



Dragon Kings[®]

GAZETTE

Time to Die

One warrior marches out to what he believes will be his final battle. A refugee of a ruined kingdom, he pits himself against the heartless raiders who plunder his country.

Starving, waning, bone swords in hand
Face them, the raiders, blood stains these sands

Time to die upon their lances
Better death than life beneath their lash

They're strong, they're many, while we're so few
Our lives they've stolen, yet come, they do

Time to die upon their lances
Better death than life beneath their lash
They mock our dire circumstances
Once proud nations naught but dust and ash

We're proud. We'll fall. They'll slay us all

Time to die upon their lances
Better death than life beneath their lash
They mock our dire circumstances
Once proud nations naught but dust and ash

Time to die upon their lances
None will mourn us once these days are past
Fell times shroud us 'neath a dark spell
Curse them! The Dragon Kings can rot in hell!



Oath Manhar - The Brigands' Guild
As traditional occupations become unviable, new ones emerge to take their place. The trader turns from his shop to the black market to seek what he needs for customers. A farmer abandons blighted fields to scavenge for survival. Left with no alternatives, honest men turn to thievery, and even organize into marauding bands to scrape just enough plunder from their surroundings to survive. It is a hard life, one to which their scruples gnawed away until they...



Forward Mighty Wagons

Captured and chained, the warrior is taken from his ruined homeland on a huge caravan. Its guards, hired mercenaries, weigh their brutality against their profits.



Trisaur
The enormous cargo wagons are hauled by the dangerous trisaurs, the three-legged dragon-kin found in the deep wastelands. Trisaur harnesses lash to the beast's sides and put its powerful hind leg to use pulling its load. Never domesticated, trisaurs must be tamed in the wild. This dangerous process involves drugging a wild beast into passivity and securing a new trisaur and enormous foot-long darts. Deaths always occur, so these tasks often require expendable slaves. Never again, trisaurs often turn on their masters as a result, trisaurs...

Dug out of the wasteland, hot beneath the glare
Watch out for the land storms, the precious ore of old has been laid bare
The column rides behind us, we hug the rocks by night
What lurks here in the darkness is not frightened by our might
Not frightened by our might
Forward mighty wagons, weighted down with what we stole
Drive the beasts much harder now, lest we pay a bloody toll
Onward heavy wagons, what we haul draws angry stares
Forward mighty wagons, what we call ours, it was once theirs
Ten more days before us, 'til we reach the Verdant Vale
Our payment there awaits us, doled out by hands most pale
Oh, the wretched who pursue us give their lives to fight us so
By arms we must oppose them though our heavy, heavy hearts, they say no
Our heavy hearts say no
Forward mighty wagons, weighted down with what we stole
Drive the beasts much harder now, lest we pay a bloody toll
Forward mighty wagons, weighted down with what we stole
Drive the beasts much harder now, lest we pay a bloody toll
Onward heavy wagons, what we haul draws angry stares
Forward mighty wagons, what we call ours, it was once theirs
Forward mighty wagons
Forward mighty wagons



The Water Bringer

Unbeaten and unbowed, a proud, enslaved princess of a neighboring kingdom is forced to bring water to the warrior and the other captives. He finds strength and determination in her unspoken courage ... and perhaps something more.

Unbowed, she serves us, a princess in chains
So fair ... unashamed, bearing water so patiently
One by one, easing our pains

Those eyes, the sadness of one, who's lost her way
Never a tear, would she allow them to see
Only her stare, and my icy glare
They wouldn't dare
I must find a way, to get away

This cage keeps us apart, locks us away, far away
These chains hold my heart, held for you, one day
Alone, stolen away, from all she knew
How could it be? Proud and regal is she,
nobody's slave, and so brave
Oh brave, water she gave, water she gave
And so much more

This cage keeps us apart, locks us away, far away
These chains hold my heart, held for you, one day
This cage keeps us apart, locks us away, far away
These chains hold my heart, held for you, one day



Caravans

Enormous trains of beasts and wagons ply the Khitan trade routes among the populated regions, as they have done for centuries. The parties and cargoes involved have changed subtly in the face of the world's cataclysmic decline. Still, the caravans themselves plod across the deep ruts along traditional paths. Coming



Lotus Warriors

The warrior is bewildered by potions and incantations that make him a more docile slave, and then forced to fight as a gladiator for the amusement of his captors on the outskirts of a strange city.

A long time in chains
I'm a prisoner
Is this a dream?
Save me

Weary days pass in blurred confusion
Whips and pain, scars, contusions
Who are we? The forsaken?
Beaten down, spirits taken

Animals made to fight each other
Cheers and calls,
made to kill our brothers
Lotus rage forced upon us
To this cage fate has drawn us

I cannot clear my mind
Time's lost its meaning
Why shed these tears I cry?
Am I sane or dreaming?

Push away this clamor in my brain
I need a way, something real
The one I lost, surely love can save me
Think of her, and clutch her memory

I won't let them take my mind
Time serves my scheming
I'll cast these chains aside
My will is screaming

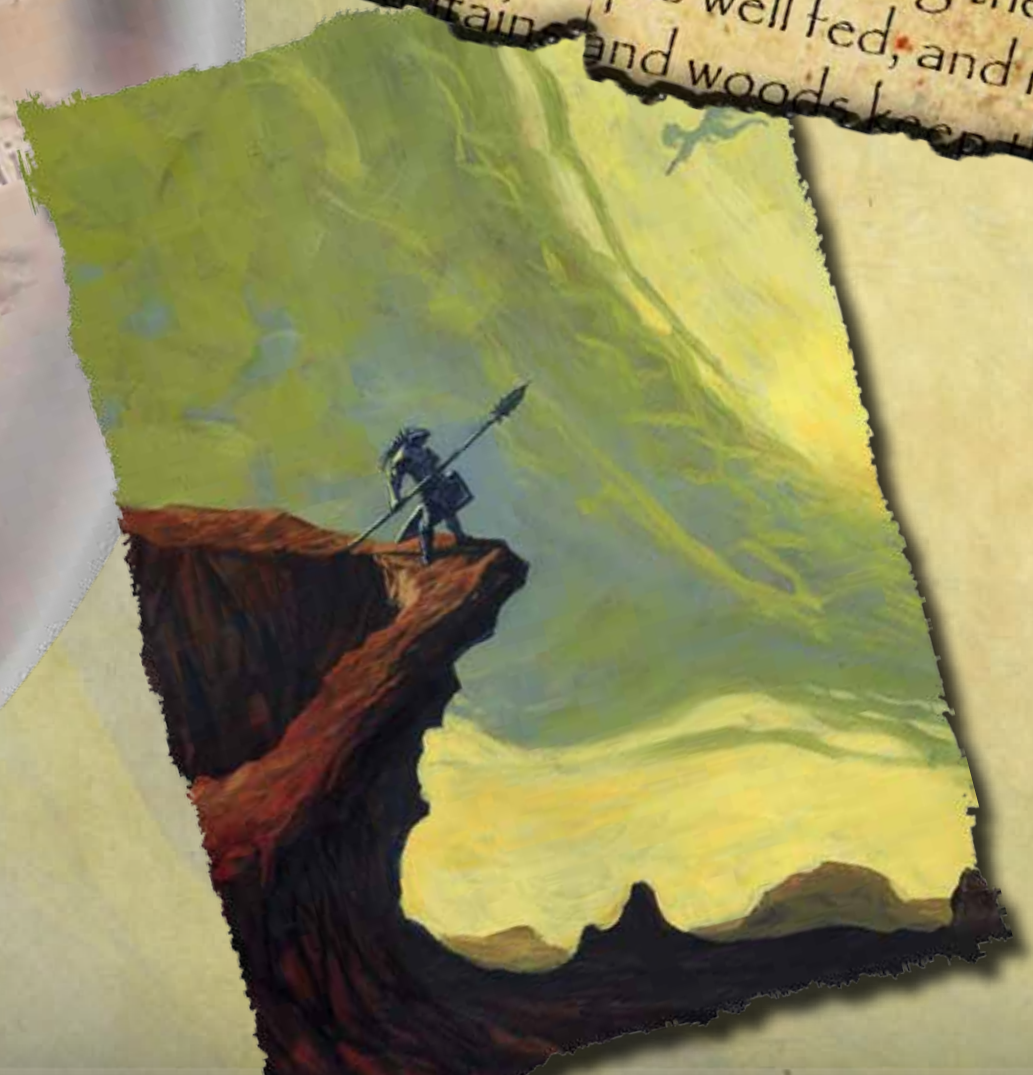
Bide my time ... watch for now ...
to escape ... in time ... in time

Keep my wits about me
Slip the chains
Slip away
I will find her ... somehow



Pharanor

Just north of the Deepshadow Mountains, the Attite city of Pharanor lies nestled between the Whitebone Wastes and Greywood. Pharanor sees spared many of the ravages of time and hostility that have ruined other Khitan cities. Its people, hard-working laborers and crafters, strive to ensure their city prospers. Plentiful game among the shadow Greywood keep people well fed, and resources nearby mountains and woods keep the



Fly By the Night Sky

Escape finds the warrior fleeing through dangerous wastelands while still chained to an inhuman adversary, a Cold Skin gladiator with unfathomable motivations.

There's blood upon our chains, we've killed men to get this far
They'll butcher our remains, and hang us from a jagged spar
So now we dare not slow, no rest now, we must not fail
How far I just don't know, before they finally lose our trail
Bound to a Cold Skin beast, can't let it slow me down
Slay it now, before it tries to kill me, but kill it how?
Fly, fly by the night sky, fly, let no one find us
Fly by the night sky, run and hide, let darkness hide us
Fly, fly by the night sky, let us fly by
We must keep up the pace, on weary feet we forge ahead
Through the bones we race, the jagged bits of things long-dead
Specters linger here, where no one can hear our prayers
Fall and they'll appear, to gladly mix our bones with theirs
If this brute could speak, oh what would it say?
Can it hate? Does it think at all? One thing's sure...
My weary life is here for him to take
Fly by the night sky, fly, let no one find us
Fly by the night sky, run and hide, let darkness hide us
Fly by the night sky, let us fly by
Fly by the night sky, fly, let no one find us
Fly by the night sky, run and hide, let the darkness hide us
Fly by the night sky, let us fly by



Cold Skins

Lizards can be found in every Khitan ecosystem from the moist fens remaining in the mountain shadows to the sun-blasted deserts. Large or small, they fill essential niches of survival wherever they can eke out an existence. The Oritahl, more commonly called "Cold Skins," are not a new race, but were previously semi-intelligent lizards, little more than animals. Since the departure of the Dragon Kings, Oritahl have slowly begun making and using simple tools and exhibiting the barest grasp of basic technologies for shelter, clothing, and fire. Other Kh

Among the Peaceful

On his own again, the warrior finds sanctuary among a people untouched by the ravages being wrought upon the world. They accept him and share their bounty.

What kind of place is this? Its like I've never seen
Breezes cool and fragrant, 'pon meadows soft and green
Here the gentle prosper, no hardship nor despair
A place of wondrous magic, proud men and women fair

I'm welcomed here unquestioned, given drink and fine repast
By men of song and reason, a safe refuge at long last
This land of grace and beauty, holds evil's grasp at bay
Can it be, I wonder? Were we meant to live this way?

Beside me, a comely maiden takes my hand
She guides me, and hopes to make me understand
A stranger, she reaches out and calls my name
I touch her, forewarned I'll never be the same

Penmai

Tukka Falk

The Peaceful

Humans who enjoy Penmai association and contact maintain migrating, round-level communities beneath

their tree-top villages. Called the peaceful, these

people come from every possible background or group: equal

slavers, dis

southern

travelers, merc

All those are drawn to a quiet, harmonious lifestyle unlike any



The Dragon Kings

The warrior's gentle hosts impart to him a vision both pleasant and troubling, images of the glorious Classic Age mixed with turbulent, present-day truths.



There was a time when the rains favored no one
Streams flowed and bounty blessed us all
Children ran joyous, lost in carefree play
While their parents welcomed the dawning of each day
The Dragon Kings had power that none
could challenge then
But times grow foul, from this world they've flown
Leaving evil pretenders to sit upon their thrones
In their absence, good kings cannot but falter
Bugs and Cold Skins free to masquerade as men
This world's wealth, picked clean as cleanest bone
While they hoard the spoils for reasons all their own
The Dragon Kings had power that none
could challenge then
But times grow foul, from this world they've flown
Leaving evil pretenders to sit upon their thrones



The Ages of Khitus

The Barbarian Age

(prehistory to 2,000 years ago)

Primitive tribes appear and wander the face of Khitus, a time of wars and chaos, and migrations.

The Classic Age

(2,000 to 1,000 years ago)

The rise of nations and city states, watched over by the beneficent Dragon Kings, a time of grace, plenty, and justice.

The Age of City States

(1,000 to 200 years ago)

The gradual, inexplicable retreat of the Dragon Kings, leaving power in the hands of jealous and ambitious mortals, also called the Age of Decline.

The Age of Despots

(200 years ago to the present)

The Dragon Kings are completely absent, foul rulers pursue their own greed. Cold Skins and Krikis are ascendant, and the world is being mercilessly plundered.



Grim Mask of Courage

Many months pass as the warrior wanders ever westward, ever nearer his lost love and her captors. He earns coins selling his sword to city after desperate city defending itself against ever strengthening marauders ... and worse.



Banners all tattered, trim ranks we pretend
Our somber procession, the wars never end
The grim mask of courage
The faces of men prepared to give up
Victory or death

Once they were many, but now they are few
Stalwart defenders, hard hearts ever true
The grim mask of courage
The faces of men prepared to give up
Victory or death

Men of courage stand together ...
A hail of arrows, thousands let fly
Another man fallen, another goodbye
Men of courage fight together ...
The fight that's worth fighting, goes on ever on
The fool hopes for better, while the
brave soldiers on
Men of courage die together ...



Daragkon - Khitan Dragons
Wild daragkin loom large across Khitus, the largest of them more powerful than any other natural creatures on the planet. Even the smallest daragkon can be a magnificent, awe-inspiring beast, which explains why it is the physical form most desired by powerful wizards and magical creatures. Sorcerers aspire to dragon form as a symbol of near god-like power. The departed Dragon Kings did such, as do several wizards who choose these fearsome forms yet today. These darag'konin ("feign-dragons") are a symbol of power lies by one sense or another. They assume the form of a dragon.



Deep in the Hivelands

Tales warn that the dreaded Black Fortress cannot be assaulted, but wanderers say the bug men's warrens may reach beneath its high walls. The warrior steels himself to sneak through the strange Hivelands.

I must go and face this evil down
By force of will I'll raze them to the ground
They have her here behind thick walls of stone
If I must I'll face them all alone

Avoid the Pale and those who crave their gold
So many eyes would sell what they behold
Another path that no sane man would tread
Among the bugs that fill my heart with dread

Deep in the Hivelands, hide away, get quietly through them
Deep in the Hivelands, I'll find a way, a way through to you

Krikis hives dug deep into the ground
Insect men all through these lands abound
More than men all through these hives
Their wisdom grows, rising even higher

For now I move, creep quiet through this place
My only chance, a brisk, determined pace
Make my way, find passage through these hives
Beneath these walls, I will find her

Deep in the Hivelands, hide away, get quietly through them
Deep in the Hivelands, I'll find a way, a way through to you

To make my way I must assume their guise
I walk among them and they won't realize
Bits of shell and chitin tied in place
A man turned bug, I pass without a trace!

Deep in the Hivelands, hide away, get quietly through them
Deep in the Hivelands, I'll find a way, a way through to you

Deep in the Hivelands, hide away, get quietly through them
Deep in the Hivelands, I'll find a way, a way through to you

I'll find my way, my way through to you

Feshass Valley

The Low Hills



KRIKIS

Krikis remain the most mysterious, inscrutable intelligent species on Khitus, despite controlling vast territories among at least three empires (and possibly more) distinct in their dominant chitin colorations. Along the frontiers surrounding the Hivelands, only warriors expand their territories or protect what they control against dangers, maintaining a wide swath of unoccupied territory as a permanent, desolate buffer between the outside world and

Be Gone

The Pretenders' otherworldly magic thwarts the warrior's courage, keeping him from his love who they keep in chains. Weary and nearly beaten, his moment of destiny is at hand.



The Black Fortress

Bev al-Khim - The Pale
The Black Tower, home of the Dragon King Pretenders, stabs the equatorial skies to the north of the detestable Krikis Hivellands. Those who have seen it say its fortified battlements stretch for miles, and swear that its tower ascends high into the sky, beyond the wispy clouds that cling to its spires, and further than eyes can see. There is no record of this place before the present age, nor have any armies ever sallied forth from its bastions. No ruler has ever presented himself for parlay with his neighboring realms.
No accusations.

Seek my enemy, deep within its lair
All alone, fate drives me on
Should I die here now, none I know will mourn

Be gone! Back to the stars
This world is ours

Dark Pretender's fire, magic's blades entwine
But through the flames, her tender eyes meet mine

Be gone! Back to the stars
This world is ours
Love's guiding my hand
It's time, heed my demand

She's here! She's here, I know it
Right where I thought she'd be
Set her free or I'll tear this place apart
But their magic's got the best of me
My mind's in a fog
Now who's this beside me? A cold skin and a wagon guard
Together we cannot fail

Rip that mask away, expose the things it hides
Not a king, but a tyrant of death and lies
Hacked to pieces now, its magic dim and drawn
Brothers in arms, standing in triumph, triumph!

Gone! Back to the stars
This world is ours
Shout victory's vow
We're the Dragon Kings now

Who are we?
We're the Dragon Kings
Who are we?
We're the Dragon Kings
Who are we?
We're the Dragon Kings
Who are we?
We're the Dragon Kings now



Beyond the Infinite

As new heroes emerge, the world's decline may at last be arrested, but the challenges to freedom and justice remain numerous.



Factions

- Bev al-Khim: Mysterious pale-skinned agents and brokers
- Boneshards: Deadly assassins scarred by hidden weapons
- Dramidge: A magic college of isolated wizards devoted to dragons
- Gare Attesa: The omnipresent Chroniclers, royal advisers and watchers
- Kuad Ahir: The Awakened, followers of the Prophet
- Merchants: From peddlers to caravan masters, the world's traders
- Nyutu: The All-Seeing, transient entertainers with unique mental powers
- Qath Manhir: Equivocally honorable brigands and enforcers
- Ractann: Bureaucratic Water Guild, emergent challengers to power
- Rakar: A magic college, the Cozeners, keepers of slave decoys
- Shadazim: Right Minders, new clergy of the ancient gods
- Trakeen: The Faithful, worshipers of the departed Dragon Kings
- Yenfansa: Feared and little-understood Devil's Children, the White Eyes



Tribes and Races

- Attites: Human negotiators and peacemakers
- Chindi: Human matriarchal traders and warriors on the fringes of the known world
- Cold Skins/Ontahl: Lizard men of the swamps with growing awareness
- Krikis: Bug men that hoard bright lode
- Makadan: Human warrior culture and source of many Khitan mercenaries
- Nordor: Human barbarian stone carvers from the frigid north
- Pachyaur: Elephantaur of the equator
- Penmai: Daring acrobatic humanoids with prehensile tails
- Prajalu: Short, stocky humans feared as poison makers and child stealers
- Martur: Slayer elephantaurs

Dragon Kings®



Mike Stone

Mark Stevens

Timothy Brown

Frank Klepacki

Mike Stone: lead and backing vocals, lead and rhythm guitars, sitar, theremin and percussion

Mark Stevens: lead and rhythm guitars

Timothy Brown: bass guitar and backing vocals

Frank Klepacki: drums and percussion

Additional backing vocals on The Water Bringer by Geneva Stone

Produced, engineered, mixed, and mastered by Frank Klepacki

Recorded at Stealth Studios, Lake Geneva, WI and Poolside Studios, Las Vegas, NV

Mastered at Klepacki Productions, Las Vegas, NV

All songs written and arranged by

Mike Stone, Mark Stevens and Timothy Brown

All lyrics by Timothy Brown

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Special thanks - Jason Henry

Mike Stone proudly uses Bergen guitars, D'Angelico guitars, Fuchs amplifiers and Seymour Duncan pickups.

Frank Klepacki proudly uses Steinberg software, Yamaha pro audio and Audio Technica microphones.

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Dragon Kings ...

... the concept album set in a fantastic and savage world

Experience Khitus, the exotic world of the Dragon Kings, a fantastic place of dunes and deserts, deadly monsters and dark sorcery! The Dragon Kings CD's twelve tracks tell the story of a single adventurer, a desperate warrior captured and enslaved to perform as a gladiator, ultimately driven by love and pride to escape and pursue his destiny across the wastelands. Hear what he hears, see what he sees, and lose yourself in a strange place of wondrous passion, courage, and magic!



Dawn on Khitus

Time to Die

Forward Mighty Wagons

The Water Bringer

Lotus Warriors

Fly By the Night Sky

Among the Peaceful

The Dragon Kings

Grim Mask of Courage

Deep in the Hivelands

Be Gone

Beyond the Infinite

RatPakRecords.com/DragonKings

Dragon Kings World Book ...

... the savage world revealed, a book of wondrous lore

Experience Khitus, the exotic world of the Dragon Kings, a fantastic place of dunes and deserts, deadly monsters and dark sorcery! Read of the Dragon King Pretenders in their Black Fortress, of the factions and strange races vying for control of the wastelands and their sand-blasted cities.

The Dragon Kings World Book tells many tales, many legends, and sets the stage for the many adventures to come. Dragon Kings is a complete setting for any fantasy role-playing game system.

dragonkingsproject.com

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