

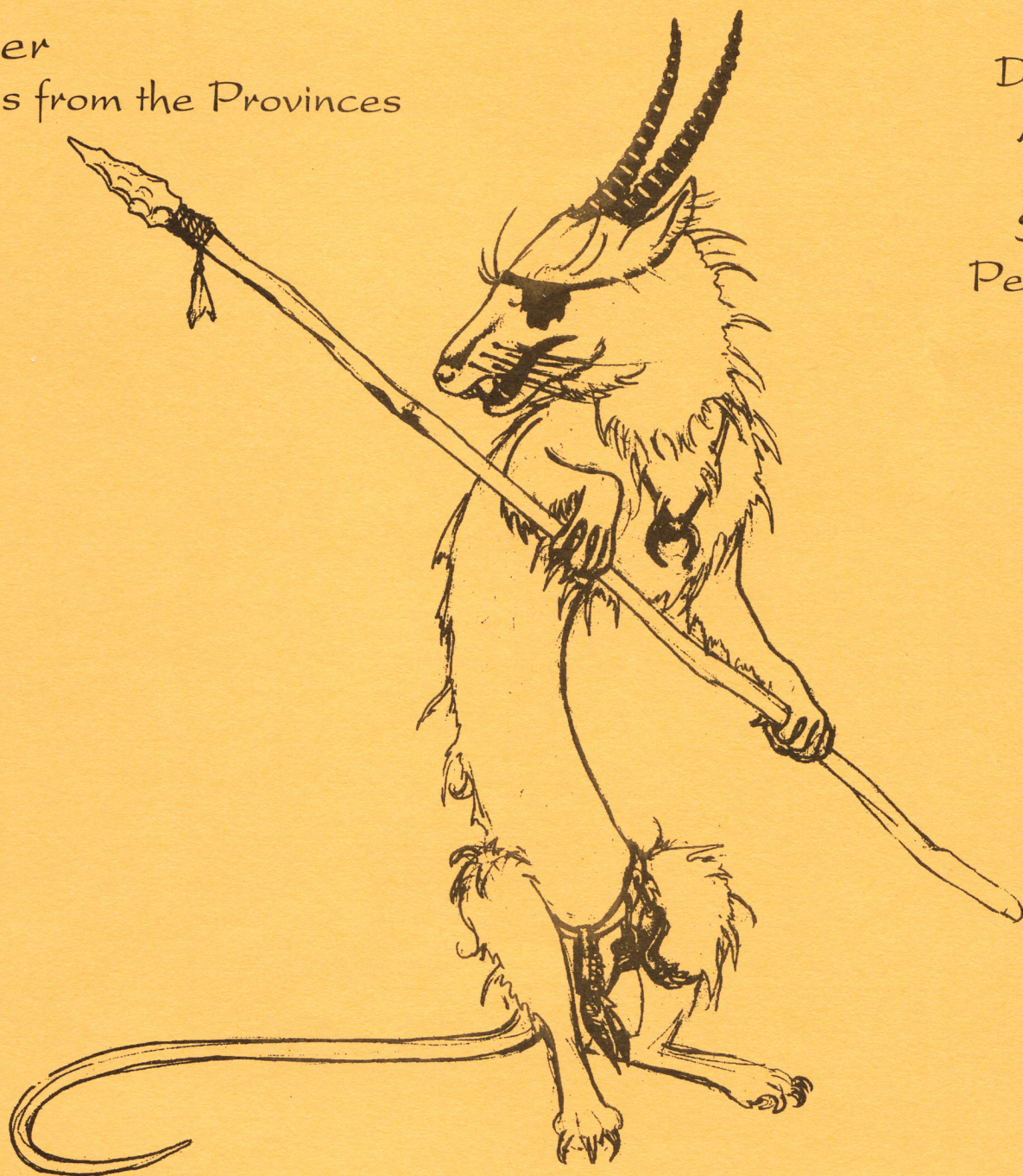
# Codex

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Inquiries into the nature  
and secrets of Glorantha

Imther  
News from the Provinces

Dragon  
Magic  
by  
Sandy  
Petersen







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Michael Dawson/Codex  
P.O. Box 9286  
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E-mail:codexzine@aol.com

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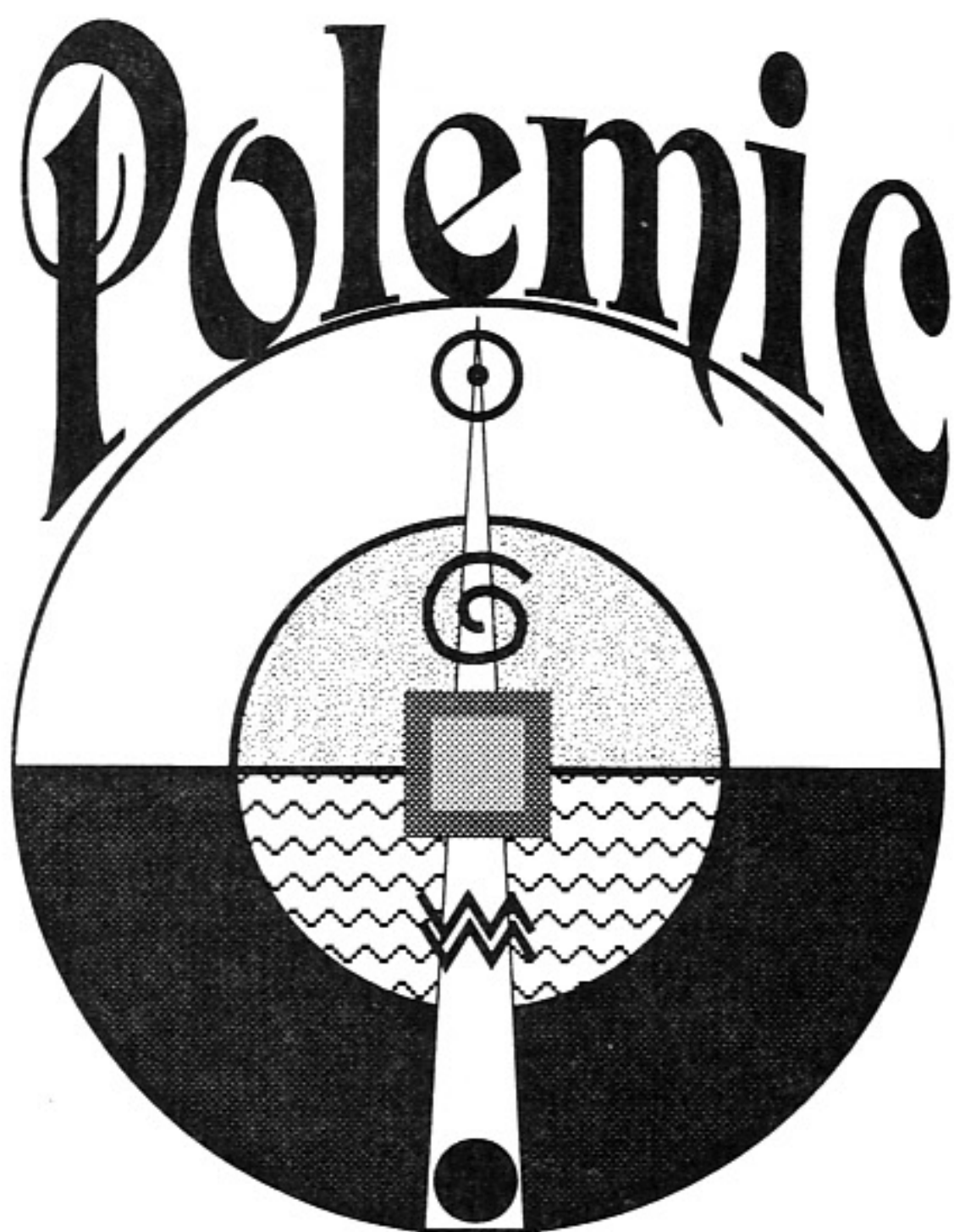
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**Subscription information: Inside Back Cover**

## Art Credits

- Front cover, Back cover.....Laura Morgan**
- Page 17,.....Somebody (David?)Scott**
- Page 28, 30, 32.....Mike Dawson**
- Footer .....Twyla Kitts**





Welcome to the "catch up" issue. That was the original intent, but so much for well laid plans. Twenty-four pages of this issue have been finished for months; it is always the last few pages that drag the rest out. Artwork continues to be a major hold up. Strange how so few people are willing to work for free.

I hope to keep up, or slightly increase the rate of production for Codex, though I am proud of the rate I've managed the first year, seeing how there is just the one of me handling editing, layout, production, solicitation of manuscripts, sales to distributors, subscriptions and mailing. Looking back at that list of duties makes me wonder if I am nuts to keep this up.

There is good news. A big part of the hold up came from my need to rely on others for scanning of art. Just last week, I purchased a flatbed scanner of my very own, so now, all I need is the art.

Even better, the response from distributors, and hence, I figure, from retailers, has been very strong. There are more copies of #3 pre-sold than there were of #2, and I sold more of #2 than I expected to.

### The Imther Feature

This issue marks the debut of Harald Smith to a non-electronic audience. I am very proud to have the chance to publish him—I think he is the best (until now) undiscovered Gloranthan author around. His "take" on Imther, and the way he presents it with homely stories and people, gives it a unique flavor. Along with that, his work is a textbook example of how to contribute to the creation of Glorantha. He picked an area otherwise unclaimed or peripheral, corresponded with Greg Stafford enough to make sure he wasn't stepping on another's work, then used his own

inspiration to breath life into what was otherwise just a few names and map dots.

I am also very happy to present Martin Crim's *Three Sisters* story. This one may take you a couple of readings to figure out, though I'm sure you'll enjoy it from the first paragraph. You may think differently, but my advice is: *Contemplate the words of the turtle.*

I've got another innovation in this issue. In strong contrast to the last two Codexes, #3 has only one little article by me. I tried to keep that out too, but I just plain ended up with blank pages. I want Codex to present a variety of voices in the RQ world, and this issue takes a big step in that direction.

### Thanks and Acknowledgements

Troy Clark came through at the last minute with some scans, just before I went and bought my scanner.

Laura Morgan continues to be very generous with her astonishingly good art.

Twyla Kitts showed graceful patience for months while I tried to come up with something for the dragon to incinerate. I'm so glad she sees my Freehand lessons as a good trade for her art.

Harald Smith's patience is saintly in nature, as I swipe all the best bits for Codex and leave him hanging on future product plans. Right after *Soldiers of the Red Moon* and *In Service to the Emperor*, I promise, Harald.

Martin Crim saved me from publishing an article that I thought was "passable" when it wasn't. Here's to him, and high standards.

### Coming in Codex #4

I think it serves the readers best to find a large chunk of information on a single topic in a single issue. Keeping that in mind, combined with what I have in hand from contributors already, the next Codex will feature the East Isles. Not the whole issue, but a big chunk. Have something on them? Send it to me!

### Future Issues

At this point, I don't have a strong feeling for what my customers want to see. Should I revisit Galastar? There is more information, some of which will be available in my first foray into a non-magazine format. Martin Crim came up with a neat little scenario best suited for a one shot or semi-Live Action game. He calls it the Galastar Peace Conference. Parts of it contain info of interest to non-GMs, and might go well in a future issue.

No one has taken me up on the idea of writing a large scenario for Galastar, and the response to last issue's "describe a building" offer has been very slow. Thanks to those who did write something up—I hope to publish the best of them in the future.

So, fellow Gloranthophiles, what do you want to see? More to the point, what do you have for me to publish?



# Imtherian Cheeses

## A Guide for the Temple Cook

Harald Smith

This small, slim document is found at the Temple of Hwarin Victorious in Hortugarth. It was supposedly penned by one Bibashar, formerly a temple cook. The following are excerpts from this small guide:

### Apple-rind Amber

This fresh, hard cheese made in the Southlands gains considerable flavor with age, taking on a robust and fruity tone. Common in local inns and family households, it keeps well in dark cellars. It is best served with a hearty bread and a pint of cider.

### Spiced-rind Amber

A variant of apple-rind amber made exclusively in the Sun Dome domains. The rind is made with sunpowder, blackfire seed, and ground niranut, giving the aged cheese a decidedly pungent aroma and taste. The cheese should **not** be stored in damp environments as it develops an unpleasant mold that sours the entire taste. This cheese goes best with bread and fire wine.

### Rout Black-and-Red

A local variant of the notable Doblian Red cheese, it is a hard red cheese with a black rind that is always made in rounds or wheels. The flavor is much more delicate than the amber cheeses and is favored in high-class inns. It is particularly good cooked in a pastry with mild sausage or bell-flower buds.

### Vakthan's Blue

From the Central Mountains, this cheese is flavored with blue mountain heather. As a consequence, it has a pungent aroma and requires a taste for strong and unusual flavoring. Generally, it goes best with robust meats such as beef, goat, or cliff toad.

### Goat Cheeses

An assortment of places, particularly in the Central Mountains (but sometimes imported from as far away as Aggar), produce the soft goat cheeses favored in Hilltown and Sidherius. Some of these cheeses (though not all due to their lack of consistency) cook up well in hearty stews. Generally served with a good barley malt or beer.

### New Lolon Green

Aged for at least a year, this white cheese is laced with strong green veins like a good marble. The older the cheese, the deeper and wider the veins of green.

Since the Civil War, it is hard to get in

Hortugarth due to the tariffs. Crumbly with a sweet taste, it makes an excellent ending to a meal, particularly served with sweet breads.



### Red Rhynopolis

This crumbly red cheese has a mild flavor, usually augmented by sun-root or sunpowder to add some bite. Almost universally served with barley bread.

### Boar's Nest Smoked White

The primary cheese of Hortugarth, it is flavored with pork fat or bacon drippings and then slowly smoked over apple wood. Do **not** cook with this cheese—it becomes tough and chewy when heated. It should be served as an accompaniment to pork dishes or eaten alone with a good cider.

### Rock White

Preserved with mountain salts, this white cheese is frequently found in the packs of miners and soldiers. It accompanies fish well—about the only Imtherian cheese that does—and is thus popular in the Isildon river inns of Hortugarth. †





# The Edge of Empire

## An Introduction to Imther

Harald Smith

**T**his provincial kingdom occupies a small range of mountains south of the Mad Sultanate and north of Holay. It is the border between the Lunar Empire and the wild lands of eastern Peloria. The mountains are home to both men and dwarfs and are a primary source of bronze for the entire Lunar Empire. Unlike the other southern provinces, Imther was never conquered by the Lunars. Instead it joined the empire of its own free will.

The years 1619-1623 S.T. are a period of growing turbulence in Imther. Since the end of a civil war in 1612 S.T., a war which crippled much of Imther, the kingdom's populace has worried about its shrinking borders and aging king. While hardly a promising time for farmers and artisans, for adventurous souls it is preparation for the Hero Wars.

Here are the most important details about Imther.

### Border Forts

In the far eastern wilds of Imther, the Lunars have established a series of border forts. From them, raiders venture into Balazar and Garsting and treasure hunters travel to the Elf Sea. If you can survive the bandits, you can make a fortune.

### Hilltown

The capital of Imther lies at the end of the second Daughter's Road. Here Hwarin Dalthippa made pacts with the King of Imther that last to this day. Dwarfs still come here to trade priceless works for pieces of junk.

### Hortugarth

The primary city of Imther's south. Once a mine or trading post, the recent civil war left Hortugarth on the border of both Holay and Vanch. It is now the focal point of much economic activity. Fortunes are said to be made or lost in a day.

### The Imther Mountains

The mountains are said to be inhospitable to all but dwarfs and woodsmen. Great treasures supposedly await those bold enough to venture in.

### The King of Imther

The current king, Margorio IV, gained his position through a bloody civil war some eight years ago. Although he estab-

lished a new dynasty, all his sons were slain in the war and he has yet to produce another heir. Rumors say that he is sterile and his wife barren. When he dies, there will likely be another civil war where anyone could claim the crown.

### Imtherian Culture and Lore

Imtherian culture is a blend of Theyalan, Solar, and Lunar cultures. Of these three, the Lunar influence is now the strongest. Consequently, Imther is rapidly leaving its barbarian roots behind and advancing into a civilized society. This is a rather unusual development in Glorantha for a mountainous land.

The typical Imtherian character is the child of a farmer who abandons the rural life for better prospects in the cities. Common outlanders are Lunar citizens from Dara Happa or Peloria, often army veterans, merchants, or thieves, looking for greater opportunities than they found at home.

Imtherian life centers around the villages and cities. Originally, these were the clan centers of the Imtherian tribes, but the Yelmations arriving in the Second Age turned them into the domains of the nobles.

The nineteen leading noble families are called Marex. They own extensive lands throughout the kingdom and receive the tithes of the lesser nobles and peasants. The Marex recognize common ancestors and often worship them.

The lesser nobles and peasants receive lands to administer and farm from the Marex. This includes common ground, fields, pasturage, and village houses.

The nobles inherit the right to maintain the laws of the land. Each Marex maintains the laws of the King and Queen and their own domain laws. The domain laws were typically established in the Second Age and are modified by the Marex in consultation with the lesser nobles, village heads, and local priests.

The King and Queen uphold the authority of the Lunar Empire, coordinate the activities of the state, and oversee the native religion. The subordinate Pilex (Marex nobles, formerly nominated, but now chosen by the King and Queen to rule the four marches of Imther) advise them, as does a primary council including the chamberlains, the marshal, and the chancellor.







## Personal Virtues

The virtues of all Imtherians derive from their religious past. Of primary importance are Truth and Loyalty (from Khelmal); Fidelity and Hard Work (from Imthus and Aidea); and Acceptance of Others (from the Lunar gods). However, recent economic changes wrought by foreign merchants and the arrival of many ex-mercenaries is altering this delicate balance.

## Customs

**Birth**—The local women seclude the mother in the local Imthus and Aidea or Earth temple. The birth is attended by the local midwife and the local wise woman. Hopefully, the local priest or priestess is on hand to give his or her blessing.

**Initiation**—Children are welcomed as adults at age 15 in a special ceremony held during Sea season. The priest and priestess of Imthus and Aidea explain to the new adults their responsibilities to the temple, to the local lord, to the community, and to other individuals. Part of this is given in the Lore of the Imtherian Lords.

**Marriage**—This is the most sacred ritual of Imthus and Aidea. It is a day-long festival which starts at the bride's home. The bride and her family proceed to the groom's home where the bride's parents receive a gift. Together, the bride and groom proceed to the temple where the priest and priestess bless the union, pronounce the vows, and lead the couples in a special ritual. The temple ceremony is then concluded and a celebration is held at the local inn. From there the groom leads the bride to their new home (or his parent's home if together they cannot afford their own).

**Death**—The dead person is laid in state for a week in a special necropolis (or sanctified home). At the end of this period, the Imthus and Aidea priest and priestess lay the person in a stone coffin in a mausoleum. If this isn't available, the person is laid in a rocky grave with a stone headrest.

## Gender Relations

Imther has always had a culturally strong female populace, even in the heyday of the Solar pantheon. Women have an equal say both in the home and in politics. The King and Queen are joint rulers, as are the Pilex and the heads of the Marex families. The priesthood of Imthus

and Aidea requires the priest and priestess to be formally bonded together. The Lunar cults particularly favor women as leaders.

In day-to-day life, men plow, herd, and perform other physical work, while women raise children, cook, gather and garden, and weave. Both sexes contribute to the militia and mercenaries in service to the Conquering Daughter.

## Clothing

Imtherians usually wear leather or linen. Wool clothes are extremely uncommon. The rich wear fur in winter. In the countryside, shirts, trousers, and cloaks are most common. In the cities, many men and women wear long linen robes covered by cloaks and scarves.

As with the Orlanthi, most people have some sort of dress clothes for rituals and other special occasions. Jewelry is also common, with the locals favoring bronze, copper, and gold.

## Food

Corn is the primary grain, brought to the lowlands of Imther by Hon-eel, the Mother of Corn. Oats are also regularly planted. Apples and various root vegetables (including the popular Redtusk) are part of most meals. Dairy products, particularly cheeses, are another staple. Pork is included in meals at least two or three times a week. Beef is less common, but avidly eaten. Imthus and Aidea's power to preserve food extends the food supply year-round.

## Trade

Imther exports preserved foods (apples, cheeses, and dried or salted meats), cider, leather and linen, stone, and metal (bronze and copper). It imports exotic food and wine, woolen goods, salt and spices, bronze plate armor (whose manufacture is prohibited in the provincial kingdoms), and slaves for the mines and quarries.

## Mythology and Religion

The Imtherians have a unique pantheon, a hodge-podge of three cultures (earth, lunar, and solar). All people learn answers to the fundamental questions of life from their local priests and lords. †





# The Election

Harald Smith

By midday, Bibashar had his breads in the temple ovens, properly attended to by an initiate who at least had some inkling of when to remove the breads. He hoped that would prove sufficient, though he had other items to attend to later. For now he was free and could attend the elections.

Working his way down the street past the small throngs surrounding city orators, he noticed that the graffiti had grown more strident. "STOP SKYSEEKER" gave way to "SHATTER THE ORB" and "CURSE MORTIONUS" yielded to "MORTIONUS SITS ON THE SPEAR". The orators had raised their pitches, too. Bibashar caught bits and pieces only as he hurried past.

From one came "... and he will bring horrors out of the Plain of Stones." From another "... Skyseeker shall line his pockets with your coin, sending men into your homes to strip it bare."

Bibashar shook his head. It was a new year, but the comments were old. He was not surprised by the sameness they held. Nor was he surprised at the crowds pushing to enter the Arena itself. He let himself flow with the crowd, only occasionally shoving an elbow away from his bulging girth. Eventually, he found himself inside the looming structure that Hortugarth's leading center of entertainment.

The crowd inside was already considerable and it took him some more minutes before he spotted the madly waving Clodius. The scribe was conspicuously dressed in his customary brown within a small sea of white robes. Trust Clodius to evade the temple dress code for practicality, thought Bibashar to himself as he tried to determine the best approach to the seats.

Halfway up the section to Bibashar's right, the seats held a group of temple initiates and priests anxious to see the results of this year's juvenatorial election. To reach them, though, Bibashar had to push through a noisy throng of Peacers wearing their distinctive green cloaks clasped with an oakleaf pendant. Not that their candidate had any chance of success, but they did always seem to enjoy themselves more than any others—even with the prospect of the eastern war that Aaron Skyseeker promised if elected.

That was the way of the elections—more promises than actions. Each year one of the five juvenatorial positions came up for election by the citizens of Hortugarth. As a free city, Hortugarth had evolved some rather peculiar institutions and the Juvenators were among those. Created by Hortus after his conquest of the city some two hundred years earlier, the Juvenators represented fresh blood and ideas for a city grown stagnant. Only citizens under the age of 30 could be elected and they could not serve as Juvenators past that age. They were always elected by popular vote of all citizens, a status which neither Bibashar nor Clodius possessed. Both were born outside the city. And since neither had ever joined the city temple to Hortus, they did not have any means to gain that status. Instead, they were merely freedwellers, welcome to attend the elections by all means (and spend their money, too), but ineligible to vote.

Bibashar reached the others. Clodius had saved a seat next to himself, though several others were also still vacant. To Clodius' right sat Aelin, another scribe who was noted for his extraordinary memory, and then Marcus, one of the temple's healers. To the left of the vacant seat was Marius, called "the Potmaker" and also Master of the Temple Kiln. Bibashar squeezed past him to reach his seat.

"Hurry up and get your fat butt out of the way!" said Narus, a skinny white robed man graying at the temples who sat behind Bibashar's seat.

"And good day to you, too!" Bibashar replied with feigned outrage. He actually liked Narus, as well as the two men who flanked him, Gordin and Ootel. All were kilnmen who worked under Marius and all were good, solid artisans. Unthreatened by Bibashar, and of similar age, they were not disagreeable companions.

"I'm going as fast as I can, you know," he said huffily as he eased his heavy frame into the bench space beside Clodius. He noted that a group of temple weavers, of whom he thought little, sat in front of them, before turning to Clodius. "Where are the templars and their crowd?"

"I think some are down there." Clodius pointed to an area near the bottom tier of the section. "Angkerio and Ingus himself are both there."







Aelin leaned past Clodius, "I know Judus went with that dandified Yanafal soldier, Belsarius, to the Inn of Last Light. I don't think they're planning to be here before the Divining of Bracchus."

Clodius added "And you won't see Sterna, Rowena, or Lucinda—I sent them looking for that heartroot and black salt you wanted."

Bibashar quietly sighed. He had hoped that Lucinda, at least, would be here with her pleasant smile and wholesome looks. "I thought you would have put Telos or Psychosus to work first."

"Thought of them, but someone had already sent them off elsewhere. I don't expect they'll be long, though. Sterna's not one to waste a lot of time when she could be carousing."

A vendor came up the stairs calling out his wares. Bibashar called for a couple of little blood sausages and paid out his 10 bracchi. He started eating.

Clodius smiled. "Not even going to ask how the election is going? You must be obsessed with something today. Just as well—it's not clear yet. Based on the piles of stones behind the judges, though, it looks to be a three-way race."

Bibashar squinted to see better, juice running down his chin. Although the second tier offered a reasonable view, faces were not clearly distinguishable. He could make out the seats the three Sequestrators in attendance. Balmoral the Blue, Priest of Yelmadio and Judge of Truth was prominently in the center, dressed as always in his sky blue robes. Cambusius, High Priest of Imthus and Aidea, the Judge of Faith, sat to Balmoral's right. To his left, Bibashar thought he could make out the towering form of Count Tordio the Bear, Chief of Laws. Given that Tordio was hard to mistake—a man known as much for his stern, uncorruptable nature, as for his hulking size and heavy beard—Bibashar felt comfortable in his guess.

Behind the seats of the Sequestrators were the badges of the candidates on top of gilded standards planted firmly in the earth. Piles of small stones lay around the standards, tokens of votes already cast. The shimmering magical light called the Veil of Hortus hung around both the standards and the edge of the Arena floor. Though no one had dared it in years, all citizens knew that the Veil could unleash the potent Curse of Hortus on any who tried to cheat the actual election. Bibashar squinted harder, trying to discern the badges through the magic veil.

"Well the Golden Orb is clearly Skyseeker's standard and it seems to be one of the sizable piles. From here the others look like Ingus' and Zepherus Argon's."

"Right on the first two," said Marius with a sly grin,

"but the third is Mortionus'."

"Mortionus?" responded Bibashar hastily. "The Stone Spear haven't had a successful campaign as long as I've been here! Even Pinea stole their support last year."

"True," said Clodius, "but he's been rousing the residents of the Boar's Nest against a lot of factions, including ours."

"Surely Ingus must still be the favorite?" said Bibashar, suddenly worried that their faction, the True Moon, might not gain their expected triumph. He slowly fingered his Moon clasp, hoping to call upon the Conquering Daughter for luck.

Marius shook his head. "I think not now. Rumors now say that Aaron Skyseeker's faction is larger than ours and that the Native Imtherians are supporting them."

"But surely we have the support of the Heart!" said Bibashar, eyeing his colleagues.

"I think that's true," Clodius replied.

"But," Marius added, "I have also heard rumors of a secret deal between the Orb and the Imperials." The others were suddenly all ears. Talking quietly beneath the buzz of the crowd, he added, "Hysterius tells me that if Skyseeker is elected, then the Orb will support Imperial measures along the Elf Sea and a more active Register of Cider."

"Surely they wouldn't," said Clodius.

"No, I think he has the right of it," Bibashar said with a frown. "Hysterius is usually reliable on information. And the King has been dying to get more of his faction in power here. Baron Tordio's just not active enough for them and they haven't had a strong voice since Baron Farex died. If the Imperials can maneuver both the Orb and the Rose, then we've got a rough year ahead."

Bibashar considered the implications. "Of course, we would get a break in the Rose power base in the militia. And odds are that the Orb and Imperials will fall out at some point. It'd just be a matter of when."

Down below, the stream of citizens continued to cast their voting stones and the afternoon wore on. Increasingly, the election showed itself to be a three-way battle between Aaron Skyseeker of the Orb faction, Ingus Stonesplitter of the True Moons (and being a Road Warrior, the obvious choice for any initiate of the Conquering Daughter), and Mortionus of the arch-conservative Stone Spears.

Bibashar indulged in assorted delicacies provided by the Arean vendors—everything from pickled fire grapes to salted mollet fish to lammas seed bread. He split a wheel of Apple-rind Amber cheese with his companions and quaffed some diluted fire wine. Though none of it aided





his health or weight, he found all of it pleasing to his palate—certainly his main reason for coming to the Arena in the first place.

Ingus slowly fell behind and became an increasingly distant third. The Stone Spear, sensing their first victory in almost twenty years, grew more and more vocal. A small knot of their supporters sat not far behind Bibashar madly screaming for their candidate. Bibashar wished he could take their badges and shove them into their mouths. He had hoped all year that Ingus would win, and it had seemed so likely up until this afternoon, that he was just stunned by the turn of events.

Ingus was clearly the best candidate for Master of the Militia. He was a hardworking Road Warrior of the Conquering Daughter, well versed in both war craft and masonry (the latter craft being one of the temple's main sources of income). He had accompanied Angkerio, the temple's greatest warrior, on at least one foray into the world of the gods and he was a consistent contender in the Hortugarth tournaments. What more could one want for the Juvenator who coordinated the defense of the city?

Aaron Skyseeker was simply a lesser version of Ingus—a little younger, less skilled, and not as good in the tournaments. He also had the disadvantage of being in a bad political faction to Bibashar's mind—a faction which spent its time trying to suppress its rival, the Rose faction, to the detriment of all.

But Mortionus, on the other hand, was a different sort altogether. He was Balmoral's greatest student of law and a true demagogue. Certainly he was a first-class orator. Bibashar had heard him debate in support of the former high priestess of Hwarin, the lady Cyrilia. He prepared such a case in favor of her that the judges nearly decided in her favor and against the needs of the temple. His debate in support of Corvoral Valusi, Balmoral's brother, was still talked about even though he lost and Corvoral was banished for his instigations against the Rose and Wheel factions. Yes, his debating and rhetorical skills were without question, but what else did he offer? He had no knowledge of the militia or fighting, he was fundamentally opposed to the Juvenators, and he belonged to a faction that typically stood against all others. And it appeared that he now led the election.

Bibashar watched as citizens continued to come in to vote and find seats. It was approaching evening and sunset when the last voting rush began. As always, certain factions liked to hold back some of their supporters to throw others off guard. Suddenly, Aelin said, "I think Ingus is making a move again!"

The temple initiates suddenly focused their attention on this last rush. And, indeed, Ingus' pile of stones was again mounting. He was quickly narrowing the gap as sunset drew closer and closer. Voters rushed now to the judges, quickly said their oaths to Hortus, and ran to the piles to cast their votes. Some stumbled and fell trying to reach their goal, only to crawl towards the appropriate pile or

even simply pitch their vote stone in the right direction.

Marius said, "I think it's the Heart residents. You know I bet Haloris kept them aside for last. Orlanatus be damned, that woman's got nerve!"

"But will it be enough?" Bibashar asked anxiously. "Yelm's so close to his final setting? If they waited too long, they won't get enough votes in."

"I can't tell. I just can't tell."

"Come on Ingus!" Narus yelled from behind while rising to his feet. "Ingus! Ingus!" He motioned others to join him. Quickly they formed a chorus chanting "Ingus! INGUS! THE TRUE MOON LIVES!"

And finally a long horn note sounded from the high wall behind them. Sunset. Yelm had finally departed. Silence settled like nightfall over the Arena before a low murmur began again. From their vantage point in the stands, Bibashar and the others could not tell whether Ingus had overtaken Mortionus or not. Aelin was sure that almost all the last two hundred or so votes had gone for Ingus, but was it enough?

They could now see Balmoral rise from his seat. Though they could not hear him, they could tell he called for the Priest of Bracchus to come forth and make the Divining. From a gateway in front of Balmoral, an old man, bent and grayed, though brilliantly attired in white robe laced with gold and silver thread and with many necklaces of gold strung around his neck, came slowly forward until he reached Balmoral and the two clasped each other. The old man continued on past the seat to the semicircle of badges and the piles of stones. He bowed his head and slowly a golden scale formed in the air in front of him. Then the scale moved forward to the piles and hovered before suddenly vanishing. A gasp ran through the crowd, as they now waited for one pile to glow. And then they had their answer.

The victor was Aaron Skyseeker.

Wild cheering suddenly erupted from one end of the Arena, while many, including Bibashar sat stunned. He vaguely heard Marius saying how the rush of votes came too late. Haloris' gamble came too late to counter the others or to draw votes from them. Bibashar knew he shouldn't have raised his hopes again. It was too much to ask that a True Moon candidate should win. He gradually noticed a tugging at his side. Marius was trying to get him to go.

"We've got work to do now, my boy. The party's over and Hwarin Dalthippa calls us."

"But it was so close, so close!" responded Bibashar forlornly.

"True it was—the closest I can recall. But if we don't get a move on it we'll never make it back to the temple through the crowd. And I'm sure you have to be there before the start of the midnight ritual."

Bibashar nodded agreement. It would be a wild night in town. Too many losers—there would be fights and brawls, probably even a murder or two, before the militia settled everyone down. Together they rose and as a group started slowly working their way home. †





# A Guide to Factions of Imther

## Harald Smith



**T**he following commentary was penned by Bibashar, the Assistant Master of the Altar at the Temple of Hwarin Victorious in the city of Hortugarth. It was written between 1620 and 1625 S.T. and was apparently used as a guide for young temple initiates, especially those from the rural villages, to understand the complexities of Hortugarth politics. Bibashar's background as a temple cook is occasionally apparent in the document.

Hortugarth is a city in turmoil. In order to serve our temple well, you must know the political situation. Even the greatest inn cannot serve great meals if the staff doesn't understand the difference between carrots and marigolds.

There are ten political factions in Hortugarth and some work together in loose alliances, much as certain vegetables work well with certain meats. Most factions can be identified by the bronze cloak clasp or necklace they wear. You should note that some individuals go to extremes to identify themselves by wearing elaborate belts, rings, cloaks, or even headdress. As with a good recipe, excess is always to be avoided.

### The True Moon

A medium-sized faction. The True Moon faction supports the status quo, assuring a Lunar-influenced society. However, it does not favor the aggressive mercantile domination sought by the Etyries cult. This faction is supported by many Trader Quarters residents, our temple of Hwarin Victorious, the temple of the Seven Mothers and the Oratory school of the True Moon. Chief spokespersons are Gregarius and Cinemus the Orators. You can recognize members by the emblem of the Moon within the Sunburst.

### The Heart

A large faction. The Heart faction support the status quo. Its supporters are residents of the Heart district and the Hortus temple. Most notable leader is the Juvenator Haloris Brighttooth, Mistress of the Mint. You can recognize their members by the stylized Heart they wear.

### The Wheels

A small/medium-sized faction. The Wheels faction is attempting to obtain control of the Hortugarth economy.

Thus they are less interested in political power than economic power. This faction is led by the Argon family (Marex nobles), and supported by money lenders, the Brachus temple and the Lokarnus temple. Their emblem is, appropriately, a Spoked Wheel.

The True Moon, Heart and Wheels factions have been working together lately to counteract the Rose/Imperials and the Orb/Native Imtherian alliances. However, this alliance does not directly oppose any other, blending like subtle herbs into the overall taste.

### The Rose

A large faction. The Rose faction is one of the two dominant factions in Hortugarth, at the moment, and, in fact, through all of Imther. It favors a strong central (royal) government (though not the present one!) and is willing to use economic as well as political means to achieve its aims. It is led by the Mallust family and supported by the Daltach family. Notable members include its leader Juvenator Sarkorio Mallust, Master of the City Seal. The emblem of this faction is the Rose.

### The Imperials

A medium-sized faction. The Imperials faction seeks overt Lunar political rule through economic domination. It is supported by the Etyries temple, the Merchants Guild, the Jeweler's Guild, the Conquering Daughter temple and many Lunar soldiers. The primary leader has become Iaphon Perpenor, Etyries merchant, and other leaders include the Sequestrator Dalmea Merchantmaster, Judge of Value for Trade (who is also an Etyries merchant and Master of the Merchants Guild). It is thought that this faction receives its orders from Mirin's Cross. The emblem of this group is the Scythe and the Sickle, crossed over the Moon.

As a special note, you must beware of this faction. It opposes our temple and the True Moon faction.

The Rose and the Imperials factions have been working together lately. They are the main opposition to the Orb/Native Imtherians alliance. They also oppose the True Moon/Heart alliance.





## The Orb

A large faction. This is the other of the two dominant factions in Hortugarth and Imther. This faction supports the return to dynastic government spearheaded by the King and Queen. Here it is led by the Hallite family and has connections with the Pilex of Sidherius. Notable leaders include the Juvenator Aaron Skyseeker, Master of the Militia, the retired Sequestrator Baron Farex and the current Sequestrator (whose name I forget), Judge of Value for Land. The emblem used is the Glorious Sun.

## The Native Imtherians

A small faction. This faction would like to enhance the power of the cult of Imthus & Aidea. It aims are more religious than political. However, it does support the monarchy. It is supported by the Imthus & Aidea temple and a number of the Native Imther Corps troops. It is also said the King and Queen of Imther quietly support this faction. More than any other group, this faction often foregoes the emblem, though the leaders wear a badge depicting Imthus and Aidea.

The Orb and the Native Imtherians factions have been working very closely of late. Their prime target seems to be the Stone Spears faction, but they also oppose the Rose/Imperials alliance.

## The Peacers

A small faction. The Peacers would like to reduce the violence of the current factional struggles. Needless to say, this is a very small faction! It is supported by the Healer's Guild, the Mason's Guild, and a few people in the Trader's quarter. The most visible leader of this faction is Juvenator Akil Bonetender, Master of the Garth. Their emblem is the Oak leaf.

## The Blue Fins

A small faction. This is the smallest faction in the city, but also the most volatile—kind of like sunpowder. It claims it wants a stable city so its members can go about their business unmolested. I suspect it actively, but covertly, opposes our temple and the True Moon faction. Most of its support comes from the river cultists, and those who make their living on or by the river. The emblem used is the Blue Fin.

The Peacers and the Blue Fin factions have supposedly formed an alliance which is vainly trying to calm the situation in Hortugarth. Their efforts have met with little success so far.

## The Stone Spears

A medium faction. This faction is extremely conservative, and would like to see a return to Senatorial rule. Their main support comes from the Valusi family. Their most prominent leader is Sequestrator Balmoral the Blue, Judge of Truth (and High Priest of Yelmadio). Their emblem is usually three vertical Spears crossed by a fourth Spear.

As you can readily see, the array of factions is large and varied. You must act carefully, as if you were preparing the most delicate confection, lest you destroy what we have tried so hard to make. Should you find yourself unclear of your actions, it is your duty to your temple to consult your superiors.

## Imther's Recognized Leaders

### Red Emperor

He rules the entire Lunar Empire and is the overlord of Imther. In his current incarnation, he has never visited the province, though his previous incarnation did.

### King & Queen

The joint rulers of Imther. Currently they are Margorio IV and Abastis whose reign began in 1608 ST and who established the current dynasty in 1612 ST by winning the civil war. They reside in Hilltown. The previous rulers were Firon III and Urkara III; before them Idalytus I (the Incompetent) and Bari I (the Cruel); and before them Pelton I (the Redeemer) and Mocleia IV (the Fertile). Succession used to pass to the ranking Pilex on the death of either king or queen. Now it would pass to the heir of Margorio and Abastis, if they had any.

### Lunar Provincial Administrator

The imperial representative to the court of Imther, he is advisory to the crown and under direct orders of the Red Emperor and the Lunar Governor.

### Pilex

The joint rulers of each of the four marches of Imther. They are now chosen by the King and Queen from the ranks of the Marex. They reside in the Pilexial seats of Sidherius (for the Southlands), Central Mines (for the Mountains), Rhynopolis (for the North), and Blackwall (for the West since 1612 when New Lolon fell to Vanch).

### Marex

The high nobles of Imther from the 19 great families. Only the Marex can become Pilex or succeed to the crown.

### Count of the Sun Dome

The ruler of the Sun Dome Temple, an autonomous area which was part of southern Imther until 1611 and is now directly under the crown of Holay. Currently the Count is the High Priest Nightcrest.

### Counts and Barons

The minor nobles of Imther. They are the lords and ladies of the many towns and villages.

### Crown Lords

The officers of the crown, usually drawn from the Marex and outranking the counts. †





# Jannisor's Face

## Harald Smith

**T**he following fragment is registered within the *Codex Imperatum Imthericum* and banned by order of the Red Emperor to any outside the cult of Moonson Imperator or the temple of Irripi Ontor in Glamour. Those who break said ban shall be bound to the net of Jajagappa and dragged to the Pits of Perdition.

Memoir of Rylindia Finestroke, Irripi Ontor library, Jillaro branch, 6-42 with reference to her *Commentary on the Representation of Heroes in Imtherian Art*.

I left Jillaro in 6-40 heading east to study the pictorial representation of the heroes of Imther. I was most surprised upon my arrival there to discover that there were none whatsoever of Jannisor. This hero was famed both for binding the Mad Sultanate and for leading an army directly against the city of Glamour during the First Wane before his destruction by the Star Twins. Consequently, and logically, the Imtherians, if no one else, should have depicted their hero in murals, mosaics, or bas-reliefs. The stories were still told of him, all with great emphasis on his features - his beard, his helm, his net-like cloak. So where were the pictures? I could not imagine that our empire would eliminate all pictures, but leave the stories intact.

So I sought out the servants and scribes, the sages and scholars, who lurked in the corners of the palace at Hilltown. They whispered, usually after some appropriate recompense, that such pictures did still exist, but were closed and barred to all, locked behind gates bound with horrid curses. It was with great difficulty that I gained access to this Hall of Triumph, closed to all traffic since the conversion of King Memnon. Indeed, the only steps that marred the accumulation of dust were my own, those of a few cats, and the tiny marks of many, many mice.

I wandered down the dusty and web-ridden hall, my torch illuminating small pieces of a great mosaic. I had to brush off the walls so often that my good white robe was soon a dark grey. But it was worth it, for I found what I sought.

There was Jannisor deep in the halls of the Gargoyle King. There was Jannisor tying a binding, the Knot of Jannisor, atop a mountain. There was Jannisor battling the Mad Sultan. And on it went. The accoutrements changed - sometimes a spear, sometimes a shield, sometimes an owl mask, sometimes a helm - but the face was unmistakable.

The deep eyes of the hero, the heavy beard in the style of Khelmal, the straight nose. There was a familiarity, too, though I could not place it then.

I spent hours copying these records upon fine parchment and carefully brought my studies out of the hall, out of the palace, and out of Imther. My research complete, I returned down the Daughter's Road to Jillaro to continue my studies. My commentary grew and many sought to learn my findings. My masters seemed pleased and hoped to see my quick advance.

It came as a shock then to return to my cell one day to find my commentaries gone and all my detailed copies as well. Instead, one Urtarius Yan-phidor, agent for the Spoken Word, stood there with my master. They told me that my studies had strayed from the path of knowledge and that I must seek out a new path. I demanded the return of my work, but they refused. I begged and pleaded in order to continue. But to no avail. I was crushed. I was removed from the upper cells and placed back amongst the novitiate doing translations of the works of obscure Dara Happan nobles and priests into New Pelorian. My advancement ended. My masters ignored me. My fine brush stroke departed me. I knew not why.

Not until that fateful day when I was sent to the Satrap's Palace to copy a minor tax document. Servants led me to a small hall containing a desk and the document. After they left, I looked around and noticed the murals on the wall. From my studies I recognized them as the defeat of Sheng Seleris. There was the Red Emperor disguised as a fisher and living with a weaving woman. There was the Red Emperor playing Ravenkanz with Aronius Jaranthir. There was the Red Emperor summoning great magics down upon the enemy.

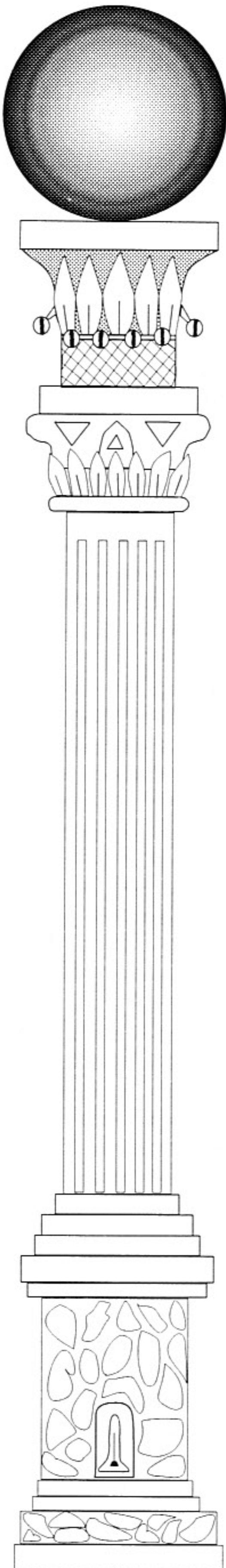
The accoutrements changed but the face was unmistakable. The deep eyes of the hero, the heavy beard, the straight nose. The Red Emperor's face was that of Jannisor. †





# Lunar Policy Organs

David Gadbois



**T**he Danfive Xaran cult is the backbone of Imperial Intelligence. Lunar Balance (and Paradox) dictate that the worst evil-doers who tried to tear down Imperial society become its most ardent protectors. These guys believe that the end justifies the means, and that the Lunar Way is the last best hope to keep Glorantha from dissolving back into the Void or becoming a fossilized and lifeless husk - thus **anything at all** is justified to protect the Empire and the Way. (But some may believe the Way outweighs the Empire).

There must be a number of security-related organizations within the Empire. In general, intrigue is rampant and there are no independent sources of information, so every cult, political faction, military unit, provincial government, city council, and Imperial ministry and department devotes some of its resources to covert activities and intelligence. Some groups span these boundaries. Here are some of the ones I have found:

## The Red Claw

A fanatical bunch of Danfive Xaran and Yanafal Tarnils cowboys whose monomaniacal goal is to further their own twisted vision of what is good for the Empire. (Think of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and its worst excesses in Latin America and Indochina. Multiply that by ten, and give them the support of a government that has no need to apolo-

gize for their atrocities.) The agents are technically under the control of the Red Emperor (and his cultists fill the group's upper echelons,) but the agents have considerable autonomy. The agents' actions are no end of trouble for other security groups. They often ruin carefully laid schemes and break long-standing intelligence networks. They are also experts at shifting the blame when they really screw things up. Their motto: "When in doubt, let the Bat sort it out."

## The Cult of the Red Goddess

The cult acts as an information clearinghouse for the Goddess (after all, they talk to her every week.) The members who came up through the cult of Jakaleel the Witch run the permanent spy networks (composed of ordinary Jakaleel cultists) at an executive level. The Jakaleel cultists also act as the secret police. Also, most Etyries cultists report to a Red Goddess agent.

## The Red Guard

Young Lunar fanatics from a variety of cults. Think of the Communist Youth. Their main tasks are to cheerlead for the Empire and to spy on Lunar citizens for signs of ideological impurity. They are frightening to the average Lunar citizen but not very effective, except when a mob of them gets together to lynch a heretic.

## The Cult of the White Moon

Think of the US Peace Corps, though it is not, by design of its leaders, an agency of the government. The cult is thoroughly infiltrated by every other intelligence group. The Peace Corps analogy only goes so far, since the White Moon's activities center in the Heartlands. Pacifists in the Lunar Provincial government occasionally affect policy outside the Empire.

## The Emperor's Spoken Word

See *Tales of the Reaching Moon* or *Strangers in Prax* for more information on the biggest Imperial intelligence agency. They have the unenviable responsibility for the day-to-day intelligence needs of the Empire, while having less clout than several other groups mentioned here. They oversee the leadership core of the Red Guard and parts of the Reconnaissance Office, but they often get the pale bit of the Glow when facing off against agents of the Red Claw, Blue Moon, or even the Great Sister.





### *The New Moon Reconnaissance Office*

A group of Red Goddess cultists stationed on the Red Moon itself. They gather intelligence simply by looking down on Gloranthan. There is a special, somewhat sacrilegious, spell that they use to see through the red haze. They are always in the market for old God Learner teleoptical devices. Due to political and ideological infighting between the Society for the Ascendency of the Red Moon and the Red Army faction, the info they have is not quite the military boon one might think; requests for troop movement intelligence, for example, can take weeks to process. The meteorological data they collect is invaluable for the groups fighting Valind, and some of it also filters down to the Earth cults.

### *Ministry of Earthly Information*

Actually, these guys just provide agricultural support services. (Their duties are similar to those of extension agents in the US.) They really hate it when they are mistaken for spies.

### *The Shooters' Club*

An illegal extortionist group that provides information on the dart competitions to worried and unwilling participants. In reality, this group reports to the Jakaleel cult; their real purpose is to keep the old Carmanian and Dara Happan nobility busy with their decadent games and to prevent the mess from spilling over into the business of the Empire. They are not often effective at either task.

### *The New School in Alkoth*

A group of crazed philosophers who maintain the Empire's military and government communication lines. They create the magical parchment used for secret messages as well as deciphering and analyzing enemy communications.

### *The Cult of the Blue Moon*

Provides "insertion and removal" services; I don't know much else about them. They use other secret organizations as covers!

### *The Imperial Revenue Service*

The tax collectors know more about what is going on in the Empire than anyone else and are not adverse to calling out the Red Guard in cases of ideological impurity (assuming, of course, that the action will be revenue-neutral.)

### *The Sun Network*

They mostly provide military intelligence for the Solar regiments but also serve as political spies for the Old Sun Party.

### *The Daughter's Eye*

A Hwarin Dalthippa subcult that collects and provides most of the useful military intelligence for the Imperial Army.

The cult of the Great Sister must also have some widespread intelligence and covert functions, but those guys are more secretive than the Blue Moon Trolls. †

# Moon Boats

## Michael O'Brien

The famous flying Moon Boats are used by the Empire to carry messengers, important passengers and occasionally troops over great distances. They travel on and are propelled by special beams of moonlight, focussed from the Red Moon itself. Inside the Glowline, where the moon is always full, moon boats are reliable and very fast: boats regularly travel from Elz Ast on the mouth of the Oslir to Furthest at the river's southern reaches in less than a week. Outside the Glowline moon boats are less effective, as their motive power depends on the strength of the moon. During the full moon period, a Moon Boat beyond the Glowline can travel at the same speed it does inside the border, about 120km per day. As the moon begins its phases, this speed drops by half each day, until the Black Moon when the moonbeam is extinguished and the boat cannot travel at all. During this period the Moon Boat is forced to land and must wait until the Red Moon turns its face again the following night. Moon Boats are particularly vulnerable when this occurs, which is why they do not often cross the magical border. One notable excursion was in 1589, when a squadron of Moon Boats defied the Syndics Ban and brought Lunar missionaries to the Fronelan city of Eastpoint, where the populace received them with great celebration.

Moon Boats are built using a secret process in a special factory at Haranshold in the Darjin Satrapy. They are made from a special wood, harvested exclusively in the Yolp Mountains and then heavily enchanted. They resemble the sleek oar-driven galleys often seen on the Oslir and Poralistor rivers, but without the oars or a mast. The bow and stern of a Moon Boat are drawn up very high and covered with magical silver mined on the Moon. See the cover of *Strangers in Prax* for a typical Moon Boat.

Moon Boats require a crew of a dozen, all members of the Red Goddess cult. It takes many years of diligent application to learn the magical formulas and techniques required to become the Pilot of a Moon Boat; this person is always a powerful Monitor. †





# Urmalofotti

## Western Tricksters

Peter Michaels

*Here are two city Trickster spirits I have adapted from A Field Guide to the Little People by Nancy Arrowsmith and George Moore. I place them in cities in Safelster, but think they could just as easily be placed anywhere in the West.*

Throughout Ralios there are mischievous and annoying spirits know collectively as Urmalofotti. The best known Urmalofotti are found in or near cities and villages, but even the Orlanthi and Uz are bothered by them occasionally.

All Urmalofotti are like little children in form and intellect, and have a variety of magical powers. Many are fascinated with the bodily functions of mortals, with whom they are usually friendly. This friendliness in no way stops them from causing problems and pain, but they usually cause no permanent harm (death, dismemberment, damnation, etc....) A few are even helpful. Urmalofotti always wear red, and they almost never stop moving.

There is some confusion about the origins of the Urmalofotti. Most people believe them to be incarnations of Eurmal, or at least his children; thus their name, which means "Eurmal's little farts". Some Safelstrans say they were originally aldryami spirits who adapted to the building of cities on their land. Ancient Uz shaman say they are the children of fertility sprites and wind or darkness spirits. There seem to be two types of Urmalofotti; those connected to human habitations, and those who prefer the "wilderness."

Urmalofotti connected to a human habitation seem bound to the locality, although the exact area varies considerably. They are often identified as City Urmalofotti. They are the most varied, and are more likely to interact with a human without permanent harm.

The "wild" Urmalofotti are usually identified as Wind Urmalofotti, as they almost always occupy themselves

solely with the winds and weather. Kolating shamans often call them "wind knots," or "nowhere winds." They are responsible when the winds turn particularly playful or destructive. Some Wind Urmalofotti are well known for raping and torturing women, while others are known for simply blowing up women's skirts.

Many Urmalofotti manifest only once or twice a year. Most cannot easily be exorcised, but the Ralians who regularly encounter a specific Urmalofotti usually know the ritual for driving it away if one exists. These rituals are often complex. There are rumors in many Safelstran cities that Orlanthi are particularly adept at commanding and containing Urmalofotti.

### Euraeuro

The Euraeuro is found only inside the city of Drom and appears to be unable to extend beyond the city walls. He manifests the first day of Sea Season, and disappears on the last day of Earth Season.

Worldly and waggish, he usually appears as a two to three foot tall humanoid. He wears elegant bright red clothes, including a cap. However, he is also a shapeshifter and can appear as a piece of red thread.

Euraeuro is constantly fascinated by women. He often changes himself into a thread in order to be made into the bodice of a dress. Once he has reached his goal, he springs forth into his physical form (ripping the bodice apart in the process) and runs away screaming, "I'm a titty-toucher! I'm a titty-toucher!" He is also fond of hiding in chamber pots, tickling the pot's user when least expected. Euraeuro's curiosity also extends to the bed. Slipping into a bedroom through the keyhole, he lifts up or pulls the covers off of a couple making love. His most disliked feature, however, is that he often shouts out comments from hiding. These comments are always about the

"Would you rather that I eat your children? I would if I could, you know. You men have forgotten how I used to feast. I will eat as I am able, until I am once again able to eat as I wish."





women he has spied upon, and include rude remarks, comparisons of body parts with other women, and critiques of love-making.

A manifestation of the Imp aspect, Euraeuro teaches the illusion spell Phantom Touch to trickster initiates who successfully learn something intimate about a woman by voyeurism, and then use that information to the woman's public embarrassment.

### Eurmalindo

Eurmalindo is found in the city of Uton and can manifest anywhere within five kilometers of the city. He manifests once each season for a week. He spends that week walking in and around the city, after which he eats a meal and disappears. He is obscenely obese, rude, lazy, and cruel to animals. He appears as a two foot tall humanoid, wearing pointed red copper shoes and a domed red copper hat. He wears dark blood red clothes. He can manifest physically only on a road or path. As he walks along, his speed and bulk increase. As he speeds up to a fast run, his fat spreads until he brushes the buildings to both sides of the road. He never steps aside for anyone, but barges ahead despite whoever is in his way. Unfortunate travellers who are not quick enough to take shelter in a recessed doorway are often bowled into the sewage ditch, and have sometimes been killed by being crushed against a building. He is also known for kicking animals with his pointed copper shoes. Eurmalindo is friendly to trolls, who are the only beings he will yell to in warning of his approach. He speaks Safelstran and Darktongue.

The Eurmalindo eats only the raw meat of cows, sheep, and goats, which he steals from local farmers. With a long loud whistle, he can call these animals to

### Obesity

1 point Self, Temporal, Stackable, Reusable

A specific illusion spell which increases the caster's "bulk." This is not an increase in the overall SIZ characteristic, but does increase the caster's girth, making him or her wider and fatter. (The spell also alters the caster's possessions accordingly.) Each point of the spell adds 3 to the caster's SIZ for purposes of knockback. This illusory bulk also affects the caster's Agility modifier and Stealth modifier accordingly. (It will not affect the caster's damage modifier, SIZ SR modifier, or Total HP.)

him. Then he starts walking down a road or path, gradually picking up speed, with the animals being forced to follow him. He runs until he comes to a cliff, at which point he tucks himself into a ball and bounces safely to the bottom. The animals are always running too fast to stop in time, and die on the rocks below. The Eurmalindo then feasts on the carcasses into the night, and his horrible laughter can be heard kilometers away.

Locals tell a story of a farmer who confronted Eurmalindo about his lost livestock, to which Eurmalindo is said to have replied, "Would you rather that I eat your children? I would if I could, you know. You men have forgotten how I used to feast. I will eat as I am able, until I am once again able to eat as I wish."

An impish manifestation of the Glutton aspect, the Eurmalindo teaches the spell Obesity to any trickster initiate who steals a herd of animals (at least five) from a local farmer, drive them over a cliff, and join him all night in his grisly feast. †

## Suggested Trickster Reading

**Gunn, Thom.** "Street Song" A poem for the Truant aspect.

**Herrick, Robert.** "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time"

A poem for the Seducer aspect.

**Lopez, Barry H.** *Giving Birth to Thunder, Sleeping With His Daughter : Coyote builds North America.*

A collection of sixty-eight wonderfully told stories about Trickster from forty-two American Indian tribes.

**Marvell, Andrew.** "To His Coy Mistress" A poem for the Seducer aspect.

**Radin, Paul.** *The Trickster : A study in American*

*Indian mythology.*

A scholarly exploration of the Winnebago Trickster Cycle.

**Robinson, Edwin Arlington.** "Miniver Cheevy"

A poem for the Truant aspect.

**Shirley, Jackson** "The Lottery"

For the Scapegoat aspect.

**Welsford, Enid.** *The Fool : His social and literary history.*

Originally written in 1936, this is the history of the comic fool from the Greek "laughter-maker" to Charlie Chaplin.





# Dragon Pass

Sandy Petersen

*Sandy writes that this was "at one time semi-official Chaosium standard, but who knows what has happened since. In any case, I still use these rules. In modified form, they also work for the human dragon-worshippers of Kralorela."*

## Personality Traits

I have my own list of RQ personality traits, probably everyone does. The exact traits don't really matter much, so long as they're organized into 6-7 pairs. For example: Honest/Dishonest; Lustful/Chaste; Indulgent/Abstemious; Lazy/Energetic; Honorable/Dishonorable; Brave/Cowardly, Vengeful/Forgiving (this is not a complete list). A human might start with, say, an Indulgent of 30, giving him an Abstemious of 70. The two scores always add up to 100.

Dragonewts, on the other hand, start with 01 in every score. Like humans, they cannot advance beyond a total of 100, but they start out without personalities, and are trying to develop them. As a dragonewt exercises his personality, he receives "experience" increases, and thus a Dragonewt can gradually get his Indulgent and Abstemious up from 01 to 50. A Scout is trying to develop certain personality traits in order to qualify for Warrior level (for instance, Brave/Cowardly & Indulgent/Abstemious are Warrior traits). If the Scout instead spends his time working on Noble's traits (such as Honest/Dishonest or Vengeful/Forgiving) and masters them before the Warrior traits, he might become a mutant.

I play that dragonewts do not increase their skills by experience in the course of a single life. They only get to check for experience gain after death and before rebirth. This makes for slow improvement, but I have always assumed that it took many years, even centuries, for a dragonewt to advance to the next caste, except under unusual circumstances. It also means that dragonewts behave even more inexplicably to outsiders. Greg believes that many scout dragonewts have been scouts since the Dawn. No wonder the poor things get impatient and mutate themselves into monsters like brontosaurus.

However, Greg and I at one time concurred that dragonewts are capable of breeding. They, of course, have five sexes, so breeding is pretty slow (there only being one member of the fifth sex in all Dragon Pass).

## Mastered Personality Traits per rank:

WARRIOR: brave/cowardly, energetic/lazy, loyal/independent, merciful/cruel, temperate/indulgent  
NOBLE: chaste/promiscuous, forgiving/vengeful, just/partial, trusting/suspicious  
RULER: generous/selfish, honest/deceitful, honorable/dishonorable, modest/proud

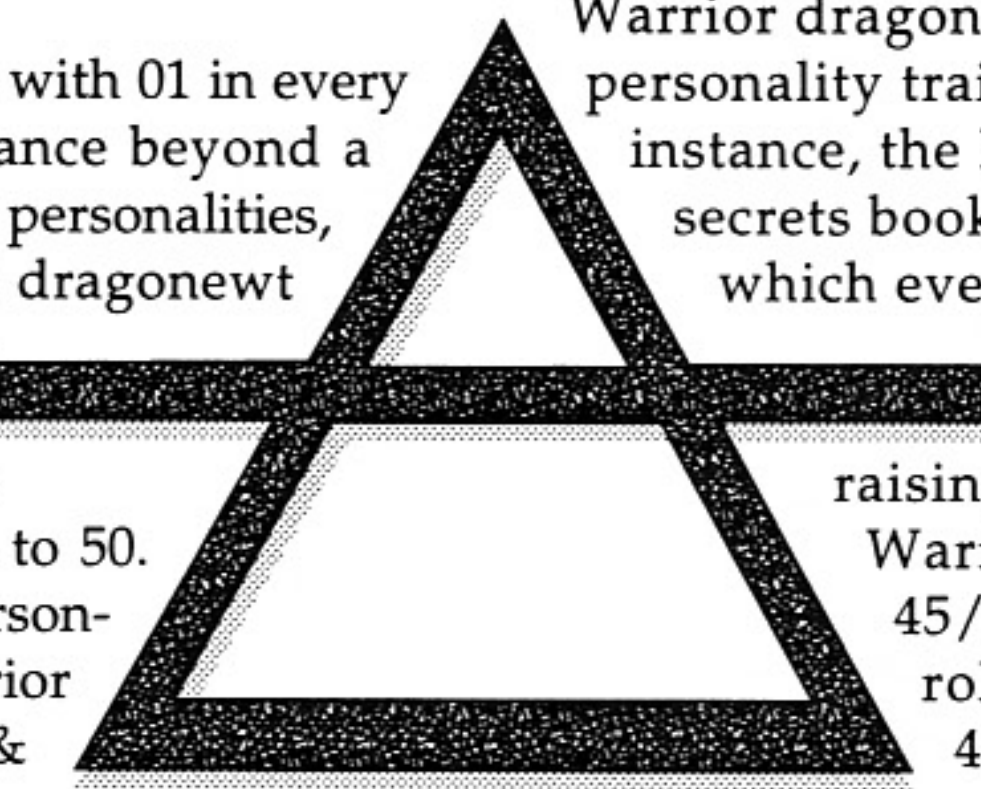
## Dragon Magic

Warrior dragonewts gain Dragon magic for all those personality traits that the creature has mastered. For instance, the Prehealing magic (see Elder Secrets, secrets book) is tied to the Abstemious trait, which every Warrior has already conquered.

Using a dragon magic decreases its personality trait by 1d6, without raising the opposite trait. Thus, if a Warrior dragonewt has a Indulgent 45/Abstemious 55, and uses Prehealing, rolling a 4, his traits become Indulgent 45/Abstemious 51, leaving a "gap".

Hence, dragonewts often dislike using dragon magic. If their embryonic personalities degenerate too much, and they are killed, they may rehatch as a lower order of being. On the other hand, a dragonewt who has already degenerated past hope of proper rebirth might use tons of dragon magic to keep himself alive, planning (after the fight) to spend several years working his traits back up, without having to die and be reborn as an inferior order of being. This explains why some dragonewts might vary from cautious to suicidal within the course of a single lifetime.

On the other hand, I play that once a dragonewt's paired traits add up to 100, he cannot increase or alter them any more, so sometimes dragonewts have to use dragon magic to lower one of their scores, so the opposed score can increase itself.





## Humans and Dragon Magic

Humans that use dragon magic start out with full colorful human personalities, and gradually degenerate by use of dragon magic, ultimately lessening their humanity. On the other hand, because they start out with such high traits, they can use lots of good magic right away. This is no doubt what attracted the False Dragon Ring to Kralorela, and could be a major contributor to their destruction — the native Kralori are well aware of the two-edged nature of dragon magic, and know that it must be used with respect and caution, not exploited as a power source (unlike their treatment of sorcery, which they exploit up the wazoo).

I think that the "bad guys" of the Empire of the Wyrms' Friends used dragon powers wrongly, but that the central catastrophe of the EWF was based on something else- a noble but failed attempt to perform a magic effect that would transform the world.

## Warrior Dragon Magic

**Dragon Armor** (Cowardly): Costs 1d6 trait, lasts for one fight. This effect absorbs damage at the rate of 1 MP per damage point. All damage done (after subtracting for armor, parry weapons, etc.) is absorbed using as many MPs as needed. MPs used to absorb this can be taken from all available sources. Not even critical hits bypass this defense. If MPs run out, the user passes out and the Dragon Armor effect ends.

**Dragon's Claw** (Loyal): Costs 1d6 trait, lasts for one fight. One limb is turned into a claw with double edged, curved nails. The claw does 2d6 base damage. Chance to hit begins at a percentage equal to the 'newt's Manipulation bonus. It can parry at a starting percentage equal to the 'newt's Agility bonus. Skill can increase by experience. The claw blocks 12 points when parrying, and its armor points do not decrease when exceeded.

**Dragon Strength** (Energetic): Costs 1d6 trait, lasts for one day. increases STR by 50%. Drop fractions. This effect is often used in conjunction with Growth.

**Firebreath** (Cruel): Costs 1d3 trait per use (more if stacked). Lets the 'newt breathe fire like a dragon. A cone of fire with a range in meters equal to the user's POW. This firebreath does 1d10 damage to the general HP of everyone in its path (you're not shielded by standing behind someone else). Armor protects normally, but all engulfed weapons & armor lose 1 AP. This effect can be stacked.

**Growth** (Lazy): Costs 1d4 trait, lasts for one day. Increases SIZ by 6. May be repeatedly used over successive rounds to increase mass. If SIZ reaches over triple the 'newt's STR, it becomes unable to move by itself.

**Scorn Wound** (Brave) [also known as Pre-Healing]: Costs 1d8 trait per use. Can be called on at any time, but has no immediate effect. When invoked, the user can instantly cure all effects of any one chosen wound one round after damage is determined. The effect can be "saved" for years after it is invoked. If the 'newt is killed by the wound, this ability can bring him back from the dead, but it costs him

an additional 1d8 trait, in addition to the points already spent when the magic was "sacrificed" for.

**Sprout Wings** (Independent): Costs 1d8 trait, lasts one day. Sprouts wings letting the 'newt fly at thrice normal speed (6 for warriors, 9 for nobles). A winged 'newt has identical hit locations to a ruler 'newt.

A ruler 'newt that invokes this becomes capable of flying onto the Heroplane or spirit plane if other conditions are met.

**Sustain Life** (Temperate): Costs 1d6 trait, lasts a number of days equal to the user's CON. Renders the 'newt immune to the need for food, drink and rest. Often used on forced marches.

**Tattoo Matrix** (Indulgent): Costs 1 trait per POW pt spent. By spending POW, the 'newt makes a magic tattoo in his skin. It can be a spell matrix, an MP-storage device, an armoring or strengthening enchantment, or any other standard device. POW spent is normal for the type, but the matrix creation is always successful. When the dragonewt graduates to another stage of existence, all tattoos are lost.

**Utuma Skill** (Merciful): Costs 1d6 trait per attempt. This is the cleansing ritual suicide, which has a base chance equal to the 'newt's Magic bonus. It cannot be performed unless an utuma is available. A successful skill roll indicates that the dragonewt has killed itself and returned to its current caste without danger of regression to former caste through imperfect personality. A failed skill roll still kills the user. If a dragonewt is ready to progress to the next stage, it must not use this skill while killing itself.

## Noble Dragon Magic

**Attune Landscape** (Promiscuous): Costs 1d6 trait per use. Lets the 'newt achieve oneness with its surroundings. It becomes nearly impossible to see so long as it does not move (once it moves, the effect ends). Unless a viewer receives a Special success in the appropriate Perception skill, the 'newt cannot be detected. This even applies to spells such as Second Sight or Detect Enemy. If the 'newt succeeds in using its Hide skill when invoking this effect, any potential enemy must actually be aware of the presence or possible presence of the 'newt to even attempt using a Perception skill (and he still needs a special success to spot him).

**Don Armor Skill** (Suspicious): Costs 1d4 trait each time armor is donned. Cannot be used unless a set of ornamental dragonbone armor is available. Successful skill use lets the 'newt don his armor in 1d10+10 rounds. In addition, each full 05% rolled gives the armor 1 pt of damage absorption, up to the total of the user's Don Armor percentiles. EXAMPLE: a 'newt has 25% Don Armor. Its player rolls an 18 on 1d100, giving it 3 pts of armor.

This is used only before important journeys or battles, and the armor is normally left on until the mission is accomplished. Experience can increase Don Armor, which starts at a percentage equal to the 'newt's Knowledge bonus. Note that a 'newt who fails his skill roll on Donning armor may need to doff it and try again, thus costing himself multiple points in his Suspicious.





**First Strike Skill (Trusting):** Costs 1d4 trait per use, lasts for the duration of the battle. This is the skill of attacking with precision, speed, and smoothness, and has a base chance equal to the 'newt's Manipulation bonus. Each round of combat, the 'newt may attempt a First Strike skill roll. It can even be used (with the same effects) if the weapon is sheathed.

**Critical Success:** attack occurs on the user's DEX SR, cannot be parried or dodged, and automatically hits (i.e., an attack roll that is a fumble or failure hits anyway).

**Special Success:** attack occurs on the user's DEX SR and may not be parried or dodged, assuming it hits.

**Success:** attack occurs on the user's DEX SR.

**Failure:** attack occurs on the user's normal SR.

**Fumble:** the user flings weapon 1d6 meters in a random direction.

**Heroic Leap (Chaste):** Costs 1d3 trait per use. Lets the dragonewt jump up to half his Strength in meters. If the dragonewt fails a simultaneous Jump skill roll, it lands prone and must succeed at DEX x 5 or take 1d6 damage, ignoring all armor. Used to scale heights, cross obstacles, or in a fight to surprise a foe and attack first, or from behind.

**Soul Blast (Vengeful):** Costs 1d4 trait per use. The MPs of the 'newt are matched vs. those of his foe as a bolt of green energy. If the 'newt overcomes the target, the latter loses 2d6 magic points.

### Ruler Dragon Magics

**Energy Deflection (Modest):** Costs 1d6 trait, lasts 1d6 hours. Let's the 'newt block incoming missiles and spells with a successful Parry. A dragonbone weapon must be used. A successful parry puts the weapon's armor points between the user and a missile. A parried spell affects the weapon rather than the user — in most cases (Sever Spirit, Demoralize, etc.) this results in no effect.

**Summon Dream Dragon (Dishonorable):** Costs 2d6 trait per attempt. To use this, the 'newt must meditate for 6 hours. At the end of this time, it must

attempt a roll of its POW or less on 1d100. Success forms a dream dragon within 60m of the user. The dream dragon must be created randomly each time the effect is used. Once it appears, it obeys the summoner's commands for one hour. Then it departs.

### Draconic Mutations

A scout mutates himself into a magisaur by getting too interested in spirit magic, sorcery, or (Ourouboros forbid!) rune magic. Any scout that actually becomes an adept or acolyte is certain to become a magisaur next incarnation and then lose his dragonewt rebirth ability - he's still immortal, and just keeps degenerating, getting more and more magical, and less and less intelligent.

Eventually who knows what he'll become? A brontosaurus, perhaps.

When an individual dragonewt overindulges certain passions, it can mutate into a dinosaur upon rebirth. When this happens, it leaves the reincarnation cycle. Here is a list of the most common "failings," and hence the most common dinosaur mutants:

**Brontosaurs:** my own belief is that these are fully-matured magisaur, but this doesn't

mean that a single dragonewt can't become a brontosaurus in a single try. I think

they're not associated with any one trait, but with the magic ritual which the

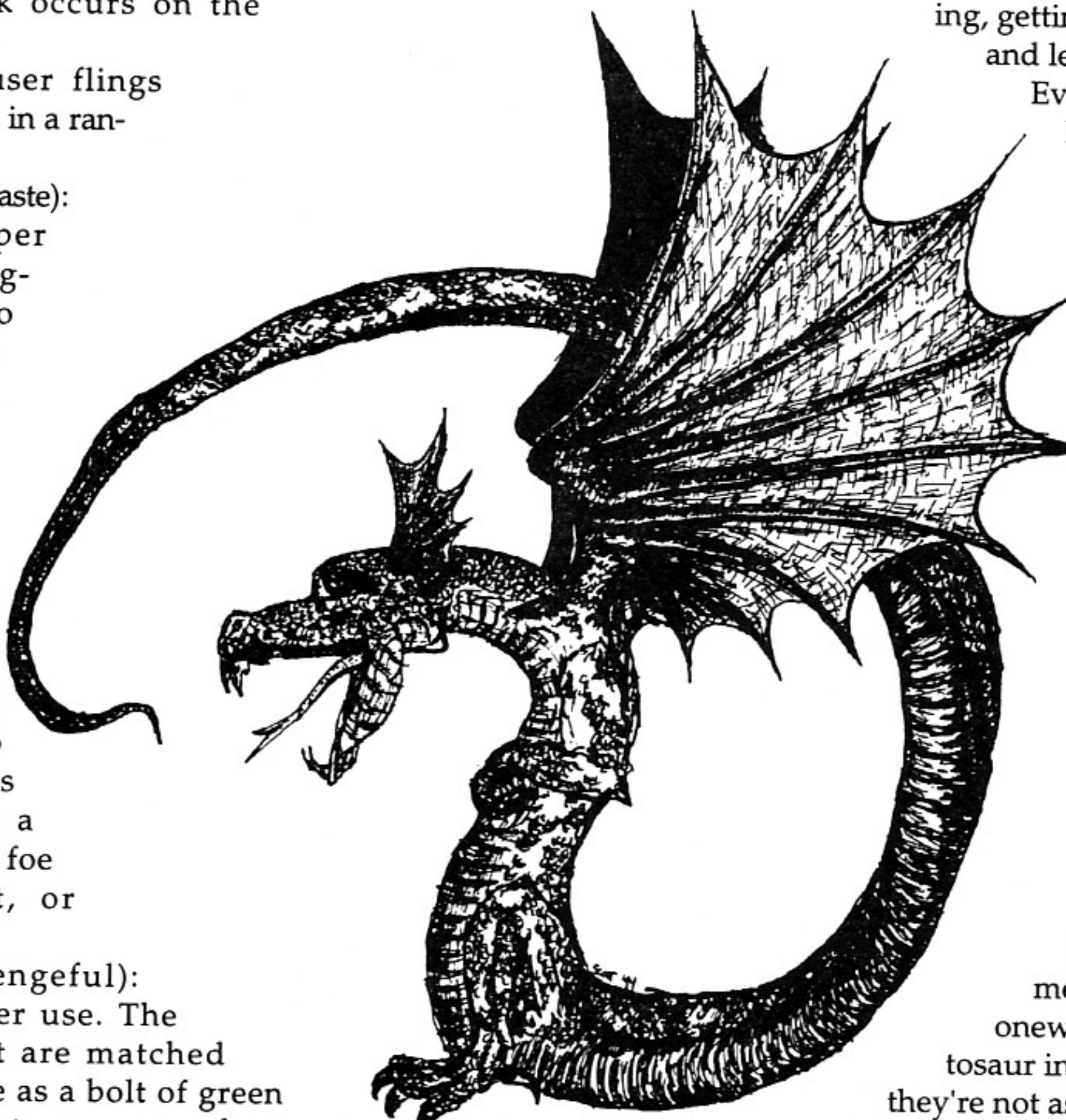
dragonewts use to try to skip a caste in their growth. This always fails, of course, but I guess there's enough newts willing to try to keep a tiny brontosaurus population around.

**Triceratops:** Lust

**Carnosaur:** greed, stinginess (as opposed to Generosity)

**Stegosaurs:** pride is my belief (as opposed to Humility).

This version of dragon magic has the advantage that the dragonewts still act weird to the players, and yet I have reasons why a dragonewt might use one magic and not another. It also helps me know why a dragonewt may act really aggressively at one time, and not at another. Of course, there's much much more to the dragonewt persona than personality trait development. . †







# Knighthood in Glorantha Trampling the Stereotype

Joerg Baumgartner

Western Genertelan culture often gets accused of being too like "generic fantasy knights." Perhaps it feels generic because people choose to view Western knighthood like Hollywood King Arthur movies. There is more to Gloranthan knighthood, though.

Most Loskalmi knights seem to be Byzantine heavy lancers rather than crusading knights: they ride in well-defined battalions, or serve as officers in the foot troops of the militia. The footmen are farmers who aspire to become knights. There is no indication that the battalions are formed along feudal lines. They seem rather to be subject to the duke or governor of a province. Further, good knights may rise into positions of high honor, even the throne of the Kingdom, without usurping authority.

There is little historical reason to form feudal regiments in Loskalm. Local defense units were unnecessary during the Syndics Ban, and the challenges Loskalm has to deal with now don't have to cope with quickly striking foes like Hungarians or Vikings. The elf forests to the north and the south pose no direct threat of invasion or raids (other than to lumber parties), the sea is guarded both by the Loskalmi navy (which has suppressed the most likely source for raiders, the Ygglinga) and the Closing, and to the East there are buffer states like Junora and Sog City which have to deal with human invaders. Along the Dilis swamp and the Gharkor gap the battalions are stationed in the foothills, and in Junora and Oranor they are stationed even outside Loskalmi borders. Sog is under control of mercenary street judges of the metropolis. Should any of these attempt a raid, the retribution wouldn't let them even take refuge with the warlords of the Kingdom of War. Loskalm is out as home for typical western knights.

Originally from Loskalm, the Carmanian knighthood provides the only body of heavy cavalry lancer-archers in Genertela. They have installed a feudal society as conquerors over a mixed Barbarian Belt and Pelorian farmer population. Then they in turn were integrated into the Lunar Empire as the Persian heartlands were into Alexander's Macedonia.

Jonatela has more in common with the dark age Germanic kingdoms in the remnants of the Roman Empire. If any region in Glorantha could be labeled Arthurian, then possibly this one - but the historical Arthur rather than Mallory's anachronisms. They form a force of mounted troops fighting from fortresses to protect their serfs' production against raiding neighbors. The indigenous people preferred an Orlanthi (Celt or Germanic) style of irregular footmen as fyrd levy.

Ralios has a late feudal society in the valleys around the lakes, but all policy in Safelster is city business, and the knights are secondary in military importance to the mercenary battalions - again not a feudal institution. There, the middle class rules, and money talks.

This leaves Seshnela as the only place where feudal knights get their livelihood from a culturally similar peasant class in exchange for protection.

Nolos and Pasos seem like a seagoing Safelster. They are nominally subject to the King of Tanisor, but are in fact prospering, rebellious duchies thriving on sea trade and warfare. With a feudal, backward hinterland and the main source of income from sea trade, the knights are the manorial lords of the post-chivalrous age rather than a military fighting class.

In Pithdaros, Agimori descendants practice their own version of chivalry, probably similar to Moorish Spain. *[Though another RQ Digest contributor suggested they would be more fun if they were more like Rastafarians and Santarians.-ed]*

Chivalry was an utopian dream of the late medieval fighting class and the high nobility played along. Much of the modern conception of what knighthood was comes from the Romantic tradition of the Victorian era, not from the grim facts of the medieval age. The Provencal knights may have succeeded for a while, until the Catharian crusade brought the proud Languedoc under the heel of the Languedouisse. In Idealist Loskalm, that romantic notion forms the unique core of the religion.

If you dislike the Genertelan West because it seems too like medieval Europe, stay out of Seshnela. Instead, visit the rest of the west to explore the effects of unique Gloranthan cultures on the institution of knighthood.†





# Lies With Truth

Martin Crim

## Or, more ruminations on the nature of the sun god and Truth after reading *The Glorious ReAscent of Yelm*.

The God Learners went everywhere and called the local sun god by a single name—Yelm, or Ehlim maybe, but more likely Elmal, the Good Sun of the Orlanthi. I surmise this because the God Learners were influenced by Theyalan culture much more than by Dara Happan culture. In fact, aside from the Goddess Switch, the God Learners had little to do with Peloria, because the EWF blocked their access through Dragon Pass. Modern Gloranthans are the heirs of God Learner teaching, which presents an over-simplified mythology. We readers are also misled by the Orlanthi bias of most of the published material on Glorantha (Trollpak being the main exception). The cult of Yelmario is a case in point, made obvious because some of the divisions have appeared since the demise of the God Learners.

We know that the God Learners did not deeply understand Pelorian mythology, or they would not have performed the Goddess Switch. *The Glorious ReAscent of Yelm* presents the real Dara Happan mythology—the

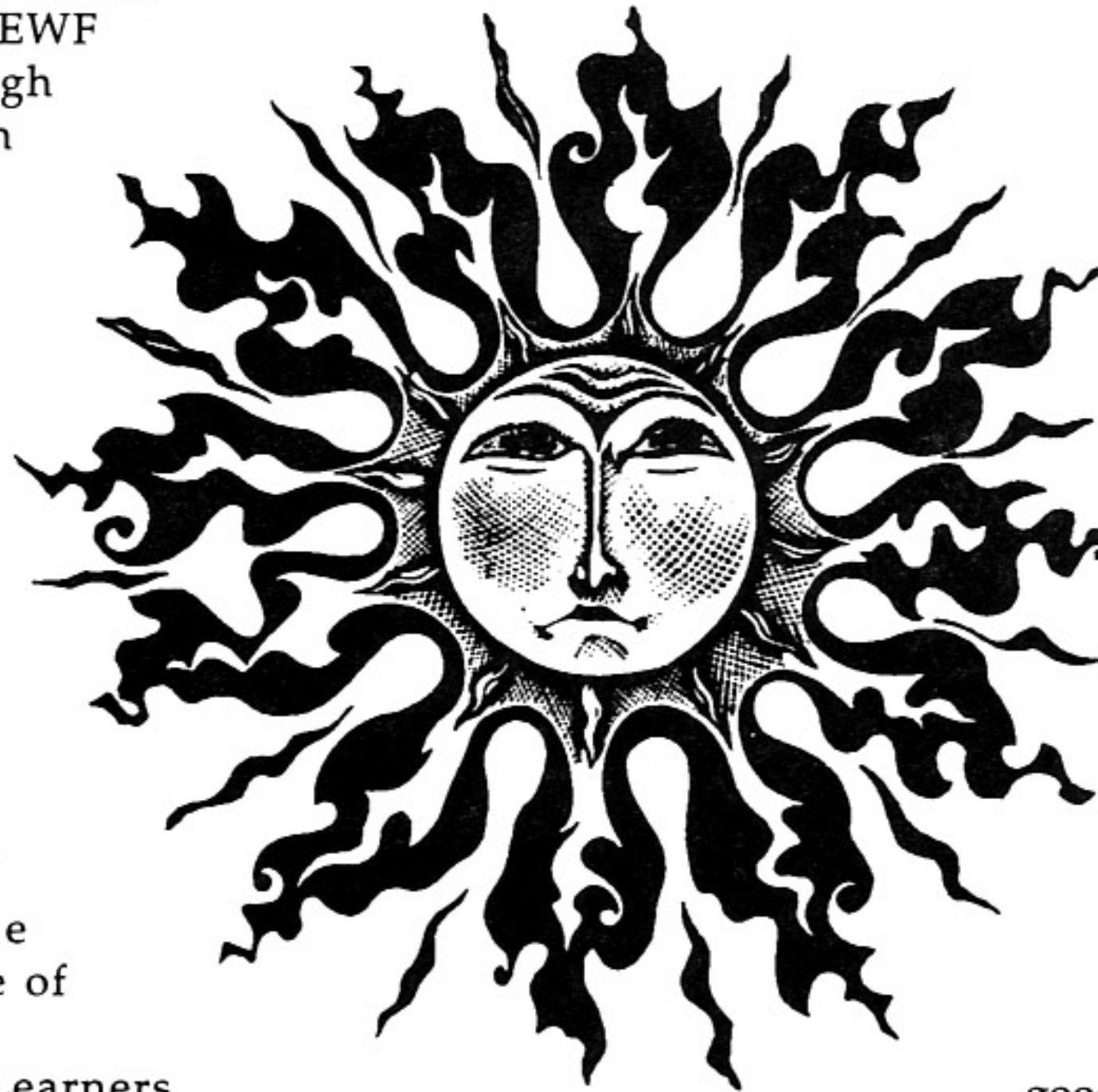
Dara Happan attempt to explain the recent and distant past, from a perspective in the early third century S.T. Although Plentonium probably relied on older sources, my guess is he relied on inspiration both divine and mundane (that is, he made it up—and in magic, saying it right makes it so.)

Yelmario, of course, does not appear in *The Glorious ReAscent*.

The Yelm cult appeared in *Gods of Glorantha* and *White Wolf* #16. I reject Stephen Martin's view, presented in the RQ Con program book, that the WW16 write-up is Pentan, because that write-up refers at many points to the Dara Happan cult, contrasting it with the Pentans. However, the previous publications do present a view of the cult which is tainted by God Learner and Orlanthi world views.

Thus, their validity is fairly low.

The published Yelm cult is still good enough for game purposes, perhaps. Before I set a game in Peloria, though, I'd want to have the *Lunar Book*, to understand the current state of Solar mythology. A gamemaster could make his own speculations, but they'd be contradicted soon.





The lesson I've learned from Glorious ReAscent and the prospectus for Heroes of the King is this: don't extrapolate from game rules, even cult descriptions. Extrapolation is fun and relatively easy, but it leads to all sorts of errors. You could extrapolate from Orlanthi propaganda and write a Solar myth that is the mirror image of the Orlanthi myth. You could extrapolate from the sorcery rules and believe that people who know Form/Set can mass produce goods. Both are wrong.

What do you do if not extrapolate? Work from a vision, as Greg Stafford does. Visions change as fast as Arkat, of course, but you can hang onto a vision long enough to flesh it out. A gamemaster must fully enter into a world's mythologies before he or she can make up parts of that world that are True.

There is a place for extrapolation, in filling in the detail left unsaid. Here's an example, which is my two cents worth on the Elmal/Yelmadio bit, in response to David Hall and Stephen Martin in the RQ Con I program book:

In the Gloranthan present (1610-1625), the Sun Dome Temples have enthusiastically embraced the teachings of Monrogh (or Monrough) about their lord, whom they now call Yelmadio. We know about them, and about the loyal Elmali. However, there are other Yelmadio worshippers around who need more explaining.

The elves of central Genertela clearly worship a god whom all agree is the same as Yelmadio, although the elves have a different name for him: Hurril. The elves do not have any reason to honor Monrogh, since they haven't made any changes to their mythology recently. Thus, elves don't have the Lantern spell. Hurril teaches the Sunripen divine spell (as per Yelm). Hurril's associates are Aldrya, Arroin, Flamal (Bear Fruit), Vrimak, and Yelm (who provides Fight Disease). Hurril's gifts are oriented toward elvish skills and needs. His geases relate to symbolic avoidances (such as not drinking Calfonilla tea) and relations with humans and animals. Hurril does not have any geases relating to eating meat, celibacy, or relations with elves, dwarves, horses, or trolls.

Some people have speculated that Antirius is Yelmadio, based on the shared Hill of Gold story. Real World myths about any particular god show the same inconsistencies as Antirius's myths have with Yelmadio's, so we should feel safe in drawing game conclusions. However, individual Antirius cultists might disagree, and it would add to Maximum Gloranthan Fun to have a schism in the Antirius cult over the question.

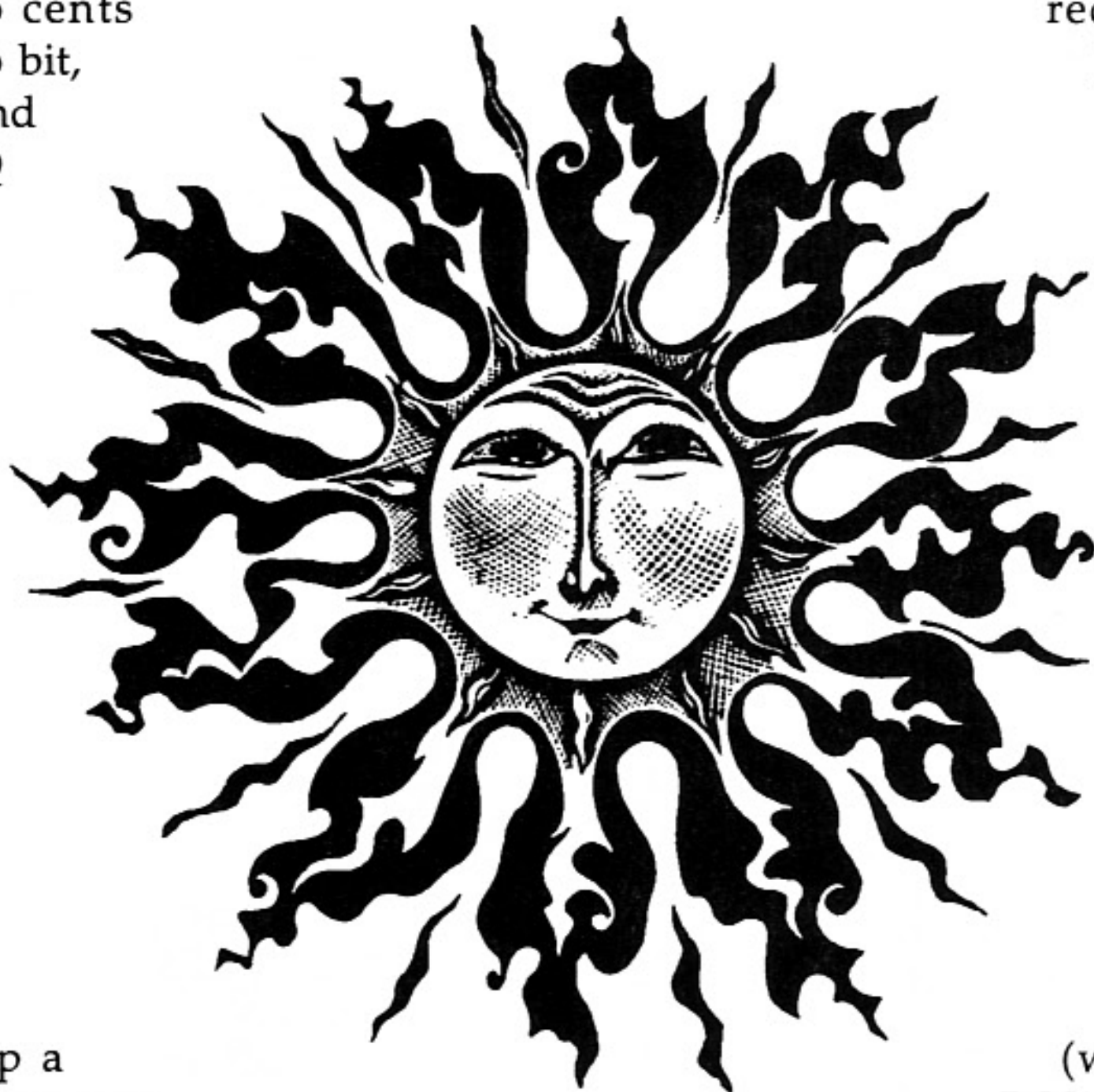
For game purposes, though, I suggest using the Yelm cult as a model for Antirius, rather than the Yelmadio cult. This has mythical justification from Antirius' supposed origin in the disintegration of Yelm. Rather than Resurrect, Antirius provides the spell of Divine Justice. This spell is similar to divination, except that it gives the caster not only

the correct finding but also the appropriate judgment to be made. It requires an ordeal of hot coals held in the hand by the accused or plaintiff.

The Khelmal cult of Imther is clearly a Yelmadio variant, but places the god at the center of a thoroughly-developed mythic landscape. The cult has different spells, associates, sub-cults, and gifts and geases. Nevertheless, the identity of Khelmal and Yelmadio is recognized wherever members of the two cults meet. A Khelmal cultist must go through a short initiation ceremony (without sacrificing a point of POW) to worship at a Yelmadio temple, and vice versa.

According to the cults distribution chart in *Cults of Prax*, there are Yelmadios among the animal nomads. The Praxian Yelmadios fall into three groups: the Waha style, the Zebra style, and the Ostrich style. I ignore any 1% notations on the chart as being too small to be viable. (When Orogurri the Bison ruled Sun Dome, he brought all the Bison Yelmadios with him, and they never returned to the plains.) The Pol Joni part of the table is clearly outdated, and anyway all members have to worship Orlanthi cults. This provides for Elmali among the Pol Joni.

The Waha style Yelmadios live among the Impala and Sable tribes. Like almost all Praxians, they belong to a society in which shamanistic worship was





predominant until recent times. Their ancestors worshiped Sun Hawk, the Praxian solar deity, and other spirits of light. These include Morning Star, Evening Star, and Oakfed. Many modern Yelmations of the Impala and Sable tribes belong to Praxian spirit cults of light. Among those two tribes, light worshippers make up whole septs or even clans. (Women of those clans, however, still worship Eiritha.)

The Waha style Yelmation cult is like the version in Sun County, with some exceptions. They do not honor Monrogh (or learn the Lantern spell). They let shamans belong to the cult. They have no Light Captains, Light Guards, Light Keepers, High Priests, or Light Sons. (Light Sons may ride no animal but horses, and Stephen Martin was right about the dual nature of cults with two rune levels.) They sometimes worship at the Sun Dome, but often do not. They sometimes worship at the Sun Dome, but often do not. Their liturgy is in a Praxian style, and they call their god Surio.

Zebra Rider Yelmations are closer to the Sun County model than the Waha style Yelmations are. Zebra initiates of the cult mostly belong to certain families with ties to the Sun Dome. They accept Monrogh and his revelation. They honor Kuschile and Togtuvei, as they always have. The major difference is that they have no Light Captains, Light Guards, Light Keepers, or High Priests. (For one thing, their cult is not large enough to have many priests, so the priests they do have do not specialize.) Light Sons among them say, "Of course, zebras are horses." They worship at the Sun Dome whenever they are nearby on holy days and often allied with the Domers before the Lunars came. Their liturgy is close to the Praxian Sun Dome's, and they call their lord Yelmation.

The Ostrich Riders have their own traditions, but the Sun Dome cult has influenced them. This influence has been greatest in the period since the Dragonkill War wiped out the tribe's ruling lineage (whom modern Ostrich Riders believe to have been Yelm cultists). They do not know Monrogh or Kuschile, but do have a spirit named Veng, patron of riding. They have different gifts relating to their cultural weapons, Ostrich riding. Their geases are sym-

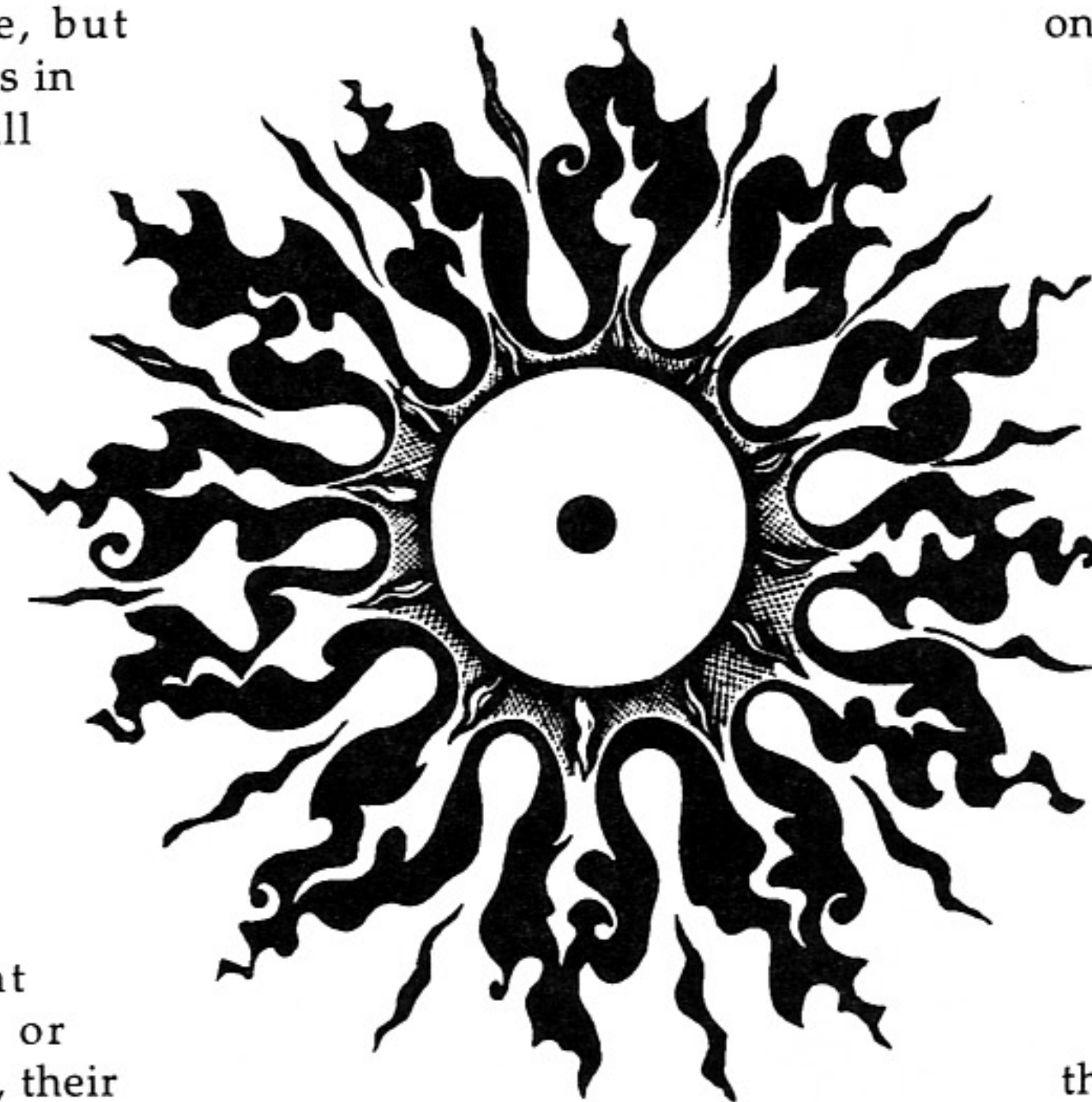
bolic (though just as restrictive as the Sun Domers' geases). An example of an Ostrich Rider geas is "do not eat in sunlight." They do not have shamans in their cult, or join the Praxian spirit cults of light. They have Light Sons who do not follow the "horse or walk" rule. If pressed, they will insist that Ostriches are creatures of the Sun and therefore proper mounts. (Sun Domers distrust Ostrich Light Sons for this reason, and simply believe that they are breaking a geas.) The Ostrich riders have no Light Captains, Light Guides, Light Keepers, or High Priests. They have their own liturgy and their own name for Yelmation: Khin.

When foreigners ruled Sun Dome County, they brought their foreign ways with them. Thus, the original Sun cult was melded with Praxian Sun Hawk worship. However, most traces of this melding have disappeared. Scholars can find one clue in the fact that rural Sun Domers have wise women (shamans), whereas Dragon Pass Sun Domers do not suffer witches to live. The two Sun Dome temples have different liturgies, but this may be more due to long separation than to Praxian influence.

Attitudes toward heretics differ among the various Sun Domers. The Praxians say that different people have different names and rituals, but there is only one sun. In their world view, there is no distinction between the sun and the sun god. When they talk to Yelm cultists, some are puzzled, some are awed, and some are annoyed at the Yelmists' claim of exclusive worship of the sun. Khelmali are more likely to shrug their shoulders. Hurrili accept all sun and sun dome worshippers without regard to doctrine, but only if the worshiped is an elf-friend.

Is there a deeper truth to all this? If so, it may be that ultimate truth is unknowable in Glorantha. A less profound truth is that cults are different, even if they worship the same god. A Lismelder Orlanthi has a different cult than a Colymar Orlanthi, although the differences there are slight. When a Sartarite comes to Pavis, though, he finds a quite different cult, and worships at the Orlanth temple there only out of necessity. I expect that all the temples of Pavis have factions based on place of origin. It's not just the Lhankor Mhytes.

†





# Blessed Swords of Rokar

Mike Dawson



**A** Blessed Sword of Rokar is usually of Western manufacture, and almost always made of iron. Some dwarf made blades exist, but few blades are made by the mostly Fronelan Third Eye Blue cult, though this often means they must be imported from the north. Older blades often came from the famous forges of Laurmal, now in ruins. Smiths from the Castle Coast say they continue the tradition of Laurmal's smiths, but only those privileged enough to own a Laurmalese blade can say for certain.

The arms of the Rokari Church of the Invisible God always appear somewhere on the blade, guard or pommel, though these may have been added after the blade was originally manufactured but before its Blessing. Some weapons are plain and others are highly decorated, as suits

the whims, status and purse of its owner. In following Tanisoran, Seshnelan, and Rokari tastes, all Blessed Swords of Rokar made to date are categorized as broad swords, though only fashion, taste and the ability to find a smith capable of making something else prevents some other type of sword from being Blessed.

## Manufacture

The actual making of a physical sword is not the important part of its Blessing in this ritual. So long as the sword in question is not already enchanted, and it has no reputation as having been used for an "unclean" purpose (such as murder) then most Rokari priests would find it acceptable.

Blessed Swords are made exclusively by Wizard Priests of the Rokari sect of Malkionism. Their ritual creation requires a consecrated Rokari knight as well. The ritual of creation for a Sword of Rokar allows something very unusual: the officiating priest uses the knight's sacrificed POW to fuel the enchantment. The wizard priest makes all enchantment rolls except for a single POW X5 roll made by the knight to properly sacrifice. POW cost for the enchantment is figured normally, with all of it coming from the knight.

Priests often require a petitioning knight to perform some deed for the church before agreeing to perform the Blessing, to prove the petitioner's worth and piety.

## Reputation

Rokari of all castes, except for the most insular of country bumpkins, know of and can recognize a Blessed Sword of Rokar. All such swords must bear the arms of the Rokari church on them as part of the rune of enchantment, so identifying them is not difficult. However, Rokari knights often decorate their weapons with religious symbols of their church, so separating a true Blessed Sword from a decorated one requires some magical expertise.

Members of other sects know that Rokari priests confer special blessing on their knight's swords, and that they do this more often than priests of other sects. Details of the





blessings are sketchy, however. Members of other Malkioni sects commonly explain it as an unholy reliance on magics forbidden by Hrestol.

To all but the most scholarly pagans, or those who live in close proximity to a large Rokari population, Blessed Swords of Rokar are entirely unknown.

## Powers and Abilities

Blessed Swords of Rokar vary tremendously in power and ability, based on the number of knights who have sought Blessing for the weapon and how much these knights have sacrificed to get the Blessings. As a weapon passes through generations, it gains power.

Choices about the nature of Rokar's blessing are sometimes left to the knights, but often the officiating priest decides. Of course, the skills and spells known to the priest casting the blessing are the final deciding factor in a sword's enchantment. The ritual of Blessing a Sword of Rokar mandates that a user restriction be placed on the sword, and that restriction is (at least) that the sword may only be used by a consecrated knight of Rokari Malkionism. More restrictive conditions are commonly placed on such swords. Many swords may only be used by members of a certain family, clan, or the holder of a specific office, like the King's Champion.

Blessed Swords used by someone who fails to meet the proper user conditions do not spontaneously shatter or break, but none of their magical abilities manifest, including armoring enchantments. Spirits

in Blessed Swords used improperly may attack the wielder, and refuse to cooperate in any way.

Typically, new Blessed Swords have a one point armoring enchantment. The example below, of the Tournament Sword of Tanisor, is an extreme one. Note that it is currently the property of one of the most powerful and well known knights in Seshnela, Comte Jacquereau, a noted tourneyer and Queen's Champion.

Some notable knights add Invocations of Saints Gerlant or Paslac to their Blessed Swords of Rokar. Figure benefits of St. Paslac's AP doubling after totalling points for the weapon AP and armor enchantment AP.

A knight can communicate telepathically with his Sword of Rokar, if it has a spirit with INT and he has personally spent POW creating or adding to its Blessing. Note that the Rokari Church normally frowns on any dealings with spirits of any kind. Rumor says certain "fringe" members of the Rokari church more readily deal in such questionable magics. These unorthodox clerics are usually wandering mendicants. Some think they are holy, privy to great secrets of Rokar and the Creator, while others think of them as traffickers with demonic forces.

## Explanation

Blessed Swords of Rokar are used just like any other enchanted sword. Their powers and abilities vary greatly, but are all standard combinations of normal enchantment types. Their sole difference is that they are always user restricted. †

# The Tournament Sword of Tanisor

This sword is one of the great prizes a Rokari knight may aspire to. It has passed through over a dozen knights' hands, and all but the unluckiest owner has added his prayers to the Sword. In appearance it is a dwarf wrought broadsword, mounted with gold fittings bearing the arms the old Kingdom of Tanisor on the pommel, and the arms of the Rokari church etched on the blade.

In addition to the standard user restriction, the Tournament Sword has the restriction that its powers may not be used by anyone who:

- has owned the sword for a year without having his own Blessing of Rokar added to it. Only a single Blessing need be added per owner.
- declines another Rokari knight's challenge to honorable combat, where the winner of the bout gains possession of the blade.
- attempts to add another user restriction to the Sword.

Customarily, the challenger offers a grant of enough land to support a knight if he fails to win the Tournament Sword. Alternately, a landless knight may

offer his services for a year if he fails the challenge.

The Tournament Sword of Tanisor has the following attributes, gained through many Blessings:

- It is an enchanted Iron broadsword, granting a base of 15 AP
- The sword has 7 armoring enchantments, adding + 28 AP for a total of 43 AP.
- The sword contains a binding enchantment for a Sorcerous Magic Spirit INT 12, POW 15, with Ceremony, Intensity and Duration skills of 55%. It is linked to the all matrices and the POW Spirit. Its INT is completely free.
- It contains Matrix Enchantments for the following sorcery spells:

Damage Boost 4	Resist Damage 3
Glow	Neutralize Damage
Fly	Resist Spells
- The Sword contains a binding enchantment for a POW Spirit with 16 POW, linked to the Magic Spirit.

Normally the sword has these spells cast:

  - a 1+ week duration, Intensity 6 Damage Boost on itself.
  - an 8+ week duration, Intensity 3 Glow on its blade
  - an 8+ week duration, 1 SIZ, speed 3 Fly on itself
  - a 1+ week duration, Intensity 6 Resist Spells on its owner
  - a 1+ week duration, Intensity 6 Resist Damage on its owner





# GoonQuest

## An Almost Fully Compatible RQ Variant System

Loren Miller



I wanted GoonQuest 1 to be a rules-lite system of sleazy shortcuts and time-saving guidelines that I as GM can use for NPCs and Monsters et al (Goons) while players continue to play their detailed PCs. Goons under this system should be 85% identical (the Orlanthi "all") to fully detailed RuneQuest characters in combat situations, which are the game situations most closely covered by game rules. They approximate RQ characters somewhat more closely in most non-combat situations, where RQ characters are not described in such excruciating detail. Magic is a problem, but I've attempted to find a workable solution.

### Equipment

You will need a pencil, some dice (10 sided, 6 sided, and others to taste), and a bunch of blank or lined index cards. I use 3" by 5" cards which I can get in any stationery or drug store in the USA. You could also use a pad of paper, or loose sheets of paper, but they aren't as easy to index as cards are. The whole goal of GoonQuest 1 is to make things easy for the referee, and I've found over 17 years of GMing that a small file box with index cards arranged alphabetically is the ideal place to keep NPCs ready for quick reference. So I recommend that you get a small filebox and a

bunch of index cards, and start going crazy with your pencil! Just don't put out any eyes with it....

### Character Description

First off let's get the terminology straight. In GoonQuest 1 we don't call sentient gameworld entities "characters," as most role playing games do. That's because GoonQuest 1 isn't a complete role playing game. It's a method of describing non-player characters succinctly while allowing them to be used in a game of RuneQuest (RQ). So instead of calling them GoonQuest characters, we will call them Goons. Got that? Now it's time to move on.

Every character has a defining ability. Some games call it a character class. In RuneQuest the defining ability actually turns out to be whichever skill or characteristic the character's player rolls against most often. For most RuneQuest characters the defining ability turns out to be a weapon skill or a professional skill of some sort, though a shaman might be defined by Fetch POW, a wizard by his sorcery skills, and a priest by her ceremony or cult lore skills. In GoonQuest terminology the defining ability will be called the goon's GoonPower (GP).

Choose the name for your Goon's GoonPower. If the Goon is a fighter, then "Fighter" would make a dandy name for the character's GoonPower. If the Goon is a thief, then "Thief" would make a dandy GP name (funny how familiar that sounds). If the Goon is a religious fanatic, then "Priest" would make a dandy GP name (we're still playing RuneQuest, after all). Note that the main GP is supposed to be very broad. It's a succinct description of what the Goon does. It should not be narrow like a RQ skill. It should be broad like a character class from The Other Game (TOG).

Now write it down on something. An index card (the kind you would keep in a small file-box) is a good place to write it. Everything you need for a Goon should fit easily on a single index card. Choose a percentile score for the GP. I'd suggest somewhere around 60% as a solid score for average folks in society, 90% for expert opposition, and 100% and up for really scary opponents. You probably know how to gauge this pretty well already, being experienced RQ referees yourself. Here is a table that I try to stick to with my own NPCs. I find that if I don't then skill mas-





ters are always popping out of the woodwork, yet nobody has ever heard their names... a ludicrous situation you will admit (I hope.)

### GP% How Good Are You?

45%	Talented Beginner, Apprentice
60%	Journeyman, Normal unmotivated folks
75%	Professional, Business Owner, a Specialist
90%	Master, Locally Known
105%	Master, Regionally Known
120%	Grand Master, Nationally Known, a local hero

If one GP isn't enough to define the character then write some more down. Call them GP2, and set them at about 30% below GP1 (GP1 == Goon's highest GP). There should be no more than two GP2 entries. If you need yet more then call them GP3s, and set them at about 30% below the GP2s.

Finally, you may want to give each Goon a flaw, or something distinctive that helps players (and you) to remember it. One might be bald, another might have a high-pitched laugh at inappropriate times, another might have a nasty scar across its cheek, or smell like cheese. We will call it a GoonFlaw (GF). GoonFlaws might have game effects, or they might not, it's up to the GoonMaster (GM) to decide. So that's why I haven't assigned percentile values to them. I suggest that if the PCs are getting demolished and you figure they need a break then the GoonFlaw makes itself obnoxious and gives them the break they need. Or if they're having too easy a time of it the GoonFlaw doesn't have any game effect at all.

Here's an example Goon. Note that I've tried to make Koraloon more than just an enemy warrior. He has a personality of some sort. It is actually possible to role play him as is. And when the Index Card is filled out with all the stuff you need to know (look in More Character Description) he'll be pretty darn easy to use in a RQ session.

#### Koraloon the Goon

Tough Customer of Kolating Descent  
GP: Mercenary Fighter 60%  
GP2: Drinker 30%  
GP2: Ancestor Worshipper 30%  
GF: Stutters

Koraloon is more than just an enemy warrior. He has a personality of some sort. It is actually possible to role play him as is. And when the Index Card is filled out with all the stuff you need to know (look in More Character Description) he'll be pretty darn easy to use in a RQ session.

### More Character Description

You may want to elaborate the character description a little. Or you may not...until it's too late. Following are some sneaky shortcuts to derive practically everything you could ever want to know from a Goon's GPs.

Luckily, if you discover a burning need to elaborate the Goon's index card at the last minute (for instance in the middle of a game session) you can. Just hurriedly follow these guidelines and put on your best Mona Lisa face. The players will think something horrible is going on as you roll dice and smile enigmatically.

**GOALS AND STRATEGIES:** Generally you will want to add a sentence or so that describes what the Goon's goal will be in the scenario, and what strategy it is likely to use to achieve its goal.

**SPECIALTIES:** Many Goons are specialists in some particular part of their GPs. A Mercenary Fighter might specialize with her sword. To make a specialty roll 1d10 and add it to the GP for the specialty skill, and subtract it from the GP for other related skills. For example, say Koraloon is a Swordsman. I roll 1d10 and get a 6. Now his GP looks like this: "Mercenary Fighter 54% (Sword 66%)."

Here's another example Goon, based at 90% instead of 60%. Quite a different type of Goon, wouldn't you say? Note that this Goon has a specialty in his main GP. See below for how to give a specialty to a character.

#### Vangker the Tanner

Expert Tanner in Nochet  
GP: Tanner and Leatherworker 82% (Huckster 98%)  
GP2: Streetwise 60%  
GP2: Initiate of Artisan God 60%  
GP3: Poet 30%  
GP3: Erotic Arts 30%  
GF: Smells like blood, stained with dyes

Alternately, if you don't want to roll dice, you can choose a number between 1 and 10 and modify the GP according to the same rules.

**COMBAT STATS:** If the Goon has a tough-guy or combat-related GP then divide that by 5 to get its HP. Compute location HP as usual, or if you need a shortcut just divide HP by three and add or subtract one for bigger or smaller locations. Double HP and consult the Damage Bonus table for Damage Bonus. All combat skills are at the appropriate GP, and if there are no appropriate GPs written down, then add one at GP3 level (GP1 minus 60%, with a minimum of 10%). Unless you want to work out SRs assume that all Goons have a DEX SR of 3 and a Base SR of 5.

**CHARACTERISTICS :** If it becomes necessary in some game situation to get the Goon's actual characteristics, roll 1d3 or 1d6 (your choice) and add or subtract from HP for SIZ. Do the opposite for CON. Roll 2d4-5 and add to HP for STR, or 2d6-7 would work too. Base





Dexterity off the most physically adept of the Goon's GPs, if there are any. Divide the GP by 5 to get DEX. Compute SR as usual. Base INT off any intellectual GPs, POW off any magical GPs (with a minimum of 10), and APP off any communication GPs (minimum 10, unless the flaw affects the Goon's appeal). If you don't like any of these options for a particular Goon, you should either pick a number or roll the dice. It's your choice, GoonMaster.

**MAGIC:** Magic is the most problematic thing you have to deal with because fully detailed RQ characters are supposed to have so many spells. And since GoonQuest is designed for GMs who make up Goons on the run, in the middle of a session, the GM doesn't have much time to decide on spells. Also, spell-users aren't rare in RuneQuest like they are in the world of Glorantha. So... what can you do? I don't have any answer for which spells to pick. You'll have to consult your ethnic and social campaign resources for that. But I can tell you how much magic the Goons get. If the Goon uses spirit magic from a shaman or a divine temple, choose one of the Goon's GPs, whichever is the magical one, and divide by 5 to get the points of spells the Goon has. If the Goon's main GP is "Shaman" or a synonym, then it also has a fetch of GP/5 POW. If the character is a divine magic user, then the magical GP better be its main GP. If it is, then it gets GP/5 points of divine magic. If it isn't primarily a divine magic user, then each point of divine magic counts as two points of spirit magic. If the character uses sorcery, then it knows GP/5 sorcerous skills and spells. Sorcery-using characters often have enchanted items. Each two points of enchantments counts as one sorcerous skill or spell. If a Goon is a sorcerer/wizard/whatever with its main GP being sorcerer, then it also gets a familiar of POW GP/5. Henotheists and other users of mixed magical systems combine all these systems. You're the GoonMaster, you figure it out.

Here's another Goon, even weirder.

#### *Brainbusterandeater the Broo*

Feral Broo in the woods around Apple Lane  
GP: Feral Broo 57% (Head Butt 63%)  
GP2: Nauseating Body Odor 30%  
GP2: Write Disturbing Runes on Object 30%  
GF: Forgetful

#### *GoonQuest in Combat*

Take the Combat Stats you derived above and use them in your standard RQ combat. Goons lose Hit Points and inflict damage just like RQ characters do. Use the Goon's combat-related GP for its attack, parry or dodge, and maneuver skills, modifying appropriately for specialties.

#### *Simple Skill Use*

Pick the appropriate GP, modify according to task difficulty, and roll against it on percentile dice, just as if it were a RQ skill. Contests of skills work just like they do in RQ. So do special and critical successes and fumbles. Here's a simple table of modifiers that I use.

Modifier	Task Difficulty
+50	Ludicrously simple
+25	Simple
+5 to +10	Minor advantage
-5 to -10	Minor disadvantage
-25	Hard
-50	Very Hard
-75	Ludicrously Hard
-100	Impossible (I wouldn't believe it if I hadna seen it with my own eyes!)

#### *Stat vs. Stat Situations*

Divide the appropriate GP by 5 and use that in place of the necessary stat. If the resulting stat is very low, you might want to bring it up to 9 or 10. Or you may not. Or you could roll 3d6 or some other appropriate number of dice for the stat. It's GM's choice. You will need this for POW more often than any other stat, because of RQ's magic rules, so you may want to routinely record Goons' POW when you first write them down.

#### *GoonQuest and Characteristic Rolls*

Pick the appropriate GP, modify according to task difficulty, and roll against it on percentile dice.

#### *GoonQuest I as a Standalone Game*

It can't be done. That would have to wait for GoonQuest 2 (GQ2). I have some ideas on how to go about it, but the result wouldn't be compatible with RQ anymore. RQ characters used in GQ2 would have to be completely reworked, not a difficult task, but they would lose quite a bit of detail. The resulting game (GoonQuest 2) would still be relatively freeform, but the rules would be somewhat stricter since they'd have to handle PCs as well as NPC Goons. If you really want to see GQ2 let me know and I'll try to coalesce my ideas and write them down. Or you can consult *Over the Edge*, a superb role playing game written by Jonathan Tweet and published by Atlas Games, to get a hint at the way I would develop GPs and the rest of the Goon description system into a complete resolution system.†





# Three Sisters

Martin Crim



In my travels in the east, I met a woman who had been born and raised among the amazons, taken captive, and sold into slavery in a neighboring country. She became quite famous and rich as a story teller, and indeed everyone called her Story Teller. She would not tell me her real name. Since I knew little of the amazons, I spent some time with her, seeking information. She was reticent, except when it came to stories. What follows is one folk tale which she told me.

A mother had three daughters. They all lived in a hut beside a flowing stream, in the wide jungle of our island. The oldest daughter was thoughtful, the middle one was active, and the youngest one was quiet. When they came of an age to wed Tolat, their mother asked them what they wanted.

The oldest said, "I want to know where this stream comes from."

The middle said, "I want to go where this stream goes."

And the youngest said, "I want to stay with you, mother."

Then the mother gave her daughters these words: "Here in my hut, and tilling my yam patch, you have been safe. Out in the wide world, there are many dangers. One of the greatest of these is called 'man.'"

"Mother," said the oldest, "you have been secretive about these so-called men. Now tell us, please, for we must know."

"Yes," agreed the middle child, "Is it a kind of animal?"

"Yes and no," their mother said. "Man is shaped as you are, and has a human soul, but his vices make him bestial even as his few weak virtues make him human. These are the signs of man: he is like a young girl, in that he has no breasts and knows little of manners. He is also like a boar, in that he has a large clitoris and wears his ovaries below it, and he is bad-tempered. He is yet like the orangutan, for he is large and hairy and fierce, and he mates by force."

"I am not afraid," said the middle daughter. "I will follow my path."

"Mother," the oldest said, "I find it hard to believe you about men, for is not Tolat, our god, a man?"

"My daughter, Tolat is a god, not a man. Where men

are fickle, Tolat is steadfast. Where men are brutal, Tolat is kind. Where men are lazy, Tolat is industrious. Tolat is your father, and mine, and husband to all the amazons, but he is not a man."

"We will see," said the oldest.

Then the oldest and middle daughters got ready for their journeys. To the oldest daughter, the mother gave a feather of the monkey hawk, the skull of a boa constrictor, and a fresh turtle egg. To the middle daughter, she gave a harpoon with a bronze head and a cord of lianas. To her she also gave a knife of stone and a shield of wood.

"Youngest daughter, do you not also wish to see the wide world?"

"No, mother."

"You will not be content to stay. Think, then, upon where you wish to go."

"I wish to stay here, mother. Nothing else."

"We will see."

So the two older daughters kissed their mother and their stay-at-home sister and each other and said goodbye. The middle daughter began walking downstream, and the oldest daughter began walking upstream.

The oldest daughter made her way upstream through the jungle. Once she was past her mother's yam fields and banana trees, the jungle came close to the edge of the stream and she had to walk in the water. The stream came up to her hips, and she had to lean against the current. She used a stout walking stick to steady herself. Soon she was past where her mother had taken her hunting, past the nut trees that they harvested, past the secret places of the monthly rites.

All at once, she heard a voice. "Daughter of Tolat!" it said.

"Where are you?"

"In your pouch."

The oldest daughter opened her pouch, but there was nothing in it but the feather, the snake skull, and the egg. "Where?"

"I am in the egg."

So the oldest daughter took the egg out and held it in her hand. She felt it quiver a bit in her hand. "Help me get out," said the little voice.





The oldest daughter gently opened the soft egg with her fingers. The turtle inside stuck its head part of the way out. "Thank you, daughter of Tolat. I know your mother gave me to you to be a meal upon your journey. If you free me, though, I will give you three pieces of wisdom, which are rarer and better than food."

"I will free you this instant," said the oldest daughter, for she was hungry for wisdom, and she broke the egg open the rest of the way and put the turtle into the water.

As the turtle bobbed away on the swift current, it called out to her, "Hear my wisdom, then. A meal is always some mother's child. Things come to fruition in their own way. And you can't eat wisdom, but wisdom can eat you."

Then the oldest daughter was angry that the turtle had cheated her. The first two things were commonplace, not wisdom. And what did it mean, that you can't eat wisdom, but wisdom can eat you. It meant nothing. The turtle was not wise, that was clear. She was also angry at herself for throwing away food. She should have eaten it.

Still, there was nothing to do but continue on upstream. The stream grew a bit shallower, and branches went off to the left and the right, but the oldest daughter stayed in the middle channel. The stream now came up to her knees, and the jungle grew together over her head, blocking out the sun.

The oldest daughter heard a high voice chanting upstream from her. She was sure it was not a woman's voice. Could it be a man? She moved up slowly, staying near one bank for cover. She was going to be more cautious now, after her bad experience with the turtle. She came to a bend in the stream, where the flow had gouged out a bank. She looked around, and saw someone sitting on a rock. The stream divided on either side of the rock, and this someone was facing downstream. It was not a woman, nor was it hairy, as the daughter's mother had said men are. It was slender, naked, and yellowish brown, without breasts or visible genitals. Its eyes were closed, and it chanted quietly to itself.

The oldest daughter thought a minute. It would not do to surprise this creature, unless she meant to attack it. She could not see any reason to attack it, except that it blocked her way. She was still angry about being cheated by the turtle, but she decided not to let that decide her way.

"Hello!" she shouted toward the seated creature. It went

on chanting. She began walking toward it up the stream. "Hello!" she cried again. Gradually, the creature stopped chanting, and it moved its arms up, out, down, and back to its sides. It opened its eyes, and the oldest daughter saw that its eyes had no pupils. They were the same yellowish brown as the creature's skin.

"I do not wish to alarm you," she said. "I am going up to the source of this stream, and I must pass by you. We do not have to be enemies, but if you threaten me, I will respond with violence."

"I have no wish to threaten you," the creature said. "I, too, am interested in this stream. Come sit here for a moment, and let us talk together."

The eldest daughter walked carefully up to the rock where the creature sat. She could see, then, that this rock was on a small island, at the point where the two halves of the stream rejoined each other. She sat a good distance away from the creature.

"Are you a man?" the oldest daughter asked.

"No, are you?"

"Certainly not." The daughter crossed her arms.

"Well, I have never seen men, but you look like what I have heard of them."

"I am an amazon."

"Ah. Perhaps that explains it."

"What are you?"

"I am a son of teak."

"So you are a male."

"Yes, as are all of my kind."

"You must be immortal, then, or your kind is about to die out."

"Neither. My kind marries the wood spirits, who carry on our lines."

The eldest daughter paused and thought.

"You say you are interested in the stream. How so?"

"I try to touch its soul, but its soul hides from me. I must try the ritual of the snake skull, but I have no skull to use."

"I know where a snake skull is," the oldest daughter said. "What will you give me for it?"

"I will give you a secret of the stream."

"I can't eat that. I am hungry."

"There is food all around. I will pluck some leaves for you." He did

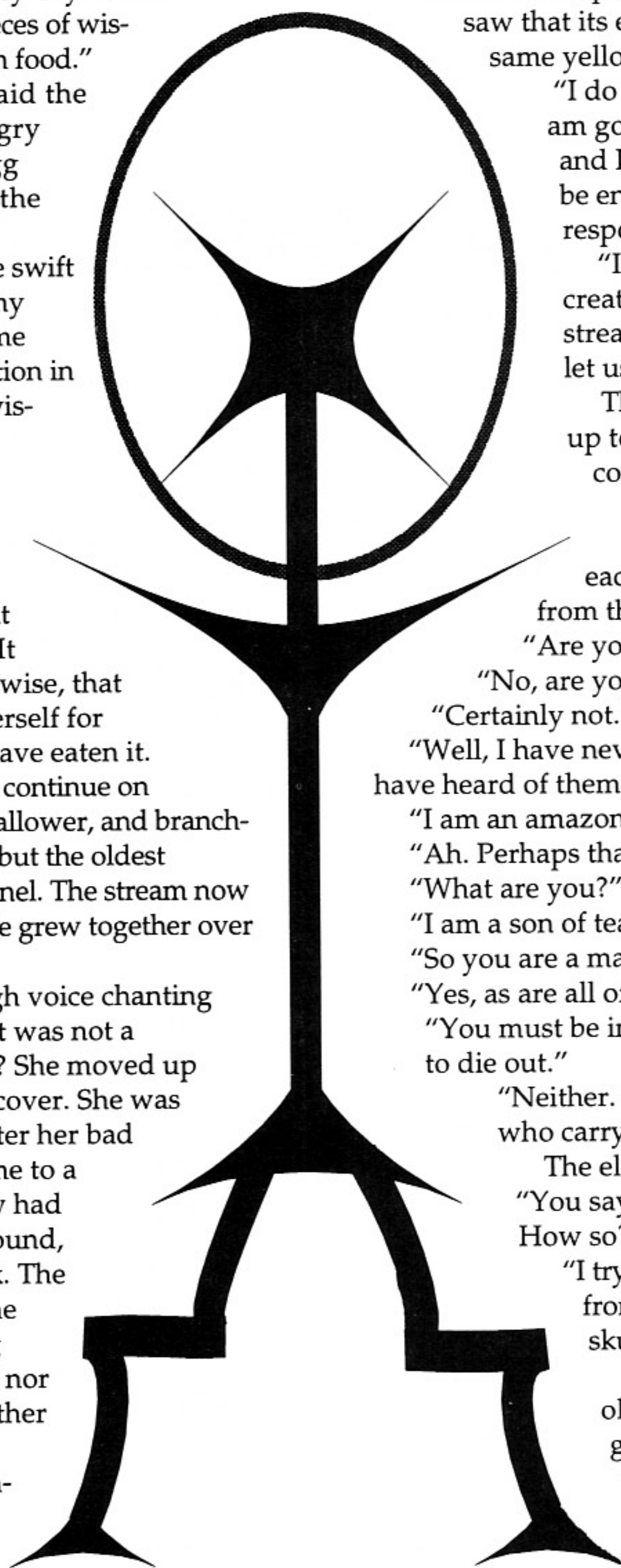
so, and presented them to the daughter.

She sniffed the leaves. "I cannot eat these."

The son of teak took the leaves back and ate them.

"What do you eat?"

"I eat yams and bananas and fish and nuts and coconut and berries and chicken and pig and deer."





At that, the son of teak took up his bow and climbed a tree, as agile as a monkey. He looked in all directions, and then fired an arrow into the thicket by the edge of the stream. A deer leaped into the clear, and tried to cross the stream, an arrow just visible sticking out of its neck. The son of teak shot it again, and it fell at the oldest daughter's feet.

She cut the deer up with sharp rocks and hung strips of its flesh across her walking stick to dry in the sun. Other parts she wrapped in leaves. She thought that it would not be wise to light a fire near a creature who called himself a son of teak. She noticed that the son of teak kept his distance while she cut up the deer.

She gave the snake skull to the son of teak. "Although you asked for food," the son of teak said, "I will give you wisdom, too. There is no need for hatred between you and me, and we can be friends if we respect each other."

"Thank you," the woman said, thinking to herself that this, like the turtle's so-called wisdom, was obvious to all. She said goodbye to the son of teak, walked the length of the island, and began to wade upstream again. The water mostly came to just above her ankles, but there were deeper spots, too.

Since she had her walking stick across her shoulders, and it was weighted with strips of meat, she had to rely on her balance. Toward dusk, she slipped on a slimy stone, and fell backward into the water. The fall knocked the wind out of her, and her head struck a rock. The meat fell off her walking stick, and the stick itself floated away. She was underwater in a deep spot, and could not move. She floated down with the current, and bumped into a fallen log. The pressure of the water pushed her head up on the log, and she could breathe again. Gradually, her numbed senses returned to her, and she got out of the water, soaked and sore.

That night, she built a fire and roasted what remained of her deer meat. Suddenly a swarm of bats came through her camp, pursued by a giant bat. The giant bat flitted back and forth across her camp, and the woman dived into the bushes for cover. When she looked out, she saw the giant bat take the spitted deer meat in its claws, and fly up into the trees over her head. It roosted by hanging with one claw, clutching the deer meat in the other claw.

"Drop my meat!" she shouted at the bat.

"It's my meat, now." The bat lowered the spitted meat to its mouth and took a bite.

"If you don't drop that meat, I'll... I'll..."

"You'll what? Stutter at me?"

This made the oldest daughter so angry that she felt herself growing hot. The back of her head had a painful bump, she was hungry and tired, and she was tired of talking creatures. She reached into her pouch for something to throw at the wicked bat. All she found was the monkey eagle feather. She threw this, quill first, at the bat. To her surprise, the feather flew upward, hit the bat in the forehead, and killed it. The bat fell down from where it perched, and it dropped the deer meat. The deer meat

caught in a branch of the tree, but the bat fell all the way to the ground.

The oldest daughter was hungry, but she knew that bat meat was taboo, and she would not eat it. She threw the dead bat away into the bushes. She resolved to fast, and went to sleep by the fire. The smell of the half-cooked deer meat, high up in the trees, made her hungry all night. Unlike any other time she had fasted, this time she did not stop being hungry. Her stomach growled at her like a wild animal. She tried to ignore it, but failed. All she could think about was her mother's cooking. She could almost smell the chicken baked in clay, with the yam inside it. She and her sisters used to fight over who got to eat the yam. She fell asleep thinking of baked chicken, fried fish, and fermented bananas.

The next morning, she was hungrier than ever. She thought about what she would be eating if she were home: cold leftover meat and yams, with fresh bananas. Her mouth watered. She cut another walking stick and went and stood in the stream. It came only to her ankles here, but it was very swift. She looked down the stream, toward home and food. Then she turned and walked upstream. She slipped on the rocks many times that morning. Each time, her walking stick saved her from injury. Gradually, her hunger faded, and her mind cleared. She learned what there was to learn from her memories of the turtle, the son of teak, and the giant bat. She laughed out loud.

She pressed on all day, climbing up waterfalls and rapids, wading around the edges of small pools, keeping always to the main stream. The trees around her were unfamiliar, different from the ones further down. The air was cooler, but the water was strangely warm. She could see ahead of her the slope of the mountain she was on. Still she pressed on, not stopping for food or rest.

At dusk, she came to the top of the mountain. There she saw a round lake, clear as glass, with a warm mist rising off it into the cool air. A beautiful person stood on the far side of the lake, and light shone from the person's body. The person was looking out across the lake at her.

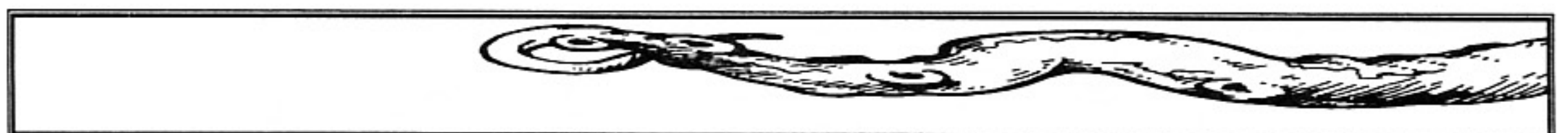
She walked, in the gathering dark, always keeping the lake on her right. She reached the glowing person, and fell on her knees.

"Have you found what you were looking for?" Tolat said, for it was he.

"Yes, I have now."

"Then we will be wed, and you will see if I am a man or not."

The middle daughter walked down the stream, singing a happy song. She used her harpoon as a walking stick. She gathered some mussels, and found a crayfish under a fallen tree limb. At noon, she stopped, built a fire, and ate her catches. She was still hungry, though, and looked around for more food. She saw a patch of berries, and started picking them, stuffing them hungrily in her mouth.





All at once, she heard a growling voice. "What are you doing in my berry patch?" the voice growled. She turned around and saw a large bear standing upright and towering over her. It bared its fangs at her. "Well? Can't you speak?"

"I'm sorry, Madam, I didn't know it was yours."

"'Madam,' you call me! You add insult to injury. Are you deliberately angering me?"

"I'm sorry, again, and I meant no insult. How is 'Madam' an insult?"

"I am a he-bear, and I eat anything that insults me or eats my berries."

"Well, if you're going to eat me, can I take off my mother's hat, here on my back, so it won't get hurt?"

The bear growled at that, but nodded his head. The middle daughter limbered her shield from her back, and ran her arm through the straps. Clutching her harpoon, she yelled at the bear, "You won't find this meal as easy to eat as berries!" She charged.

The bear took an angry swipe at her, hitting her shield. She fell back a bit from the force of the blow, but struck the bear with her harpoon. The harpoon went into the bear's side, but the heavy fur absorbed some of the blow.

The bear took another angry swipe, even angrier this time, and with its left paw. Its slavering jaws snapped forward, too. The bear's claws raked the middle daughter's spear arm, drawing blood in three long stripes.

The middle daughter danced back, wincing with pain. Everything seemed to go very slow. She heard her mother's words, that men carried their ovaries below their clitorises, just like boars. Then she darted forward again, parried the bear's paw, and drove her harpoon straight into the bear's groin.

The bear doubled up with pain. What was true of boars and men was also true of he-bears. How silly to have such a vulnerable point, so easily hurt and so painfully. She quickly killed the bear, and dressed her wound with soothing herbs.

The middle daughter used her mother's knife to skin it. She ate its heart, for strength, and made a garment out of the skin. She wore the skull on her head for a helmet, and tied the clawed forelegs to her arms. She had to shorten the

body, but used that part to make leggings. She broke out the teeth, and wore them for a necklace. Then she was ready to go on.

She walked further down the stream, keeping to the shallows, until she saw a crocodile sunning itself on a bank. Her mother had always told her to beware of crocodiles. While she was still far off, the crocodile slid into the water and swam up toward her. Only its eyes and part of its tail were above water. She climbed out of the water onto the tangled bank before the crocodile could get close. The crocodile

swam up near her, and raised its head out of the water.

"Where to, tender morsel?" it asked with a grin.

"I am going to see where the stream leads me."

"How are you going to do that, when you are afraid of the water?"

"I'm not afraid of the water. I'm not afraid of anything. See this bear skin I wear? I just killed the bear this noon."

"How impressive. Oh, I won't hurt you. Just come in the water."

"Are you a he-crocodile or a she-crocodile?"

"Such a clever question. Why do you ask?"

"I might trust a she-crocodile."

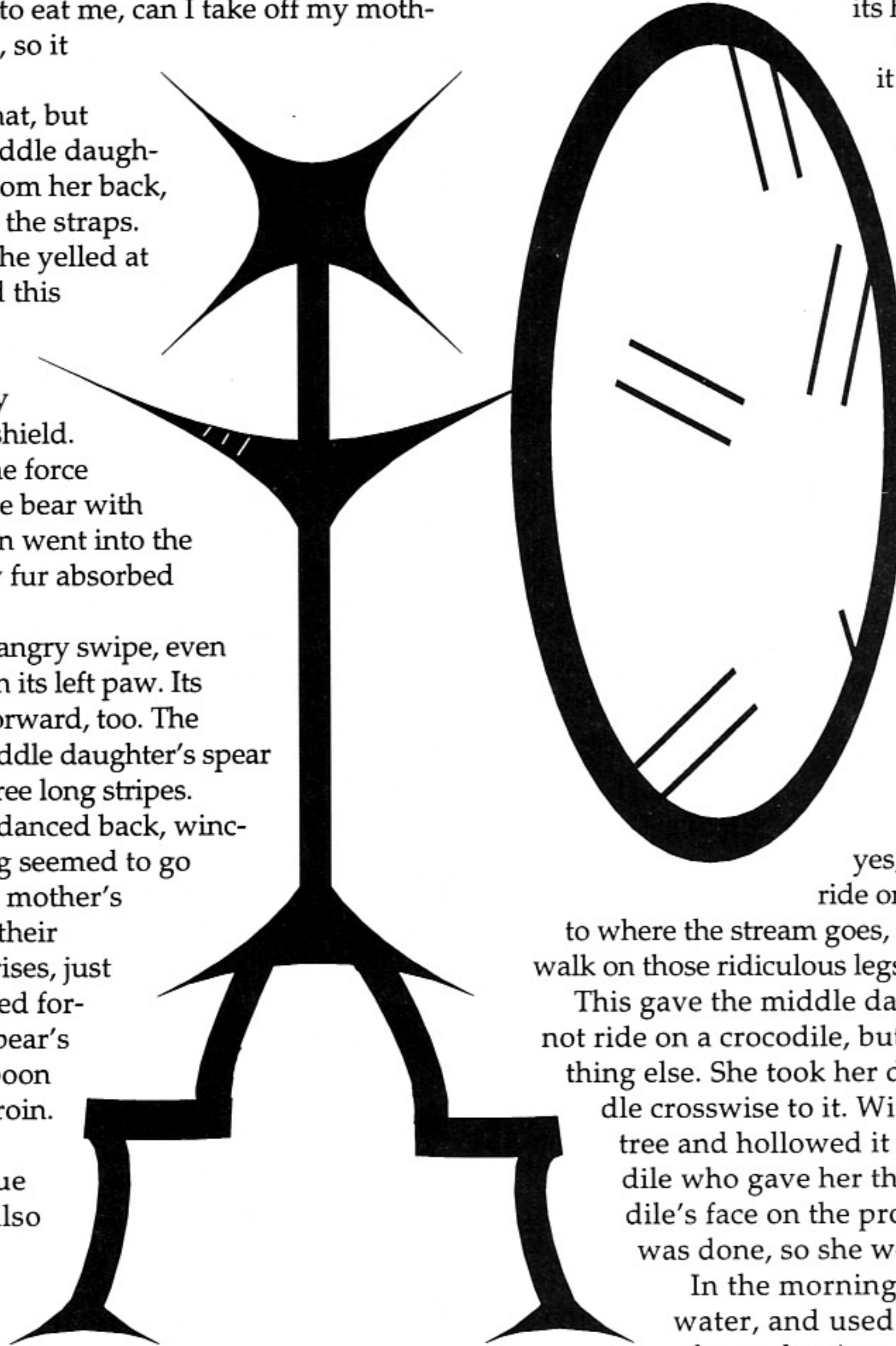
"Oh, I am a she-crocodile, yes, ma'am. Come on in, and ride on my back. I will carry you

to where the stream goes, much faster than you can walk on those ridiculous legs of yours."

This gave the middle daughter an idea. She would not ride on a crocodile, but she could ride on something else. She took her dagger, and attached a handle crosswise to it. With this ax, she cut down a tree and hollowed it out. In honor of the crocodile who gave her the idea, she carved a crocodile's face on the prow. It was dark when she was done, so she went to sleep in her boat.

In the morning, she put the boat in the water, and used her harpoon to pole down the river. The crocodile tried to come near, but she poked it with her harpoon and it went away.

The stream grew wider, but slower, as other streams joined it. It was dark water, and the middle daughter could no longer see the bottom of the stream. She poled along, but then the stream became too deep for her to pole. She drifted





along the rest of the day. When night came, she paddled with her hands toward the shore. It was hard work, and she heard the calls of leopards from the land and saw crocodiles lurking, so she decided to sleep in the boat.

When morning came, she looked around and could not see the shore on either side. The water was dark, and moving more than it had since she began her journey. It carried her up and down. Behind her, she saw something on the horizon. She began paddling in that direction, but grew very thirsty. To her surprise, when she tasted the water it was very bitter, and she could not swallow it. She lay in the boat under the hot sun.

Then she heard splashing sounds coming near her boat. Thinking that they might be crocodiles, she took up her harpoon and looked out. There were fish jumping up out of the water as they swam along very fast. As they came closer, she saw that they had little wings on the sides of their bodies.

"Little fish, will you help me?" she called to them.

The fish splashed all around her boat. "Who are you?" they cried in tiny voices, "Who are you?"

"I am the middle daughter."

"The middle daughter, the middle daughter," they echoed, splashing now in a circle around her boat, keeping the boat always on their right sides.

"I am trying to get to land!"

"Get to land, get to land," they cried. "Here come some land folk! Land folk are coming this way." Then they flitted off, splashing into the water and jumping again great distances till they were gone on the horizon.

The middle daughter stood in her little boat, and tried to keep her balance. She could just see something on the water, but the brightness of the sun, shining off the water, made it hard to see.

As the sun declined into the water, the thing came close enough to see it well. It was a boat, but much larger than hers. It had cloth on it, and the wind drove it forward. She waved her harpoon, and saw people on the boat wave back. She sank back, tired and thirsty.

The boat came alongside hers, and the people on it took down the cloth as it approached. They threw the middle daughter a rope, and she pulled her boat to the side of the big boat, and climbed up. She still had on her bear hide, her shield was on her back, and she had her harpoon between her shield and her back.

She knelt on the deck. "Water," she said, "please give me water."

She heard sounds she did not like, deep voices saying, "What have we here," and "What a strange catch!" She looked up, and saw large people that were hairy like an orangutan, breastless, and armed with sharp weapons. Men. "Give us that harpoon, and we'll give you water aplenty," one of the men said.

"Come and take it!" she cried, and quickly limbered both shield and harpoon. The three men sprung back, and pulled out their strange weapons. She charged the one on

her right, and put her harpoon into his groin. He cried out in pain, and fell to the deck. The other two tried to come at her from different sides. She moved awkwardly on the boat, whose deck shifted constantly, but she got away from one and charged the other. The scars she had from the bear's claws hurt her, and she missed him. He swung his strange weapon at her, but she blocked it with her shield.

She turned to the other man, and drove her harpoon at his groin. He had no shield to parry with, and she drove him back to the edge of the boat. "Mercy!" he cried, but she came after him. He jumped into the water, and swam to the little boat which she had abandoned.

Now she turned to the remaining man. He threw away his weapon, and stretched out on the deck. "Spare me," he cried. "All I have is yours."

She threw the men's weapons into the water, and made them take the boat to shore. She put the two men off there, but kept the cabin boy, who had hidden in the cabin during the fight. The cabin boy taught her the secrets of the boat, and together they sailed back to the stream she had come from. They pulled the boat up onto the bank, and she put a collar around the cabin boy's neck. "Now you are a slave," she said to him. "Know your place, and know that I will cut your groin if you disobey."

"I am your slave," the cabin boy replied.

The youngest daughter stayed at home, because she could not bear to be apart from her mother. Every day, she was with her mother, and they talked all day. Each day, though, the mother gave the youngest daughter something else to do. Before her sisters left home, the youngest daughter had only had to pick bananas and help with the planting and harvesting of the yams. Now the youngest daughter took on the added duties her mother gave her because, she said to herself, anything is worth bearing to be with mother.

The mother set the youngest daughter to hauling all the water from the spring. The daughter carried the heavy yoke down to the spring, and filled up the buckets, and brought them back. As she walked back, though, she began to think about the gifts her mother had given her older sisters, who had left home. When she got back to the hut, she asked her mother a question.

"Mother, where are my presents?"

"What do you mean?"

"You gave my older sisters presents, but you gave me nothing."

"You have not left. If you leave, I will give you presents."

The youngest daughter thought about those words as she hauled water. The weight of the yoke on her shoulders and the coldness of the water echoed her feeling on hearing those words.

The mother set the daughter to feeding the pigs. Each day, when she had hauled the water, she took a sack of yams and fed the boar, sows, and piglets. Each day, the pigs were just as hungry as the day before. Each day, there was





just as much water to haul. Yet at least the water quenched her thirst. The pigs, though, just went on being pigs.

"When will it be time to slaughter a pig, mother?"

"It will be time when I say it is time."

"How many more days will that be?"

"Don't you think about that. You need to tend to your chores."

The mother set her to chopping all their wood. After she hauled the water for the day, and fed the pigs, she brought the axe down on the trees in the forest, she felled them, she hauled them to her mother's hut, and she cut them into lengths for the fire.

"Mother, why do I do all the work, when you sit here, drinking fermented bananas in the shade?"

"Ungrateful daughter, I gave birth to you, I suckled you, and I raised you. If you cannot be grateful and do the work I give you, you can leave this place and never return."

These words made the youngest daughter hot, as hot as she got when chopping wood. She did not want to leave, yet her mother was trying to drive her away. This made her angry, for she wanted nothing but to stay and live the way they always had. She hated chopping wood most of all. At least the pigs would one day be food, but each day she had to cut more wood.

The youngest daughter was tired of chopping wood. She was hurt because her mother gave presents to her older sisters, who had run off, instead of giving presents to her, who did all the chores. She was angry with her mother because now she did all the work and her mother just lay around the hut.

The mother came out to the wood pile and saw her youngest daughter leaning against her axe, staring off toward the jungle, thinking angry thoughts. "Get back to work, you lazy thing!" she said to her daughter.

The youngest daughter turned around, took up her axe and brought it down on her mother's head, cracking the skull. Instantly, she dropped her axe and rushed to her mother's side, trying to save her. It was too late, and the mother's soul passed to the other side.

**T**he two older sisters came back to their mother's hut.

They arrived at the shore of the stream at the same time, and embraced with great joy. They walked together up the path toward the hut, calling for their mother and younger sister to come out. No reply came.

The came up to the hut, and saw a young pig's car-

cass hanging by the door, stripped almost to the bone. The fire had gone out, and the wood pile was down to a few logs. The two sisters looked into the hut, and saw their youngest sister asleep, even though it was noon. They shook her awake, and smelled fermented bananas on her breath.

"Where is mother?" the oldest sister demanded.

"She went away," the youngest sister said.

"Leave me alone."

"Where did she go?" demanded the middle sister.

"Far away." And the youngest sister rolled over in her hammock, turning her face to the wall.

The two older sisters went outside. They conferred, and then the oldest sister looked up at the sky, and asked Tolat to tell her where her mother was. Tolat spoke to her in her mind, and said,

"Under the wood pile."

The two older sisters moved the few remaining logs of the wood pile, and found a shallow grave.

They dug up their mother, and wept and wailed over her body. This noise woke the youngest sister, who got up out of her hammock to tell her sisters to be quiet.

The middle sister thereupon took up her harpoon and killed the youngest sister.

The two surviving sisters gave their mother a proper burial, but threw the body of their youngest sister into the stream, where it floated away until the fish ate it. Then the oldest sister went back to live in the mountains as a priestess, and the middle sister went back to live at the coast as a pirate.

**I** asked Story Teller what this said about amazons, but, after she had wet her throat with some wine, all she said was that it showed they liked to tell stories. I asked her if all youngest daughters are evil. She said no, but they all have to leave home, even if they do not want to. That made me think about the fact that all three girls in the story came of age at the same time, and I asked about that. She said that girls come of age in groups that span several years. This is probably the only really useful information I got from her.

I asked Story Teller if the story showed that amazons know little about the way men are built, but she said that there was such a

thing as close enough.

Although I found her story to be worth the effort to record, she made a reluctant informer and I caution against treating the story as reliable in any way.

Hjalti Sage. †





## Subscriptions

Codex costs \$5.00 per issue via US Mail domestic delivery to the US, Canada and Mexico. Airmail overseas is \$6.75 per issue. US funds only please, via check or money order made out to M. Dawson. (Most countrys' Post Offices can issue a money order in US funds.) The publication schedule is intended to be quarterly, but depends on submissions. The address for all US, Canadian and Mexican subscriptions appears on the inside front cover. Issue 4 is scheduled for American release in late spring 1995. Foreign publication is slightly delayed from that. Subscriptions are \$14 for a four issue subscription. The higher prices above are the costs for single issues or back issues. Stock of #2 is limited. Write for availability of #1.

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## Submissions

I solicit your submissions of Gloranthan material for publication in Codex. Disk is preferred to e-mail, though file transfer via America Online is fine. I cannot currently UUDECODE. The preferred format is Macintosh Word 5.0, but I can read DOS disks and most word processor formats. I also follow most of the submission guidelines for RQ as published by Avalon Hill. (I helped write them, after all.) See the next column over for more details.

I really need competent art. If you are good, you probably have something lying around in your old sketchbooks that I can use. Art should be black and white line art, with no large solid areas of black. Artists receive their choice of two copies of the issue their work appeared in, or one copy of two issues.

All rights revert to creators after publication, and creators receive a free copy of the issue of Codex their material appears in. Finally, a round of beer is on me at RQ Con each year for all contributors. For all contributors since last time, that is.

Finally, I am not interested in trading for 'zines that are not focused on RQ and Glorantha.

## Expanded Writer's Guidelines

I've gotten many requests for more expansive writer's guidelines, so here they are. I hope it doesn't sound too preachy, but I know my writing improved a lot after I learned these simple things.

### Grammar, Usage, and Style

Use good grammar. Your old high school grammar books give you the basics. Even better, I recommend Strunk & White's Elements of Style or the Chicago Manual of Style. Errors of grammar, usage, and spelling make it much less likely that I will use your work. I don't have time to rewrite for you.

It is harder to generalize about matters of style. Guides to better writing abound in your public library; help yourselves. There are a few very specific things that I think make for good, lean writing:

### Avoid Passive Voice

Also called subjunctive case. Don't write "The editor has rejected the manuscript." Instead, write "The editor rejected the manuscript." In your prose, almost every use of the words "will" "should" "could" "can" "may" "is" and "be" flags a passive voice or subjunctive case sentence that needs revision. Another example: "The editor will reject any manuscript full of passive voice." That's wrong. Instead: "The editor rejects any manuscript full of passive voice."

Some sentences suffer greatly from the writer's wish to get the big noun at the front.

Bad: The Kingdom of Smeltch is made up of Twenty-three Pirate Clans.

Good: Twenty-three Pirate Clans make up the Kingdom of Smeltch.

### Use Dialog When Appropriate

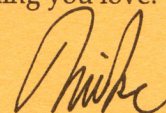
Don't write "The King of Smeltch tells you he is going to make you eat fishbait." Instead, write out the dialog, with appropriate direction. "...and leaning forward on his driftwood throne, he spits out at you 'Your choice, landsmen...eat this, or I'll use you to catch sharks! Heh!'"

### Computers and Typesetting Conventions

If you write with a computer and haven't written your article already, please use the following typesetting conventions. I hate making these change by hand.

- Single space after periods. No double spaces anywhere. Double spaces after periods are a relic of typewriter days.
- Use tabs, not spaces.
- No all caps or underlining anywhere, including titles and headers.
- No carriage returns anywhere except at the end of a paragraph.

Lastly, write something you love! That's why I write Glorantha.





## Rat & Weasel Wisdom

by Mike Dawson

How hard  
izzit to get rid a  
Toadface? 'Sonly him un  
his stinky goat. Dey spends  
mosta der time starin' off inta space,  
or else he's busy infesting every damn gecko  
and polliwog he can squirm his prong  
into with a stick. Makes me  
sick, da way he aims his eyeballs  
at eah other-make sme think he  
knows what I is thinkin. Buy you gotta  
plan, dontcha, Salta I kin tell ya got one, from the way  
toadie gives ya all them bad jobs. I tink he's up your butt  
with a big -OUW- 'Kark's left one, whatcha do that for,  
Salta-I jus' wanna help you out. Dis is Mojak, I is yer  
buddie. I know you got the smarts. Toadie, boy, he  
know it too. Dat's why you needs friends like me. Us  
rats, we unnerstand you weasels we do. So  
those pig guys. They ain't got the brains we can  
you got a pla, Salta? A good plan? I'm up for it,  
some action, I say I'm all for tying ol' Toaddad's  
goat face down in the fire for a while so we can  
play some run-it-in. Goats is my fave rit, How  
come Toadie only gets the goat? I bet if you was  
runnin' things you could have a goat and maybe  
you would share it with yer best buddy, ol'  
Mojak. Plenty of goats to go round when you



take over, I  
know that's  
how you'd  
want it to

-OUW- whattah  
do tdat fer, Salta  
ain't I yer own half  
bro-? Ill back  
you

I don wanna to hear a  
word from you, yo unworthless  
fleabag. Shut up, I'm trying to think.  
We have a job to do here. Why did I get  
stuck with you? Toadface must want me  
to fail, so he can sic some damn hell spirit  
on me. I thought I told you to shut up.  
Listen close-think about what I just said a  
hair ago. If you think hard, you remember I  
said shut up. Did you hear me? Come here I  
want to show you something. Lookit here I  
hope it did hurt. That's the point of it. Now  
shut up and suck your sores afore I peel 'em  
off ya. I got important stuff to tink about. No I  
don wanna hear your plan, unless its a plan to  
break it off, and I don watch yer trouble with  
that damn goat. Malia's Farts, if you don't get  
quiet, I'll have rat on a stick for dinner, right  
here, right now. I'll feed yer arse to Storm Bull  
if'n you don't start keepin' your gas in your  
mouth. You know, the chaos well is attracted  
to noise, so you betta start practicing keepin'  
quiet before we gets to the next Summonin'.  
Here's summtn good-  
Thed's hairy slit, that's a  
lotta blood. How did  
you ever survive  
poppin' yer ma  
with all the  
squeakin' you  
give off. Now

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