

Collected Writings of The Iliac Bay

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Biographies and history

A history of Daggerfall

By Odiva Gallwood



HERE is sufficient archaeological evidence for the modern historian to believe that there has been some variety of human settlement in the city-state of Daggerfall starting at least a thousand years before recorded history. The first use of the name Daggerfall to refer to the area around the current capitol was most probably in the 246th year of the 1st Era. The north half of the Iliac Bay, in fact all of the current province of High Rock, was conquered by invading Nords who brought a rough sort of civilization with them. One of the first civilized acts the Nords performed was a census – the so-called Book of Life. Listed on page 933 of the Book is this entry:

“North of the Highest bluffs, south of the moors, west of the hills, and east of the sea is called DAGGERFALL. 110 men, 93 women, 13 children under 8 years of age, 58 cows, 7 bulls, 63

chickens, 11 cocks, 38 hogs live here.”

Nearly four thousand years after this census was taken, we can see that these two hundred and sixteen people have multiplied heartily. The last census, in the year 3E 401, lists the population at over 110,000. It is always difficult to find an exact number, but the capitol city of Daggerfall certainly outnumbers her rivals, Sentinel and Wayrest.

It has been a consistent, if not actually helpful amusement of historians to find the origin of placenames. Daggerfall, by tradition, is said to refer to the knife the first chieftain threw to form the borders of his lands. But there are other legends that may have equal validity.

The Daggerfall entry from the Book of Life actually supports one theory about the reason for Daggerfall’s longevity. The people were coastal fishermen, but they also found the land itself sufficiently rich to support raising livestock. This inclination of the early citizenry toward reinforcing their principal products brought stability to a fickle land.

Daggerfall thrived during the years of the Skyrim occupancy. When the Wild Hunt killed King Borgas of Winterhold in 1E 369, the northlands engaged in the War of Succession and Skyrim, greatly weakened, lost her holdings in High Rock and Morrowind. The Iliac Bay had become important strategically, and Daggerfall began to expand her military.

There were multiple opportunities for her to exercise this army and navy during the Direnni conflicts with the force of the Alessian Reform. The Dirennis were native Bretons, and Bretons are hardly ever given to excessive religion. Daggerfall

became a minor base of operations for the Dirennis and their allies. Raven Direnni, the enchantress whose magic helped secure the final victory over the Alessians in the Glenumbria Moors, was one of the earliest occupants of Castle Daggerfall.

Over the centuries that followed, the Dirennis felt into obscurity, but Daggerfall continued her growth. In 1E 609, King Thagore of Daggerfall defeated the army of Glenpoint and became the preeminent economic, cultural, and military force in southern High Rock. A position the kingdom has precariously kept ever since.

Ironically, it was another successful military exercise three hundred and seventy years later that ended Daggerfall's monopoly of Bay trade: the annihilation of the orcish capitol Orsinium by a joint effort of Daggerfall, the new kingdom of Sentinel, and the now extinct Order of Diagna. The scattering of the orcs from southeastern High Rock made the river route to the Bay more accessible. The tiny village of Wayrest grew like a flower that no longer feared the mow. In twenty years, Wayrest's trade profits equalled Daggerfall's. In forty years, Wayrest was the acknowledged master of Iliac Bay trade. In one hundred and twenty years, Wayrest became the Kingdom of Wayrest.

The Kingdom of Sentinel did not exhibit Wayrest's aggrandizement during the First Era. The Redguards were warriors learning the ways of the merchants, and their land was enemy enough to keep their population checked. Indeed, the number of people in all areas of the Iliac Bay was halved once in the First Era by the Thrassian Plague, once again by the War of Righteousness, and a third time by the invading Akavari. If

Daggerfall had not spent its first thousand years preparing for the battles of the next thousand years, it is indeed conceivable that the Iliac Bay today might be Akavarian.

The Second Era, like the latter part of the First Era, is a tapestry of wars, insurrections, and plagues. Daggerfall, Sentinel, and Wayrest continued to expand and improve their military and economic positions in the Bay. Daggerfall and Wayrest would transpose positions as major trading center of the Bay, and Daggerfall and Sentinel likewise bandied over which was the superior military power.

The Iliac Bay has continued to hold an important position in the Imperial government of the Third Era. Rarely allies (though the combined armies in opposition to the Camoran Usurper in the 3rd century of the 3rd Era is a notable exception), but not always enemies, Daggerfall, Sentinel, and Wayrest have weathered the storms of contention, plague, famine, and pestilence. The recent War of Betony was typical of Iliac Bay warfare: sincere, frighteningly violent, and peaceably resolved.

Divad the Singer

By Destri Mclarg



IVAD The Singer is in one body, two unique and distinct people. Divad is the most well known of the Redguard heroes. Frandar Hunding's son, probably the most accomplished Ansei who ever lived. Yet early in his life, Divad appeared to thoroughly have rejected

The Way of the Sword.

Divad was the only son of Frandar Hunding, and was born late in Hunding's life (2396 in the old way of reckoning, probably about 1E 760 by the Tamrielic calendar), when he was away most of the time fighting the last of his duels and engaging in the many battles and insurrections of the period. At eleven, Divad entered the Hall of the Virtues of War and began training, but at 16, he finally let his anger at growing up essentially fatherless get the better of him. Divad broke his swords and left the Hall to become an acrobat in a traveling circus.

The life in the circus was unsatisfying to Divad, and after two years, his innate artisan heritage drove him to become a musician and finally a Bard. For two more years he traveled, singing in the cities of the empire – gaining no small amount of fame and recognition for his stirring and popular songs and music.

Although Divad had publicly forsaken the Way of the sword, it would appear that he continued to practice the compulsory forms of training he was taught in the Hall. He carried no sword, but in the late evening, bright lights could be often be seen in his tent (my source says nothing more about this, but it may be assumed that the writer was suggesting that Divad was practicing the form of the Way known as Shehai Shen She Ru – the Way of the Spirit Sword, or simply the Shehai).

Divad was very popular with the people of the empire, and his music and concerts were well attended. Still he could not escape his heritage of the sword. When the Last Emperor ascended to power and began to persecute the sword-singers, Divad was among the first to attract his attention.

Once the Emperor Hira and his consort decided to go to war with the Singers for control of the empire, he moved swiftly against those Singers who were visibly a part of empire society. Most he had killed, but Divad's music and fame were so wide spread that he sent a team of his personal guards to arrest him.

The Emperor's men were either very lucky or very unlucky depending on how you choose to view it. Being no fool, Hira sent 100 of his best guards, for even an unarmed Singer was a very dangerous foe. The luck was that they were able to capture

Divad and place him in chains, for they came at him as he sat dining with his elderly mother. The disaster was that as he surrendered, they rashly struck the pleading old woman. Too hard, it would seem, for she fell dead with that single blow.

That single thoughtless deed, as is often the case in war, was the one pivotal factor causing their eventual defeat. That act ignited in Divad the spirit of the Way. Up until that careless stroke, Divad was an ordinary artisan, no, an artist, a great artist, but no warrior.

The moment of her death, Divad rose from his seat, took his chains between his two hands and began swinging the heavy chain in a deadly arc. He slew four of the guards, gaining enough space to run and dive through the window and into the river. He disappeared into the night.

From that point, Divad was spotted many times and told of in many more rumors all across the empire – far more places than a mere mortal man could have ever been. At every point where Hira's men gathered to do mischief, the resistance was attributed to Divad.

As Hira moved against the Singers and began forming his army to invade High Desert, it was Divad who carried the news to the Singers. Divad was among those who climbed Hattu to find Hunding in his cave. What is not well known is that Hunding, at first refused to take leadership of the Singers. The first attempt to interrupt him at his death poem caused him to drive the elders from his cave, he even formed the Shehai in his anger. It was Divad who reentered the cave alone to speak with Hunding. To this day, no one knows what was said,

what happened in that cave. Scribes of the time reported bright flashes of light and angry voices. Five long hours came and went, then both emerged from the cave, Divad, at Hunding's side. The rest, as they say, is history ...

Divad, who had not completed training in the Hall of the Virtues of War, became an adviser to Hunding and spent his time reading the newly completed Book of Circles, but his role in the Hammer and Anvil strategy was as a simple sword-singer and fighter. It was not till the Singers fled their native empire and landed In New Land that his story truly begins.

Notes for Redguard history

By Destri Melarg



BIOGRAPHICAL Note: Destri Melarg was a well-known historian and translator of old Redguard verse, born as simply Destri in the city-state of Rihad in the 20th year of the 3rd Era. At the age of nineteen, he went to the Imperial City to study. There were few Redguards who had been to the Imperial Province at the time, and it may be that he took the last name Melarg in order to assimilate with the Breton, Nordic, and Dark Elf cultures he encountered there.

When he died ninety-four years later, he left numerous unfinished histories and untranslated verse. Very few of this fragmented work has found its way out of collections. What follows is an unmailed letter to Melarg's publishers in the Imperial City. The insights into the man who put the oral traditions of the Redguards to paper impressed me enough to seek its publication.

Melius, it should be noted, was Melius Kane, Melarg's publisher in the Imperial City.

—Vune,
Redguard First Scholar
Imperial University

Melius,

This is the outline of my final chapter for the series on Hammerfell heroes. I condensed Dendle's storytelling. I have my notes, but the story gets long with all the quotes. She puts a lot of dialog in her storytelling. I am amazed that the old stories about the 5 swords keeps cropping up. It's been a thousand years since Hellion's time, yet people continue to believe in the stories.

The wagon master sat with me after listening to her story and smoked a pipe with me. In discussing the story, he said that his storyteller used to say that one of the five swords survived the closing of the Goblin gate, and is yet hidden here in Hammerfell. It was the least of the five, but the story has it that it exceeds and modern blade magical or ebony by several orders of magnitude.

Of course I take this with a grain of salt, since a ebony weapon is unparalleled in its keen cutting ability and personally I can't imagine a weapon doing more damage than a Claymore of Firestorm or a Saber of Life Steal. Dendle even believes that out in the countryside outside of Skaven in one of the Halls of the Virtues of War, there are still people who follow the old ways and can from a Shehai or spirit sword.

In collecting these stories, I once thought I was seeing a Shehai being formed, by an old Hall master, but the thing, if it was a spirit sword was so faint that even the sword shape was questionable. I didn't want to insult the old man so I claimed I saw it too. But if that was a Shehai, I can't imagine it possibly used as a real weapon.

Here's my outline of the new story:

At the time of this story, Hammerfell is fully occupied by Redguards. All the old cities of the Dwarves (but one - the Ghost City of Dwarfhome) are now the cities of today's modern Hammerfell. A second invasion of the giant goblins comes. Hammerfell is unprepared, except for a few faithful followers, all youths in the rural Halls of Virtue.

Hallin, being the only Ansei, rallies the armies of Hammerfell. After a defeat, he brings back the old ways by telling each warrior to read the Book of Circles. The army fights the Goblins to a standstill, but things look bleak, just as in Divad's song. Somehow the goblins keep being resupplied both with arms and troops. Eventually the Army of Hammerfell will lose.

The old master of Hallin's Hall of the Virtues of War has an ancient copy of Divad's will and testament, and reads it to Hallin. It tells him that the 5 swords aren't lost, just hidden and well guarded in 5 caves. Each cave is home to a master guardian, one of the old blind Ansei – and also a maze.

According to the will, Derik must, along with a virtuous companion of pure heart enter the cave, defeat each Ansei Master and retrieve their sword.

Dendle went into great detail here. It seems that each Master

had an outstanding trait – one Katrice, possessed feline grace, and had become very catlike; another, who had icy calm was something much like an Ice Golem.

On each blade is inscribed part of an intricate message on how to use the power of the swords combined. Derik scours the rural Halls for Brothers of the Blade and Maidens of the Spirit Sword to accompany him in the quests. He finally one by one finds his companions, and wins each sword.

They learn from the blades and together wield the force of the 5 swords to seal the rent in space time that the Goblins have made and from which springs their invasion. Hallin's companions avoided blinding by the magic swords by hurling the swords together into the void, and sealing forever the giant Goblins in the void between their world and ours.

The land is saved and Hallin and his companions (3 women and 2 men) become Ansei and restore the teachings of Frandar Hunding to Hammerfell.

That's the story in brief. I welcome any comments from you or one of the other editors.

One other concern of mine. I understand that you are considering using a better known writer, Uthilla Abuhk or Casmyr Kreestrom, to write the stories I've researched. I can understand that a better known writer may mean that a few more copies of the books will be sold, but that should not be your only concern. Abuhk and Kreestrom, while fine writers and poets, will need to be lectured on the true history of the Redguards. Even if you are willing to pay me to do that, you will have to acknowledge that the books will take longer to write than if you just allowed

me to do it. Just something to consider when you make the decision.

I hope this letter finds you, your consort, and children to good health and humor.

Redguards, history and heroes

By Destri McLarg



RANDAR Hunding was born in 2356 in the old way of reckoning, in our beloved deserts of the old land. The traditional rule of emperors had been overthrown in 2012, and although each successive emperor remained the figurehead of the empire, his powers were very much reduced. Since that time, our people saw 300 years of almost continuous civil war between the provincial lords, warrior monks and brigands, all fighting each other for land and power. Our people once were artisans, poets, and scholars, but the ever evolving strife made the way the sword inevitable - the song of the blade through the air, through flesh and bone, its ring against armor: an answer to our prayers.

In the time of Lord Frandar the first Warrior Prince, lords called Yokeda built huge stone castles to protect themselves and their lands, and castle towns outside the walls begin to grow up.

In 2245, however, Mansel Sesnit came to the fore. He became the Elden Yokeda, or military dictator, and for eight years succeeded in gaining control of almost the whole empire. When Sesnit was assassinated in 2253, a commoner took over the government. Randic Torn continued the work of unifying the Empire which Sesnit had begun, ruthlessly putting down any traces of insurrection. He revived the old gulf between the warriors - the sword singers - and the commoners by introducing restrictions on the wearing of swords. "Torn's Sword-hunt", as it was known, meant that only the singers were allowed to wear swords, which distinguished them from the rest of the population.

Although Torn did much to settle the empire into its pre-strife ways, by the time of his death in 2373 internal disturbances still had not been completely eliminated. Upon his death, civil war broke out in earnest; war that made the prior 300 year turmoil pale in comparison. It was in this period that Frandar Hunding grew up.

Hunding belonged to the sword-singers. This element of empire society grew from the desert artisans and was initially recruited from the young sons and daughters of the high families. They built the first temple to the unknown gods of War and build a training hall "The Hall of the Virtues of War". Within a few generations the way of the sword - the song of the blade - had become their life. The people of the blade kept their poetry and artisanship in building beautiful swords woven with magic and powers from the unknown gods. The greatest among them became known as Ansei or "Saints of the Sword". Each of these began their own training schools teaching their individual way

of the sword. Those Ansei of the highest virtue wandered the country side engaging in battle, righting wrongs, and seeking to end the strife.

To sum it up. Hunding, was a sword-singer, a master, no, a Master Ansei at a time when the peak of the strife was reborn out of the chaos of Torn's death. Many singers put up their swords and became artists, for the pull of the artisan heritage was strong; but others, like Hunding pursued the ideal of the warrior searching for enlightenment through the perilous paths of the Sword. Duels of revenge and tests of skill were common place, and fencing schools multiplied.

Frandar do Hunding Hel Ansei No Shira, or as he is commonly known Frandar Hunding, was born in the far desert marches in the province of High Desert. Hunding is the name of the High Desert region near where he was born. No Shira means noble person or person of noble birth and Hel Ansei is his title of Sword Sainthood.

Hunding's ancestors reach back to the beginning of recorded time in the high desert and were artisans and mystics, his grandfather was a retainer of the Elden Yokeda, Mansel Sesnit, and led many of the battles of unification prior to Sesnit's assassination.

When he was 14, Hunding's father died in the one of the many insurrections, and he was left to support his mother and four brothers. His prowess with the sword however, made his life both difficult and easy. Easy in that his services came in great demand as a guardian and escort. Hard in that his reputation preceded him, and many awaited their turn to face him in battle

and gain instant fame through his defeat.

By the time Hunding was 30 he had fought and won more than 90 duels killing all his opponents. He became virtually invincible with the sword, gaining such skill and mastery that he finally stopped using the real swords created through the artisanship of his people and began using the Shehai or “way of the spirit sword”.

All sword singers learn through their intense training and devotion to the gods of war and way of the sword, the forms of discipline that allow the creation of the spirit sword. This is a simple form of magic or mind mastery where by a image of a sword is formed from pure thought. The sword singer forms the sword by concentrating, and it takes shape in his hand - usually a pale thing of light, misty and insubstantial, a thing of beauty perhaps, a symbol of devotion to the Way and the gods, but no weapon. However, those Ansei of the highest level and sensitivity and those with talent in magic, can at times of stress, form a spirit sword, the Shehai which is far more than light and air - it is an unstoppable weapon of great might, a weapon which can never be taken from the owner without also taking his mind.

The Shehai became Hunding’s weapon, and with this he slew bands of brigands and wandering monsters than infested the land. Finally upon finishing his 90th duel, defeating the evil Lord Janic and his seven lich followers, he was satisfied that he was indeed invincible. Hunding then turned to formulating his philosophy of “the Way of the Sword”. He wrote his Learnings down in the BOOK OF CIRCLES while living as a hermit in a

cave in the mountains of high desert in his sixtieth year.

In that year Hunding having enlisted in the many battles of the empire, defeating all opponents, had thought himself ready for death and retired to his cave to capture his strategy and mystical visions to share with other Sword Singers. It was after his completion of the scroll of the Circle that the Singers found him composing his death poem and preparing to join the gods of war in final rest.

At sixty he was a vigorous man, who thought himself through with life, but his people, the sword-singers needed him. They needed him as never before.

Torn's Sword Hunt, had separated the Singers from the common people, and the rise of the Last Emperor began the last great strife of the desert empire. The Emperor and his consort Elisa's final effort to wrest control of the empire from the people by destroying the sword-singers. Hira vowed to search out every Singer with his Brigand army composed of Orcs and castoffs of the wars of the empire, and to scourge them from the face of the planet.

The Sword Singers were never a numerous people. The harsh desert kept the births few, and growing up in the unforgiving wastes eliminated all but those of iron spirit and will. Thus the final strife which became known as the "War of the Singers" found the people of the sword unprepared and unready to join together their individually great skills into an army that could defend their homes and lives.

Frandar Hunding was sought out, his death poem interrupted, and unceremoniously command of the singers was thrust

upon him. To the unknown gods of war great thanks is owed that Hunding had the time in his cave to write down his years of accumulated wisdom, of strategy, of the way of the Shehai. The singers fled from their camps up into the desert hills and mountains. Fled to the foot of Hattu “the father of Mountains” where Hunding had gone to write in peace and to die, and there these remnants formed into the Army of the Circle - they learned Hunding’s Way, his strategies his tactics, and the final great vision for a master stroke.

Hunding devised a plan of seven battles leading the Armies of Hira further and further into the wilderness to the foot of Hattu, where the final battle could be fought. Hunding called his plan the “Hammer and the Anvil”. With each battle Hunding’s Singers would further learn his strategies and tactics, grow strong in the use of the Shehai, and be ready to defeat their opponents in the seventh battle. And thus it was, the six first battles were waged, each neither victory or defeat, each leading to the next. The larger armies of Hira following the small army of Hunding. Outnumbered thirty to one, the singers never faltered from the Way. The stage was set, Hira and his Army maneuvered to the base of Hattu Mountain, where the hammer blow was delivered. The battle was pitched, and many singers fell that day. Hunding knew, that the singers who lived would be few, but Hira and his empire of evil would not live and so it went.

At the end Hunding and less than twenty thousand Singers survived the day, but no army of evil was left to pillage and murder, more than three hundred thousand fell that day on

Hattu. Of those who were left to run and live, all were scattered to the four winds, and organized force no more.

The singers packed their lives, folded their tents, mourned their dead, and followed Hunding to the great port city of Arch, in the province of Seawind. There Hunding had a flotilla of ships waiting. The Singers left their desert for a new land. No longer welcome in the desert empire, they left to be sung about and spoken of in legend. The final great warrior, the singers of Shehai, the Book of Circles, all leaving that land where their virtue was unappreciated. Red, red with blood they were in the eyes of the gentle citizenry, never mind that they had saved them from a great evil.

The singers vowed to learn new ways as they traveled across the great ocean to their new land. To adopt a new name, but to honor the past. In honor of their final battle, they named their new land Hammerfell and adopted the name Redguards.

In honor to Hunding the great warrior prince, each household in Hammerfell has a place by the hearth an alcove really, just a niche, big enough to hold the scroll - The Book of Circles.

The Fall of the Usuper

By Palaux Illthre



HE people of Dwynnen celebrate Othroktide every 5th of Suns Dawn, the date when, according to legend, a man emerged from the wilderness of High Rock and defeated the undead of Castle Wightmoor to become the first Baron of Dwynnen. Few people believe the legend anymore, but there most certainly was a Baron Othrok of Dwynnen who was destined to become one of true heroes of High Rock, if not all Tamriel.

The legend, as most any Dwynnen child will tell you, is that years and years ago (archivists have agreed to the year 3E253), the people of Dwynnen were ruled by a lich and its armies of zombies, ghosts, vampires, and skeletons. Othrok was blessed with by gods and given an army of men and animals to destroy the dead. He brought peace and prosperity to the land, growing more powerful as the land improved. Years later, he led the tiny

barony against the Camoran Usurper, and saved all of Tamriel.

How much credit the Baron ought to receive for the defeat of the Camoran Usurper has been debated, but it is an uncontested fact that in the year 3E 267, the Camoran Usurper's relentless move north through High Rock was halted around the area of contemporary Dwynnen. Dwynnen is actually larger than it was in the first Baron's day – it did not, in fact, have a sea port – but the Battle of Firewaves was a coastal battle. The fact that the battle probably did not occur in Dwynnen does not in itself belittle the Baron's participation in it.

The Camoran Usurper had conquered Hammerfell and Valenwood by means of a large army, which by legend consisted entirely of undead and daedra, but was mostly composed of Redguards and Wood Elves. In all probability, the Usurper summoned the daedra and undead in Arenthia and slowly replaced the original summoned creatures with the armies of his conquered territories. Most armies of Valenwood have been historically mercenary.

Word of the Usurper's conquests reached High Rock in early 266, but preparations to repel the invasion did not begin until early the following year. Historians attribute two factors to High Rock's hesitancy. The primary powers of the Bay were ruled by particularly inept monarchs – Wayrest and Sentinel both had kings in their minority, and Daggerfall was torn by contention between Helena and her cousin Jilathe. The Lord of Reich Gradkeep (now Anticlere) was deathly ill through 266 and finally died at the end of the year. There were, in short, no leaders to unite the province against the Usurper. Of the

leaders with any influence, at least eight (the “Eight Traitors” of legend) made secret allegiances with the Usurper to protect their lands.

The secondary reason for the lethargy of High Rock had to do with the depth of relations between the province and the Septim Empire. For the first time since the beginning of the Dynasty, an Emperor ruled Tamriel who was neither Breton nor had spent any of his childhood in High Rock. The difference between Cephorus II and his cousin Uriel IV who preceded him was appalling to the people of High Rock. Even mad Emperors like Pelagius III revered the Bretons over all other races, and cousins and younger siblings of the Emperors have ruled in High Rock since the foundation of the Empire. Cephorus was a Nord, with Skyrim and Morrowind sympathies. The attitude of the common men of High Rock was sympathetic toward the Camoran Usurper as an archfoe of this hated Emperor.

The Baron and his less legendary allies, the rulers of Ykalon, Phrygia, and Kambria, changed this favorable perception. News of the Usurper’s barbaric treatment of captives and abuse of conquered lands, mostly true, spread rapidly through their territories, and then to other neutral lands. Within a few months, the greatest navy ever combined organized along the High Rock edge of the Iliac Bay. Only the navy of Uriel V’s illfated invasion of Akavir was comparable.

How the combined forces of High Rock defeated the endless army of the Camoran Usurper is certainly worthy of a lengthy book in itself. And perhaps, it is best left to the public imagination. Certainly the weather worked against the Usurper, which

is reason in itself to attribute divine intervention.

Baron Othrok's divine purpose is the central theme to Othroktide, after all. And as the poet Braeloque wrote, "To find the facts, the wisest always look first to the fiction."

The Memory Stone

By Makela Lekí



FROM The Memory Stone of Makela Lekí: This is a faithful reproduction of the thoughts recorded in Makela Lekí's memory stone, found in the Bankorai pass, in the year of reckoning 1E 973. Seven years before the fall of Orsinium due to the combined efforts of the armies of Daggerfall, Sentinel, and the Order of Diagna.

Almost all of this is in the first person, as Makela was unfamiliar with the protocols and scholarly formalities of recording herself into a memory stone. None the less, her heroism and heroic deeds live on, her memories fresh in the stone for all to feel and hear.

...muuu uhh, I wonder if this will really work?

The Mages guild took me for 25,000 gold crowns if it doesn't. Imagine? This stone will record my thoughts? What did they say? Just unwrap it from the silver foil and leather bag and as

soon as it touches my flesh it will begin to record.

Ahhhhh, the pain, I must block it out, no one would want to hold my stone and hear my thoughts if I let it record my pain. Thank the Ebonarm and the training I received in The Hall of the Virtues of War. I CAN block out this pain. Ummm just, ah, there, it's walled off.

Yes I can still see it there just beyond my consciousness lurking like a hungry wolf - a wolf that will soon consume me. I see also my inevitable death from these damned wounds. No potions left, the healing crystal and ring are used up, and me, with not even magic enough to light a candle. Oh but the gods did give me other gifts, the gift of sword singing, the thrill of battle, Frandar Hunding's Book of Circles, THE WAY OF THE SWORD. Ah but then that is my story, I get ahead of myself.

I am Makela Leki a warrior, a sword-singer, a second level Ansei. In my cradle I could form the Shehai, the spirit sword - The mystical blade, mine formed of pure thought serpents intertwined with vines of roses to form the blade, as beautiful as ...

Ah, but I'm about to tell you all about that, to tell you my story, a story of valiant battle, of my loves, of my wars, of. of betrayal and of this last glorious victory. To tell you of how I came to this distant lonely pass me and five companions, to fight these men and monsters to defeat the army that would fall on my people like cowards in the night, but again I get ahead of myself.

I am a simple warrior. I grew up as a Maiden of the Spirit Blade. As early as I can remember I wanted to be a Singer, to

feel the hunger of the blade in my hands, to feel it come alive and take my enemies. I am told our people were artisans and poets long ago in our desert homes. Here in new home now known as Hammerfell, many of us have returned to those ancient ways, but to me there is but ONE WAY. THE WAY of the SWORD.

Ah this is hard to tell. I grew up in my noble family, the only one of three brothers and two sisters that felt the calling, the Song of the Sword. Father understood, for he too had felt the call. He had become a master, and Ansei long before settling down with in our estate to raise a family. At eleven, I entered the Hall of the Virtues of War and joined the Maidens of the Spirit Sword. In my band there were six of us. Daring Julia, solid Patia, big Kati, svelte Cegila, wise Zell, and me - all are gone now, save me, and soon I will join them. ... Join them in the halls of the unknown gods of war.

We drank together, we fought, we wept, we grew in the way of the sword. We joined in our learnings in the Hall with our Brothers of the Blade. Learning from each other, we all sat at the feet of the Hall Master striving to learn the depths of the Shehai - making the spirit blade into a real weapon as Frandar Hunding had. Only a few have the purity of heart and virtue to be able to take the step and learn the mysteries of Ansei. Sword Sainthood.

Somehow, of all the Brothers and the Maidens, I only possessed the unique qualities, the faint but strong enough flicker of magicka to call forth the Shehai. Many times I called it, seldom would it become substantial enough to be a weapon. To be a Ansei of the first level you just need to be able to call it, and

that I could, so I became the first Ansei from our local hall in two generations.

Oh I have so much to tell, so many memories, so many treasures to share with you, my unknown companion. How do I start?

Umhhh, the pain is still out there lurking hungry, slowly consuming what's left of me. I guess I had better tell of the final battle, the one that has left me here, and then if I have the will left tell you of my life, of my love Raliph. Oh what a lad he was. What times we shared ... Ebonarm ... Forgive me, my mind wanders ... Let me go to the Final Battle.

Umm to start, in the middle humm. Yes. We Maidens grew, learned, mastered the Way, and upon completing the Walk-About. To you who are not Singers, this is a wilderness trek emulating the times of Frandar Hunding - where we each wander the country side righting wrongs, defeating monsters, performing quests in the name of virtue. Some of us in our Hall took years to finish. Always there is danger, we six Maidens each returned in our own good time, but many are they who do not live to return from the Walk About.

We returned, each to our own lives, to meet in the hall once a week to tell our stories to the new Maidens and Brothers, and to perform as instructors in the Way of the sword. All was well till the night of the MidYear Festival.

All our people were reveling and ... excuse ... enjoying the repast, but for we six Maidens. It happened that the festival day fell on our day of meeting in the hall, our day of prayer and fasting and honor to the Way of the Sword.

As we met, late into the night, a knocking rang on our door. When I opened, it there was a guardian the Bankorai Pass in the Wrothgarian Mountains, wounded and near death ... He told us of betrayal from the north, an invasion sponsored by the Crystal Tower of High Rock, led by King Joile of Daggerfall – our ally in the war with Orsinium!

Quickly we used up a crystal of healing in restoring him to vitality. We sent him on to the king, while we six grabbed our weapons and armor of power, and as many potions, marks, and crystals and rings as we could carry.

We flew to the pass hoping upon hope that we would not be too late. Our journey was not in vain, for we arrived just at the very point where the last three guardians were overwhelmed by the horde. Into the pass we ran forming the old battle line, six abreast.

Oh did we FIGHT.

The Song of the Sword was a joyous noise slicing through the ranks of evil. We fought for hours. Julia was the first to fall, a cowardly poisoned dagger finding a rent in her armor. Then one by one all fell, save me.

... oh cruel Ebonarm ... Then my beloved sword, the sword of my father, the one with the serpent's crest, fashioned by the master sword smith Singer Tansal broke in my hands. All was lost, our six lives spent in vain. Now, many many of them would pour through the pass. I would be easy prey for them, like a newborn child. I wept in frustration.

Then I remembered the hearth in our home - the book. Frandar Hunding's Book of Circles, the Way of Strategy. I reached

for the Shehai the spirit sword, that which I could never reliably form when I needed it, and behold ... it was alive. Alive with fire. It formed in my hand. Ablaze with power —

Oh I slew mightily, right and left, like a scythe through wheat. All the way to the Lord of the Tower I fought. With one blow I cut his magical armor asunder, one more took his head.

But to do that deed cost me dearly, wounds by the dozen, for although I had magical armor, it was not formed of spirit like my blade, it was not as invincible as my blade or my own spirit, and I was sorely wounded.

With the felling of King Joile, his army crumbled. They fled before my wrath. All ran back through the pass not even pausing to collect their dead and wounded. All who could stand ran for their lives, and I slew all I could reach, but my breath was coming short, and the pain ...

Finally I rested, on this rock where you find me now. I don't know why I chanced to bring this stone along. I bought it on a whim really, with the loot from ... ah well I guess I need to really stop and tell my story in order. I feel able to go on to tell you more ... the eternal night is descending more slowly than I thought.

Not just yet, am I ready to compose my death poem. A little sip of water and ... well I think I will go back and tell you of my life, maybe some details about the battle. And Oh yes. About Raliph and our children, humm where will I start.

... oh ... rrr ...

I am ... a simple warrior ... I grew up as a, a Maiden of the Spirit Blade ... As early ... as early as I can ... remember ...

Songs, Poems and Plays

A Dubious Tale of the Crystal Tower

By Bibenus Geon



HIS story was first told to me when I was a neonate, newly studying in the Crystal Tower of Sumurset. I was admiring the famous animal pens of the Tower when I was approached by an older student. The fellow who told me this tale seemed very trustworthy at first, but, as the reader will soon discover, the tale is very dubious indeed. Of course, I have told it since to other neonates of the Tower in the same spirit.

I offer the following for your august consideration, gentle reader.

Many, many years back, a talented but poor bard was passing through Sumurset, looking for work. He could sing, he could dance, he could act, but no one had any use for his performances. The poor bard was lugubrious, but he still visited the taverns

and palaces, day after day, begging for a chance to showcase his talents.

One day, dejected from more bad luck, he was approached by a tall elf in a long robe. A Magister of the Crystal Tower, in charge of the animal pens. The elf tells the bard of the white ape they made a cell for at the Tower, how it had died en route. There was a royal party from Firsthold visiting who had been promised a glimpse at the rare white ape. The Magister had a costume for the bard if he would deign to act out the part of the ape for the visitors. The bard had promised himself to take the first part that came his way, no matter how minor, so he agreed. The elf promised that the charade would last no longer than a fortnight, when the visitors left.

For the first several days of the masquerade, the bard did nothing more than sit in the back of the pen. He was afraid to move and show the possible imperfections of the ape costume. In time, he became bored and began walking around. He suddenly noticed that the royal party was watching, fascinated. Happy that the ruse was working, he decided to enliven the act.

Soon he had both a performance and a crowd. Instead of dancing a traditional elven jig, he would swing around the cell with every acrobatic trick he knew. Instead of singing a ballad, he would roar a roar he imagined a rare white ape might roar. The crowd loved it. The party outside his cell grew larger and larger every day.

One day, he was performing for the crowd – his finest work to date. He swung himself round and round, roaring and bleating. His hand slipped and he went flying through the bar and into the

cell next door, where a Snow Wolf was in residence. Hackling its back and growling, the Snow Wolf began to inch toward the bard.

Seeing no other way out, the bard screamed, “Help! Help!”

The Snow Wolf whispered, “Shut up or you’ll get us all fired.”

The Bankers Bet

By Robert Lyttumly



It was a perfectly ordinary day at the main office of the Bank of Daggerfall. Normal transactions took place: deposits were deposited, withdrawals were withdrawn, house mortgages were collected, letters of credit were golded. When a teller named Clyton J. Wiffington saw the little old lady approaching him, dragging two large sacks, each nearly as large as her, he changed his mind. It was not to be a perfectly ordinary day at the Bank of Daggerfall after all.

“I would like you to take the thirty million gold pieces I have in these sacks and open me an account,” croaked the little old biddy.

“Certainly, madam,” Wiffington said, eagerly. He counted the gold in the sacks and found that it was thirty million gold exactly.

"One moment, sonny," the little old lady chirruped. "Before I open the account, I would like to meet the man I'm trusting it to. I'd like to talk to the president of the bank."

Wiffington wanted the president to know that he was the teller who had taken the largest single deposit that year, so eagerly sent word to the president's secretary. As it turned out, the president was equally eager to meet such a wealthy woman, so the old lady was brought to his office that very day.

"Pleased to make your acquaintance, milady. I am Gerander P. Baggedon," said the president, Gerander P. Baggedon.

"My name," said the little old lady. "Is Petuva Smuthworthy." That was, in fact, her real name. "Thank you for seeing me. I like to conduct my business in a more personal way."

"I can certainly appreciate that," said Baggedon chucklingly. "It is an appreciable sum of gold. Would it be rude of me to ask how you came by it?"

"Not at all," said Mrs. Smuthworthy.

"How came you by it?" asked Baggedon.

"I'll let you guess," replied Mrs. Smuthworthy, with a trace of unattractive girlish flirtation.

Baggedon was a man of enormous imagination, for a banker. He guessed inheritance and longtime thrift, but Mrs. Smuthworthy coyly shook her head. Perhaps she had sold a large, old mansion? No. In a moment of chumminess, Baggedon asked if the gold came as a result of plunder or thievery. Mrs. Smuthworthy took no offense, but said no. Finally, he admitted defeat.

"I'm a gambler," she said.

"In arena fights?" he asked, interested.

"No, no, dearie. Different things. For example, I'd be willing to wager twenty five thousand gold pieces that at this time tomorrow morning, your testicles will be covered with feathers."

Mr. Baggledon was somewhat taken aback by the old woman's words. Could she be mad? Could she be a witch? He eliminated the latter possibility, for he had a sense for such things. If she were mad, she was still a rich madwoman. And he could use twenty five thousand gold pieces. So he took her wager.

For the next twenty-four hours, Mr. Baggledon obsessed over his testicles. He checked his pants so often that afternoon, his subordinates feared the worse and suggested that he not touch anything and go home for the rest of the afternoon. He spent the night seated, his pants around his ankles, his beady banker's eyes focused on his scrotum. Every time he started to doze off, his vision was filled with images of Mrs. Smethworthy plucking feathers from his balls, cackling.

Mr. Baggledon arrived at the bank late the next day – only moments before Mrs. Smethworthy's arrival. Accompanying her was a lean, bespeckled fellow she introduced as a barrister from the court. Her son, it turned out. Young Mr. Smethworthy always accompanied his mother when there was money involved, she explained.

"Enough banter," she crowed. "Our bet, dearie?"

"My dear, dear madam, I can tell you that your gold will be quite safe at the Bank of Daggerfall. I hope it will not cause you distress to discover that your gold will be safer here than in your own hands. My family jewels are quite, shall we say, featherless.

And you owe me a sum equally twenty five thousand gold.”

Poor Mrs. Smethworthy’s face fell when she heard this. “Are you sure?”

“Quite, madam.”

“Not even one feather?” Her voice suggested doubt. Mr. Baggedon could tell she thought he might be lying.

“Not one, I fear, madam.”

“It’s not that I don’t trust you, Mr. Baggedon, but it is quite a lot of gold. Might I – would you – could I possibly see for myself?”

As he knew he was soon to be a twenty five thousand gold pieces richer, and he was still a bit punchy from lack of sleep, Mr. Baggedon merely smiled and dropped his breeches to the floor. Mrs. Smethworthy examined his testicles very carefully, under, to the left, to the right. At last, she was satisfied that there was not so much as a down feather anywhere in the region. While she was looking under them one last time, Mr. Baggedon heard a thwacking noise across the office. Young Mr. Smethworthy was banging his head against the stone wall.

“What in the Lady’s name is wrong with your son, Mrs. Smethworthy?” he asked.

“Nothing, dear,” she said. “I merely bet him one hundred thousand gold pieces that by this time I would have the president of the Bank of Daggerfall by the balls.”

Fools Ebony

By Fríncheps

Dramatis Personae:

Prologue

The Adventurer, A Dark Elf Rascal

Komon, A Priest of Akatosh

Lheban, Another Priest of Akatosh

Epilogue

Stete, A Priest of Julianos

Raic, Another Priest of Julianos

Shub, A Mage

Shub, A Different Mage of the Same Name

Nephron, A Somewhat Sleazy Merchant

5 Armorers

Ortho

Crunn, Husband of Millie

A Lusty Contessa

Millie, Innkeep and Philosopher
 Gurnsey, Bovine Wench
 Assorted Wenches and Cads of the Taverns
 Soldiers
 Dwarves
 Giants

Act 1



ONCERNING Priests and Nackles As related at length by two Priests of Akatosh to the Adventurer, who at the time was not having an adventure, and had nothing better to do. In which some (probably unwanted) light is shed upon the Priesthood and its members, and upon an old peasant myth of some significance, especially common in High Rock. And in which the mysterious Fools' Ebony appears, that strange material that could bring either drastic cultural change for the many, or just great profit for a few, or death for a bunch, or have no result whatsoever.

Daggerfall and Environs in the Doldrums of the 3rd Era

Early in the month of Frostfall. The Dead Daedra Inn. Enter Prologue

PROLOGUE: Our poor players will try and remember their lines and not trip over our meager set. I beg you, the audience, not to heckle, badger, or throw rotten foodstuffs. You will only make this short play last longer. The Guild of Playwrites, Actors, and Dramatists wish any of you who are sensitive or allergic to rambling dialogue, wooden acting, incomprehensible exposition, or unsatisfying

endings that leave one confused and unhappy to exit the theatre immediately. Your gold will, alas, not be refunded. As a saving grace, this series of vignettes contains gratuitous references to all pleasures of the flesh. You may enjoy it. Ah, here comes our hero, the roguish Dark Elf called the Adventurer. It is time for Prologue to trip merrily away.

Exit Prologue

Enter the ADVENTURER

ADVENTURER: What an odd conversation I just heard between those two mages. It is best not to speak of such matters next to privy hedges.

Enter 2 Priests of Akatosh (LHEBAN, KOMON)

LHEBAN: Mind if we join you, fellow? ... Good, need some company ourselves. I am named Lheban, my fellow priest here is Komon. We both serve Akatosh, all in our own ways, of course ...

ADVENTURER: Make yourselves at home, it's not my bench. But I thought that priests ... didn't go to ... er ... places like this, Inns. I mean ... unless on duty?

LHEBAN: Oh, we're not on duty. Got to regenerate our internal vital energies, so we can go on blessing and curing ...

KOMON: We often come here, hike up our robes, kick up our heels, as it were. Fill up with some bottled energy ...

(Komon snickers)

LHEBAN: Looking for those in need of comfort and blessing, of course ...

KOMON: Oh, yes, Oh yes ... like that young girl outside the other evening ...

(Lheban kicks Komon)

KOMON: ... and anyway our High Priest told us to get lost...

LHEBAN: He means told us to get some air. We've been having

visions, you see...

KOMON: Yes, sort of weird, really ... and we hadn't even been taking any of that ...

(Lheban kicks Komon)

LHEBAN: Both of us been having the same visions - real odd.

ADVENTURER: Do tell, I'm not going anywhere in a hurry.

LHEBAN: Well, we've both been hearing sort of ... words ... for a start. Like 'Sir Nich' or 'Sain Nack' ...

ADVENTURER: You said 'Nick' or 'Nack'? Just a minute ... let me have a swig from your bottle, Brother ... Ah! That's better - high-class stuff you fellows drink! Yes, I recall - some story or old legend about an elf, name of Nuckle, I think - from Morrowind?

LHEBAN: You know, maybe you're on to something there - there is a old legend around these parts, comes from deep in High Rock I think ... hmmm ... Nackles, that's it!

ADVENTURER: Nackles, eh! Seems that several Dark Elves use that name ... particularly the ... more peculiar ones...

KOMON: Yes, I guess that the bad ones are into all that weapons magicka stuff ... very nasty fellows ...

LHEBAN: (to Komon) Komon! This fellow's got pointy ears and red eyes ...

KOMON: Pardon me, friend ... it's sort of dark, and I didn't ... uh ...

ADVENTURER: Oh, that's fine. These are strange times. You know, live and let live - or die - as the case may be. Now ... suppose you tell me about this Nackles myth? Here, let me help you with that bottle ... Ah! Thanks.

LHEBAN: Er ... sure, if you want to put it that way ... Here, have another swig! Sure, we've got the time, and I recall it clearly now.

KOMON: Yes, we've a couple hours 'til that little blonde shows up at her lamp...

(Lheban kicks Komon)

LHEBAN: (to Komon) Quiet! Remember, we had to tell the High Priest her address, so she won't be around for a while!

(to all) Very well, here's the story, best as I can recall it. This is a tale the peasants up in High Rock tell their kids to scare them into being good for a while, I guess. They tell it, let me see ... either on Tales and Tallows, or is it Witches' Festival? – just before the kids are sent out to the barn or pigsty to sleep.

KOMON: Nasty cruel peasants! But then, I'd send them all out to the midden ...

LHEBAN: Really, Komon! Remember, those poor souls need our compassion and blessing, we are their salvation!

KOMON: Now who's in Old High Mucky-Mucks' study?

LHEBAN: Er ... anyway. It goes a bit like this. If the kids have been real good during the year – filched enough in the market, mucked out the stables every day, not gone playing with goblins, left the sheep alone, and so on. If they have been real good, they've nothing to worry about. But if they haven't been real good then there is this nasty, horrid Dark Elf spirit called Nackles. Doesn't look like your typical Dark Elf – thinner, taller. Pasty white face, long as your arm. Walks like his knees and elbows bend the wrong way. Snickers like when you drag your fingernails across slate. Wears a tight black suit (not Khajiit, more like a formal suit with buttons) but too tight and small. He visits the bad girls and –

KOMON: Why are you talking about Old High Mucky again, Lheban?

(Komon hiccoughs) (Lheban kicks Komon)

LHEBAN: You really must excuse Komon here: overwork, you

know. Too many curings and conversions ... Anyway, Old Nasty Nackles is supposed to wander under our Tamriel, in dirty deep dark dwarven tunnels. Everywhere under the lands, if you can believe that! Rides in a rusty squeaky old mine cart, on old mine tracks ...

ADVENTURER: I saw some of those in Fang Lair once, down in Hammerfell a long long while ago ...

KOMON: (to Lheban) What the Sheogorath was he doing in Fang Lair!?

LHEBAN: (to Komon) Hush! If he's who I think he is, you do not want to know! (to all) Um, yes. Well, Nackles gets pulled all around these deep tunnels by goblins – not your usual dirty yellow ones, but nasty black things. Anyway, they pull Nackles round and through these dark tunnels, and then, late at night, he stops below each and every bad child's hovel or house or castle - makes no difference. Then he slides up the drainage pipes ...

KOMON: Creeps up cracks ... crawls through holes ...

LHEBAN: Oozes up oubliettes ...

KOMON: Climbs giggling up garderobes ...

LHEBAN: Right into the kid's place! Then, if the kid's only been sort of bad, Nackles will just mess things up in general, so the kid gets blamed. Make greasy dirty marks everywhere (more than usual, anyway), break some things, steal some things, so on and so forth. Maybe take the sugar sweets, leave some lumps of fools' ebony instead ...

ADVENTURER: Fools' Ebony - what's that? Heard mention of that, oh, a few hours ago ... Some Mages ...

LHEBAN: You did now? Interesting ... Very ... Well, lets talk of that in a bit ... just let me finish this Nackles thing. Where was I – Oh yes ... Now, if the little brat has been real bad – then all the little brat's toys get taken. The copper dagger, the wooden sword,

the little whip, and so on. All the usual favorite kids things.

KOMON: Whips? I like those.

(Komon hiccoughs) (Lheban kicks Komon)

LHEBAN: Now if that little brat has been very, very bad then Nackles grabs the brat. Pops him or her in his dirty great sack. Hauls the sack off down the holes and cracks, down to his rusty old mine cart! And away they go!

KOMON: Hope he leaves some bad little girls behind.

(Lheban kicks Komon)

LHEBAN: Er ... so we can save them, of course, friend ... Well. Sometimes, so I've heard tell, the brat never comes back. No great loss, I guess, peasants just breed another.

KOMON: Know 'bout that, I do, I do ...

(Lheban pinches Komon's nose)

LHEBAN: But, as the story goes round here anyway, often the brat is just put to work, digging out lumps of Fools' Ebony, shoveling dirt, bagging it. Extending the tunnels of the Nackles. After a while, Brat is pushed back up to where it came from. Seems that Brat might think it's spent a year down there, but only a day has passed up top ... Brat comes back real thin and dirty though, covered in black mess ... You know, come to think of it – on the day past Witches' Festival, I've often seen some little brats, scrawny, real dirty black mess on them, looking terrified, too. Parents drag them into Temples to get blessed and cured, if they have the gold. By the Beard of Sheogorath, the wailing and noise! Enough to drive a priest to ... er ... well, never mind ... that's our problem ...

KOMON: Nah ... it's a problem with our suppliers, I tell you ...

(Lheban throws Komon through a screen)

LHEBAN: Anyway, that's the short of it, this Nackles legend up around here. I recall now, it's widespread all over Tamriel ... and

knowing the place, probably more than a grain of truth in the tale, much, much more ...

ADVENTURER: So, I guess some of the ... er, darker Dark Elves sort of identify with this Nackles. Take on the persona, so to say ...

LHEBAN: Yeah, that sort of sums it up, I guess ... though we don't see those types hauling off brats in sacks, now do we?

KOMON: Nah, that's wot we does, girly brats anyway, isn't it not?

(Komon hiccoughs) (Lheban breaks a bottle over Komon's head)
(Komon falls unconscious)

ADVENTURER: That's a very interesting tale, gentlemen. Say, let me repay you with another bottle – what's that you're drinking? Ah, thought so – Innkeep! More holy wine for these holy men!

LHEBAN: A blessing on you for that kind gesture, friend.

ADVENTURER: I thank you, I sure could use one or three ... Anyway, this 'Fools' Ebony', I've heard mutters and murmurs about that of late – mostly eavesdropping ... pardon me ... listening ... to Mages and the like. What's with this stuff? Here, have another swig ... good!

LHEBAN: Well, we're not supposed to tell outsiders ... but then, you seem to know something already. And if you have been hearing Mage gossip ... Why, maybe we can do some business. Profit all round! Well ... for the Akatosh Chantry, of course, and your fee, good Sir.

ADVENTURER: More and more interesting – tell on, I pray you.
(Komon staggers to feet) (Komon hiccoughs)

KOMON: Time for me to go convert that little lamppost girl ... no, no, no – not last night's one, but the blonde ...

(Exit Komon) (Female squeals from offstage)

LHEBAN: Friend, you'll have to excuse Komon. He's a bit ...

you know strange ... Got these ...

ADVENTURER: Oh, that's all right, we've all got our own...

(Exeunt Lheben and the Adventurer) (Enter EPILOGUE)

EPILOGUE: Our apologies for the quality of this drama so far. If those of you still present will wait for a few minutes while our bard plays "Silence Implies Consent," we will change the set for the next act, Part the Twoth. Please don't forget to tip your wench. Do you believe there's such a thing as Fools' Ebony? Maybe we'll find out in Part the Twoth. Or maybe not.

(Flourish) (Exit Epilogue)

End of Part the Oneth, Being Mostly Concerned with The Legend of Nackles.

The healers Tale

By Anonymous



OR over twenty years, I have been a healer at the Temple of Stendarr. As the reader is doubtless aware, we are the only temple in the Iliac Bay that offers wound healing and illness curing for both the faithful and the heathen alike, for Stendarr is the God of Mercy. I have faced people at their most miserable and their most terrified. I have seen brave knights weep and strong peasants scream. I like to think that I've watched the masks drop from faces, and seen people as they truly are.

A healer's job, after all, is more than simply binding wounds and stopping the flows of poison and disease. We are counselors and comforters for those who have given up all hope. Sometimes, it seems like our kind words and sympathy do more for our patients than our spells.

I am reminded of a very sick young man who came to the temple, suffering from a variety of maladies. Once I had given him an examination, I told him the results, careful not to alarm him. I let him decide how he wanted to be told the news.

"I have some good news and some bad news, my child," I said.

"I better hear the bad news first," he said.

"Well," I said, gripping his shoulder in case he should faint. "The bad news is that, unless I am wrong, you will sicken even more over the next day or two. And unless Stendarr choses to be merciful to you, you will pass from this existance. I am sorry, my child."

As soft as the blow was, it stung nonetheless. The boy was, after all, very young. He thought he had his whole life ahead of him. Tears streaming down his face, he asked, "And what is the good news?"

I smiled: "When you came in, did you notice our proselytizer? She was the enchanting, voluptuous blonde in the antechamber by the foyer?"

Color returned to the young man's face. He had noticed her indeed. "Yes?"

"I'm sleeping with her," I said.

If more of the healers of Tamriel would consider their patients' feelings, not just the quickest way to heal them up and get them out, we would have a far, far healthier society. I truly believe that.

A Rude Song

By Anonymous



N the spring of the year
Doth propriety disappear
In the courts and the ports
Of the Bay.
Drinking new beer,
Everybody feels queer

And the Earls and the churls
Go astray.
The bee and the bird
Don't have to tell us a word.
Our bodies for naughties
Are prime.
If you haven't heard,
You can let yourself be lured
For the youth, for things uncouth,
It is time.

Oh, it's lovely to sit in a field, harvested into rows
It's lovelier still to do the same not wearing any clothes.

People of the Bay bless
The flowered court of Wayrest
For showing us the gentle way of sin
The bonny Dark Elf queen
Likes to see and to be seen
With cobblers, thieves,
And tavernkeeps,
And slaves, and fish-er-men.
In the court of Lainlyn,
Right upon the mainland
With sex, the whole place is in a whirl.
The Baroness likes to play
With men who come her way,
While the Baron likes the little boys and girls.

Oh, it's lovely to give your lady a kiss upon her nose
It's lovelier still to do the same not wearing any clothes.

In Daggerfall, they hold a ball
And all of society indulges in a variety
Of scandal, they can handle –
A lot.
The Captain of the Guard
Has to search very hard
For a bean that the Queen Has in her pants.
And the Court Sorceress
Will grant you a wish
To cause the King to fling
About his lance.

Oh, it's lovely to give your love a single perfect rose
It's lovelier still to do the same not wearing any clothes.
Oh, it's lovely to abandon all your cares and fears and woes
It's lovelier still to do the same not wearing any clothes.

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Yes sir, it's lovely not wear any clothes!

The Alikr

By Enric Milnes



might never have gone to the Alik'r Desert had I not met Weltan in a little tavern in Sentinel. Weltan is a Redguard poet whose verse I had read, but only in translation. He chooses to write in the old language of the Redguards, not in Tamrielic. I once asked him why.

"The Tamrielic word for the divinely rich child of rot, silky, pressed sour milk is ... cheese," said Weltan, a huge smile spreading like a tide over his lampblack face. "The Old Redguard word for it is mluo. Tell me, if you were a poet fluent in both languages, which word would you use?"

I am a child of the cities, and I would tell him tales of the noise and corruption, wild nights and energy, culture and decadence. He listened with awed appreciation of the city of my birth: white-marbled Imperial City where all the citizenry are convinced of their importance because of the proximity of the Emperor and the lustration of the streets. They say that a beggar on the boulevards of the Imperial City is a man living in a palace. Over spiced ale, I regaled Weltan

with descriptions of the swarming marketplace of Riverhold; of dark, brooding Mournhold; of the mold-encrusted villas of Lilmoth; the wonderful, dangerous alleys of Helstrom; the stately avenues of grand old Solitude. For all this, he marvelled, inquired, and commented.

"I feel as if I know your home, the Alik'r Desert, from your poems even though I've never been there." I told him.

"Oh, but you don't. No poem can express the Alik'r. It may prepare you for a visit far better than the best guide book can. But if you want to know Tamriel and be a true citizen of the planet, you must go and feel the desert yourself."

It took me a little over a year to break off engagements, save money (my greatest challenge), and leave the urban life for the Alik'r Desert. I brought several books of Weltan's poems as my travel guide.

"A sacred flame rises above the fire, The ghosts of great men and women without names, Cities long dead rise and fall in the flame, The Dioscori Song of Revelation, Bursting walls and deathless rock, Fiery sand that heals and destroys."

These first six lines from my friend's "On the Immortality of Dust" prepared me for my first image of the Alik'r Desert, though they hardly do it justice. My poor pen cannot duplicate the severity, grandeur, ephemera and permanence of the Alik'r.

All the principalities and boundaries the nations have placed on the land dissolve under the moving sand in the desert. I could never tell if I was in Antiphyllos or Bergama, and few of the inhabitants could tell me. For them, and so it came to me, we were simply in the Alik'r. No. We are part of the Alik'r. That is closer to the philosophy of the desert people.

I saw the sacred flame of which Weltan wrote on my first morning in the desert: a vast, red mist that seemed to come from the deep mystery of Tamriel. Long before the noon sun, the mist had disap-

peared. Then I saw the cities of Weltan. The ruins of the Alik'r rise from the sand by one blast of the unbounded wind and are covered by the next. Nothing in the desert lasts, but nothing dies forever.

At daylight, I hid myself in tents, and thought about the central character of the Redguards that would cause them to adopt this savage, eternal land. They are warriors by nature. As a group, there are none better. Nothing for them has worth unless they have struggled for it. No one fought them for the desert, but the Alik'r is a great foe. The battle goes on. It is a war without rancor, a holy war in the sense the phrase should always imply.

By night, I could contemplate the land itself in its relative serenity. But the serenity was superficial. The stones themselves burned with a heat and a light that comes not from the sun, nor the moons Jone and Jode. The power of the stones comes from the beat of the heart of Tamriel itself.

Two years I spent in the Alik'r.

As write this, I am back in Sentinel. We are at war with the kingdom of Daggerfall for the possession of a grass-covered rock that belongs to the water of the Iliac Bay. All my fellow poets, writers, and artists are despondent for the greed and pride that brought these people into battle. It is a low point, a tragedy. In the words of Old Redguard, an ajcea, a spiral down.

Yet, I cannot be sorrowful. In the years I spent in the glories of the Alik'r, I have seen the eternal stones that live on while men go dead. I have found my inner eye in the tractless, formless, changeless and changeable land. Inspiration and hope, like the stones of the desert, are eternal though men be not.

The Arrowshot Woman

By Anonymous



I heard this story on good authority from a good and honest friend, whose friend was witness to the incident. I do truly believe it happened, as fantastical as it may seem.

My friend's friend, Terron, was visiting the Elsweyr citystate of Riverhold during a very hot summer and went to the marketplace there. If you have never been to Riverhold, the marketplace is very crowded, much more than in comparably sized city states. People from the countryside flock to the marketplace daily in their wagons and carriages.

Terron was passing one such carriage, and noticed that the sole occupant was a woman, seated with her eyes closed and her hands behind her head. An odd sight, to be sure, but he assumed she must be sleeping. Terron continued on.

A little while later, after Terron had finished shopping in the marketplace, he passed the same carriage. The same woman was sitting in it. Her eyes were open now, but her hands were still behind her head.

“Are you all right, my lady?” he asked.

“An arrow shot me in my head and I’m holding my brains in,” came the woman’s reply.

Terron did not know what to do. He ran into the marketplace and literally bumped into a healer and his knight companion. They were good people and agreed to help.

The carriage door had to be torn off its hinges, as the lady had locked it and feared to move to unlock it. What they found when they finally could get into the carriage was this: the woman was holding barley dough on the back of her head with her hands.

Apparently, in the heat of the day, a jar of barley dough had exploded with the thwang of an arrowshot and struck the woman in the back of her head. When she reached back to feel what had hit her, she felt the dough and reasoned that she was feeling her brains.

The Epic of the Grey Falcon

By Anido Jhonc, Editor



THE Grey Falcon , a small warship of the Sumurset Isle, Was patrolling deep in the ocean for a pirate That had been looting the coast. The first three weeks out were uneventful. Two hours after sunset, on the 22nd day out of port, The lookout spotted a top of a sail in the moonlight, Just on the horizon. "Sail! To starboard, forward quarter!" The lookout of the Grey Falcon cried. The crew and captain of the Grey Falcon were quickly roused, And stumbled to the deck. "'Tis the ship we're looking for, Captain," said the lookout.

"All hands to battle stations! All archers to their posts," The Captain yelled, "Full ahead!" The two ships closed, And a dark figure stepped out onto the forecastle of the pirate ship. The figure made a gesture with his hands, And a giant ball of fire streaked towards the Grey Falcon. The ball of fire struck the Grey Falcon in her sails, Quickly catching them aflame.

The figure made another gesture. Large bolts of ice streaked out from his hands, And hit the Grey Falcon just above and below the

water line, Gouging large holes in her hull. The Grey Falcon was mortally wounded. The Captain cried, "All hands abandon ship!" As he was cut off by a pirate's arrow shot into his throat.

As the Grey Falcon, aflame and listing badly, plunged into the sea, One of her sailors, Darik Seasplit, Managed avoid the pirate arrows and spells to make his way to a lifeboat, And lowered it into the darkness below. Just as the lifeboat entered the water, a quick grey shape jumped into it. Darik looked, and saw it was Helnor Snarlshane, A Khajiit mercenary assigned to the ship. The two rowed the small boat away, As the Grey Falcon finished her descent into the sea. In the darkness, the Pirate ship missed their small craft. After the two rowed well out of the pirates possible view, They both collapsed from exhaustion.

Early morning the next day, They took an inventory of the lifeboats stores. Normally the lifeboat carries enough food and water To supply seven people for at least ten days.

In place of the food, though, Helnor found a note: "The food in this lifeboat was found to be in violation of Somerset Navy regulation during inspection. In accordance to that article, the food was taken away and destroyed. A replacement may be obtained by redeeming this letter at the Port Supply Office. Signed, Lt. Inspector Windhollow" Helnor read aloud.

Said Darik, to his Khajiit Companion, "We have plenty of water, but we are out of food. I don't know what we're going to do. I suppose we could try fishing, but we have no bait. There's no chance we can make it back to land Before we starve to death - 'twill be over a month in this craft" "Wait, I have an idea" said Helnor, with a gleam in his catlike eye.

Six weeks later, the lifeboat entered the port of Corwich. As it was tethered to the dock, a solitary figure was pulled out, Looking weather beaten and thin. One of the dock workers peered into the life

raft, After the figure was taken away to the port healer for treatment. "Hmm, what's this", a worker said to himself, As he picked up a large bone from the boat, A bone bleached white by the sun.

After the sole survivor of the Grey Falcon recovered from his ordeal, He was taken to the inquest for the death of Darik Seasplit, And placed on a chair before the magistrate. "We here in High Rock have a dim view of cannibalism. You'd better have a good reason for your actions," The inquisitor boomed at Helnor Snarlbane.

"By the Lady, do you?" Helnor stood, and said, "Your Honor, I had no choice. There was no food, and it was at least two months to the closest port. We both decided this was the only way someone would make it" "Well, then , I suppose that is understandable, If somewhat distasteful," the inquisitor said. "You think it was distasteful?," Helnor muttered to himself, "I didn't have any seasoning."

"One final thing, Mr. Snarlbane, How was it decided that you would be the one that would dine on the other? The toss of a coin?" Helnor drew himself up and said, "Your honor, it was very simple. Darik Seasplit was a vegetarian" "Case dismissed!"

Research and Scholarly Journals

A Scholars Guide to Nymphs

By Vondham Barnes



I grew up a scholar, an ascetic devoted to knowledge, with eyes that saw beauty in a fascinating passage in a dusty tome, love in the candle that allowed me to study on starless nights, passion in a well-reasoned argument of a long dead issue. I was a student who never graduated and was never expelled.

Though I am not defending myself, I should further define myself. I am not what you would call a prude. In fact, I can speak of subjects in a detached way that would make the most debauched strumpet in Skyhawk blush with discovered modesty. I wrote an essay the House of Dibella as a scholar should, analysing the cult of beauty and physical relations as one might study crop rotation or the digestive system of an orc. The acquaintances of mine who were inclined to wink and giggle I tolerated, but barely.

With all that said, the reader will understand that when I decided to study the language of the nymphs in order to study their character and culture, it was not a decision I made on account of prurience or

lust. Scholars have historically neglected the nymph as a subject worthy of research, and this neglect I attribute to prejudice. The sages with whom I have spoken on the subject have eloquently and intelligently formed sentences which, boiled down, can be translated as: “Nymphs look like beautiful, naked women who skip along trala-la and like to have indiscriminate sex. What could they have to say that would be of any interest?”

So here I was faced with the most daunting of projects – to study and research a species unstudied is a potentially rewarding challenge. If the subject was unstudied because the scientific community had deemed it beneath interest, a potentially rewarding but decidedly frustrating challenge. If I spent months in serious study of their language and culture and additional time in their company, and discovered nothing more than that the common prejudice is correct, the term “laughing stock” would not do me justice.

So, excited and nervous for reasons unrelated to the notoriously promiscuous behavior of my subjects, I began my studies. I mastered the language, a melodious tongue that sounds like wild elf and faerie but share no vocabulary with them. I studied the lore, and found it to be on the whole, little more than pornography and crude conjecture.

I next had to find a nymph.

From my centralized location in the Imperial City, I found it easy to send word around to several wellknown temples and guilds devoted to study in all the provinces. Not all replies back were serious in nature, but one, from the School of Julianos in Sentinel helped me considerably. To Magister Oitos and his disciples, I here offer my sincere gratitude.

Nymphs are extremely shy creatures, no matter what the more obscene stories will tell you. No one who I’ve spoken with has had one seek him or her out. Thus to speak with a nymph requires energy and patience.

Out of courtesy for her privacy, I will not here give the location of the little grotto off the coast of Hammerfell where I found the nymph. It took three months of patient waiting, leaving presents where I knew the nymph would be, before the nymph stood still at my approach.

I remember I was carrying a bouquet of purple and white tetias, and she looked at them and then at me, and smiled. The effect of her smile was truly magical, I'm convinced. Her body was, of course, perfect; her face lovely and serene; her hair like silk flame. But until she smiled, she was beautiful in the abstract, a perfect statue by a master. The smile made her approachable and, thus, terrifying.

"For you," I said, attempting my first utterance of Nymph to a real nymph.

Her smile grew into a grin which became a giggle and then a laugh. The reader has doubtless heard of the silver laughter of the elves. The nymph's laugh is earthy and spontaneous, and very ... suggestive.

"And what do you want from me in return, mortal?" she asked.

"I am," There is no, I should say, known word in the Nymph language for scholar, "I am a man who likes to learn things. I want to learn things about you."

And I did.

Nymphs are the wisest, most wonderful creatures in Tamriel. My nymph, her name is Ayalea (a poor phonetic transcription of a word that sounds more like a light wind blowing through a small crack in a hollow chamber) and she knows more about the behavior and varieties of the deep woodland creatures than the greatest wood elf scholar I ever met. She taught me of flowers and ghosts and creatures too fast and timid to have ever been seen by man.

Ayalea taught me how to learn for the very first time. How to

open my mind to all of the possibilities of life and how to use that knowledge, not just to hold in my cramped brain like a dragon's horde.

If you ever meet a nymph, speak to her.

* * *

Editor's note: the writer Vondham Barres is no longer a scholar at the Imperial University. He deposited this manuscript and disappeared from the civilized world. His current whereabouts are unknown.

The Faerie

By Szun Triop



FAERIE have been on Tamriel, in all probability, long before recorded history, perhaps since or before the days of the Elder Ones. The tales of their mischief are found in every culture, in most every village, town, and city-states in the Empire. Alternately they are called Faerie, Fey, Illyadi, Sprites, Pixies, and Sylphim, and their natures seem to flit from one story to the next with the same variation. It could almost be said that Faeries are anything unpredictable in nature.

The noted scholar Ahrtabazus studying at the time in the Crystal Tower of Sumurset Isle developed an interesting if controversial theory about Faerie. He organized the Fey variants on a chain, beginning with the glimmering sparks called Pixies or Whilloki by the Redguards at one end and the godlike beings such as Gheateus, Chonus, and Sygria at the other. In the middle are human and semi-human beings generating up to intelligent trees, brooks, rocks, even mountains. All of this was a new and completely original theory and would have prompted enthusiastic, if somewhat skeptical response

had Ahrtabazus not added this footnote: “It may be that elves as a whole are part of this chain, above whilloki and below nephrene. They certainly have similar features and propensities for magicka as the other Faerie.” (Ahrtabazus, “The Faerie Chain” Firsthold, 2E 456)

No elf liked to be put in a hierarchy slightly above whimsical pranksters like the whilloki, and Ahrtabazus was challenged on his assumptions based on very slight coincidences. Nevertheless, with modification, his Fairie Chain theory has gained wider and wider acceptance since its publication.

The hierarchial chain is not, in the strictest sense, an order of command. While Gheateus and Sygria are said to be surrounded by a host of minor Sylphim, faerie on the whole are not followers nor leaders. Their plans and schemes are not governed by a higher purpose, simply by their own whim.

To this most faerie scholars agree. Because it is based on coincidental evidence and supported by auxiliary theories, it may very well be wrong.

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