

HEARTS in GLORANTHA

Issue 2

Winter 2009

Creature Feature!

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In this issue:

Songs of Rebellion

Lunar (Darjinni) Herobands and fiction by Mark Galeotti

Happiness is Dragonewt Shaped

a RQ3/HQ adventure by John Ossoway

When the snow lay round-about

fiction by Jane Williams

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hearts in GLORANTHA

ISSUE 2 WINTER 2009

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Hearts in Glorantha blog

heartsinglorantha.ukrpgblogs.net

For previews, news, reviews and other bits.

Forum

d101games.co.uk/forum/hig

For feedback and discussion

Submission guidelines

See the Back Page of the Magazine.

Thank yous

John Ossoway for much help and advice on producing this issue.

Gilien, Ilkka, & Xavier for answering the call for art with such gusto.

Paul King and Mick Red for vocal support and feedback on issue one.

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EDITORIAL

Harpies, Aldryami and Jack O'Bears O my!

It seems such a short time ago that I was calling for content for the first issue, but now here is issue two. If the response to the call for issue one was a positive wave, issue two was an overwhelming tsunami. Within two weeks of asking, 60 pages of this issue had already been submitted!! This proves once again that Hearts in Glorantha has an energy all of its own and that the fan community is still vibrantly alive.

I saw more evidence of this at Continuum and Furnace conventions held in the UK during July and October respectively. Continuum (and the Convulsion series before it) has always been a stronghold of Gloranthan activity, and this year was no exception despite the convention's widening appeal. There was a pre-release version of HeroQuest 2.0 on sale, plus a table full of Glorantha themed books and games commissioned as fund raisers especially for the Con. There were games of HeroQuest and numerous seminars about Glorantha and the new HQ with panels populated by Greg Stafford (who told me the secret origin of the Ducks) and other Gloranthan luminaries. The highlight for me was the release of the first issue of HiG. We had a launch party on the first night of the convention and I must give a big thank you to Madeleine Eid and Jane Williams for the Gloranthan themed nibbles and David Scott for being master of ceremonies. It really got HiG off to a good start, that and selling out of the short print run! I would recommend any Gloranthophile to make the trip to the next Continuum to be held in 2010. Furnace in Sheffield was a much quieter affair in comparison. This was mainly due to its focus on table top roleplaying with its seventy odd attendees busy gaming all weekend. Some of HiG's regular contributors either ran or wrote a full weekend worth of gaming, which filled up despite stiff competition from 'new games on the block'. Its heartening to see that Glorantha if presented in an accessible and fun manner still has a place in the affections of gamers outside the traditional Glorantha cons. Lots of fun was had and we'll definitely be organising another Glorantha track at Furnace 2009.

Back to the 'zine. This issue's main feature is to look at some of the non-humans who live in Glorantha, showing that even the most monstrous have a depth of background that matches the more popular cultures.

David O. Lloyd does a scary job with a group of Sorcery using Harpies. A chilling cult and encounter group, that is far from the usual straight forward racial write up. To my mind the humble Jack O'Bear has always seemed such a silly monster. No more will I think this after reading John Harding's "From the Bestiary of Ashkoran the Tamer". Talking of things that look silly at first glance, yet yield tragedy and a seriousness on a closer look, Steward Stansfield is back with the second part of his Duck Kings and Queens list, with the account of the life and funeral of Good King Thunder. Glorantha's Elves, the Aldryami, get a look in with Shannon Appelcline's account of the process that led to the Mongoose RuneQuest Elf book and the upcoming HeroQuest Elf book. It's a testament to the dedication and attention to detail that Gloranthan fans go to get their ideas published, despite the ups and downs of the publishers. We plunge the watery depths of 'Deeper' a Merman city and learn "Why the Ocean is foggy" courtesy of Nick Davison. "Happiness is Dragonewt shaped" is our scenario for this issue, with both stats for RuneQuest 3 and HeroQuest. At the heart of the mystery is a Dragonewt with its strange ways. Its author John Ossoway is also responsible for the enigmatic Dragonewt eye that graces this issue's cover. Continuing our commitment to cultural diversity, Lunar Master Mark Galeotti provides us with 'Songs of Rebellion'. Jeff Richards writes in depth about the Dundalos tribe of Sartar. A splinter cult of Lanbril the God of Thieves, Landbril the Survivor is detailed by Stephen Mcinness. Jane Williams reminds us that this is the Winter issue with her Christmas inspired Kallyr Starbrow story.

I'm convinced that, despite reports to the contrary, Glorantha is alive and well in the hearts of gamers. The warm reception that issue one received, spurred me on to get my act together to do Issue 2. As long as the community is behind me then everything is in place for a long run.

Thanks

Newt

Dec 2008.

YUSHARGOS

A Darjiini city, by Mark Galeotti

Yushargos is generally known as the ‘floating city’ by the Darjiini, or the ‘midge-swamp city’. It is hard to be sure whether this is more a result of its mid-swamp location or its proximity to Alkoth, but this small city of just over 4000 souls is little more than a collection of house-barges and temporary reed and wicker tumbledowns. Between them are laid corduroy paths of cut logs, which are trodden into the warm, sticky mire, only to be covered by a new layer of logs every season. The locals also use coracles and rope-bridges strung between islands and barges.

The usually placid Oslir is strangely unpredictable here, something Dara Happans ascribe to Oslira’s disgust at the squalid life-style of the Yushargosi (very few Children of the Sun deign to live here), while the Darjiini simply tap their chests and refer cryptically to ‘Chovissi’s Hidden Children’. Every few years, the waters of the river build up and then rush through the swamp in what is known as Oslira’s Bore. Then, the fixed buildings are generally washed away, but the barges ride the muddy swell and then reform somewhere else. Once the waters have subsided, new channels have been cut and new islands formed, of rich, fertile mud, on which

new shanties are hastily built and by which barges are moored. The city is thus a major rice producing centre, and also exports a variety of swamp plants and meats, from the mighty gan-gan palm leaves favoured by Takenegi’s courtiers for their fan-boys, to rich swampfrog steaks.

The city adopts a similar response to the Alkothi, abandoning their islands and evading the berserker war parties in the side channels and deep reed beds. The swamp is also home to a rich and wide variety of lethal wildlife and animal spirits, from biting dzedze insects to mighty Oslir sharks and djedje crocodiles, which deters pursuit by those who don’t know the songs and Thirteen Secret Handsigns with which to placate them. As a result, the city’s garrison, the Wet Island Runners, exists only on paper. An Agsargon shaman is given the entirely ceremonial role of its manimat-suvru or warband chief, but even the formal roll of the regiment, kept on papyrus in the mighty three-story Barge of Manimat which is the city’s municipal centre, reflects this. It lists the complement of the garrison as Warrior Crocodile, Warrior Little-Biter, Warrior Swampsnake, Warrior Shark, Warrior Poisonfrog and Warrior Mouthfish.

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ITUNKALA'S TRADE

By John Harding

Ho Wahani! Ho Endrawaha! Friends it has come to pass...
Yellow stripes on my face I crave; Blue Sable slaves I crave, the end of
Igmu I crave.
Friends, I Itunkala , on the raiding trail I go.
Behold my steed Washin the bull,
Behold me Itunkala on stomper, snorter, Eiritha's son! Washin!
Me a man myself riding, me , Itunkala of the Flower Bison, first in war!
Friends, a bone sword I carry to slash my foes, a stone spear I carry to
pierce them.
A sword to cut Igmu of the Blue sables: a spear to pierce the Blue sables.
Sables with sword I am coming; Sables with a spear I am coming:
In a warlike manner I ride!
Igmu your mounts I crave,
Igmu your women I crave,
Blue Sables! Slaves you will be!

Friends, Igmu of the Blue Sable I fought him.
Friends, Endrawaha, Igmu I feared not.
My bison I rode no fear did I feel.
Horn wearer !! I Itunkala of the Flower Bison
First cut I counted; first strike on Igmu!
Thirty sables I took, Igmu's head I took.
Behold thirty sables I am bringing! Ten slaves I am bringing!
Look the head of Igmu! Igmu's head I am bringing!
Young women of the Flower Bison stop your singing
Your flowers will not fade! Prepare a feast. A meal of sable meat!
Friends, Endrawaha! Eirithani! Igmu I vanquished!
But friends where is my ear?
In the camp of the Sables. A good trade!

(Based very loosely on a Brule Sioux children's song)

LANBRIL THE SURVIVOR

By Stephen McGinness

The existence of an all encompassing cult of Lanbril has been questioned in Thieves Arm (published by the Unspoken Word) by no less a personage than Greg Stafford. Everything in the article “Behind Lanbril’s Mask” makes sense including the practicalities of the need for organised worship making a widespread organised thieves cult virtually impossible.

My Glorantha Varies. In my Glorantha part of Lanbril’s magic is to achieve a dispersed worship – leveraging power from ever increasing pyramids of power. The entities who worship Lanbril are the small cult spirits like Black Fang. Or perhaps the ones worshipped by those small cult spirits. Lanbril had to find new ways of receiving worship if he was to survive and has done this by scavenging second hand worship.

This article explores the entity of Lanbril, how he may have discovered a purpose during the Great Darkness and how he put that magic to surviving after the Great Darkness and he lost his base of worshippers.

History

Kin to Grandfather Mortal and robbed of his rightful place in the God Plane, Lanbril aided mankind to survive during the Great Darkness. He provided his followers with the skills and magic necessary to avoid their enemies and to take what they needed to survive. After the Great Compromise those skills and magics that aided in the fight against darkness and the scavenging of food and material were less in demand. His worshippers turned to more heroic figures like Orlanth or those who could encourage the growth of food from the land like Ernalda. An abundance of food and shelter saw his decline and he became lesser. Those who needed his magic were those rejected by other gods or those who hid from authority and stole through avarice rather than need. His worship became despised and his worshippers condemned as beggars, thieves and liars. As civilised society would not condone the organised worship of Lanbril who provided magic that enabled thieves to prosper, Lanbril had to change the way in which he gained power from worship, making use of the strategies that allowed humanity to survive the Darkness to allow him to survive in the shadows of the God Plane. His contribution to the survival of mankind through the Darkness ignored, forgotten and often denied. His worship is indirect through intermediaries and agents. Until the clan discovered Lanbril the Survivor, no-one had directly worshipped Lanbril since the Great Darkness.

Lanbril in Pavis

When the Trolls finally took dominion of the city of Pavis, there were strongholds that sheltered the remaining human population and these were defended by followers of Pavis, Flintnail and others. One clan saw those places as death traps, places where the trolls would know where to come to find and kill you. They believed that the key to survival was stealth and mobility. Initially the clan did not prosper. Their battle magic was ineffective in their new context, their rune magic more likely to draw trolls down upon them than to solve their problems. It is difficult to hide from trolls when darkness is their friend.

The clan’s survival was ensured by the wisdom and insight of the clan chief, Salvan the Dark. He caught two thieves stealing from the clan. He recognised that the magics that made thievery possible would be appropriate to their current situation. He promised them their lives if they would teach their magic or a painful death if they would not. The thieves uncovered their worship of ShadowWalk who provided them with magic to hide from both normal and magical pursuit.

Clan heroes quested to uncover more lore, greater magics, that they needed to save their people. Salvan led the heroquesting efforts and it was he who saw through the shadows to Lanbril behind and ultimately saved his people. The direct worship of Lanbril allowed the clan to develop the knowledge provided by the thieves. Salvan and his followers were amazed as they uncovered not the thieving

depths of a depraved deity but his importance as a saviour of mankind and as an enemy of the Dark.

Over time Lanbril became the dominant cult among the clan. He allowed them to survive the darkness, confound the sensing abilities of the trolls and avoid the divination magic of the dark troll gods.

The clan prospered. They avoided the trolls and other Rubble denizens and stole what they needed to survive. The clan proved their worth to other Rubble survivors by braving the dangers of darkness and chaos in the rubble to link the isolated, wall-bound human communities and as a source of food and other vital resources necessary for these communities to survive.

Unfortunately the instinctively secretive nature of the clan ensured that their secret worship did not become common knowledge to other human survivors. Centuries of stealth and secrecy are not easily broken, when the troll dominion was broken and the City Outside the Walls built the clan did not immediately come out of hiding. They now find themselves worshipping what is considered a thief cult whose worship is rewarded with painful punishment.

The clan want to evangelise Lanbril the Survivor but face opposition from Real City authorities, thief cultists (who are worried about losing their magic) and the trolls (who do not want the abilities of the clan to be made widespread).

Lanbril and current politics

Lunars - the clan feels they are being pushed towards the invaders as the only safe place. The Lunar pantheon is inclusive and they believe it is possible that they might be made welcome there. The taint of chaos is the only thing that currently holds them back, chaos was second only to the trolls as enemies of the clan.

Pavis cult – the clan receive covert support from some elements within the temple but the hierarchy do not currently wish to share the glory of surviving the Dominion with another cult. There is scepticism among many in the temple that Lanbril was responsible for these people surviving or that they are the same people who lived in the Rubble during the Dominion. Nor does the temple wish to provide a veneer of respectability to the other worshippers of thief cults.

Trolls – the clan are enemies of the darkness. This cult of Lanbril has devoted itself to hiding from the trolls and stealing from them. They will kill trolls if they believe that they can do so safely but more often will distract, mislead and steal.

Orlanthi – Lanbril is part of the Storm pantheon and the clan wish to reclaim Lanbril's place in the Storm

Ring of Orlanth. The clan feel resentful towards the Orlanthi and other members of the Orlanthi pantheon due to the centuries of misrepresentation and persecution of their deity. They believe recognition from Orlanth is key to the rehabilitation of their cult.

Aldryami – the elves were just as dangerous as the trolls during the Dominion but were at least open to trading material for food. As such the clan have a neutral attitude towards the Aldryami in general but there have been times when elves joined the cult to gain its anti-troll magics.

Mostali – Despite their friendliness towards the Pavic humans, the dwarves do not trust the clan. These humans are outside the plan and as likely to disrupt their efforts as to advance them. The dwarves recognise the value of the Lanbril cult but believe that the politics are for humans, not dwarves.

The Clan of Lanbril the Survivor

The clan does not consist of a large number of people. There are around 200 people who were of Empire of the Wyrms Friends (EWF) stock mixed with the local Praxian population. The clan was not of the upper echelons of Pavic society, one of the reasons they did not find themselves safe behind walls when the trolls broke through.

There are four extended families: the Fratendilli, the Dorantassi, the Berenzatari and the Sikoritessi. Each family lives in a semi-nomadic fashion lead by a high priest of Lanbril. The families only meet in numbers in set locations on cult holy days.

During the Dominion, the small family groups had to keep moving not just to avoid being found by the trolls and chaos monsters but to enable them to scavenge for sufficient food and goods that could be traded for food. Many family groups have left extended family meets and never been seen again. Members of a group who are too old or too sick and injured will often leave the group to undertake the Lanbril heroquest, risking their life to steal health and vitality from someone else in the Hero Plane. This rarely succeeds but has a detrimental effect on the rehabilitation of the cult among other cults.

After the Dominion was broken, the clan continued to live their separate nomadic lives. No-one is sure they exist except those who spend extended periods in the Rubble and either trade with people from the clan or are contacted by them when raiding in the Rubble (usually to obtain some obscure item or substance the raiders have in their possession). No-one outside the clan knows of their internal hierarchy or cult practices.

What is known is that several priests have been

encountered in the Other Worlds, questing around the Darkness and seeking truths about Lanbril.

It is said that you will only know you have met the clan if they believe you have something that they want or need. You will not stumble across them and many famed trackers have failed to find them or simply failed to return from the Rubble when hunting the clan. If you do meet the clan it will either be a lone trader or a raiding band. The trader will vanish at the first sign of violence, the raiding band will only fight on ground of their choosing, happy to flee until they know they can win.

Lanbril the Survivor's cult secrets

The secrets of the cult are closely guarded. They have been developed from the alchemy, skills and magic brought to the clan by the first two thieves. These have been changed through repeated HeroQuests and are now taught only to those initiated into the cult of Lanbril the Survivor.

Alchemy

Echo Pellets – these pellets, when mixed with the activating powder begin to crack and crackle loudly. When cast in a wide circle they will confound trollish dark sense. Within the cast area trolls would have no advantage in the dark as the echoes mean they have to rely on normal eyesight.

Neon Powder – this powder reacts with air and glows dimly for up to fifteen minutes. When thrown at a foe it will render the target visible in all but magical darkness for that time.

Scent Blocker – this oil, if applied over a naked body will completely block scent for three hours. If applied under armour it will reduce the chance of detection by 40%, by 60% if applied on armour or clothing but it only lasts for 30 minutes in such circumstances. The blocker takes an hour to apply properly.

Track in the Dark Oil – small wax packets filled with oil can be scattered over an area. These packets break when stepped on and the oil then fluoresces outside the human visual range. The oil tracks can be followed easily by someone wearing the proper lenses or using the Lanbril cult spell See Invisible Light.

Dark Lantern Oil – when burned this oil casts no visible light. It does cast a glow that can be seen by someone wearing the proper lenses or using the Lanbril cult spell See Invisible Light.

Insect Repellent – this liquid deters casual movement of insects across repellent soaked ground or material. In game terms, it reduces the riding skill of insect riders by 25% if they try to force insects over the repellent.

Magic

There are five spells that are truly cult specialist spells.

Rune

Lanbril's Dance – this allows the caster to blink to a nearby location and five minutes of invisibility, mobility and detection blank. This is a two point rune spell.

Battle

See Invisible Light – the cult alchemists have discovered how to create invisible light and this spell provides the caster with the ability to see that light. This is a variable spell. One point of this spell provides 15 minutes. Two points provides an hour. Three points provides two hours. Four points provides four hours.

Salvan's Shroud – any detect spell cast on someone under the effects of this spell will indicate that the caster is dead or diseased (chosen by the caster when spell is learned). This is a one point spell and lasts for two hours.

Iron Stomach – this spell allows for the consumption of troll food and drink without harm. This is a three point spell and lasts for an hour.

Hide Entrance – this spell masks the existence of a single entry to a building. This is a one point spell and lasts for 15 minutes.

Skills

Silent Kill – This is the skill of approaching a lone unsuspecting victim and delivering a hopefully fatal blow. The attack will be utterly silent until the second strike of combat. The victim must be alone and in a location where he could be approached from behind. The attack must be carried out with a small weapon (dagger etc) and, if successful, will result in an attack on locations 10,11,12,19 or 20. A special success will result in ignoring armour and a critical will do maximum damage to the head, ignoring armour.

Silent Kill is a modified roll. The base chance depends on the opposing skill. Basic skills such as Listen, Scan etc provide a 50% base while specialist skills like Guard, Spot Ambush etc give a 25% base. The chance to make the attack is base + Silent Kill chance – defending skill.

Any disabling hit will be silent, even if the victim is not killed.

Example: Marstek and two others are scouting the Rubble, looking for opportunities. They see a trollkin looking after a zebra carcass. They see no other trolls and so decide to relieve him of the meat.

Marstek has a Silent Kill 65% while the trollkin has darksense 50%.

Marstek's chance is $25\% + 65 - 50 = 40\%$.

His player rolls 25 and the trollkin takes 4 points of damage to the head. The family will eat tonight.

It is possible to aim only for the head but this reduces the chance of success by half (Marstek in the above example would only have a 20% chance of success).

Magic obviously makes a difference. If a guard declares that he is using Listen and the Silent Killer has silence cast on him then obviously listening will reveal nothing. Opposition should not be zero unless there are no other appropriate skills.

Silent Kill can only be trained above 25% if it is interspersed with learning by experience. If trained, a practitioner will have to gain some skill by experience before once again being able to benefit from more training.

Shake Tail – This skill was very useful in the Rubble as it allowed those being pursued to use a variety of tricks to confuse and confound those chasing them. This works, once again as a modified roll. The base chance is 50% against those with specialist skills, 75% against those without. The base is modified by trackers who have specialist senses or are using magic such as Detect Life (-15% for each such sense or spell).

Plot seeds

Talk to Grandfather Mortal

A family hero recruits the PCs on a HeroQuest. He needs people to play a variety of gods to witness Grandfather Mortal bless the deeds of Lanbril the Survivor.

Potential gain – Touch of Grandfather Mortal – this is bane to undead or to reverse the effect of a resurrection spell.

Lanbril v Lanbril

The Lanbril cult approach the PCs as they have heard rumours of the clan and their new vision of Lanbril. They want to investigate these rumours and decide what they want to do about it. The PCs are tasked with kidnapping an initiate of the clan. It may simply be that the Lanbril cult want to raid the clans laboratories and steal their alchemical secrets.

Pest Control

Trolls seek out the PCs to rid them of vermin. The trolls will promise artefacts of Pavis as sweeteners. The vermin have been making the work bugs sick, avoiding troll guards and confounding the Mother's magics. Their divinations have told them that the solution is for humans to exterminate the vermin and preserve the troll resources.

Coming to the Red Moon

The Lunar administration (or the Coders) contact the PCs to hunt down the clan. They hope to persuade them to join this new vision of Lanbril to the Lunar Pantheon. This is a more than the simple hunt as in Lanbril v Lanbril as the PCs will have to perform a persuading role and perhaps an ongoing role as go between.

HAPPINESS IS DRAGONEWT SHAPED

An adventure for RuneQuest 3 by John Ossoway

HeroQuest stats by Newt Newport

I. Introduction

Happiness is Dragonewt Shaped is a short RQ3 adventure for a group of adventurers affiliated in some way with the elders of Arnstown, a small town located in Dragon Pass. The adventure is quite self-contained, and it should be easy to fit into an ongoing campaign, or run as a stand-alone piece.

II. Arnstown

Arnstown lies in Dragon Pass, approximately 10 miles to the east of Irithold. Populated mostly by tradesmen, farming folk and fishermen, the settlement occasionally sees trappers, travelling pilgrims and those seeking adventure pass through its muddy streets on their way to somewhere more interesting.

Arnstown has a permanent population of about 400, which grows during the week of the monthly pig market. To dissuade raiders from the Bush Range, the settlement is surrounded by a high earth rampart and a partially constructed wooden stockade.

III. Adventure Background

The people of Arnstown have always prided themselves on having good relations with the Dragonewts of Dragon Pass. Superstition has always caused the townsfolk to identify the prosperity of the town with frequent visits to a Dragonewt plinth in nearby Kos Grove by these inscrutable creatures.

Two weeks ago, a group of bandits defiled the Kos Grove plinth. The leader of the group, a Lunar Shaman of Jakaleel the Witch called Fen Ella, performed some kind of ritual ceremony which caused a blight to start spreading from the plinth to the surrounding greenery. Already there are signs that the curse has spread beyond the grove. Last week a two headed pig was born at Jonrik's farm, and only yesterday the corpse of a Broo was found in the river close to the settlement.

Both the pig and the Broo have been burnt, just to be sure.

It just so happens that the Player Characters (PCs)

have been in Arnstown during this turbulent period, and are petitioned by the town elders to help put things right. Old Man Orlev, the trapper who first discovered the defilement of Kos Grove, arrived in town this very morning claiming to have tracked the perpetrators to a ruined hill fort two days to the north.

The town elders implore the PCs to punish the bandits and help to bring good fortune back to Arnstown. To accomplish the latter, it is suggested they get Whee-Lee the Dragonewt Priest to bless Kos Grove and lift Fen Ella's curse. According to the elders, Whee-Lee is unusually sociable for a Dragonewt, and at this time of year can often be found sitting on a hill to the north-east - called by some *Whee-Lee's Lookout*.

Of course the elders don't expect the PCs to do all this for free. Provided the PCs bring back proof that the task has been completed, there is a reward. Arnstown is not a rich community, but the town elders have managed to scrape together what they can - this amounts to about 200 pennies and a dozen pigs. They will insist on the adventurers taking the pigs - to refuse will insult the pride of the poor farmers who donated them.

IV. The Journey North

Travel times in this adventure are based on the PCs being on foot, and being able to cover maybe 20 miles on their first day, and 10 miles on the second day, as the snows of the late Dark Season and terrain of the Bush Range begin to slow their progress. If your PCs have horses, adjust travel times accordingly.

The PCs have two possible routes to the ruined hill fort open to them, depending which river crossing they choose to use. Several sample encounters are included, but GMs should feel free to alter those listed, or include their own as they see fit.

Salor Ford

If the PCs decide on this route, their journey will take them close to the ruins of Salor, an old EWF city. Not much of Salor remains, save for the occasional

overgrown pillar or pile of stone slabs. Salor Ford is generally fordable all year round, but it is common knowledge that bandits and beastmen often use the ruins as cover to ambush the unwary traveller.

Encounter: The Broo Gang

While the PCs are crossing at Salor Ford, they will be ambushed by a Broo Gang. See section VIII for their statistics.

Hendrick’s Crossing

Amongst the small huddle of low wooden buildings at Hendrick’s Crossing are a boat house, trading post, stables and the Hendrick family dwelling. Unlike Salor Ford, the river here is too deep to ford on foot, and risky on horseback (a *Ride* check is needed to avoid horse and rider being swept away

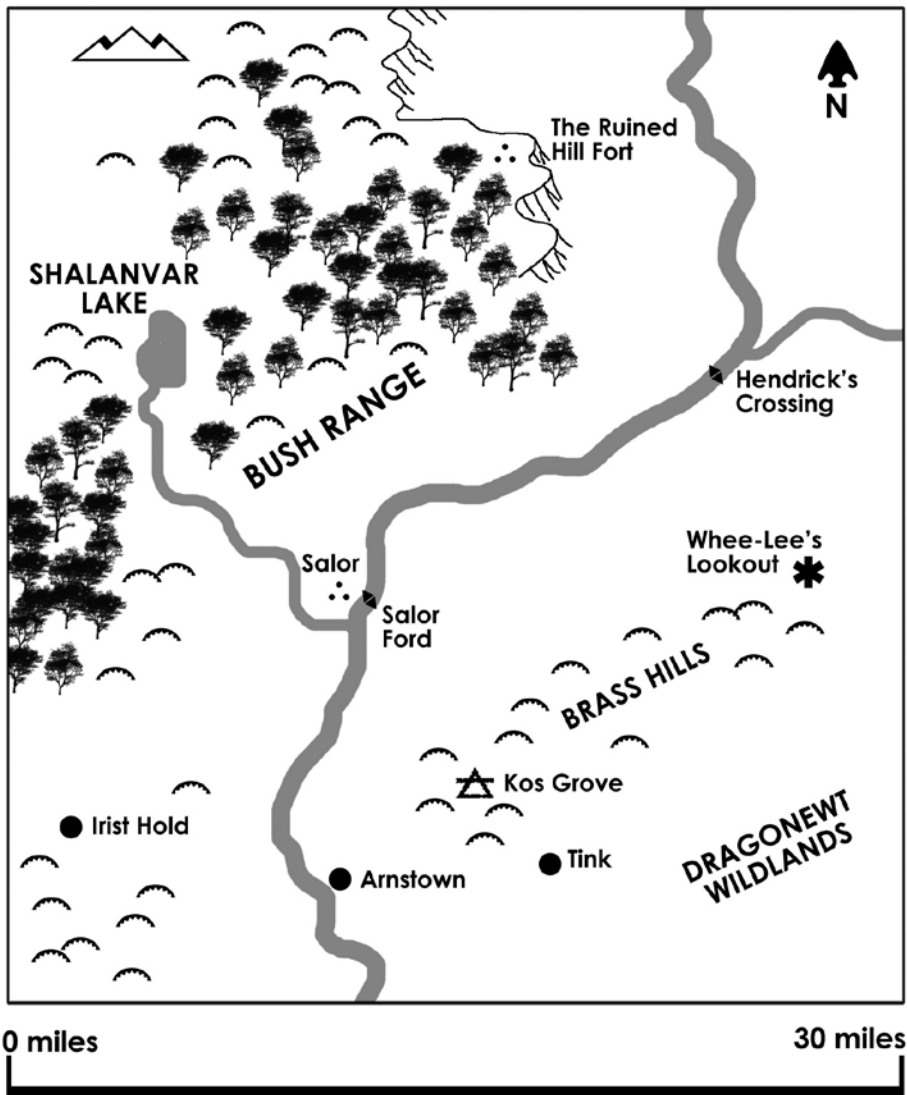
by the current). Luckily there is a ferry. Hendrick and his two sons Derik and Darrold operate the ferry – a wooden barge capable of transporting about a half-dozen horses and riders at once. His wife Brenna and their daughter Alia run the trading post.

Encounter: The Lunar Party

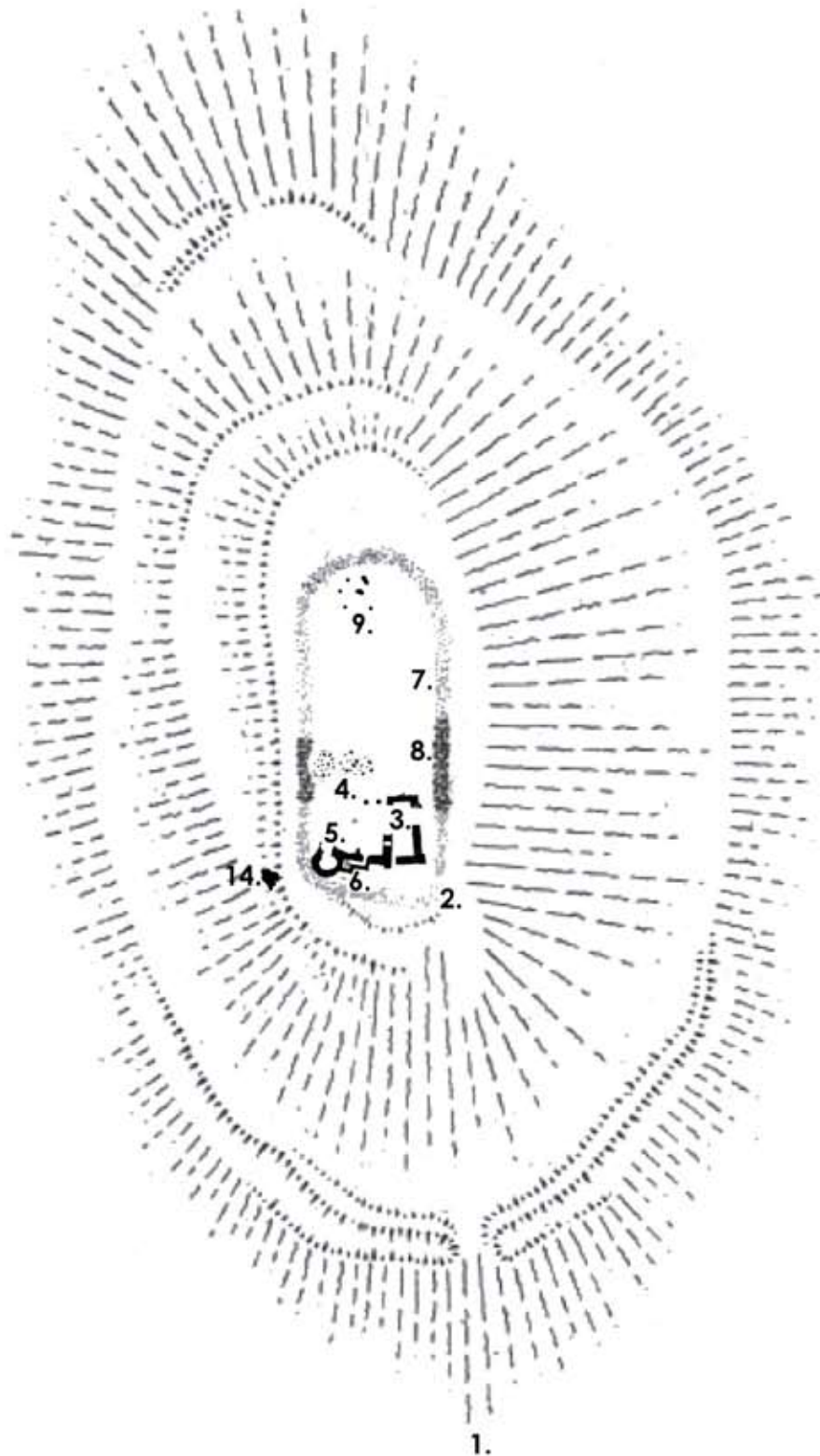
When the PCs arrive at Hendrick’s Crossing, they will encounter a Septoi of Lunar soldiers. They are stocking up on supplies before heading for the Harda Pass with a captured outlaw.

The Septon, Aulus Aurelius, is inside the trading post with his second in command. The other five soldiers are outside. Two stand guard over the prisoner (his hands are bound and legs are in chains), while the remaining three amuse themselves by harassing Alia who is drawing water from the river.

REGION MAP



THE ABANDONED HILL FORT



rubble, looking out across the countryside. If he spies the PCs coming up the hill, he will use the rubble as ammunition and start throwing stones.

5. The Tower

The ruined tower is no more than a single storey high now. This is where Fen Ella’s band have made their main camp. During daytime it is used as a cooking/eating area, and at night as a sleeping area to provide protection against the weather.

6. The Passage

A narrow passageway ends at a spiral staircase that leads down into the tunnels.

7. The Summit Rampart

A steep earth rampart about 10’ high runs around the summit of the hill fort.

8. The Vitrified Wall

A stone wall used to run the length of the summit rampart (7), but now only exists in two places as indicated on the map. The blackened remains of the wall are 5-6’ high at most, and there are many gaps.

9. Standing Stones

At the far end of the summit from the ruined keep are some ancient standing stones. This is where Fen Ella sacrificed a Dragonewt Scout in preparation for the rite she conducted at Kos Grove. The central altar stone is pitted and heavily stained with evidence of a recent bloodletting.

Search:

A sharp-eyed PC will notice that there are a lot of scales mixed in with the dried blood on the altar.

10. Dungeon

The spiral stair from above (6) leads down into a narrow stone tunnel, which if followed emerges in an ancient dungeon. Along one wall are 5x stone cells.

Search:

One cell looks like it was recently occupied by a scaly creature (more scales). There is a small bone effigy of a dragon on a leather cord lying on the floor. It is a matrix for the Spirit Magic spell *Second*

Sight.

11. Shrine

Fen Ella has converted this room into a shrine to *Jakaleel the Witch*, the deity she worships. An altar holds a 2’ high statue of Jakaleel, who resembles a skinny old woman with withered arms, draped in a light coloured shawl decorated with black stars. The stars are made of onyx (worth 100 pennies in total if prised out)

Occupants:

Poor Erik, the zombie created by Fen Ella spends his time in here, guarding the shrine. He will lumber to attack the PCs. Fen Ella also spends a lot of time in here.

12a-12b. Lizard Caverns

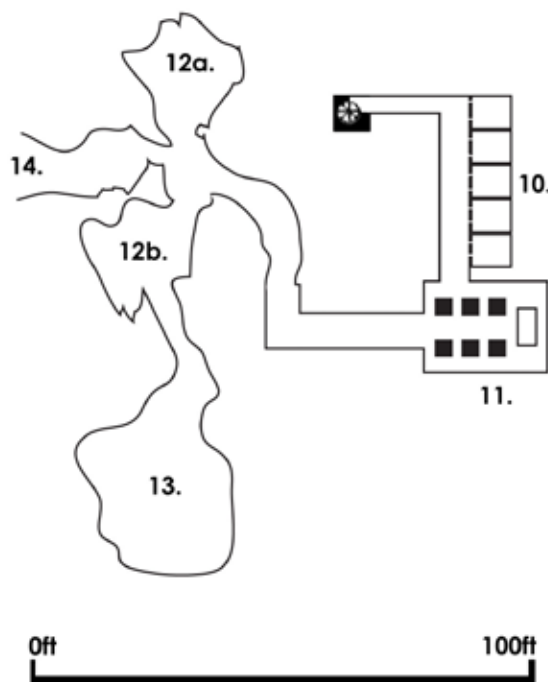
These caverns are home to a family of giant lizards. There is one in (12a), and two in (12b). Fen Ella’s gang have avoided these caverns ever since Erik wandered in here and got himself killed.

Search:

In 12b is the decomposed corpse of a Dragonewt scout. It seems Fen Ella tried to feed it to the lizards, who decided against eating it. The Dragonewt has been gutted in a ritual manner.

13. The Store

THE TUNNELS BENEATH THE HILL



Because of the lizards, Fen Ella's gang have never been in this cave. It contains a lot of rotten barrels of long decayed food and stagnant water, but there are also bottles of fine wine in here, amongst other things...

Search:

A ancient skeleton lies propped up against the wall at the back of the cavern, the black flights of 4x arrows protruding from his chest. He wears a medium-sized metal helmet and a bezainted hauberk. Next to him lies a battleaxe with a broken haft. The axe-head is a matrix for *Bladesharp 2*. Around his neck on a cord is a silver amulet bearing the symbol of Orlanth (worth 100 pennies).

14. Cave Entrance

This entrance emerges onto the side of the hill fort outer ramparts. It has been concealed and will only be spotted from the outside if a PC makes a *Special Scan* check.

V. The Journey South

Once Fen Ella and her gang have been dealt with, the second part of the PCs mission begins: they must travel to Whee-Lee's Lookout in the Brass Hills and petition Whee-Lee the Dragonewt priest to come and bless Kos Grove.

On foot, the journey south will take a day to a day and a half. The logical place to cross the river is *Hendrick's Crossing*.

Encounter: The Lunar Party Redux

If the PCs did not visit *Hendrick's Crossing* during their journey north, they will encounter the Lunar Party when headed south instead. See *IV The Journey North* for a description of the encounter, and section VIII for their statistics.

Encounter: Wild Animals

As the PCs continue their journey towards the Brass Hills, they are set upon by a pack of wolves. See section VIII for statistics.

Whee-Lee's Lookout

The hill known in Arnstown as *Whee-Lee's Lookout* lies at the north-eastern end of the Brass Hills, and is the site of an ancient stone circle, the exact function of which is lost to history.

As the PCs approach the hill, they should make a *Listen* check. Success indicates they hear a strange sound carried to them on the wind – a noise very similar to *Tuvan Throat Singing*. This is Whee-Lee, singing his indecipherable prayers to the True Dragons of Dragon Pass.

The Dragonewt Priest will be sat cross-legged atop one of the 12' tall standing stones of the stone circle, looking east towards *The Dragon's Eye*. Whee-Lee's skin is vivid green, and the collection of frills, spines, wattles, pouches, and other decorative and communicative devices covering his body mark him as a Third Stage or Noble Dragonewt. Like most Dragonewts Whee-Lee wears no clothing, although does have a pendant for the trinkets left as offerings at the plinth in Kos Grove, and many hang around its neck. As the wind blows across the hill, it catches this jewellery, creating a undulating, haunting melody.

If the PCs hail Whee-Lee, or try to attract its attention in some manner, Zoo Ma the Dragonewt scout, who until this point has been unseen, will immediately scamper into view.

Roleplaying Whee-Lee and Zoo Ma

Whee-Lee should be played as being typically enigmatic and alien, and not at all as sociable as the impression given by the elders of Arnstown. At first the Dragonewt Priest will barely acknowledge the presence of the PCs, and if possible will leave all interaction with them to Zoo Ma, his attendant scout. Zoo Ma is able to speak human languages, for reasons he will hint at during an opening speech:

"You may refer to me as the Zoo Ma The Unworthy. Dishonoured, I am made to speak in your primitive tongue. I serve my master thus in the hope that one day I will redeem myself and be seen as less unworthy."

This encounter may cause some of your players to become exasperated, but patient roleplaying on their part will pay off. The complicated Dragonewt code of ethics means that unless the PCs are particularly violent or abusive towards the Dragonewts, Whee-Lee will accede to their requests and agree to visit Kos Grove with them.

It is up to individual GMs as to whether Whee-Lee will go directly to Kos Grove, or first lead them off on another quest. Perhaps there is Dragonewt kin needing help, or an item which must be recovered which will help the Dragonewt Priest on its path towards spiritual perfection...

Kos Grove

Unless you want to throw another encounter at your players, the final stage of the journey will pass without incident. From Whee-Lee's Lookout to Kos Grove on foot is about a day's travel.

Kos Grove lies at the bottom of a wide valley in the Brass Hills. As the PCs descend towards the site they

Magic: Spirit Magic 55% - Bladesharp 2; Healing 1.

Selected Skills: Sneak 50; Hide 40; Track 60.

Notes: All wear dirty cuirbouilli and bezainted hauberks. Each has 2 javelins. See individual descriptions below for special abilities.

Yellow Fur

This Broo has thick yellow fur which secretes a potency 6 poison. It is also infected with Brain Fever.

One-Eye

This Broo has one eye covered in a dirty leather eye patch. Behind the patch is an emerald rammed into the eye socket. It is worth 250 pennies, but contains a Spirit of Disease (POW 8 Creeping Chills)

Metalhead

This Broo wears a plate helmet and cuirass, both painted with blood. It has 8AP on head/chest.

Berserk

This Broo is led by Three Horns on a chain. It froths at the mouth, and is in a constant berserk state. Double its hit points and weapon skills. It wields a battle axe in combat (1d8+1+1d6) will fight to the death.

The Lunar Party

The members of this Lunar Septoi are from a Dara Happan regiment, detached from their command on a mission of great import into Dragon Pass.

Aulus Aurelius

Lunar Septon

STR:	14	HP: 15	Head: 7/5
CON:	16	MP: 11	L.Arm: 2/4
SIZ:	14	DEX/SR: 3	R.Arm: 2/4
INT:	13	Move: 3	Chest: 7/6
POW:	11		Abd: 7/5
DEX:	11		R.Leg: 2/5
APP:	14		L.Leg: 2/5

Weapon:	SR	A/P	Damage
Scimitar	7	60/60	1d6+2+1d4
Javelin	3/9	55/-	1d8+1d2
Hoplite shield	7	25/55	1d6+1d4

Selected Skills: Dodge 35; Jump 40; Fast Talk 20; First Aid 30; Sneak 30; Hide 40; Track 60; Scan 40.

Armour: Metal helm with chain neck guard, soft leather tunic and scalemail hauberk, soft leather greaves and vambraces.

Notes: Aulus also wears a red cloak to signify his rank, and trinkets worth a total of 100+1d100 pennies if sold in a town.

Livius Varinius

Lunar Soldier and second in command to Aulus Aurelius.

STR:	13	HP: 14	Head: 7/5
CON:	14	MP: 11	L.Arm: 2/4
SIZ:	12	DEX/SR: 2	R.Arm: 2/4
INT:	13	Move: 3	Chest: 7/6
POW:	12		Abd: 7/5
DEX:	16		R.Leg: 2/5
APP:	13		L.Leg: 2/5

Weapon: SR A/P Damage

Scimitar 6	60/60	1d6+2+1d4
Self Bow	2/7*	70/- 1d6+1

*1/5/9 if Coordination 3 cast

Selected Skills: Dodge 25; Jump 40; Devise 40; First Aid 30; Sneak 50; Hide 40; Track 60; Scan 40.

Armour: Same as Aulus Aurelius. Livius also wears animal skins and furs over his armour.

Notes: Livius is well known as being a good archer. His self bow has a matrix for Coordination 3, enabling him to drop his DEX SR and get 3 arrows off each round.

The Lunar Septoi

5x Lunar soldiers: Cato, Brutus, Felix, Gaius and Vitus.

STR:	13	HP: 13	Head: 7/5
CON:	14	MP: 10	L.Arm: 2/4
SIZ:	12	DEX/SR: 3	R.Arm: 2/4
INT:	11	Move: 3	Chest: 7/6
POW:	10		Abd: 7/5
DEX:	12		R.Leg: 2/5
APP:	12		L.Leg: 2/5

Weapon:	SR	A/P	Damage
Scimitar	7	50/40	1d6+2+1d4
Hoplite shield	7	20/50	1d6+1d4
Javelin	3/9	55/-	1d8+1d2
Dagger	7	50/40	1d4+2+1d4

Selected Skills: Dodge 25; Jump 40; Devise 40; First Aid 30; Sneak 30; Hide 20; Track 40; Scan 40.

Armour: Same as Aulus Aurelius.

Notes: The soldiers are tired and eager to get out of Dragon Pass 'back to civilisation'. Each carries 10+1d10 pennies.

Tempus The Tricky

The Prisoner of the Lunar Party

STR:	10	HP: 15	Head: 0/5
CON:	11	MP: 11	L.Arm: 1/4
SIZ:	10	DEX/SR: 3	R.Arm: 1/4
INT:	15	Move: 3	Chest: 1/6
POW:	11		Abd: 1/5
DEX:	17		R.Leg: 1/5
APP:	16		L.Leg: 1/5

Weapon: SR A/P Damage

No weapons, but could conceivably have a decent skill in anything the GM wishes.

Selected Skills: Dodge 65; Fast Talk 60; Human Lore 50; First Aid 30; Sneak 60; Hide 50; Track 40; Scan 40.

Armour: Soft leather jerkin.

Notes: Tempus is a notorious thief, rogue and general all round libertine. A few months back events conspired to involve him in a brawl in a house of ill repute in Tarsh. Unfortunately for Tempus, he managed to kill a Lunar officer during the brawl (he fell backwards down some stairs and impaled himself on his own knife), and has been on the run ever since.

The Wounded Wyvern

STR:	26	HP: 25 (17)	Head: 7/9
CON:	19	MP: 10	FQ: 7/11
SIZ:	31	DEX/SR: 3	HQ: 7/4

INT:	07	Move: 2/8	Tail: 7/9
POW:	10		L.Wing: 7/7
DEX:	13		R.Wing: 7/4
			Head: 7/9

Weapon:	SR	A/P	Damage
Bite	6	65/-	1d10+3d6
Sting	97	60/-	1d6+3d6

Armour: 7AP of scaly hide.

Notes: An adult wyvern is about as big as a horse. See encounter information for more details.

The Bush Ranger Bandits

A dozen or so brigands of various cultures/ backgrounds, united by their greed and bloodthirsty nature.

Banditos

STR:	13	HP: 13	Head: 4/5
CON:	14	MP: 10	L.Arm: 2/4
SIZ:	12	DEX/SR: 3	R.Arm: 2/4
INT:	10	Move: 3	Chest: 4/6
POW:	10		Abd: 4/5
DEX:	13		R.Leg: 2/5
APP:	11		L.Leg: 2/5

Weapon:	SR	A/P	Damage
Battle Axe	7	50/40	1d8+1+1d4
Self Bow	2/7*	70/-	1d6+1
Dagger	7	50/40	1d4+2+1d4

Selected Skills: Dodge 25; Jump 40; First Aid 20; Sneak 30; Hide 30; Track 40; Scan 40.

Armour: The bandits were a mixture of rigid leather and bezainted armour, with open metal helmets.

Notes: The bandits usually prey on unwary travellers. If the more than half their number are badly injured in the first few melee rounds, they will beat a hasty retreat. Any corpses can be looted for 10+1d20 pennies.

Fen Ella's Gang

Fen Ella has always been a charismatic individual. During her travels across Dragon Pass she has gathered quite a motley assortment of followers. Some (Ak the troll) revere her, some respect her (Heorl) while others (Jarang and Markalor) are out for whatever they can get.

Fen Ella the Witch

Shaman of Jakaleel the Witch. Fen Ella is a short, wizened old woman, skin painted with charcoal. She wears a headdress made of demi-bird feathers.

STR: 10 HP: 12 Head: 5/3
 CON: 13 MP: 17 (23) L.Arm: 5/3
 SIZ: 10 DEX/SR: 2 R.Arm: 5/3
 INT: 17 Move: 3 (6) Chest: 6/4
 POW: 17 Abd: 6/3
 DEX: 16 R.Leg: 5/3
 APP: 07 L.Leg: 5/3

Weapon:	SR	A/P	Damage
Dagger	7	40/40	1d4+2 +poison
Dart	2/7	75/-	1d6+poison

Selected Skills: Dodge 20; Fast Talk 20; First Aid 50; Hide 30; Scan 40; Plant Lore 50; World Lore 50.

Magic: Spirit Magic 85% - Disruption; Flamearrow (cast on darts); Protection 5 (already cast); Mobility 3;

Divine 100% - Divination; Find Enemy; Warding; Ritual of Unlife (create zombie); Worship Jalakeel; Sanctify.

Magic Items: 3 rat skulls contain bound spirits.

Disease POW 12 (attacks INT);

Disease POW 10 (attacks CON);

Magic POW 6;

Armour: Fen Ella wears a soft leather jerkin and otherwise relies on her Protection spell.

Notes: Fen Ella worships Jakaleel the Witch [JAHK-uh-leel]. One of the Seven Mothers from the Lunar pantheon, Jakaleel was once a priestess of Zorak Zoran in the mountains of Jord. Her cult explores the diverse horrors and solaces contained in the secrets of darkness in its many forms, and she has close associations with the Blue Moon. Trolls who join the

Lunar faith gravitate toward her cult.

Fen Ella's defilement of the Dragonewt Plinth at Kos Grove was not directed against the people of Arnstown. Fen Ella just hates Dragonewts. She makes it her business to cause them harm at any opportunity she gets. None of her followers know the reason for this hatred.

If slain, Fen Ella will take 1d4 rounds to die, and if any PC comes close, she will gurgle a curse through the blood running from her mouth.

Ak the Troll

Fen Ella's Pet Cave Troll

STR: 22 HP: 20 Head: 11/7
 CON: 14 MP: 05 L.Arm: 3/6
 SIZ: 26 DEX/SR: 3 R.Arm: 3/6
 INT: 06 Move: 3 Chest: 10/9
 POW: 05 Abd: 10/7
 DEX: 10 R.Leg: 3/7
 APP: 05 L.Leg: 3/7

Weapon:	SR	A/P	Damage
Club	4	30/30	1d10+2+2d6
Claw	7	50/-	1d6+2d6

Selected Skills: Smell out Prey 50; Darksense 50; Darksense/Search 50.

Armour: As well as his 3AP hide, AK wears a battered metal helmet, and a corroded chain hauberk.

Notes: Ak has been with Fen Ella for many years now, and loves her in the same way a loyal dog loves its owner. He will fight to the death to protect her.

Heorl The Heortlander

Fen Ella's right hand

STR: 14 HP: 15 Head: 5/5
 CON: 16 MP: 12 L.Arm: 3/4
 SIZ: 13 DEX/SR: 2 R.Arm: 3/4
 INT: 15 Move: 3 Chest: 7/6
 POW: 12 Abd: 7/5
 DEX: 16 R.Leg: 3/5
 APP: 14 L.Leg: 3/5

Korol

STR:	14	HP: 14	Head: 5/3
CON:	12	MP: 10	L.Arm: 4/3
SIZ:	13	DEX/SR: 3	R.Arm: 4/3
INT:	12	Move: 3	Chest: 5/4
POW:	10		Abd: 5/3
DEX:	11		R.Leg: 4/3
APP:	10		L.Leg: 4/3

Weapon:	SR	A/P	Damage
Battle Axe	7	50/40	1d8+2+1d4
Dagger	8	40/40	1d4+2+1d4
Self Bow	3/9	40/-	1d6+1

Selected Skills: Dodge 45; First Aid 30; Sneak 30; Hide 40; Track 20; Scan 60.

Armour: Metal helm, ringmail hauberk, bezainted greaves and vambraces.

Notes: Korol is a brigand from Tarsh who joined Fen Ella's gang with his comrade Erik. Korol has not been happy ever since Erik died and was reanimated as a zombie by the shaman.

Minara The Easterner

STR:	12	HP: 12	Head: 1/4
CON:	13	MP: 12	L.Arm: 1/3
SIZ:	11	DEX/SR: 2	R.Arm: 1/3
INT:	10	Move: 3 (4)	Chest: 4/5
POW:	12		Abd: 4/4
DEX:	16		R.Leg: 1/4
APP:	14		L.Leg: 1/4

Weapon:	SR	A/P	Damage
Dagger	7	65/55	1d4+2*
Throw Dagger	2/7	50/-	1d4+2*
Self Bow	2/7	50/-	1d6+1*

*Minara has a habit of poisoning her weapons with POT8 blade venom.

Selected Skills: Dodge 45; First Aid 30; Sneak 40; Hide 40; Track 50; Scan 50; Plant Lore 30; Animal Lore 30

Magic: Spirit Magic 70% - Mobility 1.

Armour: Soft leather cap, bezainted hauberk, soft leather tunic and trousers

Notes: A tribeswoman from Prax, Minara is a short wiry woman with sun-bleached hair. She is an expert in knife fighting and hunting/tracking. Minara has a tub of blade venom (POT8) with 1d6+6 applications left.

Poor Erik

STR:	20	HP: 17	Head: 5/5
CON:	20	MP: 04	L.Arm: 5/4
SIZ:	13	DEX/SR: 3	R.Arm: 5/4
INT:	06	Move: 2	Chest: 5/6
DEX:	08		Abd: 5/5
APP:	04		R.Leg: 5/5
			L.Leg: 5/5

Weapon:	SR	A/P	Damage
2-H Spear	6	40/20	1d10+1+1d4

Armour: Bezainted and rigid leather.

Special: Cannot die, must be hacked apart. Arrows do only 1HP damage, and impaling weapons do only half damage.

Notes: Erik was a friend of Korol until he was killed by the cave lizards beneath the hill. Fen Ella reanimated him as a zombie.

The Giant Lizards

STR:	20	HP: 20	Head: 6/6
CON:	20	MP: 10	LF.Leg: 6/7
SIZ:	20	DEX/SR: 3	RF.Leg: 6/7
INT:	02	Move: 3	ForeQ: 6/8
POW:	07		HindQ: 6/8
DEX:	12		RH.Leg: 6/7
			LH.Leg: 6/7

Weapon:	SR	A/P	Damage
Claw (x2)	8	45/-	2d6+1d6
Bite	8	45/-	1d10+1d6

HeroQuest Stats

The Broo Gang

Three Horns

Broo Gang Leader 15

Significant abilities: Strong 18, Tough 19, Fight with disease infected Bastard sword 5, Sneaky bugger 8, Hide like a coward 7, Track prey 8, Poisoned third horn 10w

Followers

Yellow Fur (Broo Warrior 18, Poisonous Yellow Fur 5w, Carries Brain Fever 5)

One Eye (Broo Warrior 18, Valuable Emerald 5 containing Disease Spirit 5)

Metalhead (Broo Warrior 18, Metal Armour +4 equipment bonus if using HQ 1. Metal Armour protection 5 if using HQ2)

Berserk (Broo Warrior 18, Constant uncontrollable frothing berserk rage 5, Fight to the Death with Battle Axe 5)

The Lunar Party

Aulus Aurelius

Lunar Septon 5

Dara Happan 5

Significant abilities: Fight with scimitar and hoplite shield 15.

Equipment: Scimitar, metal armour, hoplite shield, red robe of rank.

Followers

Livius Varinius (Lunar Solider 15, Good Archer 15, Common magic: Shot fast, shoot often 18)

Equipment: Scimitar, metal armour. and self bow.

The Lunar Septoi (Lunar Solider 18, Tired and fed up of Dragon Pass 5)

Equipment: Scimitar, hoplite shield, javelin, dagger, metal armour.

Tempus the Tricky

Tarshite rogue 5

Significant abilities: Wanted by the Lunars for murder 5, Notorious thief 15, Glib and gobby 15, Sneaky 15, Get out of the way 15

Equipment: Only the clothes he stands up in and a set of metal bonds.

The Wounded Wyvern

Wyvern 5w - would be 15 if fully healed.

Significant abilities: Fight with bite and sting 10

The Bush Ranger Bandits

Bandits 18

Significant abilities: Blood thirsty and greedy 5

Fen Ella's Gang

Fen Ella the Witch

Shaman of Jakaleel the Witch 15

Fetishes: Disease 18, Disease 14, Provide magic power 10

Significant skills: Fight with dagger 16

Followers

Ak the Cave Troll (Tough 5, Stupid 5, Fight with Club and Claw 18, Doglike loyalty to Fen Ella 5)

Heorl the Heortlander (Heortling Bandit 18, Tough 18)

Baranwolf (Tarshite Axe Warrior 18, Big and Bearded 18, Strong 18)

Markanlor (Heortling Bandit 18, Fight with Bow 18)

Jarang (Heortling Bandit 18, Fight with scimitar 18, Fight with bow 13)

Korol (Tarshite Bandit 18, Fight with axe 18, Fight with bow 13, Unhappy about Erik's reanimation 5)

Minara The Easterner (Praxian hunter 18, Fight with daggers 18)

Poor Erik (Zombie 18)

The Giant Lizards (Scaly 18, Fight with Bite 18)

The Wolf Pack (Cunning 18, Fight with Bite 18, Track prey 18)

The Dragonewts

Whee-Lee

Dragonewt Priest 5

Significant abilities: Tough 18, Clever 18, Beautiful 18, Fight with Klanth 5w, Fight with Samarin 18, Fight with Bow 18

Follower: Zo Ma (Dragonewt Scout 18)

ELFPAK DESIGNER NOTES

By Shannon Appelcline

It began in Dorastor, as all good things do. The year was 1994 and Avalon Hill had recently published *Dorastor: Land of Doom*, the third triumphant release in Ken Rolston's *RuneQuest Renaissance*. After years of neglect, Glorantha was coming back to life under his able hand.

There were numerous additional books in preparation or outline by the start of the year, and my friend Stephen Martin had managed to get right in the middle of that renaissance. When he was working on *Lords of Terror* he asked me to write up an NPC for him, which I did. (I think it was the *Daughter of Ralzakark*.) He also got me onto the email discussion list of another book, which would have continued the focus on Dorastor. It was called *Oak and Thorn: Elves of Dorastor*.

THE OAK AND THORN GENESIS

Though *Oak and Thorn* was focused on the two rather strange elf cultures of that ruined land, it would have offered a pretty good overview of elf culture in general. It perhaps wouldn't have been an ElfPak, but it would have still been the best look at the elves of Glorantha ever. As a result, Rolston was thinking quite a bit about the elves and what their culture was really like. Thus, I began to hear word that there was an "elf secret."

Today it might seem pretty commonplace, because it's been pretty well integrated into both *HeroQuest* and everything I've ever written about elves, but back in 1994, it was revelatory. It was a fact about elf culture that helped to explain the elves' place in the universe and what made them unique. It was simply this: the elves were telepathic.

This was the true explanation of elfsense—that elves could come to joint agreements for the whole forest, through thought alone. There were some details in Rolston's original writings that haven't made it into my own. For example, he called the group gestalt of elven thought the "Allspirit" and he also imagined elfsense to be a very intimate type of communication that depended on touch. Nevertheless, the core idea that has influenced everything written about the Aldryami since was there.

At this point, I'm not quite sure how I became a writer about elves, but sometime after I was introduced to the *Oak and Thorn* discussion, I offered to write up an elven mythos. Mythology was one of my first loves and what got me interested in Glorantha in the first place. Remarkably, Greg Stafford, Ken Rolston, and the others were interested in hearing my ideas. So, in 1994 I wrote up my first draft of elven mythology, for potential inclusion in *Oak and Thorn*.

Looking back now at what I wrote then, I'm surprised by how much it's stayed the same. I imagined a very regularized and animistic mythology where the earliest gods broke apart to form the parts of the world. It's the clear skeleton of what's eventually seen print, though I notice a few of the names have changed. At the time, Greg was already started to de-god-learner-ize the mythology of Glorantha, and thus where my original writings simply used the names of existing gods, like Yelmalio and Triolina, what would finally see print used elven names for deities, like Halamalao and Eron.

Of course we now know that early writing was largely in vain, because the *RuneQuest Renaissance* was doomed. Ken Rolston was soon to leave Avalon Hill due to the insufficient support coming from management and *Oak and Thorn* was never to see print. It's a pity; there were some great ideas there. Even though the societal ideas for the elves have emerged and taken what I hope is a final form in my two books on the Aldryami, the details on the Hellwood and Poisonthorn elves are still deserving of publication on their own.

CREATING A MYTHOLOGY

In the years that followed, *RuneQuest* floundered, and thus there didn't seem to be much reason to put a lot of effort into Gloranthan writing. I worked at Chaosium from 1996-1998, and I know I still talked about elves a few times with Greg. I even revised my short mythology in 1997. However, not much more got done. One thing did come out of this time: Greg and Stephen both came to think of me as the elf guy. Ken Rolston really properly should have written the book on elves, but he was gone from the hobby by this time, so it fell on me instead. became

should fully detail them for your game.

While I was working on the *HeroQuest* book, Mongoose started publishing their own *RuneQuest* line. When they put out *Trolls: A Guide to the Uz* as an early publication, I realized that my own elf book faced a serious problem: if Mongoose published a book on elves before mine came out, theirs might well become the de facto description of elves, leaving mine irrelevant. So, I bugged Mongoose until they gave me the contract for a MRQ elf book.

I've had a few people assume that the Mongoose book is just a copy of my *HeroQuest* work, and I'll strongly state, that's not the case. The whole time, I was working on it, I was aware that some people would eventually buy both of them, so I did my best to make each unique. Thus the Mongoose book has more crunchy bits, unique focuses on some parts of elf culture, details on very distinct forests, a more God-Learner-esque description of the gods, and as much Second Age material as I could come up with. Occasionally I popped up my *HeroQuest* files for reference, but every word in the Mongoose book is original, and generally it represents my best effort to create an original book despite the identical source material.

Building upon existing Gloranthan material to create a unique vision of elves has been a real joy, and I hope that their unique features are slowly making their way into your own campaign.



A Voralan (Black Elf)

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FROM THE BESTIARY OF ASHKORAN THE TAMER

By John Harding

Ashkoran the Tamer

Ashkoran (sometimes referred to as Askoran) was an Irrippi Ontor sage and the head keeper at the Hideous Zoo in Glamour. He was also known for his expeditionary work on behalf of the Lunar College of Magic. Some of his more well known exploits are the search for the ancient Khansraa stone at the Shrine of Calamitous Consequence in Teshnos, the retrieval of the Waha Covenant Arch stone from the depths of Wastes and unsuccessful search for the Blood Chalice of Humakt in the Print near Dragon Pass. These are detailed in his autobiography "My Most Excellent and Modest Life" volumes 1 – 10. His most famous work however was "The Scroll of Bestial Excellence" which is more commonly known as the "Bestiary of Ashkoran the Tamer". The scroll lists a number of creatures both sentient and non-sentient, along with advice on their care and how to tame them or break their spirits. It is known for its casual references to extreme cruelty and the author's evident belief that the life of others was cheap and to be used as he saw fit. It was also famous for the strange woodblock prints that accompanied the text. The subjects of the prints were sometimes only obliquely associated with text and more often that not completely divorced from it. It is thought that Ashkoran himself created these.

While his main duties at the zoo involved the care and taming of various animals, he was also charged with examining and exploiting their military and other uses. "Other uses" usually meant finding a place for them in the Red Emperor's debaucheries. His methods of capture and examination were unusual and creative. While I find his methods extreme and conclusions varying in quality from questionable to utterly moronic, he provides a unique insight into the nature of the more ferocious of the creatures of chaos.

The excerpt below is from the chapter on the Jack O'Bear or Do-Karal I have précised the chapter excluding the more tedious details of the growth and feeding of the creatures.

Minaryth Purple

May Irrippi Ontor protect this scroll. May he blast the eyes, wither the limbs and congest the lungs of all those who plagiarise its contents. May he desiccate the tongues and claw the fingers of all those who copy it. May he cause members to be flaccid and wombs to be barren of those who would deny its truth. May the goddess find it pleasing and may the reaching moon bring enlightenment to all those who do not know the goddess's grace.

The Do-Karal

Names of the Do Karal

God Learner designation Joanurus Paralysis

Other names Jack O'Bear, Pumpkin Head (Sartar), Gourd bear, Kurkurbit (Balazar), Kurbitaz (Aldryami), Not Bear (Fronela), Chaos bear, Kurbaz (Prax)

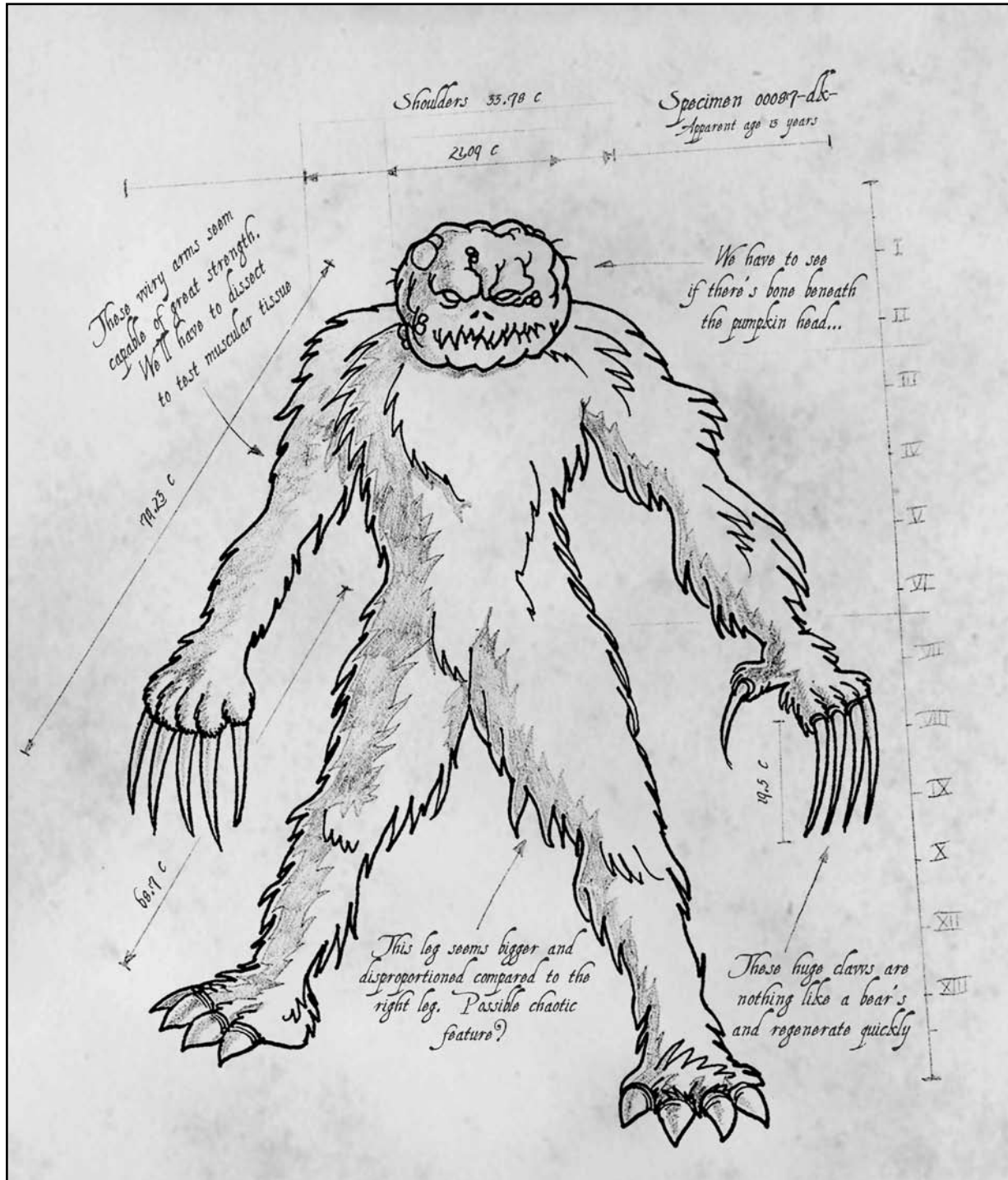
Runic Associations

Beast, Chaos, Plant

The following is the final report on the study of a number of specimens of the Do-Karal which took place over a period of approximately 10 years both in the wild and in the Garden of Shur Adad at the Hideous Zoo in Glamour

On the capture of the beast

The best if not only way to ensure capture of the beast is to attack with at least twenty men supported by magic and nets of spider silk, preferably of troll manufacture. My first specimen was captured by a party of mercenaries near Dykene in Balazar. Despite the immaturity of the specimen and the fact the hunting party numbered twenty three, it still managed to kill seven of the party before finally being overpowered. The specimen was transported back to Glamour with the aid of much magic where it was allowed to grow to maturity in the walled Garden of Shur Adad. It was



The Anatomy of a Jack O' Bear

observed over a number of years with a view to harnessing its powers in the service of the empire. In this time a number of other specimens were obtained from south eastern Prax, Ginijii and the forests of Carmania all of which showed similar but slightly differing characteristics. Unfortunately the experiment ended in disaster when a new specimen was introduced which was immediately set upon by the others and killed. This unfortunate creature exploded on dying taking the rest with him. The following characteristics were observed during the ten years that they lasted.

Physical Characteristics

All of the specimens we examined had thin, wiry bodies covered in a shaggy, matted hair. The limbs were muscular and stringy with bear like paws. The claws were slightly different to normal bears in that they were longer and in some cases possessed magical powers. Unlike normal bears they are bipedal and spend their entire time standing upright on their hind legs. The most striking feature of the Do Karal is of course, the pumpkin like head. Dissections of the head reveal a bizarre pumpkin like skull made from normal white bone; the head flesh is orange but is definitely flesh rather than vegetable matter. In some specimens the head also possessed a hard green stem like growth which grew from the top of the head. The shape closely mimicked the green stalk that you would see on normal pumpkins but was entirely composed of bone. Oddly the stalk was truncated as if it had been cut for the market. Others lacked this stalk entirely. Teeth varied between specimens. A number of them had a set of teeth that you would expect to see in a normal bear while another specimen had a series of bony plates the same colour as the head. Yet another had a nightmarish set which consisted solely of sharp needle like canines. The tongue was prominent in all and very much like a normal bears tongue. Noses also differed between specimens. About half the specimens had a vestigial bear like nose; another had a series of hard ridges, the rest lacked any nose at all. Interestingly this did not seem to affect their sense of smell with all specimens reacting in the same manner and speed to a particularly noxious bladder of walktapi gas that we released into their compound. None of our specimens had anything like ears, yet all would respond to sound. On dissection of one of the specimens it was found to have an ear canal similar to that found in humans with the difference that it terminated in a particularly thin part of the skull. This thin area while quite small was protected by a bony ridge surrounding it. It would appear that this allowed the creature to hear as well as any normal bear.

The eyes are small and sunk into triangular or almond shaped pits. The specimen which could

paralyse with a magical blast from its eyes simply had pits with no visible eyeballs. This did not seem to hamper it in any way and it could see as well as the others. Do Karal meat is invariably unpalatable with an oddly sweet vegetable aftertaste. I should imagine it could sustain a person in extremis though.

Intelligence

The Do-Karal shows a marked animal cunning and intelligence, yet does not appear to speak unless their low grunting can be taken as speech. Broos have been known to be able to talk to them via the speech of chaos. There is also anecdotal evidence of a fully intelligent specimen which could converse in several languages although this seems to be a fortunate gift of chaos which was unique to that specimen. Our own experiments in engaging in communication with the creatures revealed that most of them had intelligence around the level of a young human adult. Some could learn magic but most could not, mainly due to their inability to concentrate and obsession with food. Their mindset was quite alien to human thought and the overriding concern of each specimen was where its next meal was coming from. In fact all of them seemed to have a ravenous hunger which was only slightly abated by feeding. Even when given ample food they remained thin and wiry. While they are fierce they will not attack anything which they are unlikely to bring down or overcome with their paralysing ability. Single specimens had their paralysing ability negated and were caged with a bull headed beast-man and in all cases they did not attack first. Whereas they are usually encountered singly in the wild, hunting groups have been known and this behaviour has been noticed in the captured specimens. The group was starved for two weeks and then a group of condemned prisoners were lowered into the garden. After the initial feeding frenzy they hunted the remaining prisoners as a group. Curiously they did not use their paralyzing ability during the hunt and seemed to take pleasure in stalking and capture in much the same way as men do.

Reproduction and the seed myth

Do Karal reproduction remains a mystery with none of the specimens exhibiting any visible sexual organs. Urine was expressed from a small hole in the crotch which under dissection was found to be only used for that purpose. Specimens seem to vary in age so it would be safe to assume that they are created in a similar manner to normal animals with a cycle of childhood and adulthood. In keeping with such an unusual creature, their method of birth may be equally strange. A recurring theme in stories from many places is that of Do Karal seeds. As has been noted the Do Karal is most certainly an animal and its head's similarity to a pumpkin is only

skin deep, otherwise it is normal if chaotic animal. Mentions of Do Karal seeds abound in stories even from far distant lands; although to my knowledge seed specimens have never been found. Given that their method of reproduction is not obvious there may be some truth to these stories. None of the specimens seemed to mate during the period of observation and no seeds were found when the garden was cleared. However there is the mystery of the decayed youngling found in the Garden. Five years after the death of our specimens one of the keepers found the decayed remains of a very young do-karal in the compound. The garden had not been in use for some time and it remains a mystery to this day where the body came from. Either two of them had mated and the cub had starved after his parents death or the cub was born/grew after his parents death. The garden has thickets where a cub could hide so it could have been missed after the death of the specimens. Unfortunately the body was too decayed to confirm or deny either theory. Praxian tradition has it that the Do Karal is the sterile offspring of a chaos creature known only as Ei Na Kurbaz (roughly translated “the mother of do karal”).

The methods and limitations of paralysis

The most fearsome and effective ability of this creature is its power of paralysis. It uses this power in the wild to hunt and feed itself with a great deal of success. There are stories of large areas being practically denuded of game by a single beast. Although the end result is the same i.e. the victim is helpless to defend itself, the power manifests itself in different ways depending on the beast:

The Blue Claw Bolt

A blue bolt of light shoots forth from the index claw of either paw, on striking the intended victim he or she becomes paralysed. The range of the bolt is fairly short being around a quarter of that of an arrow shot from a short bow. In our specimen, removal of the claws negated this ability. Both claws turned blue after extraction.

The Green Pad Bolt

This differs from the blue claw bolt in that a green bolt of magic light shoots from the pad of the paw. The range is comparable to that of the blue claw bolt with similar effects. Two specimens that we captured exhibited this behaviour. Interestingly both were captured from different places. One specimen came from Balazar, the other near Ginijii in Sartar. Removal of both paws negated the creatures paralysing ability.

The Haunting Song

The song is haunting and almost human in quality

but underlying disharmonies give lie to its true nature. The song seems to only affect one person at a time but will quickly render multiple victims motionless. After this the Do Karal stops singing and starts to feed. The emperor was quite impressed with the song of our specimen and frequently had it perform at parties. Once his greatness was tired of it we experimented with varying amounts of damage to the creature’s throat until it lost the ability to paralyse. Our specimen suffered quite severe damage before the ability was destroyed.

The Piercing Laugh

One specimen that did not last very long exhibited a bizarre method of immobilising its prey. It had a high pitched laugh which grated on the nerves even if you weren’t its intended target. This laugh also seemed to irritate the other do karal which is probably why the others ate it after a few days. I would imagine that damage to the throat would be equally effective as in the former case.

The Tentacle Touch

We came across this method of paralysis on one of our visits to Dorastor. The beast in question was especially blessed by chaos as evidenced by its large size and tentacles in place of arms. The creature would strike out at its intended victim with both limbs. If both struck then the victim would become immediately paralysed. If only one of the tentacles succeeded in touching the victim, the paralysis did not take affect. We were unable to determine if the removal of the tentacles would negate this ability due to the size and ferocity of the creature.

The Swaying Head

In this case when the creature wished to paralyse its prey it would sway its head hypnotically. This was quite subtle effect. We had a number of cases where keepers were paralysed merely by looking at the creature and special care had to be taken while tending to the animal.

The Blazing Eye Blast

One specimen exhibited an ability based around the eyes. It would paralyse its prey by looking at the victim directly. The eyes would momentarily flash with a yellow light after which the victim could not move. We found this ability continued to work even after we put out one of its eyes.

Sergeant Malfakos one of our handlers experienced this at first hand.

“It came at us out of the trees silent like. My father used to tell tales of them round the fire to scare us as children but I never expected to end up tending them. It looked at poor Vovis with its black eyes and I saw them flash for a moment. Even I felt the blast which took him full on. He just stood there while the

him sometimes as well once when we finish with him but not so many of them, so only do it when they are hungry.

No! no! Hungry Eater no give birth to Do Karal we not know how Do Karal mate they live in forest most times.”

Ashkoran’s commentary

There are some interesting parallels to draw between the broo’s account and the Balazaring slave’s account. Both relate a connection to a stationary hungry being of some type. However Augustinius Toadflax’s letters from Dorastor drew no connection between the Do Karal and the Hungry Eater other than they looked vaguely similar. We later encountered the same tentacled Do Karal which ate some of our guards. The broo who related the above was allegedly invited by Ralzakark for “tea” as a punishment for being too loose lipped.

The Origin of the Do-Karal (Sartar)

As told by Thufir Haraldsson skald of the Colymar tribe

Eurmal’s Jack O’Lantern

“Gather round sit and listen this is the story of Eurmal’s bad joke, the Jack O’Lantern and how it created the Jack O’Bear.

During the greater darkness the people were afraid. At night people lit lanterns to see their way and for comfort. The lights attracted the chaos monsters and they slew and killed all they found and stamped on the lanterns so they could not be used.

In the end people were forced to the remains of turnips and pumpkins to make lamps.

Eurmal made a lantern from a pumpkin and carved a scowling face into it. This he called Jack O’Lantern. The people saw this and were afraid which Eurmal found most amusing but the chaos monstrosities saw the lantern as well. They wondered at it and feared it as well. Eurmal laughed at the cowardly creatures and thought their cowardice an even better joke.

The predark monsters were afraid, this was a new monster whose eyes glowed and whose mouth flickered with fire. They avoided this new thing in case they got burnt and eaten.

Soon Ragnaglar grew angry as his hordes were not attacking by night from fear of this new monster. Ragnaglar was not afraid and he picked up Jack O’Lantern and was greatly angered by it. He recognized the hand of Eurmal. Ragnaglar decided that he would make his own jest and have the last laugh. He went hunting but because his monsters had destroyed so much all he could find was a thin hungry bear. He pinned it to the spot with his magic

and ripped off its head! With great force he rammed Eurmal’s lantern onto the bear’s body. Now we will see who laughs he roared. He blew life into the creature and made the first Jack O’Bear. The Jack O’Bear remembered two things from its former life. It remembered how it was hungry and how it had been pinned by Ragnaglar. So the Jack O’Bear went hunting and froze its prey before eating it alive. This is a fine way to hunt roared the Jack O’Bear and was well pleased with himself. This is why you can hear the Jack O’Bear laugh in the night. This is how Eurmal’s trick backfired on us all and how his bad joke haunts us still”

Ashkoran’s Comentary

The barabarian hill dwellers of Sartar refer to the Do-Karal as the Jack O’Bear and during Dark Season, have a tradition of carving lanterns from pumpkins which resemble their monstrous heads. In their own inimitable and egotistical way these lanterns are seen as the origin of the do-karal rather than a response to it. The reference to the forces of chaos being afraid of the Jack O’Lantern is interesting. It may be that on some level this image is disturbing yet attractive to the creatures of chaos in the same way that wolf heads are to us. The pumpkin head commonly appears in symbol in the chaos regiments of the goddess’s blessed army.

Rathori Do-Karal traditions. As told to the author by Irenar Blackclaw of the Greatroar clan of the Rathori Hsunchen.

We all know the ancestors Irgar, Orenra, Irdag. But when the world was dark there was another one who is not one of us. He looked like a bear but he was not one. His name was Avonaco the lean bear, his teeth were small and claws brittle. He was smaller and weaker than the rest and the others taunted him. Avonaco did not like this and was sad and angry. The false god saw this and spoke to him in his dreams. Follow me and I will give you power over the others. Avonaco gladly followed him for not only was he thin in body but thin in spirit as well. Spider woman warned Avonaco not to listen to the false god but he did not listen. The false god summoned Avonaco to a clearing in the forest. There he danced a sacred dance to make Avonaco mighty but like the false gods words this dance was a lie too. Avonaco believed in the dance and went to fight Irgar. But Irgar batted him away with one stroke of his paw. Avonaco then went to fight Orenra but he kicked Avonaco away. Finally Avonaco went to Irdag but Irdag rose up on his two hind feet and frightened Avonaco away. Avonaco was thin in brain as well as body and decided to go back to the False god. Your magic does not work! I will go find a better god. At this Avonaco walked away with the

A ROUGH GUIDE TO DEEPER

By Nick Davison

Origins

The underwater city of Deeper is situated in the Troll Straits at the entrance to the Mirrorsea or Choralinthor Bay that is surrounded by the Holy Country. According to Ludoch storytellers, Magasta built the crystal domed city for his daughter. They claim that the Lord of the Sea compelled a demon to construct the transparent dome.

In reality Deeper was built for the merfolk by dwarfs in the First Age, when all the inhabitants of Kethaela lived in peace. It was built so that the merfolk could better participate in the politics of the Holy Country. In return for its construction the Mostali were allowed to mine the seabed in underwater craft for all metals that had no value to the merfolk. After the fall of the Second Council, especially when it moved to Dorastor, the merfolk retreated from the politics of the day. When relations between the nations soured the merfolk accused the mostali of secretly mining aluminium or sa-metal and destroyed their submersibles.

Although many merfolk are semi-nomadic, over the centuries the local merchief and his followers have adapted to Deeper, and use it as a place from which to rule the unruly humans of the Rightarm Islands.

Construction

Deeper consists of a huge crystal dome that rests of the ocean floor. Inside many smaller domes rest on the seabed, others project out from an enormous central pillar on branch like supports and some are supported by smaller pillars that are set into the ocean floor. All the domes, including the main one, are filled with varying amounts of water and have trapped air at the top. Originally the merfolk used their alliance with Brastalos to summon and control sylphs below the surface, then the mostali captured and held them within the domes through enchantments. The cult of Brastalos, normally fairly small and mystical, is very powerful in Deeper because of the need for mastery of air powers. Through heroquesting they are able to renew and restore this mastery.

Many of the structures that form Deeper were prefabricated in Mostali underground complexes

and then assembled on site with the aid of submersibles, diving bells, diving suits, and extended Skin of Life spells. Although the city was designed for merfolk, at first areas were required where human, troll, mostali and aldryami ambassadors could live. The mostali builders therefore installed mechanical devices to control the amount of water and air in some of the domes. These have stairs, balconies and rooms, unlike the other domes that merely have interior platforms and partitions suitable for merfolk.

The City

Visitors enter the city via water-filled tunnels outside the dome that pass under the rim and emerge inside the city, these are a mixture of natural rock formations and those built by mostali. A community of Murthoi lives in a kelp forest moored to the ocean floor. Their worship of Murthdrya has blessed Deeper with a mass of wondrous underwater vegetation that also provides an additional source of air.

Over the years some of the pumps and other mechanical devices which operated the water and air mixture in the domes have broken down. Usually such a failure will be ignored by the merfolk but sometimes they have needed to repair it. In that case they have on occasion managed to persuade the mostali to repair the fault, usually in return for temporary mining rights on the ocean floor. Some domes have no water in them, and others have no air because the sylph was being crushed by the rising water and was therefore released. Elsewhere in the city some of the domes have been cracked by the sylph escaping before it is completely submerged. Temporary repairs to vulnerable or failed domes can sometimes be carried out by placing a stretched undine on the exterior. The air in some of the domes is stagnant and dangerous and, according to mermothers, Sea Trolls hide here to prey on unwary Ludoch children. Whatever the truth of this story many creatures, such as moray, and conger eels and octopi have made the disused domes their lair.

The ancient Mostali machinery is now hidden with kelp, coral and silt and the platforms inside the domes covered in sand, as are steps built used by

the mostali during construction and other evidence of their presence such as part numbers and writing. The domes are free of algae and coral and still glisten and allow light through. This is result of scouring by undines and the worship of Molakka in the city.

Not only merfolk live and visit Deeper, which has a population of around 7000. All types of marine life including fish, squids, turtles, rays, stingrays, lobsters, dolphins and newtlings can be seen. Some of these are 'wild animals' others are intelligent such as the Messenger Fish who deliver messages and act as the eyes and ears of the Merchief. The god Choralinthor, who like many of the oceans and seas aided Magasta against chaos when the Cosmic Spike exploded, is also said to visit Deeper.

There are major temples to all the leading members of the sea pantheon including Magasta, Tholaina, and Triolina together with Choralinthor. Unusually these are completely aquatic temples are of ornate design with tall spires, statues of sea creatures and mosaic floors. There are also smaller temples or shrines to other lesser deities and spirits such as Brastalos, King Undine, Golod, Daliath, Iphara, Lorian, Phargon, Sea Dragon, Sunfish, Borukug the source of crabs, and Molakka source of molluscs. Most expectant merfolk choose to have their offspring in the birthing pool at the temple of Triolina. Not only is this auspicious but much safer than the alternative in shallow water outside the city. The most impressive structure is the ancient palace of the Merchief wherein resides Oolanate, the Female ludoch Merchief, her chief advisor Diadromous the large damsel fish and her court. From there the Ludoch exert political control over Seapolis and the Rightarm Islands. Also based in the Palace are the Royal guard which have sa-metal equipment and a contingent of ludoch mounted on hippocampi. The Royal Treasury contains a wealth of sa-metal and, according to legend among sailors, a fortune in treasure taken from ships that have been sunk to the ocean floor. Although this has no value to the merfolk themselves, it can be used to influence 'Two Legs' in Seapolis and beyond. There are no catacombs or a Necropolis in Deeper as merfolk dead are committed to the sea in deep ocean trenches.

The city is lit during the daytime by sun. At night there is rarely any illumination apart from that provided by Sea Light magic provided by Sunfish and the occasional visiting deep sea fish with fluorescent lures. Inside some of the domes craftsmen produce tools, weapons, baskets, harnesses for hippocampi, jewellery and armour. The merfolk use such materials as bone, hide, coral, plaited kelp, sea urchin shells and sa-metal. Some of the Islanders

also produce goods such as pots according to ludoch designs that are given as tribute to the ludoch or traded with them. Metal goods are avoided as they corrode too easily.

The Pharaoh visited Deeper on a regular basis to perform important ceremonies relating to his rule of the Holy Country and liaise with the Merchief. The Pharaoh's Palace has a large number of rooms for him and his entourage. Some are storerooms holding furniture and furnishings which are placed out in his accommodation when he visits. Among the items in storage are a huge model of the Mirrorsea and the kingdoms surrounding it, sa-metal statues of the giant Sacred Cranes, and gifts from allies such as Teshnos. The walls and floors are decorated with mosaics depicting key events from the Pharaoh's multiple reigns.

Few humans visit Deeper. Although the Admiral comes once a year to perform a ceremony called the Sea King's Tribute, a heroquest in which he pledges himself and his people into the service of the sea. Some of the Rightarm Island shamans also come here to contact powerful spirits, but only by invitation. Leonardo the Scientist tried to reach the city in a giant mechanical fish but was driven away by the ludoch. Ambassadors and diplomats are rarely brought to Deeper, normally negotiating through the Admiral.

Magasta provides food for the inhabitants of Deeper in his bountiful ocean. Most of the population hunts for their own food or gathers edible seaweed, clams, mussels and oysters from the surrounding area. Although some of the Merchief's court and the priests are an exception as their followers provide them with food. There are also huge caverns nearby where summoned sea monsters including aquatic dinosaurs could be held in the event of an emergency. Ludoch patrols escort ships through the entrance to the Mirrorsea Bay and away from the City of Deeper. Ships rarely ignore their instructions but those that do face powerful undines, waterspouts, whirlpools, and sea monsters.

Why is the Ocean Foggy?

By Nick Davison

Long ago there was no fog out at sea and Magasta could see his entire domain. This led to problems for Cislui the Sea Horse when he was trying to escape other sea gods angered by his tricks. Lacking the speed of other gods the Trickster was often caught before he could hide in kelp beds or sea caves.

One day while swimming along the coast Cislui spotted a cloud was so low that it obscured his view of the land. The Trickster called out to the 'cloud' as it drifted along the land hiding everything in its path.

"Tell me, what are you?"

"The Fog", said Iphara, goddess of fog.

"What did you say?" the Sea Horse.

Iphara repeated her reply.

Cislui called out, "Sorry I could not hear you above the sound of the waves lapping the shore. Why don't you move nearer?"

He repeated this approach several times and in the process moved further up the coast.

The goddess of Fog found herself torn. She had been warned that if she strayed from land that she would never be able to return, but she was intrigued to explore the ocean.

"Have no fear", said Cislui. "I can see that, like me, you enjoying hiding things and creating mischief."

Iphara couldn't disagree but, having some experience of deception, still didn't trust him. She sent one of her followers out to sea to see what would happen.

The Fog spirit cautiously edged up to the water edge and then reluctantly drifted over onto the sea itself. He then moved up and down the coast delighting in covering rocks, reefs and shallows.

Then came the time to return to land. The spirit moved up to the shoreline and tried to cross over back onto the land. Again he rolled over without difficulty. Following his example, Iphara and many of her followers did the same.

Cislui playfully darted in and out of the shallows using their sea mists as cover. Satisfied with the possibilities he made his farewells and said that he looked forward to seeing them out at sea in the future.

As he swam away the Trickster thought to himself it would be good idea to make himself scarce before Magasta or one of his servants arrived. No doubt he would take exception to this invasion of his domain. He was confident that some of the weaker Fog Spirits would lack the strength to escape Magasta's grip. After all, he had been careful to lure them to a point of coast with a swamp where the Lord of the Sea's power was weaker.

To this day, if you see a sea fret creeping inland then it may be one of these Fog Spirits trying to return home before being dragged back by Magasta.

forsaken. Although many of her children had lost their way, she could still redeem them and lead them to solace if they remembered their original mission of avenging the wrongs suffered by women at the hands of impious men. And so Saint Magrat has attempted to do since time began. Amen.

The humans of Ralios and Wenelia tell a different story. They say that during the Second Age, a Jrusteli scholar became lost in the Mislari Mountains and was captured by harpies. This forgotten scholar, however, was also a noted demagogue (as were so many of the Jrusteli). With his clever tongue, he kept himself from becoming a victim of the harpies' rituals and, in fact, learned many secrets of their "religion" from the queen harpy. He then led the queen to a "revelation" whereby the harpies learned that the demon they worshiped was actually "Saint Magrat," and that harpies were fallen servants of the Invisible God. Once he had obtained the harpies' confidence, the demagogue abandoned his flock (no pun intended) and left them to fend for themselves. Despite this abandonment, some harpies of the Mislari Mountains continue to worship "Saint Magrat" and attempt to treat with humans as equals and as fellow worshipers of the One Invisible God.

Entry Requirements: Must be a harpy

Churches: None

Abilities: Geography of the Mislari Mountains, Fight with Claws, Drop Rock, Spot Sinful Man, Know Saint Magrat, Rule of Saint Magrat, Fly Fast & High

Liturgists only – Venerate Saint Magrat

Virtues: Hate Men, Self-Righteous, Surprisingly Clean

Scripture (Tales of Saint Magrat):

△ Common Blessings – Bless Flock, Reconsecrate Talisman

⚡ Special Blessings – Protect from "Evil" Influences, Protect from Men, Find Food, Successful Mating

⚡ Curses – Curse Intruders

Formulary (Flying Close to God):

‡ Resist Disease, Divine Flight, Deflect Missiles, Capture Sinful Man, Force Sinful Man to Atone, Fight Alongside Sisters

Talismans: Worshipers use tokens taken from sinners as talismans (some are items, but most are pieces of the sinners themselves).

Other Side: Saint Magrat's node is called the Sacred Nest. It is a false node that has no connection with Solace, but only connects to the underworld.

Disadvantages: Worship of Saint Magrat is misapplied worship. Humans, and even other harpies, hold her worshipers in contempt.

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THE HARPIES OF ICECLAW MOUNTAIN

By David O.Lloyd

Long ago, a Harpy Queen of the Mislari mountains encountered a wandering Jrusteli clergyman, and so a new religion was born. This Queen had three daughters, and the middle daughter, Sifone, was particularly devoted to the new ways. In the 500 or so years since that time, Sifone has studied wizardry, including common magic spells that would be frowned upon by true Malkioni, and she has become a powerful magician. Today, Sifone leads a largish flock of harpies, mostly composed of her own children, and all devoted to Saint Magrat of the Harpies. She defends her small mountain valley against all comers, be they human or otherwise, and is prepared to either negotiate with or fight intruders. She also leads her flock on raids outside her valley, and although most such raids center on the acquisition of food, the harpies are not above kidnaping male travelers to determine whether they are sinners (and few pass the harpies' tests). Sifone is also willing to deal amicably with other Malkioni, and would welcome a mercantile relationship with a suitably righteous (and probably female) merchant, although she has little to offer by way of trade.

Sifone's flock consists of three liturgists and thirteen orderlies. She herself is both a liturgist and an orderly and also knows many common magic spells. The flock's superior organization allows them to intimidate several other nearby groups of harpies, who may be forced to supply aid if Sifone demands it. In addition, Sifone's magic allows her to control the nymph (an Oread) of her home valley, and she has also forced an Umbroli into her service. Sifone's current goals, aside from harassing "sinful" humans who enter her lands, are to strengthen her flock and the flock's guardian essence, which she also feels will strengthen her links to the essence plane.

Sifone the Queen

Keywords: Harpy 10w, Liturgist of St. Magrat 15w, Orderly of Saint Magrat 15w

Weapons and Armor: Feathers +0, Claws +1, Dropped Rocks +3

Mundane Abilities: Fight with Claws 20w, Drop Rocks 5w2, Spot Sinful Man 20w, Test Man for Sin

2w2, Fly High & Fast 5w2, Venerate Saint Magrat 10w2, Geography of the Mislari Mountains 7w2, Use Tales of St. Magrat 15w2, Rule of St. Magrat 10w2, Know St. Magrat 10w2, Leader of Iceclaw Harpies 20w, Intimidate 10w, Negotiate with Malkioni 20, Desires Respect and Acceptance from Malkioni 10w, Surprisingly Clean 10w

Magical Abilities: Resists Disease spell 10w2, Divine Flight spell 15w2, Deflect Missiles spell 12w2, Capture Sinful Man spell 18w2, Force Sinful Man to Atone spell 18w2, Fight Alongside Sister spell 10w2, Confuse Opponent spell 1w2, Summon Mountain Mist spell 1w2, Deflect Curse spell 15w, Cause Avalanche spell 12w, Command Mountain Spirit spell 10w, Command Storm Daimone spell 8w

Flaws: Wracked by Pain at Odd Moments 20

Gear: Hell's Tears crystal 20w

Hell's Tears Crystal

Rating: 15-15w3

Attunement: The crystal can be attuned by matching the hero's piety against the crystal's rating. Any level of victory attunes the crystal. A tie has no effect. Any defeat transfers ability points from the hero to the crystal at one point per level of defeat. A hero may attempt to attune a particular crystal repeatedly, until he or she either succeeds or suffers a complete failure (at which point repeated attempts are no longer permitted).

Benefits: Any hero attuned to the crystal can use the crystal to augment his or her magical defenses. The crystal cannot be used as an active ability and cannot be used for a variable augment, but whenever it is in contact with someone who is attuned to it, it provides an automatic bonus of 1/5 of its rating to all contests in which the hero is resisting hostile magic.

Flaws: These crystals are said to form from the solidified tears of gods, saints, and great spirits who have become trapped in the underworld. Any hero who attunes such a crystal receives one of the following flaws at a level equal to 1/2 the crystal's rating: Fear Demons or Wracked by Pain at Odd Moments.

GOOD KING THUNDER

KING THUNDERTHROAT, BEING THE FOURTH OF THAT ILK, R. 1563-1582 S.T.

by Stewart Stansfield & Keith Nellist

Widely proclaimed the last of the great duck herokings (not least by himself), Orppo Thunderthroat, being the fourth of that ilk, flourished in a time of great deeds and events. He was born in the ninth year of the reign of Prince Saronil Sartarsson, and as a youngling listened to the tales of war and destruction from over the Dragonspine Mountains.

Great armies marched and countermarched across Tarsh, trading a succession of kings, aided and opposed by blood-drunk priestesses and Lunar sorcery. From the east came the howls of the wolf-warriors, hungry for battle. To the north, the Dragonewts were roused into uninterpretable action by some strange dream. Whilst on the wereducks' borders the human tribes continued their jealous machinations, and Delecti's Marsh encroached ever further.

Orppo was acclaimed king of the durulz in 1563 S.T., two years before Prince Jarolor fell at Dwarf Ford. He succeeded his father in wearing the twin crowns of the Durulz Valley, and was made of the same stock: stout, with a fondness for fine food and entertainments; virile and self-sure; a careful husbender of wealth; courageous (though not to unseemly excess); respectful of the gods, with one or two exceptions; and, to use the words that young Prince Sarotar bestowed upon his parent, 'a wily little bastard'.

History reckons him 'The Loyal', and he respected his tribe's friendship with the Royal House of Sartar. It was in his reign, after all, that the durulz magnanimously allowed the Wilmskirk-Duck Point road to be constructed, bringing greater wealth and influence to Sartar's children. It is said that King Orppo accounted Jarosar Longarrow (r. 1565-1569 S.T.) as his favourite, perhaps because this notably emotive great-grandson of Sartar was a little more pliable to the duck king's intrigues.

Thunderthroat took it as a personal affront when the sun-worshippers refused to aid Prince Jarosar, and committed his warbands to a long, desultory conflict with the Yelmalions to the south that lasted throughout his reign. Like most ducks, the king could be brave and ruthless when circumstances dictated; but cautious and cunning when they did not. His wardrakes could not stand against the disciplined spears and shields of the Sun Dome

Temple, so conducted occasional raids in between defences of their own stilted forts.

Orppo's friendship with the next prince of Sartar, Tarkalor Trollkiller, grew similarly steadfast, though not without a little rivalry. Thunderthroat had initially supported the royal candidacy of Jarosar's young son, Jarnandar, in opposition to Trollkiller, but clashed most famously on the matter of Tarkalor's marriage to the Feathered Horse Queen, "Mother of Lands".

Thunderthroat was an ambitious drake and sought to become King of Dragon Pass himself. He was among the most persistent of the Queen's suitors, rivalling even Trollkiller and the king of Tarsh, Phargentes. His gifts in pursuit of her hand were legendary: priceless pebble-gems cut over centuries by the Stream; a herd of the finest quakebeasts he rustled from all over Dragon Pass; a herd of chanting blue cows he rustled up from his neighbours; he even ceded to her his claim to all the lands between Stone Nest and the Spinosaurus Flats (i.e. the Upland Marsh), which was somewhat speculative.

His most famous gift, however, was a giant polliwog pie. Ducks love this delicacy, and assumed the Grazers would, too. The durulz usually use a pickled mixture of frogs' tadpoles, but for this recipe Thunderthroat called out all the stops. He ordered his warbands far and wide, to seize what Newtling tadpoles he could. They were baked into a huge pie, whose crust was mixed with butter made from the sweet milk of aurochs and flour drawn from the golden crops of the Sun Domers. The Newtlings were outraged at this atrocity, and bear a grudge to this day.

The wereduck king was unsuccessful in his wooing, but soon got over it, strengthening his relationship with Tarkalor. It was during this time that he also developed his friendly rivalry with Jardanreal the Traveler, chief of the horsepeople of the Grazelands. Though their competition might have seemed fierce to outside observers, they always retained a profound great respect for each other and their respective peoples.

Though he led an eventful life, Thunderthroat's greatest glory came in the manner of his end. True to his epithet, the king marched north with his sordthanes and nestcarls, to fight by High King

Tarkalor's side at the Battle of Grizzly Peak. There Thunderthroat died alongside many kings: Trollkiller himself, Prince of Sartar and King of Dragon Pass; Kenstel son of Hend, king of the Colymar; Tarful Darkshield, king of the Tovtaros Far-Walkers and Prince of the Far Place; Lornar Lonending, king of the Lismelder and Duckfriend. So the list goes on.

The durulz tell many tales of their king's bravery that day, not least that of how he slew Fazzur's brother Farrad in single combat, and thus brought the vengeance of kin upon his race. Heortling sagas rarely speak of the wereducks' part with such prominence, if at all; the durulz put this down to prejudice, jealousy and unintentional ignorance caused by the fog of battle. Of Thunderthroat's retinue that day, only ten survived. It was Joseph Greenface, the young (and quite literally) green-faced apprentice shaman who recovered his king's body and regalia, and at great hazard brought both safe to the Durulz Valley. There, in the bosom of his realm, he was placed upon his sacred barge and dispatched down the Creek-Stream River on his final journey, to the ancient paradise of Ganderland, where the Sun rises from the Seas into the Sky

The Staff of Lordship

Description: A simple staff of gnarled wood.

Currently... held by the powerful durulz shaman Joseph Greenface, in the name of his queen.

Cults: Associated—Sartar, Larnste; Hostile—Mostal, Valind (if recognised).

Knowledge: One of a Kind. Most Sartarites will have heard the story of Sartar gifting this staff to the Ducks. Few will know of the history of the staff before that point, or from where Sartar got it. The Dwarves know the history of the staff, but they are not telling anyone anything. Valind, cruel god of winter, was involved in the story but any Valindi are unlikely to recognise this staff as one that was once used, and lost, by their god.

History: Sartar gifted the ducks with the Rod of Rulership that Valind had used when glaciers covered the world and Valind was a powerful god. It could be compared to the Lawstaff of Orlanth, only Valind's rule was a tyranny or cruel injustice. Perhaps this is why Sartar did not want the Staff himself.

Procedure: The staff needs to be held to invoke its powers. There are powers relating to Snow and Wind that are not known to

the Ducks, or indeed to anyone. What the Ducks do know is that it must be paraded about on Tribute Day. They also parade it about on Lawstaff day, but only to draw parallels to the Lawstaff.

Powers: The staff must be attuned to the user for most of the powers to work. Attuning to the staff is effectively claiming lordship over somebody or something. The Staff acts like a City Harmony spell when it is banged on the ground, for the followers of the staff's owner. It stops them fighting for a while. When held aloft on a windy platform it is a matrix for a magic similar to Wind Words divine magic, only the words of the holder of the staff are carried to the ears of all those that can see the speaker that are downwind of him. This is usually used for speeches. The staff can also be used to hit people from a short distance away. The staff wielder can use a normal staff attack up to 10 metres from an opponent. This is often used to hit or prod argumentative hecklers, rather than actually trying to kill anyone. The staff wielder must hit something, usually the ground, to have the effect, and shout something at the target. The staff contains a Bludgeon 4 matrix, and a 5-point power-enhancing crystal.

Value: Worth 7000 Lunars to a dishonest merchant, the ducks would probably try to kill someone who stole it from them.

HeroQuest: Bludgeon Heckler 20W, I'm the Big Boss 1W3, Listen Up! 5W2, Untapped Valinding Power 1W5.

Dangmarssaga ('Road to Duck Point')

The Heortlings are a lyrical people, producing an abundance of songs, sagas and poetry. Even amongst such an output, *Dangmarssaga* ranks as one of the least accomplished. It shows no great prose or narrative merit, instead being a dry, catscratched journal of one Dangmar, thought to be a swordmage of the Locaem. After the defeat at the Battle of Grizzly Peak he apparently fell in with a group of retreating wereducks, who were carrying the body of their dead king, Thunderthroat, back to their tribal lands. Sadly no account of that battle remains: the earliest sheets are lost and the saga begins mid-sentence, in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Bagnot. Only the account of Thunderthroat's funerary rites, at the end of the saga, fosters any degree of interest.

[beginning of text] ... *knows where they got that barrel from. Branded with Trollkiller's rune: finest mead made by the Beepeople far to the south, where the mountains belch steam. Plumshanks thirsty: "Just a sip." Mosswig: "It's got a dead king in it, sicko." Wyverns in the sky. Lunars close behind us. Better hurry. Wound in leg throbbing. What's that smell?*

Ducks arguing again. Woadcheeks: "I told you we should have hitched a ride on that quakebeast south, with them Weird Women." No-one else fancied trying Harda Pass and the Shaker Temple, though: not so close to the Gor Days. "They'll have our todgers!" says Mudcrown. Solthon Vale and Dragon Pass was out too, they said. "Why?" I ask. "cause they'll bloody kill us, that's why!" Long story followed, told by young Greenface. Can't remember much. Thunderthroat and Jordanreal's feud over marriage to Feathered Horse Queen. Involved castrated horses and threats to pluck wereducks and make them all vendref.

"Trust me, they'll never expect us to go this way," says Shagflax. "Killer Wilds is safest."

⊙/III/□ 1582: *Skin ripped to shreds by thorns. Not good. Ducks seem better off. Little bastards. Hard work pushing barrel through this, never mind carrying king's shield, Thunderwell. Made a mile at most. Leg feels like stone. Bluebeak and Shagflax get into fight. Plumshanks drunk this evening. Hailwing delirious. Smell getting worse. Double watch against trees this night.*

π/III/□ 1582: *Come back on ourselves twice now. Mudcrown dead. Eaten by bad goats. Hailwing looking a bit peaky, too. Greenface putting all manner of herbs on him. He looks like a beaked elf. "I've got shomething..." says Plumshanks. Smell quite bad, now. Attacked twice tonight. Woadcheeks dead. Keenwarble missing. Should*

be up into Bush Range by tomorrow. Barrel seems lighter. Leg not so bad today.

*/III/□ 1582: *Finally! Past those damn trees. Hailwing died of his wounds, poor sod. Smell gone, too. Thought about putting him in barrel, but king was a bit of a fatty. Buried him in shallow grave instead. Ducks arguing again over leadership now swordthane dead. Half want the shaman's apprentice, Greenface; half want warskald, Reedsong. No-one wants Shagflax. Except Shagflax, that is. Reedsong calls Greenface 'useless spoonbender'. Greenface calls Reedsong 'guano-beaked gimp'. Pebbled for it. Reedsong won. Making better progress. Four miles today! Though it took all day. Should reach Dendrogi Pass tomorrow.*

●/†/□ 1582: *Spent all day winding up towards pass. Hard going with barrel and shield, though easier now not carrying Hailwing. Stoutknob carries rest of king's regalia. Doesn't complain a quack. Definitely two camps of ducks. Even Shagflax seems to be with Greenface. Food getting scarce. Need to gather something soon, or hunt. But most things seem to be hunting us. Ducks complain dry soil and rock not good for worms or grubs. Mosswig complaining: "I hate mountains, I'm getting dizzy!" All ducks seem a little off-colour. I seem to be pushing the barrel more than most. A pain, as air cooler and leg hurts again. Reached top of pass by evening. EWF (spit!) ruins above us in gloom.*

~/†/□ 1582: *Arguments again this morning. Greenface wanted to explore Falling Ruins. Reedsong asked if he's looking for spoons. Fight: not very violent. Most of us agreed to stay here and rest whilst Greenface, Shagflax, Plumshanks and Stoutknob climb to the ruins. Plumshanks asked to take barrel. Stoutknob pecked him.*

They're gone many hours. I'm worried. Reedsong cheerful. They come back by nightfall. Reedsong glum. Greenface very, very quiet. Pensive. Stoutknob dour. Plumshanks hungover. Shagflax gabbling about all manner of things, including metal squirrels and an ancient witch, who spoke to our apprentice shaman. Greenface tells Shagflax to shut up.

Leg hurting a little. Fitful sleep. Woke once to hear young Greenface murmuring under his blanket. Quiet night, I heard him clearly. He said the following, over and over, before drifting off:

When the Swordwinds doth croon

'neath the Bat-dogged moon,

O Durulz! O Durulz!

Beware the stars' tune.

□/†/□ 1582: Set off down to the eastern Bush Range today. Greenface seems brighter. Quite steep. Getting barrel down here could be tricky, and take a while. "It was an accident!" says Shagflax. Reedsong and Greenface united in kicking him. Plumshanks wants to wring his neck. Scramble down, many grazes. Damn leg! Find barrel. By the Orlanth's blustery beard, it must have been made of magical wood. Only a few scuffs. Shagflax on double pushing duty, with Stoutknob keeping an eye on him. Won't reach Shanlavar Lake by nightfall. If we start early, hope to reach it by midmorning. Food now gone. Can hear ducks' stomachs rumbling. No game here; hope for fish tomorrow.

Ⓞ/†/□ 1582: Started before dusk. Reached the lake a few hours before Elmal's Shield raised highest. Greenface tells us not to disturb the water. Fear of wakening the Ice Dragon. Reedsong scoffs. Turns around to see Shagflax skimming stones over it. "What?" he says. Bluebeak and Shagflax get into fight again. Hurry south along river—more a stream. Water crystal-clear, but cold. Not good for leg. "Fishies!" shouts Mosswig. Bluebeak spears one. Hurrah! We eat it raw; its flesh is like snow. Try to catch more, get three by evening. Cook them with brushwood. Flesh still like snow.

Ⓞ/†/□ 1582: Coming down from hills, now. Hear waterfalls of the Lakes in distance. Beware: another EWF city ahead! 'Salor', Greenface calls it. Seems to know a lot about Dragonfriends, this one. See flying screechbeast above. Didn't spot us. Still, little cover here: could be dangerous. Starting to enter land of the quakebeasts. Must press on to River. Reach it by evening. Wyrms ruins on opposite bank. No exploring for Greenface today. Reedsong forbids it. Hope to find (or make) boat in morning.

π/†/□ 1582: Arguments again. Greenface says we should go east, crossing the River, and head into dragonewt lands. Then we could ford the Creek and go south, past Runegate, along the Starfire Ridges. None too keen on trusting dragonewts. Bluebeak asks him why he doesn't slit his tongue and stop pretending. Fight again. Stoutknob breaks them up. Reedsong says we continue south, skirting western edge of the Upland Marsh. Shagflax calls him a 'zombie fondler', or something like that. I don't fancy the Marsh, but the ducks seem to know it. Spend day making boat. I'll give them credit—they're good at it. Barrel strapped to side.

*/†/□ 1582: Set off at dawn. Leg better now. Good to be on River and not marching. Though boat is very small and cramped. One boat. Seven ducks. Me. Actually, leg not so good. Greenface muttering. Says we should have made sacrifice to the River. Bluebeak suggested Shagflax, but we decided

against it. Tried catching fish: no luck. I swear they're laughing at us. Laughing fish unsettling. Perhaps Greenface was right and we should have made sacrifice.

Passing Spinosaurus Flats. Very hungry again. Spot our first Spinosaur. Then more. Some of the ducks start gabbling about food. "Mmmm... spinosaur testicle kabob!" says Bluebeak, gazing at herd. "Crispy fried crest!" adds Mosswig, salivating. "There'll be grubs soon," says Reedsong, unimpressed. Made camp by boat this evening. "Back in a bit," say Mosswig and Bluebeak, who scamper off with their spears before we can stop them.

●/X/□ 1582: Morning, and still no sign of Mosswig and Bluebeak. Wait an hour or two, then decide to push on. River getting sluggish now. Air close and muggy. Mists fall soon, and don't lift. In swamp properly, now. Damned swarms of midges assault us. Every push on the pole saps strength. Lucky if we make a mile a day at this rate. Maybe should have trusted dragonewts. Horrid sounds and lights in distance, but no zombies yet. Sleep in boat, keeping as close to Flats as possible. Rather face spearosaur than Delecti's minions.

~/X/□ 1582: Woke early. Fitful sleep. Half-eaten in night by midges. Heard ducks squawking quietly into breasts as I came to. What about? Tried to focus. Me. Talking about me. "Look, Reedsong, I trust yer, honest" mutters Shagflax. "You and us, we knows the Ways. But him—" points at me, "—that Man don't. With him we're zombiebait. You'll see!" Reedsong nods. "If the time comes, we'll do him in. No worries." Greenface doesn't stick up for me. Little \$*&£. Tempted to fight there and then. But outnumbered five to one and... they're right. They know swamp. I'd die in an hour without them. Thrust my leg against side of boat tonight. Pain will keep me awake. My eyes on the little bastards and my hand on sword hilt.

□/X/□ 1582: Delirious. Maybe it's the leg, and that bitch Mallia's taken it. Or lack of sleep. Or I've got some swamp fever. Don't care. As long as it's not the ducks that get me.

That's it. Wracked by fever now. All a blur. Greenface tries to put some stinking sludge on me. Fight him off, but have no strength. No idea how long has passed as I scratch this down. Awake from short bouts of nightmarish sleep, a few minutes at a time, to feel grubs in my mouth. And in my leg! Bastard Greenface. That's it. Can't write. Wish I'd been cut down at Bagnot, like their damned king.

Ⓞ/X/□ 1582: Fever not as bad. Leg feels better. Still in Marsh, but air not as foetid. Heard bad sounds last night. Horrid sounds. Squawks. Moans. Clash

of bronze. Boat tattered. Leaking badly. Where are we? Sticky blood by hand. Even Shagflax looks sullen. Reedsong sleeping. Never get anywhere like this! Oh. He's dead. No sign of Stoutknob. "They took him," says Greenface, quietly. Or Plumshanks. "Not him, thankfully," says Shagflax, brightening up. "He got eaten by a crocodile." Reedsong seems at peace, even with feathers tattered and matted with blood. Notched sword grasped in his hands. He considered murdering me, but in end died protecting us. Stoutknob did the same. I say I'm sorry I won't see him again. Greenface and Shagflax shoot me horrid look.

Make for a strange place this evening. Yellowflower Isle. The plants move. Greenface talks to them in strange, magical language—rustle of leaves, breaking of bark, trickle of water. Leave Reedsong's body on island. Greenface says it will find rest here. "As shall we, tonight," he says. "This is a sanctuary. We're safe here." Notice for first time that he is carrying wereduck king's old staff, taken from regalia. Eat roots and drink dew. No meal ever tasted so good! After dinner Greenface departs into island's depths. Picks beautiful yellow flowers that grow here.

π/Σ/□ 1582: Sleep late and set off in repaired boat, Greenface, Shagflax, me, and king in his barrel. Pass quickly through gloom, heading east and a little south. Begin to feel the water move beneath us again, throwing off stagnant wyrd of Marsh. "There's a little stream ahead," says Shagflax. "That'll take us out of the Marsh." Find it and head south, into Durulz lands. Soon water shallows, and becomes a trickle as it winds up into hills. Time to walk again! Pain in leg is now dull throb. Struggle on. Two ducks and a cripple, pushing a king in a barrel.

Reach the small duck village of Harvest Home at nightfall. Greeted with sorrow, but too tired to take much notice. Fall asleep on fresh straw.

*/Σ/□ 1582: Awake to breakfast of panfried grubs wrapped in worms, sautéed mushrooms and a pondweed and snail porridge. I'm ravenous, but pass. I drink a little Greydog brew instead, which they grudgingly offer. Gah! They can't keep beer, these ducks. The village is quiet. Everybody's stricken with grief at the passing of their king. "Wait until we get to Stone Nest," says Shagflax, snorting. After we, or they, finish breakfast, Greenface pulls me aside. "Dangmar," he says, "I did save your life before, yes?" I reply gratefully. I might not have liked the means, but the end was pretty good. "Good," he says, before fixing me with a glance that was as icy as the fish we ate by the Shanlavar. "Then, when we get to Duck Point, leave the talking to me."

Not far to Stone Nest. Arrive by noon, accompanied by duck warriors from Harvest Home. Word of our return had already spread—a toad-rider had been dispatched last night. Shagflax was right. The grief hits us like a storm. Hear the ululating warbles from a mile away; caught the acrid smell of burning feathers on Eurmals' breath. Durulz line the path as we enter city's crude stone walls. Sord-drakes armoured in coats of bronze and strange helms bang their shields and squawk angrily to the sky. Don't understand much, but hear some oaths to Humakt.

Groups of weeping, wailing hens and ducklings mope on the ground, plucking out their feathers and pawing at the barrel. They wear the colours of mourning. Even their plumage dulled to brown, grey, black. Acolytes of their gods go among them with baskets, collecting tears and feathers. Some burned on pyres, others kept. Beside the fires sit old duck crones on giant stone eggs, bodies bowed by age and the great copper talismans hanging from their necks.

In temple to some strange duck god, barrel was set down and opened. Even though less full than when king interred, he was perfectly preserved, covered in sheen of sweet, sticky mead. The ducks lovingly wash his body and mend his wounds. His feathers stuffed and preened. His body scented with oils and clothed in fresh robes. They paint his beak gold and place him on a wooden bier covered in the fresh-plucked feathers of the mourners, fanned out as in wings. Around the king are placed the regalia that Stotuknob brought safe from Bagnot. His crowns, his sword. Thunderwell. Greenface keeps hold of the staff, but sprinkles handfuls of the yellow flowers over the king's body. Fresh garlands of a sparkling, silver bloom added also. Most beautiful flower I've seen. "What is it?" I ask Greenface. "Stardew," he replies, "Imogen's gift: the sacred flower of our kings." Here the king remains for night, as Stone Nest makes its vigil.

●/Δ/□ 1582: Morning. King's bier brought out of temple, carried by sordthanes and nestcarls. All along its length the road to Duck Point flanked by ducks, plucking out their feathers to that warbling dirge. Not long been laid, this symbol of friendship between man and durulz. Shagflax scoffs. "You wazzock. Our king hated it, didn't he? How do you think goods went to Duck Point before, on their way south? Via the Stream, of course. On our boats. Now? On your bloody carts," he says, poking my thigh. "Symbol of friendship my knob! It was laid so you could steal our trade and march your armies to our doorstep, if needs be. Don't underestimate how fraught that whole Feathered bloody Horse Queen thing got."

Evening before we cover two leagues to Duck

Point. Gates open, bannerposts empty. No fires lit in the city. Cold as Darkness Season. No dirge this time, just silence. Proceed to Ringhall, where duck chiefs gathered. Greenface prods my foot with staff as he walks past me to address them. Feel that chill again. He speaks confidently. Tells how Thunderthroat died bravely at Grizzly Peak beside his High King, loyal unto death. How he slew a Lunar general before he fell. Gained glory for his people. How old shaman, Amberdrake, had perished. How only few survivors, led by Greenface, brought king's body safely back. No mention of Reedsong, or curious rhyme at Dendrogi Pass. Squawking acclamation almost deafening. But not so much so that I couldn't hear Shagflax sniggering.

~/_Δ/□ 1582: At dawn king's bier is placed on sacred barge, constructed during the night. Decorated with his royal cartouche. Catscratched plaque reads: "Here lies Orppo, King Thunderthroat, being the fourth of his ilk, who fell in honour at the Battle of Grizzly Peak. Reigned 1563-1582." As Elmal's Shield rises, mourners flock to the docks. Beside funeral barge gather painted Swanboats of Copper Chain Clan. On the banks muster durulz thanes, carls and townfolk. Runelords of Humakt from Indrodar's Necklace. Wily snail-helmed warriors of the Marsh. Crones of the Broken Earth. Reavers of the Stream. Motley mix of hauberks of bronze, coats of clacks, starched feathers, rune-painted helms. Greenface is there, too. Can't spot Shagflax.

Horn blows and procession departs. Some in water, some on banks. Royal Boat-thane, Sprypole, guides king's barge through marshy channels into Creek-Stream River. Now we go to enact final rites of ceremony at Wild Temple. Little armada covers four or five leagues by mid-afternoon. Bulk of mourners wait outside sacred grounds; select few, myself included, follow winding path to centre. Shamans purify us by ancient rites I cannot speak of. King's bier carried to great stone, twice the height of a duck. Placed atop it by four minotaur guards. Then chanting begins and we fall from land of mortals into swirling winds of legend. Countless heroes, gods and spirits surround us, in friendship and battle. Look to king's bier and see his body lifted up by magic. Around him crawl countless tiny spiders, beautiful and sparkling as stars, each spinning delicate silver strand into a greater web. Glistening cocoon engulfs king except for his golden beak. Then we are all caught in their web, web of time, and magic fades. King lies swathed upon his bier, and is brought down again. His regalia are removed, ready for his successor. Replaced with replicas for his journey. We carry him back to the barge.

Evening now, as we rejoin the procession. Travel down Feyghost until we reach Creek-Stream River again. A thousand torches mark our path in descending gloom. Sprypole sets royal barge on its course downstream, protected by spirits. Most stay and watch, silent. A few of us travel further, in boats of our own, enthralled at spectacle. We journey for a mile or so when we hear first sounds. Soft at first. Then louder. And louder. By our torches we see forms on the bank. Beastmen in their hundreds, raised in wild symphony of grief. Centaur's stomp. Minotaur's bellow. Manticore's roar. Each saluting that little barge until it's lost in distance.

[Narrative ends.]

singing the songs of REBELLION

By Mark Galeotti

Visulan Redsnake, man of the Red Moon, smiled. He had been away from the great rivers of his birthland too long. Four years ago, he had finally embraced Sedenya in all her turning mysteries, abandoning the ways of his people. He had abandoned the One-Cut Knife brotherhood and thus Kotor the Black Death Snake, joining the River Road Militia. It was a small Lunar regiment, its members drawn from river folk of every part. His first day had been as chaotic as it had been uplifting; a confusion of all sorts of accents, from the quick, lilting tones of Bokisin Vanch to the slow drawl of a Lower Oslir Esvuthili, the unexpected sense of comradeship amongst such varied folk, the secret ceremony which brought him within the warband, the simple yet hearty meal of fish and breadleaf. Since then, he had hunted Sartari rebels down the river they called the Creek and escorted grain barges up the Oslir, trapped Vargar's Tooth on the Senvenren and witnessed not one but two ovreyin birthings during the Oronin floods.

But still, there was nothing to the warm, dark richness of the waters of Darjiin, as day began to give way to night and the living and growing humours of the swamp drifted across, borne on Asheesu's breath.

'Ho there, Darjiini, are your men an escort or a fishing party?'

Reluctantly, Visulan turned at the contemptuous bellow. It was, of course, beneath the likes of Avrio'Polemarch Sardesh, the Dara Happan commander of this detachment, to speak directly with a Darjiini, and so he relied upon his adjutant, Ruddy Ellek, an Alkothi of suitable pure blood and stentorian voice, to relay all commands. Given that they tended to be patronising, insulting or both, it was a task the latter relished.

At once Visulan saw that one of his men had seized the opportunity to spear a passing gutfish to give some proper sustenance to the thin porridge the Dara Happan quartermaster had provided for them (while Sardesh's gilt-helmed Senatorial Guards dined on fresh meat and corn bread). His first instinct was loudly to praise the fellow — his men were scouts, trained and adept at foraging on the way, not reliant upon the supplies packed in three of the five wagons rumbling and splashing along in the rear. But he knew that as both Darjiini-born and Lunar-devoted, he could expect no latitude from the Avrio'Polemarch, especially as he

was currently lost in grandiose reverie. After all, the fourth wagon contained the pay chests for the troops temporarily quartered in Ulifas, and their safe arrival would no doubt earn him riotous plaudits and a fine feast from the officers of the Dara Happan garrison regiment, the Preceptors. Visulan knew better than to expect an invitation himself. But the fifth was perhaps the most important, and the real reason for Sardesh's extreme zeal and vainglorious daydreams. Within it, wrapped in thick rolls of vonlath velvet and held safely in a cage of cleansed ivory, was the Purity Icon, a golden effigy of Yelm, bearing the Rod of Limpid Integrity with which he blessed Ulifas when it was founded. Normally kept under heavy guard in Raibanth, it was returned to Ulifas each year to be paraded through the streets and set atop the Purity Bastion for a day and a night.

The presence of the icon was a constant irritant to Visulan. The Dara Happans knowingly chose a circuitous route precisely to impress as many Darjiini as possible with their political predominance. Visulan may have left his Darjiini past behind, but it was a source of no joy to be greeted with glowering looks and hissed curses from passers-by, even as he understood their resentment. This was not the unifying acceptance of which Sedenya speaks, but the arrogance of an imperial conqueror. Then there were all the antiquated rituals which accompanied the duty of transporting the icon. As Yelm rose in the morning, the effigy had to be unwrapped and lifted to greet him. Yet none of the Dara Happans were allowed to catch sight of the icon, which was too holy to be viewed until in Ulifas, and it went without saying that the River Roaders, Lunar to a man and woman, were deemed even less worthy. Each yelmrise thus saw a farcical ritual, as the River Roaders formed a defensive circle, eyes fixed away from the wagon, in turn watched by Senatorial Guards, their tall helmets flashing in the early sun. Meanwhile Sardesh and his house priest, blindfolds ostentatiously wound around their heads, fumbled with the icon's bindings, grunting with the weight as they then lofted it to the heavens. The entire company had to remain fixed in place, eyes turned outwards, as they then laboriously wrapped it again, with clumsy fingers unused to physical chores at the best of times, much less blinded. Merciful Mother Above Us, what pointless chores the Yelmies do demand of themselves!

Still this was, at last, their final day following the Osia. By that afternoon, they would be at Ulifas, and Sardesh would have his day of glory, while Visulan and his men enjoyed the earthier pleasures of the Verge.

Suddenly he caught sight of Septon Keruvena twist with surprise. A rangy Naverian hillwoman, she was a scout whose instincts were always to be trusted, and Visulan automatically scanned the surrounding valley sides with heightened caution. Just as Keruvena sank back, mouth open in a warning cry cut short by the black-fledged dart in her neck, Visulan spotted the ambush. Spearsmen clad only in their snake-pattern war paint leapt from the river, while others pulled themselves from hides cut into the overgrown banks to either side...

‘Songs, not Swords’

The Darjiini are by no means without a powerful military tradition. Their scale-armoured warbands have shattered Stonewall Phalanxes, their skirmishers can dance through the battlefield unharmed while their arrows cut commander from his bodyguard, their shamans can send rivers thundering from their courses or raise unspoken horrors from the swamp.

However, they have had the misfortune often to be overshadowed by more powerful neighbours, such as the Shargashi berserks of Alkoth, the bronze-mailed legions of Carmania and the phalanxes of Dara Happa. Furthermore, Darjiin’s imperial masters have tended towards a brutal and indiscriminate intolerance of armed rebellion. When a Darjiini family is Singing for the Silent, many are the dirges to the dead of past wars, the ‘I hate Darjiini Usurpers’ pogroms, the forced resettlement of Carmanian times. However, the Darjiini spirit is as sly as it is indomitable, and the spirit of rebellion has not been quashed, merely driven to new forms of expression. Instead, the Darjiini fight back in many hidden or at least deniable ways.

Any good Darjiini knows how to play on Dara Happan prejudices, responding to commands with slack-jawed incomprehension or cunning and wilful misunderstanding. When a job has to be done quickly, Darjiini workers will display a comatose lethargy they call the ‘mud-walk’ among themselves, while if they have found a way of twisting instructions to counter-productive purposes then they will work like demons to do the most mischief they can before the foreman spots them. Traditional minimalist costume, a sensible response to the sultry summers of the Darjiini wetlands, has become if anything more revealing and flamboyant, precisely to scandalise prudish Dara Happans. Then there is a rich tradition of cultural resistance and pride embodied within the worship of SurEnslib and even the songs and folklore of the Darjiini. Every child

leans the Nine Sad Songs, on the surface mournful tales of lost love but a thinly-veiled allegory of their peoples’ subjugation, just as the Tenth Hopeful Ballad is not really about lost love refound but the liberation of Darjiin. Whenever proud parents name their child Shividru—after the satrap who nearly managed to complete the Water Fire Rites at the time of the Birth of the Goddess and reformed the ancient bond with the land—they are also making a statement about nationhood. Whenever a flashing-eyed Ulifasi girl drives a young Dara Happan nobleman to distraction, such that he forgets his studies and succumbs to sinful fantasies, then that is a blow struck for Darjiin without knife or fist.

The Usual Suspects

A party of outsiders are ambushed by Alkothi soldiers seeking one of the Song-Singers. The soldiers have been misdirected by locals, eaten alive by clouds of midges that seem determined to pursue them at all costs, half-drowned in hidden mud pools which have left them filthy and dishevelled. Even in the best of moods, Alkothi are short-tempered and intolerant, and these men are far from being in the best of moods. If the characters look at all local or shamanic, they can expect to be captured, trussed up and taken back to their camp, to be interrogated and eventually probably grudgingly released. If they are obviously not shamans, they can still expect the third degree—what are they doing here? Isn’t it a coincidence that they happen to be here while a wanted fugitive is in the area? Do they realise it is an offence to withhold information from the loyal agents of the Radiant Emperor?

Perhaps nothing reflects Shividru the Weighty’s dictum of ‘Songs, not Swords’ (although he did follow that with ‘But after Songs, Swords’) so much as the peculiar ‘rebellion’ of the Song-Singers of Arir. Theirs is a rebellion fought more often with stories told around the fire and magic rituals which make the eels glow blue, of sly pranks and cunning ruses. When Uruvuluru Paddles-the-Seas was asked what he wanted, he said “to make Darjiini proud of being Darjiini, Dara Happans ashamed of being Dara Happans and Alkothi afraid of being Alkothi.” In part, their goal is to keep alive the traditions of Darjiin and SurEnslib, especially the old songs through which they are communicated and celebrated, but it is also increasingly to lay the foundations for a Darjiini political resurgence. Before her death once of their number, Uliwatta Sniffs-the-Morning-Dew had a vision, of a moon drifting apart, like a reed bed when the Oslir Bore thunders through it, of an empire at war with itself and of snapping willowherb, to many symbolic of Darjiin, bursting into flower. To the Song-Singers, this was an omen, a sign that they should prepare for a new age.

Typical Personality Traits: Pride in Darjiin.

Magic: All Song-Singers are shamans of the SurEnslib Tradition. As well as other practices, the Song-Singers are also taught the secret First Clutch Practice, which provides access to powerful primal spirits.

The First Clutch Practice

Servants of the First and Last

The First Clutch of eggs laid by SurEnslib were the most potent and radiant, and they were named for the Sun, stars and planets— indeed, according to the Yunirtosi Skydancers, they were these celestial bodies — and theirs were powers and pleasures beyond mortal comprehension. Outsiders often think that the First Clutch Practice provides ways of binding these primal powers, but that is impious nonsense. Instead, those extraordinary individuals who take it upon themselves to carry out the finest work of the First Clutch, the protection of SurEnslib’s people, also gain power over those other great spirits, both friendly and malign, over whom the First Clutch had power. The best known are three:

KuKwatta, Spirit Father, the first gods of the Suvarians. His name means ‘It-four’ and she has four faces, angry and friendly, man and woman. Unpredictable and simple, he nonetheless provides her petitioners with unexpected blessings.

ErNear, Cave Mother and wife of great Suvar. Hers are the secrets of the dark passages and moist, fertile hidden chambers.

Los, Source of Monsters, from whose bubbling cauldron flutter, crawl, flop and slither all kinds of vicious creature which nonetheless have their place in the natural order of life and death.

Entry Tests: Worship SurEnslib 10W, Relationship: Song-Singers (Member) 20.

Abilities: Know SurEnslib’s Secrets, First Clutch Practice Knowledge.

Virtues: Mysterious, Passionate, Protective of Darjiin, Protective of SurEnslib.

Practice Spirits:

KuKwatta, Spirit Father (Abruptly Calm 5W, Babble Prophecy 20, Sudden Anger 5W, Unexpected Action 5W).

ErNear, Cave Mother (Fecund Darkness 1W, Find Crevice 20-10W, Healing Mud 20-10W, Hide in the Earth 1W-10W, Warm Cave 20)

Los, Source of Monsters (Bubble Out 20, Call Monster 20, Command Beast 20, Crushing Embrace 1W, Heat Water 5W, Shattering Swipe 1W, Stinging Bite 1W).

Special Spirits: There are many special spirits associated with this practice, but each is an individual and must be contacted and dealt with separately.

Secret: **In the Name of the Heron Mother** (Can be used as an active ability to banish alien spirits or other otherworldly entities from Darjiin or as an augment to any resistance to non-Darjiini magic.)

Fetishes: Small fragments of pottery, glass or stone, seemingly just random shards but in fact carefully crafted to represent pieces of the original First Eggs after the hatchings.

Other Side: The First Clutch nest in the warm and loving shadow of SurEnslib Herself.

Disadvantages: While the First Clutch Practice is a mystery to most, there are those — both Darjiini and outsiders — who know of it and that it is confined to the Song-Singers, so open display of its magics may identify the user as a member of the heroband.

The Peat Feather Crown (Guardian Being)

The Peat Feather Crown is not a crown as such, but a simple headdress on which are mounted six long brown feathers. At first glance, they seem dull and dowdy, but the more they are examined, the more extraordinary they appear: they glitter with myriad minute sparks of colour, they flutter in a breeze no one else can feel, and they radiate a potent, even sensual feeling of life, fertility and vitality. They are feathers left from SurEnslib’s own birthing nest, from six of her First Clutch, and as such the crown is both a focus of powerful magic and a symbol of SurEnslib’s enduring promise of life. It is also the medicine bundle which allows the Song Singers to learn the secrets of the First Clutch Practice.

Method: Emanation.

Form: Feathered headdress.

Communication: The most recent three bearers of the crown receive guidance in vivid and often erotic dreams.

Guardian Being Requirements: Members must be shamans of the SurEnslib tradition; they must be able to sing well (1W+) and must engage in life whole-heartedly and passionately.

Awareness Functions: Sense Life 10W.

Blessing Functions: Be Fertile 10W, Inspire Passion 5W.

Defence Functions: Resist Alien Ways 10W, Survive in Darjiin 5W.

their arrival. Even when the sabotage had been realised and the effigy hidden from view, this was a tale which would become a hundred songs and spread across Darjiin, just as the uptight Yelmies would not allow it to sully their bastion, ruining their annual celebration of primacy over their Darjiini neighbours. It was a beautiful, beautiful blow, rebellion as poetry.

Reluctantly, he reminded himself that he was a soldier of the Empire. However obnoxious Sardesh had been (and what would this debacle mean for the ambitious young prig?), this did not excuse him from his duties to the Emperor. He handed the travois to one of his men and lengthened his stride to catch up with the commander and his cronies in the van.

As he approached, he realised that they were closer to Ulifas than he had thought. The perfect circle of the city walls glowed warm in the yelmlight, while the wind carried faint sounds of music from the Darjiini tenements of the Verge outside them. Sardesh turned and looked down at him with all the arrogance of a young Dara Happan aristocrat; for the first time he even deigned to speak to Visulan directly.

‘We are here. I am sure that you and your men will feel out of place within the city and are best left within the slums. Your conduct has been unbecoming an officer of Imperator’s hosts, and if your rabble fought as well as they foraged, my men would not have had to defend them. I do not propose to grant you any of the honour of our entry, nor do I wish to communicate with you further.’

Perhaps he had sought to goad the Darjiini to unwise retort, for he was certainly taken aback when Visulan responded simply with a parade-perfect salute and began motioning his troops way from the caravan, taking a side route towards the Verge.

A flurry of orders and the Senatorial Guards assumed their ceremonial formation, forming a wide, hollow column, eyes rigidly fixed away from the centre. Sardesh, having paused for his servants to polish his golden breastplate and fit a new, cleaner (and taller)

crest to his helmet, rode proudly at the head of the column, into the Great Entry Square of Ulifas. It was full to bursting with every kind of spectator, from the dignitaries arrayed in order of importance upon the ziggurat stand in the centre, to the proud Yelmities eager to share in their god’s magnificence, down to Darjiini, curious to see what all the fuss was about or eager to sell sweetmeats and wineskins to the devout. Behind Sardesh, four blindfolded soldiers lofted the great icon upon its tall stand. As they unwittingly bore in the statue, Yelm’s distant features now sporting a broad, lopsided grin, his rod become a long and bulbous phallus grasped firmly in his right hand, the first cries of outrage and Darjiini hoots of pleasure drifted through the warm afternoon air into the Verge.

VisulanAhari, man of Darjiin, smiled.



The Statue of Yelm the Riddiculed, God of Cock Rock!

DUNDEALOS

By Jeff Richard

Halt stranger! Who comes this way into the land of the Jaldonkillers? This place is not allowed to everyone! Do you come in friendship or as a foe?

The Dundevalos tribe – or, as they are more commonly known, the Jaldonkillers – are a Heortling tribe in the Kingdom of Sartar and are famed for their proud horsemen, their talent as poets, and their well-earned ability to strike fear into the hearts of the beast-riding nomads of Prax.

The Dundevalos Valley

The Dundevalos reside in a broad and rich valley that starts deep in the foothills of the Stormwalk Mountains and separates the Verge (the dry hill country that forms the borderland between the Stormwalk Mountains and the Plains of Prax) from the Yellow Hills. An intermittent stream, the Willow Beck, meanders through the valley, and then dives beneath the chaparral of Prax.

The tribe farms the rich valley lands (planting and herd cattle and sheep in the dry hills and the grazelands of Prax) although they must occasionally fight off bands of Praxian raiders seeking metal and slaves.

The formidable crags of the Stormwalk Mountains rise to the west and south of the valley. Steep and heavily forested, many of their peaks are snow-capped all year round. From the valley, the nearby peak of Ezzjuzz Mountain (home to a clan of wind children and winter spirits) can easily be seen. To the south, the distinctive spirals of great Stormwalk can be seen on a clear day. To the north and west are the Quivin Mountains – a small group of steep, snow-topped peaks. These mountains are the spiritual and political centre of the kingdom of Sartar. To the east lie the Plains of Prax, the dry, hot home of the savage Praxian beast-riders.

The climate of the Dundevalos valley is warm in summer and cold in winter. Summer temperatures average 20-24° C, occasionally peaking over 35° C on a hot, summer day. Winter temperatures average freezing (0° C) but often drop as low as minus 34° C.

Winter nights can be much colder.

Precipitation is around 100 cm, falling mainly as snow in winter and light rain in spring. In late winter and early spring, the region is famed for violent windstorms and in summer, thunderstorms are common in the afternoon and evening.

Mixed forests and rough heathland cover most valleys and foothills, except where people have cleared them. The woods in most sheltered valleys are mainly oak, linden and hornbeam. Beech, silver fir, spruce and rowan are found on the lower mountain slopes. Above that, there are just alpine meadows or bald rocky crags.

Agriculture

The Dundevalos practice a mixture of farming and herding, with hunting providing furs and supplemental meats (primarily wild boar and red deer). The cattle and sheep of the Dundevalos graze far and wide, guarded by their horse-riding herders. Of all the peoples of Sartar, only the related Pol Joni tribe (see Pol Joni below) rely more on their herds.

Farming is largely confined to the Dundevalos valley itself. The Dundevalos carls use the Barntar plow to plow their fields – a relatively shallow wooden plow pulled by a team of 4 to 8 oxen. Barley, wheat and rye are the most popular crops – consumed as bread, porridge and ale. Men and women work in the fields and the entire clan helps bring in the harvest.

The Dundevalos reside in fortified villages, surrounded by rows of stakes to ward off Praxian raiders. Each clan generally has several settlements with between 100 and 300 people – usually centered on an extended family and their servants and allies. Dundevalosford and Jaldonkill are the only settlements that can be called towns – each have around 500 people.

Men raise livestock, including their small but hot-blooded horses, herds of fine red and brown cattle – the finest being the sacred cattle descended from the magical bull Derik Poljoni stole from the Opili nation. The Dundevalos also herd several varieties of big-horned sheep. Herds are replenished by raiding other tribes. The sheep herds graze in the foot hills of the Stormwalk Mountains and the cattle herds

crushed the Heortlings at the Battle of Night and Day, and conquered them at the Battle of Vaantar. However, it was near Dundevalos lands that the hero Vargast Redhand first defeated the Bright Empire and summoned Harmast Barefoot, the great hero who discovered heroquesting and freed the Heortlings.

Later some people were tricked into worshipping dragons and founded the Empire of Wyrms Friends (EWF). They made many great cities and roads, but at last fell to their folly at the Dragonkill. The ruins of their towns and cities are still visible today. After the Dragonkill, the Crossline marked the borders of Dragon Pass. Prophets said no one should pass those markers and everyone was too afraid of the dragons to try.

South of the Crossline, the Hendriking tribe united the Heortlings into a great kingdom – the Kingdom of the Hendrikings - centered at Whitewall until Belintar the God-King destroyed the kingdom with strange magic. Three hundred years ago, Hendriking adventurers, holy men and refugees reentered Dragon Pass. The settlers rediscovered many places – including the Dundevalos valley.

The Dundevalos were constantly exposed to raids from Praxians, until about two centuries ago when the mercenary and hero Derik Furman founded the Pol-Joni people after his success on the Horse Path Quest. Derik gathered refugees and volunteers (including Sartarites, Grazers, and even Praxians) to defend the Praxian marches. At Jaldonkill, Derik killed the Praxian warlord Jaldon Goldtooth and laid him to rest. The Praxians have often raided but have never made it past Jaldonkill.

About a century and a half ago, Sartar came to the tribes around the Quivin Mountains. He united the tribes by making peace, resolving feuds, and fulfilling prophecies. He built cities to ally the tribes into confederations. He married the Feathered Horse Queen and became the sacred King of Dragon Pass. He founded a great dynasty that united the tribes of Sartar until they were defeated by the Lunar Empire in 1602, fifteen years ago.

About 70 years ago, Sartar's grandon, Dorasar, founded a city in the Praxian wastes called New Pavis. Many members of the Dundevalos tribe (as well as members of other Sartarite tribes) settled in New Pavis and took rich farmlands in Pavis County. As a result, the Dundevalos tribe has a strong connection to New Pavis.

About 60 years ago, King Tarkalor became king of Sartar – the greatest king since Sartar himself. King Tarkalor killed the Lunar Emperor Phargentes and defeated the troll-loving Kitori tribe, who had kept trade from coming into Sartar from Heortland. Tarkalor made peace between the clans by helping

discover a new god, Yelmalio, and moved the Yelmalions out of the kingdom. King Tarkalor married the Feathered Horse Queen and ruled all of Dragon Pass. The wolf men were peaceful, the Praxians traded instead of raided, and the Empire was defeated. Tarkalor had fine strong children and everything was perfect.

About 40 years ago, the evil king of Tarsh got magicians from the Lunar Empire and killed Tarkalor at the Battle of Grizzley Peak. This was the beginning of the end. About 30 years ago, the Lunar Empire invaded, but was driven off.

1602 was the Disaster Year. Everyone went away to war. Red Emperor led an army of zombies, the Crimons Bat, an army of dragonewts, and the living goddess Jar-Eel to take Boldhome. The Lunars have occupied Sartar since. In 1613, several tribes of Sartar rebelled and in Starbrow's Rebellion they defeated a Lunar army. However, the Sartarites were later trapped by the Imperial Warlord Fazzur Wideread. The rebellion ended when Kallyr was exiled and a member of the Sartar Dynasty – Temertain – was installed by the Lunars as ruler of Sartar. However, Temertain has not lit Sartar's Flame, and so he has not been crowned king yet.

Magic and Religion

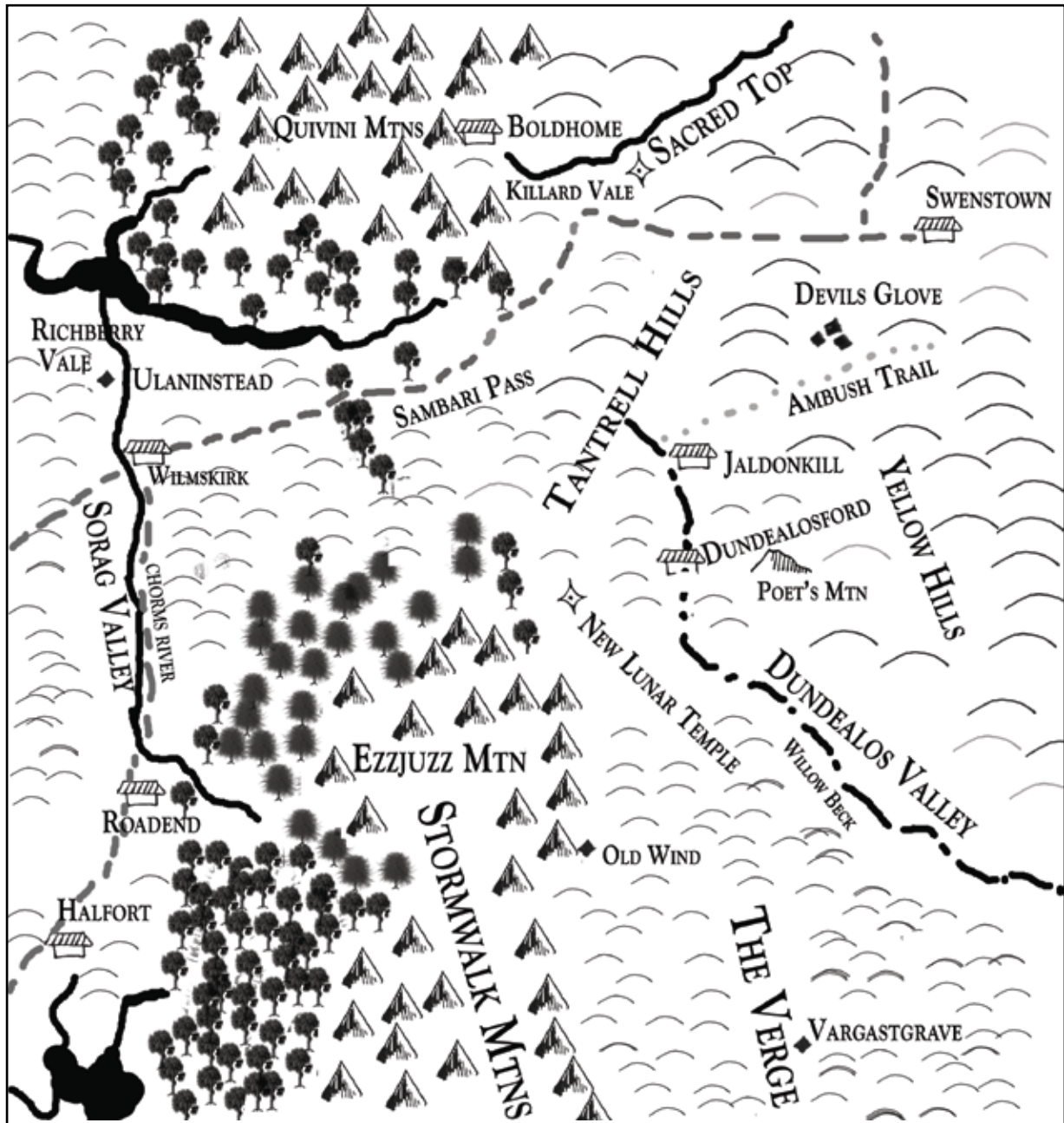
Gloranthan magic comes from several places: from powerful spirits, from wizardry, and from the gods and heroes. For the Dundevalos, gods and heroes are the main source of magic.

The Dundevalos – like other Sartarites – follow the religion of Orlanth and Ernalda. Everyone attends sacrifices to Orlanth as the king, father, warrior and farmer, and to Ernalda the queen, mother, wife and magician. Orlanth is the Great Storm, king and father of the Heortlings. He is a Great God, so vast that even wise and holy people can see only aspects of him, so people focus on the parts of him they need to know. Ernalda is the Earth Mother, source of magic and community. As with Orlanth, her full power is too awesome for most of her worshippers, who concentrate on those parts that relates to their life, occupation or personality.

Most Heortlings initiate or devote themselves to a specific deity. The religion of Orlanth and Ernalda – the Storm Tribe – provides scores of deities that are worshipped. Most Heortlings join one of those cults.

The highest religious statute is given to people who have an intimate association with a deity, called a holy person or godi. Holy people can be of many types, but most often found is the clan godi – normal people, except when they lead magic for their clan. A priest or priestess is also a holy person, but has a full-time occupation leading magical activities.

LANDS OF THE DUNDEALOS



horses. The Lunars took all their livestock and replaced them with pathetic goats, which the Balkoth now herd despite the hatred Heortlings have for that unclean animal. Their king is Angtyr of the Horn, said to be as randy as the goats his people tend.

Boldhome

Sartar’s miraculous city in the Quivini Mountains

Boldhome is the capital city of Sartar, and its largest settlement, with a population of 11,000. Its splendid and unusual architecture is attributed to the dwarfs who helped Sartar build it. Prince Temertain maintains his royal household here; it is also the heaviest garrisoned center of Lunar administration in the territory.

In earliest times, Orlanth once sat here in judgment. The Blue Ram once leapt into this vale, then up into the sky. Once Lightning was hidden here under a rock. Ernalda and five of her women once hid here from the Scathing waters. Vingkot and his brave sons once took up positions here to fight the Angry Fire giants. Sartar built Boldhome to fulfill an ancient prophecy of Lhankor Mhy:

When a city is built overnight in the vale between raven and cow, then the Maker of the Bold Home brings peace to the world, and a house to bear Justice. The sacred flame will burn, the sacred wind will blow, and the sacred earth will support the thanes to destroy Chaos. Whoever settles in this bold home shall be king!

Sartar persuade the dwarfs to erect his city overnight. Boldhome was founded on “Day 88” (the 88th day of the Orlanthi year), also known as Founders Day.

Sartar became a god atop the great bronze brazier visible day or night from anywhere in the city. He gave his last speech, and then led everyone in the Song of Immolation, which is sung when corpses are burned. As they sang, a great light grew around Sartar, brighter and brighter, until no one could look at it. It was a bright white flame, then, as the song vanished from the air, the celebrants saw it cool into a fifteen-foot-tall orange flame. In 1602, Boldhome fell to the Lunars; the Flame of Sartar was quenched, battered, and cursed by Lunar magic. Although it occasionally sputters, the fire of the kingdom has gone out.

Devil’s Glove

Hand-shaped evil hill in the Yellow Mountains

This massive hand-shaped hill is known as the Devil’s Glove because it has six fingers. It is often said to be a piece of clothing from The Devil who fought Urox. Others say that evil demon wore no clothing and say it belonged to a different devil named Uefaga, one of the horde that followed Wakboth in the Chaos Wars. His hand has chopped off and rotted to become this hill; or it was just his glove, thrown down in defiance. Nothing grows right here: trees and bushes are warped and peculiar, and even the grass here moves when the air is still. A yawning gap, the wrist, opens to a huge cave. No one can sleep inside without having terrible nightmares ever afterwards. One rumor claims that ogres come here from Prax and perform obscene rites to their hideous god.

Just north of the Glove is Enothea’s Cut. In this vale rises the Hill of Saraskos, named for the son of Tarkalor and the Feathered Horse Queen, whose body was raised here when he died.

Dundealos Valley

Valley in the foothills of the Stormwalk Mountains

The home of the Dundealos Tribe, this broad valley leads deep into the hills, separating the Verge from the Yellow Hills. An intermittent stream, Willow Beck, meanders through the valley, then dives beneath the chaparral of Prax. The Dundealos Tribe worship Ulanin the Rider here. The Poljoni worship here as well.

Dundealosford

Dundrealos Tribal Fort in Dundealos Valley

The tribal center of the Dundealos, Dundealosford is a prosperous town on the edge of Prax. So many skalds and musicians make their homes there that jokers call the tribal warband “Dundealos’ Band”.

Ezzjuzz Mountain

Peak in the Stormwalk Moutains

There are many wind children aeries on Ezzjuzz Moutain and the surrounding peaks. Ezzjuzz is the winter spirit of the cold mountain snow, a sacred ancestor to the clans there. The wind children live here in isolation from human affairs.

Kheldon

An Enslaved Tribe of Sartar

The Kheldon are the “Most Noble Tribe of Sartar.” They know many ways of making peace and keeping people from fighting for foolish reasons, and are famous for the divine aid they receive in battles fought for the good of the tribe. In the hearts of most of the tribe, the great rebel leader Kallyr Starbrow is still the king. Since Kallyr’s exile, the people have lost their Motion Powers entirely. They now do everything slowly and inefficiently, even harvesting and hunting. Ellig Greenlegs, a Seven Mothers missionary, is the titular head of the tribe. He has made Swenstown a pleasure home for his cult and rarely leaves the city.

Jaldonkill

Border fort in the Yellow Hills

Derik Furman was a mercenary and hero who founded the Poljoni people after his success on the Horse Path Quest. Since Sable Riders had slain his kin, his hatred of the Praxians was insatiable. He gathered refugees and volunteers (including Sartarites, Grazers, and even Praxian nomads) to defend the marches.

When Jaldon Goldtooth came to life again, Derik conceived a daring stratagem. He attacked the Praxians with a small force, then fled through the Yellow Hills by many trails (where the rest of his followers waited in small bands). The nomads gave chase, and at the site now called Jaldonkill, Derik laid the demigod to his rest. The Praxians have often raided but are always stopped here. The defenders have killed Jaldon here several times. A fort still stands at Jaldonkill, held by the Dundelos tribe.

Old Wind

Famous Temple to Orlanth

High on the eastern face of the Stormwalk Mountains is Old Wind Temple, devoted to the wind and its potent energies. Here Orlanth made his first camp and first set the world right. From that place, Orlanth prepared to confront the Cosmic Dragon. Old Wind is a holy place to all who revere Orlanth. The site of pilgrimage and devotion, its winds can be heard for miles. Here the most holy of the Orlanthi – the Stormwalkers – meditate upon their breath and seek to become one with Orlanth. They meditated through the Dragonkill and were untouched by the Dragons. They ignore the irrelevant world of kings, warriors, chiefs and farmers, but occasionally deign to give scraps of wisdom to pilgrims. Perhaps 100-200 Orlanthi holy men meditate at Old Wind,

supported by a mundane community of twice that number.

Poet’s Mountain

Mountain in the Yellow Hills

This small mountain on the north side of the Dundelos Valley is the site of frequent pilgrimage by skalds, bards, and musicians. The Heortlings raise no shrine here, for the entire hill is sacred. Here Orlanth composed the first poem. Since the Dawn, the winds here have drifted with snatches of song and music. Those who sleep at the mountain often wake inspired with the gift of poetry and song, but madness strikes those less worthy.

Pimper’s Block

Slave Market at a Praxian Oasis

Pimper’s Block is the name of a thriving slave market on the border between Dragon Pass and Prax. Here triumphant warriors come to send their conquered foes into exile for a profit, and here the defeated come to ransom kin or cult mate. Buyers from the Holy Country and the Lunar Empire also are here to purchase whatever exotic specimens their masters require or desire.

The Lunar Etyries cult now runs and protects the market and, in turn, claims the first choice of the slaves, choosing as they want, paying below normal prices, then leaving the rest to the mercies of the market. Morokanth are not allowed here by tradition, for even the cruelest captor will not send his winnings to become herd meat for those animal humans of Prax.

The Poljoni

Free Tribe of Orlanthi

The Poljoni are horse-riding nomads who live on the borders of Prax. They have always been associated with the tribes of Sartar due to their common religion and Dundelos ancestry. The Poljoni clans do not organize as a tribe in the same as do the Dundelos. Instead, each clan rules itself independently.

Sacred Top

Holy Hill of Killard Vale

Sacred Top is the tomb of Amilanth and Jeromar, Storm Age heroes who love kings forbade in life but could not deny in death. They spoke their marriage vows while in the midst of the Hot Death Battle, in which both died. There is a sword graveyard at the hill’s base and altars for many gods and heroes

upon Vargast and his followers, who prepared for death. But Vargast astonished everyone, for Lokamayadon had a weakness, and Vargast used it like Death upon the evil wind. With a shower of burning cinders, the evil wind blew out. Palangio the Iron Vrok waded into the fight then. Vargast wounded the demigod, but he was just human and was weakened with his battle with Lokamayadon. Palangio clove Vargast through the body, then dismembered the corpse, burned the bodies of Vargast's followers, and finally destroyed the camp. Although it was a Heortling defeat, hundreds of Dara Happans also died there, and they serve Vargast and his men in the Storm Realm as thralls.

Verge, the

Harsh lands on the edge of Prax

The Verge forms the borderland between the Plains of Prax and the Stormwalk Mountains. The rough hills are dry and make poor cropland but the grazing is good – far better than the chaparral to the east. Seasonal streams bring meltwater down from the mountains and the Sounder's River flows year round, but otherwise it is marginal land on the verge of livable.

During the Dawn Age, the Verge was the last refuge of Orlanthe free from Lokamayadon. In moder times, the Poljoni herd their cattle and sheep in these hills, even if they must fight off the animal nomads who raid here seeking metal goods and slaves. The Dundalos aid the Poljoni against the Praxians.

Important people

Tribal Leaders

Dinorth Black Bull – King of the Dundalos, Dinorth is a wise old Orlanthe warrior. Dinorth loves his daughter Haradinora above all else. Dinorth is getting on in years, but his sword Serpent Tongue is still sharp.

Haradinora – High Priestess of the Dundalos, Haradinora is the daughter of King Dinorth. She is a proud and stubborn beauty who many say is the real ruler of the tribe. She has had several Year Husbands – men willingly compete for the honor to marry her for a year.

Destorniskis – a handsome and energetic Destor warrior who made his reputation leading raids in Prax, Sartar and even in the fabled ruins of Old Pavis. He now leads the tribal warband.

Old Wolfshelm – a veteran Humakti warrior who leads the king's bodyguard. He gained his name and his reputation fighting against the Telmori.

Disaventus the Poet – a loremaster and skald whose

satires can literally kill and whose songs of praise can grant immortality.

Clans of the Dundalos

Some of these clans have only a brief mention in the Dundalossaga and only fragmentary information about them is known.

Blue Jay

Tattoo: Blue Jay

Claim to Fame: Anti-Praxian magic, feared raiders

Main Village: Jaldonkill, a fort with a temple to Derik the Raider (hero of Finovan)

Chief: Derinith the Horseman is descended from Derik Poljoni and comes from a long line of fighters. He still bears his wounds from the Battle of Caroman Pass and can only move freely on horseback.

Priest: Desorlanth Braided-Beard, an energetic old man who knows more myths than most sages.

Notes: The Blue Jay claim Derik Poljoni as an ancestor and worship him as an avatar of Finovan the Raider. They control the fort of Jaldonkill. Tend to marry women of the Black Bull Clan. The Blue Jay have a competitive rivalry with the Ulandrings.

Black Bird

Tattoo: Black Bird

Claim to Fame: Humakt shrine,

Black Bull

Tattoo: Black Bull.

Claim to Fame: A magical herd of sacred black bulls.

Main Village: Dundalosford, the largest settlement of the Dundalos tribe with its temple to Ernalda.

Chief: Dinorth Black Bull.

Priestess: Haradinora the Proud.

Notes: Tend to marry women from the Blue Jay or Ulandring clan.

Drogarsings

Tattoo: Harp.

Claim to Fame: They are known as loremasters and their chief priest is often a great skald. Drogarsi's holy Mountain of Poets is in their lands.

Hyalings

Tattoo: Flaming Horse

Claim to Fame: Shrine to Hyalor, a subcult of Elmal.

Summer Winter Owl

Tattoo: Owl

Claim to Fame: Ancient enemies of Sky Folk.
Excellent scouts.

Ulandrings

Tattoo: Horse and rider.

Claim to Fame: Shrine to Ulanin the Rider, a subcult of Orlanth Adventurous.

Notes: The Ulandrings have a competitive rivalry with the Blue Jay.

Wild Cat

Tattoo: Alynx

Claim to Fame: Hunters, leaping magic, affiliation with Old Wind Temple.

Derik Blue Jay and the Poljoni Tribe

Derik Blue Jay was a warrior from the Blue Jay clan of the Dundalos tribe who contrived an early hatred of the Praxians. His family was slain by sable riders, and he escaped only because the raiders thought him dead.

While Derik plotted and trained for his vengeance, he became a mercenary for the High King of Tarsh. Derik accompanied the king on his famous raid to steal an immortal horse. In return, the king aided Derik on a similar theft. They raided the Opili nation's sacred her and stole one of their great magical bulls. Derik traded a calf sired by his bull for a colt sired by the king's stallion. The two men were famous friends and even successfully raided the Holy Country.

Derik needed no prompting to exact his vengeance upon the Praxian nomads after they treacherously invaded the Dundalos lands and pushed onward into Tarsh. Derik faced their leader, Jaldon Goldentooth, in battle and slew the mighty hero at Jaldonkill.

In 1420 Derik and his followers, called the Poljoni, moved their cattle and the magical bull, into the Praxian lands called No Man's March. He rode upon his magical war horse, and all his folks rode horses. They claimed the right to live in Prax, alongside the Praxian beastriders, and challenged the nomads to defy them, if they could.

The Praxians attempted to do so, but were driven from the battle field after bloody combat. Derik was aided in this fight by Tarsh infantry, cavalry from the Grazers, and even some dragonewt mercenaries.

Derik revealed the rules to be adopted by his tribe. His chieftains thought them unusual at first, but

agreed because he had been right thus far. Any person could join the clan as a full member if they proved themselves to have the proper skills and attitudes. Derik urged the clan councils to accept anyone who passed the initiation test, even the candidates were from former enemy tribes. Because they were thereby willing to accept every outlaw who wished to have another chance, the tribe grew quickly. Eventually the Poljoni tribe included pigmy riders from the impala people, dusky alticamelus riders, bearded bison outlaws, and many others from foot-bound clans as well. All Poljoni rode horses. The cattle bred profusely and the horses bred true.

Within a few generations the new tribe had grown strong enough to stand as equal to the peoples in Prax. They called themselves the Poljoni, but the Praxians called them the "bastard tribe" because they were not pure or worshipers of the Prax and Paps deities. Nonetheless, trade passed between them, and the occasional Poljoni went to the Paps to worship. Their warriors were accepted into Praxian secret societies, and they became, in every way, one of the bickering tribes of the plains.

However, the Poljoni kept their kinship and friendship with the Dundalos. The Poljoni often travel to Dundalos lands to worship and trade. The Poljoni often call upon the Dundalos warriors to aid them against the other Praxian tribes, and the Dundalos use the Poljoni as scouts, raiders and skirmishers.

JALDONKILL

By Jeff Richard

The town of Jaldonkill is a border fort between Sartar and the Plains of Prax. It has approximately 500 residents - about 125 adult men, 125 adult women, 200 children, and 50 elders and leaders. At any given time there are a few merchants from elsewhere in Sartar, small bands of Praxians, and guests from the other clans. Approximately 1000 farmers and herders of the Blue Jay clan live outside of Jaldonkill in fortified steads.

Clan leaders

The undisputed leader of Jaldonkill and the Blue Jay clan is the clan chieftain, Derinith Horseman, a warrior who has long led the Jaldonkillers in war. He was badly wounded fighting against the Lunars at Caroman Pass some fifteen years ago and can only move freely when on horseback. Derinith leads the clan's sacrifices to Derik Jaldonkiller and to Orlanth Dar (Orlanth in his King aspect).

The chief and his household reside in a large hall in the lower town. However, the clan assembly is held atop the hill of Jaldonkill, in front of the temple to Orlanth and Derik Jaldonkiller.

Temples and priests

The clan's main temple is to Orlanth and Derik Jaldonkiller. The temple is a grand wooden hall atop the hill of Jaldonkill. On its roof is painted a stylized blue jay - similar to what is tattooed on the clan members. Inside is Derik's hall, with a four-sided carved Orlanth pillar, the chair of Derik, and plenty of trophies taken from the Praxians, including a magical ball of the tails of beasts taken from every Praxian tribes, and the skins and furs of the Praxian beasts. Here, plunder from the Praxians is given to Derik Furman. Sacrifices to Orlanth are made in front of the temple.

Desorlanth Braided-Beard is the clan's senior priest to Orlanth and leads most of the sacrifices and ceremonies. He is an energetic old man who knows more myths than most sages. Derinith defers to Desorlanth on questions of the gods.

The clan has a smaller temple to Ernalda and Narden the Great Woman. This temple is also located on Jaldonkill hill and is a square building made of wood and earth. Inside are statues to the goddesses and an ever-burning hearth fire. Weekly offerings to the goddesses are made here, and the clan's Ernalda ceremonies are performed here. However, the clan celebrates Queen Day in the tribal ceremonies at Dundealosford.

The Ernalda temple has two full-time priestesses.



The clan's chief priestess is Big Esrenava, a large woman originally from the Black Bull clan. Her husband is Durevos Popeye, a wealthy and clever farmer who has many supporters. The junior priestess is Lindrella Orvanfalorsdottir, a very capable steward of the temple.

Including the clan's full-time priests, the clan is supported by approximately 20 holy people, who lead rituals and ceremonies but also farm, herd, or fight.

Trade and market

Jaldonkill has a weekly market, presided over by the clan's traders, Orvanfalar the Thane and Riga the Harst (an Issaries worshiper from New Pavis). They live in stone house across from the chieftain's hall. Merchants from other tribes travel to Jaldonkill to purchase horses, livestock, wool, leather, and bronze, as well as plunder and slaves taken from the Praxians.

The annual horse market occurs in Fire Season when the Poljoni travel to Jaldonkill to offer sacrifices to Derik Jaldonkiller, their tribal Founder. This week-long festival is a major source of income for the town.

The town also profits from pilgrims traveling to Old Wind Temple. Many stay in Jaldonkill before traveling to the sacred temple of Orlanth. The more prudent pilgrims hire members of the Blue Jay clan as guides and as bodyguards - which keeps the Blue Jay clan from committing banditry against them!

Defenses and warriors

The town is defended by a tall wooden palisade, seven wooden towers, two gatehouses and a grand stone tower built by Prince Jarolar. Jaldonkill is garrisoned by 20 mounted huscarls and by the clan fyrd - some 300 militia when fully mustered.

The Blue Jay mounted huscarls are elite warriors that are sworn to defend the clan chief. As thanes they are supported and equipped by the clan with armor and horses descended from those stolen from the Grazers. They are considered the best horsemen in all of Sartar.



by David Donachie

"To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images."
—Plato, *The Republic* (Book VII)



There are **people** who think so **strongly** and **individually**, that they can literally **change reality**, teasing out the fabric of the consensus and changing it. They are called **Solipsists**.

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“When the snow Lay round about...”

By Jane Williams

(Written on the Feast of Stephen, 2006, and based on a well-known Christmas carol. For those of you who read “Lookout Hill” in Issue 1, this is set a few seasons later. Any HQ players will recognise the feats and subcults mentioned: MRQ players may want to read “Thunder Rebels” and “Storm Tribe”.)

It was cold, standing on the Goodfork palisades at night. Keeping watch was easy enough at this time of year: no-one moved in Dark Season unless they had to, even to and from the trading centre of the Kheldon, the richest tribe in Sartar, and the deep, even, snow meant that anyone who did would be seen, especially with the bright red light of the Moon shining down, making every shadow distinct. But it was cold. Hindina shivered, stamped her boots to keep her feet warm. She’d heard some people managed to fall asleep on duty, it was that boring, but she’d never worked out how you could sleep when your nose and fingers hurt this much. Tarki Wrylip, the warband leader, went the rounds every few hours, checking up on them just in case. She didn’t really approve of Hindina, didn’t really like any of the girls who’d joined Vinga in the last few seasons, since word had come of the new Kheldon Queen who their parents had said was going to change everything. For good or for bad, they weren’t sure, but it was a chance to make a name for yourself, one way or the other. For good or for bad... Hindina wanted to earn a use-name of some sort, to be famous for something, but there were some names she’d rather not have. Ragna Pig-breath, her childhood playmate, came to mind. Or “Bad King Urgrain”, villain of so many tales. Just plain “Kedrasdottir” was better than that. Vaguely she wondered if someday tales would be told of “Good Queen Kallyr”.

There were sounds now from the next post along: Tarki must be coming. Hindina straightened her spear, made sure she was very obviously looking outward, not being distracted. But the voice from behind her wasn’t the one she’d expected.

“Anything interesting happening?”

Of course there wasn’t, and of course she’d have reported it if there had been, but you didn’t say that to your Queen. “Not a thing. A noise a while back, but it was just a tree-branch breaking under the ice.”

“The clear nights are always the coldest. A perfect

night for scouting, tonight: if you think this is cold, you should try it a few miles up.” Hindina was no flyer and had no intention of trying any such thing, but that wasn’t something she could say, either. Fortunately Kallyr didn’t seem to expect an answer. “Just look down that road. You can see half-way to Swenstown on a night like this.”

“You can?” Hindina had heard tales of Kallyr’s star magic, she could almost believe it, tried not to let the awe show in her voice. Kallyr Starbrow – now that was a username.... She’d had others in the past, too, mainly to do with fights she’d won, but that was the one that had stuck.

“Well, maybe not quite. The road bends.” There was a hint of laughter there – it had been a joke, after all. “A few miles, though. Look, there’s the light from Lambnet Fort, and that’s over seven miles away. And there’s... .” She stopped, frowning. “That’s someone on the road. There’s movement. Only one, though.”

“Only one?” No-one travelled in Dark Season unless they had to, and no-one travelled alone unless they were out of their minds. Hindina strained to make out anything in the darkness, failed.

“One. And not an enemy. Run down to the gate and tell them to go out and meet him.”

Time passed faster when there was something happening and it seemed only a few minutes later that they heard what had driven a man to travel the road to Goodfork on a Dark Season night. Having your eldest son killed and eaten by a previously unknown monster, and another child not returned to the stead by nightfall, will do that. By then a crowd had gathered, eager for anything new: even some of the tribal ring had appeared, trying hard to look as if they were there as official advisors to their Queen, above the idle curiosity of the mob.

“What was she doing out alone, anyway?”

“Gathering firewood.”

“Your woodpile was running low, this early?” No more need be said – an inadequate woodpile, in a Dragon Pass winter, was the ultimate measure of incompetence. Some of the audience turned away, disgusted: it was obvious that there would be no further action to help anyone who had failed so badly to help themselves. Well, it was obvious

you had to do it the same as the goddess.

“Stay in the middle of the pack: use the people ahead of you as a windbreak. Come on, you can do this! You just stick right behind me and keep following, you’ll be fine.”

Of course she would. The cold was forgotten in the exhilaration of returned self-confidence. She trotted on, trying to match Kallyr’s stride, knowing she could never, ever, possibly match her in anything else.

Dawn came, and with it the snowfall lightened, then stopped. Another crisp, cold, clear day – but one where there was no longer any chance of following tracks. Hindina surveyed the forest and rugged hills – a child in that lot could be anywhere, and she resigned herself to a day of careful checking the whole area. Kallyr was frowning at the hillside, presumably with similar thoughts.

“The stead’s over to our east, but there’s no point in going there, not now. You know, this might even be faster than the original plan. There’s no point in following the child’s path, let’s just go straight to her. Tarki? She’s a lost child. Can you sense her?” Hindina knew that Tarki had been worshipping Vinga before she herself had even been born, but it hadn’t previously occurred to her that her magic might be closer to the goddess than Kallyr’s.

The older woman closed her eyes, rubbed at runes on her forearms before reaching her hands out, turning this way and that. “Over here. Less than a mile.”

“Good. Let’s go, then. If I remember right, there’s a ravine about there, she’ll be on this side of it.”

It was so much easier in the light, and running in an almost straight line. Yes, there were obstacles, but at least Hindina could see them. And then they were going downhill, and there was an opening in the trees ahead of them before the land rose steeply again, almost a cliff beyond what was presumably the ravine. They came out into the open and...

“Oh. That must have been a lot of snow.”

It might have been a ravine once: presumably still was, underneath. Now, it was a flat blanket of snow, blown into waves by the wind driving up the valley. And there clinging to the rock on the far side was a small figure, waving to them.

“That makes life easier, too. No need to go round, we can just run across that.” Tarki sounded relieved: perhaps she, too, had wondered if the child would still be alive after a night like that. But for once Kallyr was the one hanging back.

“Just a minute, something doesn’t feel right about this. And what’s that she’s saying?” Hindina could barely hear the girl’s voice at all, but clearly Kallyr

could, once she’d waved the troop to silence. “It’s underneath”? What’s that supposed to mean?”

Ahead of them, a rabbit broke from the undergrowth, scampered out onto the open snow, away from them, the tiny body barely marking the smooth whiteness. Except that it wasn’t smooth, not any more. There were ripples spreading from the centre. Moving? And then something burst out and up from the snow, something with huge teeth in a circular mouth, something scaly and cylindrical that sucked in the hapless rabbit before sinking back into the depths, leaving a smear of blood on the snow. Not the only stain, now they looked more carefully. And the other was larger...

Kallyr watched, imperturbably, ignoring the mass rush away from the hidden chasm. “So that’s where the monster is. Let’s not try running across there after all. We’ll just have to go round – it’s what, half a mile?”

The child had jerked back from the teeth, letting go of her grip on a bush to do so, and then sliding down the slope a little way. Kallyr watched her, too. “The only trouble, of course, is that she isn’t going to manage to hold on that long. Damn it!” She spun, punched the nearest tree in frustration, the careful self-control shattering. “A few seasons ago I’d have flown across, picked her up, end of problem. But oh, no, I had to let Ferenan talk me into this “Queen” business, and Vinga as Dar, not Vanganth. No more flight.”

Tarki laid a hand on her arm. “That’s what the tribe needed. He’s right, you know.”

“He usually is – but what that kid needs is someone who can fly, or she’s going to die.”

Hindina stared at the snow, fascinated. The ripples, the frozen waves – it reminded her of the frozen waterfall they’d seen on the way, the cascade stilled in mid-fall. Here, the waves of a lake had stopped still. Like water – frozen water.

“Or someone who can jump?” she said, slowly. “It’s water. I know how Vinga jumped over water.”

“Yes!” Kallyr’s infectious enthusiasm returned immediately. “Of course it is. Good idea, plenty of us can do that.” She looked round, started to pace back. “There’s enough room here for a run-up, and...”

Tarki’s grip on her arm tightened instead of loosening. “Oh no, you don’t. If you miss, how many spare queens do you think we have?”

“But...”

“No. No way. Not worth it.”

Kallyr looked at her, visibly estimated her chances of doing the jump with the older woman still attached,

then turned to Hindina. “You think you can do it?”

She studied the bank at the far side - steep, but no worse than the banks of the tarn she’d grown up by. And the wind had blown the snow surface into ripples. It was a lake. “Yes. I can get there, and if she’s too heavy to jump back with, I’ll climb the cliff.”

“No need. Stay with her, stop her from panicking or falling off. With the extra time, we can circle round and drop a rope to you.”

“Oh, come on!” Tarki’s exasperation was barely hidden now. “That’s snow, not water. It can’t work.”

Just as someone was taking her seriously – Hindina’s hopes wilted again: but only for a moment, as Kallyr caught her eyes and held them.

“You can do anything you think you can. If you think you can do this, you keep believing that, and go and do it. Don’t ever let anyone tell you you’re not up to it, or it’s impossible.”

“Right.” How had she ever doubted herself? She bent, scooped up a handful of snow and put it to her lips. Only a silly child drank snow, in Dark Season, but she wanted to prove the point, to herself as much as to the others. “It’s water.”

She stepped back, looking at the lake before her with half-closed eyes. Waves. Ripples. A lake. With fish in it – big fish. She started her run, felt the

familiar rush of unreal dizziness as her foot left the bank and landed three feet and a hundred yards further on: on mud, and snow, and gravel. She grabbed the nearest bush: made it! And the child... she reached out, hugged her in close. “You’re safe. It’s all going to be all right now.” She wasn’t sure how to make her voice sound adult and reassuring, but she seemed to have succeeded, as the little girl relaxed into her arms. Now all they had to do was wait. She sat down, less chance of sliding that way. Just wait. It was almost warm, here in the sun, and sheltered from the wind.

Her eyes jerked open as a rope hit her on the shoulder – but it had only been a minute, hadn’t it? Then a pair of boots hit the mud next to her, and Tarki was smiling down at her. “Nice work, Snow-leaper”.



IMPROVISING WITH AN AFFINITY

By Greg Stafford

“Uncle, not that we’re men we’ll need to know how to do magic. Are you going to tell us those secrets?”

“Yes, Varnval, that is why we’re here today.”

“I want to learn the Feat of Killing Everything in Your Path.”

“Ho ho, yes of course. But that’s a very, very special magic from a very, very difficult god. You might be able to learn the Death Glance if the sword god calls you, and then if prove yourself to him, and dedicate your every waking moment to Death. Then after many, many years you might learn that. He might ask you to kill your mother and your brother. And you’ll probably never tom on that girl you’re singing to. Are you ready for that? I didn’t think so.

“So we aren’t interested in such things today. What you need to know is how to wake Orlanth up inside of you, to help you out.

“First of all, remember that you are now a part of Orlanth, and he is a part of you...”

“I thought you said all the gods are a part of us?”

“That’s so. But you’re an Aslaring now, aren’t you?”

“Yes, I am. And proud of it”

“Of course. We’re a great people, beloved by Orlanth and Ernalda. And you are a man now, too. So in those rites that made you one of us, you also initiated your life with Orlanth. So you have a special relationship with Our Father now. You can call on any of the gods and goddesses of the tribe...”

“Even Mallia?”

“Yes, Gargar, even Mallia. If you don’t mind having pieces of your soul eaten up...”

“Mallia will eat up my soul?”

“Not really, but calling on Sickness opens you up to Sickness, even if you are asking her to not be with you. It’s dangerous. She knows the way to your heart and can go there when you are weak or sad or afraid. So leave Mallia and Eskovar and Benbin out of it.

“As I was saying, you can call on any of our gods and goddesses. They might hear you and do something to help you out. But you’ve already made that special relationship with Orlanth, so he doesn’t have

to hear you. You are already a part of him...”

“And I can call on the goddesses too?”

“Yes, they love us too, Varnval. But if you don’t stop interrupting it’ll be time to chop more firewood and you’ll never learn how to work with Orlanth.

“OK now. Let’s say that you’re out hunting. You have your javelin. You see a deer. And you want Orlanth’s help. Now, you have already been in the wilderness with Varanorlanth...”

“I haven’t. I was with Orlanthcarl, guiding his plow.”

“Oh. My first time with God I was hunting. You’ve only been to the Godworld once, and you’re lucky to learn about plowing, so we’ll talk about that then. You’re smart and ambitious. I’m sure you’ll own part of a plow some day.

“So imagine you’re out plowing. The ground is hard, it’s a hot day and the oxen are lazy, you were busy and didn’t have time to sharpen the plow, you got to the field late and something’s wrong with the harness and it’s pulling to the left.”

“That’s the way it always is for me.”

“Then listen up hard. You really need Orlanth’s help.

“You have the Orlanth power in you. So first, you start breathing the way we taught you—the Orlanth breath. Do it now—in... out... in... out... And every fifth breath, pause. Remember this, be aware of your breathing. That’s where Orlanth lives in you. You’ll learn to do it without thinking, but for now, think about it. Do it later when you’re chopping the wood.

“What are you doing when you breath?”

“Receiving power from All Father.”

“Yes, yes. You are taking in the Power of Orlanth. Be aware of that! He’s feeding your soul!

“And think about how you were walking with god in the Godworld, when you went to Karulinoran and helped him plow. Visualize it. See it. Feel it in your own steps. He steps, you step. Do you remember what he said to the oxen?”

“Yea... sort of. Something about lovers...”

“Ho ho, yes, close enough. You’ll learn the words and it’ll be easier. So say the words, feel the steps,

breath. And where is your breath going? When you exhale it, where does it go? Tell me, where's it go?"

"Back out into the air."

"Yes, but now it's a part of you. You can shape it, direct it. Exhale that power and direct it to the plow, to those lazy oxen. And when your breath goes to around them, think of Guthurax and how he leads Orlanth's oxen. Have Guthurax guide yours. Think of how Durev cuts the earth with his blade, and have Durev cut yours.

"And breathe, with intention..."

"That's hard to keep in mind."

"Yes. But it'll get easier as you do it. And on the holy days you can go and study Orlanthcarl some more to see how he steps."

"Can I go and help Durev and Barntar to learn more?"

"You can try, but which god chose you?"

"Orlanthcarl."

"Yes. So he is your guide and it'll be easiest to go to him for help. Now, Elmal is in Sendre's House. Go practice getting Orlanthcarl's help to chop wood."



A warrior calls upon the rain god Heler's magic

HEARTS IN GLORANTHA

ISSUE 2 WINTER 2009

LANBRIL THE SURVIVOR

An alternative Lanbril by Stephen McGinness

SINGING THE SONGS OF
REBELLION

Darjini Herobands/Fiction by Mark Galeotti

WHEN THE SNOW LAY
ROUND ABOUT

Fiction by Jane Williams

DUNDEALOS

A Heortling Tribe detailed by Jeff Richard

ITUNKALA'S TRADE

A Bison rider song by John Harding

IMPROVISING WITH AN
AFFINITY

Gloranathan magic fiction by Greg Stafford



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CREATURE FEATURE!

ALDRYAMI, DUCKS, DRAGONETS, HARPIES,
MERMEN, JACK O'BEARS O MY!

Gloranathan Creatures explored by Shannon Appelcline, Nick Davison, John Harding,
David O.Lloyd, John Ossoway

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