



# Meteor Tales #1

## - The Eye of the Dragon -

Short Stories of Sword & Sorcery  
in the style of old Pulp Magazines.

*By Angelos Kyprianos*

## Meteor Tales

Meteor Tales are short medieval fantasy stories based on the style of pulp magazines such as Weird Tales. They present adventures set in the world of Vitallia from the Meteor Tales universe, a roleplaying game created by Angelos Kyprianos. The stories are short and self-contained.

By Angelos Kyprianos



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## #1 The Eye of the Dragon

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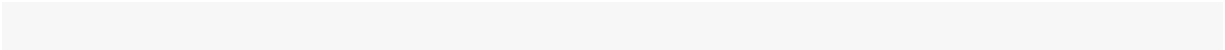
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# 1

Amidst frozen waters, frigid gusts, and colossal ice formations resembling towering mountains, the resilient crew vessel was at last nearing the fabled isle of Miasel. It smoothly sailed through undulating waves, foreboding fogs, and shadows concealed beneath the frozen depths, reminiscent of tales foretelling the demise of seafaring beings. However, those trials had now been left behind, and the Phoenix, that remarkable vessel, had successfully accomplished the voyage from the frosty northern reaches of Esgolithon to the tropical island of Miasel.

Dorak stood with a sense of joy and satisfaction at the ship's bow. He had cast aside the bear fur that had provided warmth throughout the journey and now relished the warmth of the sun on his robust physique and sturdy muscles. An enormous sword jutted from his belt, leaning against him as he surveyed the expanse before him.

"Behold, my companions! The Promised Coast lies ahead! By the Amar and the Luvar, I warned you not to question me!" Dorak exclaimed.

The two slender men beside him grinned mischievously, though they lacked Dorak's vigor and strength.

"Now the true endeavor commences. See there! Beyond the verdant trees, deep within the jungle, we shall discover a path. It shall guide us to the crest of the hill where the Ivory Tower stands. From there, everything becomes effortless. We shall survey the Temple of Ismahar from above, descend upon it, and claim the Eye of the Dragon. Before the denizens of this place can overcome us, we shall return triumphantly and set sail for home, as wealthy as kings!"

Gulas and Mack chuckled cynically, rubbing their hands together. The promise of riches bolstered their courage. They would not have to linger long in this accursed place that legends had draped with eerie tales. Now, as they drew nearer, the warmth embraced them, the trees beckoned invitingly, and the beach's white sand appeared as soft as a mattress.

"Dorak, were dragons truly once here?" Gulas inquired.

Dorak grew annoyed. "Certainly, they were, you fools! What did you expect? Otherwise, why would we seek the Eye of the Dragon? But that is all in the past. Dragons were vanquished eons ago! Their lairs lie vacant, and the gold within them continues to amass year after year."

The men stared, dumbfounded.

"How is that possible? Has no one claimed it?" Gulas persisted.

"By the gods, you truly are imbeciles! Many have tried, but they lacked the favor of the gods, unlike Dorak the Cruel! And no, they are not unguarded. Disgusting reptiles slither and desecrate the treasures of their ancestors. It is the Sarcanta, the dragon people, who toil like ants. They shall experience the wrath of my sword for daring to lay hands on my gold."

The men appeared troubled.

"I mean our gold, by the gods!" Dorak clarified.

## 2

As they stepped onto the scorching sand, a refreshing breeze swept over them. Before them stretched the Promised Coast, exactly as the rumors had described it—breathtaking and seemingly endless. A cluster of majestic palm trees served as a natural boundary between the beach and the island's dense jungle, concealing the rocky paths marked on Dorak's well-worn map. Wasting no time, they gathered provisions and readied their weapons, eager to embark on their journey. However, as Dorak turned his gaze back and watched the shrinking silhouette of the anchored ship, an unfamiliar doubt gnawed at him.

"By the gods, my companions!" he exclaimed, forcing a strained smile. "Do you see the palm trees? We shall soon reach the designated point on the map, right there, look!" He pointed his pudgy finger at the paper. The other two simply nodded in agreement. "Onward! Let us make haste and complete this quest ahead of schedule!"

Before long, the heat became unbearable. Dorak's body glistened with sweat, and his taut muscles trembled with each arduous step through the vegetation. The two smaller men unsheathed their short swords, clearing a path by slashing through vines and other obstacles. Suddenly, Gulas felt a sharp pain in his calf, and a cry escaped his lips. Dorak sprang into action like a panther, brandishing his sword and scanning the surroundings.

"What in the name of the Gods is happening?"

"My leg, Dorak! I... I don't know, something bit me," Gulas replied, his voice filled with fear.

Examining the calf of the terrified young man, Dorak rolled his eyes. A peculiar plant, resembling a colossal tulip head, had latched onto his flesh like a suction cup. Blood trickled from the wound, and Gulas was immobilized by pain. The plant's stem appeared plump and oddly animate, greedily consuming the man's blood in voracious gulps.

"By the gods!" Dorak exclaimed, gripping his blade tightly. "Cut it out, Gulas!"

Gulas swiftly drew his knife and with a powerful motion, cleaved the plant in two. Blood spurted, staining both his leg and face as the lifeless plant lay in two large pieces.

"What manner of demon was that?" Gulas cried, horror-struck, as he gazed at the purple and foreboding wound on his leg.

"It's nothing," Dorak falsely reassured him. "Once you rest, it will pass. Demons, you fool! We did not come here to be devoured by flowers!"

The three men forced laughter, with Gulas being the most deceitful as he now limped along the remaining path. Until the sun descended, Gulas dragged his leg like a burden, occasionally crying out in pain. Dorak paid him little attention, pondering how unfortunate Gulas was to perish in such a wretched manner and how fortunate he himself was to be favored by the gods. As they neared the Ivory Tower, Dorak feigned a compassionate expression.

"Wait here, Gulas, as we ascend," he instructed. "Keep watch! We shall return swiftly. Rest your leg, for we have a long descent to the temple, where we shall seize our diamond and make our way back."



### 3

Upon reaching the summit, they found themselves standing in the shadow of a dilapidated tower. The wind blew fiercely, and the sun had long descended, allowing the night to cast its gentle veil over them, while the stars sparkled above like shimmering diamonds.

"By Justar!" Dorak exclaimed. "Have you ever beheld such stars, my friend? They are as magnificent as pearls, gleaming like diamonds. How fortunate are we, Mack? I have always said that the gods favor me! Do you doubt it? Look! There, by Solisis! Can you see it? Ismahar, the grand temple. It is where the ancient barbarians who inhabited this land sought refuge from the loathsome lizards! They took with them diamonds, rubies, gold, and, of course... the Eye of the Dragon!"

Mack now found himself captivated by the radiant glow emanating from Dorak's eyes in the darkness. Internally, he harbored reservations about the barbarian's ambition, yet he couldn't help but admire both his strength and his imposing physique, illuminated by starlight, which seemed to accentuate the purity of each muscle as if they were masterfully sculpted.

Suddenly, a shadow loomed over them. Dorak crouched down and tightened his grip on his sword, while Mack drew his knives, moving about in restless circles.

"What in the name of the demons of the Abyss is this?" Mack exclaimed.

A repugnant creature soared overhead in menacing circles. It possessed immense bat-like wings that effortlessly sliced through the air, a colossal lion's head, and an erect scorpion-like tail that defied the wind.

Dorak swiftly dashed behind a nearby rock, his body low to the ground. Mack looked at him in astonishment, attempting to mimic his actions. Before he could do so, however, a gust of wind struck him, and he fell facedown with a jarring impact, involuntarily releasing a scream as all the air rushed from his lungs.

"Dorak... what happened?" Mack gasped, his fingers desperately clinging to the ground as he attempted to crawl. He could faintly hear Dorak's voice in the distance.

"That, my unfortunate friend, is a Manticore. You wretched dog. They are abominations, blending the features of lions, bats, scorpions, and other creatures from the Abyss. You bear its venom upon your back."

Mack's sobs filled the air, pleading for help and a means of escape. "Please, Dorak... Get me out of this wretched place."

Dorak's face hardened as he regarded his injured companion. "There is no salvation for you, my friend. Sadly, you lack the favor of the gods. Cease your wailing now, for I must seize my prey."

Standing tall, Dorak patiently awaited the descent of the creature. He observed its wings aligning before him, while the venom-dripping tail remained inactive for a few more moments. Recognizing the opportunity, Dorak seized it with unwavering determination. With a sweeping motion, he brought down his mighty sword, channeling all his strength into cutting the monstrous path. The blade struck the creature's jaw, shattering bone as it exited through its eye, unleashing a gory spray of blood, flesh, and sinew in all directions. The creature crashed to the ground, disappearing behind Dorak like a mountain of scales and crumpled bat skin, its wings snapping under its own weight. The battle was swiftly over before it had truly begun.

"That is how you slay a Manticore, my friend," Dorak proclaimed proudly to Mack. However, Mack no longer paid him any heed, his attention lost in his own turmoil.

## 4

In the pitch darkness of the jungle, Dorak ventured alone, leaving behind the unfortunate fate of Gulas, whose swollen leg had met a grisly end, surely resulting in a torturous death. The quest for treasure in unfamiliar territory was an arduous endeavor, especially without the favor of the gods, Dorak mused to himself as he pressed forward toward the temple. His gaze remained fixed ahead, his senses heightened. This was his element, a barbarian as strong as a lion and swift as a panther. The Eye of the Dragon awaited him, and this time, it would be his alone.

In a small clearing deep within the jungle, Dorak paused momentarily to drink from a nearby stream. As he wiped his face clean, he beheld a sight that momentarily took his breath away. Statues, scattered all around, depicted individuals in peculiar attire under the dim moonlight. Approaching with caution, a lump formed in his throat as he observed the frozen expressions on their faces, frozen in eternal wildness. He noted their peculiar stances, their outstretched swords, and pondered who could have carved such statues in this remote place and what might have inspired their creation. Then, like a lightning bolt, the realization struck him.

"By the Luvar and the Amar! These are not statues. They are petrified people!"

He sprang to his feet, his sword poised in every direction, anticipating threats lurking in the shadows.

"What wicked force has brought this evil upon us? Is it a medusa? A basilisk? Or some demon from the Abyss? By the gods, I shall not be known as Dorak if I sit idly to uncover the cause!"

He sprinted southward through the trees, allowing the foliage and branches to tear at his skin in his swift passage. With his heart pounding in his chest, he poured all his strength into traversing the jungle, refusing to glance back for any reason, even if a mountain of gold beckoned to him.

"The Eye of the Dragon is worth more than all the gold on this island combined," he reassured himself, briefly pausing to catch his breath. He had lost track of how long he had been running in the darkness.

As the night wore on, Dorak noticed the jungle gradually giving way, revealing a dry valley surrounded by canyons. Red rocks encompassed him, and everywhere he looked, he saw cliffs reminiscent of old quarries. This was the Deep Canyon, a place he had glimpsed from afar while atop the Ivory Tower. The temple was within close proximity now.

A shroud of mist enveloped the vicinity, and moonlight bathed the path ahead in a soft, silvery glow. Stealthily, Dorak sought refuge behind some ruins upon hearing the sound of chains snapping in the distance.

Dorak, fueled by adrenaline and a desire for triumph, could see the ancient temple's marble structure in the distance, filling him with a sense of elation. Alas, he knew it was not yet time for celebration, for a lurking danger concealed itself within the shadows. His keen senses allowed him to discern a group of reptilian creatures conversing in their hideous language before the steps of Ismahar. Towering like men, their scaly skin glinted under the moonlight, and they brandished massive curved swords with gilded blades that seemed to radiate in the darkness. Five in number, they exuded an aura of muscular brutality.

Leading the way, in chains and clad in scanty clothing, was a woman, her arms and legs adorned with metal rings. A Sarcanta, swinging a chain as if taming a wild beast, presided over her. Dorak narrowed his eyes as he observed the scene, feeling the fire of adrenaline ignite within him. Without hesitation, he charged toward them like a vengeful demon, his sword raised high and a primal scream tearing from his throat.

Steel clashed with steel, and the air resonated with the resounding clash of swords. Caught off guard, the reptilian creatures faltered. Dorak swiftly lowered his sword, impaling one of them, his blade slicing through strange scaly flesh before dropping the lifeless body to the ground. As a curved sword struck his shoulder, he bared his teeth, retaliating with a forceful kick to the assailant's gut. In a series of swift

blows, he severed another's arm and decapitated it. However, attacks rained upon him from multiple angles, and for a brief moment, he felt a pang of underestimation as the reptilian swords cut into his calf and ribs. Though he dispatched another foe, fatigue began to set in, his legs growing weak and knees faltering.

"By the gods," he growled, observing the Sarcanta lowering its sword from above. Dorak stared at his impending doom, the weight of his own sword feeling insurmountable, the prospect of deflecting the strike seemingly distant and arduous. Yet, in a sudden turn of events, the Sarcanta halted abruptly, a metallic tip jutting out from its sternum before collapsing onto the ground, its sword clattering loudly. The captive woman, still bound, had seized the opportunity, driving a small knife into the creature's back. Dorak swiftly dispatched the last reptilian adversary, triumphantly proclaiming his victory to the gods and, of course, to the woman.

The captive rose to her feet, revealing ash-covered legs and arms. Her long blonde hair cascaded down, and her toned body exuded strength and skill, accentuated by the moonlight that caressed her curves and fierce beauty. Dorak scrutinized her with intensity, finding in her blue eyes the composure of a seasoned warrior. Fearlessly, he approached her, his shadow enveloping her like a protective cloak, as her gaze remained steadfast, locked with his own.

"What are you doing here, woman?" Dorak's deep bass voice resonated as he confronted the woman, casting a shadow over her. She allowed her knife to slip from her hand, its weight inconsequential as it hit the ground without a sound.

"I am a prisoner, stranger. It has been a long time, but hopefully no longer, thanks to you," she replied, her voice carrying a sense of relief.

Dorak's pride swelled, and he adjusted himself, noticing her gaze lingering on his massive chest.

"Those days are over for you," he declared, taking her hands and leading her closer to the temple steps. He had her extend her wrists, guiding the chains to follow. Before he rose his weapon, he observed the

woman's semi-naked form, her supple waist bending as she leaned over, her flawless silhouette highlighted by the dim light. He licked his lips and, with two swift strokes, freed her from the chains. She rubbed her hands and feet, grateful for the release.

"I am Diza. I hail from distant Dragoria, and I thank you for setting me free."

"Dragoria? A southern tribe! By the gods, now I understand how you survived here! I have heard tales of your people. They say you fight just as fiercely as the men," Dorak responded.

The blonde beauty smiled. "Not as fiercely as you."

"Dorak!" the barbarian boasted.

"Not as fiercely as you, Dorak!" Her voice sounded like a sweet melody to his ears.

"I was captured a long time ago. Our ship was left behind empty, surely sunk by now, as none of my companions survived. Only I remained. The jungle, canyons, and monsters of this island proved to be more challenging than we had anticipated. Thus, I found myself bound by reptilian chains. The fate that awaited me was undoubtedly brutal. The canyons surrounding us are filled with settlements where slaves like myself, and now you, are subjugated by the reptilian creatures," Diza explained.

Dorak listened, a smirk playing on his lips. He absorbed the dangers she described, deflecting them like arrows hitting metal.

"Beyond the Deep Canyon lie mines, occupied by reptilian overseers who command enslaved men to extract gold for Dragonhome. It is where their great master, the dragon lord, resides," she continued.

For a brief moment, Dorak's attention was caught by her words. He emitted a sarcastic growl, looking at her with disdain.

"Dragon? Ha! You are a delusional woman! There are no dragons anymore. They perished thousands of years ago. Listen to me when I speak. I am Dorak, hailing from the north, where generations of dragon



hunters have thrived. So, have no doubt when I tell you that dragons no longer exist. My ancestors ensured that just as I have ensured your freedom now."

Diza's gaze lingered on Dorak as he devoured her with his eyes, drawing closer to her. Sensing his desire, she took a few steps towards him, inviting his advances. Dorak seized the opportunity, grabbing her and forcefully pressing his lips against hers, his grip tight on her waist. Diza eventually broke away from the kiss, gently stroking his arms.

"Here we are in danger, mighty Dorak! Perhaps we should seek safety instead? Do you have a ship? Companions waiting for you?" she suggested.

Dorak chuckled. "I had comrades when I arrived, but they perished in the jungle. We are not all made of the same mettle, you see, and I have the favor of the gods."

"So it shall be," Diza agreed. "But what are you doing here alone then?"

Dorak turned his attention back to the temple, causing Diza to roll her eyes.

"Don't tell me..."

"The Eye of the Dragon!" Dorak revealed immediately, a hint of pride in his voice as he noticed the admiration in Diza's expression.

"But that's a legend, Dorak! Even you can't..."

Dorak's expression darkened. He approached Diza menacingly, towering over her like a colossus.

"Do you doubt my capabilities?" he growled.

She remained silent.

"Do you forget that I saved you from the reptiles? How I arrived here unscathed, alone? Do you think I would stop now, so close to the greatest treasure this world has ever known?"

Diza stared at him, her admiration growing with each word he spoke. Dorak fantasized about leading her atop a mountain of gold, claiming

her as his own amidst her exquisite beauty. He paused for a moment, his expression shifting.

"Wait for me here, woman, and you shall see. When I return, we will use the Eye of the Dragon to guide our way back, and then I will lead you to the ship and back to my homeland. I will make you mine, and you shall have riches and the honor of standing by the side of the greatest warrior of the north."

Diza seemed captivated by Dorak's confidence and allure. Before her stood her hero. He may not resemble the knights of her storybooks, but he possessed a primal, alluring power that could not leave her indifferent.

"It sounds magnificent, mighty Dorak," she finally replied. "As magnificent as you. Every word you speak resonates in my ears like melodies, for no one else has had the strength and audacity to come so close to the Eye of the Dragon. However, there is one point on which I disagree."

Dorak appeared intrigued. "And what might that be?"

"I won't wait here. I will come with you into the temple and assist you. And before you attempt to dissuade me, know that I hail from Dragoria and hold no fear of danger or death. Moreover, I am bound by a debt of honor as per the customs of my homeland, and to disregard it would burden me for the remainder of my days. We are accustomed to upholding such honors without defilement. I will accompany you because your journey into the dark depths of this place will require the aid of my blade."

Dorak could not, and would not, refuse. He could only marvel at his fortune once again. Throughout his life, he had been blessed with the love of the Gods, and this moment was no exception. Not only had he ventured where no other had dared, but he would return with the most coveted treasure and the northern realm's most captivating woman. A warrior beside a warrior, bound by swords, flesh, and shared determination!

Without uttering a word, he firmly grasped her hand, and together they embarked upon a swift ascent up the temple steps.

## 5

A torch illuminated the dark chamber, casting a golden glow. The walls, adorned with intricate paintings and mysterious symbols, displayed images of a regal figure surrounded by kneeling people and glowing thunderbolts.

"Who were these people?" Dorak whispered.

"They must have been the Shanah, the inhabitants who resided here before the dragons arrived and annihilated them," Diza replied. "They built this temple to seek refuge from the wrath of the dragons."

Pressing on, they ventured through winding corridors. Bones littered the floor, and skeletons adorned the walls, covered in webs with rusty weapons clutched in their bony hands. With each step, they delved deeper into the temple, where darkness hung heavily and the air grew thin. Dorak felt his courage falter. In the wilderness, he could embrace his true nature, unafraid of beasts, animals, or monsters. But in this unnatural labyrinth, devoid of life, he sensed a primal threat that struck fear into his heart. As they reached the top of a steep set of stairs, leading further into the dungeon, he wondered if it was all madness. Perhaps the world's gold was not worth this treacherous journey. For once, he longed to escape and inhale the crisp air outside.

"What's troubling you?" Diza asked, faithfully trailing behind him like a shadow.

At that moment, Dorak contemplated revealing his doubts. He considered telling her to forget the whole endeavor. The ship awaited them, and even if they sold it upon their return, it would yield a handsome sum in gold. He could settle some debts and endure the winter. Moreover, he knew of places in the north where villages were always in need of skilled swordsmen to defend against monster raids, offering generous compensation. But he kept these thoughts to himself.

"It's nothing. Let us press on," he replied, masking his inner turmoil.

He thrust the torch forward, revealing the end of the low stairs where even the mice dared not tread. The air in the basement was thick with the smell of mold and decay. This place, once constructed as a refuge from the dragons' flames, had become a tomb itself.

"Whatever king led the people here also led them to a great grave," Dorak murmured, his gaze sweeping each corner.

"Graves hold riches, great Dorak," Diza replied.

Dorak couldn't help but notice how composed Diza seemed. While his own nerves were difficult to conceal, he didn't want to reveal his fear to the woman. Yet, he couldn't shake the suspicion that she harbored more secrets than she let on. Every time he turned his head, he found her trailing behind him, her eyes fixed on him with an unwavering expression. It made him wonder about her true nature.

Suddenly, Diza's hand grazed his shoulder, causing Dorak to halt.

"Be careful, my giant," she whispered sweetly.

Dorak glanced down. His boot had stopped just in front of a peculiar tile. He illuminated it with the torch, revealing an intricate rune etched into the marble.

"What is this, woman?" Dorak asked.

"Magic, Dorak. A potent magical trap," Diza explained.

Dorak rolled his eyes, but cautiously stepped over the tile, with Diza following behind.

"You seem to be quite knowledgeable," he said suspiciously. Diza smiled.

"I have a keen eye for these things," she replied.

"Hmm."

"This way!"

Diza moved ahead, and Dorak matched her pace. They reached a massive metal door consisting of two panels. The mechanism appeared

to have been tampered with, allowing a narrow sliver of light to guide them.

"By the gods, what is this place?" Dorak whispered.

"Silence now!" Diza's voice turned commanding, and Dorak hesitated to react. As they pushed open the door, they entered a vast chamber engulfed in an unbearable stench that forced them to their knees. Covering her mouth, Diza pointed ahead. Dorak couldn't believe his eyes. Before them lay a grotesque monster, sprawled amidst a hoard of gold. Its scaly skin was riddled with spears, some still embedded in its flesh. Blood seeped from its wounds, staining the coins beneath it crimson. Lifeless bodies were strewn about like macabre ornaments in a dark garden, their limbs disfigured by fire and gaping wounds.

"By the Sentinel, it is still alive!" Diza exclaimed, confirming Dorak's suspicions.

There was no time for words. The creature, resembling a dragon but the size of a carriage, stirred, its weakened movements causing a torrent of blood to flow from its dying form. Dorak lunged forward, wielding a sword he picked up from the ground, and Diza joined him in battle.

The barbarian swung his sword down upon the monster's neck, the blade slicing through its flesh with ease. Smoke rose from the wounds, and in an unexpected burst, a jet of fire erupted, illuminating the chamber. Dorak reacted swiftly, evading the flames, while Diza leaped with feline agility to avoid the fiery onslaught. Seizing the moment, Dorak pressed on, unleashing a furious assault upon the creature. Each strike forced its head to lower, and sensing its weakness, Dorak redoubled his efforts, his blows cleaving through the beast's flesh like a butcher. Desperate, the monster abandoned its attempts to breathe fire and charged at the barbarian with all its might. Its tongue snaked out, snatching Dorak's sword and hurling it away, while the force of its body knocked him onto his back.

"Dorak!" Diza's voice echoed from a distance, but the barbarian had no time to waste. With unwavering determination, he seized the monster's massive teeth with his bare hands, using every ounce of his inhuman



strength to hold it at bay. Screaming in agony, he felt the dragon's acidic saliva burning his flesh as he fought against the overwhelming force, inching closer and closer to the creature's maw.

"Gods, help me!" he cried out in despair. "Aid Dorak the brave, deliver me from the jaws of this demon!"

Alone in the darkness, tormented by the acidic burns, he felt his strength wane. Fear enveloped him, and he found himself helpless against the monstrous power of the creature. But in a moment of desperation, he glimpsed an opportunity. Thrusting his hand into the hole in the dragon's neck, he grasped what seemed like liquid fire, enduring searing pain. Yet, it was the monster that suffered more. With all his might, he pulled and squeezed, feeling as if he were tugging on infernal ropes from the depths of hell. Finally, his grip was released. The dragon's tongue was torn out, coiling around his forearm like a fiery whip. The beast roared, its unnatural weight bearing down upon Dorak. With his last ounce of strength, he slid beneath the scaly skin, rising to his feet. Across from him, Diza gazed upon him once again, her admiration unchanged. Never had Dorak experienced such excruciating pain. His skin was scorched, one hand nearly melted, and the smell of his singed hair filled his senses. One eye struggled to see, but with the other, he beheld a gleam within the mountain of gold before him.

Drenching his bloodied fist into the treasure, he began to search for the gold. Amidst his ramblings, his words emerged unclear, lost in the agony that resounded in his own ears and Diza's.

"I told you... woman, I am loved by... Gods."

He clasped a stone, smooth as crystal, radiating with a sunlit glow. A smile graced his lips as a wave of new pain coursed through his body. Deeply moved, he gazed upon the flawless stone before him, a sight more enchanting than all the earthly jewels, more captivating than the loveliest maidens of Vitallia, more precious than any magical artifact in Rose. Endlessly, he studied its perfect clarity, a reflection as clear as a mirror.

"I told you, Diza. The gods favor me! Did you witness my triumph over the beast? I, Dorak the Cruel, the Barbarian of the North, who conquered the dragon's island where no one else could! Can you hear me?" His gaze delved deeper into the stone's depths, where his disfigured face, marred by burns and wounds, gradually emerged. And as he watched, Diza's face drew nearer to his own.

"I hear you, mighty Dorak," she whispered into his ear, her breath warmer than that of the dragon. Suddenly, he felt a sharp, piercing pain, and as he bent forward, he caught sight of the knife's tip penetrating his abdomen.

Diza swiftly withdrew the knife, and Dorak's body collapsed to his knees, his gaze fixed upon her before he fell backward onto the ground. Her flawless silhouette gradually blurred, the angles fading away, while the torchlight diminished, conceding ground to the encroaching darkness. He wanted to utter something, but the words eluded him, stifled by the fluids in his throat.

"Go now to the gods, barbarian, who hold you in such favor," she uttered with those final words. Diza claimed the stone, turned her back to him, and departed from the chamber.

**END**

## **About the Author**

Angelos Kyprianos was born in 1985 and grew up on the island of Spetses. He is a writer of fantasy books, a musician, and a creator of role-playing and fantasy games.

### **Bibliography:**

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- 21 seagulls
- Daughter of the sea

- The Portal & the Island

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