

Tales *of the* Reaching Moon

Issue 12

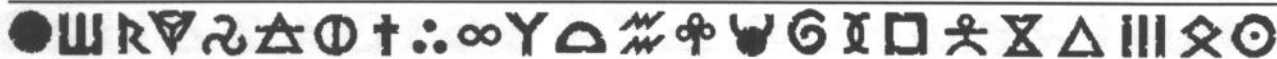


Bumper Colour Special!

Sandy Petersen's Warhamster

Stories by Alan Lavergne and
Penny Love

News, Views, Reviews



Tales of the Reaching Moon, The Gloranthan Magazine

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In *Wyrm Footnotes* #12, Greg Stafford shares his views on DI in the article "Divination and Divine Intervention". Stafford addresses what he sees as game abuses of DI, things like silly multiple attempts, teleporting out of danger, and restoring the dead to life. I would like to suggest a different take on the question "what is the limitation of a god?". Much like the rune power variant, I think that the gamemaster should take significantly more responsibility for role-playing the way a deity answers a call for DI.

Many players, and gamemasters alike, see Divine Intervention as a miraculous cure-all. It can teleport you out of trouble, it can raise the dead, it can increase stats, et cetera. I ask "How?". How did Ernalda get the ability to Teleport her worshippers? How does Magasta restore life to a dead Orlanthe?

A god's runic association, his "theme" if you will, determines the kind of divine magic that god can grant. I think the runes should also constrain the Divine Interventions allowed. Much as rune magic might be seen as a limited DI, Divine Intervention might be said to be "super rune magic". The basic idea: use the god's spell lists (both divine and spirit) as a rough guide to the possible effects from DI.

Escaping Danger

For example, I think that only Orlanthe and Mastakos should be able to Teleport their worshippers out of

danger (or anywhere for that matter). This is because only these two deities have the rune spell Teleport. Other Mobility-rune gods might bestow a similar benefit. Perhaps worshippers of Issaries, Etyries and Lokarnos might pray and be granted a super-mobility spell, to outrun their enemies. Looking at spirit magic spells provided, I might suggest that any god who can teach the spell Mobility might be able to grant such a miracle.

What if the character doesn't worship a Mobility god? Look at the runes. Look at the rune magic and spirit magic lists. Use your imagination! I might suggest variations on elementals and spirits. Ernalda could have the earth swallow up her worshipper, to be borne to safety underground by a gnome. Not necessarily far away, as Ernalda is not a Mobility goddess; just to safety. Air gods could have sylphs carry an unconscious initiate away. Sea gods could have an undine knock foes down, and "wash" the worshipper away to safety. But, don't be afraid to limit DI; the gods are not omnipotent! If the Magastan is in the middle of the Wastes, there can be no undines coming to his rescue. It's his fault he is too far away for his god to reach. Magasta will have to think of something else.

Minor gods are even less omnipotent. They are usually too weak to directly intervene in the world. Often, the only DI they can grant is to send a cult spirit, or a small elemental, to aid the worshipper in need. Cacodemon is a prime example: the only DI he offers is the appearance of one of his demonic Fiends.

Resurrection & Healing

I think a deity should only be able to restore life to one of his or her own followers. The god has no mystical link to other souls, and thus cannot pull them from the path of the dead (An obvious

exception would be any Healing deities, who have special spells to do just this sort of thing).

A related miracle is healing, usually in the middle of a battle. An argument could be made that a god who has no healing magic, spirit or divine, can't do it! Admittedly, this could be pretty severe in a game. But, I'm not advocating game balance. My intent is to keep the gods within their spheres of influence, bound by the Great Compromise. As an example, Wachaza doesn't offer his worshippers any healing magic. But, to help a worshipper through a combat, he might bestow several points of Seastrength, Bladesharp, Coordination, and Mobility. If the praying Wachazan is already unconscious, then maybe he doesn't deserve the patronage of Wachaza, and is better off dead.

Role-play the Deity

This is the underlying theme. As gamemaster, you have to decide what the deity thinks about this prayer for intervention, and how to respond. In a DI situation, the god turns his attention toward the worshipper. Note the contrast to what was said earlier about calling for divine magic. The god is not omniscient, so he probably only knows what is in the mind of the praying worshipper, and any other worshippers in the immediate area. Using this information only, the god, as played by the gamemaster, decides how to intervene. The player can make a specific request, but the ultimate authority about what happens rests with the gamemaster.

Don't grant Interventions that don't fit the image of the god. Humakti or Storm Bulls who ask aid to escape from a combat should be laughed at, whether they make the DI roll or not! Humakti and Storm Bulls who DI to be better fighters have the right idea, and should be answered appropriately, if the roll is made of course. Other, less violent gods are more prone to protect and shelter worshippers in need. Just how they do this is up to you as well.

Thanks go to: Steven Barnes, Martin Crim, David Hall, George Harris, Oliver Jovanovic, Rob Mace, Mike McGloin, Charles Morehouse, Erich Schmidt, Greg Stafford, David Scott, Ross Stites, and James Wadsley, for their help in the development of this idea.





to the infantry that the cavalry rode high and mighty on their fine horses and did not care for them, and they said so. It seemed to the cavalry that the infantry were slovenly and badly drilled and crawled as slow as a slug upon its belly, and they said so, looking down their noses from the height of their horses. So the infantry, who had control of the quarter-master, gave the cavalry bad fodder, oats which were all chaff and old meal, unfit even for mashing. Moran thought highly of his master's horses, but also thought he did not want to make a fuss. So at night he would return to the quarter-master store with a stolen key. He would tip the measure of oats he received into the top of the store, and take out a fresh measure from the bottom, so that the level remained the same and no one could see his tampering but he had sound oats to feed his master's horses. This went on for many days before Terlech became suspicious. But she was anxious not to make a fuss also. She lay in wait by the quarter master's one dark night. When Moran appeared, and opened the grain store, she pounced. "I don't want no trouble," Moran said, quickly, when he saw her. "Well, you've got her," No-Trouble replied, and doubled over her fists. Then and there the pair set-to with their bare knuckles, and this was a mighty battle. Moran was smaller, but he was wily, and knew how to keep out of Terlech's longer reach while landing his own blows dancing around her. At first the infantry posted a watch, and said nothing except to cheer their champion, for none cared to bet against No-Trouble. But by-and-by some of the cavalry were roused by the commotion, and wanted to bet on Moran, so the infantry accepted. The fight grew very exciting, for neither combatant would yield, and blood spurted everywhere. Feeling ran high on all sides, and there were shouts and jeers, so that by-and-by an infantry officer was roused by the commotion. The posted watch gave a hissed warning, and the engrossed crowd scattered. But Terlech was just about to land on Moran a terrific blow to the stomach, that would double him over, and then she would get her knee in his face and knock him stone-cold and win. Meanwhile Moran was planning to give Terlech a sharp blow to the chin, that would knock her senseless, and he would win. So neither ran, and the officer caught them.

The officer, who was Que-Kerech, asked what was going on. Moran explained that he was just pointing out to Terlech a pimple on her chin, and Terlech explained that she was just curing Moran of his hernia trouble. Que-Kerech looked at the spilled oats, and the battered faces. He thought that they could both dig ditches for the latrines for seven days. This was so, he explained, Terlech could get the fresh air to help her complexion, and Moran could get some work to strengthen his abdomen. Digging ditches for seven days made Moran and Terlech inseparable, and after the day's work was over they would go out and get drunk together.

And they met up with Wyvern-Rider in this wise, that he was proud and quick to be insulted, and happened to quarrel with someone else while Moran and Terlech were very drunk in the same beer-tent. Now both of these two liked a fight, and seeing one start without them, they joined in and hurled furniture. By the time the three had crawled out from underneath the wreckage and fled the guard that came to restore the peace - and it happened that all three fled in the same direction and hid together - they were all very companionable. They were notorious in Wyvern Reach, so that people were scandalised and often said so, while discussing the latest outrage. They started fights with people bigger than themselves then ran away, leaving the other side to take the blame; they organised betting on races and cock-fights; one dark night they got Ker-albach's grey horse up several flights of

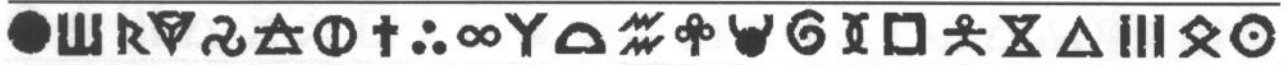
stairs and into the wooden fort, so it had to be lowered down again by winch and was up there three days together, and a horse on a height is a ridiculous thing; they swapped the altar statue of the Green-Mother with a small and very live piglet during the Earth Season festival to Ernalda, causing much outrage among the locals. And had they done half the things people said they had done, they would have had no time to do anything else, yet they were very busy. Terlech had her squad to look after, and Wyvern-Rider had Crimson-Claw, and Moran must spend a lot of time running after Dylath-Lar.

Meanwhile Dylath-Lar turned deaf ears to news of their offences, and said that all this gossip could not be believed, even when he was looking at Moran and Terlech No-Trouble, and knew very well that the innocence shining in their eloquent eyes was one big lie. He only got angry with them once, and that was soon over. This is how that happened, that Dylath-Lar had a daughter of whom he was very fond. He would lift her up when he saw her and toss her into the air to hear her delighted squeal of laughter, or put her before him in Tor's saddle and take her around camp while he was riding about. When she was one year old her mother took her to visit her own people, who lived in a small village in another part of the mountains, and when she came back there were green stains on her infant palms, and also about her mouth.

When Dylath-Lar wanted to know what this meant, his daughter's mother replied that she had given her own mother two sheep, and they had given her into Ernalda's care when one year old, as was the custom of her people. Green was the colour of growing wheat, she said. They had daubed her daughter's palms with green dye, then pressed her hands against Ernalda's shrine, leaving her prints there so Ernalda would know to look after her. Then she had put her hand in her mouth, as children do. But the dye would do her no harm, and would wash off eventually. This news displeased Dylath-Lar. It seemed that his own daughter was being taken from him. Also his money paid for those sheep, from gifts he had given his daughter's mother, and this seemed an over-generous sum for a paltry piece of village worship. So he took up his child in his arms, and went to consecrate her to the care of Teelo Norri, who among the Seven Mothers casts a watchful eye over the young and innocent.

Dylath-Lar paid the priestess of Teelo Norri a handsome sum, much more than two sheep, and the priestess placed on the child's forehead a crimson mark so that Teelo Norri could look down all the way from the Red Moon, and know that this child was one she must look after. Dylath-Lar took his daughter back to her mother in triumph, sitting her on Tor's saddle before him, and he said that the stain would wear off eventually. Mother and father were displeased with each other. The mother said that she would go back to her own people in the mountains, and Dylath-Lar said she could go where she pleased, but he would keep his daughter, and that stopped her. Although in the end all that happened was that both Teelo Norri and Ernalda looked after this young child, and she grew strong and vigorous.

But this coldness between mother and father seemed a terrible thing to Moran, and when he was drinking he confessed this to his friends, and wept over it. Wyvern-Rider thought nothing of it, and went away on a journey soon after, but No-Trouble was deeply touched by this sad story and the pair thought on it, long and hard, especially when they had been drinking. Now it happened one festival day, while both mother and father were busy



about something else, Moran took up their child, and took her with him to drink with No-Trouble. The little girl chuckled and played amongst the tables, and the soldiers fed her bread sopped in beer- lees which made her tired, so she crawled up into Terlech's lap and slept. And all this time Moran and No-Trouble were drinking and debating the fate of this poor child, to have parents that did not love one another, and they were deeply touched and wept, and thought how they could cheer this small child up even though she seemed bold and cheerful. But they said it was just her natural good-nature, because Teelo Norri had blessed her, and really she was dreadfully unhappy. As they were thinking this, Yelm was sinking below the horizon, and Crimson-Claw and Wyvern-Rider swept across the face of the sun. Now it struck both Moran and No-Trouble that the way to cheer Dylath-Lar's daughter would be to set her in Mik-esh's saddle, as she had often been set in Tor's, and this plan seemed also eminently wise and sensible.

So they took the sleeping child, and went with her to where Mik-esh had set down, and Teel-al gone to deliver his urgent dispatches before taking off the gear and harness, and they set her in the crimson saddle with silver trimmings, that was laid upon the crimson caparison. And by this time, her mother had noticed her missing, and had been searching for her, although she did not think to look in a wyvern-pen or a beer-tent. She found Dylath-Lar and accused him, and he did not know what she meant. So he also started searching. He looked in the beer-tent, and the soldiers there said she was with Moran and No-Trouble, and they were taking her to the wyvern. So Dylath-Lar turned around and ran. Meanwhile the child woke, and saw she was sitting in the crimson and silver saddle, atop the red wyvern, and she chuckled and waved her arms with delight, for Mik-esh seemed to her to be like Tor, and the high back of the saddle was her father. And both Moran and No-Trouble wept again to see her so happy, and unconscious of her fate with unloving parents, and they leant against Mik-esh's armoured flanks in order to weep better.

Now Mik-esh was greatly astonished to find a small child set in his saddle, and greatly displeased at this offence to his dignity. He turned his snake head about on his long neck, and his terrible jaws gaped, showing the seven rows of seven teeth in his snake-snout, each as long as dagger blades, and strong as iron-swords. He thought he would spit poison, then he thought he would just swallow whole this offence to his arrogance, and he coiled himself back upon his own body, his crimson scale glittering in Yelm's last light, and his snake-head rushed, jaws gaping. But the child just laughed, and waved her plump arms, so he was greatly astonished a second time, and taken aback. So he closed his jaws, and nosed her doubtfully, wondering if she was no mortal but a spirit-thing, to be unafraid of his wrath and majesty. Her forehead was daubed pink, and her mouth and raised hands were faded yellow. She patted the velvet tip of

his nose, then took a grip on the first spike, the small one over his snout, and would not let go.

And this was what Teel-al saw as he returned, and also the running Dylath-Lar. Teel-al jumped up quickly, and got himself between the terrible snout of Mik-esh and any injury to this small child. He abused his foolish friends, but they were too busy weeping to pay attention. Dylath-Lar snatched back his daughter from the saddle and had her safe in his arms. Dylath-Lar was very angry, and would have done forceful things about this anger, except that at that moment Mik-esh spoke.

None of them beside Teel-al had ever heard Mik-esh speak. The chest was deep, the lungs powerful, and the tongue inhuman that produced this deep, liquid voice, and it rang like the roar of ten lions and the scream of ten eagles. Only it was ten times more terrible again because of the ancient wisdom threaded through it, that made them feel both melancholy and martial.

"Who is so bold to sit in my saddle and laugh at my glory although she can barely crawl?" Mik-esh asked, his head swaying, his yellow eyes slit-glinting. And Dylath-Lar replied with his daughter's name, for he was greatly astonished at being so addressed.

"I foresee for her that she will be as great as her father before," Mik-esh said, and he nosed the child's pink-daubed forehead. She seized his horn again. The hot stink of the wyvern's breath rushed over them both, and blessed them. Then Mik-esh gently withdrew from the child's clutch. He laid his terrible head back in the sand facing the western sky, which was glowing crimson in Yelm's after-light. This wyvern's praise pleased Dylath-Lar greatly, so he said nothing more. But it did not please her mother, when she heard of it, and she went to Moran and Terlech and Wyvern-Rider (although he had no part in this foolery) and the things she said to them, one by one and all together, have gone down in myth and history. The trio met afterwards, ashen-faced and shaken, for they had thought that Mik-esh was the only one in camp who had a venomous tongue. And over their beer they agreed that this woman was to be known between them as the Serpent, which is half-insult, half-compliment. For the serpent is small and shy, and creeps quietly to one side when danger is near, anxious to keep the peace. There are only two reasons why she will bite. The first is if someone rudely surprises her when she is sleeping in the embrace of the sun. The second is when she is wound about her eggs, and they threaten her young. Then she turns upon the enemy, and bites him in the soft part of the heel so he is quickly poisoned, and that, agreed Moran and Wyvern-Rider and No-Trouble, was exactly how they felt, and they must have another drink to recover from this poison. So they applied themselves to the cure with great vigour. But this mutual fright reconciled Dylath-Lar and the Serpent to each other.

(XXIX. 21-009) Lunar Battalia #17: The University Guards are notorious for their inhuman savagery. The regiment originated from those followers who guarded Raibanth University when Irippi Ontor was awarded his honorary degree. (XXIX. 21-010) "Oh raven steed, whose fortune it is to spread the golden thighs and god-like firm convexities of the divine Majesty..." begins a panegyric, praising the horse of Guilmar the Fat, King of Seshnela. (XXIX. 21-011) Sorin Vingsson told me of the time he went to the Land of the Dead and there saw poor spirits imprisoned in great rolling insect-like forms such as those pig-insects found under rocks and wood. In this form, Ikadz, demon of the dead, sends spirits rolling throughout the grey plains until their torment is eased by another. Sorin broke one roller and gained a companion for the night. Sorin also saw the place of peace where no day falls, but he could not explain the meaning of this to me. (XXIX. 21-013) The town of Runegate Fort gets its name from the gate in the east wall. This gate is rumoured to have been brought from an ancient city in the Holy Country by the horse people who settled the region, and before that from an even older city, now lost. The gate is shaped like a Luck rune, and the wood which shapes the rune is of a type which no scholar I have found has ever recognised. The rune-carved gates inside the



Glamour

The Acceptable face of the Lunar Empire

By Chris Gidlow

The nymph Glamour was a the daughter of Tylena, Mistress of Illusion. She is the patroness of those who deal in fashions and cosmetics. She is the source of the spirit magic which bears her name, though her initiates are also able to cast it to alter favourably the appearance of inanimate objects as well as people. It is no surprise that her initiates now include trinket sellers and guides in the capital city. From her sacred spring on the borders of Dara Happa, she provided solace for those who found the harsh light of Yelm's Truth and Justice too much to bear. When the Red Goddess ascended into the heavens, the Red Emperor sought out Glamour to provide comfort for her worshippers now their imperfections were exposed to her watchful eye. The story of their courtship forms the opening verses of the Dance of Returns and is customarily sung at Lunar Weddings. The Red Emperor bestowed on Glamour the title "The Inspiration of Moon Son". She granted him use of her spring and land beside the Crater, and he in return made her goddess of the city he founded there.

Glamour is the Goddess of the Capital city of the Lunar Empire. Her cult has all the normal aspects of a city cult. It is also dedicated to presenting a positive image of the city and the Empire to the world. Glamour's priestesses make sure that the pronouncements of the Emperor, along with the architecture of the city, news from the frontiers and

unpalatable aspects of the Lunar Way, are viewed in the most favourable light. Her single, Great, Temple, known as the Temple of Truth, houses the Lunar Ministry of Information. It stands beside the Citadel of Halfway, at the end of Red Square and is one of the most famous landmarks of the Empire.

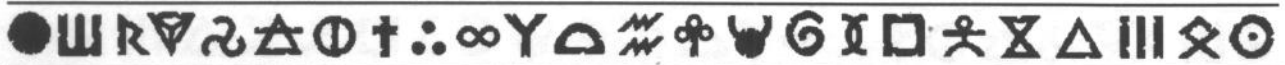
In addition, she provides spells and skills to those involved in the fashion, cosmetic and souvenir trades. Most of her initiates occupy low status jobs as hairdressers, beauticians or trinket sellers, but her cult is patronised by the rich and famous from throughout the Empire, and all Lunar cults maintain friendly relations with it. Her priestesses are, not surprisingly, citizens of great influence. Her cult is connected with the Runes of Illusion and Harmony, and the Red Moon. It offers the Rune Spell Optimism, which has an effect similar to Fanaticism on those non-combat skills which benefit from a positive state of mind. It is the source of the pink-tinted lenses used to contemplate the full glory of the Red Moon from so near the Crater, and is responsible for the warm rosy glow felt by most travellers visiting at the city.

A Visit to Glamour

"My visit to Glamour could hardly have been complete without a sight of Red Square. The focus of the Outer City is bathed in the warm light of the Citadel of Halfway, whose massive wall forms one side of the Square. The ashes of Heroes of the Empire find their last resting place here, and there is always a queue to enter the Mausoleum of Yanafal Tarnils. This is a squat red structure, built in the Dara Happa fashion and curiously ugly. Once a year, the Emperor and attendant deities and demigods review the Red Army from its flat roof. Opposite, on the other side of the Square

is the splendid Second Wane temple of Etyries. They say that in more prosperous times all imaginable goods from the furthest corners of Glamour can be bought there, though obviously, given the current state of the Wane, I did not find its booths particularly well stocked. One end of the Square is formed by the imposing temple of Irippi Ontor, housing the Imperial Archives. Illuminating inscriptions with the slogans "War is Peace, Light is Darkness, Chaos is Fertility" mar its otherwise austere facade. Most visitors hardly give it a second glance, however, their gaze being irresistibly drawn to the beautiful Temple of Truth at the far end. Its three multicoloured domes are surely one of the most famous sites of the Empire.

I had intended, in common with most tourists, to buy one of the small replicas of the temple available from the official Ministry of Information stall, but was prevented from crossing the square by a crowd of rowdy and unkempt White Moonies shouting disloyal slogans and waving Sartarite banners. Just as I thought matters would get out of hand, the gates of the Citadel swung open, and a squadron of Char-Un rode out from the barracks within. I confess I shuddered as these terrifying troops cantered their horned steeds across the centre of the square. They were particularly fearsome in their traditional dress, complete with long moustachios and fur caps. At a word from the Hetman, their polished sabres shot from their scabbards. As the priestesses of Glamour later made clear, the Moonies threw missiles and placards at the troops, who were provoked into response to avoid injury to innocent bystanders such as myself. The rioters were swiftly dispersed though I must confess that my appetite for further site-seeing was dampened."



In future columns I'll describe some 'systemless' roleplaying techniques and alternative strategies. I'll examine the ways we construct player characters, and game techniques to meaningfully connect them to the wider Gloranthan community. I'll explore the links between player and character, and examine ways to constructively utilise these links. I'll describe alternative heroquests to that of the warrior. Finally, I hope to present a heroquest scenario built on these principles. And I'm sure, along the way, I'll get lots of feedback and ideas from readers.

What is a Myth?

The story is not the myth. Oh no. The story is like a piece of firewood. The myth is the healing fire that waits within the wood. Touch-Earth Rip-Wind. Keeper of the Waters of Darkness, Dagori Inkarth.

Where do our myths come from? They are eternal, but we also must dream them anew in every generation. They come to us in new robes, though their truth is unchanging. When one of our tribe is sanctified, or initiated, when they go off alone into the wilderness, or into the depths of the temple, there they will dream a truth. It might be song or story or vision or spell. That truth is holy, and it must be shared with the entire tribe. So our myths live.

"Share what you can of that truth. But do not worry if your words seem inadequate; we all know that more was shown to you than you can tell."

CloudStrider. Wind-Shaman of Far Point.

To understand the heroquest we have to understand myth. In their studies, anthropologists use a wide variety of different approaches, usually based on a very close study of the *specific* cultural and historical circumstances from which a myth springs. By contrast, psychologists working in the Jungian tradition have described myths as archetypal stories, *universal* fragments of our soul life that reveal what it is to be human. These apparent conflicts reflect the biases and different emphases of the respective disciplines. Joseph Campbell combined elements of both approaches in his work, stressing that a myth is rooted simultaneously in history and eternity. Campbell's ideas figure

prominently in Greg's construction of Glorantha, and are essential in understanding that world. In Glorantha, Campbell's theories become the laws of reality, the laws of mythologic.

In our own society, to call something a 'myth' usually means it is untrue. As a culture, this reflects our distrust of metaphor and our alienation from spiritual values. Throughout most of the world, and most certainly in Glorantha, a myth is a profound cultural truth; not necessarily literal, but revealing something of the nature of reality and the sacred. In Gloranthan terms, a myth is a pattern in the Godplane: eternal, unchanging, yet able to manifest in a variety of different forms through time. Myths provide models - models of how to think, models of how to behave. They divide the universe up into categories and explain how the present order came to be.

Before continuing, you may wish to read the Lightbringers' Quest in *King of Sartar* or the Doraddi origin myth from *Tales #11*. Think about how the points I raise apply to these myths.

Myth is a natural language of human potential and meaning

In Glorantha, belief is something intertwined with the very nature of life, not something optionally imposed on the top. One does not 'believe' myths. Myths are.

Myth is a picture language, a language of truth and insight, the language of the priest and shaman, sharing a wisdom of death, life and meaning. Myths are not to be judged as true or false (and many Gloranthan scholars endlessly and fruitlessly debate this) but as effective or ineffective, life-giving or life-destroying. They are not invented; they occur. We can never overestimate the educative power of these life-binding images.

Because of this, it is dangerous to analyse myth too much! (God Learners beware.) Myth sets its own agendas, demands its own responses. A myth's real existence is on the Godplane and in the depths of the human psyche: the shared stories that we call myth are only a temporal and partial reflection. Myth cognises, re-cognises the elementary ideas of our own being. Myth is its own exegesis.

According to Campbell, myth "touches fires burning deeply in the psyche:

Footnotes

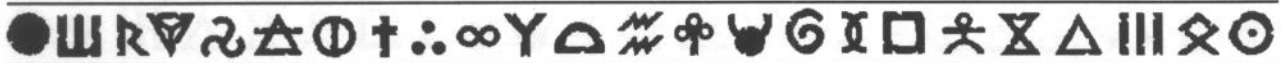
1. *Tales No. 7*, the Heroquest Special, examines various approaches to heroquest and is highly recommended. Obviously, I am attempting to build upon the foundation already established by these rules.

2. A basic appreciation of Joseph Campbell is crucial to understanding Glorantha and heroquest. While *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* is often mentioned as the heroquest text, Campbell's introductory *The Power of Myth* (with Bill Moyers, Doubleday 1988) is a broader and much more accessible introduction to transformative mythology. Robert Bly is a poet often associated with the Mens Movement: his *Iron John: A Book About Men* (Addison-Wesley 1990) is a controversial and challenging analysis of a hero's journey as expressed in a single myth. Women's mythology is granted a similar treatment in Clarissa Pinkola Estes' *Women Who Run With The Wolves* (Rider 1992). Carol Pearson's *Awakening The Heroes Within* (Harper Collins 1991) describes twelve hero archetypes and their role in everyday life.

3. Roleplaying as we know it, by some strange quirk of history, began in wargaming. Parts of that wargaming legacy are still with us, especially in commercial gaming — the emphasis on rules, dice and mathematics, the kill-or-be-killed plots. Us versus Them, the pandering to our violent instincts, the glorification of the adolescent male in all of us. Its a rewarding exercise to imagine what roleplaying would be like if it began slightly differently, with a different set of assumptions. What if it began as a development of impromptu theatre, or non-competitive theatre sports, or story telling, or live action playing, or as part of the dramas, rituals and games so important in so many religious traditions and in sections of the Mens, Womens and Human Potential Movements? All of these approaches have good points and bad points; all of them are very different from the wargaming model that has dominated our history. They emphasise different senses, different forms of presentation, different rationales. As a thought experiment, it helps us to imagine some of the aspects of roleplaying we presently undervalue or ignore. I will return to this.



Lambelli



permanent presences, desires, fears, ideals, potentialities that have glowed in the nerves, hummed in the blood, baffled the senses since the beginning." Myths are a product of nature as well as culture, as necessary to a balanced and mature psyche as nourishment to the body.

Myth creates and defines a community

It creates a single moral community of believers who share a common sense of meaning. It provides a truth that is emotionally experienced — the truth of the relationship of the individual to the group. When change threatens and action is required, a community will look to its myths.

Human myths relate to the spiritual unity of the species. The myths of the other Elder Races serve a different purpose, even if at times we believe we understand them. And of course, Chaos has no myths, even if we have myths about Chaos. Chaos is anti-structure and anti-meaning. Chaos is anti-myth.

Myth finds expression in ritual and ceremony

Myth are carriers and catalysts of truth and meaning. They are ritually enacted and rehearsed for the spiritual well-being of the entire community. Temple ceremonies, initiation ceremonies and rites such as those at Sacred Time present

in dramatic and visual form a community's cosmological ('How did things begin?') and ontological ('Why are things the way they are?') intuitions. They display the images of myth and enable them to be shared and psychologically assimilated. They open the mind, not only to the local social order but also to the mystery dimension of being; that which is within as well as without.

And of course, low level heroquests allow initiates to enter the myth itself.

Myth is never fixed: it is open ended

A myth is eternal; any expression of it within time is necessarily partial. Therefore, the goal for high-level Gloranthan initiates and heroquesters is to go *beyond* the story to the meaning — to be born from the womb of myth, not to remain within it. I am sure that many Gloranthan religious mysteries and cult secrets deal with this quest, to discard the symbols and metaphors and interact with reality directly. High level heroquesting (and the regeneration it brings) means going beyond, not remaining within, the confines of mythology.

Myth changes over time

A myth grows, creates offspring, and sometimes dies. More correctly, a community's partial understanding of a myth as portrayed in story and song changes over time.

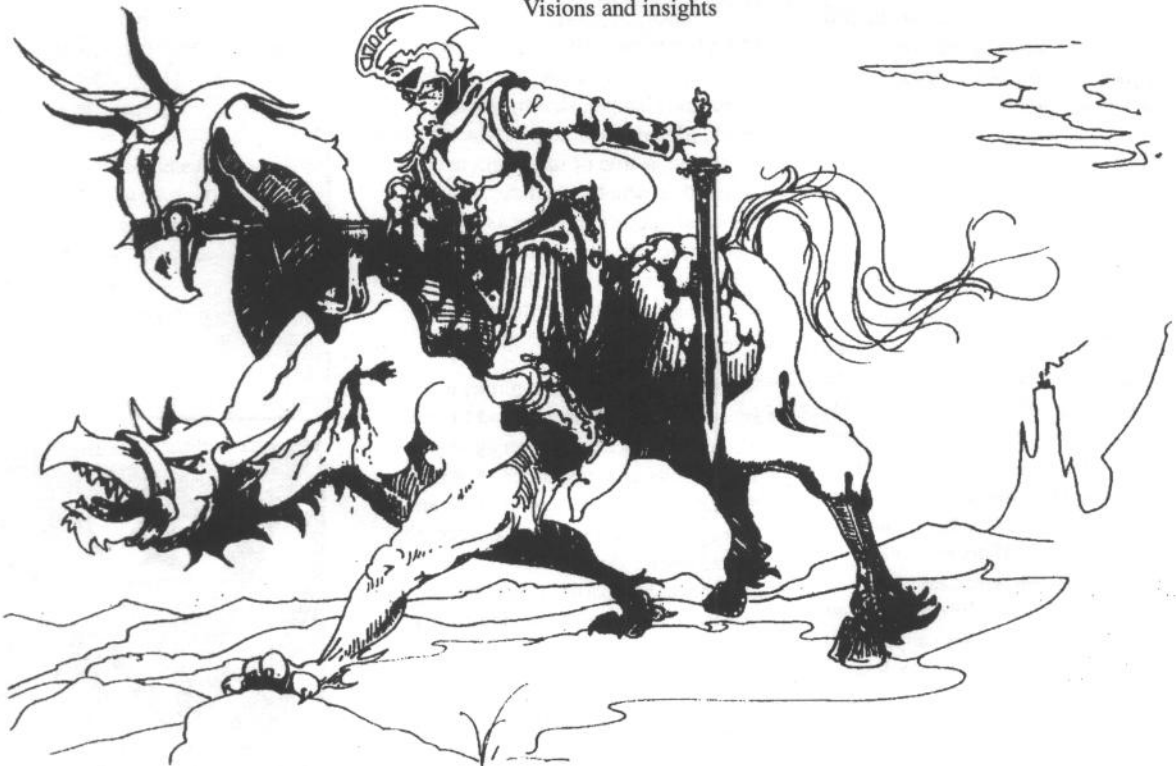
Visions and insights

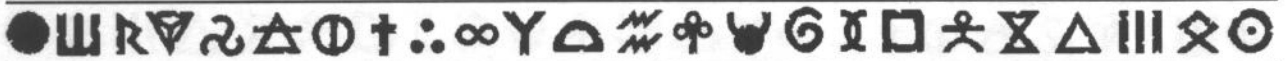
gained in religious ecstasy or on the hero-paths of hell enrich and develop a given pantheon; and if the change has a ring of truth, it will be accepted.

When cultures collide, stories and realities clash as surely as do weapons and customs. And occasionally the timeless ground of being itself, the Godplane, will be changed by those determined or desperate enough to walk the hero path. In Glorantha, not only does the interpretation of reality encapsulated in myth change over time, but also the underlying reality itself! Gods die. Memories are erased. Great magics meld and tear the fabric of being. For mortals and Gods alike, reality is something that must be fought for.

The Orlanathi / Lunar clash provides an example of this. Lunar and Solar tales are being imported into Sartar by itinerant entertainers, traders, settlers and soldiery. The fierce warriors ideals of Orlanathi society are being challenged by the Lunar worldview — a mystical, pragmatic and all-embracing ethic tinged with decadence. As these views permeate the towns and villages, the old myths and attitudes are challenged. The old myths change. And as the myths change, so do the Gods.

While this Lunar spiritual warfare is intentional, it is not without its dangers. No change can be one way: Orlanathi





"Spirit-men talk to friends, and tell us to gather at good place of Moonbroth, there to attack the Men of Red. I uneasy because this place is three knots close to Bad Things, like Broo People and such, too close for comfort, not far enough for safety. Also, not like waters-ever since Twin Sisters climb into sky, waters seem to jump more often. But spirit-men say not to worry, they bring many allies and friends to help us.

We gather all the People west of River, sharpen darts and arrows, and go to place. To my surprise, many Waha folk there, more than ever seen before, even at The Paps, more than knew existed. Of them, the Bison were largest, the Bastard Riders showed up, Rabbit Survivors, Unicorn females, some Alticamelus (though not many, and I surprised at that), Water Gobblers (maybe we later find some tails among their dead; that would be a treat!), Nose-Horn Riders with their mighty lances and clubs (Waha bless them), Men-and-a-Half, and the Bird or Bolo-Lizard Men (I never remember what they is called).

I saw no Sable Riders, or Morokanth (though we soon find out why). To my horror, I see gangs of Goat-People, all disgusting, with oozing sores and looks. I see many Storm Bull worshippers grip their weapons harder, and could see the efforts of many khans trying to hold these mindless brutes back from attacking the Goat-People.

"Our spirit-men say not be concerned, The Butcher needs all tribes' help, even Goatkin. Waha promises victory, and much help will come from the domain of Waha. There are many spirit-men, too many in one spot, all claiming to be the favourite of Waha, and the leader of the rest. Khan of Bison and Khan of Impala try to summon Founders. We take our place in the left and right sides, ready to pour darts and arrows into the Red Men warriors. Spirit-men begin great summons of ...

"Treachery! Betrayal! Sables riding with the Red Men on the other side! Silver Bell riding in and out. The Dust! The Dust! Lances lowered, Bisons and Rhinos charge, none can stand before them, all suddenly down, falling falling, screams of bisons and rhinos dying! Terrible balls with spikes. Arrows blackening the sky. Lizard things and pig riders, pony riders and sables close, kill twenty with darts, no more in quiver. Unicorn females, Rabbits, Tall Men, Goat Folk close, fight, twisted by strange red magic! Moon Broth erupts! Red Men charge none stand before, Bird Lizards and

us ride in front, halt advance with bolas and darts, I take three more Hairs! Silver Bell hit by Sable arrow, wound won't heal!! I ride back behind lines to rest. Spirit-men gather Soul-Winds!!

"Storm Bull dies down and holds His Breath. Our spirit-men control the Wild-Fire—the Great and Holy Oakfed—and set him loose to feed on Red Ones. Then Oakfed roars his wrath and flies to eat our foes. All is quiet on the Plains.

"Suddenly, then whole world is blasted, become fire and heat and melting rock. Oakfed appear before all spirit-men, and shouts in deep voice, which toss me off Silver Bell to ground. I cover my ears in fright, but still hear in head the voice of Oakfed. Never will forget that terrible voice, though no understand all:

'I find yon Red Ones indigestible; they leave a bad taste in my mouth!! My hunger is great, so I will eat all of *You* instead!!'

"Spirit-man after spirit-man scream as he eaten up by Oakfed's fiery appetite. And then he turn on rest of us. I lucky to escape with only loss of one eye and these few burns. A spirit-man who live- cursed be his soul to be tormented by The Bad Man- later tell me that Oakfed met *His* Father among the Red Ones- and covered as He understand crime to be committed. Lowdrilla (who is *this* giant-spirit?) punish Oakfed, and send Oakfed away hungry. Maddened, Oakfed eat us instead! Damn all spirit-men to The Bad Man!!

"Those who could, we flee to all hiding places we know. The Red Ones hunt us down like Rabbit Folk, and laugh as they spear us for sport. They do terrible things to us with twisted red magic. Oh Waha!! Where is the honour in killing a hurt man? Where is the courage scar to earn?

"I am left dead, mighty Silver Bell broken beneath me, javelin in my back, my skin smoke and start to blister. I know not what happen next, but wake during time of Darkness Woman. I crawl into a Serpent, and find trickle of water and skullbush at bottom. My skin on fire, and I wish to be taken to Waha. Waha not grant my prayer, and I live, this broken rider you see today.

"Warriors, it matters not what clan or people you from. Do not be so quick to listen to khan-words, you who are so young, so mighty, so hopeful. Your khan can cause your death - or worse. Go home while you still can. There is no shame in living.

"Do not trust your khan just because he khan. Do not listen to words of honour, songs of glory, tales of riches and victory. These words are just dust, and can not be eaten when the belly is hungry, the body broken. **THESE ARE LIES!!!** Other leaders promise peace and an end to hunger, if we just worsh... I wonder..."

I know. I was there. And the Twin Star Sisters continue to watch above.

"A Tale of Woe!! A Tale of Woe!! Some jerky for my Tale of Woe!!"

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rune are of a much more recent construction. The gate is named the Fool's Gate - for it is said that only a fool trusts to luck. However, incredibly, the gate was the only part of the town to survive the attack of the Crimson Bat in 1602, and the subsequent inferno. (XXIX. 21-014) During the Closing, a ship setting sail for deep water encountered a variety of effects, the result of which was always sinking the ship. Sometimes a great sea monster appeared and dragged the vessel down, as when Telendeus Starwise set sail from Refuge, or when Admiral Givassum departed the Bay of Ozur. Intrepid sailors departing from the Nolos region are known to have perished from various sources, as noted in various entries in Light-house Observations compiled at this time: "A green fog enveloped the ship" appears thrice, "A wispy red haze lacerated the ship to splinters" once, "The ship turned turtle", twice; once a ship "Was pushed back to shore, but had no crew aboard;" and one time "Sir Kransis' stout vessel broke into two as we watched, and the men were dragged under water, fighting." Pug the Perspicacious: Many other effects have been reported as well, even in modern times when captains fail in their sacrifices. (XXIX. 21-015) Tarron, one of the wives of the great shaman Little Dog, has been reincarnated into the body of a dog. (XXIX. 21-016) A History of the City of Dorion, Northern Ralios. The City of Dorion in Northern Ralios was founded in the early years of Arkat's Empire by one of Arkat's lesser commanders, whose name is no longer known: he is spoken of in history only as "Lord



WARHAMSTER

MASS COMBAT RULES FOR RUNEQUEST

by Sandy Petersen



RuneQuest combat is realistic, but can be slow, especially when a large number of opponents are engaged. In Glorantha, mass battles happen frequently, and when the Hero Wars begin in earnest, your campaign may include some of these. Here follows a system that we have used to simulate mass battles. It is fast, and can recreate battles with a few hundred participants as easily as those with several thousand.

1. Game Scale

1 inch = 10 meters. 1 figure represents 10 men. 1 turn represents 1 minute of time. This scale is enough for many actions. A typical Gloranthan battle (using White Bear and Red Moon as a guide) is not as large as an equivalent Earthly one, probably because of magical fallout.

To speak plainly, if an immense gathering of Gloranthan troops got together for a massive fight, they would be exceedingly vulnerable to certain attack magics. Hence such huge battles are rare in Glorantha, and when they do occur (as in the Nights of Horror), both sides are frequently decimated. A typical Gloranthan war probably consists of a large number of clashes, each consisting of only a few hundred up to a few thousand soldiers on a side.

2. Combat Sequence

First Movement: all units (on both sides) move, in any order that the owning players wish. Each player selects one unit, then each moves that unit simultaneously. If one player has more units than the other, he moves his extra units after the other side has finished.

Missile units being charged can get a shot in just before they are engaged during First Movement.

Combat: all units fight at their owner's option. Units wishing to fight do so in the following order:

- Rune Magic
- Battle Magic
- Sorcery
- Melee Combat
- Spirit Magic
- Missile Combat

Second Movement: a unit that did not attack, throw missiles, or cast spells can move again during this phase. Also, all units that received Overkill (killed "more" units than they faced in melee) can move.

3. Unit Statistics

All units have a number of combat statistics: Combat Factor (Cf), Defence Factor (Df), Missile Factor (Ms), Missile Range (Rg), Morale, Movement (Mv), and Magic Factor (MgF).

Combat Factor is used in melee combat only. It represents a unit's competence in battle. Normal range is from 1 to 5.

Defence Factor is used both in melee and missile combat, and occasionally in magic combat. It represents a unit's resistance to losses. For most human units, this score is 1-2.

Missile Value is used only in Missile combat. Non-missile units have a Ms of 0. Missile Range is the number of inches a missile unit can fire.

Morale must be checked periodically and keeps a unit from running away.

Movement gives a unit's speed in inches per movement phase.

Magic Factor is how magical the unit is.

Figure Basing and Frontages

Units should be divided into the following categories and then based as follows:

Heavy Infantry	5 figures to a stand
Light Infantry	4 figures to a stand
Skirmishers	2 figures to a stand
Heavy Cavalry	3 figures to a stand
Light Cavalry	2 figures to a stand
Missile troops	3 figures to a stand
Militia/Mobs	2 - 3 figures to a stand
Magicians	3 figures to a stand

25mm figures should be based on 125mm x 25mm card.
15mm figures should be based on 50mm x 20mm card.



For mounted troops, only the rider takes the morale check. A unit takes a morale check when:

- It loses 1/4 of its starting strength (each time)
- It loses a leader attached to it
- It sees another unit with equal or greater morale retreat or rout.

Modifiers to the Morale Rating (per unit)	
- 1	Facing chaos (anytime you are in melee versus a chaotic unit)
- 2	Facing bad chaos (ditto, except only certain chaotic units inflict this)
- 1	Unit already disordered or retreating
- 2	Unit half strength or less
+1	Leader with unit

Disordered: a disordered unit cannot fire missiles or force march, and is at a disadvantage in melee. It rallies automatically by spending one full round without moving or taking casualties.

Retreating: the unit moves directly away from the nearest enemy at its normal speed. It cannot engage in combat. If attacked, it takes casualties, but inflicts none. Each round, it may attempt to rally with a Morale roll (this can turn a retreat into a rout). If it fails to rally, it keeps moving until it is out of the play area and thus out of the game.

Routed: the unit must move directly away from all enemies, and attempts to keep moving until it leaves the play area. If it is surrounded, it attempts to surrender. It cannot engage in combat and if attacked takes casualties, but inflicts none. Basically, the unit has been eliminated.

7. Forced Marching (Mv)

A unit can choose to force march in either movement phase.

Forced Marching: a unit can move either half-again normal speed, twice normal speed, or triple normal speed. After moving it must take a Morale check. If it fails, it is Disordered (see Morale rules). The amount of force-marching performed affects the unit's Morale check.

Increased Speed	Morale Check
up to half-again normal	normal
up to double normal	-1 from Morale
up to triple normal	-2 from Morale

8. Battle Magic

Some units have parenthesised MgF's. Such units cannot use magic at all. Certain other units count as magicians - Sorcerers, Priests,

or Shamans. They get the benefit of special magics that may be the subject of future articles.

Any unit with an unparenthesised MgF can use Battle Magic. This is a bonus equal to the MgF which may be added to the possessor's Cf, Ms, Mv, MgF (for purposes of magical defence only), or Morale for the following turn (until the next combat phase rolls around again). No rating may be more than doubled through the use of Battle Magic. Thus, if your Cf is 2, you cannot raise your Cf higher than 4, no matter what your MgF.

Whenever a unit uses Battle Magic, it takes a loss check by rolling 1d6. If the 1d6 roll exceeds the unit's MgF or is equal to 6, its Battle Magic is used up. The unit may use no more Battle Magic for the rest of the day. This represents the loss of Rune spells, magic points and bound spirits.

Battle Magic can only be used once in a round.

A unit may voluntarily use less Battle Magic than its MgF. Each unused point of Battle Magic reduces the 1d6 roll by 1.

Example: the Marble Phalanx has a MgF of 3. If it uses its MgF to add only 1 to a statistic instead of the allowed 3, its loss check is lowered by 2, meaning that it retains use of Battle Magic on any roll of 5 or less (instead of 3 or less).

Examples of Play

Melee Combat: A unit of 14 Axemen (Cf 3) attacks a unit of 8 hoplites (Cf 5). Neither side has any modifiers. The axemen roll 14d6, with their Cf of 3, and deliver 7 Hits, which kills 3 of the Df 2 hoplites. The hoplites roll 8d6, and six hit, killing 3 Df 2 axemen. The final tally leaves 11 axemen and 5 hoplites alive.

The hoplites have lost over 25% of their unit and so they must make a Morale check.

Missile Combat: Ten archers shoot at a second group of hoplites. The archers Missile value is 4. The defenders are using shields, so the missile value is reduced by one; only rolls of 1, 2 or 3 hit. Ten dice are rolled. Five Hits result and two Df 2 hoplites are removed.



Converting RuneQuest Characters to Warhammer

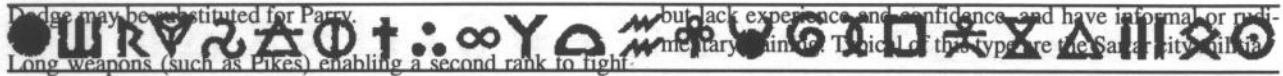
Note: Drop all fractions.

Combat Factor: $(attk\%/5 + parr\%/5 + max. damage)/10$

Creatures with multiple attacks add together all attacks and damages.

Use 1.5 x maximum damage for impaling weapons. "Max." damage does not include special or critical hits.

Poison adds 1/2 POT to damage.

Dodge may be substituted for Parry.  but lack experience and confidence, and have informal or rudimentary training. Typical of this type are the Sartar city militia.

Long weapons (such as Pikes) enabling a second rank to fight allow more figures to fight, but do not raise the Combat Factor.

Do not use Lance attack for mounted figures (Lance is figured as a combat modifier).

Note: figure a mount's Cf separately from the riders, if it is able to fight.

e.g. the Granite Phalanx. The average trooper has 75% attack (75/5 = 15), 70% parry, and a two-handed spear (1D10+1+1D4 = 15 x 1.5 = 22). This gives a total of 15+14+22 = 51, divided by 10 gives a Cf of 5.

Defense Factor: (chest armour + hit points)/10

For nonhumans, use the Biggest Missile Hit Location to substitute for Chest (so Dragonsnails would use their Shell). If a figure is heavily armoured elsewhere than its chest, add +1 or 2 to the armour rating. If it is much more lightly armoured elsewhere, subtract 1 or 2.

Note: figure a mounts' Df separately from the riders.

e.g. Our average hoplite wears a leather tunic under a plate cuirass. He has 14 hit points. This gives a total of 9+14 = 25, divided by 10 gives Df 2. The hoplite also has plate greaves, a leather tunic, beazinted skirts and a large Hoplite shield and so the Df is raised to 3.

Missile Rating: (attk%/3 + max. damage + (Shots per round*5))/10

Use 1.5 x max. damage for impaling weapons.

e.g. An average Thunder Delta Slinger has an attack of 80% (80/3 = 26), a maximum damage of 15 (their slingstones do +2 damage), and can get off two shots per melee round (2 x 5 = 10). This gives a total of 26 + 15 + 10 = 51, divided by 10 gives a MR of 5.

Missile Range: 1/10 maximum range in meters.

Morale: a function of courage (measured by POW) and a number representing discipline and training.

Morale = (POW^2)/100 + training

Training: 0 to 4

Fanatics = add +1 to morale

Guard (training 4). These are the elite, always the smallest percentage of any army. Usually only small bodyguard units are of this class, but the Lunar Bloodpillers are a full strength guard unit, as are some Sartar magicians.

Elite (training 3). The best of the line regiments, veterans, and proud of their status, willing to prove it in the field. Examples in the Lunar Army are the Imperial Bodyguard, the Steel Sword Legion, Standfast Hoplites; while in the Sartar the Boldhome Axes, Twin Spears, Swordbrothers, etc. In Prax the Ten independents have this morale grade.

Regular (training 2). Normal fighting troops, with some experience and led with a normal amount of confidence and intelligence. They can be counted on to respond to normal commands with accountable regularity. The majority of any army is this class, unless it is native militia raised for an emergency.

Green (training 1). These troops have the willingness to fight,

Dregs (training 0). Impressed mobs, untrained peasant, discontented allies, unpaid mercenaries. Generally reliable for everything except combat.

Example: the average hoplite has a POW of 14 and the Granite Phalanx are defined as Elite troops. This gives 14 squared = 196 divided by 100 = 1 + 3 for training gives a Morale of 4.

Movement: Meters/SR + (remaining Fatigue/10)

The maximum possible movement is Meters/SR +1. Often the Fatigue value serves to decrease a units movement, because it carries too much.

All humans start with an MR of 3. A Holy Country hoplite has a low fatigue level. In fact, it is -1. So his speed is 3 + (-1/10), dropped back down to 2. Poor devil. A Granite Phalanx hoplite, wearing the same armour, but with more basic FPs, has a fatigue level of +3, so he gets a speed of 3 + (3/10), or just plain 3. A Sartar city militiaman, wearing only cuirboilli, has a fatigue of +12, so his speed is 3 + (12/10), clear up to 4! A naked Brolian has a fatigue of +22, but because you can't add more than +1 to the base speed, he is no faster than the Sartar city militiaman.

Magic Factor: POW^2/50

If a unit knows no spirit magic, sorcery or divine magic, he gets a parenthesised MgF. If a figure knows particularly more or less magic than one might expect for someone with its POW, you can add or subtract a point (or even two, in extreme cases) from the final MgF.

*Example: our average hoplite has a POW of 14. This gives a total of 14 * 14 = 196/50 = 3 MgF.*

If a unit is a magic specialist use either Fetch Rating, Rune Rating or Sorcery Rating as the unit's MgF.

Fetch Rating: fetch POW/10.

Example: A unit of shamans and assistant shamans with an average POW rating of 45 would have a fetch rating of 4.

Rune Rating: points of Rune Magic/3.

Example: A unit of Chief Priests, each with at least 15 pts of Rune magic, would have a Rune rating of 5.

Sorcery: lowest sorcery skill/20

Example: A unit of Adepts, with a minimum skill of 75%, would have a Sorcery of 3.

Sample Troop Types

Humakti Warriors: fanatical. Their MgF is doubled when used to raise their Cf.

Storm Bull Warriors: fanatical, plus they suffer no morale penalty versus chaos foes. Their MgF is doubled when attacking or defending against a chaotic opponent.

Chaos Creatures

The morale of most normal beings suffers when facing chaotic foes. Many chaos units have a Chaos factor, expressed as a die roll, rolled once for every 10 figures in the unit. At the start of each round of melee, the Chaos Factor kills that number of enemy



minotaurs go berserk. Their Cf is doubled, they ignore morale, and they cannot use Battle Magic. If their foe flees, they'll force march after it, trying to wipe out the enemy unit. Once the enemy unit is destroyed, the berserker rage ends, and the minotaur unit is automatically disordered.

If a minotaur unit suffers any losses from missile weapons, it also goes berserk and charges the nearest unit shooting at it, as described above.

Trolls: a widely-varying race with many sub-types. Trolls suffer no disadvantage at night combat.

Cave Trolls. -1 morale in sunlight. Can regenerate, except under full sunlight. At the end of each round of combat roll 1d6 for each Cave Troll killed that round. If the result equals or exceeds their opponent's Cf, that troll figure regenerates and returns to life. **Great Trolls.** Generally have heavy armour.

Mistress Race. Magician units. All troll units within 12" have +1 morale. **Trollkin.** -2 to morale in sunlight. Small targets.



Undead

Ghouls: enemy troops within 6" of Ghouls must make a morale check each round of combat. Whenever an enemy engaged with ghouls retreats from melee, the ghouls are automatically disordered (eating the fallen) and must be rallied.

Mummies: may not cast spells. Flame attacks do double rolled hits to a mummy unit.

Zombies & Skeletons: these creatures are immune to missile weapons. Foes armed with impaling-type weapons subtract 2 from their Cf.

For every 3 zombie or skeleton figures killed in a round, one immobile "parts" figure is left behind on the battlefield. The undead are now dismembered into twitching body parts and become a terrain feature. Any unit moving within 1" of the "parts" is attacked with a melee value of 1. "Parts" are invulnerable to further attack.



Spirit Magic

Shamans are single figures, representing a single shaman and his apprentices. His MgF is his Fetch Rating, and is henceforth referred to as a MgF. He can use his MgF just like any other unit.

A shaman can use his MgF to benefit friendly figure within 5". This is like Battle Magic, except that the shaman divides the benefit received among the recipients. Thus, a shaman with a 10 MgF gives 5 figures each a +2 bonus. A Battle Magic loss check is made each time this is done.

A shaman also starts the game with 1 controlled spirit per MgF pt.

All spirits move at a rate of 20.

Attack spirits. Attack enemy figures by rolling 1d6. If the roll is higher than the defenders MgF, the spirit's effect occurs, and the spirit is used up. If the roll is lower, the attack spirit is destroyed. If the roll equals the defenders MgF, the combat continues, and is re-rolled the following round.

Attack spirit	Effect
Disease spirit	-2 to morale. After battle, figure is eliminated.
Fear spirit	Morale drops to 0.
Ghosts	Enemy player takes over figure.
Madness spirits	Figure disordered. No rally possible.
Wraiths	Figure eliminated.

Elementals. Each Fetch point equals 1 Size of any type of elemental. **Healing Spirits.** These spirits cure figures infected by disease. **Magic and Spell Spirits.** Each such spirit provides the shaman with 1d6 one-use MgF's, useable at any range.



Rune Magic

Priests appear as single figure, representing groups of about ten priests each. Each figure has a MgF (which is also his Rune Rating) and a special effect(s). They may use their MgF just as can a normal unit.

Attack Spells. To use these, the attacking priest rolls 1d6 and adds it to his MgF. If the total exceeds the target's MgF, he is affected. Otherwise he is unharmed.

Elementals. A priest capable of using elementals can summon and control elementals with a total Size no greater than the priest's rune rating. A priest can control more than one elemental figure, and can take other actions while simultaneously controlling them. If a priest's elementals are injured or killed he may not summon replacements.

Chalana Arroy

raises the morale of the unit they are with by 1. Chalana Arroy figures cannot attack. They can:

1. Cure Disease. After the battle the healer cures one figure per rune point.



Sartarite Fyrd

STR 11 CON 11 SIZ 13 POW 12

Spear 55/50, 1d8+1
archers: bow 50, 1d6+1 MR 3, Range 12
Armour: cuirbouilli + leather
Training: Green

Cf: 3 Df: 1 MgF: 2 Morale: 2 Move 4

Tanisor Knights (heavy cavalry)

STR 13 CON 15 SIZ 13 POW 13

Sword 90/90, 1d10+1+1d4 (lance-armed for charge)
Armour: scale
Training: elite

Cf 5 Df 2 MgF 3 Morale 4

Tarshite Regular Provincial Trooper

STR 12 CON 12 SIZ 13 POW 11

Spear 65/60, 1d8+1+1d4
Armour: Cuirboilli + leather.
Training: regular

Cf: 4 Df: 1 MgF: 2 Morale: 3

Knight's Horse

STR 32 CON 14 SIZ 32 POW 13

Kick 50, 1d6+3d6
Armour: ring barding

Cf 3 Df 3 MgF (3) Move 10

Warhamster Unit Sheet

Unit name

Combat Factor (Cf)

Defense Factor (Df)

Missile Factor (Mf)

Range Factor (Rg)

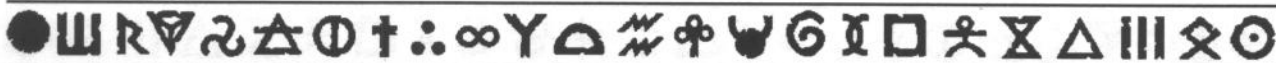
Morale (M)

Magic Factor (Mgf)

Unit Blocks

Permission is granted for photocopying of the Warhamster Unit sheet for personal use. (As if you couldn't think one up for yourself...)

(XXIX.21.029) An entry from the log of Gormand Rockclimber, c.1582. My travels brought me to Jonstown, where I was invited to dine with Sigmund Dream-Walker, a fellow scholar. Sigmund fancies himself a master of the thoughts and motivations of all races of Dragon Pass. He even has some theories on Dragonewt behaviour (although I do not give them much credence). Having just come from Duckpoint, our conversation turned to the mental workings of that scurrilous people. He spoke to us for most of the meal, and well into the ale afterward, on the subject of Ducks. I posed him this question: "Why is it that those small, weak cowards seem so taken with the worship of Humakt, patron of Honour, Battle and Death". I found his answer intriguing. "The duck-folk understand that cowardice is part of their very nature. However, their Orlanth culturisation dictates that bravery is one of the highest virtues. Some ducks feel that they will never be able to live up to such an ideal, becoming bitter and spiteful towards humans. Others, however, undergo a 'reaction formation' (what this is I didn't have a chance to ask), which causes them to fanatically internalise the virtues which they feel are lacking. These 'Sword Drakes' are often some of the bravest, honest, most honourable creatures imaginable, almost to an impossible degree. I might even posit that the Duckpoint Humakt regiment is the most disciplined fighting unit in all of Dragon Pass". Growing weary of the subject, our conversation...



Typical Hoplite

Philselenos, Hoplite of the Granite Phalanx, age 26.

STR	14	Move: 3
CON	14	Hit Points: 14_____
SIZ	14	Fatigue Points: 28-31 = -3_____
INT	15	Magic Points: 14_____
POW	14	DEX SR: 3
APP	12	

Location	points
Right Leg	8/5
Left Leg	8/5
Abdomen	9+6/5
Chest	9+9/6
Right Arm	1/4
Left Arm	9+1/4
Head	8/5

Weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
2H Spear & Shield	6	75%	1D10+1+1D4	-	10+18
1H Spear	7	75%	1D8+1+1D4	40%	10
Hoplite Shield	8	25%	1D6+1D4	70%	18
Scimitar	7	30%	1D6+2+1D4	30%	10

Spells: (80-31=49%) Endurance 6, Standfast, Strength 1, Vigour 1, Healing 1, Protection 1

Divine Magic (one use): Shield Wall(2), Heal Wound

Skills: Scan 75%, Listen 75%, First Aid 65%, Speak New Pelorian 60%, Speak Dara Happan 48%, Orate 30%, Read/Write New Pelorian 20%, Battle 10%

Equipment: Philselenos wears a short-sleeved leather tunic, bronze cuirass and greaves, a bezaunted skirt and a full helm.

Poliocrates

Lochagos of the Granite Phalanx, age 40.

STR	16	Move: 3
CON	16	Hit Points: 15_____
SIZ	14	Fatigue Points: 32-32 = 0_____
INT	15	Magic Points: 14_____
POW	17	DEX SR: 3
APP	10	

Location	points
Right Leg	8/5
Left Leg	8/5
Abdomen	9+5/5
Chest	9+13/6
Right Arm	4/4
Left Arm	9+4/4
Head	8/5

Weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
2H Spear & Shield	6	118%	1D10+1+1D4	-	10+18
1H Spear	7	109%	1D8+1+1D4	92%	10
Hoplite Shield	8	99%	1D6+1D4	107%	18
Scimitar	7	92%	1D6+2+1D4	67%	10

Spells: (98-32=66%) Endurance 6, Standfast, Strength 1, Vigour 1, Healing 1, Protection 1, Bladesharp 1, Countermagic 2 (in torque) Mindspeech 6, (in crest) Demoralise(2).

Falerius Aggarius

Junior Triarch of the Granite Phalanx, Initiate of Yelm the Warrior, Initiate of Yanafal Tarnils. Age 21.

STR	13	Move: 3
CON	12	Hit Points: 13_____
SIZ	14	Fatigue Points: 25-25 = 0_____
INT	15	Magic Points: 14_____
POW	14	DEX SR: 3
APP	14	

Location	points
Right Leg 2/4	
Left Leg	2/4
Abdomen 7/4	
Chest	7/5
Right Arm	7/3
Left Arm	7/3
Head	8/4

Weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
1H Spear	7	19%	1D8+1+1D4	11%	10
Hoplite Shield	8	21%	1D6+1D4	48%	18
Scimitar	7	56%	1D6+2+1D4	21%	10

Spells: (81-25=54%) Healing 2, Protection 4, Bladesharp 2

Divine Magic (one use) Find Enemy

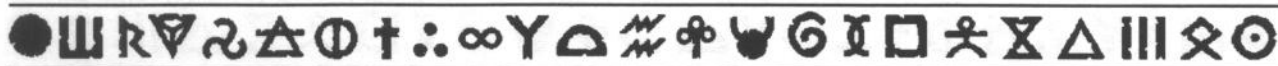
Skills: Battle 50%, First Aid 15%, Speak New Pelorian 51%, Speak Dara Happan 82%, Orate 52%, Read/Write New Pelorian 60%, Read/Write Dara Happan 60%, Human Lore 28%, World Lore 28%, Ride 36%, Throw 38%, Fast Talk 32%.

Equipment: Falerius wears the typical leather tunic, covered by a scaled long sleeved hauberk. His full helm is similar to that worn by the Hoplites, and decorated with silver-alloy. On campaign he rides a fine well-bred horse. He prefers to wear high leather riding boots. His silver officer's crescent, worn around his neck as a gorget, has a matrix for Mindspeech 2. This is standard among Phalanx Officers, and is used to communicate with the other Triarchs or to his Lieutenant. He is popular with the Hoplites, friendly and easy-going, but with the right amount of decisiveness and reserve.

Divine Magic: Shield Wall(2), Morale, Divination, Worship Granite Phalanx

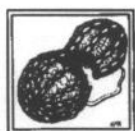
Skills: Scan 82%, Listen 87%, First Aid 75%, Speak New Pelorian 60%, Speak Dara Happan 52%, Orate 90%, Read/Write New Pelorian 90%, Battle 66%, Human Lore 60%, World Lore 58%

Equipment: Poliocrates wears a short-sleeved leather tunic, silvered iron cuirass and greaves, a bezaunted skirt and sleeves and a full helm with a red transverse crest which is a matrix for Demoralise. He also wears two silver phalerae in the form of stylised breasts, matrices storing 6MPs each. His silver neck torque is a matrix for Mindspeech 6.



Plants

By Eric Rowe



Stinkseed *Olere Semen*

I was in Corflu, nearing the end of my unfortunate trip through Prax, studying various uses of the Skullbush plant, when I was startled by the vile odour of a returning Lunar file. Having spent time with various Lunar regiments, I was quite distraught at their condition and wondered aloud what kind of commander could tolerate such troops.

My local guide then informed me that the file had just returned from swamp patrol and had not yet washed. I saw the same troops later much cleaned up, but the odour had not lessened to a tolerable level. Further questioning of my guide revealed that soldiers often smear a disgustingly smelly seed paste upon themselves before leaving on patrol.

Intrigued as to the nature of these seeds, I did some investigating and found their source, an Etyries priest named Koronius Falabdur. It seems he controls the distribution of these seeds, along with the rest of the local trade. He imports them from a renegade elf in Adari. Issaries knows what the elves actually use them for.

Here it is used to keep away the giant mosquitoes and other swamp insects that dwell in hordes outside of the protective range of the Gorakiki shrine. Corflu duty is unpleasant indeed. My guide claims to have seen some desperate soldiers pay up to half their weekly salary on these imported seeds.

As to the taste, it is better left never even tried. Each peanut sized seed, once cracked, oozes a greenish-yellow fluid of incredibly horrible smell. To be complete though, I did try it and can honestly say that I would rather swallow a live Carmanian Spiny Marmot than taste one more Stinkseed.

Gamemaster Notes:

- (1) It takes three crushed seeds in half a cup of water to smear a thin paste completely over an average sized person. The paste itself washes off easily, but the odour will linger for up to four days after removal.
- (2) No swamp insect will approach a person covered in Stinkseed paste. In fact, even people near someone so covered will be afforded some insect protection. This protection does not apply to the leeches which are so common and have the nasty tendency to worm their way under armour. No one ever said Corflu duty was easy.



Tarafor's Oil Succulent (Soldier's Friend) *Spina oleum*

My first exposure to Soldier's Friend occurred when I accompanied a mercenary troop into Dorastor, attached to the Etyries trading party there. Soldier's Friend is a member of the Aloe family of succulents, differing at the superficial level of leaf protective measures and oil content. The unnaturally high level of oily fluid within each leaf is what makes this plant so valuable.

A corporal acquaintance of mine first showed me Soldier's Friend as he used it to oil his scimitar. A well oiled blade never rusts, he says. Since then I have also seen it used on armour just prior to inspection. The next use of it I found when I complained of blisters and the caravan healer used it to soothe my feet. It eased my pain and the blisters soon healed naturally. Lastly it is nutritious, if bland, and has added strength to many a soldier on low rations.

Although Soldier's Friend can be eaten raw (and is quite tasty that way), my recommendation it to eat it dried. It stores better this way and a small chunk can be chewed for a long time without it losing its spicy flavour.

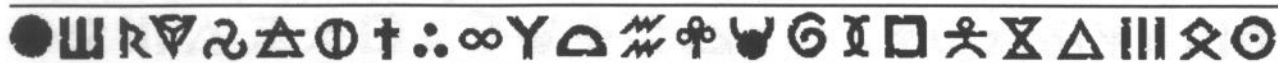
Gamemaster notes:

- (1) The fine oil does an excellent job of rust protection on metal. It is also a natural antiseptic and keeps blisters, burns or small cuts from festering or worsening.
- (2) On a purely nutritional basis, two oil filled stems of Soldier's Friend will provide a day's provision for an average man. It will leave them hungry though, and should not be relied on for more than a day or two because of its lack of bulk.
- (3) The succulent is named for the scholar Tarafor who first successfully bred it. The plant requires great care in growing and often soldiers will have spouses tend a garden with some for them to pick on their visits home. Despite continued military efforts, Soldier's Friend has not been able to be commercially grown.



Perrin's Ivy (Blade Venom) *Venenum Perrinous*

Perrin's Ivy is a rare, temperate zone ivy noted for a special type of poison that can be brewed from its seed pods. The ivy itself is parasitic and can be found slowly strangling many types of deciduous trees. Its leaves are a dark green with misty white splotches that radiate outwards to its five



Reflections on the Red Goddess

or

Perspectives on the Red Moon and the Six Hundred Year Curse

by Nesus Clockwork, Grey Sage Acolyte, Loremaster of Mineralogy, Companion of Dilfar, Lecturer on Mostali Schisms and Metaphysical History at the Lankor Mhy College in Dangk, Safelster. Translated by Phil O'Connor.

Freezeday, Illusion Week, 1622 S.T.

Apologia

Some might view this document as an uncharacteristic example of self flattery, or perhaps a cowardly attempt to voice my views among the uneducated laity while bypassing the more intense scrutiny of my peers. I am attempting neither. I have found it necessary to expose my thesis through this medium because of the intense

objections to my theory from the honourable members of The Committee, who have criticized aspects of my proposal without the full knowledge of all the points and assumptions I have made. Therefore I set my theory in its completeness in the following humble pages, so that the honourable members can make a more educated critique of my ideas.

Before I discovered the Value of Self Worth; and chose to devote my remaining working hours to the Lord of Wisdom, I was taught by my Mostali friends that the world is but a machine, broken by foolish gods and evil races, and that my lot in life was to devote my energy to its repair. I have since discovered the falseness of this view, but not if its basic premise. The world is in disrepair, yes, but not because of the foolishness of the God Wars. Its fundamental cause of breakdown has always been the responsibility of mortal man. I know that this claim has been the source of the most intense objection so far, so I will take the opportunity to explain further and outline my proof.

The First Age Experiment or Gbajiism

No one is quite sure of what Gbaji was or what he was supposed to represent, but two things all sane people are certain of: He was Chaos, and he tried to destroy the world. One must not forget however that he was created by the Broken Council, mere mortals from all races. His creation was a mistake, not because the Council had incomplete knowledge, or that its

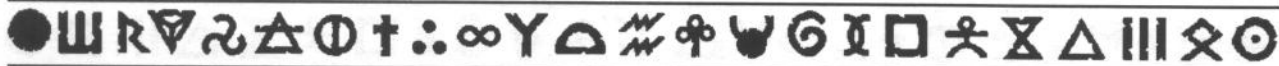
methodology was flawed, but because the principle on which Gbaji was based was fundamentally wrong: The principle that mortals can create a god themselves is an affront to the Cosmos and all its laws. Surely the fact that Yelm himself stopped in the sky and time was broken at Gbaji's birth is evidence that the event shook the compromise at its core. Gbaji's action after the blasphemous event further reinforce his foulness and the corruption of his philosophy. What lessons can we learn from this?

People should not try to gain for themselves more than what the gods struggled to get for them. Did we learn from the Gbaji experiment? Unfortunately not, as we see in the Second Age.

The Second Age Experiment or God Learnerism

Who were the Godlearners? Explanations range from morally bankrupt sorcerers to bandit-adventurers who plundered the hero plane for personal gain, without cult guidance and divine sanction. The Godlearners caused irreparable damage to the world, such that we cannot know what it was like before they came. Their crime lies not in that they explored forbidden paths, and discovered forbidden secrets. Their crime was that they had no respect for what they sought, and no guidance to understand what they found. They sought power for its own sake, and worshipped themselves. The world itself rose to destroy them and their empires: the seas refused their ships, the dragons ate their cities. As in the First Age, a group of mortals attempted to create their own





power, without the normal attachments to responsibility and respect. Theirs was a philosophy of exploitation and rape, violating natural laws in order to take more from the world than was allotted to them. What can we learn from the Godlearners? The world has a natural order, a cycle of creation and destruction, and to tamper with this magical order is to invite the wrath of the gods and the cosmos. Did we learn from the Godlearner experiment? Again the answer is no, as I shall demonstrate.

The Third Age Experiment or Lunarism

This brings us to the subject of my thesis, the Lunar Empire. I shall demonstrate that not only has the curse of our history repeated itself in this age, but actually doubled in blasphemous intensity.

The Lunar Empire presents a seductive facade to the outside world: It accepts all faiths and races, and believes individuals with ability and skill should rise to the upper levels of society. Behind this mask lies a corruption even more foul than Gbaji or the Godlearners, because in fact the Lunars embrace both! What proof do I have of this my honourable peers would ask? Simply consider the fact that the Lunars publicly proclaim to worship Nysalor, the term used for Gbaji by the Broken Council. Further evidence of Gbajism lies in the cult of the Seven Mothers. Each member of the septate was once a prominent member of another cult. Take for instance Yanafal Tarnils, formerly a Sword of Humakt who broke away from his cult when he was resurrected. This sort of violation of cult restriction was also exhibited by those who fell under the spell of Gbaji in the First Age. Lokamayadon, the leader of the Broken Council, claimed to head the cult of Orlanth even though his actions nearly destroyed his god! Each of the Seven Mothers broke away from their original cult to embrace the Red Goddess, who corrupted them with the secrets of Gbaji. More proof is the empire's use of chaos creatures such as the Crimson Bat and regiments of chaos men. Gbaji used similar creatures during the invasion of Dragon Pass and Fronela. The evidence of Gbaji corruption is irrefutable. What of the evidence of Godlearner influence in the Empire? I have studied Lunar magic for some time now. My interest

was sparked by the possibility that Lunar magic was similar to Mostali sorcery. Most of my information came from the Red Goddess priest Antonius of Darani, whom I had an opportunity to converse with during several field trips to the ruins of Hrelar Amali. I discovered that their magic was an entirely new form never before seen in history. In simplistic terms it combines spirit spells with the principles of sorcery. What secrets allowed the Red Goddess to create an entirely new type of magical practice? I believe the answer lies in God Learner secrets. This kind of magical experimentation was common under their rule, and produced such evil magic as tapping. I admit the connection is weak, but consider the Red Moon, created by the Red Goddess. There is evidence to suggest that the crimson orb is a typical example of a Godlearner construct. Its creation and worship invite comparison to the Machine God of Maniria.

I believe that the Lunars have not only resurrected the worship of Gbaji, but also revived Godlearner philosophy. They have not only embraced these evil concepts, but made them an integral part of their god and society. What secret crimes has the Red Goddess perpetrated against the world that we are yet to discover? What is the meaning of her power to both be and not be: Goddess and mortal, weak and strong, female and male, mother and daughter, creator and destroyer?

Conclusions

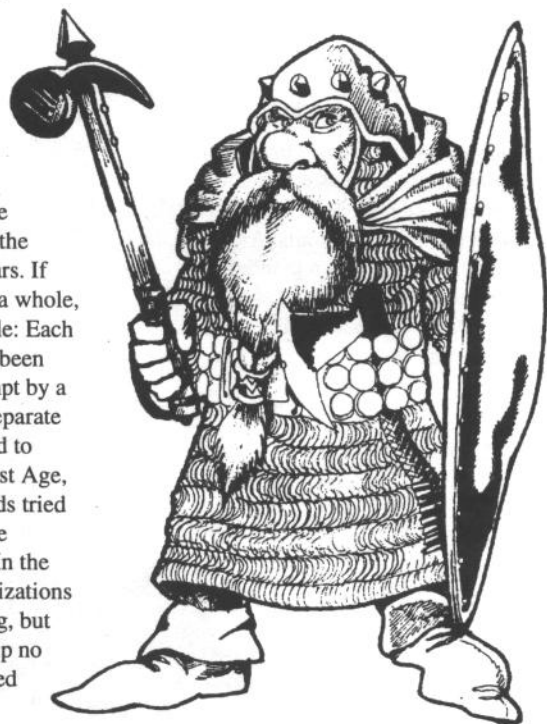
If my theory is correct, what conclusions can we make about Gloranthan history and the coming of the fabled Hero Wars. If the pattern is to be studied as a whole, only one conclusion is possible: Each age of Genertelan history has been marked by an organized attempt by a group of mortals to create a separate source of power not connected to established sources. In the First Age, those who worshipped the gods tried to create a better god and were punished for their insolence. In the Second Age the Western civilizations attempted to do a similar thing, but differently because we worship no god directly. Instead we created

a school of thought that promoted the rape of the natural world in order to create a new source of power. The world itself rose to punish these cosmic thieves. Now we see in the Third Age a repetition of this pattern, a melding a both previous evils into one: the Lunar Empire. This is one more attempt in man's self destructive quest to gain control of his surroundings without accepting the responsibility of that control. These attempts to rape, short cut, and steal power from the gods leads me to conclude that an issue unresolved by the compromise is demanding resolution. The Lunars embody the most recent attempt to redefine the contract between mortal and god, people and land, race and the world.

I fear the Lunar experiment. It tampers with many more aspects of Glorantha than either the Godlearners or Gbaji ever did. Its success seems unlimited, and resistance has proven futile. What will stop this empire? Will Arkat rise again to fight his resurrected foe? Will the world rise again to destroy the chaos loving goddess? My only comfort lies in the words of the Mostali fathers who assured me that the rise of the Red Moon is only a sign that the repair of the world machine is on schedule.

I dearly hope they were right.

News Clockwork





Holiday Glorantha presents

Windy Hill

A Great temple to Orlanth in Lankst

by Patrik Sandberg

Windy Hill is a magnificent Orlanth Great temple within the land of Lankst in north-western Ralios. Since before time Windy Hill has been a sacred ground for the Orlanthi in Lankst. It is here that Orlanth begot the ancestors of the local tribes, where he held his first Iron Council, and where he began his epic Lightbringers' Quest. His divine energies are still within the central hill, where the temple rises into the middle air. On the hill he presided over the meeting between the clan founders during which he sent his winds roaring through the uplands marking the territorial borders that each clan should abide within. The descendants of those ancient clan and tribal founders still claim land and territories marked by these ancient and mystical Wind Lines.

During the Dawn Ages people gathered around Windy Hill to worship and to defend themselves in an uncertain new world. At that time there were no buildings. The hill itself was fortified by earthen and wooden walls. Although the present day temple is a grandiose example of Orlanthi art, it is still the same Dawn Age earth walls that encircle the Hill.

The first disorderly centuries of the Dawning saw the Clan Wind Lords (the Chieftains and weapon-thanes) acting as the paramount leaders of the temple and the clans. The world that awaited survivors from the Great Darkness was hard and merciless. This made the mundane skills possessed by Wind Lords often more important than the spiritual teachings of Storm Voices.

An early challenge to the Orlanthi came from a new deity sponsored by the elves of Ballid. This bastardised deity, Yelmalio, was claiming many clans located near the outer fringes of Ballid. Therefore the clans of the Windy Hill temple went to war against the Yelmalion clans and their Aldryami allies. By re-enacting Orlanth's struggles against Solar

powers the Wind Lords proved their awareness of the mythical responsibilities they bore, and at the same time disposed of their Yelmalio adversaries. The victorious Orlanthi decided they must mark their victory with a material focus that would last through the centuries to come.

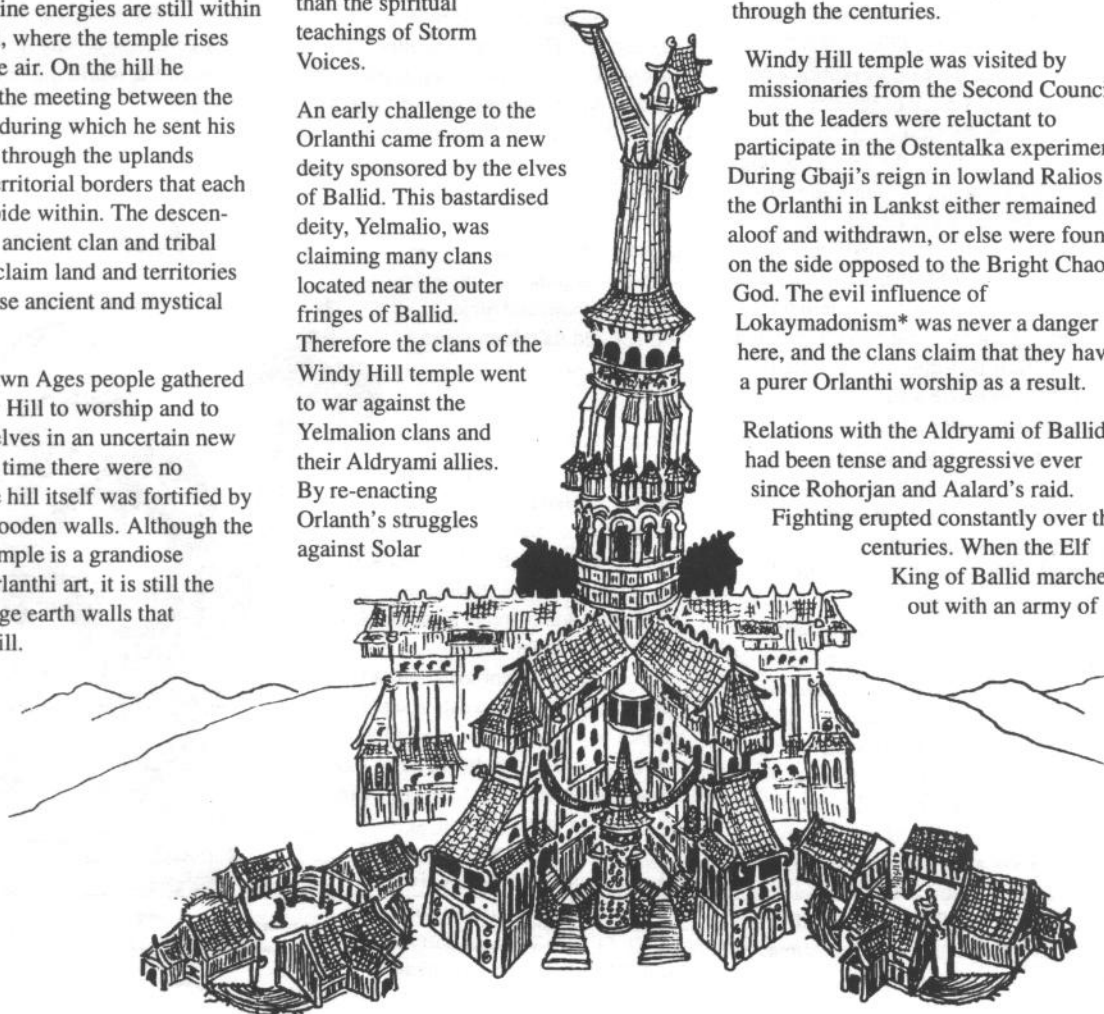
Two Wind Lords, Rohorjan Two-Tongue-Tale and Aalard the Dark, led a heroic raid deep into the great elf woods of Ballid. With a staunch band of followers, and carrying magical adamantine saws, they entered a sacred grove of gigantic Hard Wood trees. These trees were so strong that only adamantine, chaos ooze, or 333 days of burning could damage them. With the magic saws the trees were felled and then more than a hundred sylphs carried the party and their booty back to Windy Hill.

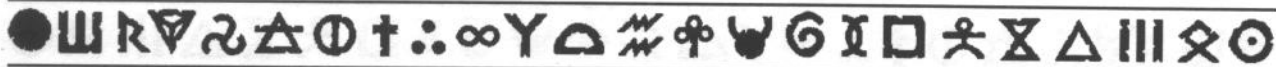
The Hard Wood trunks became the foundation of the temple the Wind Lords began to erect on Windy Hill. The magical hardness of the Aldryami trees made a perfect base to the building that has since been built, level by level, through the centuries.

Windy Hill temple was visited by missionaries from the Second Council but the leaders were reluctant to participate in the Ostentalka experiment. During Gbaji's reign in lowland Ralios the Orlanthi in Lankst either remained aloof and withdrawn, or else were found on the side opposed to the Bright Chaos God. The evil influence of Lokaymadonism* was never a danger here, and the clans claim that they have a purer Orlanthi worship as a result.

Relations with the Aldryami of Ballid had been tense and aggressive ever since Rohorjan and Aalard's raid.

Fighting erupted constantly over the centuries. When the Elf King of Ballid marched out with an army of





Elves to meet Arkat and fight against Gbaji, the differences were forgotten and the Orlanthe joined with the Elves (albeit on the opposite wing of Arkat's army). After the Gbaji-wars a truce was made a truce between Windy Hill and Ballid. Ever since, relations between the two have been less violent, with each side ignoring the other as much as possible. But it should be noted that opinions of the Orlanthe of Windy Hill concerning the Aldryami are more prejudiced than average among Orlanthe. The Aldryami return this contempt. Intermittent raiding continues between the two but rarely leads to an outright conflict. In fact the terms of the truce allow for this with agreements for exchanging prisoners and payment of wergeld in the case of unlawful killings.

In the Third Age Windy Hill has grown in power, reaching great temple status just over 300 years ago. It has also become the traditional meeting place for the Confederation of Jofrain, which is formed whenever unity between the clans is felt necessary.

Recently (1617), the temple has had some difficulties with Kocholong, the King of Lankst, who doesn't want the attitudes of the temple to disturb his relations with the elves of Ballid, whom the King pays tribute to. But at the same

time Ulrar Plantburner, an influential Storm Voice, has gathered a large following of initiates at the temple, and he claims that the road to glory for Orlanthe lies within the confines of Ballid. In his visions he has sensed a previously unknown Wind Line, apparently the beginning of a Hero Quest path straight into the Woods of Ballid. The High Wind Voice Tormadan Skinflower is hard pressed to mediate between the aggressive Ulrar and the mighty King Kocholong. Opinions are mixed among the Orlanthe between those who favour keeping the truce and those who feel its usefulness has ended.

Temple Description

(see accompanying map and picture)

The temple is situated on Windy Hill, the central hill in a region of rolling hills located roughly in the centre of Lankst. Ancient earth walls encircle the whole hill, with four openings protected by rune-carved and magical wooden gates at each of the compass points. From the gates many paths circle their way up to the summit of the hill. Magical defenses are built into both earth wall and the wooden stockade that surmounts it. The top of the hill is rather flat, and on holy days most of the congregation

gathers outside to worship. Great winds are raged, the Storm Voices chant, and the horizons in all directions have a tendency to become hazy as though Windy Hill was about to slide into the God Plane and leave the mundane plane altogether.

1. King's Tower

The central great tower is dedicated to Orlanthe in his position as King of the Universe. It rises many stories high, each story being around 10 meters high. A number of windows dot the walls, so that there is a constant breeze within the tower. The ground floor holds the massive trunks of Hard Wood that Rohorjan and Aalard used to found the temple. They support the weight of the whole King's Tower.

Among the many wooden and stone statues of Orlanthe, there are also found two mysterious standing stones. Their surfaces have been chiselled with signs and patterns, eyes and truth runes. They are called Lodakan's Stones. Lodakan was a wild sage who worked at the temple in the First Age. Obsessed with Law he wanted to describe and depict Orlanthe's Wind Lines once and for all. The results of his researches he inscribed onto these already ancient stones. Unfortunately, the key to reading Lodakan's rather obscure messages and signs has since been lost, so the two stones are now of no help in assisting the settling of disputes over Wind Lines and land rights. Many have tried to interpret the messages over the years, but none have succeeded.

In past it is said that the temple owned a scroll which held the key to understanding Lodakan's Stones, but officially the scroll has been missing for over 20 years now. (Rumours that the High Storm Voice has the scroll, and has been commanded by Orlanthe himself never to reveal it are unconfirmed.)

2. Hall of Honour

Each of the halls (2-7) are named after one of Orlanthe's favoured traits, and before entering a worshipper must boast of a recent occasion when they evidenced that trait. The impious are refused entry. All of the halls share the same general pattern: The ground floor is a long hall-way leading to the King's Tower and the walls are hung with tapestries depicting famous scenes of Orlanthe or Orlanthe Heroes exhibiting the relevant trait.

On the second floor there are quarters for Storm Voices, acolytes and Wind Lords. However if the residents do not behave in the proper way (i.e. if they don't have 15-20 in the relevant personality trait) ugly Enforcers make it impossible for them to stay there permanently. The result is that some halls are often crowded, but others can be empty for short or long periods.

On the third floor there are rooms in which residents can pray or make sacrifices to Orlanthe. Many come here to sit in silent contemplation, listen to the whispering of the wind, or the roaring of the storm. Poetry, with the various traits as their subject, is read or composed in these parts of the temple. The famous



Tormaden Skinflower



poet Bedvadar of Miktorn created his praised and epic lay "The Repentance of Orlanth" in the Hall of Wisdom, for instance.

For Hall of Piety (3), Hall of Courage (4), Hall of Wisdom (5), Hall of Generosity (6), and Hall of Justice (7), see above.

8) Youth tower.

In this tower are paraphernalia and pictures describing the events of Orlanth's youth, including the contests against Yelm and his early conflicts. This is a very popular spot with young and newly-initiated Orlanthi's on their first trip to Windy Hill. Here they gather and boast of their deeds, mostly of deeds to come.

9. Storm Tower

Here the worshippers can learn of Orlanth's actions in the tumultuous mythic Age when Orlanth fought to conquer the world. Opponents included other Air Gods, Light Gods, Elf Gods, Darkness Deities and Draconic powers. When traditional foes are to be fought, or other events about to take place, that can be traced to Orlanth's Storm Age, cultists visit this tower to gain inspiration, to make offerings, or to hold rituals.

10. Quest Tower

Here is represented the Lightbringers' Quest. The tale told is the Windy Hill version. The tower holds trophies or relics supposedly given as gifts to Hero-Questers of the cult from Orlanth. None is very important or potent except as symbols of power.

Initiates visiting the tower are often filled with awe. There are many mysterious happenings in this place. Some parts are closed off and only Rune Levels preparing for great Quests may visit them to learn special secrets and myths.

11. Thunderous House

This is a shrine to Orlanth Thunderous. Many worshippers come here praying for rain to their fields and clement weather. Offerings from cultists are common. Weather spirits and sylphs sometimes appear in this house. Also, it is here that prayers are made to learn or regain magics to Increase Wind, Decrease Wind, Cloudcall, Cloudclear, Thunderbolt and Wind Warp.

12. Adventurous House

(Vulgarily called the House of Riff-raff by some.) This place has a military feel to it, it is where the warrior thanes and champions of the clans meet to swap war stories and boasts, and to fight. In a small room at the back wandering adventurers of all sorts are given hospitality. Humakti or Storm Bulls are often more numerous in this house than pure Orlanthi. Shrines to Orlanth Adventurous and Mastakos provide the spells of Wind Words, Fly, Shield, Teleportation and Guided Teleportation.

13. Rex House

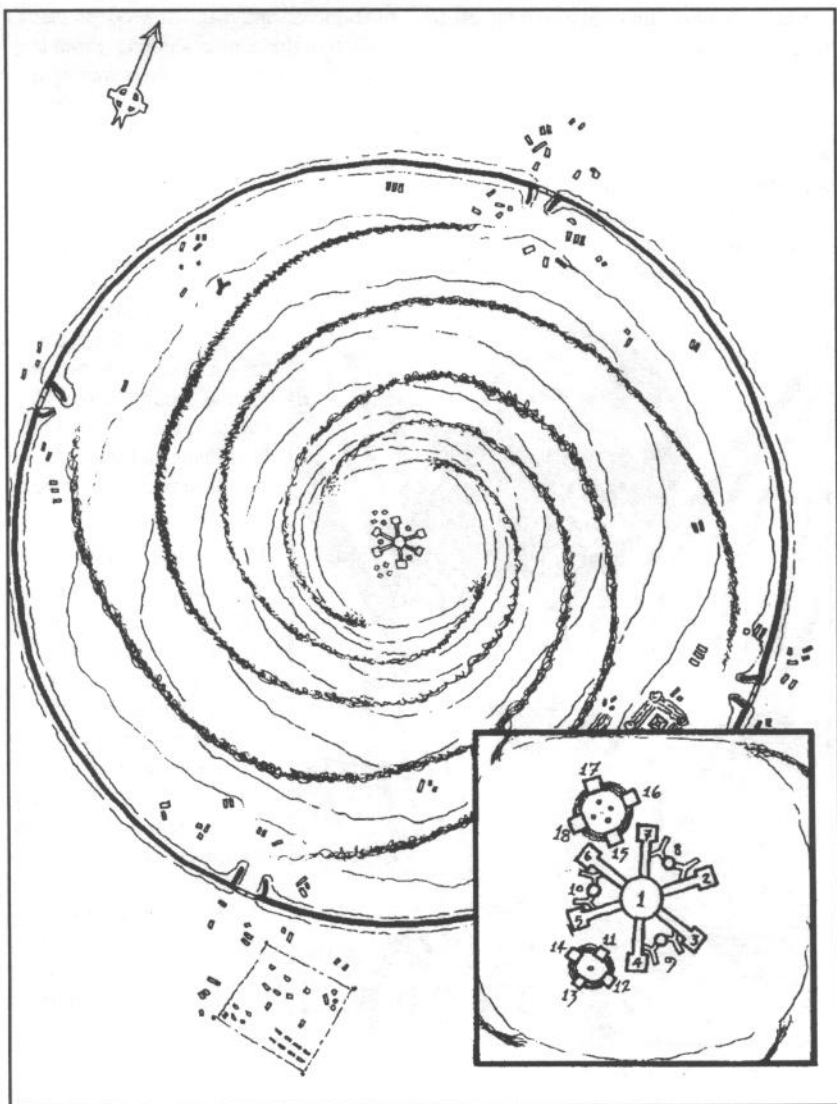
Shrine to Orlanth Rex. It is here that chieftains and kings from Lankst, belonging to the Rex subcult, gather and meet, often hoping for divine guidance in their decisions as leaders, so that they will rule justly and virtuously. Rune Magic available include Command

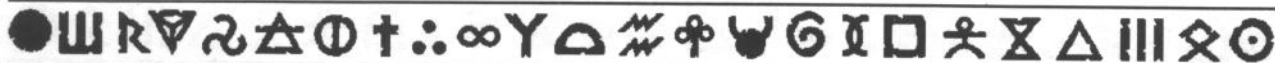
Worshippers, Command Priests, Detect Honour, Bless Woad and Bless Thunderstone.

14. Lightbringer House

This is a mysterious house where only Rune Levels or the mighty and the brave dare tread. In the past cosmic forces have been known to whisk unsuitable people away into oblivion. The house embodies the mystical and heroquesting aspects of Orlanth. Note that the doorway points to the west - the route of the Lightbringers' path to the land of Dusk.

In this house the most secret rites and knowledge are taught to those deemed worthy. The unique Windy Hills Rune Spells for Hero-Questing can only be learnt by studying with the Storm Voices here. Garundyer, the hero of Seven Storms, has visited Lightbringer House several times and talked to Tormadan Skinflower for days.





15. House of The Sandals of Darkness

This building houses a shrine to one of the Magical Weapons subcults. A Wind Lord presides over each shrine and the heroquest that must be faced for candidates to gain the use of the respective Rune spells.

16. House of the Lightning Spear, 17. House of the Scarf of Mist, and 18. House of the Sword.

Surroundings: (not shown on picture)

At the foot of the hill, both inside and outside the earth wall, there are always a more or less permanent "city" of tents to house all the worshippers. Many leaders or other long-term visitors have built their own buildings to dwell in. Goldentongue merchants always have wares to sell, including huge amounts of alcoholic beverages.

Inside the earth wall, in buildings of their own, Orlanth's associate cults (Ernalda and the Lightbringers) have shrines.

Some notable personages

High Storm Voice Tormadan Skinflower. Windy Hill is fortunate to have such a powerful leader. In his mid-fifties he is still a mighty brute who as was once a Wind Lord. He is a thoughtful and clever leader, though his critics would call him cold and calculating. Lately he has had dealings with Garundyer and is helping the HeroQuester gather an Iron Council.

Wind Voice Sortegast the Crooked. Twenty years ago this now elderly priest tried to re-enact Rohorjan and Aalard's raid against Ballid. Unfortunately, he was cursed by an Aldrya shaman. Now, on every holy day of Aldrya, Sortegast's lungs and windpipe burst with foliage and flower, which flows out of his mouth. Of course he would have died long ago if it wasn't for the local Healers who have managed to find herbs to counter the attacks. Needless to say, every Aldrya day is still a painful experience to Sortegast.

Storm Voice Ulrar Plantburner. Young and ambitious. Pupil to Sortegast, he has

managed to gather a rather large contingent among the initiates during the last years. As noted above he is antagonistic toward the Ballid elves and he is currently awaiting signs from Orlanth to launch hostile activities against them in contravention of the truce.

Wind Lord Averon Thunderfoot. Five years ago, this competent Wind Lord returned from a lengthy journey in the far-away Lunar Empire. He has learned to hate the Chaos-loving Empire. Averon has heard that priests prophesying about a holy war to begin in legendary Dragon Pass, and he has been stricken with visions himself. He is very keen on forming an army of tribesmen and undertake the heroic trek across the continent to Dragon Pass.

Storm Voice Joteryer Longleap. A very, very old man, Joteryer is only seen on cult days. Otherwise he has retired to his chamber where he surrounds himself with 25 shadow cats, and plays with small sylphs. Sometimes his old but pure voice can be heard singing in Stormspeech. Unbeknown to all, it is Joteryer who is in possession of the scroll supposed to help reading Lodakan's Stones.

Wind Lines

These are mystical, non-material, half-spiritual winds that blow in a crisscross pattern across Lankst, marking the borders between clan territories. The problem is, that due to the ever changing nature of Air, the Wind Lines have a habit of continually moving around. It is also a very hard task finding and then following a Wind Line.

Some people, specially gifted, get a chance - often when least expected and to their own surprise - to find a Wind Line. When they "feel" that they stand in a Wind Line they can try to follow it across the terrain, by means magical and mystical, or through ordinary skills. Such guidance has been given in the past and it will be given again. Thus, it is possible to intentionally seek and find a Wind Line through great diligence.

Once in a while, some tribal would-be-hero tries the mystic

journey along some forgotten Wind Line, guided by their Law Speakers, Storm Voices or Breath Shaman. Through this policy the Wind Lines once breathed by Orlanth have become a means to achieve political goals by shrewd chieftains and kings. Every so often a clan will claim alteration of their territorial borders when a band of Orlanthi have found and travelled a new Wind Line. The disputes arising from these claims are judged at the Windy Hill Temple where the truth behind the stories is tested.

Sources: Glorantha, Genertela; Genertela Book, Wyrms Footnotes, Issue 13, pp 4-10, Heroes, Vol 1, No 4, pp 17-20, 29, 30

Note: * Lokamayadonism is a Chaotic action when a chosen leader goes too far in taking personal power for himself. Lokamayadon was the representative of the Storm tribes at the Second Council. He was present when the council created Osentalka, The Perfect One, or Gbaji as he was known to many. He ruthlessly crushed all those Storm tribes that tried to oppose him, and eventually usurped part of the powers of Orlanth and set himself up in Orlanth's place. Those who resisted found that their own rituals had been invaded and sabotaged. Lokamayadon was finally defeated when Harmast Barefoot returned with Arkat the Liberator and his Western army.



Ulrar Plantburner

QUEEN OGZAG'S HALL

By Jon Quaife

*We plough our fields to grow our grain.
We grow our grain to bake our bread.
But the secret, that lies far below,
In the place where lost things go.*



INTRODUCTION

Locals always know where to find Murrine's orphanage—it's the only place anybody can find any decent healing in the vicinity. Murrine is a holy woman who follows Teelo Norri. Rumour has that she has good connections, and the kids who stay in her orphanage always seem to be the healthiest looking kids around. But locals will also be the first to tell you that Murrine isn't the sort to exorcise infections with charms of the goat-goddess or by one of Chalana's healing trances. In fact, Murrine doesn't seem to know any flash 'magic' at all, except for her Healing Bread, miraculous bread that's guaranteed to see off anything from a wart or verruca to a duelling wound. Once, Glabdrops the gametal-monger asked her where she learned her secret, to which she replied, "Queen Ogzag's Hall." Since then, everyone's been keen to find out exactly where "Queen Ogzag's Hall" is, but since nobody's had any success, the local Storm Voice is saying that it must be a very magical place indeed. Murrine's Healing Bread is not for sale, but she gives it away if she has any to spare.

In fact, Queen Ogzag's Hall is a magical place that could be hidden away in any city. This scenario assumes that the player characters live in a tribal community in some way associated with a nearby town. Queen Ogzag's Hall's location is so secret that perhaps only Ogzag and Murrine know where it is. In this scenario, the player characters (PC's) are likely to find out and thereby satisfy the curiosity of just about everyone in the community.

Murrine's orphanage is not all that it seems. Murrine's connections go as high up as the Red Emperor himself, although nobody seems to know quite what the connection is. Nonetheless, the street-orphanage that Murrine finds, feeds and educates seem to go far in the Empire; a good many serve the Emperor himself as courtiers, military officers, scribes or concubines. There seems to be no obvious reason for this although some speculate that Murrine must know something that the Red Emperor would rather she didn't. In this case, either her good sense or his benevolent mercy (depending on your point of view) stays his hand from unleashing the panoply of demons and assassins at his disposal.

Nonetheless, Murrine's orphanage does seem to be under threat from other quarters and, despite Murrine's protests, the Emperor seems powerless to intervene. This is no doubt because a good deal of his

Murrine, Holy Woman

Murrine follows Teelo Norri and Chalana Arroy, although she often claims that these goddesses are the same. Most of Murrine's time, energy and money is invested in other people; she leads a simple life with little privacy and no luxury.

STR	7	Move	3
CON	13	Fatigue	20
SIZ	14	Hit Points	14
INT	14	Magic Pts	11
POW	11	DEX SR	2
DEX	16	Enc	8
APP	7		

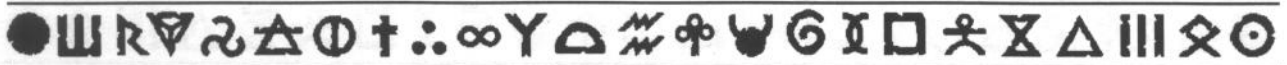
Location	Melee	Missile	AP/HP
Left Leg	01-04	01-03	0/5
Right Leg	05-08	04-06	0/5
Abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/5
Chest	12	11-15	0/6
Left Arm	13-15	16-17	0/4
Right Arm	16-18	18-19	0/4
Head	19-20	20	0/5

Magical Lore: (Spirit Magic, 47%) Heal 3, Song of Sleep, Soothe Cut, Vigour 2. (One Use Divine Magic, 98%) Cure [Disease] x2.

Skills: Astronomy 40%, Imperial Intrigue 70%, Human Lore 55%, Plant Lore 60%, Spot Untruth 75%, Treat/Identify Disease 85%, Treat/Identify Poison 40%, Baking 55%.

Languages: Murrine is fluent in Pelorian and the locally spoken Theyalan dialect. She is literate in the use of Pelorian script.

Notes: Murrine wears a simple robe and sandals. She wears an image of Teelo Norri on a cord around her neck and carries a tattoo on her left wrist which once marked her out as a slave of the Emperor. 'Song of Sleep' is a range touch, instant spell which takes five minutes to cast and requires a voluntary recipient to make a CONx2 roll or fall asleep. 'Soothe Cut' reduces the irritation of bumps and bruises. 'Song of Sleep' is a 1 MP spell; 'Soothe Cut' has a MP cost of zero.



aging them to follow the village nosy-parker, or by having a couple of Persephone's arrogant troopers enter the tavern to ask questions while Persephone and her troopers wait outside: "Oi, jerk! Where's the holy woman and that brat Rufus? Not here you say? All right girls, search the place ... Not here? OK, we'll burn her and her rat-hole together." If both these routines fail, have the PCs' chief order them to go to town after the nosy-parker who is (of course) a witness required for the moot that was to be held or transaction to be undertaken.

Murrine's Orphanage

From the outside, Murrine's house looks like a typical one-storey middle-class townhouse. A sheltered veranda runs along the front of the house, and a large double oak door has "Home For Unwanted Children; Provincial Branch" painted on it in Pelorian char-

acters and written in local tongue. Such an austere exterior, however, belies the interior. The house is full of children, many of whom converge upon all visitors, especially unfamiliar ones. They range in age from suckling babes to twelve years old.

Room 1 - Entrance Hall

This room has whitewashed walls and a tiled floor. It is clean and featureless except for a long bench which lies along the east wall. Sick children are sometimes sent to sleep in isolation on this bench.

Room 2 - Murrine's Office

This room contains a fine desk with a stylised bronze head facing outward at each corner, a seat and three bedrolls (one for Murrine, two for troublesome children). The door to the office is locked at all times, as are all the desk drawers and the cabinet.

Room 3 - Kitchen

This typical kitchen contains a stove, pots and pans, a table, four chairs, and other predictable kitchen utensils.

Room 4 - Dormitory

This is the dormitory for the older children (aged four and up). In total the room contains twenty beds and two chairs. If children are sleeping here a warden will be in attendance at all times. What scant possessions the children own are stored beneath their beds.

Room 5 - Classroom

This room contains thirty desks, some tables, and a large blackboard on the east wall. During the night, children who cannot fit in the dormitory sleep here.

Room 6 - Children's Room

This room contains eighteen cots; it is the nursery for children aged up to four years. Some simple toys are scattered about the floor, and a chair and desk are placed in a corner for the warden who is always on duty here.

Room 7 - The Back Yard

Washing and toilet facilities are to be found here.

Typical Hell Sister Trooper

STR	11	Move	3
CON	22	Fatigue	33
SIZ	11	Hit Points	17
INT	13	Magic Pts	11
POW	11	DEX SR	2
DEX	18	Enc	15
APP	9		

Location	Melee	Missile	AP/HP
Left Leg	01-04	01-03	4/6
Right Leg	05-08	04-06	4/6
Abdomen	09-11	07-10	4/6
Chest	12	11-15	6/7
Left Arm	13-15	16-17	4/4
Right Arm	16-18	18-19	4/4
Head	19-20	20	4/6

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Dmg	Pts
Light Mace	6	85	35	1D8+5	6
(Mace w/charge*)	6	55	—	1D8+5	—
Short Spear	6	70	20	1D8+1	10
(Couched*)	—	65	—	1D8+1	—
Knife	5	40	30	1D3+1	4
Tgt. Shield	5	25	65	1D6	12

*—*Couched Lance and 'mace with charge' are special attacks: both can only be done by charging. A couched spear attack must always hit first to be effective, and can only be prevented doing so by somebody who wields an impaling weapon of lesser SR value than the spear. In a 'mace with charge' attack, the mace always hits second, and the rider must successfully parry her foe beforehand. If a couched or mace attack of these types is successful, the rider adds the damage bonus of her horse to her damage roll. 'Mace with charge' attack is a secret technique known only to the Hell Sisters regiment.*

Magic Lore: (Spirit Magic, 40%) Demoralise (2), Heal 3, Protection 3, Strength 5 (increases STR to 26, Fatigue to 48, and damage bonus to 1d6)

Skills: Ride 80%, Human Lore 20%, Listen 40%, Scan 55%, Search 55%, Track 50%.

Languages: Pelorian 75% (good), Local Language 30% (faltering).

Notes: These troopers have had STR and DEX enhancements by enchantment and their maces have been blessed for +5 damage (which count as 5 point spells and must be renewed every sixth full-moon). Each trooper wears bezaunted armour and a curvy lamellar breastplate.

Typical Cavalry Horse

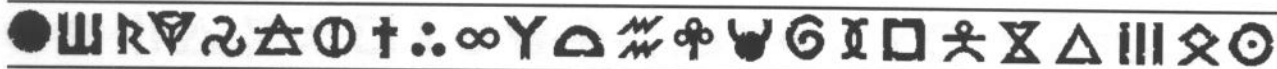
These horses are trained to stay calm in battle.

STR	32	Move	10
CON	11	Fatigue	43
SIZ	32	Hit Points	22
INT	4	Magic Pts	11
POW	11	DEX SR	3
DEX	13	Enc	11

Location	Melee	Missile	AP/HP
RH Leg	01-02	01-02	2/6
LH Leg	03-04	03-04	2/6
Hind Q	05-07	05-09	3/9
Fore Q	08-10	10-14	3/9
RF Leg	11-13	15-16	2/6
LF Leg	14-16	17-18	2/6
Head	17-20	19-20	3/7

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Dmg
Kick	6	32	—	1D6+3D6
Bite	6	50	—	1D8+3D3

Notes: These horses wear soft leather barding.



The Slanging Match with Persephone

When the characters arrive a crowd is gathering outside the orphanage. Persephone's troopers wait outside, sitting atop their horses, as well as a number of NPC's from an enemy clan of the PC's (if Persephone has managed to ally them); Persephone's horse is riderless—she is either arguing with the town garrison's captain at the gate or has gone to bring some burning staves from somebody's hearthfire. If the PC's are looking for the village nosy-parker, they will see no sign of him in the crowd; however, they do see Rufus beckoning to them from one of the orphanage windows—Rufus cannot leave the orphanage for fear of being grabbed by one of Persephone's lackeys.

If the PC's enter the orphanage the children seem more excited than frightened. Murrine will ask the characters if they will stay in the orphanage, hoping that they will help her get the children to safety if the worst happens and Persephone sets fire to the place. Murrine shows no interest in any defence plans that the PC's choose to draw up; on the contrary, she insists that the door into the Entrance Hall (Room 1) is not locked or otherwise obstructed, and states that no sword is to be drawn unless the children are in any direct danger. Rufus is excited along with all the other children; he and a couple of boys have readied kitchen knives and wooden scimitars with which they intend to set about Persephone's soldiers.

When Persephone arrives she hands out burning torches and barks some orders to organise her troops (three of whom are stationed at the front entrance, and three at the rear — extra clansmen supplement these and also enable Persephone to take two of her Hell Sisters troopers into the orphanage with her). Seeing this, this child Murrine (with Rufus at her side) will go into the entrance hall to speak with her 'guest.' At least a couple of the PC's should follow Murrine; this is after all where the action is.

This should be your players' opportunity to direct all their verbal venom at Persephone who will, of course, rise to the occasion. If PC's try and beguile her with sophisticated or subtle talk, she'll just be abusive: "Your mother was a whore, just like all your women in their pig-huts; your father was full of hot air, he boasted of brave deeds but in the heat of battle he died a coward's death," that sort of thing—all the better if Persephone can insult friends or relatives of the PC's with some degree of remotely truthful authority. Murrine has no intention of handing over the child Rufus, although this wrangling between Persephone and the PC's will no doubt distract everybody from this pressing issue for some time.

A Fight Fought to the Bitter End?

If it comes to a fight, Murrine will not participate in any way. It should be clear to your PC's that getting involved in a fight against Lunar soldiers will ultimately prove to be bad for them.

If Persephone is slain, the scenario ends. This is not what Murrine wanted, but she will grudgingly acknowledge the misguided assistance of the PC's and reward them appropriately. Whether the fight is lost or won, if any Lunars are killed the characters must suffer the consequences of criminal status. In this case they had best leave the area, and even so there is no guarantee that reprisals will not be exacted upon friends and family. If the PC's lose the battle Murrine will be taken prisoner and executed the next day (unless Persephone is dead, in which case she will simply be left to rot in a prison, perhaps eventually to be slaughtered in an arena spectacle somewhere) and the children will be moved away. The characters will never see Rufus again and the orphanage burned to the ground.

The Avatar

However, perhaps as swords are drawn, for a brief moment everybody hesitates. All outside noise ceases; the only sounds that can be heard are those made by the people in the entrance hall, and these seem incredibly loud; otherwise, everything is silent. Time seems to stand still; the quality of light in the room seems to change to a dim but soothing glow. A dove flies into the room and lands upon Murrine's head, and she begins to sing.

"Elelelu! Elelu! Three doves to the three realms: So say the gods of Above, Below and of the Realms of Men: 'We have struck dumb the boy Rufus. He who may restore his speech shall be his keeper.'"

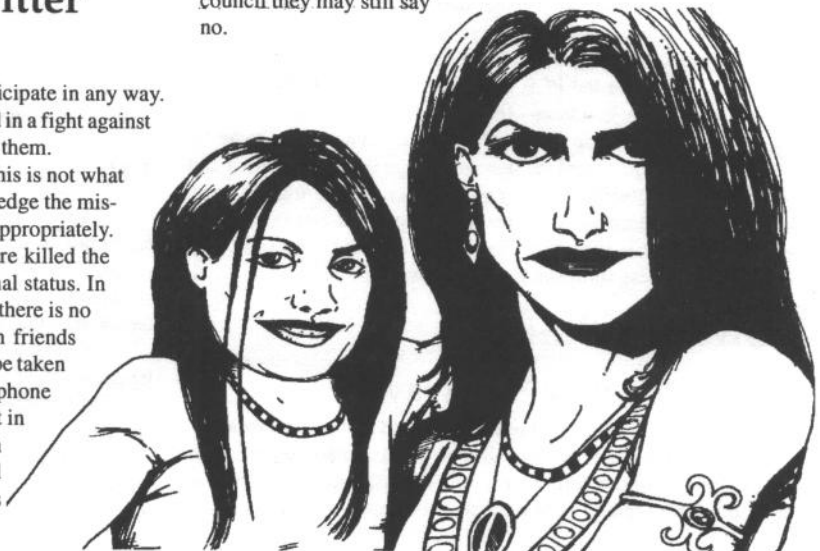
Once these words have been spoken, things return to normal. A silence descends upon those present in the entrance hall. Murrine looks pale and sits down. Rufus cries and buries his head in Murrine's skirts; as the avatar has proclaimed, his speech is lost.

Persephone demands custody of Rufus; Murrine refuses. Persephone reiterates her legal right to take him away, as determined by the Provincial court. Murrine states that she knows how to cure the boy. Persephone condemns her healing abilities and swears that he will be seen by the finest doctors of Peloria. Murrine refuses to hand over the child, which provokes another threat from Persephone to burn down the orphanage. Seizing the child she tells Murrine that he will remain in the provincial capital until her doctors have healed him, then the business will be settled with the courts and with the gods. Murrine does not resist.

The Next Step

Murrine must now rely on the help of the PC's. She suspects that the cure that will heal Rufus lies on a magical path to the Hall of Queen Ogzag, a troll Queen whose underworld treasures include a crust of the first bread ever baked by Ernalda. Murrine has already trodden this path and to do so again would risk greater danger. In her efforts to persuade the PC's or their clan to assist her she will speak of the benefits of the quest; while she does not know the consequences of failure, she will confess that she suspects Rufus to be a son of the Red Emperor.

If the PC's are not certain regarding whether or not they wish to assist Murrine, have them arrange a decision making process which will provide some entertainment and roleplay. If the characters are Orlanthi, perhaps this should be discussed in their clan council, apportioning each PC the role of one of the thirteen members. In this way you can introduce some NPC influence but still leave the PC's feeling that haven't been railroaded into the scenario; even with a council they may still say no.





Ogzag is happy to trade a crumb of Ernalda's bread with the PC's. Her price is high, but all she asks for are things that are no use to the PC's in their lives. Thus, she might ask for types or proportions of a character's forgotten thoughts, cut hair, spent money, dead cattle, or lost possessions. When the PC's have struck a deal one of Ogzag's attendants will scuttle off and hand a PC a fist-sized lump of dry bread. With this, the deal is concluded.

Cheating On Ogzag

The heap is Ogzag's pile of underworld treasure; her share of lost and forgotten things in the world. As the PC's scramble up the heap, have each one make a Scan roll. Success means that the character spots something that he or his family had lost in the past. This should be something quite valuable or precious; an heirloom, a magic item, a lover's flower. If a PC picks up such an item it will provoke no reaction from any of the trolls in the hall who in any case spend their time grubbing around for tasty scraps to eat. Offering to purchase the item from Ogzag will not merit any response; her answer would be 'no,' but to say so would be beneath her dignity. If a character embarrasses Ogzag by persistently asking, her attendants will make known her displeasure, or perhaps even throw the offending individual out of the hall. There is no overt reaction to theft in Ogzag's hall: PC parties who do steal, however, will always leave by a left-hand exit.

Leaving Ogzag's Hall

Ogzag's hall has four exits, two 'right hand' exits, and two 'left hand' ones. The left hand exits lead to places at the extremes of the world, while the right hand ones lead to places in the mundane realm. The two left hand exits lead to the One-way Stairway and the underworld expanse called Frigidplain (which eventually ends at the place called 'Hellcrack,' south of Pent), and to the Bloggom Marshes on the western edge of the known world. The two right-hand exits lead to the Devil's Playground in Pavis, and (by water) to the Styx grotto Esrolia. If a PC tries to leave the hall stealing a familiar item, the entire PC group will be directed to a left-hand exit. Generally speaking, questors enter and leave at opposite ends of the hall; thus the PC's will head for the Styx grotto or the Bloggom Marshes.

The left-hand exit the PC's are most likely to take if any of them have stolen from Ogzag's treasure horde presents the characters with a steep slope of slimy rock, red mud and trickling brooks. Time is hard to follow here, and the climb to the top may take hours or years; each step is an activity for its own sake and somehow bears no temporal relation to any other. At the top of this climb, the characters arrive on a rocky ledge looking eastwards across the Purple Marshes of Bloggom.

The journey to the surface world through the right-hand exit is easier. This might constitute a dream-like subterranean boat ride, or a hike in which Issaries or a dead NPC guides the PC's a good deal of the way.

THE BLOGGOM MARCHES

If your PC's wind up in the Purple Marshes of Bloggom it is not the end of the world for them (even though that's where they are).

The vegetation here emerges from a seemingly never-ending expanse of very wet mud, and is purple in colour. The sky here is continually red; the sun runs directly from east to west, but is small and distant at sunrise and huge and close at sunset. Just as the sun



dips over the horizon, a clanging sound can be heard, like huge metal gates closing. Once the sun has set, the marshes remain illuminated by an eerie purple glow whose source is the vegetation here.

For the edge of the world, the Bloggom Marshes are a comparatively safe place. A pathway marks a west-east route through the marshes, although often the characters will follow forks which lead to dead ends, or to traps set by marsh elves. Just how your characters will escape from here is up to you. The author's suggestion is to have them run into a wolf-pirate crew hauling their ship eastwards. Half starving, they will be glad to recruit the PC's. The scenario pack "Vikings!" offers material which would be entertaining to employ in this context. The book "Voyage of the Dawn Treader," by C.S. Lewis, is recommended for all potential world's-edge referees.

CONCLUSION

Eventually the PC's will hopefully return with their piece of Ernalda's bread. If this is not many years later Rufus will still be in the provincial capital and Murrine will heal him; soon after she closes the orphanage and heads north back into the Heartlands, taking the boy with her. Although Murrine claimed to have been acting in the best interests of the characters and their families, only the future can reveal the truth in this. Whatever his fate, Rufus will remember the PC's.

Above all, however, things do change in the locality when the PC's return. Ernalda's bread turns out to be quite a curiosity, and many of the village women try a morsel before Murrine takes the remainder away to the provincial capital. There is much talk of bread recipes in the local inn and it might be said that the locals begin to look a good deal healthier.

Ernalda's Bread

Both Ogzag and Murrine would claim that the lump of bread retrieved by the PC's in the underworld was a crumb of Ernalda's original loaf. Whether this is true or not, the morsel has some amazing curative properties. One crumb is enough to give the consumer a

+5 CON bonus next time he or she makes a CON roll against disease, for the purposes of healing, or during childbirth. A whole mouthful is enough to cure any wound or bodily affliction or prevent aging for a year. Anyone simply tasting the bread with any sort of aptitude for cooking (ie a skill above base chance) will never look at bread in the same light again, and will no doubt gain a reputation for baking the most delicious and nourishing bread in the district. As for any who retrieved the bread from Ogzag's hall, should he ever turn a hand to baking or brewing, will soon have the locals talking of the miraculous properties of his bread or beer. And if any were to ask them where they ever discovered such a secret, they perhaps might say, "I found it in Queen Ogzag's Hall!"

Rumour Indicators

- T - The rumour is true
- F - The rumour is false
- M - The rumour is so general as to be meaningless.
- R - The rumour may or may not be true at the referee's option.
- B - The rumour is generally true but that it also has a substantial false component.
- A- The rumour is too awful to even think about.

Rumours



Rumours

In Dorastor Porcharngoists play marbles using microgorp.

T

The Honda Fireblade is the hottest 900cc UltraSports motorbike around. Apparently, it goes like a laser beam down the road. It's also named after the *RuneQuest* Spirit Magic spell.

T

We all know the Lunars use crucifixion. Some say that being nailed to a Death Rune means that the person crucified can't be resurrected, others that days on the cross count as the days dead as far as Resurrection spells are concerned.

B

If you stare closely at an animal in the Stonewood for several hours you will be able to see it move a little.

T

There is a certain tribe of trolls near Shadows Dance who possess the secret of weaving material from spiders' silk (ordinary spiders, not giant ones). This material is so strong and finely woven that arrows cannot penetrate it.

B

Volunteers at RQ Con 2 will be dressed as ducks, bounty to be determined at a later date.

B/A

The most horrible creature in the Praxian Wastelands is in fact the Tunnelled Hills itself!

B

Minaryth Purple has developed a split personality. Sometimes he thinks he's Minaryth Blue, other times he thinks he's Minaryth Red.

R

Before each work period, a dwarf foreman leads his workers in group callisthenics. He motivates them by leading the chant: "All parts of the World Machine need proper maintenance."

T

The French company Oriflam has almost completed the new edition of *Nomad Gods*.

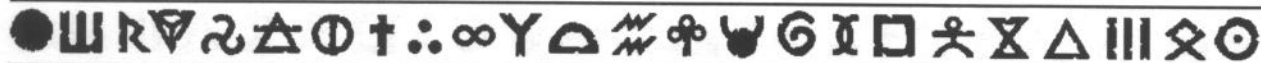
T

THINGS THAT LOVE NIGHT

by Alan La Vergne



Part 1



“It should be right up your alley,” said Asmodea. The alley that Zero liked best was the one that led to the shop of Untru the baker. On one side, neatly arrayed on clay platters coated with paraffin, were the confections, sugar-dusted or syrup-drenched or fruit-infiltrated, with multiple layers of dough baked until they bubbled and browned. On the other side, bread-wrapped meats, chopped mutton and diced beef in savory sauces of rosemary and garlic and butter. Zero knew Untru well. He had taught Untru’s daughters the letters of script, and showed her how they combined to form simple words like cheese and cake. In a typical assessment of the value of literacy, Untru had given Zero a five-copper discount on a fifty-copper pastry. “Teach her something useful,” said Untru, “like telling the difference between real gold and troll’s gold, or how to spot a muffin snatcher. Numbers, I’ll grant you, they’re handy, but letters!” Untru wagged his head in disbelief.

“Not that alley,” said Asmodea, recognizing the direction of Zero’s mind.

He was not pleased at having his mind read. “In that case, you better give me a map.”

She tapped the rough paper on the table in front of her. Even though she was more than ten years younger than Zero, she had been given a much better table than his. Hers was made of bright reddish-brown wood with a smooth and pleasant finish. Zero noted with resentful satisfaction that it wobbled slightly. “Their official report says he’s been missing three weeks,” she said. “They’ll probably catch up to him sooner or later. It would be nice if we got there first. Of course,” she added, “we aren’t very good at catching up to things.”

Zero nodded. “When you hold Truth in your hands,” went an old proverb, “wash them thoroughly afterward.” Truth is elusive, according to the wind worshippers, only honor is solid. Scholars, however, were convinced you could capture Truth, hold it without getting dirty, and even exploit it. Truth and Stasis, irrefutability and immovability, those were the attributes of knowledge that Zero and his compatriots affirmed. At times, however, it seemed like a grain of Truth and an entire beach of Stasis. Her elbows rested on the report, her chin on laced fingers. “In your own way, you will be a ponderous angel of mercy. If we get Verek first, we’ll just put him to work in the silver mines until he pays it off. Of course that will be twenty years, but at least it’s living.”

“As opposed to what will happen to him if his former friends get him first.” They both knew the consequences: a hot disintegration of internal organs, eruption of skin, the prolonged agony only an expert can provide. “It’s not as if they’re monsters,” added Asmodea. She glanced at the door. “After all, they’re just protecting their secrets.”

After all, they are our allies, thought Zero. And they have people in this temple. And who knows what they can hear, and where they can hear it? “A lot of people here were very fond of him,” said Asmodea. “For the sake of that attachment, if for no other reason, it would make all of us feel a great deal better if they didn’t find him before we did. If he is in our hands, we can make ... restitution until he repays us.”

“And that’s where I come in.” “We are pretty sure he’s still here in the city.”

“It’s a big city. How many people do I get?”

“You know the answer to that,” said Asmodea. “I will assist in any way possible, but...”

“...but you will do your standard number, hiding details, keeping secrets, protecting sources.”

“I can give you a sample of his output.”

“You’re all heart.”

“Thanks a lot.”

Of all the organs which governed a person’s life, none was supposed to exert less influence within the confines of the Lhankor Mhy temple than the one which pumped blood. “Heart-felt” meant irrational. “Heartbroken” meant maudlin. The ultimate compliment was “He’s got two heads.”

According to conventional wisdom, sages had beards. Therefore, Lhankor Mhy scholars had to wear beards. Among the books that were never shown to those outside the temple was “The Mantle of Infallibility: Public Relations for the Savant”. Beards came in for a lot of discussion, but it didn’t say anything about having a heart.

“So I’m to have all the glory to myself.”

“You know better than that too.”

At least she looked apologetic. “No publicity, huh?” He sighed. “Perhaps you will tell me just why I am undertaking this mission.”

“Out of the goodness of your spleen, I suppose.”

“Appealing to my better nature will get you nowhere.” He pushed himself out of his chair. A chart on the wall showed the Library hierarchy. Zero was near the bottom. “Verek’s got a wife, doesn’t he?”

“He’s married, yes.” Asmodea frowned again. “Her name is Cassine. Understandably, she’s frightened. I would be too, in her position. Her husband’s played her a rotten trick.” She glared at Zero. When he didn’t leap to Verek’s defense, she went on. “She’s barricaded herself in their quarters, the second story of a house on Moneychangers Row. I don’t know how you are going to get in to see her, if that’s what you intend.” “She must get food somehow.”

“Forget her. If she knew where Verek was, she’d be with him.”

“You could do a divination.”

“Don’t hold your breath.”

It was a matter of documentation. Eshnael, the chief alchemist, had access to the files.

“Not even off the record?”

“There is no such thing as an off-the-record divination.”

Actually, Zero knew better. It was not unheard of to leave a divination and its results “temporarily” unrecorded, but if Eshnael found out, Asmodea would have to be very careful about what she ate.

Besides, Verek was just an ordinary initiate, and gods didn’t keep track of initiates very well. Zero wasn’t quite sure why not. He visualized Lhankor Mhy as having fleets of scribes, accountants, clerks, and messengers to do His bidding, quite apart from the legion of subservient godlings, saints, heralds, and cult heroes who should be attending Him. Somewhere there should be a vast Bureau of Initiates, charged with accumulating, storing, and retrieving important data on the god’s loyal and not-so-loyal worshippers. On the other hand, perhaps His filing system was no better than that of His Library here.

“Where’s Verek?” comes the request, carried by an apprentice who is soft on the third assistant requisitions clerk. Two days later, the request is submitted again, followed by another after a week. Each time the Initiate Location department disavows knowledge of the previous request. “There is no Search Instigation form on file. Therefore it was never submitted.” A deputy scribe has to be brought down to bully the filing clerk. A chief scribe has to be brought down the bully the assignment clerk supervisor. “Was

that Verek of East Dam, Verek with the Short Leg, Verek Axebeard, or the Verek who was always cracking his knuckles?" Verek of East Dam, thinks the chief scribe. "Well, he's dead." How long ago? "Two hundred years." Well, for crying out loud, man, why did you even mention him then? "If you insist on being abusive, we aren't going to get anywhere. Now if you will excuse me, I have important work to attend to." Four months down the road, it turns out that the Verek file isn't in the main Bureau library at all, but has been borrowed by Maxim Minim, of the Nomenclature division, who is doing a study on names with an r in the middle. That means the file has not been updated in five years (the present duration of Minim's study; he is still composing the Funding Request). Consequently all the information that has come in on Verek in that time has been paced in the Current Activities hopper, which is five kilometers long, a kilometer wide, and three hundred meters deep. It is full of scraps of parchment, some of which have been waiting since the Dawn Ages for filing. The chief scribe looks carefully at the hopper, and then decides to take the rest of the afternoon off.

"Let's see now, if I've got this straight. No helpers, no divination, and no credit. Is there anything else I don't get?"

Asmodea carefully examined her nails. "How explicit do you want it?"

A large brown woman answered the door. She almost reached the crossbar above the door, and her shoulders and hips were wide enough to make it seem that the door hadn't been opened at all. Zero thought Snapdragon was just about the right size.

"Oh, no," said the woman. "I told you the last time that I wasn't going to let you in any more." She opened the door wider. "This time Samm doesn't want to see you. Leave us in peace!" She stepped back.

"I'm glad to see you too," he said, and moved through the doorway. "You're not getting any thinner." She poked him roughly in the side. There were only two rooms in the house, but Samm, naturally, was in the other one. This one was where Samm and Snapdragon sat, and cooked, and ate, and experimented, and carved. The other was where they slept. It would be Samm's favorite room.

"Awright, Snaps, lay off the poor fellow," came his drowsy voice. "I've told you before, he's fragile."

"I don't remember that," said Snapdragon cheerfully. "Snide, yes, and unscrupulous, and a pain in the butt, but fragile you never mentioned."

"Did you really say those things?" said Zero to the lean brown man who emerged, rubbing his eyes, from the bedroom.

"I might've. It kind of slips my mind." Samm yawned. "What's up?" What's up was his favorite question, perhaps because it reminded him of second stories. "I've got a job for you. A little one." Zero heard Snapdragon close the door behind him. "Tell him no, Samm," she said.

"Breaking and entering?"

"Something like that."

"Legal?" Samm asked it casually.

Zero pretended to be unaware of the intentness of Samm's gaze. "It's authorized," he said.

"Authorized." Samm smiled. "See, Snaps, being around Zero's good for my vocabulary. Just one of the advantages of life in the big city."

Samm had always been a big-city boy. If you were the best second-story man in the land, you had to go where there

were second stories. Samm had always wanted to be a burglar, the way others wanted to be priests or mercenaries or mayors. It was a profession, he explained once, which brought you into some of the best homes. He soon acquired a familiarity with the ways of locks and bolts and windows and roofs. There were very few buildings he could not get into one way or another. His colleagues held him in awe. Samm never divulged his secrets. When asked how he got past the guards, eluded the dogs, beat the locks, he invariably answered, "I had the password." It was an effective reply. It gave him his nickname, Password Samm, and it endowed him with a mystique that disarmed the hostility of informers. In the quicksand world of thieves, you didn't betray the one who could walk over the bog.

"A guy from the temple has been selling bootleg potions," said Zero. "Selling them at half price, and sometimes even less. Naturally, the Alchemists Guild is after him, and if they find him..."

Samm whistled softly. "I wouldn't like to be in his skin." "Unofficially, the temple prefers to look after its own. We are trying to run him down before the alchemists do. His wife has fortified their second-floor flat on Moneychangers Row and won't open up to anybody. I need to talk to her."

"How does she get food?"

"I don't know."

Samm whistled again. Snapdragon whistled back, louder. "Did you hear that, Snaps? Zero doesn't know. What's more, he admitted it. This *must* be serious."

"Dirty work," she said.

"I need you to find a way to break in while she's asleep, so you can let me in." "He needs me, Snaps," said Password Samm to his wife.

"He needs a broken arm," she replied.

Outside of the world of crime, there were those who had not taken a romantic view of Samm's larceny. Since their resources were the ones being tapped to fuel Samm's reputation, they were less than enthralled by his exploits. One of his victims had eventually brought the matter to an upstart scholar who was boasting that he could solve even the toughest crime. It was Zero's first major case, and his first major humiliation, and his first major success. Samm had fed him Password *Rikk*, and Zero had taken the bait, and been ridiculed, and had doggedly hunted Samm until he trapped him. Zero had extracted a lot of money for his employer and a promise of cooperation for himself. Zero was not an agent of government; it was not his duty to call Samm to account for his other misdeeds. Samm assured him, however, that he was now an honest woodcarver and no longer pursued his former evil ways. Of course not.

"Doesn't sound too tough," said Samm.

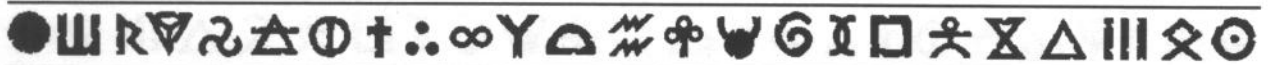
"Can I come along?" asked Snapdragon.

They both looked at her. "How come?" asked Zero.

"Well, if the poor woman is frightened, she would be much likelier to talk to a woman. When two men break into her house in the middle of the night, she's going to die of terror."

Samm burst out laughing. "Snaps, you're ten times scarier than either one of us."

Zero picked up a small tiger which Samm had carved. All the tiny teeth were quite sharp. So were the claws. He scowled. "Too many people. I don't like the idea of all three of us hanging around there. It increases the chances of us getting caught." He looked again at the face of the tiger. It seemed furrowed in concentration, seeing things which Zero couldn't. "Besides, if something does go wrong, we're going to need a reserve to break into the City Dungeons and rescue us."



"I don't know the password."

Zero didn't want her along. She made him nervous. It wasn't that he would worry about her safety. Samm had been top of the line. Snapdragon hadn't.

Even mid-level muggers, however, were dangerous and unpredictable. Zero *knew* she had quit, but it still made him feel a little funny. People *do* change. But Snapdragon had broken bones and run heads into walls. Looking at her now, he could see the strong-arm robber she had been. She had never been caught, and Zero met her after she had stopped. It had just been a couple of casual remarks about times and places that led Zero to identify her with Trollmother, who had terrorized the side streets of the city for three years.

Trollmother. It was a measure of fear. Snapdragon was quite goodlooking, if you liked your women tall, firm, and sensible. And she would never have children.

They hanged people for crimes a lot less brutal than hers had been. Zero never really considered turning her in, but he still felt uneasy. He thought a lot about crime, and figured he understood it. Punishment was a different story.

"His name is Verek, and hers is Cassine Housefinch," said Zero to Samm. "They're both in their late twenties. He hasn't been seen for three weeks, except, of course, by his customers. Who aren't talking. For the last two weeks, she has been shut up in that house."

Samm squinted at a carving of an elongated man with four arms. "I wonder how come she's still in there."

Zero nodded. "I've been wondering about that too."

The alchemists had to have a decent second-story man of their own. Why hadn't they gone in and taken her? They could have used her as a bargaining chip. Verek, according to all reports, was devoted to her. Possessive, even.

Snapdragon interrupted. "Samm, would you turn yourself in to rescue me from the alchemists?"

Samm looked uncomfortable. "Well, of course. I guess." "Honestly?"

"Well, for Verek it might be different. He might really love his wife."

"Ass." "Snaps does have a point. The alchemists could threaten Cassine a lot, and rough her up a little, but they wouldn't dare do anything more. They aren't completely a law unto themselves. But Verek knows, if he turns himself in, they'll use him as an example, pulling him apart one bone at a time. It would be a thousand times worse for him than it would be for her. The alchemists know that too, so why should they bother? They'll get him pretty soon anyhow. It isn't easy selling potions under the table. You've got to find customers with reasonably substantial amounts of money. Someday, inevitably, you're going to approach the wrong one."

Zero put the tiger down. "That's why we're going in tonight."

"Not much time to prepare."

"If we leave now, you can scout out the neighborhood, and I can talk to a few people. And we can still be back in time for lunch." Zero looked hopefully at Snapdragon.

"Great," she said. "I'll make my gravel nightshade stew. Hurry back, boys."

"B ootleg potions, huh?" said Samm, when they were on the narrow street. "Let me take you someplace."

The streets didn't get any wider, but residences and small shops

gave way to warehouses. Pigeons and people in a hurry gave way to empty wagons. Zero knew the warehouses were full of unsold merchandise, immobilized by changing military and political winds and by disputes over ownership in the wake of the changes. Two years ago, activity had swirled around the buildings day and night. Now they looked as if they had been neglected for decades.

"There's the place," said Samm. It was just another warehouse.

"What's here?"

"Eternal youth."

"These days," said Zero, "I'd settle for eternal middle age."

"Let the buyer beware," said Samm. "With Haptor's products, eternity doesn't last as long as it used to."

Samm pulled open a rickety door, entered a dark hallway. Zero hesitated a moment, then followed.

"Hello, Samm," came a quiet, coarse voice out of the murk. "Who's the hippo?"

"A friend, Burtuk."

"Too bad, I was hoping he was merchandise. If everything is on the same jumbo scale, there ought to be plenty of useful raw material."

"He's a customer."

A small, powerfully built, dwarf-like woman emerged from the shadow of Burtuk and his staff. "Nothing," she said with contempt, "keeps our clientele away. Customers are never in short supply. Starting materials, however..." She gazed impassively at Zero, with cold eyes that weighed and packaged.

"Actually," began Zero, wondering what they were talking about.

Samm cut him off. "Is Haptor in right now? We'd like to talk to him." "Sure," said Burtuk. "Go right on back. If you're sure you want this guy to see the source of his miracle wafers."

Samm pushed Zero ahead of him, down a corridor whose only illumination was light sneaking in through the ill-fitting facade. The floor crunched. Zero bent down and picked up a feather. The floor was covered with them. The smell oppressed Zero. He recognized it. It was what the Book of Wiles called the odor of truth.

"If they find out who you are," said Samm, "you're a dead man."

"Why don't you say that a little louder?"

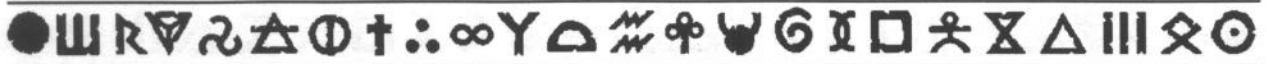
"A little nervous, Zero?" There was pleasure in Samm's voice. "Out of your element?"

A despairing inhuman shriek of pain echoed through the building. It found bare walls and bounded off them, dying away into a black tremor. "You'll get used to it," said Samm.

"Don't count on it."

The door opened on a long torch-lit room, only three or four armspreads wide but extending back far into the leaden haze. One wall was lined with cages, tough wooden poles lashed together, many empty but many others with occupants. In the nearest one, a tiger lay sleeping on its side, its striped chest rising and falling in irregular rhythm. Its fur was matted and dirty, and marred by bald blotches. Two cages down a lethargic gorilla squatted with its hands around two of the poles, and stared at nothing. It did not look up as Zero walked by. In another cage a small ostrich pecked at itself. A dead ostrich lay beside it. Zero could see other animals in the cages, and wondered at the silence, not the shriek. A boar, its tusked snout resting on its forelegs, grunted almost inaudibly. Only the small red eyes showed that it was one of the world's most quarrelsome creatures.

A large yellow eagle was pinned to the wall, secured with rope and wooden pegs. Blood was seeping from its belly. A man



in a leather smock was transferring the eagle's viscera to a pail. A tall man, thin to the point of pain, glanced sharply at Samm and Zero.

"It's all right to look revolted," said Samm. "They expect it."

"Hail, Samm!" called the famine man. "Long time no see."

"These days I've been buying retail," said Samm.

"What about today then?" The tall man looked pointedly at Zero. "We aren't too fond of visitors during working hours."

"I am..." began Zero.

"This is Rondo Corto, the well-known bandbox singer," interrupted Samm. "Rondo, this is Haptor, who makes that miracle candy."

Haptor smiled very slowly, as if he were afraid of cutting himself on the sharp edges. "I've heard you sing, Rondo. Nice vibrato you've got. Funny, you look a lot bigger in person."

"I'm closer," said Zero.

"Heh, heh, very good," said Haptor, and yanked at the eagle's neck. The bird was obviously dead.

The two armed guards were watching Zero closely. All it takes, he realized, is just one of these people to have seen him in the temple library. He didn't have a forgettable shape. Haptor looked back at Zero. "Well, Rondo... You don't mind if I call you Rondo, do you." It wasn't a question. "What can we do for you? Feeling a little run down? Need a little pick-me-up?" His mouth twitched up into a leer, but his eyes remained completely icy and mirthless. It was the most unnerving expression Zero had ever seen on a human being. "Is it safe?" asked Zero, at a loss for intelligent remarks.

Haptor's chuckle sounded like grit in a mill wheel. "Safety?" He shook his head in mock astonishment. "You want safety, you go to the alchemists. Those greedy snakes will take a small fortune and give you as much safety as a small fortune will buy. We're not talking safety here, Rondo, we're talking potency. Get it?"

Zero got it. Haptor's lines sounded like he had delivered them many times before.

"I take it this eagle has just furnished one of the special ingredients."

"Three of them, in fact. For our different blends."

"How come the alchemists don't bother you? I thought they didn't tolerate competitors."

The room was chilly. Haptor's eyes were chilly. Zero sweltered under the man's silent stare. It was amazing how hot you could get without any heat at all.

"We aren't competitors," said Haptor at last. "We sell different things. They sell their antidotes and flash-in-the-pan magics. Fully guaranteed, no refunds. We sell youth, rejuvenation, vigor, performance. Try buying that from the scholars. So we don't compete. We even buy from them. When we can afford it."

"You buy potions?" blurted Zero.

"You know, Rondo," said Haptor. "You ask a lot of questions."

Zero shrugged, but it was clear some sort of reply was expected. "Curiosity," he said finally, thinking hard, "is very important to a bandbox singer."

"Oh?" Zero waved his hands dramatically. "You know, life, spirit, inspiration. Things of that ilk."

"Ilk? You sure talk strange in person."

It was time to change the subject. "The alchemists' potions haven't done me any good. Samm here says you have better stuff. So what do I find? You've been buying from the alchemists." He pointed to the slack bird on the wall. "This is all very dramatic. Give the customer a good show. But what assurance do I have you're not just diluting and rebottling the same old

failed remedies I've already thrown away good money on?"

"Assurance!" Haptor seemed to find the word amusing. He shook his head. "You're gonna die, that's assured. Your relatives won't give a damn, that's assured too. The Empire will take more than its share in taxation. That's the kind of assurance life offers, chum. I deal in satisfaction, not assurance." His assistant carried the bucket away. Haptor flipped the bloody knife into the air, caught it casually by the tip. His fingers were red. "Listen, when we can afford it, we buy a painkiller for these beasts before we cut them open. It keeps the noise down. The healers bleat a lot about our methods, but will they sell us the knockouts at cost? Or at enough of a discount to make them affordable? Guess."

"The guy I deal with," said Zero cautiously, "the guy I bought the useless potions from, as I recall his name was Verek."

"Verek? Yeah, I know him. Small guy, real sure of himself. He's pretty snide about our place here, but I notice he's never in a hurry to leave. Likes the show, maybe."

Burtuk came in the door behind them. "Time for my lunch, boss," he said. "Jarel is guarding the door."

"There's a new alchemist guy making the deliveries now," Haptor said to Zero. Then he turned to Burtuk. "Say, how long's it been since Verek's been by?"

"Three weeks at least, boss. Is he in some kind of trouble?"

"Don't know." Haptor frowned. "How'd we get started talking about him, anyway?"

"I'd hate to be in trouble with the alchemists, I tell you that," said Zero. When nobody seemed inclined to disagree, he went on. "An alchemist buying from you, now that would be funny. Was Verek one of your clients?" "Nah," said Burtuk. He had a mechanical laugh, as if he were copying something he'd heard without understanding it. "Verek's always bragging about his hot little wife. Better than any elixir, he says. I asked him once who was taking her temperature when he was away. Didn't like that. Real sensitive, he is. Nobody messes with an alchemist's wife, that's what he said."

"Say, Burtuk," said Haptor, a little impatiently. "This ought to be a real treat for you. You go to all those shows and acts. Did you know our customer here is none other than Rondo Corto, the bandbox singer?"

Burtuk glanced at Zero. "No, he isn't."

Haptor smiled his mouth-only smile. "I didn't recognize him either. He looks a lot different in person. He's closer." Haptor looked pleased with himself.

"That isn't Rondo," said Burtuk. "I've seen him a half dozen times. Once up close, at the Jemelfrit Pop Festival. Rondo's nose is bigger, for one thing. It's just not the same face."

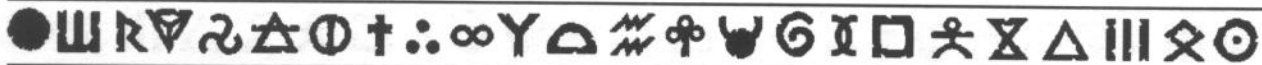
A spiny lizard in the next cage moved. Its scales hissing against the floor made the only sound for several long seconds. Haptor pursed his lips. "I ought to know who I am," said Zero angrily.

"Steofyn!" called Haptor, without taking his eyes off Zero. "Come over here a second, will you? Bring your sword."

"You don't want my business, fine. Come on, Samm, we're leaving." "Just a second, Rondo. Before you leave, sing something for us." "Here?"

Steofyn trotted up. He was a chunky man with huge fists, but had a childish knees-together gait. His shord was stubby and sharp. Without waiting for instructions, he placed the tip in front of Zero, inches from his belt buckle.

"You know this bird here?" asked Haptor, in a distant voice. "You know what it eats? King of the birds, right? A noble creature. Master of the air. You know how it lives?" A flick of his knife, and a wing came free. "Dead meat. Carrion." Another flick, another wing. "It eats flesh left by tougher hunters. Rotten, mag-



goty, stinking, disintegrated, abandoned meat. Some king." He spat. "Nothing but a flying hyena."

The lizard coughed. Nobody else interrupted.

"I once went to a talk by a well respected animal expert," he went on. "He said that carrion eaters perform a valuable function in the wild, cleaning up the debris of the life-and-death struggle, and turning it back into natural materials. I liked that, natural materials. So you see, our glamorous vulture here is just one of nature's housekeepers.

"We perform a valuable service too. That eagle was getting only minimal use out of its heart, its liver, its sweetbreads. Keeping it alive, sure, but just so it could eat the leavings of others. While we, on the other hand, turn those organs into human pleasure and satisfaction and renewal. In relieving the agony of the underperforming male, we operate on a level far above that of this meaningless bird."

He turned and pointed to a cage halfway down the row. "You want to see one of our next donors? A real prime specimen, believe me. Chock full of ingredients."

On the floor of the cage was a girl, about fifteen, crouching on hands and knees. She regarded with group with a listless stare. Her hair was a light and delicate brown, but it hung about her face in unkempt ropy strands. Her skin was deep animal bronze over tight muscles. She was naked.

"She's just an animal," said Haptor. "She's got no more brains than that idiot boar five cages down. She's hardly smarter than a dead eagle. There are herds of them on the high plains. She can't speak, or understand language, or add, or value money, or worship, or remember a spell, or any of the other things civilized men can. And she can't learn to do them. She's just a beast. I bought her.

"But she has a liver, and ovaries, and kidneys, and a few other useful glands. So we'll carve her up for them. Heartless, huh? But she's an animal, like the cows they slaughter for all those steaks you put away, Rondo.

"I wouldn't spend too much sympathy on her, however. If you don't start singing pretty damn quick, the same thing's going to happen to you." "Makeup," said Samm.

Burtuk and Steofyn stood impassively, waiting for the command to kill. "Rondo isn't as young as he used to be," said Samm. "But fans don't want to know about that. They want to see that famous bear of a man. So he has to use makeup."

Haptor was chanting a spell. Zero kept his thoughts pure, in case they were being read. "Why do you think he's coming here?" said Samm. "He's getting along in years, and needs a little help."

"I never heard of makeup that good," said Burtuk.

Samm didn't seem worried at all. Zero decided not to wheedle either. "You're a music lover. Remember Bama Zak and the Ladykillers? That wolf head of his was makeup."

Burtuk was a little unsure now. "That was different."

"How?"

"That was like, a costume."

"And my stage face isn't?"

"All right," said Haptor slowly. "I don't know if this guy is on the up and up, but I don't pick up any hostile chatter. And Samm is straight, we know that. So maybe there's nothing to get excited about. All the same, Rondo, or whatever your name is..." Without looking, Haptor swung the knife. It passed through the eagle's neck. The carcass thudded to the floor. "Shove off."

Steofyn didn't lower the sword. "He'd make a lot of youth juice, boss." Haptor put a hand on Samm's shoulder, without friendliness. "You know, Samm, if we chop up your friend here,

we have to do the same to you. Now I don't think you're quite ready for the glue pot. But watch your step." "You're all worried about nothing," said Samm.

"I look forward to your next concert, Rondo," said Burtuk. "When is it, by the way?"

"Two weeks, city center," said Zero, without hesitation.

"Next time warn me before you get me into something like that."

Daylight and normal city squalor warmed Zero after the claustrophobia and stench of Haptor's factory. It was hard to believe they were still in the same town.

"A little risk is good for the circulation." Samm wiped his forehead. "And for the perspiration." They were both walking quickly. "I made that name up on the spur of the moment. How was I to know there really was a Rondo Corto?"

"Why hasn't that place been closed down?"

"People in authority get old too." Samm looked around, as if he expected to find years catching up with him. "It's a good thing they forgot about making you sing."

"Actually, I have quite a good singing voice. I could..."

"Don't."

Zero put one foot in front of the other, in the direction of Moneychangers Row, remembering a girl in a cage.

The house to the left of the one Cassine was hiding in was yellow. That in itself was not so unusual; many buildings in town were yellow with age or yellow because of the clay they were built from. But this one was painted yellow.

Yellow was the color of Sun. This was Wind country, and Sun worshippers were not popular here, especially since their mercenaries were cooperating with the Imperial conquerors. Painting your house yellow was an invitation to resentment.

This paint job obviously dated back to before the Conquest. It was streaked and beginning to break up, leaving arrows of bare wood hanging from the eaves. If it was a political statement, it was a shabby one.

The first floor belonged to Ejo, sharpener of knives. His wheel was bolted to a table by the door. Pudgy and pale, he fawned over customers and snapped at everybody else. Zero paid to have a dagger sharpened. Ejo was indignant about its condition. Abused and neglected, he said. "What about your other knives?" Zero said this was his only one. Ejo got indignant again, and listed all the knives a person needed. "You wouldn't own just one tunic, would you?" Ejo's commercial outrage was a bit wearing.

"Do you have a license for *selling* knives too?" asked Zero.

"Of course I do. I'm an honest merchant." He lowered his voice. "Trying to do you a favor."

"You can. I'm looking for a house to buy, and that one next door meets a lot of my requirements. Do you know who the owner is and where I can find him?"

"That old flea haven? You don't want that place. Unless the price is right. Which it won't be. The owners are those two guys on the other side, Hezbin and Hesmit. You just walk into their place, they'll charge you for the floor space you're taking up. Forget it," Ejo paused. "You could make me an offer for this one, though. I'd give you a very sweet deal on it. Not that I'm anxious to leave, mind you. It's a terrific location. It's just..." he floundered. "It's just..." An old couple hobbled by. The woman pointed at Zero and said something. The two of them laughed. Ejo brightened. "I'm planning to retire," he said. "To the country." Ejo didn't look a day over thirty-five.

Zero saw a wrinkled face in a window of the second floor



of Ejo's mansion. That's the one I want to talk to, he thought. I'll bet she knows everything that goes on in this neighborhood. She doesn't look too fond of me at the moment, but that will change when she gets to know me.

"Loans, Eggs, and Funerals," said the sign. "Hezbin and Hesmit are happy to serve you."

"May I help you?" asked the short man. He had fuzzy black hair and a minute goatee. Zero nodded. "Which one are you?"

"Hezbin, at your service. Would you like an egg?"

"At almost any time of day," said Zero.

"It was my brother's idea, the chickens. Diversification, he called it. They don't look very diverse to me, all squatty little nasty-tempered birds. But you can't argue with their eggs."

The eggs which brooked no disagreement were spread in boxes full of sawdust. Judging by the gaps in the array, business was brisk. It occurred to Zero that a couple of eggs might make a suitable peace offering to Snapdragon. He picked out two, then a third, and paid for them. Hezbin took his money, scrutinized the coins briefly, and dropped them through a slot into a large metal-bound box. "I'm sure you will find them good eating, sir."

"You better believe it, haw, haw," boomed a voice from behind Zero. The man sounded enormous. Zero turned and saw a figure the same size as Hezbin, almost identical except that his goatee and fuzzy hair were red. "Suck one of them," he continued, "and it will make a man out of you."

"So that's what it takes," murmured Zero.

Hezbin looked embarrassed. "This is the one with the bright ideas, my brother Hesmit. Next he's talking about a merger with Duster & Toom, the guys that make the embalming fluid we use. He's determined to take our prosperous little business and turn it into a bankrupt conglomerate." "Haw," said Hesmit. "No vision, that's his problem. A snail, down in the mud. I, on the other hand, am a..." His eyes glittered as he sought an appropriate beast to honor with his analogy.

"A wyvern?" proposed Zero.

"What's that?"

"A kind of small dragon. Very rare."

Hesmit chortled. "That's me all right. A small dragon. I'll remember that. Hesmit the Wyvern."

Small only by comparison with the real thing, a wyvern was a slow-witted, two-legged dragon with a poisonous sting and delusions of grandeur. If the hide fits, thought Zero.

Hezbin coughed. "I take it you didn't come in here for the eggs, sir. Perhaps you are looking for some financing?"

"Eggs, loans, and funerals, your sign said. Is the third how you collect on the second?"

"That's what I keep telling you, Hezbin," said his brother.

"Once we take over Duster & Toom, we can separate the stiff

business from the lending aspect. It will make our customers a lot more comfortable about dealing with us."

I don't want anyone who owes me money feeling too comfortable," grumbled Hezbin. "Besides, those cadavers back there are Dad's legacy. Not, that is," he amended, turning hastily to Zero, "that precisely those very bodies have been in the back room since Dad pushed off. It's just that we inherited the funeral business from him, and it gave us the capital we needed to go into moneychanging, which is now our main line."

"I keep saying it's time to dump that creepy stuff onto a subsidiary, but Hezbin won't hear of it."

"Actually," admitted Hezbin, "I'm kind of fond of corpses. They don't sneeze on your shirt, they don't own dogs, and not one of them has ever asked me for spare change. Dad always used to say there's a lot you can learn from a corpse."

"If you didn't come in here for the eggs," broke in Hesmit, "and you didn't come in here to borrow money, and you didn't come in here to get somebody stashed, just why did you come in?"

"For the building next door," said Zero.

"Sheesh," said Hesmit with disgust. "That dump." "It's a solid house, very durable construction," cut in Hezbin smoothly. "It has its full quota of tenants right now, but one of them might decide to leave at any moment. The quarters are extremely comfortable, according to all the renters. When would you be interested in moving in?"

"Well, actually, I was thinking about buying the entire building."

"Haw!" said Hesmit. Except for coloring the two brothers were identical in appearance. Zero wondered which one was older. They could have been thirty or fifty. Their ferret faces were hard to read.

"Not a chance," said Hesmit, slapping the counter for emphasis. "I'd sell you Dad, if he hadn't already been boxed and stuffed by the family business, but there's no way we're going to part with that nice little silver mine. We got a great location and tenants who know better than to complain." "And they pay rent to a couple of gravediggers," put in Hezbin ironically. "It keeps them on their toes. Sorry, no sale. Unless we're talking big money."

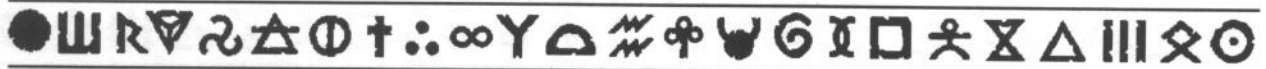
"How many tenants you have in there?"

"Six, two on each floor. Professional people. Quiet, don't make trouble."

"Any possibility of a vacancy in the near future?"

"Not soon. We just collected the rents last week. They're all paid up for the next season." Hezbin shook the cash box. "The family business sometimes can be a motivating factor for them. We didn't have to dun a single one, they all brought in the

Elf-Friend". It is written that... The following three pages, which hold the remainder of this entry, has been removed (without the Collator's consent) for private study by the Sage Anias, Deputy Chief Librarian of this temple. The Collator respectfully requests that the pages be reinserted when the D.C.L.'s obviously important studies have finished, and reminds Anias it was his policy (endorsed by all the factions) that it be an offence for any work to be removed from the Library. Theo. P (XXIX.21.017) It is common to hear Lunars sneering at the superstitions of other cultures, but one superstition from Pent which bars married women from drinking red wine has become popular if somewhat abused in the Lunar Empire. The superstition says that if a woman spills red wine on her dress then her husband's blood will be spilt in the same place. This has led to the farcical sight of ambitious wives within the Lunar aristocracy throwing glasses of wine at the wives of their husband's rivals in an attempt to kill them!



rent voluntarily."

"How much do you take in in rents?"

"Oh, a hundred a month," said Hezbin, lying easily. A commercial falsehood between men of the world. "Impressive," said Zero. "It must be the location."

"On the other hand," interjected Hesmit, after some thought, "for the proper inducement, if you understand me, we might be able to arrange a vacancy. We got a nice long lease contract, there's always a technical violation in there somewhere if we want to look for it. Like this second-floor flat, got a dame holed up in it, says her husband took off. Nice place, two rooms, even got a fireplace. We got rights of inspection, to check for abuse of property, it says so right in the lease, but she won't let anybody in. She's a queer bird all right, scared of anything on two feet. For the right incentive, we could bust her out of there in a couple of weeks."

Hezbin was looking like an older brother wishing Mom had stopped at one, but said nothing to contradict him.

"Not on my account," said Zero.

When Zero came out with his eggs, Ejo was nowhere in sight, so he climbed the ill-assembled stairs to the door above the sharpening station. The stairs had been tested by pygmies and cats, he was sure, but not by anything larger. The boards crackled and moved as he stepped on them. There was a Sun sign on the door, many years from the last paint job.

The door was opened by a slim young woman, in a light blue dress, held at the neck with a gold clasp. Her hair, ordinary brown but soft and airy, was picked and ruffled by the breeze.

Zero was momentarily confused. He had expected the old woman. "Uh, excuse..." he began.

"Oh, hullo, Zero," said the girl. "What are you doing here?"

Zero never forgot a name. Faces yes, names no. "You know me?" he blurted.

"You don't recognize me," she said with mock annoyance. "I've seen you at the library lots of times."

She showed him a bracelet on her left wrist, with the Lhankor Mhy runes set in tiny perfect jewels.

"Oh," said Zero, still at a loss. "You must be an apprentice." Apprentices came and went. Some were indifferent scholars, others hatched schemes for instant wealth. Few stuck it out.

"Yes, I am Verek's apprentice. At least I was," said the girl. "At the moment, my position is a little ambiguous. With him being away and everything."

If I were twenty years younger and foolish, I'd fall in love with her, thought Zero.

"Are you looking for him?" She smiled, and gave her head a little shake, which set her hair drifting over her shoulders. "I'm sure you could find him in no time at all."

Make that ten years younger and sensible, he thought. "What's your name?"

"Arden." She hesitated.

"Just that?" He smiled slightly.

"Well, actually, my father called me Arden the Booby. I don't usually tell people because it's not exactly flattering."

"Sounds like there's a story there."

She nodded. "Before I was born, Dad used to work as a hired guard for caravans and cargo boats going up and down river to the ocean. He wound up spending a lot of time in seaports, which he hated, but he loved to sit out on the beaches and watch the birds.

"I can still hear him telling me about the gulls riding the updrafts into the sky without ever moving their wings, and fleets of pelicans sweeping along the surface scooping out fish, and little petrels skipping and dancing along the wavetops, and a huge frigatebird with humped wings coasting back and forth endlessly across the water. But best of all, he would say, was the booby. It circles the water at a good height, watching, watching, alternating flaps and glides. You think it will stay up there forever, and just then, it dives. Hrroooooosh! he used to say. The booby dives — Hrroooshh!"

"Have you ever seen a booby?"

"I've never been near the ocean. I don't even know what it was about me that made him want to call me the Booby. But Dad always had his own reasons for things."

"Who are you talking to?" came a shout from within the room.

They had been standing on the landing, Zero shifting his weight from one foot to the other and trying not to look down through the gaps in the wood. The structure made him uneasy, but he enjoyed watching the wind fluff her hair and tug at her dress.

"Zero, Mom, the one I was telling you about. The detective."

"Well, let's see him!" demanded the shrill voice.

Arden smiled apologetically. "Would you like to meet my mother?"

"Of course. I'd be delighted."

The woman was sitting in a low deep chair, with a large ball of yellow yarn in her lap. Next to her on a small table was a carved wooden bird; once it had been painted gold, but the years had flaked the coat away, leaving the animal with a blotchy diseased look. Zero, who was no expert on birds, wondered if it were a booby.

"Mom, this is Zero. Zero, this is my mother, Arriet."

"Arriet the Toothless," corrected the woman, with a disconcerting grin full of white and yellow teeth.

"Very glad to become acquainted," said Zero formally.

"That's right," said Arriet. "They're my own."

"Whoever named you wasn't very observant, I guess."

"Not at all," replied the woman with relish. "My parents gave me that name when I was three days old. It was absolutely accurate. They just never bothered to change it. My mother was ever one to rely on first impressions." Beside him, Arden sighed. Zero knew he was listening to an ancient routine.

"Have you lived here long?" he asked.

"Thirty-seven years," said Arriet immediately. "Since before you were born."

This was Zero's kind of woman: one who was lousy at guessing ages. "You probably know Verek pretty well then."

"He's in trouble, is he?" She clacked her teeth for emphasis. "I always knew he was trouble."

"Oh? How?"

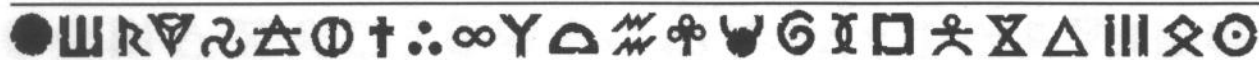
Instead of answering, she carefully scraped a bicuspid with a small spoon. "Young man, I'll bet you don't properly appreciate your teeth." "They do their job. But..."

"Do you know how many you have? And what they are called?"

An eternity of itches and rashes, Zero thought, on Arriet's mother and her first impressions. "Thirty-six?" he guessed.

"Twenty-eight, not counting wisdom teeth." She clacked her twenty-eight again. "Two incisors, a canine, two premolars, and two molars on each half of each jaw. Baboons have three molars." She patted the stained bird beside her. "You see, you scholars don't have a monopoly on knowledge."

"Mother, I think he's interested in hearing about Verek, not teeth." "Well, if he is, let him say so. Is that right, young man? Did you come here to interrogate me about Verek?"



This wasn't going the way he had planned. He'd given away practically all his secrets to this pair, and all he'd learned about so far was baboon molars. Instead of replying, he walked over to the window. Below, Ejo was handing a chisel to a man in a green tunic. Across the street, Samm pushed a cart down the rutted gravel and clay roadbed; he was not hurrying.

"Yes," he said to Arriet.

She reflected a moment. "I can't tell you all that much about him." She looked up at him from beneath lowered lashes. "Even under torture." "I'll keep that in mind. Hold the hot irons, Egor."

"Verek no, Cassine yes. I've known Cassine since she was a baby, knew her parents. Zelyph and Beryta were both of the Sun, like my Otus." Hostility gleamed briefly in her yellow eyes. "And their child has deserted to your sterile parchment god, just like mine."

"Where do they live?"

"They don't."

"They were your friends?"

"The closest. To look at me now, you wouldn't guess it, but I was once a warrior of sorts. The four of us traveled all over the plains and through the Troll Gorges. Worked as guards, couriers, toll takers. Friends like them you find only once."

"They say Yelmatio reincarnates. You may yet meet them again."

"Not Zelyph and Beryta I won't. And I don't need you to tell me about my god's arrangements for his people."

"It was just a sentiment, Mother," said Arden drily. "No reason to jump all over him."

"Well, there was nothing sentimental about the way my friends died," snapped Arriet. "They were obliterated, not killed. You don't come back from that."

"Day At Night," said Zero softly.

Arriet's face softened. "Very good, young man." She turned and stared out the window. He saw a reflection at the corner of one eye. "Not many remember. It wasn't that long ago."

"Seventeen years ago midsummer," said Zero. "I read about it at the time."

"We had a little song," said Arriet. The reflection was clearer and brighter now. "A silly, empty night song. Tranquil night, and heaven starred." Zero realized she was singing. "Sleep is king, and love stands guard." Her voice trembled. "Dumb song, huh?"

"Rondo would love it," he replied.

She rested her hand on the half-gilded bird, and her head against the back of the chair. "I was on watch. Me and Otus. I guess you could call that love standing guard. But we were in the Long Woods and feared nothing. We weren't as alert as we could have been, and missed the wingbeats and the hisses. They froze us and then began to feed on our sleeping friends." Zero knew the story of Day At Night, but had never heard it from one who had been there.

"There were only a few of them, and many of us, but with that kind, it only takes a few. Still, somehow, Otus wrenched himself from their control, and wailed. I can still hear that terrible cry. Our friends awoke, those that could, and saw the doom upon us."

Outside the morning haze had burned away. Cold sun beat down on the side of the house. Cold light came in the window.

"When the Children of Death meet vampires, they fight them with Death. True death, that can take even the undying. But we of the Sun fight them with Day.

"Most of our warriors had done a Deed, and sacrificed to the Sun, and received a Day in return. When we knew our attackers, we called for Day. One after another, our warriors threw

their spell, and the woods lit up like the inside of a star. Undead recoiled in horror from that glorious dazzle. There was nowhere for them to flee. Before they could turn to smoke and blow away, we skewered them with our golden spears, and cut off their heads, and plunged golden daggers through their dark hearts."

Arden interrupted. "Zero wants to hear about Verek and Cassine, not some musty old battle. History is full of old battles."

Surprisingly, Arriet agreed. "I think about that night too much already. Cassine was thirteen years old at the time, and lived with us for four years until she met that Verek. Full of promises, he was, about how rich and respected he was going to be. It was easy to see why she didn't want to marry a warrior, but I couldn't understand what she had against my son Marthen, a solid young man and an honest farmer. She could have had him easily, he was just demented about that girl, but she had to take up with a giddy alchemist. Now Marthen has a fine place up north, with barley and leeks and hemp and a nice flock of chickens, and she's holed up in that apartment, scared to death of Verek's former friends." Arriet sighed. "I wish I could help her though."

"Why don't you?"

"She won't let me. She's afraid of me. Afraid!" Arriet snorted. "Of me!"

"She's probably afraid you'd bite her," said Arden. "Maybe if you lost your teeth..."

"Very funny." Her mother scowled.

"Have you seen her?" Zero turned to Arden.

"Just a couple of times," admitted the girl. "She's very nervous, but she knows I have nothing to do with the other alchemist people. Once I brought her a message."

Zero turned the full force of his gaze on her. A detective has to have piercing eyes, he thought. Eyes, do your stuff.

Arden looked placidly back at him, smiling and moving her head slightly. She really did have beautiful hair.

So much for that idea. "Where did you meet him?" said Zero.

"Meet whom?" Arden looked puzzled.

"Have you been seeing him?" broke in her mother.

Arden rolled her eyes. "No, mother," she said, stretching out the "no". "The young man is just trying to help."

Arden giggled.

"Now what's so funny," demanded her mother.

"You keep calling him 'young man'. He's old."

Zero kept his face immobile. "What was the message?"

Arden stopped laughing. "I can't tell you anything about Verek."

"How did you know he had a message for you?"

"It wasn't..." She just shook her head.

"Was he making arrangements to get her out?" This was one school of interrogation. You just repeated the same questions over and over again in slightly different guise. It was one way of growing old.

"I have no idea."

"You are worried about his safety. So am I. You have to trust me. How did he get in touch with you?"

Arden sighed and turned away.

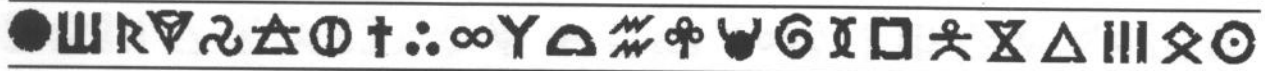
"Answer him!" said her mother, sharply.

The young woman replied without turning around. "He knows my route to the temple in the morning, and my route home in the evening. Since we lived next door, we often used to walk it together."

"Too often, if you ask me," said her mother.

"Stop it, mother," said Arden. "He's just a teacher, after all. I mean, he's old too."

"A man is never too old," grumped Arriet, glaring at Zero.



It was the second time that day he had been lumped with Verek in a conspiracy against the female race.

"You're still living in ancient history," said Arden. She pointed to the door, then the windows. "Look at this place, festooned with cloves of noblock and tabu signs and vials of alleged holy water, all because of some runin with vampires in the hoary past. Anybody would think that the city was crawling with them! Instead, nobody has seen one in years. If you're going to be afraid, fear the alchemists instead. You have no right at all to criticize Cassine."

Arriet stared at her for a long moment. "My daughter and I have a difference of opinion on my precautions." Arden bit her lip, then said, very low, "Sorry, mother."

Arriet pointed at the white bulbs which hung over the street window. "Someday that may save us from Beryta's fate." She thrust her jaw forward. "I still can make one more Day, too. That will send him running for it." Arden sat down, looking apologetic and incredulous at the same time. "Who?" asked Zero. "Send who running for it?"

Arriet shook her head mysteriously. "I've got my ideas."

"Poor old mother," said Arden.

"Old, my overbite! I keep my eyes open, I saw Age coming and ducked out of the way. You, you don't look behind. One day he'll sneak up on you, and all of a sudden you'll be Arden the Toothless..."

Zero walked to the back of the room, and looked out the window. Behind the house was a small courtyard, shared among the three houses centered on this one. A large well was set in among uneven cobbles and broken paving stones. The bucket, adorned with human ears painted on the sides, leaked. Behind the well, an exhausted fence leaned toward the alley, waiting only for another rainy season before it could lie completely flat. Beyond it, two boys, each about eleven or twelve, were hitting a girl with staves. Stout, angry, and coarse, she was refusing to defend herself, even though she was taller and heavier than they were.

A wiry brown man emerged from the house next door, the one in which Cassine was fortified. "All right, you guys, knock it off," he said calmly. Zero recognized Samm's voice.

One of the boys decided he had time for a last whack, while the other sauntered insolently away. Samm covered the last five meters with eye-widening speed, and cuffed the boy hard in the face. The boy dropped the staff in astonishment and pain, and Zero saw blood on the boy's nose.

"A staff is a weapon, pal, and anybody with a weapon is an adult," said Samm, and hit him again. The boy dropped to his knees, too frightened even to yell. His companion abandoned bravado and fled. Samm moved off down the alley. When Zero looked again, the courtyard was empty.

"If you want to save Verek," said Zero harshly, "you tell me where he is."

"I don't know where he is," said Arden, now standing in back of her mother, a hand on her shoulder. "If I knew, I'd tell you."

Zero rubbed his nose. "Do you bring her food?" Arden nodded. "I leave it outside the door." "And the message?"

"He would get her away in a couple of weeks."

"How long ago was it delivered?"

"A couple of weeks."

In the street, Ejo made another try. The price of the house was negotiable. The location was prime. The tenants were superb human beings. Zero said he would keep it in mind. Being a landlord might be better than being no lord at all.

Another day was expiring, the sun sliding down the edge of the world. Honest citizens prepared to retire to their homes,

leaving the darkness to other owners. Samm kept suppressing a smile. He couldn't keep from bouncing as he paced. Zero was pretty sure he knew what Samm was feeling. Good Old Days. Nighttime was all right with Zero; it brought dinner and mid-night snacks. He preferred to spend the hours indoors, that was all. Samm, however, was in his element.

"No sweat," said the lean man. "It'll take me a couple of hours, tops, and then I let you in. I don't... didn't usually break into occupied rooms, so I got in faster. Being quiet will make it take longer."

"When do we start?"

"Not for hours yet. We need everybody around there to be asleep. I'll leave here just before midnight. The two of you should show up an hour later. And then wait for the signal."

"Are you going to tell me how you're getting in?"

Samm leaned forward, his hands on his knees, jittering a little with anticipation. "Might as well. You'll find out anyway. Through the floor." Experts didn't intimidate Zero. He had argued with too many of them. But he had told Samm to run the operation his own way.

"People lock doors and windows, but who worries about the floor? There's always a loose board or two in old places like that. I looked in the closet behind the stairs. I can remove a warped ceiling plank and squeeze myself between the joists. There's a floorboard above it I ought to be able to work loose without too much trouble. If there's nothing too heavy on top of it. The way it's bent suggests it's free."

"Won't that make too much noise?"

"I use a lot of grease."

Samm's expression was bland and unreadable. Zero was pretty sure he knew what that meant. Successful burglars could afford to acquire a little magic. Samm almost certainly knew a silence spell. But spells were a private matter. You might tell your spouse which ones you knew. You didn't tell a detective.

Snapdragon's stew contained neither gravel nor nightshade. That was the best that could be said for it. Cooking was not one of her talents. To Zero's way of thinking, that was a major defect. He wondered if Arden liked to cook. Or bake.

Samm was looking even browner than usual as he leaned on the door. It was a color which reflected less light than black itself, he claimed. "Okay, you two, stick to the timetable. Give me only an hour. Watch the window and try not to be too obvious about it. When I signal, Zero comes up and Snaps stays just inside the outer door." He looked at Zero with a wry smile. "(She) can take care of herself." And then he was gone. They didn't hear his footsteps in the hall outside.

Snapdragon began braiding her hair, plaiting it together with a piece of black ribbon, to tie to the laces down the back of her shirt. She had let her hair grow since her retirement from crime. Zero watched her work.

She said, not looking at him, "Why, Zero, I didn't know you thought about things like that."

"I don't." He was getting tired of having his mind read. First Asmodea, now her.

"You should lose some weight," she said. "You wouldn't be bad looking if you were thinner."

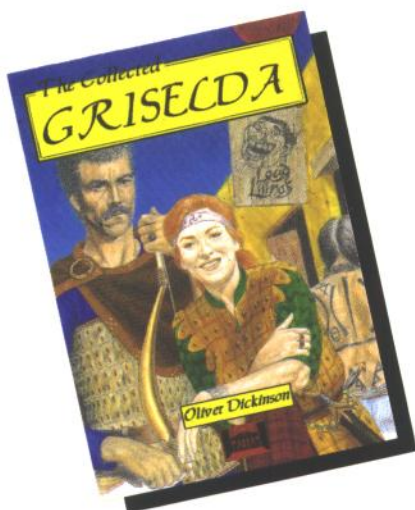
"Beauty isn't everything," he said. "I have a great personality."

The room glimmered drearily in the flicker of the lantern. A table with rickety legs canted against one wall; a thimble and spool of thread rested in the angle between the wall and tabletop, ready to slip through. A large trunk had been shoved

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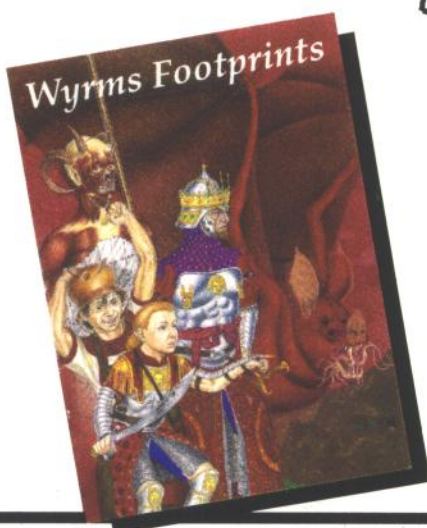
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