

The RuneQuest-Con Compendium



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The response to the Storytelling contest exceeded our wildest expectations. I think there were right around twenty participants. The first three stories presented here were all finalists. Eric Rowe deserves accolades for his winning tale, as do all our storytellers. *DC

Orlanth and Thed

As told by Arol Oathkeeper to the Sambari
by Eric Rowe

broos. (*murmuring by the audience*)

Broos. (*louder murmuring*)

What are you? Cowardly Yelmalions? Broos!

(*Loud Jeers*)

That's better.

Thed. (*loud murmuring*)

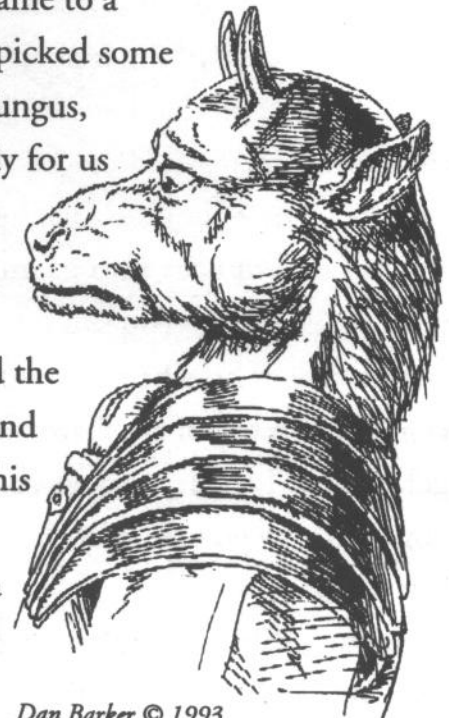
Thed! (*loud jeers*)

Good. You all know to hate the foul broo and their terrible mistress Thed, and you know they despise us as well. Perhaps many of you have heard the ancient legend which describes the enmity between King Orlanth and Vile Thed. The Colymar tell a tale wherein one of Orlanth's brothers commits a heinous act upon Thed's person, and her revenge is forcing Just Orlanth to appoint her the goddess of rape. Or perhaps you have heard the even more corrupted tale, the lie spread by the evil Lunars. In that tale it is Orlanth himself who violates Thed, and her powers of rape and revenge come as justice for his act.

Of course, these are untruths. We of the Sambari keep the true tales of our god and leave them untainted by the lies and half-truths of others. What you hear now is the tale you must tell your children of Orlanth and Thed.

This is a tale of a time long ago, when even

the gods were young. Yinkin, brother to the great Orlanth was hunting Kalor frogs in the forest. He had just spotted a purple one and had begun his stalking of it when he noticed Thed making her way through the trees. Back then Thed was not the foul Broo-birthing monstrosity we now know her to be, but was in fact a very beautiful and seemingly kind maiden. Yinkin was one of the few who distrusted her, for he could smell her wicked heart. Therefore, he allowed the frog to escape, which shows how much he distrusted Thed because the purple ones taste like raspberries and were his favorite, so he could follow her. Eventually she came to a small glade and picked some yellow faragon fungus, which fortunately for us no longer grows in the world. As she studied her prize she noticed the lurking Yinkin and was enraged by his spying of her deed. She used a horrible magic that none knew



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she possessed and drove off a terrified Yinkin. He was so scared he did not return to the clan for many weeks.

Fortunately for this story there was another witness to this event. A man saw the interaction and his mortal mind snapped from the horror. He also ran fleeing from the forest until he was found by the White Lady. Though unable to calm his fears she learned of the event he had seen and went to wise Orlanth with the news. He was greatly disturbed and called his friends together to ask for their advice. When the story had been told the Grey Sage informed them that faragon had but one use. If mixed in a drink and consumed there will be no immediate effect, but if the imbiber is later wakened in the night they will be consumed by lust and make do with whatever is available.

The group was then quite startled when Thed appeared with a gift for Orlanth, an ale she had brewed herself. Orlanth thanked her and quickly quaffed the beverage. He told her it was excellent and thanked her for it. She smiled prettily and mentioned maybe she would see him later. Once she had gone he spewed the ale from his mouth back into its mug, for he had never swallowed it. You can tell he was a great god because of how he managed to speak even with a mouth full of ale. Can any of you here do such a deed? I challenge you all! Ah, no takers as I knew. Know you see why the gods made him their king.

Anyway, Orlanth quickly figured out Thed's plan. At this time he was still wooing fair

Ernalda, but had not yet gained her hand. Thed also wished his affections and had grown very jealous. She intended him to succumb to her potion and late in the night come to him. Ernalda would not forgive his transgression and he would have to settle for Thed. This made Orlanth very angry. Orlanth again asked his friends for advice and the strange woman said she had a plan. After telling it they all laughed and agreed it was a fitting punishment for Thed.

The first part of the plan was accomplished by Issaries. He took a small piece of lead and traveled to the council of the fire tribe. There he traded it to them for a large goat, of which they had many. This is why clever traders today are said to be able to trade lead to a Yelmalion.

The second part was up to Eurmal. He took out his many disguises and combined them so that the goat looked very much like mighty Orlanth. The goat was then fed the tainted ale and put to sleep in Orlanth's bed. Sure enough, later they saw Thed sneak into the tent to accomplish her twisted plan. The noises made it difficult to sleep that night, but everyone managed to.

In the morning the whole clan was awakened by Thed's scream as she discovered her true nocturnal companion. She ran out of the house to the laughter and jeers of Orlanth and his friends. Ever since then her children have been the foul goat-men and they have hated Orlanth for having rightfully shamed and refused their mother.

faster she danced, until her feet were a blur above the blades, and the rattles buzzed without ceasing. The cloak lifted as she spun till it was as high as her shoulders and her lissome body was exposed to the lustful gaze of Ragnagnar. When it seemed that she could dance no faster, she cried out, "Fly free, little sisters!", and the cloak dissolved into a rain of agony and death upon the crowd. The snakes which she had clutched she threw into the face of Ragnagnar, and as he screamed in pain, she swept up her sword and the other, and slicing her brother's bonds, thrust one hilt into his hand. Holding his other hand in hers, they ran from the tent towards the river.

Long had the viper clan warred with the chaos tribe and now they were among their enemies who were mostly unarmed and unarmoured. The serpents bit and stung, face and fess, heel and hand. For each foe that died of tooth and poison another died of terror and panic. Their deed done, the serpents slid into the darkness, and were lost in the night. Amidst the rage and confusion of the moment, no-one saw the captives escape at first. All too soon, the army boiled out of camp, hot upon revenge and recapture.

As they reached the banks of the Black Eel River, the pursuit was close indeed. Vinga cried out, "For the sake Heler of the Water Tribe, our father's bondbrother, save from Chaos, O Spirit of the Black Eel." Without waiting for a reply, Vinga and Barntar leapt into the water, and it close above their heads. When the creatures of Ragnagnar came to the shore, there was no sign of either Vinga or Barntar, neither upstream nor down. Thus the reported the two drowned in the river. The spirit of the river had heard their plea, however, and carried them safely away, hidden from the eyes of all searchers.

When they were abreast of the camp of Orlanth, the spirit brought them gently to shore, bidding them remember her service. As Vinga and Barntar rose, wet from the water, their kin found them. The word of their return flew before them, and all grief turned to joy. Gre was the feasting, and great was the praise from Elmal himself. From that day forward, Vinga Ernaldasdottir s in council with the greatest of the warriors, and led wom to battle in her own way.

The Tale of Thrimball the Storyteller

as recounted by
Rich Staats

I was but ten years old when Thrimball entered our camp one evening and delivered his tale, but the visit would long be remembered as the day when our chieftain, Gregor Staffswinger, was fooled by an Illuminator into sparing a Trickster's life.

We were gathered for the Dark Season rites, and as was our custom, all of the best storytellers were gathered to deliver their tales. The usual crowd was there, Gomgrof Troll Slayer, Iggy the Corpulent, Shalishmak the Wise, and a host of others, but the storytelling contest was open to all. Iggy was the local favorite. The rules for participation were simple. The story teller got to his or her feet and presented the tale to the assembled group. In exchange the story teller was given a straw tick to sleep on, a meal to warm his belly and the admiration of the crowd.

I was sitting near the door flap, fairly far away from the blazing hearth at the center as I was not yet of age, when Thrimball entered the tribal hut. He looked at the assembled warriors, women and children of the tribe, took their measure and nodded to himself in silent approval. I was close enough to see the sparkle in his eye as he made his entrance. He noticed me too, because he reached down and pulled a lunar from behind my ear and handed to me!

Gregor noticed Thrimball at once, but it was not fitting for the chieftain to greet a stranger in our midst at once. Thrimball did not have the ritual markings on his face, showing him to be one of our tribe. After another flagon of ale, "borrowed" from a Pelorian trader who strayed into the

tribal lands unescorted, Gregor boomed out "Ah! And, who is this stranger in our midst? Come forward and tell me what brings you here to our hearth to steal our warmth and light on this cold Dark Season night? What have you to offer in exchange for our hospitality?" Thrimball was half guided and half manhandled to the hearth.

Thrimball stood silent for a moment while he and Gregor locked eyes. A smile crept across both countenances, and Thrimball bowed somewhat melodramatically to Gregor while addressing his words to the assembled crowd. "Oh wise and ferocious chieftain Gregor! Your fame has spread far beyond the limits of your tribal lands - vast though they be - and, I, Thrimball the Storyteller, wish only to share the hearth of one so noble and a tribe so powerful and gracious. In exchange for a warm bowl of porridge and a straw tick I shall spin a tale tonight as none of the tribe has heard before." Gregor laughed aloud for it was well known that nothing intrigued Gregor more than a good story! Gregor had felled nearly as many foes with the honey of his tongue as the sharp edge of his iron bastard sword. Gregor gestured dramatically "arise Thrimball and sit here by the hearth! As you are a stranger in our midst, you shall be the last to present us with a tale this evening." Thrimball straightened himself while suppressing a smile and sat down by the glowing flame.

All the storytellers accounted themselves well, but Iggy outdid himself. The tribe rose as one to their feet, stomping, clapping and cheering Iggy, and he was clasped warmly on the back by Gregor as Iggy ambled away from the glow of



imps with sticks. The imps broke and fled, the illusions scattered with the winds, and Eurmial sought to hide in Orlanth's clouds.

Finally, Yelmalio and Orlanth came together once again and now they clashed with arms. Orlanth cast his new Lightning Spear, but the weapon had no hold on the fiery son of Yelm. Yelmalio in his turn cast his Firespear, but Orlanth's rains quenched its fury. Their chariots closed and Orlanth thundered. Yelmalio's steeds fell, turning over his glorious chariot. Yelmalio stood now with sword and spear in hand, though his Golden Bow was lost. When Orlanth turned and charged, Yelmalio stood his ground and struck at the right hand ox. It fell and broke the chariot's balance, neatly turning the cart upon a spiral path away. Yelmalio's sword, though, was now shattered and Orlanth leapt upon him.

Orlanth raised his sword for a killing blow, but Yelmalio drew upon his solar powers and blinded Orlanth. Thus the blow fell astray. Yelmalio regained his feet and took up his shield. The two fought back and forth upon the Hill of Gold, each spilling the other's blood, but gaining no advantage.

Yelmalio finally recognized the truth, that neither would tire and that Orlanth would keep returning to the attack. But he also knew then that even in the heaviest storm the light could still be found, within himself if not without.

So Yelmalio cast his spear of hope and Orlanth was daunted. Realizing that he could not win, Orlanth withdrew. And as he withdrew, he declared to Yelmalio that Ernalda was truly his, but only if he could win her back from Orak, the hell wind who now held her for his own.

Yelmalio then turned north to face the dark and wintry winds of Valind and the hell wind of Orak which Ryar barely held in check.

sticks and gravel and garbage that Eurmál served him..

Eurmál continued on this way for lunch, tea, and supper. The Ogre's belly was stuffed but this trash could not satisfy him. His stomach growled louder.

Eurmál slipped out of the house again that night and went about his collecting. Again he hid his materials around the pantry and kitchen and piled up more rocks in the big cauldron. The second day's cooking and feeding went like the first. The beautiful aromas and tastes drove the Ogre frantic with hunger, but the trash he was eating could not satisfy his appetite. His stomach growled like a ravenous bear.

The third night and day progressed the same way. By tea time the Ogre's belly was roaring like a mill as the gravel and sticks were grinding away in his stomach. Eurmál watched the Ogre's eyes following him hungrily as he worked in the kitchen. He saw the drool trickling from the sharp canine teeth which the Ogre was no longer managing to hide. As he cooked, Eurmál began to undo the disguise that made him look so skinny.

"Look," he said, "I'm getting back to my normal weight." He pinched a roll of fat on his belly and showed it to the Ogre. The Ogre's stomach roared so loudly that the whole house shook with it. Drool ran like a small brook down the Ogre's chin.

Eurmál hitched up his tunic and adjusted his apron to get back to work. He stepped over to the fireplace and turned his back on the Ogre. He bent down to stir the pot that was simmering there and his plump tender rump was clearly exposed to the Ogre. The Ogre immediately hurled himself across the kitchen to seize Eurmál. He was ready to eat Eurmál raw!

Crash! His foot shot through the floorboards that Eurmál had loosened. The Ogre tripped and went flying through the air, right at Eurmál's back! Eurmál ducked

down and the Ogre flew right over him and into the roaring fireplace. Quick as thought, Eurmál reached up to loosen the cauldron, which was now full of rocks, and it swung around into the fireplace. Plunk! Right down on top of the Ogre, pinning him in the fire where he lay screaming his pain and hunger. Cheerfully, Eurmál grabbed the stacked faggots and tossed them into the fire till it blazed up like a furnace.

Eurmál went dancing round the kitchen, singing praises to his cleverness and eating up all the Ogre's remaining food. (Which wasn't very much after three days feasting by Eurmál.) The Ogre was completely burned away to soot and went flying up the chimney.

His feast done and his vengeance achieved, Eurmál left the house and danced down the road. What he didn't realize was just how hungry the Ogre had been when he was burned up.

He was so ravenously hungry that even the little specks of soot to which he had been reduced were still hungry! He was so hungry that his stomach was still growling, but now that he was only tiny specks of soot the growling had become a high-pitched whine instead of a deep bass roar. The cloud of soot that hovered above the chimney saw Eurmál dancing away and swept down upon him. Each little speck bit a chunk out of Eurmál as big as the speck itself. Eurmál slapped and batted, batted and slapped, but there were too many. He had dozens of tiny bites before he turned and fled as fast as he could run, down the road through the forest to the great river, where he hurled himself into the water. Frustrated, the hungry swarm gave up and dispersed through the forest.

That is why, ever since, the northern forest has had hordes of little black flies that will eat you down to bare bones if they get the chance.

Not overheard at RuneQuest-Con . . .

There was these trolls, see. And I was one of those Humakti. So I whipped out this Sword of Fireballs which I found in the Cave of Doom after defeating Babeester Gor in single combat by rolling "01" forty-five times in a row using nothing but my front teeth.

Where was I?... oh yeah. So then I blasted the trolls, accidentally setting Pavis on fire. But the Lunars said that it was all right because I rolled an "01" on my Oratory. The trolls had been burned to a crisp, except for their soft metal treasures, among which was the original Lead Cross that....

What, your event is starting?... I'll make it quick. So, Cthulhu starts to rise from the sunken city of Sartar... Why are you running away? Then after Humakt lent me his sword and Zzabur gave me hundreds of moist towelettes....

Wait, come back!



Tim Beecher

- ¹⁰ In the traditional Orlanthe rituals of hospitality and gift-giving, the *meat gift* is “a thing we offer only to kinsmen, and those as good as them” (KoS p.62). It would thus be appropriate at a wedding. Certainly the curse for breaking such a hospitality-tie would be great, and the Lawspeaker’s caution is wholly justified.
- ¹¹ This story is essentially an Orlanthe’s retelling of *Mr. Fox*, a traditional English folk-tale (obliquely referred to in Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*). My text owes much to the 1821 version collected in Angela Carter’s *Virago Book of Fairy Tales*, and at least as much to the oral version recounted by Peter Ewing at several meetings of the Oxford Arthurian Society. The original Gloranthan tale is told in *King of Sartar* p.137:

“One time, in disguise, Sartar dealt with the foul Brangbane, the king of the Dinacoli tribe who was buying daughters from distant families with illusory gold. He would cut off their fingers to make a vile brew of evil potency which gave him great power, and then kill the women.

“Sartar’s magic gave the evil king an insatiable appetite, and an illness which made all real food repulsive to him. Brangbane solved this by eating the dead, and extracting power from the corpses. But though he survived as a ghoul, he was ever pursued by the ghosts of those he had unjustly slain. Furthermore, the ghosts of these women can be called upon by any Sartarite who needs help against ghouls. Brangbane still runs about the hills of Sartar, plagued and hating, still full of great power until the wailing ghosts catch up with him. His name is usually not spoken, and he is called the King of Ghouls.”

For this version of this story, it proved difficult at first to identify the antagonist without giving the game away from the start. But as Brangbane is customarily not named (to avoid attracting his attention?), while any of his modern epithets would be inappropriate, it proved overwhelmingly tempting to identify him with the trickster, Fox, a mythical enemy of the Ducks and the Swan People. The key element of the lady’s finger plays the same role in both versions of the tale, and appears even more appropriate in its Orlanthe setting than in the old English story from which it was derived; while Mr. Fox’s “God forbid’s” find their ironic comeuppance.

HOME OF THE BOLD

Conceived and Written by David Hall and Kevin Jacklin
RuneQuest-Con Referees - Brandon Brylawski, David Gadbois, Brian Carpenter,
Ken Rolston, David Cheng, and a whole bunch of volunteer "Crested Dragonewts"

Role Call

Janet Anderson - Berta Featherpenny (Grazelander priestess)
 Paul Anderson - Romne Sharpword (Sambari housecarl)
 Shannon Appel - Vamastal Greyskin (Sambari king)
 Andy Ballantine - Asquai Stormpetrel (Grazelander military attache)
 Chris Becker - Yesugai Kuckuk (Grazelander Cultural Attache)
 Tom Beeson - Norpin Hopcherry (Stonemason's Guildmaster)
 Maurice Beyke - Egrid the Enlightened (Aide to Harvar Ironfist)
 Robert Bisbee - Alfgar Goodspear (Locaem tribal king)
 David Blizzard - Corwen (Colymar tribe)
 Ron Boerger - Hemrid the Ox (Balmyr king)
 Bill Bridges - Lemidus the Scribe (Aide to Gordius)
 Nick Brooke - Temertain the Learned (Prince of Sartar)
 John Brown - Halthippus the Inspired (Guardian of the Flame Altar)
 James B Chapin - Leonidas of Darleep (Lunar Magistratus)
 James D Chapin - Dimi Hardhide (Leatherworker's Guildmaster)
 David Chapin - Pliny Dropgoode (Reporter)
 Diana Chapin - Yrsa Nightbeam (Torkani queen)
 Paula Crock - Elspeth Halfbarrow (Earth priestess)
 Bryan Davis - Tayang of the Glowing lake (Aide to Subatei)
 Fred Davis - Ozymandius Sharporn (Praxian "trader")
 Mike Dawson - Harvar Ironfist (Duke of Alda-chur)
 Robert B. Detter - Paravor Sureseat (Poljoni "trader")
 David Dunham - Magnyrd the Black (Gordius' spymaster)
 Jon Evans - Count Stolwitz (Heroic cavalry commander)
 Marc Eyraud - Hulus Hinglesias (Lunar seneschal)
 Scott G. Ferrier - JD Brightstone (Jeweller's Guildmaster)
 John Flavin - Sarostip Cold-eye (Humakti Sword)
 Brian Forester - Blackmor the Peaceable (Colymar king)
 Mark Foster - Oleas Quipp (Weaponmaster's Guildmaster)
 Paul Gilles - Ormond Sacker-Sigerson (Lunar Advocate)
 Mark Gilles - Goram Whitefang (Telmori bodyguard)
 Ian Gorlick - Tiberius Augustus Hector (Lunar Sergeant-at-Arms)
 Andrew Greenberg - Servizi Interbankeri (Moontown leader)
 Nils K. Hammer - Toleander Planter
 ("Head of the Financiers' Guild")
 Paul Harmaty - Old Herb (a storyteller in Geo's)
 Paul H. Heinz - Honest Gordon Greenhill (the bookie)
 Rhys Hess - Arkator Longspear (Sun Dome Templar)
 James Ho - Denis Quailfoot (the best thief in town)
 Eric Jablow - Publicus the Punctilious (Aide to Gordius)
 Oliver Jovanovic - Groblob Grinlips
 (Shady dealer from Troll Corner)

Barbara Jackson - Estal Donge (Temertain's consort)
 Yvonne Kaplan - Malana Goodnight (Chalana Arroy healer)
 John A. King - Torvald Rolfsson (Dinacoli king)
 Curtis Lyons - Nimkin Fastcard (Foreign merchant)
 Peter Maranci - Sir Tutophet Ixthanin (Knight of Heortland)
 Finula McCaul - Terpitia Bosky (Etyries Merchant)
 Mike McGloin - Constable Pugh
 John Medway - Jubba the Hood (Lunar spymaster)
 David Millians - Wertor Orindori (Tarsh Ambassador)
 Mark Minster - Alvar Stormsson (Amad king)
 Mark Mohrfield - Atticus the Travelled (Tarsh merchant)
 Noel Montelegre - Tatius Bracegirdle (Reporter)
 Michael O'Brien - Gordius Silverus (Lunar Provost and Governor)
 Sue O'Brien - Alcapata Honorius (Tax collector)
 Jeff Okamoto - Morak Moran (Head of the Underworld)
 Alison Place - Nerissa Bracegirdle (Domestic Servant)
 Rebecca "Madriel" Bisbee - Tamera Threeslice (Warrior-woman)
 Paul Reilly - Sigilius Doyne (Etyries Merchant)
 Roderick Robertson - Subatai of the Silken Tongue
 (Grazelands Ambassador)
 Neil Robinson - Antonio Smallheap (Jeweller's Guild apprentice)
 Jim Rogers - Flavius Ginnicus (Gin Salesman)
 Eric Rowe - Ontorius Threadneedle (Lunar bureaucrat)
 Lawrence Schick - Portin Dunbar (Town Crier)
 John Schmidt - Constable Dibble
 Scott Schneider - Justin Blundar (Praxian "trader")
 Michael Schwartz - Thufir Twosword (Humakti sword)
 Malcolm Serabian - Aleham Ratsbane (Tarshite Lieutenant)
 Rich Staats - Spensor Marksson (Issaries merchant)
 Chris Stafford - Clem Beastwood (Bounty hunter)
 Greg Stafford - Montague Goodcandle (Royal Librarian)
 Michael Strathearn - Toning Hardblow (Enstalos king)
 Curtis Taylor - Edruf Strongbreath (Malani king)
 Kendra Tornheim - Ingie Thickfist (Local tough)
 Hans van Halteren - Skalfi Blackbrow (Lismelder king)
 John Walker - Ranulf Grimblade (Culbrea king)
 Scott Watson - Ivar Quickstep (Cinsina king)
 Andy Weill - Tolstoy Arrowroot (Union leader)
 Jeannie Whited - Juliana Silverus (Gordius' fair daughter)
 Robert Wolfe - Laertes Sciplilies (Stalwart Lunar officer)
 Paul Woodmansee - Lergius Cassius (Lunar General)
 Mike Young - Previous Horserider (Barman of Geo's)

Editor's Note: There were a handful of casting changes at the last minute. There are probably a few people on this list getting undeserved credit for a given role, and thus there's an equal number of folks going unheralded. Our apologies for not being able to give 100% proper recognition.

~DC



GORDIUS SILVERUS

Lunar Provost of Boldhome

Michael O'Brien

A transcript of this document later found its way into the Nochet Collectanea, a diverse collection of assorted documents held for public use in the great reading room of the Nochet Temple of Holy Wisdom. An editor, unknown, but almost certainly of Lunar origin and conversant with the events at Boldhome, makes a number of remarks which are included below.

From the Inquisitorial Commission into the Rebellion at Boldhome, 1624. Carried out in the field before Tattius the Bright.

The defence oration of Gordius Silverus, deposed provost of the city.

[Editor's Note: As the only priest available with Truth spells was confined to his tent with a virulent attack of Uleria's Measles that day, parts of Gordius's account could be interpreted as self-serving and extremely partial, particularly his explanation of how he ended up far away in Casino Town after the revolt.]

"I've paced it out from side to side, 'tis five miles long and two miles wide..."

Despite my love of poetry, I had barely time to compose the above two stanzas in my time as Lunar Provost of Boldhome, so busy was I in the service of the Empire. Notwithstanding the fact that parts of Boldhome lie in ruins following the uprising, I am confident that the Emperor will see that I carried out my duties in an exemplary fashion, and have in fact brought Sartar firmer within his grasp.

So onerous were my duties, I had little time for the social niceties - I made a brief appearance at Temertain's garden party, and officiated at the opening of the Chariot Track but could not stay for any races. And stories of trollish walktapes, a vampire in the streets and other scandals - these I left for my constables to deal with, for I was embroiled in high politics.

I saw my main task to be that of fostering closer ties with the Sartarite tribal kings. Our original hope that they would unite under beneficent rule of Temertain the Philosopher King was of course by now simply embarrassing, and there was still no sign of an heir (though I believe Temmy had somehow got his hands on a sort of aphrodisiac: he promised me that Sartar's Flame would "shoot up thirty feet before too long"!). The policy my predecessor Tattius instituted - the taking of hostages - only caused resentment, not loyalty. With the famine upon them, I decided to take a different tack with the Sartar kings. I called them together and made them a simple offer: they could accept gifts of grain to feed their starving minions in return for accepting provisional Lunar citizenship and allowing our missionaries to freely operate in their lands. And, if they converted to Lunar worship they could have their hostages back: as citizenship is hereditary, their children would therefore be citizens too, and so would be free to go as they please.

The already loyal King Blackmor of the Colymar had painted his face bright red as a symbol of his devotion to the Lunar Way, so I awarded him full Lunar citizenship. Later, he was arrested as a traitor, but we found that he had been unjustly accused.

Apart from him, three more kings accepted my offer of grain for loyalty. The first was Hemrid the Ox, king of the Balmyr, whose son had killed by Lunar troops while resisting arrest. One might think it remarkable that he should then convert to our religion, but the court case was resolved in such a way he saw the fairness and impartiality of Lunar justice. Leonidas wisely decreed that the soldiers involved were acting beyond their orders, so the good name of the Lunar army was not besmirched. Hemrid gained his satisfaction with the punishment of the criminals - I made sure this happened by promising Leonidas full jurisdiction in Boldhome if he found this way - and so accepted the Goddess's embrace.

The other kings to convert were Skalfi Blackbrow of the Lismelder, whose tribe secures our border against Delecti, and Ivar Quickstep, the ambitious king of the Cinsina.

The problem of Harvar Ironfist would be a more difficult problem to solve. I welcomed the self-styled "Prince" of Far Point and "Duke" of Alda Chur with alacrity. Harvar came out in support of us during the critical first days of Starbrow's Rebellion, but still had no formal ties to the Empire. He made it explicitly clear to me that he would finally swear formal allegiance and homage to the kingdom of Tarsh once he was permitted to join the cults of Yelm and Moonson Imperator. I took up Harvar's cause, for binding Harvar closer to the empire politically (through his oath to Tarsh) and religiously (by joining the Red Emperor cult) would inextricably link his fortunes with ours and secure our northern reaches forever.

I know that my critics and detractors might ask why I so readily acceded to Count Leonidas's request that resources be diverted away from the Reaching Moon project towards building the Temple to Yelm in Moontown. I did this so that the Count would thereby owe me a debt of gratitude, and would not forget my decision when it came to the thorny question of Harvar Ironfist's candidature into his cult. Besides such a diversion was only temporary, for I obtained a promise from Harvar that should his quest to join Yelm succeed, he would make a sizable donation towards completing the sun temple. We could then go back to building the Reaching Moon temple in earnest.

I am a practical man and I find theological quibbles pointless, however Count Leonidas made it clear that he would only induct Harvar into the cult of Yelm if proof of his noble ancestry could be found. Apparently Harvar's high standing in the Yelmalio cult stood for nothing in the Count's eyes, even though I am led to believe Yelmalio is considered the Son of the Sun in these parts.

It was essential for my plan that proof of Harvar's ancestry be found, so I summoned the Royal Librarian, Montague Goodcandle. Sages and scholars in this barbaric region sport



"WE ARE, AFTER ALL, PROFESSIONALS"

by John Medway

Evidence presented in the third prosecution of Jubba Penumbus, also known as Jubba "The Hood", ex "Aide de Camp", "Facilitator" and "Master of Spies" to Tatius the Bright, former Governor of Dragon Pass.

Prosecution Note: This is another of the now three, contradictory diaries of events near the time of the Fall of Boldhome kept by Jubba. In our opinion, the three diaries were kept, so that different information could be presented, or obscured, depending on the political situation.

It is our opinion that the diary originally released as evidence at the first of the Boldhome prosecutions, was in fact mostly false. The remanded sentence, granted Jubba, in exchange for this "information" was obtained through treachery and deceit, and should be reversed. Also, the punishments meted out on those on whom Jubba informed, will be rolled back, or compensated for, where this is physically or magically possible.

The fragmentary nature of this third diary, causes us to believe that it was never revised and polished, as were the others. It is possible that these were notes current with the events described, and that this may be a truer accounting than the others. However, Jubba has shown himself to be a master of disinformation and lies, so this may be how he desired this diary to be interpreted. Also, some of the days and times differ from other accounts, which implies that some notes may have been touched up, or that Jubba became aware of certain situations before or after others. His subtitling of days follows much of the rest of each days writings.

Following are selected passages from the diary, both in evidence of wrongdoing, and as a report on the condition of the Imperial Administration under Gordius.

Empty-Half/Fireday: Low Life

I sit here and seethe. That rat-bastard Magnyrd has again shown impertinence to his betters. Time to teach him some respect.

That fat slob of a Provost, too. Sent report to Tatius. The Temple is again slowed by the Provost making the wrong concessions to the locals. Make the buggers work for their food! Hulias is getting a bit testy. Supply must have dried up.

Servizi needs a leash. Gods, what aspirations. Will not back off from mayor.

Dibble needs something to do. Anything.

Get dirt on Leonidas. Make it?

Into Geos again! This is amazing. They haven't been this careless in more than a season. Puzzling, though - no forment, other than the usual background noise. Meeting place changed? Too bad Tolstoy's on their side. Could have been useful.

Peremedi's accent.

Full/Wildday: Our Lady of Madness

I must have something done about Lergius. After that foolish expedition into the pocket, we've lost most of what good will we have earned in the past season. Is Stolwitz capable enough? Careful - Icillius? Or is it Wertor?

Construction is nearly at a halt. It's too late for such delays, regardless of the Healers. Gordius doesn't seem to mind. Change it.

Subutai thought he recognized me as P. I was able to talk my way out, but he may be suspicious. P. needs to lay low.

Who's that Juliana's with?

Sigilius seemed uncomfortable when Terpitia showed up. They obviously still don't know about each other. Amusing.

Just when I think the natives have half a brain there's Temertain, again. Doddering old fool. Is dealing with him worth it? Does it gain us anything? Talk with Tatius.

Full-Half/Godsday: I'd rather be your arch-nemesis

Well, Magnyrd is cozying up. What's that snake up to? Note: call off the bankers - this could be interesting. Is the Provost that aware of how precarious his position is? Does he realize what kind of boob Lergius is?

Read Lergius the riot act. Surprised at the lack of contraband in Geos, was he? At least he'll talk to me first, now. Though I may have leaned on him too late... Send word to Tolstoy to keep low. Sigilius is a sleaze, but pliable... Push moderate position. Talk with Hulias.

Shady Esrolian peddling a large number of weapons in town. This is not acceptable. Get Lergius to buy them up, or have something happen.

Hulias is more cooperative. Must have found some H. Try to find someone else for Tonaling to suck up to.

Up Yelm Emperor's ass. Leonidas is becoming a burden. Get him to cooperate.

Prosecution note: At this point Jubba obviously snapped off the quill of his pen, as there is a large smear of ink, and a tear in the paper. We have been unable to determine if this was accidental, or was to cover up something he had written.

What is with Terpitia? Favor Torvald?

No progress on Temple. Do something about that idiot provost.

What does that loitering troll want?

Crescent-Go/Freezeday: Power, Corruption and Lies

Alcapata Honorius, my Goddess. That tax assessor is devious, though reasonable enough. Poll tax - We are brilliant! It took the Provost a few minutes to work out the math, though. Even Magnyrd was rolling his eyes at this! We should probably be able to insure Sigillius. Or anyone, but Servizi. Even Herb?

G's face! When he heard of the Inquisitor... It might all be worth it to see his glorious incompetence brought to a messy end.

Magnyrd has been useful, and cooperative, and it seems genuine. Either I am senile, or he is genuinely concerned about the situation. Hasn't said much about the Provost, though. He's been spending some time with that obvious Grazelander spy. Black cloak. Hah! How subtle. Wish they'd bathe.

Remember accident at Moonson Temple.

Stolwitz seems to be a man with honor. Nevertheless usable?

Lergius is losing even more quickly in the South than I thought that even he could. Latest word from Tatius is not so "Bright". Contingencies made.

Selling weapons permits to rebels. If ever a questionable policy... Provost has new silver utensils and goblets. Coincidence? Leonidas might be interested...

Where in the Hells of the Tax Demons is Toleander?

Where is that merchant with the weapons? Black hood time?

Progress with Torvald. Tomorrow talk with Leo. about Hemrid.

Damn! Bloody vampire got Terpitia. Shameful waste. Get Dimi in line.

Dying/Waterday: Light at the End of the Tunnel?

We've got the Grazelanders. Good. We probably disenfranchised too many of the locals. Servizi won. That's easy to fix. Hopefully they won't mind a moderate like Sigillius. Hulias helpful. Make sure his supplier stays open.

May be able to fix a compromise to satisfy Hemrid. L. was ver reasonable. What's gotten into him?

Dimi becoming more of a liability. Trolls don't like what his activities do to night business. Hulias is downplaying the news about Terpitia and the others. Offer Grinlips Dimi in exchange for canceling the walktapus buffet he's planning, and for handing over the cook? His ZZ funboys might enjoy the fun.

Prosecution note: this affirms that Jubba was concealing information regarding the vampire who murdered several persons before the riots began. Also apparent is his knowledge of a murderous cook, a fugitive from a Lunar regiment.

How many of those permits has Gordius allowed sold? This is astonishing. He's already run out of vellum, and is using cheap local paper. Get word to Arrowroot to start a riot. Warn of this folly before it is too late.

Prosecution note: it is our belief that this is an attempt by Jubba to cover over any exploration of possible connection between him and the missing seal of the office of the Provost. Such a connection has not been proved, but further investigation may be in order. It is known that Jubba fled Boldhome a suspiciously wealthy man, though that could be from fraudulent expense vouchers.

Alcapata: Pick-pocket? Ha! Arrest her?

Prosecution note: Further evidence damning Alcapata, as it has been hinted that Jubba had her watched. If one of Jubba's eyes didn't see the event, it may very well not have happened.

Remember: We are after all, professionals. We are professionals. We are professionals.

Prosecution note: Another pen nib snapped here.

Black/Clayday: A Day of Shame

Damn! The pony boys are off now. Subutai's spy is still asking for asylum in a most unsubtle way. Lose him. Harvar instead of Temertain still seems do-able. Suggest it to him and arrange salamanders?

committing crimes against the natives. Jubba said that we shouldn't let them off, or it might cause trouble with the natives. Servizi said we should get the troopers off, which made me think Jubba was right. So I suggested that Stolwitz get his troops found guilty, given a minor sentence, and I would have them transferred out of town.

The troops I had patrolling the Jonstown road reported back. They discovered clear evidence that the Malani tribe were behind the ambush of the Gin consignment. I also had a dispatch that the Sambari were mobilizing for revolt. Thanks to Blackmor, and some grain deals that Gordius had arranged, I was able to get the Cinsina and Balmyr tribes to help us. I decided that it was in the best interests of the Empire if we had Sartarites attacking Sartarites, rather than a Lunar attack on the Sartarites. So, I had the Cinsina attack their traditional enemies, the Malani, and the Balmyr attack their traditional enemies, the Sambari. These raids turned out to be very effective because the rebel tribes had come to Boldhome to help with the revolution.

On Clayday I had another offer of mercenaries for hire, this time from Sir Ethilrist and his Black Horse Troop. His offer was most reasonable, but I couldn't get into see Gordius to get the money. At the time Wertor Orindori, the Tarsh ambassador, was also waiting to see Gordius to complain about Grazelander raids. I made a deal with him - we would each pay for half of the fee, and I would use the troops to guard the Grazelander border. I paid for my half out of my own pocket, with a small loan from my aide Laertes. I figured we could use the troops, and could always redeploy them to a more useful position later if needed. My personal wealth was never important to me anyway.

Throughout the week there had been several murders, and rumors of a Vampire, but I hadn't been able to help until Clayday. It was then that I learned that Demi Hardhide, the man I had bought the armor for the troops from (whom I still owed a third installment payment) was the Vampire. I had just seen him at the Dead Broo tavern minutes before I heard the news. So I told some people to follow a few minutes after me, and I went back to find him. There he was, not knowing that I knew his true evil form, and he let me approach thinking that I was going to finish paying for the armor. After I had pinned him, several more from the bloodthirsty crowd ganged up on him and we all attacked, destroying his undead form.

As dusk fell after the Vampire's death, Gordius had some unknown evidence that the rebels were going to revolt the next day, and we should get troops onto the street that night. He declared martial law, and I posted three companies on the streets, and one in Moontown (with Gordius).

The morning of Windsday started out well. But shortly after the news of martial law was read, there was rioting. I sent troops to the People's Podium first, and we beat some crowds away, but that wasn't where the real problem was. The worst rioting was in Geo's Pocket. We were just turning to go into Geo's Pocket, when in the other direction rioting started from the Humakt Temple and Merchant District. In the rush, due to poor communications, two companies went

to the Humakt temple (under Laertes and Ratsbane) while I took the third company into Geo's Pocket. I didn't have a proper view of how many were rioting, and I thought that one company would be enough. I was wrong. My troops were overrun and many killed, but I managed to escape back to Moontown.

I went to Lunar headquarters to gather the fourth company and put them on the streets, but just as I arrived, the HQ came under attack by two crazed Sartarite rebels. I rushed to slaughter them, but was shocked when I found that one of them was my friend, Skalfi Blackbrow. Fortunately before I was forced to raise my hand against my friend, one of Gordius' scribes, I think it was Lemidus, Mindblasted him. Both attackers went down to overwhelming forces.

However, this suicide attack had delayed for several crucial minutes getting the fourth company onto the streets. Ratsbane came back to the headquarters saying that Moontown was in flames. We quickly got the troops out then and put down problems in Moontown. We then met up with Count Stolwitz and the two other companies, regrouped, and prepared to counterattack into Geo's Pocket.

The final battle for Boldhome was close. There were heavy casualties on both sides, but we were defeated in the end. Boldhome itself was gutted. Gordius disappeared; I presume he fled with his fortune. Count Stolwitz, Ratsbane, and I fought a holding action with the troops and to my pride, many other Lunar citizens fought valiantly with us rather than flee. Stolwitz was killed in a heroic charge, but the rest of us escaped. My aide, Laertes, using his leave of absence as an excuse, had fled with Esta to protect her. In my heart I can't blame him, as he was protecting his family.

After the battle, we retreated in good order. I still have several regiments in the district, and feel that we can quell this rabble in a season or two. Also, Argrath sailed off, so the situation is stronger in Prax and we can draw even more troops to fight the rebellion.

I was questioned extensively by an Imperial Inquisitor after the loss of Boldhome. I told him that Gordius had acted poorly, and if anyone should get the blame (and someone always does), it was him. Gordius pilfered too much money, so we weren't able to afford to buy everything that we needed. Had I been able to hire a few more mercenaries (like I wanted to and was offered), we might have been able to hold Boldhome. Also, had I been able to buy all of Quipp's weapons, he wouldn't have had to sell them to others (I suspect he sold them to the rebels). After all, he had to sell them to someone.

The Inquisitor seemed to accept what I said, and hinted that if Gordius takes the fall, I might be the next Governor Provost. If I'm able to take back Boldhome and secure the district, which shouldn't be too hard, it would do great things for my household. Also, I had news just before the rebellion that my son was alive and well. All in all, things were looking up despite the temporary loss of Boldhome

The Personal Diary of Wertor Orindori

Special Ambassador of King Phrandros of Tarsh, Loyal Servant of Moonson Imperator

by David Millians

Fireday

This barbarous, drafty town swirls with discussion of the upcoming mayoral elections. These ignorant savages know little of (and appreciate less) the wonders of the wider world, so they attribute unrealistic importance to their own local, impotent leaders. Chiefs, warriors, merchants, servants, slaves, and livestock mingle in the streets, twittering endlessly about their own favorites. Only the beasts are suitably unimpressed by the contest. While I recognize the significance of this place and assignment in the current turbulence that affects Dragon Pass, I do long for an eventual posting in a more civilized domain.

I attended the garden party of Prince Temertain, the foolsh and easily manipulated, though admittedly amusing in his own way, lord of Sartar. Though his credentials are dubious, even with his won people, his status has helped to calm this rambunctious people.

While in attendance, I was able to confirm that Estal, his consort (whom I have observed carefully these last few weeks), is indeed the sister of my king! How could this be? Rumor has it that she and the prince met while studying in Esrolia. Is this the case? Why is she here? Why is she with the prince? She revealed little of her purposes, to my great frustration, but she did intimate that her work concerned the well-being of the empire and her brother. Does it involve the prince? Or is he merely a convenient opportunity for her actual work. Naturally I pledged myself and my resources to her, for she is my master's kin. Time and the wisdom of the Goddess will reveal my true path in this affair.

I also met with several officers of the imperial army, cementing my cause more securely to theirs. Many are sons of Tarsh, eager to aid their homeland and the empire. I am confident that should I need their services, I can reliably call upon them. In addition, I spoke quietly with several more common guards, also loyal Tarshites. Their position as the Prince's guards afford many possibilities, from information gathering to more nefarious work. Again, their loyalty to cause and empire seems to secure.

Also in attendance at the party was Subatei, the representative of the Grazelander. Though he and his delegation are boorish, I am sure they are canny negotiators and accomplished liars. Our brief exchange was cool and generally polite, though even the Prince, his obliviousness, was aware of and discomfited by the tension. I shall have to pursue at many levels this ridiculous and most disloyal situation with the Grazelander. They herald their own doom.

I observed the sun worshipers at prayer today. I am seeking a meeting with Harvar Ironfist, lordling of Alda-Chur. I am aware of his interest in the cult of Yelm, and I shall no doubt have dealing with those overly proud, swaggering roosters in days to come. Harvar was in attendance on the prince this day. He spoke enigmatically of troubled times when I addressed him. He is clearly a clever man, and whatever the result of our negotiations, I am sure to keep a close watch on him.

Wildday

The mood in this city continues to shift with every new (and frequent) blustery wind that blows down from the looming mountains about the valley. I was accosted today by Clem Beastwood, a Tarshite bearing papers from the king himself and obviously about some underhanded business in this land, though

he only really hinted at his true purposes. He requested my aid but was vague about his needs. Finding him an unpleasant and confused character, I promised assistance through the embassy, hoping to put him off for the time being but not wishing to anger my lord. Such is the work of a loyal diplomat.

I spent part of the evening at the Ruptured Broo, a simple watering hole. There I met with several spears-for-hire, discussing their interest in performing some important work for me. Should Harvar not be amenable to my offers, I shall have him killed, as a menace to both the empire and my king's own lands.

Godsday

The chariot racing held the commoner's attention today, leading to much fruitless wagering and cheering. Such is the way of the simple minded.

Estal is pregnant! At first I was overjoyed by this apparent diplomatic coup! Here I had the sister of my king pregnant with the heir of Sartar. I was sure that with only modest effort I could gain the support of many powerful imperial officials in authorizing this succession, bringing great benefits to empire, king, and myself. Then she revealed that the prince is not the father! Apparently he is incapable of having such a role.... This information in itself may prove useful. Estal will not reveal to me the name or nature of the true father. I again promised my undying loyalty to her and made arrangements to meet again later. I had a member of the prince's guard begin following her, reporting back to me on those she met, seeking to understand better this tangled web. I also laid plans to remove her from the city (again with the assistance of suitably loyal guards) should the need arise.

I met with Subatei and some of the other Grazelander for much of the rest of the day. Though he remained obstinate in his declarations of peace (difficult to believe in light of his people's raids and harassment of Tarsh and its envoys), I discovered him to be a likable enough fellow on his own. Like me, he expressed some weariness with the assignments and constraints of his duties. Were we not in conflict, I might find his manner more enjoyable. There is, of course, my awareness as a trained diplomat warning me that all of this pleasant affect is merely a dissembling ruse. Our discussions lasted well into the evening, producing little other than an agreement on some basic facts. He finally conceded that raids were occurring but attributed them to renegade horsemen. I ended our meeting by warning that his people had need govern themselves, even their renegades, lest the imperial army find the need to govern them itself. Subatei found this idea unappealing. I must meet with those loyal officers who will heed my warnings about these underhanded clans.

Freezeday

Today was again a day spent in meetings. During my discussions with imperial authorities, I overheard hints that the fighting in Heortland is not proceeding as well as public announcements would indicate. This is ill news, and I dispatched my butterfly to inform my king, mentioning as well the meetings with Subatei and Estal's predicament, of which I know little more as of this writing. The Provost seems comfortable with my presence, even while he conducts discussions of a most delicate

How I won the Battle of Boldhome (and looted the Citadel)

Subatei of the Silken Tongue

by Roderick Robertson

My predecessor as Ambassador to the Hillmen having been relieved of duty (and life) for conspiracy against the King, I made sure that my wives were well out of the way of the King's reach, just in case. My party travelled to Boldhome in the company of a red-haired mud-girl named Tamara Three-slice, a member of the cult of Vinga, but a nice girl for all that.

I met my embassy staff just before having to rush off to the Prince's garden party, where Wertor Orindori (the Tarshite Ambassador) and I cordially snubbed each other. Having met the Prince and consort, a number of Lunar officers and other Ambassadors, I spent my time engaging in meaningless chit-chat until I could get away from the party. While my memories of the ensuing week are lacking due to the distance of time, I do remember a few things:

On Fireday Asquai Stormpetral, my Bodyguard, and I attended services in the Temple of the Sun. We got several dirty looks when we inserted the name Yu-Kargzant in the hymn to the sun, instead of Yelm, but no-one made an issue of it. When the time came to ask a favor of Yelm, I asked for "The best thing for the Grazelands, which is to drive the Lunars out of Dragon Pass." (This came into effect at the end of the week)

Asquai foiled an assassination attempt without bothering to tell me. It wasn't until late in the week that he happened to mention a knife he had taken off the assassin. "What Assassin?" quoth I. "Why, the one that tried to kill you three days ago." He could have told me about it. We took the knife to The temple of the Sages, who gave me false information about the owner of the knife, driving me into the camp of the rebels.

I had a chat with Wertor about the outlaw Jandetin, who had been raiding into Tarsh. I assured him that Jandetin was in custody, and that his days as an outlaw were few. I was partially right! About half-way through the week, the Feathered Horse Queen died, followed soon by the King of the Grazelands. His successor was Jandetin!, a rebel who had been raiding the lowlands of Tarsh for years. A message to Tayang, my aide, was mistakenly given to me. It instructed him to kill anyone in the embassy who looked like they might be backing the Lunars. I assured Tayang that I was firmly anti-lunar. I had already sold my spare grain to the Silverus, Provost of the Lunars, getting many benefits (reduced tribute, many extra rights) from them (While I wanted the Lunars out of the area, I wanted to make sure that if they remained, we would be in a better position).

One of my men, Yesugai the "Cultural Attaché", was a Lunar Sympathizer, but I did not have him killed.

He actually managed to confuse the Lunars about our intentions, so they never tried anything.

One night, my party found ourselves near Geo's just as darkness (and the curfew) was falling. Inside, I was approached by a fellow who claimed to have a map that could be of use to me. I paid the Silver coin he asked, and was given a map of a secret passage from my Embassy into the Citadel of Boldhome. This made my part in the rebellion (when it came) extremely easy (and lucrative).

As the week wore on, I was approached by many people about hiring my mercenaries. Only two people were interested in the 3,000 horsemen that were available for the next campaigning season, more wanted the 150 men of my personal guard. I actually managed to strike a bargain with Tamara Three-chop, for 5 Lunars for my Golden Bow warriors, and 3 for my other retainers. She thought that the price was Per Man!, which would have been the mercenary contract of all times. Unfortunately, someone else put her straight, sigh.

When the rebellion actually started, I pulled all my men into the Embassy and defended the gates. We jeered the other worshippers of the sun (Sun Domers and Elmalians) who supported the Lunar army. We saw a party consisting of the Tarshite Ambassador, the Prince and his consort passing by. We called out to them, and I offered sanctuary to the Consort. At first Temertain did not want to leave her, but my well-known abilities at smooth speaking convinced him that it was better to separate them. He left with the Tarshite Ambassador, while she stayed with us for a while. At the same time, one of my aides asked if the Daughter of the Imperial Provost(!) could join us. I agreed, out of the softness of my heart (and what better hostage for our defense?).

As the rebellion moved to its climax, I appealed to Yu-Kargzant, reminding him of my plea to drive the Lunars out. As the crowds gathered in the streets and slaughtered the Lunar troops, I led my entire retinue through the secret passage into the Citadel. I raised the Horse-tail standard of my clan over the ramparts (which seems to have been mistaken for the old banner of Sartar by the rioting hillmen). At the same time, I sent my men throughout the castle to secure any valuables against theft by the criminal element who seemed ready to burst into the citadel.

Okay, so I sent it all back to my home in the Grazelands and blamed the theft on the Lunars. The stupid Hillmen didn't know the difference!

To: His High Lordship, the Left Hand of the Dark One,
Conqueror of Life and Death, The Undying King

Regarding the Uprising in Boldhome and the Failure to Provide an Additional Sacrifice

O Gracious Lord, I wish firstly to commend thy servant Arius for his most excellent services to our Lord and myself, by the pollution of the well which the servants of the Murderer hoped to complete my destruction. He claims it was not himself but rather an unwashed Lunar officer attempting to escape who caused the pollution, but nevertheless I recommend his services to our Lord most highly.

Our priest Arius had several queries about my report which he desired me to explain to your most gracious Lordship before his own report to your Grace most high. I shall seek to explain my own behavior in this matter so as to clear up any blame Arius himself might be assigned in this matter, and this report will be brought to your mighty Lordship by Arius himself.

Firstly, in the matter of Oleas Quipp, the weaponsmaster. Although his blood beat rich and strong, I did not offer him as prey to our lord. Father Arius marks this down to sentiment, as the fellow was my friend, but this is not the case. I did not slay the fool because he was useful. . . He helped the continuation of my mundane duties as Head of the Leatherworkers Guild, by petitioning with the mayor of Boldhome and the double-crossing Stonemason on my behalf. For that matter, he provided useful information I provided to the devious Jubba in exchange for my continued existence.

In the matter of the Gin merchant, I could hardly restrain the urge to drink from his marinated corpse. Again, Arius faults me for sentiment. . . My crime was instead to put too much trust in the Lunar Chief of Intelligence, Jubba. He promised me a victim, along with a curfew pass and citizenship papers. But when the mob was pursuing me, he was nowhere to be found. We must keep a closer watch on these Moon-worshippers, they are a tricky lot.

However, I most whole-heartedly endorse the idea of Ambassadorial relations with the Lunar government. Although they wish to manipulate us for their own reasons (not an unworthy goal, especially for the sheep that they are), they are stupid enough to think that they can guide that which death himself cannot claim. The Orlanthi are single-minded in this matter, but the Lunars may provide us with our chance. Some of the officials of their government will accept us as brothers, and provide us with ready victims, I am sure.

For that reason, it is my belief that it is of *utmost importance* that the Lunars win their struggle with the Orlanthi. The Orlanthi are disorganized in an obvious way, but they harbor chaos fighters like the Storm Bulls, and some of the Earth goddess worshippers. I was UNDETECTED until the cursed Earth priestess was possessed by a demon earth spirit, which had the power to see through all my concealments. Absent that earth priestess, my task would have been successfully completed. As it was, that cursed little weasel Pliny, boyfriend of my first victim, detained me long enough for me to be caught and impaled by the priestess. Had the Humakti known enough to sever my head as well as impale me, or to check the quality of the well water (which was no longer running), I would have been destroyed.

The Lunars, despite their claims to organization, are possessed by chaos both literally and figuratively. I am of two minds on this matter: their chaotic structure allows us freedom to operate and manifold opportunities to obtain victims. At the same time it is increasingly becoming clear that their operations against the Orlanthi are suffering because of corruption, incompetence, and lack of clear command structures. You, our leaders, must decide upon how our influence should be exercised.

I hope that this explanation, coupled with Arius' report, will convince you that my failure was for reasons beyond my control, and that my knowledge will bring benefits to the cult that outweigh any benefits to be derived from making an example of me. Therefore I plead for my continued existence as a member in good standing.

I remain, on bended knee, your Most Humble Thrall,
Dimi Hardhide
James D. Chapin

The Beggar's Tale

From the Collected Words of Varn Sandlefoot

by Harald Smith

De ringin' voices in me 'ead bothered me, 'til I realized dat dey weren't in me 'ead, after all! Imagine me surprise t' discover dat I was sittin' in de bloody Lunar Courts of all places! Well, I certainly can't 'member how I got dere. Last I knew I was down at Geo's, beggin' fer a bit o' porridge and some ale. But it bein' warm and all dere, I figgered t' sit a spell.

Well, now, I thinks to meself, dat could be meself up dere afore all dem judges and all. Not like I ain't been a fighter meself. Was 'til a few seasons back afore me unit got all hacked up by de Lunars down in Esrol. Jes' me alone made it dis far t' Boldhome o' all spots. Not like me brother all cozy up Imther way doin' some nice little garrison work. No, I gotta beg fer me food and spirits, checkin' out de Geo's Inns when I can and all or beggin' from de cursed Lunars. Must say, tho, dat de gin be real nice 'ere.

So, gettin' back to me tale, dere I was sittin' quietly like in de court and some poor Lunar soldier slob is up on charges fer killin' some clan chief's son. And 'e don't seem to know what's up or not and de judge can't make 'eads or tails o' it all. So I goes back t' sleep, ya know, and den de judge, 'e's findin' de poor sucker guilty o' de deed after all. I been all pleased, see, 'cause dis soldier fella seems pretty keen t' go 'ackin' up peaceful folk and all. But I know de show's over, so I leaves de court, but can't seem t' shake dem voices.

Off's I goes den, sort o' wobbly still, but I makes me way through de town and sees me friend Nerissa and she's all 'appy like. Guess she done found 'er true love, ya know. She certainly 'ad 'im in tow right 'nough. 'E looked a tad shady t' me, though, kinda like de 'azia 'eads I sees down Esrol way. But I reckon if 'n she's 'appy, den so should I be. Ain't offen dat such a love strikes-kinda like de lightnin' spear o' Orlanth, I reckon.

Now dis is when things get fuzzy like. We were a celebratin' and then next I know I is standin' talkin' to some dragonkind speakin' o' de world t' come. Why 'e even promises me dat me own day will come and not dat far off. Well wid me 'ead and all, I goes t' find some more gin fer meself so I don't see no more o' dese dragons.

Ya know, dey got demselves a curfew 'ere, but I don't mind it much-a beggar in dese tattered rags and twine-bound sandals gets nary a glance, even in de Lunar Pocket. I stays outta Moontown, though, don't go traipsin' up dat way. Now, as I was sayin', I don't mind dat curfew, wanderin' de streets til dawn breaks. I guess it was den dat I meets up wid Old 'erb. 'E's lookin' fer votes see and asked me. Well I said sure, though I don't thinks I did much fer it. Can't say as I 'ad a vote t' cast either, but 'e don't seem t' mind none.

Kinda forgot 'bout 'im soon enough. Ya see, I got caught up in some fuss near de markets over some vampire or some such beastie. Dis lady wid an axe was a chargin' and a chasin' after some poor fool, but 'e kept like gettin' away in de crowd. I thinks t' meself dat she's just out t' marry 'im, but I seen Nerissa again followin' de axe lady and she says somethin' 'bout 'im bein' evil. Well, I been as close as I wants to dis axe lady, so's I goes about me own business, right enough.

Seems I lose track o' de time once more-guess it was dat extra pint o' gin dey gave me or somethin'. But dere I was back in Geo's Pocket and it ain't real friendly down dat way dat day. Went into Geo's Inn t' 'ave some porridge and dey wants to bounce me out! Well, I showed dem me own brand and says I be just a poor beggar wantin' some food, so dey finally lets me in and leaves me be. But dey a bustlin' about over some plans and folks dey come rushin' in and rushin' out like dey be some fire somewhere.

Well, it gets me all excited and restless, so I goes back out to de Pocket, me stomach full and all. And dere dese Lunar soldiers come amidst all de folk and be set upon. I even see de standard taken, so I figgers dat I should join in and all. And den I keep 'avin dese visions o' some spirit what calls itself Goodcandle near de standard. It's a callin' on de folks, inflammin' dere 'earts and all, to go rushin' off t' Moontown. I take up a torch meself and join de crowd. Next I knows dere's fires all about and people fleein' dis way and dat. So I takes de time t' check out dis one spot see and finds meself a nice little stack o' Lunars and even some book what's bound in leather wid dis tracery o' gold. Can't read a blessed word o' it, bein' in some other tongue, but it look nice and all. Dis Goodcandle spirit, 'e says t' take it, too, so I do.

I 'ears de next morn dat dere's dis Flame o' Sartar lit and thinks t' meself dat wid me new stash I could leave dis 'ere town and so's I do. 'Ead north, ya know, t' see me brother again-Imther bound and none too soon I thinks. P'raps dis book will come in 'andy, too. No more beggin' fer me, no sir, though dese visions still 'aunt me and dere's dis 'ere candle in me pack dat I ain't seen afore, though I knows it means somethin'.

As I 'ead out on me way, I up and runs into Nerissa one last time. Seems she's been a married now. Make a nice couple dey do, so I's wishes dem well. P'raps some day I'll find me own spouse.



YRSA NIGHTBEAM'S STORY

by Diana Chapin

I am the Queen of the Torkani tribe, recently betrothed to Alvar Stormsson, King of the Amad tribe of Far Point as a result of the recent events at Boldhome. My tribe is a proud one, where women are the respected leaders. We worship Dark gods, whom most fear and many find loathsome. We show respect for the gods of Storm and offer them sacrifice as well, but our real allegiance is to the dark ones. I myself worship the great Kyger Litor, Mother of Darkness, but I took care while in Boldhome not to reveal this, for I know that others react to our great and fearful Goddess with horror and aversion.

I came to Boldhome to seek some peace for my tribe. The werewolves, the Telmori who live near us, had ravaged our lands and people and forced us from our homeland. My sister, Xiola, was being held prisoner and hostage by the Lunars. I had no real allies, for the treacherous Baba Boilface had betrayed other Sartarite tribes in the Rebellion of Starbrow. Now that evil, well named, pimple on the face of the Earth, had been murdered by his own household, I had the responsibility of seeking peace with the Lunars so that they would not let Harvar Ironfist, accursed sun worshipper, loose to destroy our people. Also our people would starve if I could not get additional grain from the Lunar Provost, Gordius.

I felt deeply the wound of dishonor that Boilface, curse his name, had inflicted on our tribe; I wanted to immediately speak to the Sartar tribes to see if I could re-establish our former friendship and alliance. I knew Harvar was our enemy and I had no trust in the ways of the Lunars: they would secure my loyalty by imprisoning my sister? Such is not the way of those of honor or friendship. Bonds forged in this way are soon broken and show the real face of your opponent.

I chanced to meet my future fiancée, Alvar Stormsson, at the very beginning of my visit. We immediately knew that we had a common will in our opposition to Harvar. He introduced me to others of the Sartarites and helped me to gain their friendship. I took this as an act of goodwill and little thought that he had other interest in me until he later declared his love.

I made it my business to meet all of the Sartarite chieftains, with or without Alvar, and to see which of them would be willing to reforge the Sartarite alliance to give us some protection against Ironfist and the Lunars. Only those in the Lunar camp or the enemies of my tribe spoke well of the Lunar rule.

Simultaneously, I sought an audience with Gordius to obtain the grain needed for my tribe. Like the politician he is, he said he would release the grain only if I swore allegiance to the Empire and its gods. I told him I must consider this decision and discuss it with my tribe and he offered to let me see my sister. While this might have been generosity, it could also have been intended to soften my will. It only reminded me of their evil ways. When he spoke of worshipping their gods, it filled me with revulsion; I could stomach an alliance if I must, but I could not worship their pasty faced gods and renounce mine; I was thankful none here but Grinlips knew the gods I really worshipped.

After this interview, I was even more convinced that I must throw my lot in with the Sartarite tribes that have been our allies over centuries, but I did not know whether we had the strength to resist, or to dare to seek to overthrow the Lunars. It was clear to me that if we did not, the Lunars would take over all of our lands and our tribes, one by one, with the aid of vicious dictators like Ironfist and force us to worship at the feet of their gods. Such a life is not one my people or myself would be willing to live, no matter what the cost.

Several times after this, Gordius's emissary, Lemidus, spoke to me urging me to join the Lunars, but I was able to put him off politely without provoking him. I feared he would notice that all of the Sartarites, including myself, were plotting together. I also was not sure how much we could trust some of the tribes who had had a relationship with the Lunars.

I had known that the Earth Priestess, Elspeth Halfbarrow, was a friend of our tribe. I offered her my help in seeking out the slayer of her friend, though there was little I could do since she could not use my spells and the trolls knew little to help her though I think they tried. Groblop Grinlips did help us with resources as did Old Herb. My friend, Alvar, met often with the other Sartarites and with the shadowy brigand whom I feared cared too much for power and gain and too little for our alliance. However, when I saw a woman with him, I wondered if she could be our missing princess to whom I would readily offer my support over the weakening Temertain who could not relight the sacred flame and had become nothing but a lover of Lunars.

I even managed to negotiate neutrality with the Telmori after talking to a member of the prince's bodyguard, who swore they were not responsible for the raids we suffered. Hearing from their other Sartarite neighbors that they were not so evil as we thought, I agreed to a temporary peace until we could discuss matters further.

Finally, soon after my love and I had pledged our vows, the crisis came. Day by day, the Lunars were readying their troops and the Sartarites were gathering their allies. I pledged my fyrd to the battle. While I could well be responsible for the slaughter and starvation of my people, I truly believed the alternative would be a life of slavery. I knew that the trolls held a secret way into the City to bring the troops in and I knew that most of the Sartarite tribes were with us and that even the beggars would help us that we were fighting for our true leader Kallyr Starbrow's return, wherever she might be.

During this time, I found out who the vampire was from Grinlips and told my husband lest he or our fellows fall victim to that foul undead creature.

To my great surprise, once the battle broke out, I found that even our old enemies, the grasslanders, were on our side. During a lull in the battle, Alvar and I almost met a tragic end. We found each other in the heat of the fray and were seeking where we should put our swords next. I saw Ironfist and said what better opponent could we find; in his death was our freedom. Little did I know that the devil spawn had thrown a spell over my beloved; when we struck at him, he threw my lover under his control.

I cast Blinding upon Ironfist, the only spell I had, and fled from my betrothed lest he injure me unwittingly. I take comfort in the knowledge that Ironfist was hampered for the rest of the battle as he wandered sightless through it with his retainers and that, our gods be praised, he did not slay Alvar, who remained his helpless pawn until the spell wore off.

Great was my joy, when the sacred flame was relighted and the triumph of our people announced to the cheers of all. Even the vampire was slain.

(The following song has been reported as being sung amongst the Torkani about these events:)

*Yrsa Nightbeam, Queen of Torkanis
Warmate of Alvar, King of the Almdas,
Warrior and woman, worships the Dark Queen,
Fearsome and fiendlike, awful in aspect
Famed Kyger Litor, killer and light-slayer.
Yrsa the truth-teller, strong in her mind speech,
Journeyed to Boldhome, sought peace for her people
Reforged the broken, rebuilt the battle strength,
Sartar to Sartar, wedding and warbond
Even the werewolf, now trusted in truce.
She blinded the balewolf, Harvar the Ironfist,
Her fyrd was mighty, bronze bright in battle,
Succored her sisterkin, Xiola and Starbrow.
When the flame burst forth, Torkani triumphed,
Undead were vanquished, moon and sun darkened
Now darkness is ruler and the Nightbeam burns
Brightest of night stars!*



Memoirs of Colonel Morak Moran

by Jeff Okamoto

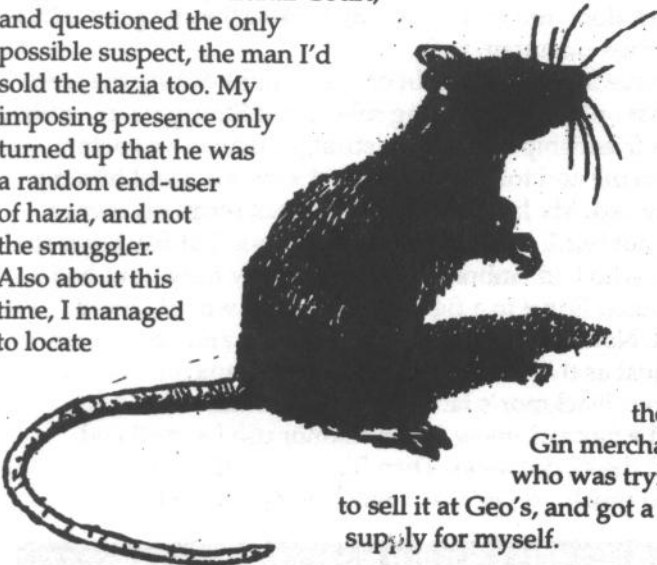
The first day started out well, with one exception. For some reason, the Imperial Tax Collector, Honorious by name, with four hoplites, temporarily detained me and forced me to pay taxes on my possessions. The Boldhome Bugle began broadcasting, and I successfully distracted Honorious long enough to escape. This was fortunate, since I was carrying my iron knuckles and a dose of hazia, which might have been discovered. Later Honorious finally cornered me, but as I had no possessions, I was not taxed. I tried to get a receipt stating the above, but Honorious was too hip for that skip.

I made contact with Old Herb, who informed me that the latest incoming shipment of hazia was delayed until tomorrow, so I spent the rest of the day renewing acquaintances and seeing what was new in the city. There were certainly a lot of strangers in Geo's.

The next few days were frustrating. Herb claimed the shipment had disappeared, and I wondered if perhaps Herb was trying to set me up with my downstream and personal contacts. I sold my remaining dose for 7 Lunars and extorted 2 Lunars from Egrid. I also began spreading around all the rumours I'd heard.

The shipment had still not arrived, and I was getting very irritated. Herb claimed he had not been approached by his contact, and both Gordon and my customers were getting antsy. With nothing better to do, I began hanging around Moontown, listening for any juicy gossip. One that particularly interested me was that a hazia merchant had been arrested and was in the Lunar jail. Operating on that tip, and milking my relationship with Constable Pugh and Collector Honorious, I tried to determine which of the three was the missing merchant. None of them responded to the clues in my subtle "temperance lecture". Nevertheless Herb, who had also heard the tip, believed it. I snuck back into the Lunar Court,

and questioned the only possible suspect, the man I'd sold the hazia too. My imposing presence only turned up that he was a random end-user of hazia, and not the smuggler. Also about this time, I managed to locate



the
Gin merchant,
who was trying
to sell it at Geo's, and got a
supply for myself.

By this time, the chariot races were about to start. Suspecting a possible Solar setup (they had actually nominated a very-reluctant rider, and I wondered if they were betting against themselves), I still laid down a bet on Previous Horserider, the barkeeper at Geo's. Previous in fact won, and I made a small profit.

Later in the week I closely questioned Herb, but although we both suspected the other, both of us claimed complete ignorance of the missing shipment. Worse yet, one of my personal contacts, Terpitia Bosky was no longer dependent on hazia! What a possible catastrophe!

At last I got careless. After too openly questioning all the foreigners who'd entered Boldhome, one of them falsely claimed to have an arrest warrant for me, then attacked me. Herb held the man off, then I ran for it.

I stayed on the lam for a day and a half, then finally decided to chance being in the open. Herb and I now believed that the shipment had been intercepted by an "old acquaintance", Nimkin Fastcard. Worse, he and Terpitia were obviously working together, meaning that to get the truth out of him would be difficult.

Getting desperate, I put out a contract on Bosky in an attempt to then beat the information out of Nimkin, but the contract apparently failed.

Once Montague Goodcandle, the Librarian, began openly agitating in the Common Market, Herb gave me two blank documents forged with the Lunar seal. I quickly filled in an order from Tatus the Bright making the bearer of the document a "spoken-word agent", whose orders were to be obeyed instantly. When a legion of Lunar soldiers came to put down the growing riot in Geo's corner, I flourished the document and ordered the commander to return to his barracks. To my utter gratification, he did so. Another regiment entered Geo's Pocket alone, and was torn to shreds.

Noticing a fight going on outside the Temple of the Household of Death, I quickly brandished the document to Aleham Ratsbane, the second-in-command of another Lunar regiment. His commander already fighting, Ratsbane abandoned his commander, who quickly fled.

By doing so, Nimkin revealed that he was shipping arms into Boldhome, and I quickly passed them on to some other guy who needed weapons. This also freed up the Household of Death, who joined forces with the rioters in Geo's Pocket and the Market.

At last, Provost Silverus himself led three Lunar legions to the Market, where the battle for Boldhome commenced. Having done my part to ensuring the start of the revolution, I quickly slipped into the shadows and watched the fight.

The rest you know. Silverus jumped into the Market well, Temertain fled with Estal, and Kallyr, having ignited the Flame of Sartar, was named Prince.



King Edruf Strongbreath of the Malani

by Curtis Taylor

Below is an excerpt of a conversation I had shortly after the Lunar occupation army was thrown from Boldhome by the Sartarites. At the time I was on my way to Esrolia with relics to trade from the Pavis Rubble when I stopped at a village outside of Jonstown to rest. The conversation was with Edruf Strongbreath, a slightly inebriated King of the Malani. -- Pelor Rator

...maybe I could have done it differently...

Kalkos, my son, is surely dead. My cost to throw the vile Lunars from our homeland was the sacrifice of not only my last son, but the women and children of our tribe. While the Malani fyrd was driving the Lunar excrement from the Quivin Hills, the worthless and cowardly Balmyr tribe attacked our lands. Why? Why did these supposed Quivini assault their own brothers? I tell you it was in the name of shameless greed that has always plagued our peoples...If only we could learn to work together under the firm leadership of a real Orlanthi, a true leader!

The Cold Wind? Hah!! There is no such thing. Our own tribesman, Sarostip Cold-Eye, made up the story that he was the leader of the Cold Wind Movement. He did this only after the ruin of our tribal thanes. I sent all of our brave thanes with him (except Faithful Jengor and Mandil Good-Ale, that is) to destroy that damn Lunar gin caravan north of Jonstown. This was no small force of men that I sent to accomplish this deed. Oh, the friggin' Lunar scum were destroyed utterly, but our thanes were exhausted after that long haul over the hills followed by hard combat. They were too tired to continue as a useful fighting group and fell back to the hills of our homeland to recover. This is how the women and children that you see now survived the assault of those worthless Balmyr. Our thanes were in the hills recovering when the Balmyr attacked. Anyway, I am wandering...Our thanes were sent to destroy this foul Lunar caravan by me so that Sarostip could get into contact with the Cold Wind Movement. Yes, he struck this deal in Geo's: if he could destroy this caravan of sin, he would be put into direct contact with the "Cold Wind Movement." I sent our thanes to deal with this loathsome caravan. I gave Sarostip the location to attack from. I am responsible for the death of those thanes.

Death...why is it that we Malani are so dogged by this thing called Death? We, who revel in the worship of the life-giving breathe of Orlanth, we who serve and protect the bounty of Ernalda, while the traitor, King Blackmor the Foul lives still?!? I killed him twice myself, but I suspect only someone as cowardly as he could survive the Rebellion of Boldhome intact. This hobbling creature surely is the epitome of a traitor, foul servant of chaos; curse of existence. He surely could not stand before the might of Orlanth, but he would rise when my back was turned, just as any weed of chaos will sprout in Ernalda's garden when she tires and must sleep. I killed him twice, I tell you!!

Oh, that damned Lunar Provost! I tried every method I could to free my son. I even tried to get the fool Temertain to help free my son. The Royal Librarian, Montague Goodcandle, told me over a drink of ale that the Fool, Temertain, was looking for some lost iron statues, so I tried to bribe the Fool with the iron statues our tribe raided from Tarsh years ago. Temertain the Useless would have stripped himself nude and walked the streets for those statues, but he could not convince the stubborn chaos servant Gordius to free my son. The only way the Lunar Provost was willing to free my son was if Lunar missionaries were sent with my son to "show the light of the true world to my tribe." There is no way in this lifetime or the next that I would ever allow those Lunar Riddlers into my stead, even though it cost my only son his life!

I still am indebted to the King of the Sambari, may Ernalda bless him with her bounty. Though his grain cannot feed the mouths of the dead women and children of my tribe, it has allowed the men of my tribe to make it through the Storm Season. With his grain, I was freed from the need to crawl to the stubborn Gordius the Bureaucrat's handout of grain. I still do not believe that my friend, Skalfi Blackbrow went to the Provost begging for his tribes grain. His price? Some of those Lunar missionaries were sent with the grain. To steep a price for me! To steep for the rest of the loyal tribes, I assure you.

Ahh, it all came out in Mahome's wash. The Lunars are gone from Boldhome, and should be gone from Sartar, shortly. Now that the Lunars are out, I wonder how I can direct our leader to further the glory of the Malani...I mean Sartar...



Truesword could have caused this, only some strange Lunar or chaotic magic. Edruf contacted again and this time he did draw blood. The next hit, I saw, was going to be for Blackmor, so I helped Edruf stand against the foul magic with a Riposte spell. It saved Edruf's life. Blackmor was surprised and did not concentrate on the next attack. This time he was hit and killed but at the same time worked a magic which sent Edruf screaming from the place of the fight. I knew that the Lunars would probably interpret this fight from Blackmor's point of view, and would state that Edruf had attacked without any reason. This could even lead to Edruf's execution. To prevent this from happening I informed the press about the exact circumstances. I do not know if this helped but the next day Edruf was released after being questioned by the authorities and not charged. Blackmor, by the way, was resurrected, adding insult to injury.

Finally there's the matter of the Flame of Sartar. Sartar can never be free if the Flame is not lit. And the one who lights it will surely lead us into freedom and will lead us afterwards. I have always looked to Temertain as the one to do this. So what if he isn't openly hostile to the Lunars? I have had to do exactly the same this week just to keep my people safe! I trust that Temertain will be a good king once we get those Lunars out of his hair. During the week there was already somebody who tried his luck at the Flame: that bastard Harvar Ironfist. Can you believe it? A Yelmalion, converted to the Lunar Goddess, trying to light the Flame of Sartar? Well, it didn't work of course. First he got hit by a lightning bolt, probably thrown by Sartar himself, and then arrested by my friend Lergius. I hoped they would crucify him, as they promised, but later I heard they let him go again, with the excuse that he was just visiting the Flame as a tourist. Anyway, back to Temertain. Since the others want Kallyr Starbrow to lead and Cold-Eye even plans to kill Temertain as soon as he comes to the Household of Death, I have advised the prince to go light the Flame before dawn and then come to the temple of Humakt to collect his followers, certain to be more numerous once he has proven his worth.

WINDSDAY, DEATH WEEK, STORM SEASON, 1624 HIGH HOLY DAY OF HUMAKT, DAWN AND AFTER

I put on my sword which I am finally allowed to take into the city and go to the Household of Death. All my comrades are there. I wait for the news that Temertain has lit the flame. It does not come. Neither does Temertain himself. It does not matter. Today is for Humakt anyway. The high priest leads us in the high holy day ceremonies and I feel the strength of Humakt flowing into me. Today is going to be a good day.

After the normal ceremonies have been concluded one of my comrades goes up to the high priest and they talk. The priest commands our attention and recites an invocation. I see a vision of Sarotip Cold-Eye standing on a plain, a battle in the background. A chaos horror comes into view and

Cold-Eye attacks it. After an intense struggle the monster lies dead, but I now see that Cold-Eye has paid for the victory with his own death. My senses return to the everyday world and I hear Cold-Eye explain that the monster represents the Lunar empire and Humakt sends him to lead us against it. And now he does something I have not seen for a long time. He starts singing the Death Song. Today Sarotip Cold-Eye will do glorious things and join Humakt. I wish I could join him in the Song but I cannot. Again my other obligations force me to compromise. I cannot choose death freely. Even so, I will do my best for the rebellion and for Cold-Eye.

As we emerge from the temple we are accosted by some Lunar official and Cold-Eye is drawn into a fight. We cannot allow this to hold us up and give the Lunars more time to organize. I decide to lead a charge into the Lunar headquarters in the hope that we can cause delay and disorder. If we are lucky we may even catch the commander unprepared and leave the army uncontrolled. I am followed by Edruf, Alvar, Yrsa and all our men. We storm into the headquarters and I look around to organize the assault. I see only Edruf and his men. The others must have been separated from us somewhere. This leaves us with rather a small force for dealing with Lergius, with the Lunar provos and with various other Lunar hot shots, not to mention the regiment they had held back in protection of the headquarters and which is just now coming out of a hidden position. But I am not going to run. It is as if Humakt has heard my secret prayers and has given me the wish I could not utter aloud: to die in glory and join him for the final battle to come.

I seem to be facing the heaviest opposition. I always knew I would be facing Lergius but I did not expect it would be in an uneven fight. I don't seem to be able to do any damage to my opponents but am not yet wounded myself either. From the corner of my eye I see that while I and my men are holding back the regiment Edruf is just killing his third victim. As I see this my mind goes blank.

I realize I am dead. I even know how I died. One of the Lunars mindblasted me and while I was helpless they killed me. I seem to know many things I cannot remember seeing. I know Lergius is still my friend for it was him that broke my sword and placed it over my body so it could join me in death. I know Edruf managed to teleport away from the headquarters and is now leading new troops someplace else. I know Boldhome is being cleaned of Lunars. I know my son is alive and leading the Lismelder I ordered to come to the city. I know my people are safe because of the men I ordered to stay behind, fed because of the grain I sent and in no religious danger because the Yanafal Tarnils missionaries died valiantly in the marsh expedition. I also know that Temertain is not the man I thought him to be but just another politician. He ran from the city without even trying to light the flame. But this fact does not bother me. It even makes me more content with my last piece of knowledge: I will never have to act like a politician again.

Old Herb Tells His Best Story Yet

by Paul Harmaty

Huggy the Fish was dead. That was for starters. The damn fool had mixed himself an "iceball" and gotten stiffed. Now the Hazia courier had no one to contact in Boldhome and I had to find that stuff before it fell into the wrong hands. What would you do if you were carrying around a kilo of contraband? I could feel the headache starting at the back of my neck.

It's not like Hazia was flowing like water through the streets of Boldhome. Hell no! That cursed advocate in the magistrate's office was doing a damn fine job of lousing up my life. Someday I'll square things, but today I gotta find that courier.

I'm sitting at my usual table in Geo's talking with Denis Quailfoot. "We got dealt a bad hand Denis". Denis is a nice enough kid, got a world of potential but lacks full confidence in his abilities. Someday he'll be a first rate racketeer, for now he's my most trusted employee. "Huggy the Fish has bought the farm and now we got a courier loose in Boldhome with MY Hazia and he don't know who to hand it over to." Denis gives me that look, the one that says "I'll do anything you ask boss", so I continue. "We need to find out if anyone has asked for Huggy. Find the person that asks this question and bring him to me." "I'm on the case" says Denis as he shoots out the door and onto the streets of Boldhome.

There's a real crowd in Geo's today. It usually doesn't get this busy till later in the day. Time to do some schtick. I sand up and start speaking to no one in particular and then go directly into the story of Elmir al Safad and the Elixir of Eternal youth. It's another classic performance and a total success. Nobody pays any attention to me. On the other hand, I don't miss a thing.

My buddy Previous, the barman, is having a chat with some folks that may as well be wearing signs that say "I'm a Sartar Rebel." Geez, if I worked for the Lunars these guys would be history. Subtle they are not. At the other table a Yelmalio type from Farpoint is having a quiet talk with an aristocratic woman. This looks enough like a miss match to pique my interest, but now is not the time. At the door, the acting bouncer is Engie Thickfist. She seems lost in thought and why not, it's such unfamiliar territory for her. Anyway the hang dog look she's wearing means you'd best stay outta her way today. All in all, the impression I'm getting is that plans are being made and deals are being cut and I'm on the outside looking in. This is not a good feeling.

I'm strolling the market a little later in the day when my man Morok Moran comes over to pay me a visit. Morok is my front man. I've let him run the day-to-day operation of our business for the last few years. He takes the credit for being the Criminal Mastermind of Boldhome and catches most of the heat and I get to live the peaceful life of an eccentric storyteller. It's a beautiful thing.

"Any word on that Hazia shipment, Herb?" Morok

knows I don't like him calling me Herb. "Boss" would show proper respect, but then, Morok has begun to believe I am an eccentric storyteller. "I'm working on it, Morok. You heard anything about a man asking for Huggy the Fish?" He looks at me the way a mouse looks at a snake. "Not a word." he says. Morok thinks I have the Hazia and I'm holding back on him. The addicts think he's to blame if they can't have their next fix and addicts can be very unpredictable, so Morok's feeling a bit on edge. I tell him the truth, but he thinks I'm feeding him a red herring, "Find the man asking for Huggy and you find the Hazia." He nods his head and leaves dissatisfied. As he goes I think how we'd better work it out between us or I'll need to find a new number one man.

Morok is gone maybe a minute when Denis shows up. Denis and Morok are not the best of friends, so it's a good bet he's been waiting till I was alone. "Any news on the courier, Denis?" "Nothing, boss. A complete blank." He sounds like a dejected kid. "Don't worry about ." I say, " He'll turn up." This cheers him a bit. "I got something I need you to do." I hand Denis about half a dozen posters I've had made up. "Put these up around the city and don't tell anyone I asked you to do it." He looks at the poster. "Elect Old Herb Mayor of Boldhome" it says, and it has a fair likeness of me on it to boot. "Gee boss! You're running for mayor?" A put a hand on his shoulder "Quiet lad. There's something going on in Boldhome and I want to know what it is. Anyone asks you who wants them posters up, you tell them that the people LOVE Old Herb. I want to find out who'd be interested in someone the people of Boldhome love". He smiles and melts into the crowd. "It's been an interesting day" I think as I head back to Geo's for some wine and a bit of dinner.

The next few days are a little less interesting. Nobody has asked for Huggy the Fish, Morok's got some strung-out Hazia-heads howling at the moon, nobody takes me seriously enough to talk to me about being mayor and finally I go through the trouble of getting a forged invitation to Prince Temertain's garden party and then miss the bloody thing. Hell! Even after passing the word to Previous I was interested in a rebellion, I haven't gotten the Sartar rebels to take me seriously. Things are definitely in a down cycle. Business gets even worse as the week wears on. Morok and I have a heart to heart and decide we pretty much hafta give up on the Hazia business...for now. I tell Morok that our only chance to reclaim our criminal 'glory days' is to kick the Lunars outta Boldhome. The disorder the change of government would cause will provide us the environment we need to thrive. He buys the story and we agree to work together toward this end.

Finally I catch a break with the rebels. Alvar Stormsson, a local chieftain from Far Point has a powerful enemy, Haryar Ironfist. He asks me for some favors and I do my best to help him out. In return, Alvar and Yrsa Nightbeam are an item.



Yrsa is Queen of the Tarkani tribe and into the rebellion bigtime!. She tells the rebels I'm a true Lunar hater who can't wait for the Sartar to breath free once more. Wham, just like that I'm no longer the scum of the earth in the eyes of the rebellion I'm a real freaking patriot. What fools!

I meet the rebels on neutral turf. They are lead by a Humakti Runelord, Thufir Twosword and a fine looking woman from the Heortland by the name of Tamera Threeslice. They tell me they are working for Kallyr Starbrow and want to know how I can help them. So I tell them how the poor people of Boldhome love me and follow me. I tell them how I can raise a mob from Geo's quarter, riot in the streets and occupy the Lunar garrison while they get their allies to storm the city from the outside. When they hear this their eyes light up. I've just told them that I can deliver Boldhome to them on a platter. They see that they underestimated me. I forgive them. Hell, I've spent my entire criminal life trying to be underestimated.

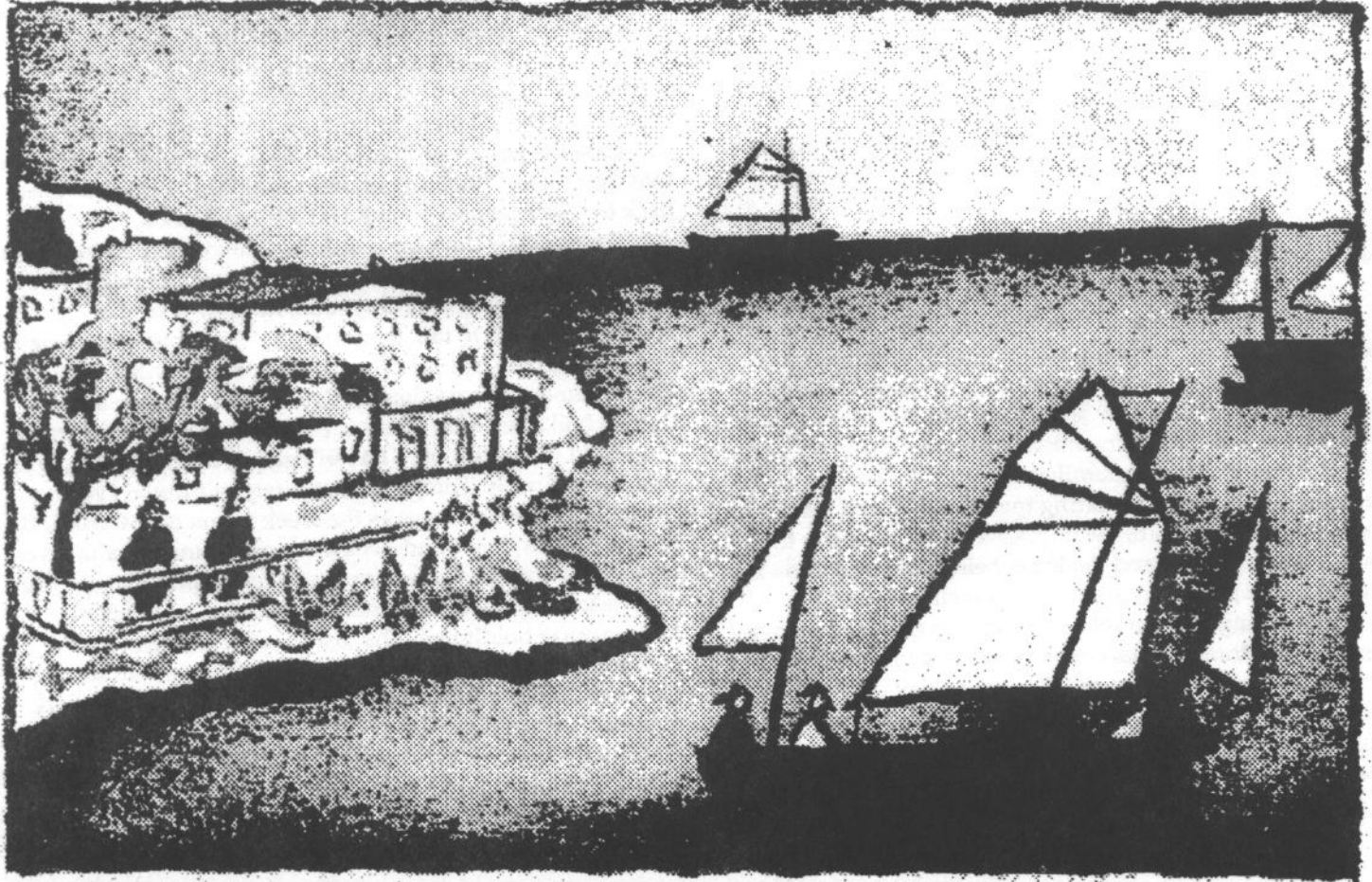
It's Humakt's High Holy Day and the show is about to begin. The rebellion starts at Humakt's temple where Thufir and his followers assault the Lunars in attendance. As the news hits the streets I use some stirring oratory and raise a mob. We march on the great market with torches burning and voices crying "Lunars out!". The garrison is called out to squelch the rabble in the streets, as we knew they would. Three companies of the Empires finest converge on the great market of Boldhome. My mob is no match for trained

soldiers, but my mind is keener than all of their spearpoints. The time has come to play my trump card.

My man Morok greets each of the column commanders as they arrive and shows them a letter bearing the Imperial Seal. A letter that I had drawn up the previous day and stamped that morning with the seal I'd had made earlier in the week. It says "The bearer of this document speaks for the Emperor. Do not question his commands he is a Spoken Word agent." There is confusion among the Lunar officers at a critical time in the rebel uprising. Two of the three Lunar companies go back to their barracks at Morok's command. The Lunars abandon the streets and the riot grows out of control. We march on Moon Town as the rebels outside the walls storm the city.

The rest of the story is history. The Lunars are routed and retreat to Aldachur where Harvar Ironfist makes them feel at home. Kallyr Starbrow enters Boldhome in glory and lights Sartar's Flame. The people cheer themselves horse and drink themselves into a stupor. Nobody comes to thank Old Herb, nobody gives me credit. Only a handful of people know that I made the whole thing work. It's a beautiful thing.

I find some time to celebrate a little as well. The disorder that reigns in Sartar will offer many new opportunities to expand my organization. Hell, I may not have been elected mayor of Boldhome, but I'm still the godfather of the underworld and I've got a business to run.



- GS: Did I tell David Cheng that Nick Brooke knew the answer to the God Learners? Did I? [to David Cheng]
- DC: No, not exactly. Here's the deal. Greg told me of a guy in Britain whose insight into Glorantha was so deep that this guy figured out the God Learners' secret on his own. He approached Greg and asked, "Is this it?" and Greg said, "Yeah, you're right." And Greg was terribly impressed with this guy. And then when I went to Convulsion and I met Nick, I was thinking, "This must be the guy, 'cause this guy, he radiates this stuff."
- GS: So, no, I don't think you know the answer.
- NB: Great.
- DC: We've said it publicly. Nick Brooke is less of a God Learner now.
- 13: Was it really Kallyr Starbrow who lit the flame of Sartar on Day 88 of 1627?
- GS: According to the documentation. Yes. I believe that this is so, although the documents conflict. And I'll tell you why, ...
- 13: I had a follow up question to that, by the way. Which is the ancestry that's attributed to--the dual ancestry attributed to Argrath, the one that's mostly on the female side, was stated as that, is that really Kallyr Starbrow's ancestry?
- GS: No. It is Argrath's. All of it.
- 14: I think this is one of the six. After the battle between Arkat and Gbaji, was the one who actually emerged as Arkat actually Gbaji?
- SP: The guys in Dorastor say it was. But Arkat's future career doesn't seem very Gbaji-like after the War. So do you want to believe a bunch of chaos monsters in Dorastor, or what the Orlanthe say?
- 15: You had mentioned yesterday morning that most important changes or events in the universe that took place, the Trickster was present in some form or another. Orlanthe is the god of Change. Therefore, does Orlanthe maintain the sanctity of the Trickster in order to have a tool of change?
- GS: [long pause] I think he does... No, is the answer. And I'll conditionalize it by saying it's not his intent to do this, he's adapting to the circumstance that Eurmal's always there. That's fine.
- 16: In Home of the Bold, Lunars are supposed to dress as Greeks and Romans. Can we think of Pelorians in general as looking like Greeks and Romans or is that just a convenience for, say...
- GS: No, that is correct. That in 1612, it's sort of late Greek, early Byzantine.
- 17: A follow-up to a question that was asked before. If a Brithini or a Mostali dies, do they have an immortal soul or do they really dissipate?
- GS: They dissipate.
- 18: Just for the sake of resolving an issue in our campaign, is Trickster the prime agent of Arachne Solara?
- GS: Agency implies some direct control or contact. Their contact is inevitable but accidental.
- 19: Can Arachne Solara receive cult worship and do anything about such worship?
- GS: I'd say no. You can enter into a personal relationship with her but there is no cult intervention between you.
- SP: There may be, of course, lots of cults trying to reach her.
- GS: That's right. It's a personal thing. It's a mystical thing.
- 20: You've seen reference to cults that have the Ice rune and had vague references--some consider it another Element, some consider it a sub-element of Cold. Is Ice frozen water in Glorantha, is it something different, is it an element, is it--what is it?
- GS: It's frozen water.
- 20: Is it really an element, a sub-element of Cold, or what?
- GS: If we're going to get into a rune thing here, then we'll kill each other. There's a couple people here who'll kill me. It's a hard question. Sandy says, "We sort of wished we hadn't published that rune."
- 21: Whereabouts in Ralios is the kingdom of Jorstland, when it was?
- GS: The kingdom of what?
- 21: Jorstland. It's in Trollpak.
- GS: In Ralios?
- 21: Yeah.
- GS: Give him his dollar back, I don't know, Sandy thinks it was in Fronela. But if you find the reference, I'll do a better job in writing, or something.

- created in Dorastor, and then you start hearing about Gbaji. Now, I wanted to know if this was a Darth Vader sort of thing, where Nysalor turned evil, or Gbaji was a separate entity which possessed Nysalor and had to be driven off by Arkat.
- GS: They're separate entities. The Dara Happans recognize an individual, they generally remember Nysalor with respect. And his evil enemy, Gbaji, who came from the far west to destroy him.
- 31: In Ralios, who are the Guild of Chaos Monks and what are their ties to the remnants of Gbaji worship in the region?
- GS: The Guild of Chaos Monks was a throw-away that I wrote when I made it. I thought it was an interesting concept and that some adventurous designer would be able to take it and run miles with it.
- 32: We were told that people that are worshipers of the Hykimi pantheon or of the Hsunchen culture have some of the physical characteristics or the temperamental characteristics of their beast, their animal. They're a couple of places we're told about there's like a Hykimi tribe, like the Opossum people, and there's also a scarce and secretive, illusive tribe that's highly distrusted by the Praxians that ride a giant marsupial of another kind. My question is, do the women of this tribe, carry or transport their young in the same fashion as their animals, in a pouch?
- GS: I believe they do. If they're good worshipers.
- 33: Did Argrath gain at least some of his abilities from the spirit of the Pharaoh? The Pharaoh was killed by Jar-Eel.
- GS: I hadn't known that yet.
- 34: Is Glorantha a temple to Arachne Solara? And all of its inhabitants worshipers in a higher scale ...?
- GS: In the sense that a man's body is the temple of his spirit, yes.
- 35: Who and what is the nature of Ginna Jar?
- GS: Good value for a dollar. Ginna Jar is either another blank space on the council for someone who needs to sit there, which may change. On the first half of the quest, it may be a Humakti. For the second half, it may be a Babeester Gor. *It depends on the precise circumstances of that individual ring. Or, it is the collective spirit of the members of the Lightbringers' quest.*
- 36: Was Talor the Laughing Warrior fighting in the Gbaji wars, or did he have his own problems in Fronela?
- SP: Talor the Laughing Warrior was brought back from Hell by Harmast Barefoot because he was disappointed with the outcome of Arkat. At the time that Arkat was coming up through the South towards Dorastor, up through Peloria, Talor was coming up through Fronela, and they converge on the last area of Dorastor, the final battle, at the same time.
- GS: And he had had his own problems in Fronela. He is often credited with being the man who drove the Telmori out of Fronela.
- 37: For those of us GMing in Pavis, can you tell us something about what the secret of the puzzle canal would be?
- GS: Sandy can.
- SP: The puzzle canal—which secret are you referring to, the things that are in it, or...
- 37: Its overall significance, that ...
- SP: OK, if you stay in the puzzle canal, and go around it in the right patterns, then when you sail out of it again, you're in the hero plane. Or you've gone back in time, or something even worse.
- 38: Up in Balazar, there was a First Council and part of the Council were the Gold Wheel Dancers. Was Pinching in the Cradle a Gold Wheel Dancer?
- GS: Yes. And it came about as a result of play in a campaign. And I'll just—if you've got a second for a story. We had a player character who was a half-orc, Urggh, half-troll or something. His horse was smarter than he. And whenever he saw people go to a worship thing, you know, and they'd set up their little altar and all this stuff and do their prayers, he'd say, "That's kind of cool, you know, I wonder what they're doing?" It's obviously valuable and important. Well, the only thing obviously of value and importance to Urggh was his gold. So whenever people would worship, he'd just empty out his saddle bags of gold and imitate them. Well, one time they're on a Heroquest and they were in the Underworld, in the land of the dead, and he says, "Well, I guess I'll do this too." And he dumped out all this gold, and he said his prayers, and he was answered. And that was the last Gold Wheel Dancer who could be reached. And so he brought it back to life and it was placed on Gonn Orta's boat.
- 39: Do Rokari and Hrestoli recognize each other's lords, and wizards, and knights as legitimate?
- GS: No. However, there is some rumors of an ecumenical council in an attempt to heal these ancient breaches. Coming soon at a convention near you, next



Convulsion, in England, this ecumenical council will be the live role-playing game. It will also be replayed at RuneQuest Convention II, in Oakland, California, this time next year, under warm weather.

40: Just exactly was Talor always laughing at, and why did he stop?

GS: He was laughing at the pain and irony of existence.

40: And those terrible times when he lost his laughter, what happened?

GS: The pain was too much. Even irony sometimes runs out.

41: One of the sub-cults of the Seven Mothers is She Who Waits. Is there any illumination—any source material beyond that?

GS: You'll have to wait. Because I'm not sure precisely sure who or what she was.

42: In Gods of Glorantha, they talked about the sorcerous worship ceremony as something that basically achieves nothing—very little mystically but gives you a feeling of wellness. Yesterday, you were talking about Arkat in his initiations into the Malkioni religion going on all of these little Heroquests. Are the Western ceremonies much more magical than implied in Gods of Glorantha?

SP: If you just cast a little worship ceremony, like a Sacred Time ceremony or a big deal, get you worshipers all together—you can cast a little worship ceremony all by yourself in a cave somewhere and achieve very little. Or you can have ten thousand farmers, knights, and wizards, all worshipers together and have a little more.

42: But the way the effects of the worship ceremony, being translated to the Godplane, would be the same?

GS: Yes.

[tape flaw -- question about Heroquesting and time travel]

GS: You cannot deliberately go back in time, except through a Heroquest, and that takes you back to a sacred ceremony or event.

SP: But if you make a mistake, you could end up falling out at the wrong place, or the wrong time

44: Is the manifestation of the Telmori curse something that happens from childhood or does it happen during an initiation period when the child reaches puberty?

GS: Childhood. Telmori women occasionally give birth to wolves. Or litters. Or mixed litters. And that is unusual. Most Hsunchen do not get it until initiation. Telmori are cursed, so they're always beasts.

44: But they're always beasts in [unintelligible]

GS: No, it's a natural ability for them.

45: What about the Hidden Castles that pop in and out of places and times. If you got into one and were lucky enough to get out again, would you not be able to time travel in that exception?

GS: Yes, but you don't know when you'll get out.

46: In the Dead Place, does the nature of magic become a non-entity?

GS: Yes. It's a power sink.

46: So, if spirits are caught in that area, they're unable to function.

GS: Yes.

SP: Or they physically end up there. They drop out of the spirit plane.

GS: That's right. There is no spirit or Godplane there. They manifest themselves without their spirit or god powers. They look like people, they look like animals, they look like plants. It's a good trap to get your enemy's god into the Dead Place. But nobody's foolish enough to do it.

47: There were magical barriers set up after the Dragonkill War, but the Colymar managed to cross them, apparently without a whole lot of preparation. What made them go away?

GS: I'm not sure that there was ever any actual magical ward that maintained — that kept the humans out. They put up stuff, but I'm not sure that it was a magical function. I think it may have just been totally superstition. Also, I'll just point out that the Grazelanders had been in Dragon Pass for at least a generation before the Colymar. They came in from Prax.

48: Is Time an entity, or does it have a consciousness?

GS: No.

49: During the Gods Wars, Genert was killed and Pamalt wasn't. The question is, is the expression of Genert's death the fact that almost every dramatic snap-back incident, let's say Gbaji, Wyrms Friends, Jrusteli God

question. Nobody knows, it's impossible to know. I might know, and I'll probably figure it out just before I die.

54: Are all the inspirations of the Moonson daughters, and are all the daughters of the Red Emperor inspirations of the Moonson? What's an inspiration?

GS: [deep breath--i.e., inspiration] The first inspiration of Moon Son is actually the City of Glamour. So they're not all people. But essentially what the lunar line is, that the inspirations are manifestations of a portion of the Red Goddess for a special need. Inspired by the Emperor's consciousness.

55: When the Ban falls in Charg, what comes out?

GS: I don't know. That's one of those things that I'm just keeping ready. They're many things like that are just waiting, and I'm going to save it.

56: I have read of various magical roads that exist, especially in Dragon Pass, that a priest or somebody can use a ritual to get on to travel fast with danger with his colleagues. Is there a similarity between this and the dragonewt roads, that dragonewts have, and if so, are dragonewts annoyed about that?

GS: Similar but not the same. Only dragonewts can use the dragonewt roads, and people can use the people roads, the other roads.

56: And a minor follow-up. Are the rituals well known?

GS: Very, very obscure. And one of the main reasons is that magic roads -- by the way, one of the items at the Auction has a map of the magic roads in Sartar, in Dragon Pass--but one of the problems is that the road goes through -- the only place you can step down are the holy places. On the top of Wintertop, in the sacred part of the Earth temple, on the movement rune. These are places where people have agendas, they don't like strangers popping in.

57: What are the six questions that you won't answer?

GS: That's the first one.

58: Why are there no dragons in Pamaltela?

GS: They probably haven't woken up yet.

SP: There's no dragonewts, that's not the same as no dragons.

59: There are many obvious connections between Glorantha and Earth. Kralorelans are like Chinese, et cetera. Is this just a parallelism, or is it actually a causal

connection? Is it possible to arrive in Glorantha from, say, Earth's Dreamlands. You know, where you drift off. Like, could the Yggs' Islanders actually be descended from Vikings who [unintelligible] for some strange reason.

SP: You ask about Earth's Dreamlands -- that's how I get there.

59: Viking question concerning things like the myths of the Yggs Islanders, how their ancestors came across the sea in ships, et cetera. Were their ancestors from elsewhere, or were they always on Glorantha?

GS: Yes. Yeah, I am not one who enjoys mixing genres. I think it always does each genre a disservice.

59: So the parallelism is just there.

GS: Correct. Vikings can't show up in Glorantha in my game. I let it happen it once and I still regret it. That was Redbird.

SP: A D&D character.

GS: Never again.

SP: Redbird finally ended up going to a Stormbringer world.

60: Yeah, going back to our various episodes. What's something strange about the Second Age, compared to the First and Third, is that you had two things going or at once. At least in Genertela. What's the exact relationship -- because the implication is the Devil was involved in all these in some ways -- what was the exact relationship between the Empire of the Wyrms Friends and the Jrusteli God Learners? The fact that the two of them exist at the same time is sort of interesting.

GS: Hostility. They did not trust each other.

SP: There's also an Eastern Island Empire, which is not God Learner, and the Errinoru Elf Empire, which is not God Learner. It was the Age of Empires, as it were.

GS: Exactly, the age of centralization. And they were enemies. Dire enemies. I think the God Learners have a bad rep in the Lunar Empire because they fought against the Solar Empire.

* end of tape*

- BB: It's especially important when you've got characters who have very different, for example, political or economic power. It's almost unavoidable that sometimes you're going to have wealthy people who can exert social and political power, and then you're going to have low life gutter snipes who don't have those kind of resources. But, they can have all sorts of dimensions that the wealthy powerful guy cannot, in order to make up for it.
- SP: Watch the movie "The Three Musketeers". The heroes of the movie aren't Cardinal Richleau or the King and the Queen. The heroes of the movie are the low life gutter snipes. And, in the game "The King's Musketeers" that Lawrence and I [unintelligible], the overriding plot was the high political maneuvering up at the top of the big powerful people, like Ken Rolston and stuff, who lead things. What the maneuvering did was it generated many actions for the little lowlifes [unintelligible] like running around in the sewers. And so, these six guys would decide something. If their decisions generate expanding waves of action and activity
- BB: Right. The King and the Cardinal were concerned about other things, with the movements of great troops around that would decide the fate of Europe. But, on the other hand, the Musketeers could dual for the heart of a lady.
- SP: And in the middle range, every single unit of troops was controlled by another player in the game. They had to go get that player to agree to move his troops. Sometimes you use orders to do it, of course. One would say, "Well, I think you should move them over here." [unintelligible]
- KR: But it's nice to have the set pieces occasionally show up in their schedule in order to draw everyone back together so that everyone has the same dramatic time frame from time to time. Because otherwise you have people running around not knowing what one another does, which is kind of O.K., but [unintelligible].
- BB: One thing that you'll find out is that fifty stories took place that you didn't hear anything about. For example, in "Home of the Bold" there are eighty people, and there's gonna be all sorts of things that you're not in earshot of that happen. Some of them surreptitious, some of them loud and boisterous. But, as long as you have plots of your own, that's no problem and you can get together afterwards with people and find out all the things that you didn't know about that happened.
- KR: We've touched upon that David [Cheng] is going to have the diaries available from "Home of the Bold" so that you can get a sense of what is invisible to you, and that's kind of interesting.
- KJ: One of the things that I think is important about what makes a good live role playing game is getting caught up in something bigger than you are. This is one of the advances over tabletop roleplaying games. And, not every GM can do it. In large games, you're part of a bigger universe. It sounds to me very much like "King's Musketeers" was that kind of game. It's something that we were aiming for in "Home of the Bold." We didn't want people to be Gloranthan addicts, necessarily, to play the game, but we wanted to be able to give the flavor of something Gloranthan.
- SP: But the last time I played RuneQuest, some of the players were Lunars, and some of the players were pro-Lunar Sartarites, some of them were anti-Lunar Sartarites, and some of the players were Grazelanders. And all their players were going... it was up to the Gamemaster, running everyone but your own party.
- LS: Live role playing frees you from that annoying need to have to work with people. (laughter) Or at least the same people, around the table.
- A: You don't have to work with any particular people.
- BB: What Kevin just said, about a good game catches you up, really drives what the GM's try to put into a game to in order to make it good. We've discussed some of the things that we think make up a good live role playing game.
- People who have lots of reasons to interact with one another. All the characters being stars, all the characters having the potential to star in their own sphere of activities. Another one is simplicity of rules. We all agree on that. The rules have to meet a couple of important criteria in order to get the best drama, in order to get out of the way. If rules are complex, if rules actually take much time to do, then the dramatic scenes are broken up and the feeling of being caught up in another world is diminished. And, the rules have to follow some criteria in order to do this.
- First off, they have to be easily memorized. People often haven't played this system before, especially since most live role playing games don't use any existing system because no existing system is simple enough and no existing system can be tailored to the genre (often you want rules that speak to a particular genre). It has to be simple enough that you can memorize it, that the rules automatically roll off and nobody has to look up anything. There's nothing that wastes time and kills an action more than somebody having to go...
- SP: Go call a Gamemaster who lives to look up something.
- BB: Yep, absolutely. A second thing that's also helpful is that you want them to use as few materials as possible. Sometimes you can get away with using a die, but the problem is that everybody has to have one, and people lose theirs or leave them somewhere or can't find them on their clothes, or all sorts of things. So, we even strive to do away with dice. In order to have a system that's simple and still differentiate the character, so that you're not like him, you have to have some method to compensate. And, what we typically use is special ability cards. You have cards that let you do a thing that's outside of the rules either several times during the game, or once. And, that's all the mechanic there is.

* tape change*



apparently run until people drop, there's so much stuff going on. And, at some point they become self-generating.

BB: Right! Character players start to invent new plots out of whole cloth.

LS: So, when you cut the game off at 1PM or whenever on Sunday, there are lots of people who go off in the corner and say, "Well, we're not done yet! I've got this last thing to do!" And they will go on, sometimes for another hour or two, figuring out what is going to happen and keeping it going. They really do take on a life and impetus of their own.

A: How would you deal with GM that also want to play non-player characters?

KR: Don't do it! We say it's a bad mistake!

LS: Yeah. There are a lot of GMs who demonstrably don't agree with us, but all of us think that it is a bad thing. The GMs have to be there to help the players, and once... I can't tell you how annoyed I've been and how much time I've wasted in games where the GMs were playing as I sat around trying to get something resolved, cooling my heels while the GMs interacted with each other, having a good time because they know all the cool stuff. And, boy, were they having a good time swapping their in jokes while I wasn't getting anything done. Also, when they do that, the directors somehow can't keep from taking the juiciest characters, and that hardly seems fair.

KJ: Absolutely. The GMs should only be the NPCs.

LS: Yes.

BB: It's tough for a GM to be an NPC, because he knows too much. But, sometimes there's a character that's only got a bit part, that you can't assign to a player because their role is too minor or too little likely to have impact on anything more than one small aspect of the game. And that has to be played by a GM, or somebody outside the game who has volunteered to come in to play the part.

SP: We've had a guy walk in carrying the Maltese Falcon, and then drop dead from all these bullet holes. Obviously there's not much of a role for a player to do. The Gamemaster got a couple of hours of him when he did that. If you're a Gamemaster, you can pretty much resign yourself to not having the same kind of fun as players. Your only recourse is to get another group somewhere to also do these games and go play in those games.

BB: But it's a different kind of fun. It's not like GMing is a chore.

SP: GMing is a different kind of chore. [laughter]

LS: If you're a Gamemaster, you had better enjoy the process of building the game. Because, you're going to be doing that for

months on end, most likely, and working with other people you better like, and you better be sure you're still going to like them later on. You have to enjoy putting these things together and be aware of the fact that you're getting a lot of your primary fun in advance, and then when the players take it they're gonna run with it. As soon as you turn the characters over to the players, they're not your characters anymore. They belong to those players. The player's going to look at your character and all the stuff you labored over so carefully and say, "Ehh, this part doesn't make sense to me. It's not how I see the character. I see him more kinda like this. I'm gonna do it that way. I'm gonna throw these three goals out and I'm gonna add these other two. And I'm gonna do it completely different than what he does because I read that book. I know it better than him."

BB: The best you can do in that instance is to touch your head like it's [unintelligible] and let the player go on and do what he wants.

LS: And help him. He's gonna come to you and wanna do something that seems to you completely nuts, and your gonna help him as much as you can because he's there to have fun and you're there to help him have fun.

BB: In fact, if a player wants to do something, the usual answer is "yes," unless it's going to screw some other player in a game-inappropriate way. In other words, it's going to take unfair advantage of some mechanic or something like that. Or, it's going to bring the game to a premature end.

LS: Or it's going to inflict major damage on the context of the game. You don't wanna let people do things that are way out of the genre or milieu because that's bad.

BB: Take your character, all the stuff you got in your packet. Multiply it by eighty, and somebody had to slave over that three or four times in order to get it to look nice. And then, there's all sorts of side arguments that don't end up even being written but simply some tiny point being resolved.

LS: Lots of things just plain get thrown right out. Look at your "Home of the Bold" character and look at all the stuff that's in there. Nobody sat down and wrote one whole character, and then wrote another whole character, and just did that eighty times. They had to figure out the basis of who all these people were, and then gradually evolve these characters over a long time, and figure out new ways that they can interconnect, and change ways that now no longer make sense, and elaborate further on the plot level. You can take as long as you want. I think that's your better satisfied [unintelligible]. Six to twelve months. [unintelligible]

BB: Thank you all. [applause]

On the weekend of January 14-16, 1994, a group of 250-or-so Gloranthan devotees congregated at a hotel nestled in the suburbs of Baltimore, Maryland. They came from all across the United States, and the most fanatical travelled from even farther reaches of the globe.

RuneQuest-Con succeeded in its goal of being "a sophisticated event, for mature, sophisticated gamers. More than just a collection of tournaments; a place to come together and share quality gaming ideas. A forum to recognize the very best games and gaming worlds that the hobby has to offer."

This book is an attempt to distill to written form the fun that was had that weekend.

The contents

One of the surprise successes was the enthusiasm brought to the Orlanthe Storytelling contest. Close to twenty bards had tales and legends to entertain their fellows. Seven of those folks have shared their stories here for your enjoyment.

Home of the Bold was an eighty-person Gloranthan freeform game, where friction between Lunar occupying forces and Sartarite malcontents led to armed rebellion. Twenty participants tell us about their experiences in the game.

We were able to record several of the hour-long seminars that took place at RuneQuest-Con. For those of you seeking Gloranthan lore, we've got 26 pages of it here. There's also an excellent discussion on Live Action Role Playing, which seems to be the next big thing in the RPG industry.

Finally, we present the rules to the Live Action Trollball game played that blustery Sunday morning.