up with him and chased him to the mountains. With the mass of teeth, claws, fur, skin and scale closing in, Orlanth suddenly felt a strong arm pull him up the mountain. It was Banola the Bear, who dragged him to her cave up the side of Bear Mountain. Orlanth sat there in the dark adjusting to the warm surroundings.

"This is my cave, you are welcome to stay here as long as you want," said the mother of bears.

"Is it safe up here?" said the concerned Windlord.

"Yes. The chaos things will not slide up here, as I know how to drive them off with tooth and claw," replied Banola. "What are you doing in the wilderness?" she continued.

"I am looking for the other Lightbringers, to put right what I made wrong," said Orlanth.

"Oh yes, the world has been a mess since your pride brought down the Sun. I am glad you have chosen to make it right. Too many of my children have died, eaten by Trolls or killed by Chaos "growled the bear mother.

The Windlord nervously looked out of the cave's entrance. It was clear to him that the chaos horde still swirled round the mountain. Hungry it waited for him. Seeing Orlanth's desire to be on his way Banola made him an offer.

"I will help you. If you bring the sun back from hell, I will come down from my mountain and fight chaos so you can continue on your quest" she said.

To this the Windlord gratefully agreed. Then together both of them left the cave to save the world. Orlanth to go to hell to resurrect the sun, and Banola to the remains of the Great Wood to banish Chaos with claw and tooth.

First Age- The Gbaji Wars

Information on the First age is notoriously rich in heresy and hearsay. The accounts of the Gbaji Wars, an event that has had lasting and deep effect on the region, are muddled and garbled. This is because of a ban on researching the matter, made by the Godlearner Empire. Out of fear it persists into even these modern times. Here I present two accounts of this momentous war. The first is from the oral tradition of the Delelarites. The second from a Salefestran military treatise written by Lord Eherst De Vay, called "The Military History of Ralios". The first piece is too flowery for my tastes, while De Vay lives up to his reputation as a factual but literary bore. –Dolindor

Nysalor and Lokamayadon

At the Dawn the bright and beautiful God **Nysalor** was appointed ruler of the lands of the survivors of the Gods War by Orlanth, lord of the Storms King of the Gods.

His Bright Empire stretched across central Glorantha and his wise and benevolent priesthood led the people, rebuilding the land after the evils of the Darkness.

Initially all were united under Nysalor's bright wisdom. His glorious brightness spread across the lands, from his seat of power in the miraculous realm of Dorastor, bringing peace to the land so long under darkness and strife.

Lokamayadon was the High Priest of Orlanth in those days, uniting a strife torn people under one strong leadership. Under his rulership the people prospered and all feuding stopped, as he benevolently ruled from his place on Nysalor's High council.

However when the rays of light reached the far off western lands of the Sorcerer a heretic named **Arkat** challenged Nysalor's divine rule.

Arkat stirred up the godless westerners in a Crusade of strife and hate, which burnt its way across the lands. It shattered the harmony of the races. Dwarf, dragonnewt and troll all left Nysalor's protection, returning to their self-serving ways.

In the Eastern Wilds, Nysalor's taming reign was destroyed by Darkness loving trolls and traitorous humans known as the Karns, powerful seven foot tall warriors with troll blood in their veins.

Many a wise priest of Nysalor was killed by a Karn assassin, burning with hate and envy. It is said that Lokamayadon, the wisest and most beautiful of Nysalor's pupils, his end this way. Ever since the tribes of Eastern Ralios have been torn with dissent and hatred. Periodically preyed upon by hungry trolls and attacked by the inheritors of Arkat's legacy to the west.

Nysalor brought a golden peace after the chaos and bloodletting. Arkat claimed and convinced people that Nysalor was evil and their enemy, turning their hearts against him, and finally destroying the Living God in the land of Dorastor.

Truly is Arkat thus named

GBAJI THE DECIEVER!

The Karian Campaign

By Lord Enhort de Vay

The Revolt of Kora Flamesword

Seeing the Deceiver for what it is, a small band of Warrior Priests led by their High Priestess Kora, start assinating high-ranking Riddlers. As the movement grows amougst the Karians, so does their fanatism. Leading to a series of martyr assassins, lighting themselves on fire and burning their targets to death in "Kora's Deadly embrace."

Highly likely Kora's Revolt was created by agitations paving the way for Arkat's Crusade prior to its arrival in Karia.

The Vale of Tears

The Trolls of Halikiv assemble an army and move prematurely against the Bright Empire. Through Gbaji's deception the whole troll army is caught in a shallow vale in broad daylight and massacred. Study of the Battle of The Vale of Tears is required reading for any General seeking to best the Trolls.

Arkat's Crusade reaches Karia

Much worn down by the battles against the Vampire Lords of Ralios, Arkat's Crusade was badly worn down by the time it reached Karia. Arkat ordered a halt to the Crusade, just after the crossing of the Dragon Point. The Crusade began to break up at this point.

The Battle of Four Hills

This was the major battle of the campaign. Arkat vs the Four Tyrants of Karia. A battle of magical as well as military action.

The Siege of Castle Kartolin.

This is where Arkat's Crusade finally ran out of steam. Unable to take Castle Kartolin and therefore free up Kartolin Pass, Arkat left the Crusade here.

Arkat's Curse on Karia

After defeating Nysalor in Dorastor, Arkat enacts a ritual; possibly Troll in origin, that rises his soldiers killed in the Karian Campaign as Undead to seal off the Land. Many critics of Arkat have said that this is just another example of him leaving things half done. However the Undead army ceaselessly roams across the land, not only suppressing any remaining chaos but also preventing looting of the ruins. It also closes the door on invasion through Karia of the Stygian Alliance in central Ralios. by the unpredictable Dragonnewt nation of Ormsland to the north.

The Second Age - The Age of Empires (c 500 ST - 1120 ST)

Karia is very rarely mentioned in this period. Writers of the period are preoccupied with Arkat's Dark Empire and its collapse at the hands of the Godlearners. Karia is only mentioned occasionally as a "Haunted Desolate place, the boarders of which even ravaging conquerors of the period stopped their advance". -Dolindor

The Third Age

This is my account of the period of time that is increasingly becoming known as " The Hero Wars". It has been hastily thrown together from a variety of sources, and is intended to form the notes for a more coherent body of work that I am planning in the future.- Dolindor

Early Third Age

1120-1559. With the fall of the Godlearners and the Kingdom of Seshnela, Ralios degenerates into petty lands, which are occasionally gobbled up in some alliance to fight the kingdoms to the West, or overwhelmed when those Kingdoms go through a period of strength. The Orlanthi barbarians of the East Wilds are left to war upon each other and occasionally against the Trolls of Halikiv or their neighbours in the City States. No leader strong enough to bind the peoples of Ralios together emerges, although many tries and fails.

No mention of Karia during this period. One as-

sumes that Arkat's Curse is still in place and successfully prevents any exploration or settlement of the region.

The Foretelling Of The Hero Wars

1599. All across Ralios wise men, mystics, priestesses and wizards of all sorts all have the same prophecy that both Arkat and Gbaji are to return. Although nobody agrees on what shape or forms these two will return, or whether it will be a physical manifestation or simply a spiritual return of their magic and powers on the mundane plane, everybody agrees something big is about to happen.

The Delelarite King orders Watcharkat Fort to be established to guard northern borders of Delela. Local Orthanthi still very distrustful of area due to haunted reputation. However since occasional Broo raiders from Dorastor use Karia as a route to their lands warrants the building of such an outpost. Also it is prophesised by Delelarite Mystics that their old nemesis Arkat will return out of Karia so they also build the fort to watch for his return.

In Naskorion Duke Rainard de la Faucille reorganises the Stygian Church and declares himself the legitimate heir to Arkat's Dark Empire.

In Halkiv something stirs the Trolls deep beneath the mountains and Trolls are seen in increasing numbers around the boarders of the lands of men.

Civil War in the Kingdom Of Delela

1600. The Kingdom of Delela plunged into civil war when a Troll war band in Cololaland murders the Voshefrei monarch, King Sosfan, and all his advisors. However the crafty Queen Elenela Greeneye, who is said to be able to see into the future, sends her son Aruzban into hiding in the mysterious land of Vustria before the king is murdered. The Vispen and the Vardel tribes fight each other for the throne, and the other ten tribes either ally with one or the other.

1602. The Vispen and the Vardel attempt to unite by marrying the Vardel chief's son to the Vispen chief's daughter, at a gathering of the two tribes. However after much drinking fighting breaks out. Many elders of each tribe killed, including the Vispen Chief. Tribal war restarts with renewed vigour. Some observers say that this incident was actually engineered by Elenela Greeneye. Whether this is true, this is the reason behind the Vardel/Vispen blood feud that carries on to this day.

1603. Aruzban returns to Delela with supernatural allies and his famous Ironlimbs gained in Vustria. In preparation for his coming Elenela has manoeuvred most of the tribes into the position of accepting him as King. The Vardel and Vispen tribes although weakened by losing most of their elders at the Tribal meet of 1602 are still a thorn in the new King's. They achieve this by erratic obeying of his commands and non-payment of tithes.

1604. King Aruzban is now firmly in control of the Kingdom of Delela. He introduces new taxes and introduces a monetary system based around a silver coin, known as"silver", to pay for his wars against the raiding Trolls in Cololaland, which is settled by his people. He also implements a system of tribal Forts for the defence of his new realm and so that he can keep a closer eye on the Tribes.

Karia Opened to Settlers

1605. King Aruzban Ironarm of Delela gives the declaration that Arkat's Curse on Karia is undone after a successful quest, led by him. He promptly exiles the troublesome Vispen and Vardel tribes to this new territory that he calls "New Delela". Watcharkat is now a small city due the increase in the garrison and the migration of the exiled Vardel and Vispen Tribes.

1607. Religious exiles from the Duchy of Naskorion , fleeing Troll persecution in their homeland, arrive in the city. They start building a Church to St Orlando, the Saint who embodies the qualities of Orlanth in the Stgyian Church. .

1610-1612. Building of a Great Temple to Orlanth in Watcharkat. This is because of the increase in popularity of the Church of St Orlando and the Nanskorion population. This is seen as a threat to Delelarite sovereignty, an issue that still troubles the area to this day.

The Hero Wars Begin

1617. The Duke of Naskorion invades Southern Delela while Aruzban Ironarm is preoccupied fighting Trolls in Cololaland. The Duke quickly quashes all resistance in the area, and has his armies hold the newly conquered lands.

1620. NOW! The Duke of Nanskorion prepares for more conquest, and the Delelarite King prepares to meet him head on. The Trolls continue to terrorise the inhabitants of Cololaland. Meanwhile the settlers of Karia increasingly left to their own devices by their parent homelands, must decide who they should ally themselves with or whether they should become independent

The Tale Theft

by David Dunham

Heroquesting is one of the central aspects of the HeroQuest game, but it's one of the most difficult to run, unless your players are Heortling Orlanth worshippers, because there are so few myths for anyone else.

But actual Gloranthans would know a lot more myths, so I came up with an interactive process (i.e. a game) to create myths while running the heroquest.

Seen merely as a sequence of stations, a myth can be viewed as a collection of stock motifs. There are helpers, obstacles, and challenges, leading up to the hero obtaining the prize. If you're reenacting the myth as a heroquest, you probably know what the intended prize is. Everything else — the stock motifs —should be written on index cards, in general or vague form. Nearby are the cards I used for a myth of the Umathelan storm barbarians, reflecting their culture, location, and what little I'd already created of their mythology. Possible interpretations are in parentheses.

I also had three cards: "The Tale Theft", "Sampo is stolen!", and "tore the Sampo from a book." I laid out the first two, and gave the situation to the players:

> Mysterious strangers have interfered in your clan rituals, and have taken one of your myths. In fact, you no longer know what the sampo is.
>
> Oshia toDaires (currently Sister Witch) suggests a heroquest. The clan is willing to do this but most think that a raid is in order, as soon as the omens are more clear (the beans are not revealing a pattern).
>
> You know that Jamerë is the hero originally responsible for bringing the sampo to your clan, so Oshia suggests reenacting his myths. Only fragments remain, and you're not sure if some of them are really Jamerë, his god, or his helpers (or their gods). Oshia thinks you will be able to learn more about Jamerë as you go.

The basic idea is that the cards will define the story, but the characters still have to reenact it. To begin play, give each player a number of cards. With seven players, I gave each three cards. With four, each had four. Players are free to look at their cards. You may want to let your players create their own cards, or give one card to another player (that player should then reciprocate).

baked an apple pie
salmon
herded the Blue Man's sheep
a basket of snake eggs
through the Forest of Despair (you need to remain cheerful)
a blinding snowstorm (probably inhabited by hollri, dehori, shivergusts, etc.)
mostali machinery
Rhododendron Boy (an aldryami)
millions of stinging red ants
the King of Shovel-Tuskers (it's caught in a pit trap, and you're always hungry)
the Boiling Spring (perhaps part of Mondoro's treacherous landscape)
a mammoth rider (probably a Fonritan mahout asks for your aid; if you're generous, he will gift you with great strength)
a landslide
hunted the Shadowless Bear
transformed into an <animal> (a power of Systella the Lightbringer)
a group of manatees (tamed by the now-extinct lascerdans; feed them like Rondella and you're generous)
hidden in a gourd
by canoe (a race or chase scene)
Snail Woman (an ogre)
over the snow-capped mountains
energy fools the magician
sniffed out
a game of selquesh (the lacrosse-like field game)
a game of sichteque (the board game)
a baby (possibly a succubus — how can you resist such cuteness?)
an enormous boar
a plague of insects (probably timinits)
broke a taboo (perhaps hospitality, after being given shelter by the storm)
broke the stone (perhaps a standing stone circle)
the Three Swords (a court of Phausia decisors test your Fair, Honorable, Truthful, Vengeful)
traded for magic beans
a leather table laid with a feast (this is the famous table from "Stenya and Hooafting," plundered from Gundgund)
an old woman making baskets (prove your kinship)
sorted the millet (using wind magic)
Cold Wind (an enemy god)
the Iron Witch (gives a task)
the Tree Lady's grove (see "Lebchi and the Tree Lady)
a dire wolf (threatens an old ground sloth; if you are Merciful, it will share the meat, feed its pups, and send a pup with you)
a titanothere It asks what you are doing. If you are truthful (like Ropotes), he will offer Ancestors, Knowing, or Spirits. If you are secretive (like Systella) you can choose between Magic, Transformation, or Secret Path rituals.)
spin flax into gold (flax is Rondella's plant)
found the path
tricked the guardian
a fog thick enough to spread on bread (you're lost in it)

At each heroquest station, decide what type of station it is. For example, usually you gain a helper or gift towards the beginning of the story. The next station would be a challenge or physical obstacle, and so on. Each player presents a card relevant to that station, e.g. a helper, gift, obstacle, challenge, etc. (You can play them face down or face up — the former lets you recycle them if you have a small number of cards, the latter allows for discussion.) I chose a card either based on player acclaim, whatever amused me the most, or what seemed to fit best. (You might want to choose more than one card if they go together well.) I then described a situation that led up to a relevant challenge. This is then played out like any heroquest station. The card would then be placed in line, assembling a story.

(Unused cards go to a discard pile.) A player whose card was chosen gets a +3 bonus at this station. The idea is to encourage playing relevant cards.

Players may want to play a card in their hand as the resolution to a station. Depending on dramatic needs this could either allow passing to the next station, or give a +20 bonus. I recommend either spending a hero point, or expending the card — leaving them with one less to choose from.

After a station is resolved, every player gets a new card. (Shuffle and reuse the discard pile if necessary.)

The story may seem a bit random as you go, but by the time you get to the end you can usually come up with an explanation for everything.

Don't forget that heroes of a myth are sometimes expected to fail. Lack of a helper is usually not critical, and if an obstacle isn't passed, call for another obstacle.

The only pre-determined story was that the Sampo had been trapped in a book, and was in the process of being copied. Ideally our heroes would interrupt this before its completion. I then placed the last card — and reversed the first, on which was written "The Theft Tale," revealing the true sense of the myth.

Although I used the framing device of a stolen myth, this technique is really intended for the players to discover the myth their characters already know. True experimental heroquesting would be a lot riskier!

I ran the game with these cards twice, and both times the conclusion was nearly identical: trickery followed by seduction. In the writeups, I have made the protagonist Rabilis, a trickster-like goddess of the Umathelans. We only knew this after the fact, however.

Players might want to use this myth in the future, to steal some item. They wouldn't need to all be worshippers of Rabilis — a number of incidents suggest that she is accompanied by companions who can fight or hunt effectively.

In "The Theft Tale" I had a vague idea of how things would end up (the idea of the City of Labyrinths and the GM card "tore the Sampo from a book"), but I've also used this technique when all we knew was the name of a quest. A good set of mythic motifs and player creativity is all you need!

Version One: Tentacles

Rabilis set out in search of the Sampo. It was not long before she met Rhododendron Boy, who was aloof after the ways of his kind. However, she befriended him, and she gifted him with a seed.

She continued towards the mountains, avoiding loose rocks and managing to spot a landslide and leap to safety before she was buried.

As she continued, she heard a trumpeting sound. Investigating, she found the King of the Shovel Tuskers at the bottom of a pit trap. She managed to aid his escape, and in gratitude he told her that he remembered hearing that the Sampo was now in the Labyrinthine City. He taught her a way to avoid losing her way among the twisted streets, from which many men could not find their way out.

Further down the path, she came across a village, and was challenged to a game of selquesh. Although the villagers caused the field to shift underfoot, Rabilis still won the game, and was given good hospitality. She befriended the Dark Lady, who warned her about the city, where the Writers recorded everything and kept it locked in their tower.

As Rabilis was leaving, the Dark Lady presented her with a baby, which she had to carry and care for on her journey. Nonetheless, she would not set aside this burden.

The road led to a town, where the chief offered a fine feast produced by a magical leather table. However, his people were slavers. Although Rabilis escaped slavery, they stole the seed she'd been given, which saddened her.

Rabilis finally came to the Labyrinthine City, set on a great river. She was attacked by guards using Mostali machinery, which hurled arrows great distances, and driven back, but was not harmed.

She watched as the guards questioned people entering the city. Everyone had to state their owner and their destination. Approaching by another gate, Rabilis told them she was bound for the Tower of Writers, and spun a complex chain of ownership that led back to herself. The guards were confused, and Rabilis slipped inside.

She found her way to the Tower of Writers, and climbed to the top. There she found a book chained to a table. It was open to an illustration portraying the Sampo! Also chained to the table was another book, and a copyist who was about to copy the Sampo. Although he was dedicated to his task and difficult to distract, Rabilis gave him a kiss that took his breath away. At the same time, she reached over his shoulder and tore the Sampo out of the book. She fled the Labyrinthine City, using the Shoveltusker King's memory trick, and returned home with the Sampo.

Version Two: Seattle

Rabilis set out in search of the Sampo. She soon met a woman wearing many iron rings all over—covered in the metal of death, to master death. "Hello, thief," said the Iron Witch.

"Why do you greet me so?" asked Rabilis.

"Because I know that you seek the Sampo."

"Can you tell me where it is?"

"Why should I?" asked the Witch. They bargained, and she agreed to a contest of marksmanship for the location of the Sampo. She launched one of her razor-sharp rings at a bird in flight. Her aim

was fair, but Rabilis was swifter: Her arrow passed through the ring and struck the bird first. The Iron Witch told Rabilis that the Sampo was in the City of Labyrinths, and showed her the path.

The path plunged into a deep forest of the Aldryami. Rabilis knew this was a forbidden place, but paid this no mind. Eventually she encountered four dryads playing, and persuaded them to take her to the Tree Lady's grove.

"You have come to a forbidden grove," said the Lady, "Why should I let you leave alive?"

"I have come to pay my respects to the Lady, and beg her blessing," said Rabilis. She persuaded the Tree Lady to grant her blessing, and was sent off with a magic seed.

As she proceeded through the woods, Rabilis encountered a fearsome dire wolf, who wished to eat her. She offered to hunt for it instead. Rabilis brought down a great titanothere, and the wolf was well pleased with the meal it made. The wolf warned Rabilis that the best way into the City of Labyrinths would not be the obvious one.

Rabilis soon had reason to regret her generosity to the wolf, as the mate of the slain titanothere found her and pursued her in fury. But Rabilis's bow was swift and she drove off the beast with a shower of arrows.

At the edge of the forest she met a poor woman amid fields of flax. She offered what hospitality she could. Rabilis took pity on her, and showed her how to spin the flax into golden (if somewhat ratty) cloth. In gratitude she told her that the Sampo was in the Tower of Writers.

Soon after leaving the poor woman's house Rabilis found herself enveloped in a fog thick enough to spread on bread. She summoned a mighty wind and blew a clear path through, finally sighting the City of Labyrinths by the sea.

The main gate was well guarded, but Rabilis disguised herself as a returning noblewoman and tricked the guardians into letting her inside.

In the city Rabilis was immediately lost in the twisted streets, but through gifts and a silver tongue persuaded passersby to direct her to the Tower of Writers.

The Tower of Writers was full of workmen peeling bark, stretching hides, preparing ink, and marking hides and bark with runes. At the top of the tower, Rabilis saw one copying a drawing from one stack of bark to another—a drawing of the Sampo! Rabilis arrayed herself in her finery to distract the workman from his task, then called a great wind that blew off the roof and scattered marked bark everywhere. As the workman was furiously trying to gather the bark, Rabilis snatched the drawing of the Sampo, raced out of the tower, and returned home.

Location Mythlets

by Jane Williams

How to take the two-line myths associated with many of the locations in the Dragon Pass gazeteer and turn them into heroquests and scenarios tailored to your campaign and your PCs.

It's such a handy source of inspiration for the next plot, isn't it? A nearby location with a story or myth attached, nicely vague so you have room to adapt it to your campaign. Only... How, exactly?

You have a minimal myth. You need to make up the rest - three stations at least, enough to give all the players something to do. And you're staring at an almost-blank piece of paper with an equally blank mind, aren't you?

To start with, let me show you that your piece of paper isn't as blank as it looks.

What do you want?

The first place to start is with your players and their characters. What cults have you got? What interesting abilities (or inabilities)? Any fun backstory due for an airing? Any "named items" that haven't yet been defined? Which of all these do you want to showcase this time? What sort of conflict are you after? Combat, diplomacy, magic, ethics?

Really, this stage is no different from any other session you've designed for your players. Use all your usual tricks at this point.

Make a few notes, give yourself some ideas to choose from, then you may recognise matches in some of the ideas I'm going to throw at you next. Because writing plot is all about pattern-recognition. The human mind is very good at recognising patterns, even patterns that aren't there, if you give it some data to work on. That's why we like doing jigsaws, building up links between pieces until we can get from one side of the picture to the other, and that's what we're doing here.

What have you got?

Let's move over to the other side of that blank piece of paper and take a look at the mythlet. It probably doesn't fit too well at the moment, but that's a good thing. A jigsaw two pieces across would be pretty boring. Let's fill in some more pieces around it.

What's the norm?

The point about a local mythlet is that every now and then, it has to be reenacted. Maybe to keep getting a blessing, to stop something bad happening, or just to maintain the Way Things Are. Being the owners of a myth can be important to a clan's identity, and reenacting it will strengthen the wyter even if there are no other obvious benefits.

What do we mean by "every now and then"? Once a year, on a specified day? (Look at the Gloranthan calendar - days, weeks, and seasons all have significance) Every seven years? Every time we have a new chief? Every time a white calf is born? Every time strangers come to the tula?

Whose responsibility is this? Is it specific to one bloodline? One clan? Maybe the site is so important that it's a tribal matter, possibly even kingdom. The higher we go, the harder the quest is likely to be, and ther wider the net can be spread to get exactly the right candidate for a role. A small clan may have to make do with a Destor PC in the Humakt slot (he's got a sword!), a tribal king will have the contacts to seek out that PC with the really obscure subcult.

Who "usually" does the ritual, if it isn't the PCs? Are the usual participants good at it, or not?

What is the underlying myth? Some parts are compulsory: the lead hero is probably named, the challenge they face is probably described. The rest, you're going to make up, and make up to fit your PCs. We'll deal with this later, but for now, think about that lead hero. What sort of challenges do they usually face? What abilities do they usually use to deal with them? What sort of problems are they unable to deal with, and need help with? (So after Humakt (and friends) healed the lion's paw, he (and friends) chose the correct path, persuaded half the enemy to be their allies, and then went on to the Big Fight....) Do they have a standard side-kick or foil? Of course, if this isn't a major deity, just a local hero, then this becomes more difficult to find out (and easier to make up!). Some of those "local heroes" appear in many places in "Dragon Pass", though, so check them out in the index. Also, look at cases where a "local hero" is doing a lower-level version of a more well-known myth.

Having looked at that: who would normally take those parts? You just listed some NPCs, and can start to work out how they fit into the local social structure.

What effects are there on life in the mundane? Is this the time for everyone else around to have a party? Possibly the entire clan does a purely mundane and simplified reenactment, too: a procession around a fixed route, perhaps. Lots of possibilities there, that's your standard "travelogue" plot.

Maybe the ritual itself is so easy it's trivial, the

rewards are great, and there's a competition every year to see who gets the honour? Remember the Garhound Contest? Maybe, while this is normally true, every seven years the quest is much harder and the rewards are less. The locals know this, the PCs don't. So when they arrive to compete, the locals keep letting them win....

What's different from the norm?

That last idea can be expanded. So far we've looked at what's normal. Maybe something's different this time? That would help, because you probably don't want the PCs taking part to be or to become the norm.

The simplest and most obvious difference to introduce is that the Lunar occupiers don't want the ritual to suceed. So just getting the "normal" participants to the ritual, through it, and out again, may be a problem in itself, and one to be solved at the mundane level. Can your PCs find out about a sabotage attempt, and foil it?

Why might the PC get to take part this time? Maybe the Local Hero needs the best support he can get? Maybe the obvious usual hero is unavailable? Or needs a deputy? Maybe while he's a good match, he lacks some skills they can help with? The clan's best warrior is off to kill Aroka - but she's a Vingan, she can't seduce the Dark Woman. Delegate to PCs.

Possibly the opposition, mundane or magical, have changed tactics, assuming that they're acting of their own volition (cliffs and similar opponents don't often change tactics). Do our side know about that, or will it come as a surprise partway through the quest? If they know about it, or even suspect, they can take precautions (like calling for help from the PCs). If not, someone's going to have to improvise a response, part-way through a heroquest. Wouldn't it be nice if one of the PCs coincidentally had the right skills?

Maybe the opposition level is higher than usual - the usual Darkness representative is a trollkin, but someone's kindly supplied a demon from the Black Horse Troop instead.

Some local experimental soul has a Cunning Plan for doing the quest a better way, or getting extra results out of it - the traditionalists won't like that, probably only people who think like PCs will support them. I've even run one once where unknown to everyone else, the controlling priest was using the quest as a means of disposing of the lead character, while also stealing most of their magic....

Simply having the PCs present will be a change from the norm, we hope. How will the locals react to them? Are they strangers here to help in their time of need? Foreigners who we don't really trust? A lot will depend on who called them here, and how this "sponsor" is regarded. Maybe this is a homecoming, the wild adventurers called home to help. That gives you a whole range of responses, from the parent who still treats them as a kid to the younger sibling who hero-worships them, not to mention the people who think they're irresponsible teenagers with overgrown egos. Admiration, resentment, jealousy...? All the usual things when a group arrive in a new location and upset the existing social order simply by existing. If you can make any of this match the myth, the extra resonance will be great!

Fitting it together

Now, we have a lot of bits of jigsaw over on the Myth side of the table, and the PC bits over on their side. Time to choose which ones to use, and fit them together. I'll assume for now that you do want the PCs to go heroquesting – any of the other options fall into "standard scenario" territory.

What's compulsory? What do you know about the lead hero, the opposition, and the skills needed? You usually get told that much. If there are parts the PCs can't do, put an NPC in the slot and move on to the supporters. What assistants or sidekicks does the hero usually have in most known myths about them? Equipment, even - remember the Arming of Orlanth?

The match between PC and role does not have to be perfect. It can depend on abilities they didn't know they had. If the way of defeating the enemy is to beat him at a game of Triple-Gambit Fox & Geese using the clan's sacred gaming pieces, it's possible that one of the PCs may find an unexpected and highly specialist skill on their character sheet. At 13, but that's still better than 6 or 0. Maybe they pull out that relationship to Old Uncle Hrothgar - isn't it handy that the old man taught you to play the game?

Maybe that Named Item that you hadn't previously identified is the long-lost Sacred Widget that gives +20 to the chances of the quest succeeding? Beware, you may end up either giving up the item, or coming back here every year!

There can be times when a perfect match to the role is the last thing you want! Suppose a myth calls for Trickster to take part. No-one in their right mind wants a real genuine devotee of Eurmal in their ritual! So instead, you find someone who has the one ability Trickster is supposed to display here. Did anyone take "pull silly faces" or "burp tunes" as an ability?

What gets very interesting about this is that it isn't just the GM and players meta-gaming, picking characters and plot - so are the PCs and NPCs! Some of their decisions may be better than others.

"Let's not do the Baths of Nelat, we'll all die"

"I'm not having any Humakti in this, I don't trust them"

"Yes, I know he's useless, but he's my cousin"

That helps you fill in some of the prejudices of the local decision-makers, fleshing out their character sheets.

Examples

Situations vary so much that it's hard to find something that will suit everyone, but here's a few possibilities to look at. First a couple of existing scenarios set around this sort of theme, then a look at how we can build our own.

The Garhound Contest

Yes, I know, that isn't from the Dragon Pass gazeteer – but it is a scenario built up around a local ritual, and a very good one, too.

Old Hare's Riddle

Another old classic scenario, this time from Tales of the Reaching Moon 7, by Jon Quaife. Here, what happens every year is that the Hare spirit visits Greydog village, and asks riddles – different riddles, but always the same answers. The ritual reaffirms the relationship between Hare spirit and village. But this time, the third answer is not the same, and someone will have to heroquest to find out the new answer, reenacting the first meeting between the clan founder and the Hare. The heroquest path is detailed here, and is generic enough that almost any group could follow it – some combat, some persuasion, some trickery. The examples given of the clan squabbles over who's to blame for what are great fun, and could provide several sessions of roleplaying in themselves if you felt that way inclined.

Broken Neck Hills

P16 of Dragon Pass. This apparently is where the young Orlanth and Yinkin used to race each other from their mother's hearth to play in the valley below, risking broken necks. Now there is an annual race between "holy men of Orlanth and Yinkin", and some of the participants do break their necks.

How are we going to fit the PCs into this? Well, are any of them Orlanthi? That was easy enogh, wasn't it? You can probably work out how to give any Yinkini something to do, as well. And Kero Fin starts the race, warning them of the dangers – there's a spot for Earth worshippers to take part, though unless you have an actual worshipper of Kero Fin in the group, they'll just be supporting the main priestess.

But that's a bit simple, and probably leaves out half the party. How can we complicate it? Well, we have here a well-known ritual that's liable to leave "holy men of Orlanth" with broken necks. I wonder how the Lunars will feel about this? You know, I don't think they've banned this ritual at all... There are similar annual races in England, often chasing cheeses down hillsides, for less well-defined reasons. One recently turned out to be far more dangerous than usual, because heavy rain had made the hillside extremely slippery. Weather control sounds like a nice magical means of sabotage to me – and for once, we have Lunars trying to make Sartar wetter, against Orlanthi wishes! Hand the rest of the PCs a clue about the Lunar ritual, and any other sabotage that may be going on.

Of course, it isn't only Lunars who want to quietly remove prominent Orlanthi. Clans have been known to feud with other clans... do the PCs have a rival, or an enemy, who might be taking part? This would be a great opportunity to get in there and trip them up, wouldn't it? Maybe one of their allies is in there: and so is someone else, who wants to get rid of the ally? The Earth priestesses can do damage, too: withholding blessings at the start, making the earth beneath their feet unfriendly. Oh, yes, lots of opportunities for foul play, for the PCs to take part in, or try to stop.

Crow Top

Not an annual ritual, this time, and based on more recent history. Bagdalch, the Spirit Crow, is imprisoned here. Making "certain offerings" frees him, and, accompanied by hordes of crows, he falls upon whatever victim the worshipper names. When Derrreva the Clever did this in the Resettlement, it started the Corvid Wars.

This is one of those cases where you're going to want to look things up in the index to find out just what was going on here. Read the "Killard Vale" section, to start with. The Corvid Wars were complex, the reason Derreva had enemies isn't immediately obvious, and the aftereffects were long-lasting. I won't fill in all my deductions here, just point out that there's a lot to look at, and that it probaly links in with modern Kheldon inter-clan politics. But as a general concept, anyone desparate enough can try to find out what the offerings should be, and send Bagdalch against their enemies. You won't be popular, but you can do it. What those offerings are, and how you go about finding out, is entirely up to you to decide. Asking Derreva would seem like a good move: she's buried at Wethersfield. Maybe some Sage or other will know more. When you know what sacrifices were used, how are you going to get them? (How did Derreva get them?) What talents do your party have? Use them. Or, if this sort of thing isn't their scene, invent an NPC who's trying to summon the Crow against her enemies, and have them realise what a bad idea that would be, and try to

stop her. Did I mention Kheldon inter-clan politics? Kallyr's ancestors were on the Raven side of the Corvid wars....

Last Cast

Here the cult requirements are a bit more specific. Vinga and Urox fight chaos together, the opposition is known as the "friends-now-foes", and Vinga drives them away with a Last Cast – presumably of a javelin. If you have a Vingan or a Uroxi in your party, you can see how this is going to work out. Alternatively, take a look at the setting: this is a Vingan refuge for exiles that the Lunars have not yet found. Any turncoat Sartarites who wanted to betray the location to the Lunars would count as friends-not-foes. Possibly the PC action here is to find out that the betrayal is going to be attempted, and to warn the defenders that the ritual will be needed.

Larnste's Table

Almost too many options here! Larnste raised it when he needed a place to rest his staff and gloves while he ate. These days, it seems that the Orlanthi hold "many rites" atop it, and the Cinsina clans hold annual celebrations and races here. "Lant Ulfar's head watches from the edge". Yes, this is another where you need to look up a few more entries to find out what was going on. Fortunately here the main story is in a box on the same page: Lant Unfar the giant is trying to trap Larnste, god of Motion, and Destor rescues him.

You could find a Destor PC, of course, and a giant to hit. You could also decide that those races are to do with the God of Motion. Larnste doesn't have many direct worshippers, so my guess would be that anyone with a connection to the Motion Rune can take part. Well, that's most of the party, then.... now go and look at my previous comments about racing downa steep hill. What Lant Ulfar was trying to do was to remove Larnste's powers of motion by means of drumming. Someone who didn't like Orlanthi might want to try that again, and succeed this time. Enter a Lunar with a drum...

The Cold Caves

I'd originally said that you should start by looking at your PCs, and so far we've been starting at the other end. Let's look at some PCs, and then find a location myth to suit them. I don't think many people have the group of a morocanth, a duck, and an Agimori, not any more, but you do get the Humakti troll (adopted), the Yinkini, the skald, the Kolating and the Desemborthi thief.[1] So we take a quick look through sites everywhere to find something to suit. There seem to be quite a lot dedicated to Yinkin.

We already know about Catnip Hill, where the Bad Dog stole Yinkin's heat, but what's rather more use are the Cold Caves nearby, where Orlanth followed those Bad Dogs into the Underworld, and stole the heat back again. Orlanth in Thief mode is also known as Desemborth, so that's one part sorted. He found his way into the Underworld by persuading the troll who guarded the entrance to Wonderhome to let him in, then put the Bad Dogs to sleep by sending a sweet lullaby on the winds. Perfect! Fits our PCs in every possible way. We don't know how often this is done, but with a range of characters like that required, it can't be often, or if it is, it's done badly most times, with not much of a "fit" between the part in the myth and the NPC taking it. The PCs will be very welcome. Normally it probably isn't very important, but obtaining heat is going to be a very useful trick when the Fimbulwinter comes along. That's a way in the future for this particular party, but I can see them being called back to help, when it happens.

There's only one slight catch: those of you who are alert are reading Dragon Pass trying to find the Cold Caves, aren't you? Stop looking. I made them up. I borrowed a bit of myth from here, a bit from there (the lullaby on the breeze is in the Sambari Pass, their home tribe), and invented the lot, in the spirit of the myths in the book, but no more. *And there is nothing whatsoever stopping you from doing the same thing.* Dragon Pass mythlets give inspiration, no more. All you get is a two-line mythlet: and there's nothing to stop you from inventing those two lines, as well as all the rest.

1 This is a genuine PC party, in a game run by a friend.

Lookout Hill

By Jane Williams

"..at the foot of the Quivini Mountains (D4). A high sacred hill of Killard Vale. Deloradella wove the Blanket of Gloom from the foulthorn bushes that grew on the hill, so the Thunder Brothers burned them off." - Dragon Pass, p 38

They waited, pausing at the foot of the hill, making sure that not only were their weapons ready, but the masks and other symbols of the gods they represented were in place. This was the one area where Tarki still had doubts about her own competence for the position she had held, and held successfully, for the last eight years, since the last leader of the Kheldon warband had been killed in battle. Rituals. Fights where the idea where was not so much to win as to repeat what had happened in the Godtime. Where you chose your team not for being good in a fight, but for how well they matched the people - beings, rather - who had participated originally.

At least in this case the idea was to win, and it was a simple enough job. Go to Lookout Hill. Find it mysteriously dark. Burn down bushes. Fight trolls. Darkness vanishes. And the team was "the Thunder Brothers", which meant they were all warriors. Well... She glanced back at her King, who would be leading the ritual as Orlanth. Ferenan *had* been a good warrior. Still was, in many ways, but now, in his late fifties, he was well past his prime. His Storms would do a good job of protecting him, but she still worried about him. Still, he understood rituals, as a king should. He'd known that this one would work better if they had representatives of as many of the Thunder Brothers as possible, and had the connections to get them: with the Lunars trying to forbid worship of any of Orlanth's faces, that was getting harder and harder. Some of those strangers were with them now, masks in place, gathered around him. No point in expecting them to act as one with the usual warband, they stayed close to the man to whom they owed their loyalty: today.

One of his choices, though - she still wondered, even after hearing his explanation. Asking his niece to come home to represent Vanganth. Ferenan didn't usually over-favour his kin at the expense of the tribe, but he had a soft spot for this girl - just look at the trouble it had caused all those years ago when she'd been stupid enough to be taken as a tax hostage. Tarki vaguely remembered her from before that as a stubborn, annoying teenager, throwing tantrums if she wasn't allowed to fight. Since then - well, the arrangement she had come to with her uncle was that if she wanted to fight the Lunars, she could do so elsewhere, and as a result she had barely been back on the tribal lands since. From the stories Tarki had heard, she was profoundly glad of it: the girl seemed to have a definite talent for causing trouble. Whether she had any others was the question, and one that she'd been sufficiently worried about to ask Ferenan directly. She'd expected a sharp retort, but instead he had smiled, almost approvingly. "That," he said gently, "is the question that at the end of today, I will be asking you."

Reassuring in some ways, worrying in others. "This is a test, then? You're considering her for the warband?"

"Hardly. I doubt if she would want that, and the decision would in any case be yours, not mine. But yes, I will be interested in your opinion of her, and I hope that today will give you the opportunity to form one."

Vanganthi were good for two things in Tarki's opinion - scouting, and showing off. Well, and countering enemy flyers, but the trolls had never had flyers any other year, and if there was one good thing about these ritual fights, it was predictability. She already knew what to expect, but there was no harm in getting an extra scouting report, and today it didn't even matter if the girl got careless and let herself be seen: the trolls knew they were coming. Even so, there was a limit to how long Tarki was prepared to wait. Where was she?

Ferenan touched her arm. "Coming in, from the sun."

The one direction trolls wouldn't be looking. And coming in fast, too, minimising the time spent in the open air. That could be competent professionalism, or it could just be the desire for a dramatic entrance. It was certainly that - concentrating, Tarki could see the great air-haggar she was riding, wings folded back in a dive, then spreading at the last moment to slow. Despite herself, Tarki ducked to avoid the impact, unlike Ferenan, who had presumably seen this before. The huge bird faded from sight inches before the wings would have struck them, and it was just Kallyr standing there. She had matured since Tarki had last seen her: no longer a gangly teenager but an attractive young woman, with the poise and confidence that accepted attention rather than seeking it. She *was* drawing attention, though, not only from the overly-dramatic entrance, but from the tightly-laced leathers. Yes, Tarki could see that heavier armour was a bad idea for a flyer, but did she have to be so… provocative?

"Everything as expected?"

She was frowning slightly. "No, not quite. There's a patch of darkness where it should be, though bigger than you described, and of course I can't see through it to tell what's in there without them knowing I'm doing it. That must be where the command group is. But there's a couple of dozen trolls behind it, not just in it, and some wearing black and red. A lot more trollkin than we expected, too."

"One of the berserkers'll be warlord. Wave of trollkin, then they'll hit us." Tarki considered that, remembered previous fights, mentally compared their own strength to what had been adequate then. "All right. It'll be tough, but we can still do this. They'll use simple tactics, nothing to worry about there. Metisa, you're the troll expert, anything to add?"

"It's an odd mix. Berserkers usually mean less trollkin not more. And why the change, anyway? They can't be expecting to win, surely? Usually they do a token fight, then run, or send the expendable ones, someone they want to get rid of. There's politics behind this. There's been odd things going on over the last few weeks, groups of trolls fighting each other. I don't know what's going on here, but I don't like it."

Ferenan frowned. "If they do one unexpected thing, they might do another, and when we're in ritual combat, unexpected is dangerous." He drew himself up, the formal mask of Orlanth the King overlaying the mild-mannered old man. "Vanganth, my son. You will not join this fight. Fly high, and watch them from above. I trust not this foe of darkness. Look for ambushes, look for tricks."

Tarki half-expected a protest at that, but Kallyr just nodded. "And if I spot them? Who's staying in reserve - you and the byrnie?"

It made sense, and Tarki was both relieved that Ferenan would be out of danger and worried that with their forces split, they would be hard-pressed to handle the main attack.

"No. Orlanth leads his sons, he does not cower behind them. If - when - you spot something we have not planned for, I cannot tell you how to deal with it. Act as you see fit: be my Javelin."

That was more trust than Tarki wanted to give an unknown quantity, and the words seemed wrong in the context somehow, but he was right. Even so, she couldn't resist. "Make sure you don't get seen." Not that there was much risk of that from trolls, in daylight.

"It's all right, I'll stay in the clouds."

They all looked up: way, way up: and the older man tailing her sighed reluctantly. The breeze that they had brought with them had blown away the earlier flocks of sheep and even the alynxes, only the hawks were left. "That's high."

She smiled. "I know – too high for you. Doesn't matter. You stay with the King."

Giving Ferenan that bit more protection: good. Tarki remembered Offir as having been a very good fighter, when he was around to be useful. Not that that had been all that often, even before he got assigned to keep the girl out of trouble. Now, though, he was fussing over her rather than taking up his new and more honourable position, checking her lacings, suggesting extra furs. How long did he think they had? Treating a scout as if she was a weaponthane....

"If you've quite finished....?"

He gave her an icy stare. "It's cold up there, and the winds are strong."

Kallyr flashed him a warm smile, melting the ice a little. "And I can think of more heroic ways to go than being lashed to death by my own bootlaces – but that's enough for now. Nothing's come undone in the last two minutes, and I'm not likely to get bitten by a cloud. You protect the people who need it."

Tarki resisted the temptation to snap back at the implications of that last remark, turned her attention to the important members of the warband. Ferenan would make sure each of the mythic roles was handled correctly, but she had to take care of the mundane part. The Burners in the centre, carrying Mahome's torches to burn down the bushes. Not much point in winning the fight if they didn't manage that much. Some had suggested there should be actual Mahome worshippers, but bringing unarmed women into a battle was too risky, the enchanted torches had always been good enough. Javelins ready for a first flight into the darkness surrounding their target. And a good heavy guard around the King in the centre, including anyone whose magic was strong against trolls. All set, and she nodded to Ferenan – to Orlanth. Think myth, think of herself as Vinga, protecting her "father". With the mask on, he was standing straighter, looking more like the warrior he used to be. She moved to take Vinga's position on the left-hand side of the warband, the shield side. Protect him, even if her part was indirect.

Forward, now, the waiting over. That first flight of javelins – no squeals from within the darkness, this time, though. Some javelins flew back – strange, trolls usually used slings. Metisa had said there was something odd going on, and it looked like she was right. This wasn't going to be the usual walkover. Still, it was ritual... the only way to do ritual was the same as before. Anything else was too dangerous to even consider. Fortunately "the same as before" was just what she wanted at the moment: most fights, you hit the enemy at a full charge, but

entering the Darkness, they always went in at a walk, not knowing what lay just inside it. Step in, shoulder to shoulder, and expect to be attacked as you did so. Darkness and cold closed about her, and a weak blow struck her side. Trollkin – she slashed at it automatically, already changing her stance for the back-swing to take out the second one, and was taken aback when her blow bounced back, almost hitting her own leg. Armoured trollkin? But it wasn't – as far as she could see in the darkness, it had no more than the usual rags. Magical protection of some sort, it had to be – she'd met it before, but not from trolls. Still, it didn't matter, not from trollkin, all they had to do was push forwards and not bother hitting them at all. Shields down, just push them out of the way: and as they moved further into the Darkness, look out for the bushes. Foulthorn was nasty, the pain from a scratch might only be trivial, but it never seemed to heal properly. A bush loomed up ahead of her, and she pushed a trollkin towards it, experimentally. It screamed, and fled. Fine, though it was promptly replaced by more.

Over to her right, a light flared: the Burners had reached the bushes, too. She knew from past years that the firelight would aid them for a few minutes, then the smoke from the burning plants would counteract it. A quick look around while she still could – the real trolls were approaching, heading for the flames. They usually kept as far from fire as they could. Different, again, and she realised with a sinking feeling that if they, too, were protected by the same magic as the trollkin, neither shoving nor thornbushes would work against their greater weight and tougher hides, and their better weapons and greater strength could not be simply ignored. Then one of the fires caught, blazed, despite the trolls surrounding it and she felt relief - this was going to work after all. It blazed higher - higher than she had ever seen, and the lighters jumped back. Not fast enough - there were screams as one man's arm was caught by the flame. *The enemy were controlling the fire*. Their main weapon, turned against them just as her sword had been: and she wondered, now, about those returning javelins. This was going wrong. If it had been a normal fight she would be withdrawing by now, but this was a ritual, and that decision would be Ferenan's - Orlanth's - not hers. As long as he chose to stay, the Loyal Daughter would fight to the end to defend her kin. Around her, others seemed less sure, starting to back off. "Stay together!" If they got separated in this, they had no chance. She swung her sword, desperately, putting all of her magic behind it, and felt it bite home. The next blow, however, did not, bouncing back again. Looking over at where Ferenan was surrounded by his Storms, she saw that they were having similar problems. Would he withdraw? They were losing, badly, and hadn't even seen the berserker charge she had been expecting to be the main danger, yet.

There *was* a movement forward from the darkness, though, now, but not an uncontrolled charge. One huge troll, clad in red and black over the lead armour, swaggering slowly towards the fire. *Into* the fire. He stood there, wreathed in flame, surrounded by his followers, laughing at the ineffectual humans. The warlord, the champion, it had to be, and immune to fire. This had to be the focus of the danger, the strangeness. He had to go, now: and before Tarki could order the warriors around her into a charge, suicidal as it would probably be, she saw Ferenan's group, closer to start with, do just that. The great mace swept down to meet them, beating their puny weapons aside, the flames leaping out to burn them as they fell. The other trolls were closing in, too, all round their Death Lord: but that smaller figure, behind him, wasn't a troll! Not with red hair. Metisa, with her magic: the trolls didn't know she was there! She wasn't even trying to hit the warlord, she was concentrating on the mace he wielded. If she could disarm him.... but she'd become visible as soon as she attacked. The mace shuddered, trembled, but its wielder spun round and grabbed her, throwing her back into the crowd. Their best chance – failed. The Death Lord strode forward, a wave of his paw dimming the fires to a thick, choking smoke. Forward, towards Ferenan and what was left of his guard.... Tarki knew what would happen when they met, and it didn't leave time for the despair she felt. She had to get there, somehow, had to at least slow the monster by a few seconds, enough for her King to get away, but she couldn't even break through the lesser enemy surrounding her. A javelin, across the battle? Difficult enough under normal circumstances, but in the darkness, and the smoke...

If only she could see!

She remembered coming up here at midwinter to sacrifice to Rigsdal. Then, it had been night, but a clear cold night, bright with stars, none of this confusion and fear. Light, that was what they needed. Light to see by, to throw by. This was Rigsdal's hill, and he'd promised to defend the Storm Tribe. He still watched over them, she'd been told that, pointing out trolls in the darkness, the Star Javelins they saw flashing through the sky were proof. She'd rarely addressed a prayer directly to any god herself, but it was all she could think of, now. She knew so little about this one, she didn't even know what to ask for except in the most general and desperate terms... *"Help! Please, it's your place, our King... anything, whatever sacrifice it takes, but help him!"* Not that she expected it to work, only a child expected help. Her shield slammed up, blocking yet another mace, she'd given up trying to attack with her sword, only parrying now. Down again, countering the lower blow she'd left herself open for, and

as the shield dropped, the light in the sky became visible beyond it.

Light? Or lightning? Something incredibly bright, streaking towards the battle from far above, the shape becoming clearer with every second. A star javelin? A star captain, even? It looked more like a bird - a huge bird, in a steep dive, blazing with light. Rigsdal's white raven, Ternveka? But it had two heads... and she recognised it – didn't believe what she was seeing, but recognised it. The last time that had dived towards her, she'd flinched away, even knowing she was safe. This time, it wasn't going to pull up short. She'd seen a peregrine stoop before, knew what that could do to prey when it hit claws first. This hit with claws and with its rider's spear, then vanished as it touched the ground, leaving Kallyr standing in the middle of the remains of the Death Lord, still blazing with light. The trolls scattered - the Orlanthi nearly did, too. The figure facing them now was barely recognisable as the girl who had flown away. This could easily have been the Star Captain she had prayed for - if you ignored the leathers instead of armour, and the lack of any weapon or shield. It didn't seem to matter. The light was armour enough, and weapon enough.

But the darkness was still there, around her. Around them. The fires were gone, now, and Tarki was uneasily aware that beyond the light Kallyr cast, she could still see nothing. This wasn't over. The real battle was still to come, and she didn't know what was going to happen next. This wasn't the right story, it was a new one, she didn't know her part, none of them knew their parts...!! no, no panic. The basic story was the same: "fight trolls, remove darkness".

Darkness wasn't just a means of hiding enemies, it was an enemy itself: the enemy they had come here to defeat. Kallyr was staring into it, poised, ready for an attack that perhaps she alone could sense. Tarki tried to work out whether she was Vanganth or Rigsdal, now, gave up. The Thunder Brothers, fighting trolls, fighting the Darkess, that was what she needed to know. Did it have a focus, something they could hit? Shadows crept around the edges of her vision. There *was* a darker form, in there, Tarki could almost see it. Was it her imagination, the result of strain and fear, that made enemies of bushes when you were on night patrol? No. This time the shadows didn't resolve into harmless mundanity, they solidified, moved. Another huge troll: but no red cloth, no lead, no spiked mace. Just darkness... and a swarm of trollkin around her. "Her" - that much was clear. Robes, no weapons. Tarki realised that she had stopped breathing, that every eye in her warband was drawn towards this centre of the magic that was overwhelming them. This was the real menace, the real power. She carried no weapons, but the dead berserker seemed harmless in comparison. She didn't need weapons. She *was* power, and darkness, and horror, and she drove back the light before her. Perhaps she wouldn't attack, if they stayed very still and very quiet. The silence was muffling, drowning even thought, until its focus broke it.

"You killed my brother." The Sartarite was heavily accented, but intelligible. "For that, the Darkness will swallow your lands forever. No more light. No more sight. The Dark will eat you all." And Tarki could believe it. They had brought Fire, as Orlanth and the Thunder Brothers had done, and it had been turned against them. They had brought Light, and it had only achieved a temporary victory. She stared at the huge dark figure, numb. This fight could not be won with swords, nor by doing what had been done in the past. Unless Ferenan could think of something? But he, too, was simply standing there, not responding. Kallyr was between him and the enemy, but how long could even that protection last?

Those fangs bared in a smile – or hunger? "The Dark will eat you all," she repeated. Softly, but in a rumble that seemed to come from all around them, edging in, like the shadows. The fires were out. The only remaining light was Kallyr, and even that last hope was dimming. Tarki remembered, now, that this wasn't a Star Captain, this was a kid, pretending. She wouldn't be able to do anything, not against a real enemy. All she might manage was to annoy the priestess, make their position even worse. Would she have the sense to surrender?

Kallyr's head jerked up in the rebellion Tarki remembered all too well. "Oh, yeah? Bets?" The response of a stubborn child who didn't know when to give up, and Tarki despaired. She wasn't even armed, just those silly little Vanganthi daggers: even she must realise how futile they were, for she hadn't drawn them.

The deep laughter from the Darkness showed only contempt. "Bets? *You* would gamble against *me*? Did your mother teach you nothing?"

"Yeah." Kallyr wasn't backing down, even now. "'Never abandon your family', that's what my mother taught me." She was still standing there, between her uncle and the threat. Still, like everyone else, facing the Dark, but unlike them, shining with enough Light herself to drive it back a little. Only a little. That wasn't an attack that could win, it was barely a defence.

Tarki stayed frozen, watching the giant queen troll for the inevitable attack that would end them, unable to take her eyes off her. How long could this stay as just words? Taunts? The alynx playing with the mouse? It should have been Ferenan, Orlanth, accepting the challenge if anyone did, but... the Thunder Brothers could act on his behalf, and when only one of them could act at all...

"She was a fool. A wise fool, but a fool. *Look at me when you speak to me, girl*! I do not tolerate rudeness."

Kallyr glared at her, furious, fists clenched, that light pulsing in response to the ultimate childish response. "*Won't!*" She deliberately dragged her gaze aside, looking around with elaborate casualness at the dark shapes that everyone had almost forgotten surrounded them: and snapped out a crisp warning: "Tarki, left flank! They're behind us, get them!"

What??? The spell that held her attention was broken, she jerked round to find a group of trolls only feet away – no wonder she'd thought the shadows were creeping up on her! Her sword was in her hand, and she obeyed automatically, wondering as she did so why it seemed so natural to take this girl's orders. No rebounds. No frustration. The helpless horror was over, she waded into the fight with relish, knowing that around her others were doing the same, their paralysis over.

And then the last opponent faded before her, the darkness faded, the priestess shrank into obscurity and defeat, and it was light. They stood on the empty hillside – no bushes, no shadows, only the clear light of dawn. No trolls. Around her, friends were getting to their feet. "Metisa?" She, too, was alive, uninjured. "Metisa, what *was* that? Was it real?"

Her fellow Vingan was almost smiling, wryly. "That was proof of that saying about the female of the species. Proof of everything we believe in – and I almost wish we were wrong. That, my friend, was a healer protecting her children and her family. We women, you may remember, can defend ourselves."

"A healer? That was a healer?" Tarki compared her fading memory of that overwhelming power and majesty to the quiet, gentle, women she had known by that name in the past. "What was a healer doing leading a warband into battle?"

"A good question. Given the rather useful brother, and the gamble they took, my guess would be a crown test. A change in troll politics: and it failed."

It was much later when Tarki managed to get Ferenan alone, to say what had to be said. To kneel, and to hand him her sword.

"I failed you. As warleader and as warrior, I failed."

He did not take it. "Not as badly as I failed you. Metisa warned us to expect the unexpected, she warned us of troll politics, and I ignored it. I put you in an impossible position. No blame to you for the result." He pushed the sword back towards her. "Keep that, use it in the tribe's service. I still need my warleader, and others will in the future."

She stood, reluctantly, slid the sword back into the scabbard, raised her eyes to find him holding out a goblet of wine. "Now, if that is dealt with, I need my warleader's advice. I said that after this was over, I would be asking your opinion. What do you think of her, now?"

"Her?" But she didn't need telling who he meant, after that. She had to be fair: her own dislikes were irrelevant. She sipped the wine, thinking, pushing preconceptions aside."Better than I expected. I still say she's too rash, too impulsive, gambles far too high. No respect for the risks she's taking. It's hard to tell what or who she *does* respect – well, besides you. She's impressive, I'll grant you – too impressive. After that, the warband would follow her anywhere, but I dread to think where she'd take them."

"The young and impressionable will be impressed, yes. The troublemakers.... as a focus for those who are too young to remember that attacks provoke responses, I find it hard to think of anyone better qualified. And the rest, too, though that matters less. She copes well with the unexpected, would you agree? Better than most – better than I do."

Tarki knew what he wasn't saying, there. She *had* failed him, in the way she had always known she would. She only knew how to do rituals the way they had always been done. When more was needed, she had frozen, unable to think. Ferenan trying to take the blame on himself wasn't right – he was a good king, but he needed a better warleader. A younger one. One with the flexibility she lacked. It wasn't his fault, it was hers.

"You couldn't have expected that the whole thing would have been changed so much – that it would have become a Crown Test!"

Ferenan smiled slightly. "Actually, I did expect it to be a Crown test - just not for the trolls."

She stopped, not quite believing what he must be implying. "You're not seriously suggesting…?"

He shrugged. "Think about it. You said the warband would follow her anywhere. I agree with you, but I would rather have you leading them. If the warband would follow her, would the tribe?"

And Tarki was silent.

The Seduction of Tarahelera

By Jeff Richard

The Destorniskings were given hospitality by the chief of the Oxhead Pol Joni clan, Darsenerus. The chief spoke with the Destorniskings and his own holy folk – the priestess Orelia the Crone and Hantralanth the Lawspeaker - about the ritual they would perform; the sacred Seduction of Tarahelera.

After hours of discussion, it was agreed that Robasart the Lover would take the part of Niskis in the magical ritual. His kinsman Caradoc would fill the role of Yinkin, the trusted companion and brother, stealthy and a good guide. For all the others it was more difficult, but finally it was all decided, and the preparations began.

The ceremony itself took two full days. About a thousand Pol Joni gathered atop the sacred hill where the ritual would be held. The Pol Joni would offer the gods their best bull, their best horse, and their best ram. Lindrella agreed to give the best of the few geese she had not yet sold. Lindrella set up everything needed for the sacrifices.

The sacred participants were clothed and masked as their part in the ritual. Robasart was dressed in the best clothes available, his skin was painted blue and he was given the weapons and insignia of Niskis. Caradoc was painted black and given gloves with sharp alynx claws to wear. Lindrella, as the cunning aspect of Ernalda, was clothed in pelts and painted in red. Hantralanth was garbed as the dark clouds of Orlanth and was given the Sandals of Darkness and a black cloak. Orelia the Crone was given a cloak of feathers and circles were painted around her eyes. Finally Orstandel the Smith was to be the sword and shield of Orlanth, and wore the best possible armor and carrying what good weapons he could.

And then it was time for the ritual. Everybody gathered around the hilltop. Robasart was sitting cross-legged in the centre, in deep concentration and meditating upon his breath. Lindrella held the ceremony and sacrificed the beasts. Spirits appeared. At first they were not visible, but you could feel them. They grew more powerful. All the Pol Joni chanted and played their instruments in the rhythm of the ritual. And finally things began to change. The participants no longer rested on earthen ground, but had the feeling that they were flying through space and time. Upwards they flew, towards the heavens, and all of a sudden they were standing in the great hall of Orlanth!

It would take to much time to describe this magnificient hall and it´s inhabitants. Many of the gods of the storm pantheon and their followers were there. But none took note of the Destorniskings themselves! Instead all saw Niskis and Yinkin, with the others around them as aides or advisors. They sought to leave for the Golden Palace but there was an additional problem nobody had thought about: The Great Hall has eight plus one secret doors, and all lead to different planes or places! The solution came when the Cunning of Niskis called upon Ernalda for help. It was the goddess herself who told Niskis to leave now and capture Tarahelera, and a wish from her is like an order from Orlanth. She whispered briefly to Orlanth, and the Great God showed them how to open the Eighth Door of Karulinoran, which leads to the Sky Realm.

Leaving the Great Hall of Orlanth, the sacred party came onto the Celestial Fields of the Sky Realm. There are settlements in the fields of golden wheat, but those living there ignored us. Both Lindrella and Orelia took some of the golden wheat with them, though for different reasons.

The sacred party had little luck finding the Palace of Gold, until they remembered that the Palace of Gold is the brightest part of the Sky. Closer and closer the party came, until they reached the Palace of the Sky Tribe. Many beings were there, anonymous faces with arrogant behaviour, often dressed in red, yellow or god. Niskis and his companions stood out as foreigners but they were ignored as being beneath the interest of the inhabitants.

The Palace of Gold is an enormous ziggurat in the center of the Celestial City, and since there was no other way to enter (violence didn´t seem to be an option) the party walked through the great high gates and past the eagle-headed guardians.

The Palace of Gold is a place sprawling with divine action. Gods walk there, godlings, their helpers, trustees and many more. Evereything is decorated, but all the beings are strangely faceless. And they all have an arrogant manner, with no etiquette or courtesy.

Within Yinkin as a guide, Niskis and his followers were able to reach the Palace of Gold, and there the appartments of the Lord Venebain, but the door was guarded by the biggest and most monstrous hound imaginable! This dread beast was Rowdril, the guardian of evil, the teeth of Lord Venebain. It was dozing on the doorstep, and Yinkin smiled as he realized that his plan could work. He had brought meat from the Hall of Orlanth - where there is food in abundance - and on his silent paws he sneaked to the

hound and tied the meat to its tail! Be it the scent of the meat or the tightening of the knot, suddenly the hound awoke. Yinkin jumped back, covered by the Shadows of Niskis, as the hound sniffed. Soon he discovered the meat behind itself. It turned. So did the meat. A wild hunt started, Rowdril chasing his own tail. The demon watchdog forgot about the door it had to guard!

That was the moment Niskis had been waiting for. He stormed forward, the rest in tow, and all were inside before the demon hound got its meal. That was the third stage of the ritual, but now the party was inside the labyrinth that is Lord Venebains quarters.

The party walked through the labyrinth. They avoided the guardians, the sky captains. But they couldn´t find Tarahelera until one of the sacred party suggested that they listen for the sound of music and singing, and let Niskis be guided by that. It worked! Soon enough Niskis found the garden and hid himself behind a bush. There he saw the beautiful Blue Woman -Tarahelera – singing and dancing. The goddess was blindingly beautiful, like an azure stream, and she wore a skirt with many patterns and designs.

The sight of the Blue Woman filled Niskis with lust and desire. Without thinking about dangers he stepped out of hiding and startet to sing a poem he composed on the spot. All his heart and soul was in this song, and he called about every scrape of power the Pol Joni could give him out of the ritual. He called out:

Without warning

as a whirlwind

swoops on an oak

Love shakes my heart….

Now it was Tarahelera who was struck by a divine thunderbolt, and very quickly she was in Niskis´ strong arms. Niskis and Tarahelera performed a sacred Nisking dance, accompanied by the songs of hummingbirds and honey bees. At the height of the dance, the Daring One made love to the Blue Goddess in the garden, and Tarahelera pledged herself to Niskis and agreed to come wherever and whenever Niskis wished.

Tarahelera showed Niskis a secret path out of the Palace of God to the Celestial Fields. Accompanied by the Blue Woman, they ran across the Celestial Fields, supported by the powers set free by the sacrifice of the horse. Unfortunately Lord Venebain soon knew what had happened and he gathered his companions and chased after the refugees. But Niskis and his companions ran like the wind, and were aided by their prayers to Orlanth.

When Niskis reached Aedin's Gap, the gate to Orlanth's Great Hall, the Thunder Brothers were waiting, armed, and prepared for battle. Even Lord Venebain didn´t dare to fight them there, and so all he could do was to scream a curse against Robarsart and the Blue Jay clan. As the curse streaked out for its target, Orstandel threw himself into its path and took the curse intended for Robarsart, thus sparing Robarsart from Venebain's curse.

Niskis entered the Great Hall hand in hand with Tarahelera. There were cheers all over the place, many a toast was spoken for Niskis, and a great feast began. The party felt drunk after a few sips, but it wasn´t the drinks that made them dizzy but their return to the Mundane World. When they opened their eyes they recognized one thing immediately: It was raining! In Prax during Fire Season! A sweet, gentle summer rain! The ritual had succeeded, and all the Pol Joni cheered and praised Orlanth, Ernalda, Tarahelera and Niskis. And Robarsart got a lot of invitations to various tents held by women….

After the festivities the party returned to the Dundealos lands, with the sacred bull and an escort from the Oxhead Pol Joni, whose friendship they have won. There were already ties between the tribes, and the ritual made them even stronger. But it remains to be seen if the sacred bull can prevent the ill omens to become bitter truth.

Rymes & Ribbolds Royall

The Kings and Queens of the Durulz

by Stewart Stansfield with Keith Nellist

Few denizens of Dragon Pass are as curious or bewildering as the wereducks, or *durulz*, that live along the banks of The Stream and fringes of the Upland Marsh. Their myths and history are impenetrable to most, yet the source of much speculation. To many, this 'little people' are a bundle of contradictions: they can be fractious, quarrelsome and cowardly, yet also brave, tenacious ('plucky' is *not* a good word to use) and steadfastly loyal.

The currents of myth and legend have occasionally dealt the durulz a bum hand, and their reaction to this is intriguing. To some mythographers, the wereducks seem to live *despite* myth, as much as because of it. They can display a worldly cynicism and sense of self-sufficientness that is unrivalled in Glorantha.

Durulz culture is in many ways similar to that of the ducks' Sartarite Orlanthi neighbours. They appear to worship many of the same gods, albeit in their own manner and alongside a motley collection of local deities and spirits. Most notably, the wereducks' shamans lead sacrifices to their river god, the ancient essence that is The Stream.

A nestcarl of the Royal Nesthold c.1582

Many of the similarities with the Heortlings were forged or strengthened by the rites and magic of Sartar. With this great hero and founder the durulz formed ties of friendship and respect unlike any made before or since, and with a sincerity and trustworthiness surprising to those harsher judges of their nature. The exact form of the bond that Sartar made with the wereducks is unknown, but in their loyalty to his Royal House the durulz have known few peers.

Their race is classed as a tribe in Sartar's realm. It is composed of clans, ruled by lords and chiefs, subordinate to the tribal king. The durulz rites and office of kingship stretch back into legend. Since the early days of their race the wereducks have had kings and queens to rule them; indeed, at times, there have been as many as two, three, or even four leaders contemporaneously ruling various settlements and stretches of land along the Durulz Valley. Powerful rulers have occasionally united the clans in the past, usually via force or bargain, but it is only through Sartar's legacy that the tribe has become truly unified. Though some leaders have been forthright in their relations with the humans, others have let their shamans speak for them (perhaps, it must be said, because they fear being absent overlong from their court).

The durulz are a vocal people, favouring the sing-song tales of oral histories over the work of scribes. There is no written chronicle to rival the lists of kings and emperors computed by various realms of Man. Instead, the calendar of kings is told in various canticles and poems, perhaps the most famous of which are those created by the durulz known as Waddlewit.

This series of poems accounts, in a somewhat familiar but elegiac style, the lives and deeds of the wereducks' rulers. Each is the subject of a single verse, composed of seven lines of (largely) iambic pentameter, in the form a-b-a—b-b—c-c. Because of the poems' subject matter, this structure has since become known as the 'rhyme royal'. These verses were originally spoken or sung; but not long after the Battle of Grizzly Peak they were recorded by some grey sage, and lodged

Who was Waddlewit?

Wilms Wadlewyt (or Waddlewit) was the *nom de plume* of an otherwise unidentified durulz skald and poet of the later 1500s S.T. His or her only work of note is a series of rhymes recounting the lives of dozens of durulz kings and queens. There has been much speculation as to the identity of Waddlewit. The rhymes' language, lore and somewhat critical style have led some to suppose their author a court wit, perhaps an officer in the royal nesthold of King Thunderthroat (being the fourth of his ilk). Certainly no further rhymes appeared after Grizzly Peak (1582 S.T.)—the mysterious case of that describing Thunderthroat himself excepted—and both the leading candidates, Hal Surefoot, the Royal Dishthane, and Imog Rushwallow, Royal Preener and concubine, perished at, or soon after, that battle. The first known written collection was made in 1587 S.T., inscribed on illuminated sheets of reed paper and entitled *Rymes & Ribbolds Royall*.

at the Jevdur Knowledge Temple. Temertain himself is rumoured to have studied them before he took up the crown of Philosopher-King.

Hereafter are presented some verses from these 'Rymes and Ribbolds Royall', fleshed out with further tales of the heroes and villains that inspired them. In addition to such biography, each entry contains information on a famous treasure of the durulz tribe, with statistics provided for *HeroQuest* and *RuneQuest*. Sadly, the kings and queens are not accounted in chronological order, but as this editor's whim dictates.

Philoxetus Joon's Primer on Durulz Names, written for His Most Worshipful Beneficence Enzortis Taran-il, Basker in the Septessential Glories of Her Radiance, Wingman of the Paradisal Aviator, Satrap of First Blessed &c., &c., Ulurday/10, 7/36.

The durulz (or, as the barbarians call them, 'were-ducks') are an expressive folk, and this is particularly true in their choice of names. They seem to have two parts to their name: what some call a first or hatching name, which, I suppose, is similar to names like 'Trethelo' or 'Basekorina'; and a bloodline, family, nest or surname, which, I might suggest, is similar in form to, say, 'EelAariash'. (May the blessings of Her eternal radiance ~~not~~ shine upon them, their kin, and sundry dependencies.)

Hatching names, chosen by the parents, are typically used by close relations to distinguish between individuals of the same family—or, indeed, to refer to hatchlings and fledglings before they take a family name (of which curious process, see below). There is a bewildering variety in hatching names, which often vary from clan to clan and family to family. For example, note 'Alvin', 'Anaxtheus', 'Godfrey', 'Nar Rucker', 'Penelope' and 'Quackjohn'. Such choices can be strange and, in great contrast to their surnames, usually show little connection with suggested etymologies.

Family names, however, tend to be quite apposite. Indeed, some suggest that they were once the only names the durulz went by. It is thought that the ancient durulz displayed a considerable variety in physical and personal characteristics, and present surnames were but descriptive monikers that later became fixed and handed down to subsequent generations. Such names tend to favour personal, physical origins over those derived from their occupation or the landscape. Unlike the ~~savages~~ Orlanthi, the durulz rarely use patro-(and indeed matro-)nymics, except perhaps in barbarian company.

Peculiarly, it seems from the evidence of our ~~spies~~ missionaries that the durulz don't possess a family name until they are a couple of years old. A henwife doesn't take her drake husband's family name, nor vice versa. I can perhaps understand this, as a grey-bellied Blackscap suddenly going by the name Yellowbelly might appear silly, even for that little race. Instead, juvenile durulz seem to take their name after that part of the inheritance that is strongest–which usually becomes quite apparent during fledging.

Though they inherit characteristics from both parents, our evidence suggests that it's usually quite clear if a juvenile duck is, say, a Honeyrump or a Bluebeak, irrespective of where they live, and which parent was of which family. (Though with family names like Plumstaff and Shagflax, I'm a little unsure as to how this might be apparent.)

Usually the family name is confirmed by the decision of a council of relations, friends and elders, not shy of giving their opinions. If there is room for argument, it is typically resolved through voluble debate, until disagreeing factions relent. Double-barrelled names are exceptionally rare, but occasionally resorted to in situations where it really is difficult to decide.

Dominant family traits appear to be remarkably robust, persisting through the centuries. Though a few Yellowbellies might have underfeathers the colour of dull straw, or some Reedsongs sing a touch flat, the general impression is that it would be churlish to deny the link.

In addition to using hatching names to refer to ducks of like family, quite a few further descriptive nicknames spring up, much like they did in the earliest times. These commonly reference deeds and occupations as much as physical characteristics. Such names can take root and replace an existing bloodline name, often to distinguish between two branches of a family, or recognise some feud or social mobility. Most of the 'less physiological' family names—such as the Grubcatchers, Sprypoles and Slopbanks—appear to represent cadet branches of older bloodlines.

Some durulz consider their hatching name to be an informal, family affair—and if used by strangers it may be held as presumptive and rude, unless accompanied by their surname. Contrastingly, they don't seem to mind being called by their surname alone. Durulz kings and queens are typically referred to by their family names, as such is a matter of great import and reflects nobly upon the bloodline. To distinguish between different monarchs of the same family, the suffix being the X of that ilk is usually added, e.g. King Thunderthroat, being the fourth of that ilk. In this scheme, there is no distinction by way of gender: kings and queens alike are accounted on the same roll.

Some known durulz bloodlines

Amberdrake, Bittersord, Blackscap, Blinkmottle, Bluebeak, Bogwatcher, Boldbladder, Brackblood, Brightfeather, Clearwhistle, Dawndapple, Deftwaddle, Drydottle, Duskwort, Fairflanks, Fatleaf, Fierceplume, Fozzlebeak, Giltwit, Glowstalk, Goodshrooms, Greenbeak, Greenface, Grubcatcher, Hailwing, Hardshins, Hoarfoot, Honeyrump, Keenwarble, Longneck, Midgeflower, Mildgizzard, Mistcall, Mizzledown, Mosswig, Mudcrown, Nettlebeak, Palespeck, Pinfeather, Plumshanks, Proudbill, Pucewattle, Quagbanter, Quickpaddle, Redcrest, Reedmurk, Reedsong, Ringeye, Rosehackle, Ruddy Shoveler, Rudepebble, Rushwallow, Rustmantle, Screwpipe, Shagflax, Shrewdbill, Silverhead, Slopbank, Smaltstaff, Spintail, Spleengurgle, Sprypole, Squallheart, Starmolt, Stoutknob, Sungobble, Surefoot, Sweetcall, Swiftlore, Tarscaup, Thricepeal, Thunderthroat, Truedive, Wetnape, Whitetail, Wildwheat, Wisemustard, Woadcheeks, Yellowbelly.

Old King Stoutgild

King Hoarfoot, being the second of that ilk, r. 1402-1429 S.T.

O hoaried feet did cast thy princely tread,
On star-dew'd ground knit tight with sorrows sewn,
Over a kinship lost and kingdom fled.
Away, away, thou errant drake hast flown,
In a bratchet's basket thou made'st thy throne;
Of its sweet suckled milk the poets write,

For thy gold's grave lay in that cup of night.

Wilms Wadlewyt, *Rymes & Ribbolds Royall* (1587 S.T.)

For some reason, people tend to picture King Hoarfoot (being the second of that ilk) as a rather corpulent individual—not so much fat as *positively humongous*. Yet in reality that noble wereduck was a rather thin fellow (though one of his frosty paddlefeet did get a little case of gout in his final years). His supposed fatness mixes well with other legendary characterisations: all roaring voiced buffoonery, throwing roast-beetle husks and turnip stalks over his shoulder, wiping the grubjuice from his bill, and getting so sozzled that he couldn't get out of his throne and relieved himself there.

Again this is somewhat wide of the mark. Hoarfoot liked a party, it is true, but his tastes were not so gluttonous as might be supposed; and as for his voice, well, some suggest he was actually fairly quietly spoken, and even possessed an ever-so-slight lisp. Yet dampen his image as we might, he still cut quite a figure, and with his finely turned bill and sinewy, athletic vigour he was an acknowledged hit with the hens.

Perhaps it's that nickname, 'Old King Stoutgild' that trips us up. It doesn't refer to *that* kind of stout, but the wetter, darker kind (though one can admittedly lead to the other). He liked his beer, did Hoarfoot, and plenty of it, too. Warm and thick, mulled or just plain 'mullahed', it was downed with relish. It provided his joy in life, but ultimately led to his downfall.

Lorko Hoarfoot's early years were fairly typical for one of his noble birth. As a young wardrake he led a distinguished, if not exceptional, life, fighting and hiding from Delecti's terrors in the Marsh, blooding his sword and squabbling with his fellows. He frequently accompanied Polgo Hardshins, the champion and war-warbler (and later king) of the wereducks, on his forays into the mists and under such tutelage became a capable practitioner of the wereducks' peculiar forms of warfare.

His abilities were tested in the Duck Wars of 1380-1383 S.T. The wereducks were taken unawares by the human barbarians' migrations and driven from their rich farmlands in the Durulz Valley. The wereducks and their beastfolk allies fought tenaciously—if to little avail—against the Colymar and Lismelder, and Hoarfoot was wounded in the skirmish that saw the minotaur Threehorn Glower slain. As a Gabbung, he was opposed to the rumoured machinations of King Giltwit and his Keepers[1], but enjoyed the fruits of Delecti's surprise intervention in the conflict when he was among the durulz that ambushed Kurash Varn and his expedition, securing peace for his people. He took one of Varn's arms, and only reluctantly gave it back.

When King Hardshins the Leperbeak[2], who had succeeded Giltwit, died of a combination of feverish consumption and the leprous Festering Billrot, Hoarfoot was acclaimed king in his stead. His reign, like Hardshins' before him, had seen relations with the Lismelder ease, and even blossom into friendship. Like most durulz, the Duck Wars had left Hoarfoot

suspicious of Man, but this stance was softened by the charms of Queen Imogen[3], who with a smile and touch on the beak could render the hardiest death-drake a gooey-eyed, fluff-feathered idiot. Though she, with individuals like Alfgar Greydog (well, more his brews, to be honest), led in this matter, the Gabbungs also felt a natural affinity to the Lismelder's Humakti. Hoarfoot himself became a firm friend of the great hero and king, Indrodar Greydog[4].

The wereduck king took Indrodar's death hard. He felt guilty that he had not accompanied his friend on that last expedition; he became detached from life at court and sank into his cups. Only upon hearing news from Greydog Inn—*"I've heard Kogall Longbrewer's done a new ale!"*—would he brighten up. Hoarfoot didn't necessarily understand the brewing art, but he was an enthusiastic amateur. He instituted the nesthold office of Master of the Gyle, but the wereducks never could copy the expertise of the Greydogs, as much as they tried.

Hoarfoot's annual royal progress among the wereduck clans had already become increasingly erratic, even wandering outside the boundary stones of his lands. In 1422 S.T. he passed straight through Stone Nest—much to the perpelexion of the arrayed dignitaries—to wet his beak in the Loom and Shuttle Tavern. The year later, he followed the Good Ale Path. Twice. This was quite a feat, especially as none of the path actually ran through durulz lands. Though the humans were at first cautious of this regal invasion of their tulas, they soon realised that Hoarfoot and his retainers were rather harmless, polite—for durulz—and paid well in wereduck specie and goods. (He *was* barred from the Goodplate Inn, though always claimed that was a misunderstanding.)

So his excursions continued until, in 1425 S.T., he set off on his progress and never came back. At first Hoarfoot made his home in the taproom of the Greydog Inn. They were good customers, Hoarfoot's court, so Kogall didn't really mind. The king even had a special 'throne' carved, positioned by the fire and surrounded by the treasures of his kingdom.

It would be wrong to suggest that Hoarfoot ignored the duties of kingship, at least at first. He held court and issued proclamations, articles, acts and warrants, albeit between mugs and in a rather more convivial atmosphere. When his privy purse ran dry, paying for all this became interesting. 'A clack for the King's Mugg' became a popular euphemism for the tribal taxes; in some ways it led to the monetarisation of the Durulz Valley, with taxes being less in kind and more in coin.

His drakes stayed loyal, until hackcough, boredom and gluttony spirits took them—whereupon Hoarfoot happily appointed as officers various bemused patrons of the inn. When Kogall died in 1426 S.T., the king fell into his final malaise. He lingered for a while longer, before heading south to Goodweaver lands. By now his court and coin had gone, and his royal clothes become threadbare. Many of his regalia had been pawned and lost; the Longbrewers themselves carried his Big Ring on a chain around their necks.

So the king, muffled to the cold, hauled Thunderwell down the lonely path to the Loom and Shuttle. There he sat, limbs frail and eyes rheumy, with a blanket across his legs. His snoozes became longer, until one evening he dozed off and never woke up. He died at the age of seventy-three, a rather sorry individual, tired and alone. His remaining regalia were returned, and his Greydog throne became a novelty, occasionally used for children.

And the name, *Stoutgild*? Despite his various attempts, Hoarfoot had never been able to clear his tab. On his death the Greydogs, Goodweavers and others presented the wereducks with a demand for recompense. It took the Durulz Tribe three whole years to pay it off.

Thunderwell, Shield of Kings

Description: An enchanted, leaf-shaped bronze shield, burnished bright and marked with an ancient durulz glyph. It measures about three-feet in height and is one-and-a-half feet wide at the centre.

Currently… believed lost in the Upland Marsh. When the durulz tried to escape the Duck Hunts, it was found too heavy and abandoned during their flight. It was last seen near the Hump (*Tales of the Reaching Moon* 19, p. 35). Or maybe it was the Sump. One of the two, anyway.

Cults: Friendly—Orlanth Thunderous, Maran Gor, Babeester Gor; Hostile—Doburdan, Shargash, Lodril.

Knowledge: Automatic; Famous; One of a Kind. Before it was lost, almost everyone in Dragon Pass had heard of the Thunderwell. Most who lived near the duck kings had actually heard its Thunder, although they may have thought it just normal thunder.

History: The God-talkers tell that the ancient king, Squallheart, once trapped an entire thunderstorm in his shieldwell, angry that it was disturbing his sleep. It has remained there ever since, ready to do the wereducks' bidding. Because the shield holds the weight of the Sky in its well it is exceptionally heavy.

Procedure: The shield needs to be banged with a weapon (be it by its bearer on purpose, or by an opponent whose blow is parried), which must do 7 points of damage or more to unleash the shield's power. If this occurs, the banging weapon takes 3D6 points of damage from the reverberations caused by the Thunder within. If this damage is greater than the weapon's current Armour Points (AP), it loses the *difference* in AP—normal weapons can easily shatter when used to strike Thunderwell.

Powers: Thunderwell is unreasonably heavy (25 ENC), and cannot be used by a person of normal strength as a shield. If a person was of superhuman—or *superduck*—STR (19+) they could use the shield and it would have an infinite number of AP. Knockback would still affect the holder. The real power of the shield is unleashed when it is banged: it acts like a 1D6 damage Thunderbolt divine magic spell to all those in front of the shield within 20 metres, who must also make a SIZ x 5 roll to stay on their feet. This effect can only occur once per day. The shield is noisy for those behind it too (and a little blustery to the bearer's nether regions), but does no actual damage or knockdown.

Value: The great bronze shield could be worth 15,000 Lunars. Wereduck shaman Joseph Greenbeak is offering a reward for its return to the durulz. (Maybe not 15,000 Lunars, but he seems to have something enticing.)

HeroQuest: Thunderwell 10Ш2 (Thunderbolt Bash 15Ш2, Weight of the Sky 1Ш3).

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Halgreema the Rotbane

Queen Starmolt, being the first of that ilk, r. 1339-1367 S.T.

By iv'ry path thou didst thy passage mark,
Through mizzle's masque afore a rot-weav'd wake,
Thy bows the reaping gale of Grambletark.
No twice-lost sight could fail to catch thy drake,
His thrusting blade thy scabbard's own to take;
From loy'lty's pearl the Streamsons three did spring,
Each doom'd to die alone and ne'er be king.
Wilms Wadlewyt, Rymes & Ribbolds Royall (1587 S.T.)

Bold, precocious and ever so slightly nymphomaniacal, few were surprised when the young warhen Halgreema Starmolt succeeded King Hoarfoot "the Wringer" (being the first of that ilk) to the Winged Crown of the Upper Durulz Valley. If any had doubted her credentials, they were soon silenced by Starmolt's first act as queen.

Unsure as to the support of the bloodlines of Duck Point, she took the erstwhile despot of that place, Taltos Sungobble, and put him to public torture and death. He was plucked alive, feasted on by swamp-flies and marshmaggots, and had his gizzard drawn out through his beak and fed to the ravenous spirits of the Dark Earth. Sungobble died after a day's ordeal, but not before he cursed the queen with his last breath.[5]

Suitably confirmed in her majesty, Starmolt set about expanding her realm. Hoarfoot the Wringer had already compelled the lowland durulz to give tribute to the Winged Crown, but Starmolt went further. She offered the widower King Truedive a marriage alliance; now flanked by Starmolt's possession of Duck Point and facing a murderous neighbour, he felt he had little choice but to accept. They married in 1341 S.T.

When, after only a year of marriage, Truedive perished in the Marsh[6], Starmolt united the durulz under a single ruler for the first time since legend. As sole queen, she held all three of the sacred sets of reins that gave power over the spirits of The Creek, the daimones of The River and the essences of The Stream. Her battles against the things of the Marsh were legion: she quested for the ancient treasure, the horn Bellowbright, which could summon the spirits of the dead to destroy their mindless, shambling bodies; and with the sword Grambletark she performed the famous Cutting of the Zombie Chain. All of this justly earned her the sobriquet *Rotbane*.

She had a truly fearsome countenance. Angered by the ever-encroach-

ing Marsh, Starmolt plucked out her left eye and cast it into the swamp, so she would always be aware of what passed on its borders. (This was quite an act, considering she had already lost her right eye in a fight with a manticore as a young warrioress.) That disembodied eye is said to exist still, floating in the brackish waters.

The Thirteen Thanes: *Ran(gard) Bluebeak*, royal champion and Marshal of the Sords; *Rollo Fairflanks*, Groom of the Royal Plumage; *Yand Giltwit*, Master of the Royal Nest; *Ben(der) Greenface*, Royal Dishthane; *Peer(andale) Mudcrown*, the gaoler and Warden of the Marsh-shore; the brothers *Broost* and *Taroos Reedmurk*, twin redsmiths and Royal Shieldbearers; the Royal Boat-thanes *Wil(lem) Sprypole* and *Sor(an) Whitetail*, both admirals of the swanboats painted grey for war; *Nel(kark) Starmolt*, the queen's favoured cousin and prince of Duck Point; *Henery Swiftlore*, Sordthane of the Queen's nestcarls; *Hal(ooric) Thunderthroat*, Royal Bannerthane and war-warbler; *Dar(roold) Yellowbelly*, the Captain of Stone Nest.

In all her deeds, Rotbane was aided by the Thirteen Thanes—loyal retainers who were said to share her bed, and each other's too. Many were young and vigorous, and their vibrant gaiety contrasted with the often dour and ruthless personality of the queen. Though she had no children by Truedive, it was whispered that Starmolt had bastards aplenty, for few drakes were brave enough to refuse the royal prerogative. Such pregnancies had little effect on her activities, and the eggs were quietly fostered on others or warmed by timid thanes' wives.

Rotbane's greatest union, however, was with the river god of her people. She wooed and wed The Stream in the Helering rite, and in 1342 S.T. laid a single pebble-shelled egg in its waters. From it sprang three demigod hatchlings, the Streamsons—each part-durulz, part-undine. They had strange, magical names and embodied the powers of The Stream: Sramamakt Hailsong the Black Oracle; Pyheerios Brightplume the Sword-Sorcerer; and Arksateram Swampseer the Mutable. These were mighty heroes, who from the earliest age performed deeds of legend.

When Rotbane died at the age of 53, all looked to the Streamsons to succeed her. But these beings were terrible and fey; whose magical nature led them to a different calling. In the two-year interregnum that followed, the Thirteen Thanes fell upon each other, claiming to support the claims of one Streamson or the other, but in reality pursuing their own agendas. The squabbles culminated in the Battle of Bluesherds Mound (1368 S.T.), when a force under Thunderthroat, Sprypole and Greenface surprised and defeated that of Fairflanks and Giltwit, who fled to the sanctuary of the Wild Temple.

Yet by then the Streamsons had died or disappeared on their quests, and the Thanes' power was rapidly diminishing. In 1369 S.T. old Galarak Proudbill raised an army of disenchanted lowland durulz, forced the surviving Thanes to come to accord, and was acclaimed king.

The Chariot of the Gods, Spirits and Essences of the Creek-Stream River

Description: a water-chariot made from a giant, ornamented Dragonsnail shell, with Movement rune paddlewheels and a lily-spun wake. Its three sets of hairwoven reins—Daimon Reins, Essence Reins and Spirit Reins—glow with magic.

Currently… the chariot is held by Queen Wild-Wheat, along with the Essence Reins and Daimon Reins—though the latter have lost their power and must be rewoven or replenished somehow. The Spirit Reins were captured by someone or something, who uses them to enslave Ripplestripe.

Cults: Associated—River Gods; Friendly—Mastakos.

Knowledge: Cult Secret [Reins]; Famous; One of a Kind.

History: When the legendary king Stormscap slew five-headed Ulopogg, chaotic Wazir of the Dragonsnails, he took its shell and crafted it into a water-chariot. The daughters of the Sky River Titan wove for him three sets of reins from their magical hair, which gave power over their brothers and sisters.

Procedure: Each set of reins must be attuned to the user by sacrificing a point of POW, and can then be used to wrangle a single type of entity—a 'spirit' from The Creek, a 'daimon' from The River and an 'essence' from The Stream. The Spirit Reins will not work on a daimon from The River, and so on. Wrangling the entities works like spirit combat, but the reins cause the spirit to lose 1D6 magic points (instead of 1D3) on a successful 'attack' by the user. Once wrangled, the entity will remain subservient to the wrangler.

Powers: The chariot confers a +50% bonus to the Drive Chariot skill. Each set of reins allows the bearer to control its entity as if a permanent, continual, automatic Control Spirit spell was in place. The entities count as initiates of their particular River Gods: they may use spirit magic and can sacrifice POW for divine magic. Typical spirits are listed below.

Ripplestripe (spirit)—a tiger of maximum characteristics, with a body of wholly mutable, flowing water (counts as 4-point armour on all locations) and ripples for stripes. POW 15, Move 10 (in water), Swim 120%. Spirit Magic: Clawsharp 3, Demoralise 2, Mobility 4; Divine Magic: Fear.

The Challenge (essence)—in the Silver Age a knight issued a challenge to a mountain, slapping his gauntlet across its face. The mountain never noticed, and it's lain there ever since: a giant, glowing, disembodied gauntleted fist (5 AP). STR 45, DEX 5, CON 25, SIZ 38, INT 10 [Free INT 6], POW 15, Move 10 (in water), Punch/Slap [SR 9, 40%, Damage 1D10+4D6]. Sorcery: Intensity 60%, Duration 45%, Multispell 30%; Cast Back 55%, Damage Resistance 80%, Glow (self only—permanent), Ironhand (as the Spirit Magic spell) 70%.

School of Hrudnos (daimon)—a school of glistening, leaping fish, shimmering with magic. DEX 20, SIZ 30 (school), POW 15, Move 10 (in Water). Spirit Magic: Coordination 3, Mobility 2, Shimmer 4; Divine Magic: Command Fish.

Value: The chariot might be worth 50,000 Lunars; each set of reins 100,000 Lunars or more!

HeroQuest: Magical Chariot 20W; each set of reins has a rating of 10W2.

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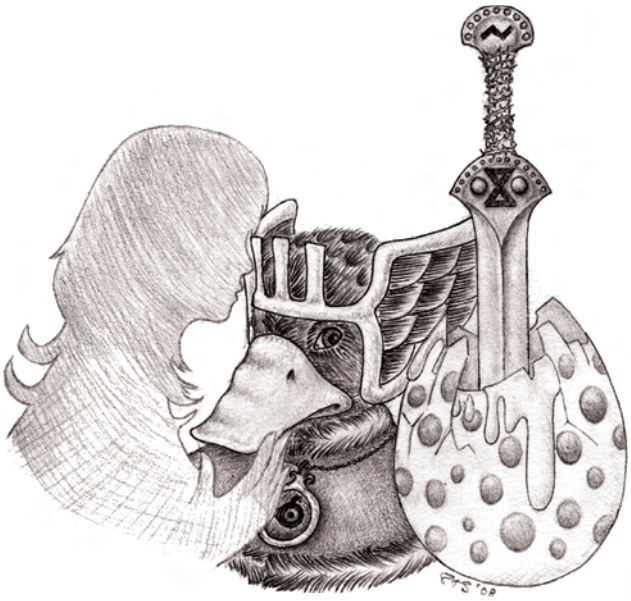
Blackscap the Oonoclast

King Blackscap, being the first of that ilk, r. 1311-1327 S.T.



What love-caught prince could fall so deep to bliss

As thee, when thou didst goodly sense profane

And slake thy thirst with lust's dark-counsell'd kiss.

With She thine eyes were blind to glory's wane,

Thy realm scour'd deep and cruel with trick'ry's stain;

Thine heirs but broken shards abreast thy hilt,

Thy hearth and soul-fires quench'd with gold blood spilt.

Wilms Wadlewyt, *Rymes & Ribbolds Royall* (1587 S.T.)

That little people has known more than its share of tragedy. So spoke Temertain the Philosopher King, as he concorded with Fazzur the treaty that condemned the durulz—who had helped put him on his throne, it must be remembered—to the Duck Hunts. *Tragedy*. A word that seems to resonate with wereducks who, in rather less philosophical or kingly language, "always get the shitty end of the stick."

We can't always blame humans, however. Or gods, spirits, saints, dwarfs, elves and trolls. The durulz themselves have been responsible for some of the greatest tragedies to befall their race. Perhaps the most lamentable of these occurred three hundred years ago, before that vagrant Arim ever crossed the Deathline with his army of beggars.

In the aftermath of the Dragonkill, the durulz enjoyed growth and prosperity. They had submitted to Ironhoof, King of Dragon Pass, and his son and successor, Bright Yanasdros, but possessed autonomy in their own lands. Perhaps a little too much, as their demesnes were fragmented, split between coalitions of clans forged under varied crowns by the mightiest drakes and hens.

Along the lower Stream Valley and southern borders of the Upland Marsh, the clans were ruled by kings from wealthy bloodlines such as the Giltwits, Mudcrowns, Proudbills and Ruddy Shovelers. In what would later become known as Duck Point (yes, the wereducks *did* live there) sat the despotic Sungobble princes. Along the upper reaches of the Stream, and to the north along the eastern edges of the Marsh, lived the proud upland clans that gave tribute to the Winged Crown of Hintervale.

In 1311 S.T., Nar Blackscap[7] took that crown upon his mottled head. He was an able king, who ruled by example. He lacked the cowardice attributed to his kind, being brave to the point of recklessness. He viewed with concern the expanding Marsh and led frequent forays into its depths. Indeed, he loved to hunt stoorworms, walktapi and zombies in the cypress swamp with his companions, utterly fearless whilst he held the great treasure of his people: the ancient sword Grambletark.

The first twelve years of his rule passed without undue incident. His people had enjoyed good harvests, and fought well. Blackscap's only sorrow was that he was childless; though he was a handsome drake, and had his share of concubines, he had yet to find a henwife fit to be queen. He sought to unite the crowns of Stone Nest and Hintervale, and saw in the young noblehen Freena Clearwhistle a chance to further his aims by marriage.

In 1323 S.T., as he prepared for his wedding, he led a great hunting party into the Marsh. All his friends and courtiers were there, and Clearwhistle's father and brothers too. It was a gay occasion (or as gay as a zombie hunt in the Upland Marsh can be). His friend, champion and war-warbler, Bolgark Skirlsworn, carried his banner and together they slew a giant, rotting quakebeast.

As the party feasted on reedwine and roast grubs in celebration, the wereducks heard a song keening on the Marsh air. When its dark, willow-limbed singer approached from the mists, Blackscap raised his sword to strike it down, but stopped, enraptured. *She was beautiful*. Grambletark's thorns bit deep into his hand, and the waters broiled at his feet, but he thrust the sword back into its scabbard. And

thus the king welcomed a Dancer of Darkness into his heart.mistress to sing and perform her ecstatic dances of darkness; every morning the Marsh encroached upon his lands.

Those that expressed outrage were exiled or slain—the brothers Clearwhistle were strangled for treason before their sister's eyes. Blackscap favoured his love's cruel jokes over his thanes' counsels, and entertained the rotting ambassadors of Delecti she urged him to admit.

In 1325 S.T. he allied with the treacherous Sungobbles, and warred upon his lowland neighbours. The king captured Stone Nest, and enslaved its inhabitants. He built a shrine there to his love's beauty and demanded that all worship her. The Stream recoiled at the evil that seeped into its waters. It refused to irrigate the wereducks' crops, and famine ensued. In anger, Blackscap marshalled his wardrakes and sent them to assault The Stream itself. The entire army was massacred, drowned and smashed by the undines' fury. Only Skirlsworn and a handful of warriors survived.

Grambletark

Description: A thorn-hilted shortsword (1D6+2 damage, 10/20 AP) forged from an alloy of enchanted copper and aluminium, and marked with runes of Movement, Water and Life.

Currently… held by the Anas Clan, after Godfrey of the Soup recovered it from the Stone Nest ruins (Tales of the Reaching Moon 19, p. 11).

Cults: Associated—Aldrya, Hard Earth, River Gods; Friendly—Lightbringers, Earth Cults; Enemy—Vivamort. Humakti appreciate its effects, but remain neutral towards this blade and cannot use its powers.

Knowledge: Cult Secret [Marshal Waters matrix]; Famous; One of a Kind. The Anas Clan believe it to be a weapon of great import, but only Joseph Greenface knows its true and perilous history.

History: Born of the hammer of the Sky River Titan and the anvil of the Hard Earth, Grambletark was blessed by Aldrya and first held by the Yellowflower elves. They gifted it to the wereducks, whose heroes have wielded it since: mighty Stormscap, Queen Rotbane, Hailsong Streamson, Valkark Brightfeathers—the list goes on. Its greatest Life powers were lost when Blackscap the Ovicide used it to shatter the eggs of his tribe. It disappeared when Stone Nest was sacked by the Lunars after Starbrow's Revolt, but has since been found.

Procedure: The sword is a combination of enchanted item and allied spirit (INT 8, POW 15). The user must sacrifice a point of POW to attempt to attune the blade, and then use his POW to beat the sword's on the resistance table. Grasping the sword's hilt costs one HP; a further HP is lost per 5 rounds of use. Each use of its spell matrices drains a temporary point of CON, which can only be replaced with eight hours' rest.

Powers: Grambletark has the Mindlink function of an allied spirit, but its spells function as matrices. The sword contains a Strength 4 matrix and a Marshal Waters matrix [5 Points Divine Magic Spell; Ranged, Temporal, Nonstackable, Reusable]. When cast, the latter causes all still water within sword's reach to move with the weapon's motions—counting as 'flowing water', which a vampire cannot pass. If the wielder manages to engage or corner the vampire it can fight, but takes 1D3 points of unregeneratable damage from the swirling waters each round. Against Living targets it cannot inflict damage that could result in loss of life or limb that round—excess is ignored, even if that would mean no damage at all is caused. The sword has double normal Armour Points and floats on water. Whatever spells the sword once used with its own POW are sadly lost to legend. Grambletark is tainted by Blackscap's deeds: the user must make occasional POW x 5 rolls to stave off madness, as he or she hears through Mindlink the songs of the restless spirits of those unborn ducklings, murdered centuries ago.

Value: With its powers against vampires, it is potentially priceless—though its weakness against the living and its taint of madness are largely unknown.

HeroQuest: Grambletark 15W (Cannot Kill 1W4, Legacy of Madness 20W, Marshal Waters 1W3, Strength of Kings 10W, Thorny Hilt 20, Unbreakable 10W2).

The following year, as his nesthall decayed to cold emptiness, populated by rotting jesters and the last of his guards, his wife laid a clutch of eggs. She died in sorrow as she did so, but went unburied for weeks. Blackscap had his children at last, yet would now commit his most heinous act.

The Dancer of Darkness whispered her greatest deceit into Blackscap's ear—that the unborn wereducks plotted against him from inside their shells; that his own children would lead the hatchlings against him and conquer his kingdom. The king must destroy them all.

On Freezeday of Illusion Week, Dark Season, 1326 S.T., the king ordered his guards to go out and destroy all the unhatched eggs they found in his realm. Some obeyed; others, like Skirlsworn, refused and finally raised their banners against the king. Blackscap himself took his sword to his own children, shattering the eggs there and then in his throneroom. Being

not yet fully born, the Life was too weak in them and Grambletark was powerless to stay the king's hand.

Hundreds of eggs were broken and the Stream ran gold with the blood of the unborn. The great undine froze that day, and would not thaw for a year. Overcome by the ritual the Dancer of Darkness had caused to be enacted, its surface shone with the glimmer of gilted ice.

Accompanied by beastfolk allies, Skirlsworn and his companions marched to assault the king's stronghold. They had no need of an army, for they found Blackscap alone in his throneroom, gibbering amid the egg shards and yolk stains of his children. The Dancer of Darkness had fled, but was soon found and chased into the Marsh. There she was slain, laughing at her victories. It was Skirlsworn himself who strangled Blackscap as he sat upon his throne, and who took the Winged Crown as his own when it fell from that mad king's drooping head.[8]

Endnotes

1 King Ormak Giltwit, being the third of that ilk (r. 1380-1393). The bastard son of Queen Rotbane (r. 1339-1367) and (the later) King Yand Giltwit, being the second of that ilk (r. 1373-1374). Leader of the *Keepers*, and tarred by some with the suggestion that he concorded the infamous 'Giltwit's Bargain' with Delecti. The *Keepers* and *Gabbungs* are what might loosely (and somewhat disingenuously) be described as political parties in the Durulz Tribe. See http://duxploitation.blogspot.com/2008/05/keepers-and-gabbungs-durulz-politics.html. For suggestions of durulz complicity in Delecti's attack, see *Tales of the Reaching Moon* 19, p. 24.

2 King Polgo Hardshins, "the Leperbeak", being the first of that ilk (r. 1393-1402). Founder and leader of the *Gabbungs* and a staunch foe of Delecti. His other notable act was to tell an emissary of the Wasp Riders to 'buzz off': a deed the durulz still find immensely funny, even if no-one else does.

3 Imogen, Queen of the Lismelder (r. 1383-1390). "She died too young and was mourned by all." See *Tales of the Reaching Moon* 18, p. 10.

4 Indrodar Greydog (1339-1424), King of the Lismelder (r. 1392-1421) and hero of Humakt. See, for example, *Tales of the Reaching Moon* 19, pp. 4-8 and ***Storm Tribe***, p. 101.

5 Taltos Sungobble had been taken as a 'hostage' by Hoarfoot in 1336 S.T., and cast into the wereducks' half-sunken dungeons. Starmolt also had all other Sungobbles proscribed and killed, with one possible exception. Duck Point legend suggests that Errol Sungobble was hung from the gable of his nesthall, but somehow survived and escaped. He lived in exile until Rotbane died and it was safe to return, taking the name Longneck.

6 It is unknown exactly how he died. Popular tales suggest he fell into a patch of quicksand, or perished in a sudden marsh-gas explosion.

7 The ending *–scap* is fairly common in durulz names through the ages. It represents a diminution of *scapular [feather(s)]*, referring to the wereducks' shoulder plumage.

8 He would become better known as Hoarfoot, who made peace with The Stream, defeated the Sungobbles, and ruled the ducks of Hintervale from 1327-1339 S.T.

Newt talks to Jeff Richard

Jeff is a long time Gloranthaphile. I first became aware of him when he helped sort out the miscommunication of the Issaries Fan Publication Policy (FPP) back in 2005[?]. I then met this whirling dynamo of energy in person at Tentacles 2006. He's been very active on the Gloranthan email lists in recent years, and has helped Greg with several of the recent Stafford Library releases.

Jeff was instrumental in helping me understand how straightforward the FPP is, even for a pretty comprehensive fanzine like Hearts in Glorantha which charges a small cover price, and within a couple of emails we had sorted out the pretty much all of the issues that the fanzine is likely to have now and in the future. Since we are both on Google mail, which has an inbuilt chat client, soon, got chatting away. Jeff is heavily involved in the development of HeroQuest 2nd Edition (HQ2) especially the Gloranthan magic rules, and follow on supplements these chats got quite revealing.

This is the highlights of several chat sessions, that covered a variety of subjects; HQ 2 rules (which Jeff is heavily involved in the Playtesting/Development of and I'm on the playtest group), upcoming HQ2 supplements, Dara Happa (Dara Happa Stirs book for Mongoose and Shreds of Light and Reason for Continuum), and the fan publications policy which is where we start……

Fan Policy

Jeff: Newt - did those last emails answer your question?

Newt: Yes, I've got one more and then I'm good to go

Jeff: Perfect. I hope my answer to the author issue was a bit clearer and easier.

Newt: Yes - and I can use it as an answer for potential contributors as well

Jeff: Exactly.

Newt: Its seems to be a sticking point with the fan policy that people unfairly think that its a ruse for Issaries to steal their work....but hey you've probably heard this before ;)

Jeff: Actually the fan policy is there to allow Mongoose, Rick and you to do what you want - while still keeping the door open for a computer game.

Newt: I think there's still alot of misunderstanding and dare I say it bitterness arising from Stephen Martin's misrepresentation of the FPP

Hopefully ventures like HiG will help dispel that

HQ2 developments

Newt: on a positive note have you seen young Darran has put up the Great Gloranthan Gathering Podcast up [http://web.mac.com/darransims/]

Jeff: yep.

Actually there is an immense amount of positive stuff going on under the surface.

HQ 2.0 is 95% done.

The new default Gloranthan setting for HQ 2.0 is being written by Loz (Lawrence Whitaker) and I - with input from old hands like Nick Brooke!

Newt: cool

Jeff: Magic is being made simpler, more intuitive and more iconic.

Newt: I've seen the latest Playtest draft of HQ2. Is magic even more simpfied from the guidelines Robin gives there?

Jeff: We are making affinities easier. They are going to be the core Gloranthan runes. So no more affinities like Bless Children or Sheep.

It will be Air, Death, Magic, Mastery, that sort of stuff.

And you approach your god through one of the runes.

So you end up with much more individualized characters, while still keeping less stats.

Newt: Sounds cool

Jeff: Greg was really impressed. Said that is what he always wanted to do but could never figure out how.

Newt: We're playing a campaign in Black Horse County (which is as evil as it sounds) and magic was a real sticking point

Jeff: Wonderful!

Wizardry land.

With evil scriptures and grimoires.

Newt: One of the players who really likes figuring out the nuts and bolts, has a Demon Horse Wizard

and the whole character sheet is dominated by spells and magic abilities . It takes a good 10 mins for him to cast any thing , if he's trying to squeeze out the most from his character.

Jeff: Cool. Of course the Demons are in charge there. If I recall, Robin had us play Demon Horses, who were the bosses of our riders. The only folk we feared was Ethilrist.

Newt: 'Demons being in charge' well thats one view.....Big pact will hell by Arkati Sorcerers is probably the way we are playing it with Ethilrist about to try to Ascend to Arkat's Place just before the climatic final battle ,leaving our Pcs as his heirs

Jeff: Cool!

Just in time to get stomped on by everyone who hates you.

Newt: yup its kinda based on the Battle of Grunwald. So we've got incoming Grazelanders

Jeff: Yeah, they would hate you.

Newt: and possibly the Lunars

Jeff: They would distrust you....

Newt: since they twigged that the Pcs in our game helped the Argarath's escape from Whitewall

Jeff: Sounds like a blast.

Newt: One of the campaign secrets was that BHC was set up so far away from the Lunar Heartlands

Jeff: That make sense to me. Keep Ethilrist as far away as possible!

Newt: ...because Ethilrist being a good Arkati realised that the Lunars were the new Gbaji

Jeff: Sure I could buy that

Jeff: Is this using the old rules or the new?

Newt: We are using HQ1 since the campaign started Feb last year

Jeff: aha

The magic is much much easier in 2.0

As are the basic rules.

Newt: We've ended up simplifying things anyway

Jeff: Everyone does. That is everyone simplifies the old rules

My players (from Berlin and Seattle) love the new rules.

Newt: most people except Demon Horse player use the spell name ranking eg "Bloody Scrreaming sword of Death 5w" style of sorcery

Jeff: The way it works now is you master a scripture or grimoire with a specific list of spells.

Magic books, in other words.

So you might have "Ethilrist's Big Book of Summoning and Commanding Demons".

Jeff: The magic rules were hard to get right.

Jeff: basically everything is now connected to a Gloranthan rune.

Jeff: Divine magic focuses on a few runic affinities, spirit societies get spirit helpers associated with runes, and grimoires are typically focused on a rune.

Jeff: I hope you enjoy the new rules....

a lot of this has been done as a result of years of playtesting with HQ. Basically Neil and I kept lists of things that didn't work in the old rules and spent a lot of time thinking "how did we actually play this?"

Newt: Reading the rules this comes out, as many of the changes are in line with what came out of our actual play even some of Robin's more radical narrative stuff, like setting resistances to match the story and the whole pass/fail cylcle

Jeff: yeah. I didn't play HQ every week for 5 years and learn nothing.

Yep. Setting the resistance to match the story is IMO the key rule change.

Makes writing scenarios both easier and harder.

Pavis: Gateway to Glorantha

Newt: HeroQuest 2 will probably come across better when its properly laid out, we all found it a bit dense to read. Having to get through Robin's intro blurb about narratist gaming was hard

Jeff: Yeah. But the second book will show you how to use the first book in a specific Gloranthan setting.

And I think people will be happy with the setting We are trying to show people you can have many many genres of Gloranthan games.

Well, we are going back to Pavis as our "default" setting to re-introduce people to Glorantha.

And our goal is to have a book that needs only HQ 2.0. None of the other material will be needed.

Newt: That's bang on the money and what the gamer on the street has been asking for years

Jeff: That's what we thought.

This is the big plan Rick, Loz, Neil(Robinson)and I have been plotting.

We plan to do other books, but we want to start with Pavis and the River of Cradles.

And have it be open - so that folk can take it the direction they want. No need to play in the big meta-mythical epic campaign if that's not your cup of tea.

Newt: again bang on the money

Jeff: We are treating Pavis as one part Casablanca, one part Indiana Jones and one part Greggly wiggi-

ness.

Newt: and the only people you'll piss off and alienate with that plan are the obscure Gloranthan Scholar types.

Jeff: Yep. I mean I love my doctorate in Advance Gloranthology. But I don't think you should need a degree in it to play the damn game.

Newt: So whats going to happen to the HQ1 era stuff?

Jeff: We keep it in print. We show folk how to use it with the new rules.

The funny thing is most of the scenarios were written more in tune with HQ 2.0 than HQ 1

Newt: any plans for the Lunar Empire?

Jeff: Right now? None. There will be a treatment of the Seven Mothers in Pavis.

If Mark or Nick want to write stuff they are welcome to.

Right now Loz and I are focusing on Pavis and maybe a followup book of scenarios. And Greg and I will be doing Grand Argrath and maybe a book of heroquesting.

But we want to get the ball rolling, show folk how to do this, and then let folk write.

Newt: cool

Jeff: hope that sounds pretty good!

Newt: yes ☺

Jeff: Then there is the great map project which starts at Continuum.

Newt: great stuff, how much is all of this going to be based of the old Moon Designs Glorantha Classics books?

Jeff: OK, we are keeping a fair amount of Pavis & The Big Rubble. We are updating it, getting rid of old D&D stuff, fleshing out the factions and clans, describing in detail the major temples, and having all brand new scenarios.

We are keeping the neighborhoods, and the art - although we will have plenty of new stuff.

This will be a big book.

We are not having the Cradle.

Since this will be set BEFORE the Cradle.

Jeff: Loz is working on an Indiana Jones scenario with Neil. And some film noire type scenarios.

Gritty thief and bandit stuff.

Newt: Kinda the defining moments of Pavis for most people

Jeff: Yep.

I have the mythic backstory, which people can completely ignore if they want.

But there is a direct link between the Second Age and the Third Age in Pavis.

I recently ran Balastar's Barracks as a HQ 2.0 scenario for Gloranthan newbies.

I focused on the actual story of going into an underground ruin filled with trolls and zombies and spirits.

Had them terrified and nearly killed them all off.

They loved it.

Newt: Yeah Dungeon bashes with HQ take on a whole new meaning of EVIL

Jeff: Yep. Since now you can focus on the actual storyline twists and the atmospheric tension.

Newt: I could never get my head round the attitude of 'now we have this lovely story telling game called HQ, we won't be doing Dungeon bashes any more''

Jeff: Of course you can do dungeon bashes. It is a genre of stories.

But you don't have to worry about shit like mapping or the mechanical crap.

Cults of Sartar for HQ2

Jeff: Right now I am writing a HQ 2.0 supplement so nobody every has to try to make sense of Thunder Rebels and Storm Tribe again.

Taking the 500+ pages of that dense material and making 72-96 pages of easy, gamable source material.

More like Cults of Prax than Storm Tribe.

Newt: so will the old books still be available for 'fluff'?

Jeff: yep

Newt: are you going to cover clan rings? It always annoyed me that there was three different sources for clan rings, which actually are a very good gameable device, which should all fit together

Jeff: Sure. In one paragraph.

I am describing this as a gamable "Report on the Orlanth" from KoS.. Way back when I took the first stab at doing what became TR, I wanted to take Report on the Orlanthi and then add gamable gloss.

Newt: I got the PDF's for Liber Newtus yesterday :)

Jeff: how do they look?

Newt: Gorgeous Mike Mason got a pro-layout person in and Simon Bray has done some very evocative art

Jeff: Well, I am pleased that Liber Newtus is coming out. And the Dara Happan book for continuum. And soon HQ 2.0, The Sartarites, and Pavis GtG.

probably the most productive Gloranthan period in 10+ years.

Newt: So whats happening with the Elf book and Men of the West and Distant shores ?

Jeff: Elf book needs art. And internally we need to decide if it needs to be upgraded to 2.0.

Same thing with Men of the West (which is pretty much done).

Distant Shores is an adventure, which means HQ2.0 ification is probably more important.

Dara Happa Stirs & Shreds of Light and Reason

Newt: BTW got Dara Happa Stirs yesterday, its in my work bag for the journey in/home

I'm several shades of happy :)

Jeff: Great. I just have a pre-art pdf.

Newt: the art and maps are the best of any of the MRQ stuff

Jeff: Yeah. Loz and I went to the Pergamonmuseum here in Berlin and took tons of pictures.

Loz then went to the art director at Mongoose and said "this is what it should look like" and they used Greg maps. Greg told Loz to throw away the original city maps they made for Loz and Greg made new ones and a lot of my shit ended up in it as well.

Newt: Its great

Newt: I loved Glorious Reascent of Yelm,but it was a bit hard to read

Jeff: Yeah - we are hoping to get a new sketch of the Gods Wall for Continuum

Newt: I want that for my office wall get Mr Bray on that asap!

Jeff: he's overseeing it

Newt: cool

Jeff: Which remind me, I still need to finish my short article on Alkoth for Simon.

Newt: where's that ending up?

Jeff: Shreds of Light and Reason , a Continuum con fundraiser

Newt: aha

Jeff: My Alkoth article will probably surprise a few folk.

Like the fact that very few humans actually reside year round in Alkoth.

Newt: That doesn't surprise me

(but then again I've got Dara Happa Stirs :))

Jeff: yep. Greg and I gave Loz a lot of insight into Alkoth for that book.

It is a nightmare place of hungry devouring demons. No blue sky above Alkoth, no stars either.

Newt: I had the pleasure to play the Alkoth Scenario from Dara Happa Stirs with Loz at Furnace last year. We had to play though the whole bloody 'to enter you must die' entry into Alkoth.

Jeff: A city of the dead.

Yep. It is the Hellmouth.

And Shargash is the guardian of hell.

Newt: that set the whole tone of the adventure and was one of the most uncomfortable moments in an RPG game ever

'oh he's going to kill my character, I know its only a game but he's going to kill my character!!'

I am so running DH Stirs with my home group

Jeff: wonderful

Yeah, Alkoth is a crazy evil Mesoamerican entry to hell. Which is wonderful.

Jeff: Try running DH Stirs with Heroquest 2.0

Newt: I think that will be what my players demand

Jeff: It will be a lot easier.Even Claudia - who hated HQ - likes HQ 2.0

Fixing the Wrong

By Newt Newport

This adventure write up is very much bare bones. It provides the story and the relationships between the characters without dwelling on the detail, which the Narrator can either make up or get from the appropriate source books (Dragon Pass, Thunder Rebels, Storm Tribe, Imperial Hand Books one and two). For example, the adventure is set in two tulas, the precise location of which is up to the Narrator. If you are running this as a one shot, 'some where in Sartar' will suffice.

The situation that is presented to the players is a tragedy, that they can either intensify the resurfacing of old hatreds and hurts or find some sort of peaceful and happy ending. How they deal with the adventure is up to them and if the Narrator comes across a situation not covered by this framework they are encouraged to be flexible and go with the direction the players suggest. The scene structure provided is just a suggestion.

The adventure write up assumes that the player heroes are either Lunars or Heortlings. If Lunars then they will be attached to the Bleak House mission, who as part of their Imperial service are charged with the conversion of the Birch Shaper Clan. If Heortlings the they will either be members of the Birch Shaper Clan or representatives of a neighboring clan who have been sent to help deal with the sensitive problem that Jelhena's marriage proposal brings.

The Situation

Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

"Ten years ago the Hazel Owl clan was decimated by the Lunar College of Magic for insurrection against the Lunar Empire. Scarlet robed Comet Seers brought down meteors from the sky dome, devastating the clan's land, the tula, shattering their clan spirit, the Wyter, and killing their chief Vargast the Pure and over two thirds of the people living there. An eighteen year old Crontas Milkfed survived this holocaust by cowering under the skirts of his lover in the Tula of the neighbouring Birch Shapers clan. His fifthteen year old sister, Jelhena the Gentle, was driven insane by Lunes that rode down from the Dark Side of the Red Moon on the meteors and fled into the wilderness.

Now the pitiful survivors of the 'Star Fall' huddle round Bleak House, a Seven Mothers missionary House on the edge of their old Tula. The missionaries, charged with their care and conversion, are a staff of six priests and priestesses under the Priest Juhan the Kind. Also, when opportunity arises, the missionaries try to convert the Birch Shapers to the Lunar Way.

The Birch Shapers are undecided about the Lunar philosophy of 'We are all Us' no matter how kindly and gently Juhan and his staff present the universally of the Red Goddess. They do, however, in the name of peace, obey the Orlanth ban and pay tribute to the Lunar occupiers. The example of the Hazel Owl clan is still a daily reminder, as clan hunters report that, even twenty years on, their old Tula is still desolate and lifeless. The Birch Shapers, being a clan of artisans and crafters, sit on the fence and behave themselves hoping the Lunar war machine leaves them alone. All except Crontas, who has matured and hardened into the leader of the clan Fyrd and weapon thanes. A grim devotee of Humakt, he dedicates his life to death, especially the death of the Lunar Missionaries.

His sister in her madness has found enlightenment in the Lunar Way. Although now known as Jelhena the Hag, she thinks a match between her and the eighteen year old son of the Birch Shaper's chief will unite the two clans, bringing the Hazel Owl clan back from the dead and with it all the people she loved who died in the Star Fall. The desperate Hazel Owl survivors support her as do the Lunar Missionaries, although their aim is a conversion.

Meanwhile out in the blasted lands of the Hazel Owl Tula something is wrong. Broo have been sighted round the old village at the heart of the tula and both the staff of Bleak House and the Birch Shaper's Clan Council are worried."

Narrator's overview

The Wrong that must be fixed

By invoking destructive magic to punish the Hazel Owls the Lunars have damaged the world and let Chaos into it. The focus of this Chaos is a reborn Vargast, who is the warped and twisted leader of a gang of savage Broo who now reside in the Hazel Owl Tula. No one knows this yet and it is likely to be the subject of much woe and upset once it is revealed.

Jelhena in her own mad misguided way seeks to heal the hurt by marrying the young son of the chief of the Birch Shapers. In her eyes this would unite the clans, bring back the Hazel Oak Wyter and life back to the old tula. Because Jelhena has been converted to the Lunar Way in a drastic and life saving way, she off course expects that the Birch Shapers would also convert en mass as part of the healing process.

Her brother seeks to burn out the wound by eliminating the Lunar Mission and, when he learns of it, the Broos in the old Tula. He has very little support

amongst the peaceful Birch Shapers and, if the heroes are Heortling, will try to enlist their aid. With or without them Crontas and the clan Weapon Thanes will eventually go on the attack, bringing bloody violence. As a Humakt he long ago severed the ties between him and family, so to him Jelhena is not his sister but rather a Lunar traitor who must die in the 'cleansing'.

The Birch Shapers are sitting on the fence. As a clan of crafters lead by an Issaries devotee, they are not a warrior clan (which is reason why if Heortling the heroes have been called in) and are weighing up the best option. On the one hand they respect their Orlanthi traditions, whilst on the other they have a sneaking admiration for the Lunar Way.

The missionaries of Bleak House would of course like to show everyone that the Lunar Way fixes all wrongs.

Cast List

This list of non-player characters is divided into two.

Main characters: these play a significant role in the adventure. The player heroes may be the 'stars' of the show, but these are the supporting actors. They are described very simply with a one or two line description, occupation, homeland and magic keywords and any significant equipment they may have.

Extras: these are the faceless and nameless characters who are overshadowed by the heroes and the main characters. They are given a one line description. Although all their professional abilities are not noted they can be assumed to be at 17 with non-professional abilities at 13.

Main Characters

Jelhena the Hag

Once pretty and gentle, her harsh life scavenging to survive post Starfall has made her tough and hag like. Driven insane during the attack, she has used it to her advantage and has 'seen' the light of the Lunar Way.

Heortling Begger 5w2

Practioner of Five Moon Spirits tradition 15w

Save the Hazel Owl clan at all costs! 5w2

Cronelike 18

Noble of the Hazel Owl Clan 5w

Crontas the Milkfed

In his youth he was an indulgent playboy. Now he is a hard bitten warrior who embraces death and vengeance.

Heortling Warrior 5w2

Humakt Devotee 15w

Hate Lunars 5w2

Driven to avenge the Hazel Owls 5w2

Sword of Vargast the Pure +8

Vargast the Unclean

A tall and muscular bull headed broo, whose facial features resemble those of Vargast when he was human. Bitter and twisted he hates all life.

Broo Warlord 5w2

Initiate of Thed 18

Former Orlanthi 5

Foul and smelly 5w, Viscous 5w

Juhan the Kind

A kind hearted soul from Glamour who wants to spread the wonder and comfort of his home city to the rough backwaters of the empire. Despite the hardships he still stays wonderfully jolly and optimistic about bringing the word to the barbarians.

Priest of the Seven Mothers 15w

Caring 5w, Optimistic 5w

Lord Borg Goldsmile

A pompous Dara Happan lord, exiled to the smelly bogs of Sartar for some imagined slight against a social superior. Suffice to say he hates it here and takes every opportunity to take it out on the locals. Especially dislikes Crontas, and would love to defeat him in battle or in hand to hand combat.

Dara Happan Noble 5w

Devotee of Yanafal Tarnils 5w2

Pompous 5w , Dislike Heortlings 18 , Dislike Rainy weather 18

Selema Henwife

Popular chief of the Birch Shapers, she is a jolly sort with a will of iron. The clan's main god talker.

Devotee of Issaries 5w

Chief of Birch Shaper Clan 5w

Merchant 5w

Iron will 5w, Jolly 5w.

Sunbeam, Elf leader, Keeper of the First Picture Book

A happy sunny elf whose bubbly disposition makes her the ideal candidate to deal with outsiders. But don't let her personality fool you as she knows how to wield magic and an elf bow to make sure that outsiders who violate the forest never leave.

Devotee of Aldrya 5w3

Elf Warrior Priestess 5w3

Happy and outgoing 5w2

Extras

Juhan's staff, six Seven mothers initiates. Mans the twice daily soup kitchen, tends the sick in the hospital, assists Juhan in magical rituals and wields a mean scimitar when needed.

The Hazel Owl refuges. Down trodden and pitiful, they are forgetting their lunar heritage and gradually embracing the Lunar Way.

1st Iron Stone Phalanx, a battalion of twenty five men who followed their lord into exile.

Crontas's Weapon Thanes. Twenty five warriors dressed in chainmail and armed with longswords and round shield. Proud ,haughty, consider themselves part of an elite few and better than the soft crafters and farmers. Totally loyal to Crontas.

Birch Clan. Mainly crafters and sheep farmers. The men can be mustered into a two hundred man fyrd, armed with slings, swords and shields.

Birch Clan Ring. Seven clan elders who assist and advice Selema.

Jempa the Young. Selema's bright sparky and sarcastic eighteen year old son. He hunts, he plays with his friends, he hasn't taken on the responsibilities of manhood. He is so pleased that some old hag wants to marry him NOT!

Vargast's Broo Gang, fifty members strong, dressed in dirty rags and wielding diseased weapons, mainly axes and swords, scrounged from the wreckage of the village.

Sunbeam's elf helpers. Initially these number about twenty but more come running quickly if needed. Super elves from the before time, these have 5w2 in their abilities.

Locations

Here are the locations that play a significant part in the adventure. An overview and feel is given for each, with it left up to the Narrator to provide specific details.

Bleak House

This solid timber fort sits on a hill at the very edge of the Hazel Oak Tula overlooking the Oxbow ford. It is defended by a stockade and mud ditch filled with poisoned stakes. In the main building live Juhan and his staff. As well as their quarters there is a hospital and a temple to the Seven Mothers. An adjoining one story building houses the Iron Side Phalanx. Beside this is a parade ground which they endlessly drill on.

Outside the stockade, huddled around the fort, is a community of about 50 tents which house around 200 men, women and children of the Hazel Owl clan. These survivors are fed by regular supplies of grain from the Empires 'Hearts and Minds' effort. Many are firmly on the way to becoming Lunarised.

Oxbow Ford

The river Oxbow divides the two tula and this ford is the natural place to cross the river. On the Hazel Owl side there is no vegetation or cover, except for a few boulders fragments of the meteors that fell to earth during the Star Fall. Bleak house looms in the distance on its hill, a kilometer from the ford. On the Birch Shapers side, the landscape is dominated by dense bushes that reach up to head height. A dirt track goes through the ford and continues to the villages at the heart of each Tula in each direction.

The Hazel Owl Tula

This place feels wrong. Any hunters will immediately be on edge. The bleak muddy and misty landscape is dotted with craters and the stumps of burnt trees. Nothing grows here and it frequently rains 'Orlanth's Tears' as the god weeps over the lost land. At the heart of this ruin is the Hazel Owl village itself, guarded grimly by human heads on spikes. The stockade is broken and most of the long houses are burnt to their foundations, but the Chief's round house still stands with half its roof intact. This is where Vargast and his broo gang make their home. Outside the Chief's round house is a three metre tall statue made of hazel wood in the shape of an owl, the head cracked and splintered. This was the home of the clan's Wyter.

The Birch Shapers Tula

The mirror image of its neighbour. Lush verdantly vegetated hills, blessed with Orlanth's sweat rains

and Ernalda's beauty the tula is a peaceful place full of sheep and happy people protected by the Lunars. The only challenge travellers are likely to get are from Crontas and his guards who patrol the land looking for strangers and picking fights with Lunars and their sympathizers.

The village is a collection of about one hundred long houses gathered round a large temple to Issaries, where the Chief and her family make their home. In the surrounding fields there is a small temple to Ernalda, which includes a shrine to Banatar the Farmer. At the very edge of the cultivated fields, where they give way to woodlands, is an overgrown and weed filled field in which is the locked and closed temple to Orlanth.

Still Green

This is part of the Otherworld, which the heroes can travel to using a HeroQuest to find the lost 'First Picture Book' in Scene 3. It exists in the Vinkortling Age, a time of strife, when Orlanth was exiled from the Storm Tribe and his son King Vinkort struggled to have him restored. It is an Aldraymi (Elf) wood that grows on the slope of the Spike, so is full of strong trees, vibrant flowers and pungent herbs. The Children of Aldraya live here in large numbers – so as well as Elves there are dryads and runnersp. The heroes are at -10 to their magic here since it is such an alien place, while the aldraymi get a +10 bonus to their magic and physical abilities because they are attuned to the forest and know how to draw on its vibrant energy and make best use of its undergrowth and tangled branches.

See Thunder Rebels P45 for more

Scenes

The adventure is organised into scenes. These are merely suggestions to the give the Narrator the idea of how to structure the story. In actual play the players can and will come up with ideas that require the quick thinking Narrator to create new scenes or amend the ones presented here.

Scene 1 A Poor woman's way

Jelhena arrives at the door of the heroes (Bleak House if the group are Lunars, the Chief's Hall if the group are Heortlings). She outlines her plan to unite the two clans through marriage to Jempa the Young. If the players are Heortlings this triggers much debate, with Crontas opposing the match outright and accusing his sister of being a Lunar traitor. Heortling Heroes must decide who they want to support in the mater, since both Crontas and Jelhena ask for their aid. Meanwhile in the Lunar camp, Juhan sees this as an ideal opportunity to bring the two clans together under the Red Moon and involves the heroes by asking them to escort her to the Birch Shapers clan – where the rest of the scene plays out pretty much the same.

Scene 2 The Marriage tests

Selema is no fool. On the one hand she doesn't want to unnecessarily anger Jelhena's Lunar backers. On the other hand she realises that Jempa isn't exactly thrilled about the match, so she proposes a series of 'Marriage Tests'.

At first these are pretty harmless physical competitions that the heroes get involved in on behalf of either Jelhena or as the opposition. Mud wrestling, running to Oxbow ford and back and tree jumping competitions are all laid on. The heroes may suspect that Selema is playing for time, which she is.

Then the final test. Selema boldly proclaims before the whole village.

"There is an evil in the heart of the old Hazel Owl village. The gods will favour those who drive it out and that will be the final say on the matter. Gather up ten warriors and make your way to that desolate place"

Two groups of warriors will assemble. One led by Jehena, made up of Iron Side Phalanx soldiers and Lord Goldsmile, and another made up of Crontas and his weapon thanes. The heroes join which ever team they are supporting and the race to cleanse the blasted Hazel Owl tula is on.

This leads to a confrontation between the groups and Vargast's Broo. The actual confrontation of Vargast should be full of drama and tension, as his offspring work out that it is their father warped by chaos that they face.

Scene 3 Into the Still Green

The ever crafty Selema, although swayed by the results of the fight against Vargast, has yet another test.

"Before the Hazel Owl clan was disbanded they would lend us a magical treasure once a year. Called the 'First Picture Book', it would inspire our artisans to make some of their finest work. Those that bring me this lost magical treasure will surely have the favour of the gods and the hand of my son!"

The book itself was destroyed in the attack on the Hazel Owl Tula, but fortunately some of the Hazel Owl clan survivors, which include Crontas, can remember how the book was initially gained by the clan.

"The Bright Woman traveled to the Elf Wood of Stillgreen. Ignoring all physical threats to her person she employed her intellect and impressed the Elves of that place. They presented her with the First Picture Book. She returned to her people and shared this treasure,

teaching them to express themselves through pictures where before they only had spoken words."

To the Hazel Owls the Bright Woman is a semi-divine clan ancestor and Crontas' supporters know the HeroQuest rituals to travel to the Still Green to acquire the book. In fact it is a clan secret that this ritual was enacted once a year. After the book had been loaned to the Birch Shapers, as a gesture of friendship, and returned to the clan it always faded from the mundane world and had to be regained the next year.

Juhan, being a good Chronomancer – a school of Lunar philosophy that studies other cultures myths and tries to find representations of the Lunar Goddess in them – knows this local myth. He is convinced the the Bright Woman is Sedenya herself! This knowledge, right or wrong, gives him and the Lunar heroes access to the HeroQuest itself.

After enacting the ritual to cross over to the Hero Plane, the HeroQuest comprises of two stations.

Ignoring all the physical threats of Still Green. The giant animals, the man eating plants and the Elf War bands. There is actual danger involved, but heroes who react with violence will be immediately attacked with the full wrath of the forest and ultimately ejected from the Hero Plane. Heroes who shrug off the attacks move successful to the next station.

Impressing the Elves. In a sunny glade the heroes encounter the personable Sunbeam. She encourages some display of intellect or artistry from the heroes. If successfully impressed, a hard task against a resistance of 5w2, she gifts them with the "First Picture Book". If unimpressed she shakes her head in disappointment and the Heroes are escorted from the forest and the Hero Plane.

Scene 4 Gather your forces

Either way the last scene determines the outcome of the Jelhena's marriage proposal. The side that has lost immediately denounces the decision and vows to eliminate their opponents. This leads to a gathering of forces, which the heroes are charged with completing. Not only are the heroes preparing their immediate allies, but also convincing sympathizers within the other sides camp, that it is time to stop siting on the fence and throw their lot in with the heroes.

Scene 5 The Battle of Oxbow ford

Oxbow ford is the obvious place for a battle, and both sides magically and physically prepare for it.

The rocky terrain on the Lunar side of the river does not favor the Iron Side Phalanx, so Juhan proposes a 'Spirit Hunt' where the heroes magically target and take out the principle leaders of the enemy, such as Crontas. Besides, Juhan thinks that proving Lunar magical superiority, rather than a display of bloodshed, will be more effective in converting the Birch Shapers.

The bushes on the Heortling side of the river, really favour the skirmishing tactics of the Birch Shaper Fyrd. Once the Phalanx and any other troops the Lunars have mustered have been dealt with the Clan Heroes move in to take out the leaders in single combat. Depending on how much support Crontas has gathered amongst the clan he may be victorious at the battle, leading to the destruction of Bleak house and the liberation of the Hazel Owl refugees. If moderates like Selema are still running the show, the aftermath of the battle is a quick diplomatic visit to Bleak House to smooth things over.

Using a Charm

By Greg Stafford

“Mother of Kolat, we’re here for the teaching.”

“Welcome, friends. Put your gifts on the Rock Table, and sit around here, where you can see me.”

Kolat, little boy, come to mama. Kolat, little girl, come to papa.

Kolat, dear lover, come to me here, and hold me in your arms to share.[1]

“Thank you, dear one, for coming to speak through me to these young ones.

“What is the First Rule?”

“The world is alive.

“Correct Eren. What does that mean?”

“All things have a spirit in them.”

“Is that right Yaran?”

“I thought only some things had spirits. Others have other sources of their vitality.”

“Yes, very good. What are those others called?”

“Enemies.”

“Yes, that is one term for them Eren. But let the others answer too. But are they *really* enemies? Is Voria our foe?”

“No. They are allies.”

“Those other vital sources are rivals to our beloved Kolat. But enemies are those who would harm us. The gods and their followers may be inferior to us and jealous for it, but they are not enemies. ‘Rivals’ is a better word. But to get back to the original question: what are the other powers called?”

“Gods and sorcerers.”

“Souls and Essences.”

“That’s more right. Souls and essences. Are they alive like us?”

“Sort of. Alive differently.”

“Correct. They come from lesser worlds. They imitate true life. The Ganval folk say they are not really live, but half alive, more similar to the undead. I don’t agree with the analysis. If you ever see a lich stumbling after you it’ll be plain the gods are more like us than them.”

1 This is the teacher’s invocation song.

“Can we call the essence gods to help us then?”

“We can. You know the story of how Barkan got his people free.[2] But it is a waste. It’s better to work in harmony.

“Has anyone heard from any spirits since we met last?”

“The badger again.”

“A rope talked to me.”

“A dandelion scared me.”

“Good. You are all safe from those. Tell me what you did when these things happened.”

“I sang to it.” [all three together]

“And you sang….?

Tell me your name, what do you do?
What do you want me to do for you?

“Good. And you got answers? Good. Don’t’ tell me. I don’t need to know. That’s personal, to you. But to recollect how we work with them, remember these things:

“You must touch the charm where it resides.[3] You must call its name to alert it to you.[4] You must give it the command. Then it will do what you’ve said.”

“Remember that they are confused easily. They can only do what they can do. If you tell your flower spirit to attack someone it will be released, but do nothing because it doesn’t know how to attack. Your sharpening spirit can’t heal you, and so on. So be sure to work with them in advance. If you have experience with them they will be quicker and more efficient.

“Now go back to those that spoke to you. You can use the house again for the summoning circle, and I’ll protect you here. Are we ready for that? Good…”

2 Barkan liberated his people by summoning essences to do his bidding, and thereby escaped detection from Hakakarl the sorcerer.

3 Contact with skin is required

4 Only advanced spirit users can do this mentally, without audible verbal calls.

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A mysterious meteor in the Wastes

"Using a Charm" by Greg Stafford
A Kolat shaman explains how magic works.

"Rymes and Ribbolds Royall: the kings and queens of the Durulz"
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"Homeland: Kralori" by Mark Galeotti

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A HeroQuest Scenario

"Interview with Jeff Richard"
Contains lots of info about the upcoming HeroQuest 2ed and future Gloranthan supplements.

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Feature - Mythology and Glorantha

"Tale Theft" By David Dunham
"Location mythlets" & "Lookout hill" by Jane Williams
"The Seduction of Tarahelera" by Jeff Richard

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