

Passage

1

An excerpt from *Paknan z-Helzrz*, a novel published a little over a decade ago following a great war. The author explores themes of feminist reclamation in postwar times.

*Yira ensaci Purrés. kai:
t-Zalmi mosac paknan a.
tęlr: a Ota t-pava.*

*tęlr: a Ota t-pava. kai:
t-Zalmi masetrz pakná rat.
Gerraós segi. kai:
Pakná ezzu rat pitóz.
t-Secya pava semrs rat m-rat z-mosat.*

*Yira saci makra. kai:
t-Kiray sec su semrs otr rat.
a Semrs rat t-ensal.
raczr Kirayrs paknan halman u-pava.*

*Purrés segi. kai.
a Anselrs rat. Pavan ratn z-tasisyan z-helns heci.
Gerraós retasaci tasisyan.
tęlr: ezzu rat Rqssatki h-akvan.*

*Gerraós saci makra. kai:
Segi t-kiray sezzr.
Segi t-ensal ezzu rat tevi su m-ratosat m-kiray.*

*Yira vezamsi. kai:
t-Akvan ahkamr raczr; solr: Lar kirayrs raczr.*

Jared approached Clarissa. “Tomorrow you will lose the house, so now you become its family.”

“Then you will tell the family tomorrow I will lose that house,” Bernard replied. “The house is ours. Today, I will tell the family of the loss myself.”

“I have and will never stop searching,” Jared resolved. “I should help you. We’ll search for that long lost house and family.”

“I’ll help you,” Clarissa replied. “My family is in the mountainous city. Bernard crossed through there. It’s how we met, after all.”

“Let’s search for them,” Bernard resolved. “Let’s help each other get there and search for them.”

Jared accepts. “We will journey to the valley and find it.”

The book will go on to become a literary classic. Following the pseudorealist tradition which emerged during the war, the plot is deceptively mundane; the story is told entirely through the conversations between the three characters.

Commentary

2

When I was presented with Willmagnify's torch, I was struck by the inclusion of this scene-setting blurb:

An extract from a Kinvalic mitrâ (book, novel), describing the adventures of the literary hero Kité. In a mythical past, Kité has wandered far and wide. Now in the presence of Nhata and Kahati?, he makes a plea.

I'd never seen something like this before in a relay. Without betraying anything in the passage or taking away from the fun of the game, it set my imagination running, and I knew I had to do something similar for my own torch.

In the **Légatva** lore there's no tradition of literary heros, at least in the epic or biblical sense. I usually explore more contemporary themes like politics, pop culture, and cosmopolitanism. After some brainstorming, I eventually settled on the backdrop being a postwar novel. The two paragraphs bookending the passage above are my attempt to evoke that same excited imagination in you.

The subtle detail I'm most proud of the novel's title, *Paknan z-Helzzr*. The goal was something in the vein of *Atlas Shrugged*—evocative and ear-catching while hiding a deeper meaning. The literal translation is just "The House in the Mountains," but the use of evidence marking implies that the narrator is familiar with the house yet has never seen the mountains that surround it. What that actually means is left open to the reader.

I also changed the character's names. The protagonist became *Yira*, a type of flower. **Légatva** culture doesn't really have gender in the same sense as us, but it could read as a man's name. The other two characters became *Gerraós* and *Purrés*, meaning "strong" and "wise" respectively. They're also foreign names, associated with a militant western culture whose homeland is a famous mountain range.

The text itself is mostly faithful to content of the torch, but shifted in tone to feel more literary classic than literary epic. The biggest change was structural; instead of nine delineated sentences, I opted for a paragraph structure, broken up by speaker, like you'd find in a novel.

The setting is analogous to our 1930s.

Although only the first was included with the torch.

More accurately *Yira* is a name associated with type-A personalities.

I also added a sentence or two to make it more prose.

(1) **Yira ensaci Purrés. kai:**

Yira en - sat - s - i Purrés kai
 NAME in - go - CMN - KN NAME QT
 “Jared approached Clarissa, saying:”

(2) **t-Zalmi mosac paknan a.**

tę = zalmi mosat - s pakna - n a
 to = sun lose - CMN house - KN 2
 “Tomorrow you lose the house...”

(3) **tęlr: a Ota t-pava.**

tęlr a ot - a tę = pava
 thus 2 be - 2 to = family
 “...thus you become it’s family.”

(4) **tęlr: a Ota t-pava. kai:**

tęlr a ot - a tę = pava kai
 thus 2 be - 2 to = family QT
 “Then you will tell the family, saying:”

(5) **t-Zalmi masetrs pakná rat.**

tę = zalmi mosat - rc pakná rat
 to = sun lose - 1.AG house:UN 1
 “Tomorrow I will lose the house.”

(6) **Gerraós segi. kai:**

Gerraós sem - k - i kai
 NAME say - REFL - KN QT
 “Bernard continues, saying:”

(7) **Pakná ezzu rat pitóz.**

pakná ezzu rat pit - óz
 house:UN ASSC 1 be - NTR
 “The house is ours...”

(8) **t-Secya pava semrs rat m-rat z-mosat.**

tɛ = secya pava sem - rc rat im = rat ez = mosat
 to = star family say - 1.AG 1 of = 1 of = lose

“... today I myself will tell my family of the loss.”

(9) **Yira saci makra. kai:**

Yira sat - s - i makra kai
 NAME go - CMN - KN shoulder QT

“Jared resolves, saying:”

(10) **t-Kiray sec su semrs otr rat.**

tɛ = kiray sec su sem - rc ot - r rat
 to = search 3.CMN and say - 1.AG be - 1 1

“I have searched and will search.”

This was a weird sentence to puzzle out. The starting point was realizing that the irrealis and the perfective both use the same preposition, *tɛ*, to introduce the subordinate verb. In theory it’d be easy enough to combine them, except *sem* is transitive and *ot* is not.

The first thought was to just make *sem* reflexive and thus eliminate its need for an object, but *segi tɛ* is already idiomatically used for “let’s”, which might confuse this sentence. The second was to try to concoct a construction where the object of *kiray* is also the object of *sem*, but that seemed like a nightmare. So finally I opted to just use *sem* as normal, but allow a rare PRO-drop.

Valency is pretty rigid, so *sem* can’t omit an object.

Sem is one of a small class of verbs whose reflexive is semantically bleached.

(11) **a Semrs rat t-ensal.**

a sem - rs rat tɛ = ensal
 2 say - 1.AG 1 to = help

“I should help you.”

(12) **raczr Kirayrs paknan halman u-pava.**

rat - zr kiray - rc pakna - n halma - n u = pava
 1 - PL search - 1.AG house - KN far - KN and = family

“We’ll search for the distant house and family.”

(13) **Purrés segi. kai:**

Purrés sem - k - i kai
 NAME say - RFL - KN QT

“Clarissa replies, saying:”

(14) **a Anselrs rat. Pavan ratn z-tasisyan z-helns hatés.**

a ensal - rc rat pava - n rat - n ez = tasisya - n ez = helans het - és
 2 help - 1.AG 1 family - KN 1 - KN in = city - KN in = mountain:KN be - 3.UN

“I’ll help you. My family is in the city in the mountains.”

(15) **Gerraós retasaci tasisyan.**

Gerraós retosat - s - i tasisya - n
 NAME cut - CMN - KN city - KN

“Gerraós crossed that city.”

(16) **tęlr: ezzu rat Rąssatki h-akvan.**

tęlr ezzu rat rąssat - k - i ah = akva - n
 thus ASSC 1 meet - RFL - KN at = valley - KN

“That’s how we all met in the valley.”

(17) **Gerraós saci makra. kai:**

Gerraós sat - s - i makra kai
 NAME go - CMN - KN shoulder QT

“Bernard resolves, saying:”

(18) **Segi t-kiray sezr.**

sem - k - i tę = kiray sec - zr
 say - RFL - KN to = search 3 - PL

“Let’s search for them.”

(19) **Segi t-ensal ezzu rat tevi su m-ratosat m-kiray.**

sem - k - i tę = ensal ezzu rat tevi su im = ratosat im = kiray
 say - RFL - KN to = help ASSC 1 each and of = cut of = search

“Let’s help each other with the cross and the search.”

(20) **Yira vezamsi. kai:**

Yira vezam -s -i kai
 NAME accept -CMN -KN QT

“Kira accepts, saying:”

(21) **t-Akvan ahkamr raczr; solr: Lar kirayrs raczr.**

tə= akva -n ahkam -r rat -zr solr lar kiray -rc rat -zr
 to= valley -KN journey -1 1 -PL and DMY search -1.AG 1 -PL

“We will journey to the valley and find it.”