

THE FALL OF KING MWEFU

The Classic Edition

Translated from the Fobwa language
by Allen G. Pacoitz

WHINERY PRESS

English Translation ©1909 and 1937
by Allen G. Pacoitz.

All rights reserved, no part of this publication may be
duplicated in any form.

First Printing: February, 1909
Second Printing: August, 1934

The Classic Edition:

First Printing: January, 1962

Editorial material ©1962 by Robert Graft

Reluctantly published by
Whinery Press
5422 Violet Drive, Antigo, W.I. 54409

Note from the Editor-in-Chief

Robert Graft, who is the junior editor in charge of editing this work, despises this particular translation; he has very few allies and I hope you're not foolish enough to be one of them. This translation, though it departs from the source, is traditional and a part of our culture in a way that the newer translations never will be (despite their accuracy).

However, Robert Graft's notes are very informative and interesting to say the least.

JOHNATHAN CONCORD,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *Whinery Press*

Foreword by the Editor

The Fall of King Mwefu is a good story; except this translation is not. It may have seemed like a decent enough translation back in 1909 when Allen G. Pacoitz first translated it and he was the only scholar who could even read the language of Fobwa. Nevertheless, many people, who were intrigued by the story, learned to read Fobwa so that they could enjoy *The Fall of King Mwefu* in its original language. And when they did, they realized that Pacoitz was inserting his own ideas and removing important content as if he were a mad man. The only reason this edition even exists is because despite the protest of many Fobwa scholars, Pacoitz's translation is still the most popular translation in schools and in the home.

There are now many more scholars studying the Fobwa language and we now have much better translations; do yourself a favor, drop this book right now and go out and buy *The Fall of King Mwefu: Faithful Edition* from *Whinery Press*, it is true to the original work, and in the opinion of many is a much much better narrative. Actually I don't really even care if you buy it from us at *Whinery Press* or not. As long as it's not translated by Allen G. Pacoitz you should be fine. Note, however, that due to the nature of the Fobwa language (and its total lack of word order) other publishers might call their translations *King Shunwe's Descension* or any number of things. The name Mwefu itself could also be rendered (using the Pacoitz phonology) as Nweshu, Hungwe, or Fumwe; and there are also completely different phonologies out there such as the Joshua phonology where the sounds are scientifically reconstructed from

phrases that are thought to be borrowed from Hebrew; so this is something to look out for in other publishers' translations. In *The Fall of King Mwefu: Faithful Edition* most of the names differ from Pacoitz's because he had absolutely no consistency. Sometimes Pacoitz used the verb form of a name or worse, half the name would be in one form and the other half of it would be in another; sometimes he'd ignore putting the name in all together and substitute it with an unrelated English noun.

If for some reason you actually want to read this edition, for historical purposes or some other nonsense, then by all means read my footnotes where I point out all of Pacoitz's inaccuracies. And whenever I refer to the *original* I'm referring to the original Fobwa text.

ROBERT GRAFT,
EDITOR FOR *Whinery Press*

Maps

Pacoitz'

I don't need to tell you that Pacoitz' map is worthless; there is only two place names written on the whole thing, the terrain is vague and there is only two rivers? I think Pacoitz just made this up, but he didn't even make it up based off of the places described in the text.





Graft's

I grew tired of looking at Pacoitz' map so I made my own using hints from the text. It's more accurate and way more informative, however, I did take some liberties.

Contents

Maps	viii
Pacoitz'	viii
Graft's	x
 Contents	 xi
 1 Prologue	 2
 2 Bamboo Poles	 4
 3 Music	 12
 4 Epiphany	 18
 5 Marred and Pierced	 24
 6 New Managment	 30
 7 Doubt	 36
 8 Pain	 42
 9 The Imposter	 50

10	Regret	56
11	The Monster	66
	Appendices	72
	Appendices	73
A	Fobwa Language	76
A.1	Pronunciation of Fobwa Names	76
A.2	Properties of Fobwa	77
A.3	Basic Lexicon	78
B	Origin of Fobwa Manuscripts	80
C	Robert Graft Finishes the Story	82
D	Robert Graft Takes Liberties With The Text	86
E	Charles Barfoot's Continuation	96
E.1	Conspiracies	97
E.2	Captain Seaweed	100
E.3	The Ring	115
E.4	Barfoot Interrupts Himself	118
E.5	Rushing Wind	125
F	Sarah Foxe's Continuation	128
F.1	The Problems Inherent in Authors	128
F.2	Forest for the Trees	129
F.3	Music's Dark Secret	131
F.4	Words Are Deception	132
F.5	Creativity	133

Chapter 1

Prologue ¹

Others always rose up to oppose me; I wouldn't mind so much if it was just them. For when I count my enemies and find myself in their ranks, I realize what a wretched creature I am. It's possible (though highly improbable) that I could overcome everyone else, but how could I possibly overcome myself since I am my own equal?

...

Finally they had done it; the soldiers captured the armor clad rebel who had for so long defied their illegitimate and greedy rule. The nation called Zinodwo had been raiding the poor country (The country wasn't so poor until after it got raided) of Kaaji for almost a decade. Many heroes had risen up to stop the soldiers of Zinodwo, but this one was the best – this one also just happened to be me.

They led me up the scaffold, I could hardly walk since they had me bound with so many nets and chains.

¹This is Robert Graft, unfortunately, if you read the introduction you would know that I would have to pop up in the footnotes to correct things. I told you not to read this book; but since you are, the first chapter is not really a prologue by any stretch of the imagination; actually this chapter comes from the middle of the original book, but Pacoitz never was very bright and wanted to rearrange everything to make it a frame story. And the first paragraph is not even in the original text, it just comes off as Pacoitz trying to be philosophical.

I knew what was going to happen, they began to tie the noose; I was to be killed like all the heroes before me. But then a soldier removed my helmet.

“My Lord!? He’s our King!” Shouted the soldier in bewilderment. For I was. And now it was clear that the very same person that was giving the orders was also the one thwarting them. But that didn’t make any sense, what would I the king have to gain by losing the war? Surely not money because however much Kaaji was paying me I could get more by simply taking it from them.

“Explain yourself.” Said the king’s second in command. (Pardon my confusing habit of switching point-of-views, as a king this tends to happen: like using *we* in place of *I*) ² I was very much ashamed of what I had done. The crowd consisted mostly of Kaajin ³ with some of my Zinodwan ⁴ soldiers to control them. Despite this, all the people – in unison – began to chant, “Explain!” and kept on screaming until, “If you’ll be quiet I might just let myself explain!” I shouted.

I knew that both sides wanted to kill me; so I began to tell my story.

²Note that in Fobwa, kings do not talk about themselves by using *we* or anything similar, but Pacoitz doesn’t care about historical accuracy as long as he can get a laugh.

³This means people from the country Kaaji which scholars tell me is Fobwa for “weak (soft) place”.

⁴People from Zinodwo, Fobwa for “rare place”.

Chapter 2

Bamboo Poles

As you know, I am Mwefu the king of Zinodwo. My reign began 12 years ago when I was 27 years old. I am now 39 years old and for the past ten years (under my rule) my country has destroyed and robbed this country of Kaaji, killing whoever stood in our way. We knew our conquest was wrong, but we loved the spoils thereof too much.

One day, in the sixth year of our conquest, ¹ a group of 20 of my soldiers robbed a fruit merchant. They brought the merchant before me in my tent.

“Tell me,” said the boy, who was also the merchant, “is it right to rob a citizen of Zinodwo? If it is, then why not do it in your own country?”

“You are from Zinodwo?” we asked.

“Yes.”

“What are you doing here and why haven’t you returned?”

The boy muttered something; he wasn’t nearly as articulate when he didn’t know what he wanted to say. ²

“Well?” I interrupted.

¹In the original the exact date is there, but Pacoitz never bothered to learn to read the Fobwa calendar.

²The original goes on to talk about how he had planned what he was going to say on the way over, and like with all times when you plan what you’re going to say, the other person says something unexpected.

“I was adrift in the flood five years³ ago and I tried to get back. But your guards wouldn’t let me back into Zinodwo because I didn’t have my papers.” responded the boy.

“So you’d like it if I had my soldiers escort you across the border?”

The merchant looked at the ground and fidgeted nervously.

“Well, I have a livelihood here, and I don’t know if my family survived the flood. No offense, but I like this country very much and would like to know I have friends to go back to in Zinodwo before I leave.” said the boy.⁴

“If you give me a list I’ll have some of my soldiers check for your friends and relatives. What is your name?”

“Paavo.” said the merchant as he started writing down his friends and family’s names.

“Paavo, with a name like that you must be pretty timid.⁵”

“I suppose. May I have my money and fruit back now?”

“Well, perhaps, but it has been three months⁶ since I’ve spoken to a Zinodwan who wasn’t my soldier. I’d like to see you again. So I’ll give you back your stuff and more if you come back tomorrow.”

“Thanks. But I just want what was taken, I don’t need *more*.”

³five years and ten months actually.

⁴He was hardly a boy since according to the original, he was 15.

⁵*Paavo* is Fobwa for “weak heart” which figuratively means *lazy*, not *timid* as Pacoitz’s bad translation skills might imply.

⁶Pacoitz actually had this number translated properly, I suppose even he gets lucky.

I felt guilty for stealing Paavo's stuff, never had I felt so bad about what before I had merely considered acquisition of wealth. But now I had robbed one of my own people. So I gave Paa-vo back his possessions and sent him home. It wasn't just I who benefited when we raided Kaji though, it was my whole country, for every bit of treasure I brought back, I only kept one percent of it for myself, the rest got evenly distributed across the country; this made me very popular, and also made me wonder if I'd still be if we ever stopped plundering Kaaji.

Before the day had passed, my men and I had robbed three more merchants and 21 odd homes (They were odd because their number was not divisible by two⁷). It was the first of the month, so we loaded up our horse drawn carts with all of this month's spoils and headed towards the river where we'd meet one of my ships. From there we would load up the ship and the ship would take the loot and distribute it across Zinodwo, making all my people richer.

I took note of the scenery. ⁸ The trees were mostly willow trees, they grow as weeds in the swampy land of Kaaji. Sometimes a lone pine or oak tree would appear, but we'd chop it down so as to keep Kaaji gloomy.

But as we were traveling the path that went through the northern woods, we noticed a figure following us. He was clad head to toe in corroded copper; the blue-green armor was not in the least bit threatening; that is till after he ran towards us.

My guards shot arrows at him, but it was of no avail, the arrows glanced off without slowing him down. In and out of the trees he ran, very quickly for someone in

⁷Of course this pun was not in the original language.

⁸Mwefu is trying to buy time so that he doesn't have to die right away.

what must have been a very very heavy⁹ suit. When he reached the carts, he pulled the pins off the axles on one side of each of the carts. This of course caused the wheels to fall off, tipping the carts over and spreading the jewels and coins all over the mossy ground. My soldiers tried to kill him with swords, but the copper armor was stronger than steel and the blades could not cut or dent it.

Not wielding a sword of his own, the copper man caught a swinging blade in his armored hands. He twisted the sword out of the soldier's hand and struck him with the hilt before throwing the sword into a nearby marsh where it sank to the bottom. He proceeded to do likewise with six others. So, seeing swords were of no use, three of my soldiers tackled the copper clad rebel. He could not win in a simple wrestling match, but he squirmed out from under their grasp and ran back into the deeper part of the woods.

"That," said Twizwa, my second in command,¹⁰ my head soldier, trembling, "was a man we killed last year. He ran our ship aground, so we tied him up and burned him at the stake while he was yet in his armor. Then we removed his ashes and cast the suit into the river."

I understood what that meant, but I didn't want to show fear.

"So what if he's a ghost? If we killed him once, we can kill him again." said I.

We had lost a great deal of time, and the journey would not be able to be completed till the next day, so my men stopped for the night. We picked up the treasure and left it in the carts (which we kept the wheels off of to

⁹The original says 110lbs.

¹⁰Fobwa for "heavy servant". Names in Fobwa are given to you when you're born, (though sometimes they are changed, as it was with Mwefu) so it's most likely that Twizwa was a fat baby.

prevent the pins from being pulled out and toppling the cart again) and I left 30 men to guard it for the night.

I, surrounded by the rest of my guards, went back along the path to our camp and I retired to my tent and slept, but not too well.

...

When the sun rose, I got up and remembered Paavo and the note he had written me. I gave word to one of my messengers to go aboard my treasure ship before it left that day to Zinodwo and go inquire about the list provided by Paavo.

Well it was time for breakfast, so I ate like a king. I had eggs, rhubarb crisp, roasted almonds, and toast with apricot preserves. ¹¹ I was glad that I wasn't like the poor people of Kaaji who could only afford disgusting food such as escargot and grass-fed beef. ¹²

I waited for Paavo to show up; and waited. It was half past noon when I finally considered that perhaps he was not coming. Why should I have regretted taking his possessions if he was just a lazy ¹³ greedy merchant with no respect for the crown?! Truly if anyone deserved my wrath it was — and my doorman entered through the curtain.

"Paavo is here to see you," he said, "shall I let him in?" My anger subsided.

¹¹Yes the "ate like a king" is not in the original, Pacoitz is pitifully trying to be funny again. And not even the most learned Fobwa scholars can figure out what the king ate for breakfast; but they are fairly certain that he didn't have any of the things that Pacoitz claimed he did.

¹²Pacoitz is going for irony here, but none of this is in the original! Pacoitz does not belong translating great works if he is going to behave as if he were the writer!

¹³See *footnote 5*.

“Why yes. Take him that painting of me.¹⁴ Just kidding, let him in.” Paavo entered, eating an apricot¹⁵.

“Would you like some?” he said, wiping the juice off his chin.

“No thank you. It is good for you to be in my presence.” We said.

“What do you mean by that?” asked Paavo.

“Oh, it’s just kingly speech. It means ‘I’m glad to see you.’ ”

“Why do it at all?”

“Because we are the king —”

“You and *I* are the king?”¹⁶

“No, I alone am king, and the king only uses superior (often confusing) speech because he is always right.” Well, at least I wanted to believe that I was always right.

“What about people that disagree with you, you the king?” said Paavo.

“They die of course.”

“Sounds harsh.”

“It’s necessary so that the king can remain in power. By the way, I sent my messenger with the list of names you gave me.”

“Thanks, I appreciate it.”

“Have you ever fought before, Paavo?”

“No, not really.”

I picked up two bamboo poles and tossed one to Paavo. I told him to fight me, but he could not wield the rod very well. I knocked it out of his hands many many times. Whenever I went to strike him, he caught my pole with his hands instead of deflecting it with his pole.

¹⁴Another superfluous joke.

¹⁵According to his biography, Pacoitz was very fond of apricots and tried to find ways to put them in everything he did.

¹⁶Pacoitz and his English-based foolishness again.

“Hold on,” I said, “if these were real swords instead of bamboo poles you would not be able to do that, your hands would be chopped off. You can’t just catch swords in your hands.”

“I know,” replied Paavo, “it’s just the first thing I think of when something is swung at me.”

We tried again, and again; we fought all day and into the night. He was getting better, but he was still bad. At least now he wasn’t catching the bamboo in his bare hands. I won every single time (That doesn’t really reflect much on his inability though since I’m very good with swords).

“Are you coming back tomorrow?” I ¹⁷ asked.

“I don’t know.” said Paavo, “I’ll probably be too bruised and sore in the morning to even get up out of bed.”

So Paa-vo went home (wherever that was). My soldiers arrived back from delivering the spoils to the treasure ship. And I went to bed.

¹⁷I knew one high school English teacher who read this version of the book, and she saw king Mwefu’s lack of using the royal “we” around Paavo as proof that Mwefu feels more like a normal person (and less like a king) around Paavo. But there’s absolutely no evidence in the original that the King feels more normal around Paavo at this point. Even Pacoitz himself admitted that he only translated it that way because it was too confusing when the king used “we” in situations where it could be confused to be something other than the royal “we”. To mistake Pacoitz for a great translator is to deny the truth of his destruction of real literature.

Chapter 3

Music

Nothing of importance happened the next day. Paavo did not come to visit me; likely because he was sore from fighting me all night.

The day after that, however, Paavo arrived for breakfast. He didn't care much for the wine or finer foods, instead he ate apricots. We then practiced fighting again with bamboo poles. I won as always, but he was showing promise.

"Your highness," said Twizwa as he entered my tent, "the time for the raid draws near as a fish eats the bait." Twizwa was a far better poet than anyone in my kingdom.

Some question my choice in putting Twizwa in command of our army since he's really not a very good fighter. When we first became king, ¹ I asked Twizwa when he was just my page, we asked him, "Twizwa, you are wise beyond your years, tell me, who would you put in charge of my military?" and he replied with, "If I were the king, I would search my kingdom for the one whose grasp of language were unparalleled, whose way with words was unmatched."

¹Pacoitz omitted the part of the story where his former head soldier, Bwaa tried to kill king Mwefu and was thus put to death. In fact in the original there was a whole chapter about it, and besides developing Twizwa's character, it made Mwefu's choice to elevate Twizwa much more credible.

The truth is that words are more useful for controlling than might is, and I already am the greatest fighter we've ever faced, so why would I need another great fighter if he's just going to command rather than fight anyway? I don't even see why I was made king, just because I won a tournament? Because I took down the ten best warriors in the country? That's just how the system for the election of kings in Zinodwo works. But we're glad that's how it works because the conveniences and power of being king are most delightful. So if my second in command should be good with words, then who else can speak as Twizwa can?² So I put him in charge of the military.

I sent Paavo home and we went on the raid with Twizwa. We were camped in, and still were taking resources from the village of Vwi in Kaji. We marched through the trees to the west and came to a place where four brick houses were.

We divided into five groups; four to rummage each of the houses, and one to play some triumphant trumpet music. One of the most important parts about being king is having a presence that demands respect. The people were forced out of their homes and the beautiful music made the feat seem glorious. They were about to all be killed, but then I noticed that someone else had joined the band, a flute was echoing the theme that our musicians were playing. It got closer and closer, till the blue-green copper clad figure appeared atop the bluff; he was playing a rather large bamboo flute.

My trumpeters stopped, and I told my soldiers to apprehend the flute player. They shot arrows at him, which of course bounced off his armor. He did not stop playing that flute. He made his way down the cliff, hopping from rock to rock. Then using an arrowhead in his free

²See Appendix A.2

hand, he cut the ropes that held the horses to the cart and scared them off.

“He’s taunting us, isn’t he? He’s like a shrew wrestling a snake.” Said Twizwa.

“Just get the nets and remind the soldiers that even though his armor makes it impossible to cut him, blunt blows should still hurt.” I said to Twizwa.

“You’re assuming he’s made of flesh and blood and all the other necessary organs, and not a ghost.”

Twizwa gave the commands that I told him. The soldiers beat upon the rebel with their swords, ruining their edges in the process; nevertheless it seemed that it was having effect, because he was knocked to the ground. They were about to tackle him when he got up and snatched one of the swinging swords. Lo, and behold, he could wield a sword now. He disarmed and wounded many of them (They weren’t wearing full armor as he was because it would be too heavy to be practical). Meanwhile, the people who we had planned on killing had fled into the woods and no soldier was left to stop them because they were too busy either fighting the rebel or playing music.

Then he too disappeared into the woods. Not one of my soldiers could catch him.³ If I hadn’t believed he was a ghost before, I believed it now, and it filled us all with fear.

A resistance then broke out and the people whose homes we had forced them out of had come back with a militia and they drove us out of there before we could claim any of their gold or silver. I really hated that rebel.

³Pacoitz fails to mention that the soldiers rode horses. But with all the trees and cliffs, and paths which are too narrow for horses to go through, the soldiers were at a disadvantage; and he was far too fast to be apprehended on foot.

Then the most terrifying thought occurred to me; neither the rebel nor Paavo could wield a sword when I first met them, but after I taught Paavo how to fight, the rebel showed fighting skill too. They also caught weapons in their hands. Was this enough grounds to prove they were the same person, that my good friend had betrayed his own country and was fighting for the enemy? No, no, it couldn't be, Paavo was far too frail to be such a warrior.

...

I awoke the next morning to Twizwa giving a speech about the proper way to kill an enemy or something like that.⁴ Forgetting my suspicion that Paavo might be a traitor, I taught Paavo how to wrestle; he learned very quickly and over the course of that week he got very good at it. My soldiers made some raids throughout that week without me, but each time they came back with less and less gold and more stories of the ghost of the copper clad rebel. I was sick of it, but I was too afraid to die in battle against an invincible adversary. But suppose it was Paavo? I needed to go on one last raid to find out.

So we went north towards the river and stole some silver from the people there. But the copper clad rebel ran up like usuall and my soldiers tackled him. For a moment he was on the bottom of a pile of four soldiers, but then I saw him, flip over soldier after soldier till he was at the top of it, twisting arms in a way that prevented any of them from moving. All the soldiers quaked in fear.

⁴In the original, Twizwa's speech is actually about ghosts and about how it might be possible to defeat the copper clad warrior by utilizing various superstitions. It was an amusing and interesting speech, and it is inexcusable for Pacoitz not to put it in. To omit this part leaves out a lot of the original comedy (which was actually funny, unlike Pacoitz's puns).

So now I knew that this rebel was indeed Paavo, using the same techniques I had taught him. I knew he was not a ghost, so I drew my sword. We fought, just me and him, but I was a great swordsman and I disarmed him. Then I sliced the hinges off the breastplate of his armor, leaving his chest exposed with only his yellow shirt to protect him. Then, I stabbed him through the left side of his chest. Piercing where I knew his heart to be. The music my soldiers played was triumphant, but my heart⁵ did not listen and instead played a dirge.

The rebel collapsed and his once quick body became as slow as the dirt. We let him lie there. I knew it was Paavo, I had no need to remove his helmet. I almost regretted killing him since he had been good company. I figured that if anyone found out that the rebel was Paavo I'd look like a fool for befriending the enemy; So we commanded that no one touch the body, under punishment of death. Then I realized that with the body sitting there, anybody (whether they were my soldiers or not) could take off the armor and see who was in it when I was not looking; it'd be best if I brought the dead rebel back to my camp where I could come up with an excuse to remove the body from the armor myself and keep his identity a secret.

"Let's take the body with us." We said.

"But you said not to touch it." An obnoxious soldier replied.

"Oh, yes, you're right." I didn't want them to think I had changed my mind about that, so I picked up the armored rebel; he was heavy, but the exertion was worth not going back on my own orders.

We then finished the raid and went back to camp

⁵I hate this word, it's so vague. It's definition varies to the point that it means nothing. It's cliché and Pacoitz is a fool for using it. A better word for this context would be "emotions".

where we celebrated our victory; not even the death of a good friend can stop me from enjoying good wine and admiring good gold. After that though, I had a casket made and set in one of our supply tents. Then I placed the copper rebel inside it and locked it with a padlock. But I forgot to tell someone to bury it.

Chapter 4

Epiphany

Several days passed and we were nearly finished plundering the city of Vwishaja¹. But as I was doing some shopping², I saw Paavo, selling fruit as he always did.

Paavo's fruit stand was rather disorganized, it was seven or eight planks set on three or four stumps with unsorted baskets of fruit balancing on them.

"Hey, sorry I haven't visited in awhile. I've been kinda busy selling fruit. Business has been booming." He said. I did not know what to make of this, I was absolutely certain that Paavo was the copper rebel, but I'd killed him, stabbed him through the heart, how could he still be alive? Perhaps he and the rebel were two separate people after all. Could it be that I'd misjudged him and he'd been my ally all along? Or maybe he really is a ghost and that's how he survived – No, no! Paavo is no ghost.

"What kind of fruit would you recommend?" Said I to him.

"Well, there's apricots." He replied.

"No, I mean good fruit."

"You don't like apricots?"

¹"Yellow child." However, this word is rendered improperly because the different syllables are in different cases for apparently no reason; it should be *Vwifava* or *Jwihaja* if we conjugate it into a verb like *Kaji* is.

²More like stealing.

“No, not really. I’ll take six bushels of oranges.” I said as I handed him six small nuggets of gold. Paa-vo then took a couple minutes to separate the oranges from the rest of the fruit and managed to get only four bushels.

My men and I went on our way, and ate all the oranges we had bought in a matter of minutes. Then we went back to camp. The first thing I did was hurriedly go to the supply tent to double-check that the rebel was still inside it. But he wasn’t, and the casket looked as if it had been kicked apart from the inside out. The padlock was still on it, but since there was a gaping hole in the top of the coffin, the lock had done no good. Now I know someone did not steal the body, the splinters from the hole were pointing outward, so the rebel must have come back to life. But even if the rebel had come back to life, that didn’t mean it was necessarily Paavo.

I didn’t know what to do, so I showed Twizwa the broken casket.

“That rebel will not stay dead.” Said Twizwa, “But that matters little now I suppose. From what I know, ghosts are usually local, they only haunt near the location from whence they were slain. If we were to go to the next town we might find all our ghosts problems to be gone. And besides that, we’re finished with this town anyway.”

...

The next day our ship was blowing its horn in the harbor. Apparently they were ready for another shipment of spoils. I gathered most of the men and we brought our horse drawn (apparently horses are very good artists³) carts out to meet it. My soldiers were on the look out for the copper warrior. They were very frightened at the

³Another cliché pun.

thought of ghosts, and I was too; I was a much better fighter, and it's very unlikely that'd I lose a fight to it, but with all the coming back from the dead, sooner or later he might get lucky, and I might get a headache, and I might lose. I hoped what Twizwa said about ghosts being local was true and not merely wishful thinking. It'd be dreadful to move to the next town and have to kill it all over again, and again, and again.

As the saying goes, speak of the devil and he appears.⁴ One of the carts tipped over and lo, the copper clad rebel had been in the cart, hiding under the money the whole time and had pulled the pins off of one side of both axles. He then leaped into the next cart and proceeded to tip it over as well.

The rebel's breastplate was still broken off and he worked hard catching swords and blocking arrows to prevent them from hitting his chest. Then when my men remembered to wrestle him, he knocked several of them down the hill that the path was going down. Then, running fairly fast, he disappeared into the woods. He only managed to tip over two of the carts, so the other one was still standing.

Then we had to fix the carts. While we were fixing them, that messenger that I had sent earlier arrived.

"I found out what you wanted me to look into about Paavo." The messenger said. And he went on to explain that Paavo's family was all missing as far as he could find out, but he did find some old friends of the family; they told him that when Paavo was born his parents could barely feel his heart beat, so they named him Paavo which means "weak heart." No sooner had they

⁴In the text, both Pacoitz's and the original, no one was talking about ghosts (though they all were thinking about them). And this line, besides being bad even before it became overused in everything, is not even in the original.

named him though, when they realized that his heart, as it turns out, was on the other side of his chest. Paavo did not have a weak heart after all, they just checked for a heartbeat in the wrong place. But this didn't matter, because by the time his parents realized this the name had stuck.

This all made sense then. The teal colored copper clad rebel⁵ was Paavo, and because he was Paavo he learned as Paavo learned, and when stabbed in the left of the chest he did not die, because his heart was on the opposite side. The warrior was no ghost, and neither was Paavo.

But what was I to do? Was I to betray Paavo as he betrayed me? No, I liked him. I couldn't bear to bring upon him that much disgrace and to lose him to death a second time. As long as no one found out, I would be saved from the shame (and possible revolt against me) from befriending this rebel. I would then tell no one; not even him, because then no one would ever hear me say anything to implicate myself in such a crime against Zinodwo. I was still going to make sure that Zinodwo got plenty of spoils, but I also wanted Paavo to feel like he was doing at least something noble to obstruct our conquest.

...

Because Twizwa kept nagging me about ghosts and how foolish I was being for staying in this village, we left Vwishaja and headed toward Jaahwii⁶. The city had thick walls and it had a lot of archers. But we assembled trebuchets and launched many boulders at it. We sieged

⁵Pacoitz constantly renders the same Fobwa phrase regarding the rebel as something different each time. His unsurety is nauseating.

⁶Fobwa for "tall and solid."

it for a few hours; it didn't take long.⁷ The wall was now in shambles and many of the buildings too. With the archers all defeated we marched into Jaahwii.

On the way, a beggar stopped us, he laid right in the road. He was old and he was scruffy and he asked us for some alms.

"No," We said to the old man, "we don't support beggars, it's not a good way of living."

"You are the king of Zinodwo, aren't ya?" Replied the beggar. Then he burst out laughing uncontrollably. It took a good minute to stop him.

"Why are you laughing? Doth a beggar have more standing than the king?" Asked Twizwa while he violently shook the man.

"The king of the other country said he don't support beggars. Well, that's funny indeed because he created two whole countries of them. You robbed my country of Kaji blind and made us into beggars, and then you know the rest."

"Know the rest of what?" I asked, "I do everything to stop begging in my country. I even went as far as to give 99 percent of all I get on my conquest here to every constituent of Zinodwo."

"And that's why they're beggars.⁸ Because they don't have to work for the money they get, a great lot of them take all the money they get and spend it on casinos, women, and strong drink. And then they have no money left for food so they resort to begging in the streets. So I say unto you that you must like beggars, you've created

⁷In the original, the city had been in ruins since the King had besieged it the year before and he had only now got around to plundering it. It is very foolish of Pacoitz to think that anyone could siege a city in just a few hours.

⁸Pacoitz is bad at formatting dialog, to clarify, this paragraph is said by the beggar.

an awful lot of them, and you like supporting them too. So give me some gold.”

“That’s completely ridiculous! All of that is unfounded.” Said Twizwa.

“I’m not moving off the road till you give me something.” Said the beggar.

Not being able to put up with it, we gave the beggar a nugget of gold, however, he still did not move.

“Hah! I knew you were a beggar lover.” He said.

“Come on, we gave you some gold, now move!” I yelled at the beggar.

“Can’t move, I’m a cripple.”

I dragged the beggar off the road and tossed him into a thorn bush. He did not know how to act before a king, and he had offended me by accusing me of making both Zinodwo and Kaji countries full of beggars. I knew he was wrong – I really hoped he was.

We went into the city and pitched our tents, and slept.

Chapter 5

Marred and Pierced

“King, the beggars have showed up in great numbers. They’re stirring up a riot.” Said Twizwa, waking me up.¹

“Drat,” We said, “you give a beggar some money, and now the whole world knows where to go for hand-outs. Tell them we’re not giving them anything!”

“I did that already. But they are insisting.”

“Drive them away!”

“Sir, there’s at least 3,000 of them.”

“3,000, that is a mess. Well, we have 416 men, they could probably take out no more than six men each – We’re dreadfully outnumbered. Go fetch that beggar from yesterday. I’ll bet he’s in this somehow.”

They brought the man before us.

“Why is that crowd here?” We asked him.

“Alms, what else?” He replied.

“There must be 3,000 people out there.” I said, “You sent them didn’t you? Don’t bother lying, I know you did. What’s it going to take to make them leave? And please don’t say ‘alms.’” We said.

“You’re cursed.” Said the beggar, “Last night² I beheld a man wearing wooden armor, marred and full of arrows. He went from town to town telling all the beg-

¹There’s a gap in the narrative here, four days have actually passed since they set camp in the city.

²“Two nights ago” in the original.

gars to come here and recieve treasure from you, the enemy king.”

“That’s ridiculous.” Said Twizwa, “How can a cripple see what happens towns away when he cannot walk? You’re a liar in everything you say.”

“Well, that may be true.” Said the man, “But I only stretch the truth when it falls short of reality, in order that it might be more so.”

“More what?” We asked.

“More itself, more truthfull.” Replied the beggar.

“That doesn’t make any sense.” Said Twizwa, “The truth doesn’t ever fall short of reality, because reality is truth. And when you stretch the truth you are making it into a lie.’

“But when I stretch it, there’s more of it and thus more truth.³” Said the man.

“We’re done talking with you.” We said.

“In the last town you were in, a rebel, clad in copper, opposed you and made your raids difficult—”

“Who told you of this?” I interrupted.

“Twizwa told me.” The man said.

“I did no such thing.” Twizwa said.

The beggar began to laugh obnoxiously, “Since Twizwa first opened his mouth, I saw that he was a master of words, that can hide messages in speech. Apparently, by pure accident, he puts secret messages into everything he utters.⁴ He’s so good he doesn’t even realize what secrets he’s telling (which most people won’t catch) in his everyday conversation.”

³This whole banter about truth only applies to English, and so you can guess that it is another pathetic addition by Pacoitz.

⁴Pacoitz omits the beggar’s backstory about how the beggar was lazy and spent a lot of his time playing with words and could hear the rotations of a person’s speech.

Twizwa blushed and said, “King! He could have heard about that copper rebel from *any* of those beggars.”

This beggar was a liar. But was there any truth in anything he said?

“The spirits of those rebels you killed are rising from the grave to stop you; their blood cries out from the ground.” Said the beggar, “First the copper, now the wooden. If you leave to another town, another warrior slain in battle will meet you there. You couldn’t kill the first; this one too shall haunt your every step. You want to know why those beggars are there, because the ghost of this rebel invited them.”

“I don’t care why they’re here.” We said, “Can you get rid of them?”

...

“Pardon me,” Said Twizwa, interrupting my story, “but isn’t it foolish to think that chest wounds are only fatal when they hit the heart?”

“Twizwa, why didn’t you bring that up when I was telling that part?” I responded, shifting the chains to make myself more comfortable.

“My mind wanders, I only thought of it now.”

I was still on the platform telling my story,⁵ he had a very good argument, Paavo should have been dead even if I didn’t get his heart, how did he live? I did not answer but instead kept telling my story.

...

⁵Here Pacoitz returns back to the frame story he contrived. If this is hard to understand it’s because Pacoitz’s ability to weave a narrative is very weak. If you remember back in the first chapter, the king is telling this story and this question from Twizwa is a disruption to his telling of it. It makes no sense to have this interruption to Mwefu’s story be here instead of when the event actually happens.

“Bring me to the crowd.” Commanded the beggar. For that moment he spoke with such authority that I wondered if I indeed was the king or whether this man’s greatness surpassed my own;⁶ however, this all faded when we brought him to the crowd. He issued them commands such as, “Go home,” “The king has nothing left, but he invites you to enter his country,” and “you’ll find no hand-outs here,” but it was all in vain. The people nearest him heard and they relayed it back to all the others, but not all understood. The ones who heard the beggar tried to leave, but the crowd was so thick they could not. It was evident that what the first part of the crowd was hearing was not the same thing the end of the crowd had heard by repeat.

“This is not working.” I said to the beggar as I grasped the hilt of my sword ready to slay him.

“Hold on. Give me some time.” Replied the man and he pointed at Twizwa, “You, wordy mouth! You know how words change meaning when they are said wrong, say the things that I said, but say them so that the people at the end will hear it without its meaning being lost.”

Twizwa then, using his skill with words,⁷ said those

⁶This nonsense about the beggar’s authority was not in the original; Pacoitz is preparing the story for an awful perversion.

⁷Scholars think that Twizwa spoke with a lot of redundancy and that when the meaning of what he said changed by being repeated wrong, the meaning still was what he had intended. The downfall of the Fobwa language is evident in that it is so easy to mishear what someone says due to its monosyllabic nature and lack of formalized sentence structure. While these downsides enable rotational shift poetry, they are downsides for ordinary conversation. Because of this, some people question whether Fobwa is a natural language at all. See Appendix B.

things to the crowd, and sure enough the beggars dispersed and were gone.

"I may have got rid of the beggars." Said the old man, "But the curse will still stop you in the end."

"You didn't get rid of them, Twizwa did." We said, "And also, that curse is nonsense." Before the annoying beggar could get the last word in, I had two of my men carry him back to the gate of that ruined city.

Since all the beggars were disposed of, we set out on our raid. No curse could stop us. If there was a warrior clothed in abused wooden armor, which I doubted, he would be no problem. We gathered gold and silver and precious stones, but they were not abundant, it took the ransacking of many many homes to find any. It was now getting late and storm clouds had formed over head. In fear of the weather, we headed back towards our camp. But the rain came down in torrents. Every one of us got hold of an umbrella and looked up at the sky, I'm not sure about the science behind it, but the sky was glowing a bright yellow, and the rain was so thick it was like a fog had covered the land.

Though it was night, it wasn't very dark because the sky lit the land, but that didn't do much good since no one could see more than thirty feet through the rain, and when it came to hearing, nothing could be heard but the relentless downpour. At least nothing could be heard till a horse neighed and the sound of clinking gold caught my ear. There was a shadow of a man taking gold out of our cart and placing it into his bag. It was as the beggar had said, his armor was mere wood and it was beaten up and covered in arrows. My men started to fire their bows at him, but it is very hard to shoot when one is holding an umbrella so almost all the arrows missed. But I could see that his ability to evade our shots was hardly sufficient to withstand even this. He tried to dodge, but he did so very poorly. So after a few close calls, he ran away

and faded into the rain.

But that was not the last of him, he returned (this time with an empty bag) and began to fill up another bag of our gold. I could not stand for this, I dropped my umbrella (how stupid carrying one of these makes one act. My soldiers could not stop him without the danger of “getting wet,” what children!) and came at him with my blade to crack his armor open. But he caught my sword with his gloves which seemed to be made out of teal copper. This wasn’t a curse out to get me, this was Paavo. I could have twisted my sword out of his hands and slain him, but how could I? Paavo was not really taking much of our spoils, and I was actually quite impressed by his skill thus far. This wretch would die if not for my intervention; so I twisted the sword out of his hand and made it look like I had tripped so that he could get away.

I wished I had not dropped my umbrella.

Chapter 6

New Managment

The next day it was still raining and I went south through that town of Kwaahwaa¹ to see if we could find Paavo. I found him working at the lumber yard splitting wood.

“Paavo,” I said, pretending to be surprised, “what are you doing here?”

He stammered for a moment and said, “Oh, just splitting wood. You bought all my fruit in Vwi so I came here to Kwaahwaa and found employment splitting wood.”

“Why did you not visit me?” I asked.

“I could not make it through the crowd yesterday!” He yelled angrily².

I invited him to our camp and I continued to teach him how to fight (or how to dodge rather). We started out by throwing small pebbles at him to see how he could avoid them. He flailed about and jumped around like a madman, but still I hit him almost every time (It would have been every time, but really small pebbles are hard to throw both fast and accurately).

“What are you doing?” We asked him?

“I’m being a moving target.” He replied.

“Dodging is not about being a moving target.” I said, “Think for a moment, a good marksman will aim not

¹Dead plant.

²Pacoitz has grossly misinterpreted this sentence. Most scholars agree that Paavo was merely nervous when he said this and was not angry whatsoever.

for where you are, but where you're going to be. And a bad marksman will aim for where you are and probably hit you by accident when you dodge anyway; it's just as likely that you'll run into a shot by moving as by not moving. But by standing still you have a much better opportunity to dodge because you can start moving in any direction without having to stop first. It's best to stay still until you know that you'll be hit unless you don't move. Dodging is not about moving quickly, it's about only moving when you have to."

After a speech like that, you would have thought that his evasion abilities would have instantly improved, but changing one's instincts is not easy. What I said was counterintuitive, it would take a while to learn.

So we practiced dodging for a week. Paavo began to do passibly well.

I invited Paavo to observe a meeting between Twizwa and I; and he came. Twizwa was discussing ways of defeating these ghosts.

I sat on my royal chair, Twizwa sat on his mat on the floor surrounded by his piles of paper, and Paavo sat on the guest chair.

"Well, we've seen from our encounter with the copper rebel that these ghosts can not be killed. My king, you stabbed one through the heart! I think the ghost may have possessed the armor itself. If we were to open the armor we'd find no one inside it." Said Twizwa.

"So you're saying that if we destroy the armor then the ghost will be useless against us?" I asked.

"Yes." Said Twizwa, "I think it would be wise to have each of your soldiers carry an ax rather than a sword."

"Wouldn't fire arrows be useful too against a wooden menace?" Said Paavo as his eyes darted around, refusing to meet mine.

Paavo was apparently trying to ward off suspicion. I knew fire arrows would be brought up, hence why I

taught him how to dodge, but I did not expect Paavo to be the one doing it.

“Excellent suggestion, Paavo.” I replied, “Alright, let’s arm our men with fire arrows and axes.”

“Did you ever find out if my family was still alive?” Asked Paavo.

“My messengers found none of your family, just some old friends of your parents. They didn’t really have much to say about you.”

“Oh. . . So I guess I’ve no real reason to go back then.” He said.

So Paavo went back to splitting wood (That’s what he said anyway), and my soldiers and I went out on a raid. We stole some more precious metals and stones, as well as wine, and we took the path through the woods back to camp.

“Odd,” I thought to myself, “I expected Paavo to try to steal some of our plunder.”

No sooner had I finished thinking this when a voice called out, “King, is that you?!”

“Yes, it is we.” I replied.

One of the soldiers who we had been guarding the camp ran up to me.

“My lord,” He said, “While you were out we were attacked and robbed.”

“How can this be?” Said Twizwa, “You had three quarters³ of your men guarding the camp.”

“It rained so hard we could hardly see, and hearing was also difficult.” The soldier said. It was still raining heavily and ironically⁴ I didn’t catch all that he said and so I asked him to repeat it.

³Actually 30, which is less than a tenth

⁴More of Pacoitz ruining the narrative by trying to be funny.

“We were all spread out keeping watch, and the ghost came upon us one by one and tied us up. He then broke into your treasury and took a great deal of it. I managed to untie myself and the others and have run all this way to tell you. I know not whether he is still defiling your plunder.”

So we hurried back to camp and found a great deal of the tents torn through and the treasury one especially. Half of our plunder was gone.

“We’ve all been fools.” Said Twizwa, “Keeping treasure in a tent is the least safe place. If it pleases the king, let us build a stone room with a heavy iron door within which to store our spoils.”

“Let it be done.” We said.

It took only a day, but it was a very strong building; we moved all our spoils into it.

...

We continued to go on raids for the next week.⁵ The whole time my men were obedient in carrying their fire-arrows and axes; some were dissatisfied that they didn’t get to use them and had to carry them anyway, but most were glad they didn’t have to use them.

The plunder room started to fill up and did not get broken into. However, Vwumwaa, the man that distributed the plunder to my people in Zinodwo, sent another whiney letter about needing more gold to calm the people down so that they wouldn’t revolt.

“What are the people complaining about?” Said Twizwa, “The only reason they’re getting any share in the treasure is because you are so generous.”

⁵Pacoitz left out a great scene where king Mwefu talks to Twizwa about the economics of their country and how to keep it going. Twizwa also sends out a report of how much treasure they’ve acquired to Zinodwo.

“Vwumwaa always complains even when there’s plenty.” We said, “And we sent the report last week after we were robbed, so we have much more than he thinks. I tell you, he’s more annoying than that beggar. . .”

Twizwa laughed, “Then why not put the beggar in charge? Surely he can’t do any worse.”

“Actually, that’s not a bad idea—” I said.

“Sir, you can’t be serious.” Said he.

“Hear me out.” I said, “That beggar has been a bother to me, sending him away would solve that problem. He’s proven to have a way talking with beggars and stopping mobs, even if he did need your help with such a large crowd. Now I still don’t think that the people of our nation are beggars, but perhaps he can deal with them just the same. But how embarrassing for Vwumwaa, he will hear that he’s been replaced by a beggar of the enemy’s country and perhaps he will come groveling back to us and stop whining and annoying me so much.”

“Have you gone mad? You can’t just put a beggar, let alone a beggar of the opposing country in charge of an important office such as that!” said Twizwa.

“Have you forgotten what you were before I promoted you to second in command?” I replied, “You were a page, if you value your position, don’t question my judgement.”

The beggar was then put in charge of spoil distribution.⁶

⁶If you can’t tell by the complete utter absurdness of all this, Pacoitz made it all up. In the original, the king did entertain the idea of making the beggar responsible for managing the plunder; but he never actually did it, and he surely didn’t tell Twizwa about it. Apparently Pacoitz became so enamored with the idea that he just had to ruin the whole credibility of the narrative. Pacoitz needs to realize that he is supposed to be the translator, not the author!

Chapter 7

Doubt

The next day, we had another meeting with Twizwa and Paavo.

“There we were all ready to destroy that rebel ghost, and he never even showed up and he went behind our backs and robbed our treasury tent.” I said to Paavo.

“Quite disappointing.” Said Twizwa, “But now that we’ve built the plunder room, no one will be able to steal our spoils.”

“Not unless they can find the key.” I said as I pulled it out of my pocket and set them on the table, “The ghost won’t be able to take it from me, I’ve beaten him before. We’ll take three quarters of the men with us, that way if it does attack we’ll overwhelm it by sheer numbers. And notice how he only attacks us in the woods? If we were to take the plains he would not attack, and even if he were to, we could see him coming and shoot him before he got there. Also instead of using carts (we really only need them for delivery day when our horses have too much to carry) we could select six men to carry the spoils on their horses, that way they could easily outrun this ghost. Believe me, this plan is foolproof.”

“Why, that’s genius.” Said Twizwa.

“Yeah, that’s a good plan.” Said Paavo, “I hope you bring him down.”

“Well, that’s enough for the meeting,” We said, “Twizwa, make sure all these things are prepared.”

Twizwa walked out of my tent, and I followed him. I knew that I had left the key on my desk; because I wanted Paavo to take it. I didn't want to see Paavo try to face my army and myself and lose. No, instead he'd take the easy route and open the plunder room and take what he could carry. It was no longer raining, so I knew that my men would stop him before he took all the treasure, so there wouldn't be much harm done to our income.

Paavo had walked into a flock of wolves in sheep clothing, where I was the only real sheep.¹

So we went on the raid with axes in hand and fire arrows (not lit of course) in our quivers.² We took ways through the plains and stayed away from the woods. We robbed a good many houses and stole some horses.

Everyone was dreading the possibility of encountering the ghost, (Twizwa was making his usual speeches about it) but not I; Paavo had sat in on our meeting, it would be very foolish for him to try to attack us when we had left the keys to the plunder room on my desk in my tent. No, he would use the key to steal some plunder out of the locked room.

We were making our way back to camp when one of my men saw the wooden armor approach – how stupid Paavo was! My men began to shoot their flaming arrows at him. But he was dodging fairly well. But no one can dodge dozens of arrows at once forever, the arrows eventually hit him and he began to catch fire. Despite that, he was now close enough to fight and be a threat; so the soldiers entrusted with the spoils galloped off on their horses.

The wooden rebel was now burning and writhing in pain. Before my soldiers could use their axes to break

¹This terrible attempt at a metaphor is not in the original.

²Why Pacoitz would think it necessary to say the arrows in their quivers weren't on fire is beyond me.

his armor off, the figure cast off his wooden armor and we beheld a man clothed in a billowy yellow cloak.

“He has no form.” Said Twizwa, “He’s just a ghost now, he can’t hinder us any more. Without the armor he has no body and –”

Twizwa stopped speaking because the yellow figure had jumped into the air and knocked him off his horse.

“Twizwa, you fool!” I cried, “Breaking his armor didn’t hinder it, we freed it!”

The rebel ghost rode Twizwa’s horse toward the fleeing mounted plunder carriers;³ so we all mounted our horses and went after him. He was gaining on the plunder carriers, but he did not know how to properly ride a horse, and in no time at all, his horse was shot out from under him; however, that did not faze him at all and he was running faster on his feet than the horse had been going.

He out-paced us and leaped onto the back of one of the plunder carriers’ horses, kicking its rider off at the same time as mounting it. Then grabbing the bag of plunder, he jumped off the horse and ran towards the woods. We pursued him on our horses but we could not match his speed. One of my men, an expert marksman, almost shot the rebel, but before the arrow hit him, I hurled a knife into the ground ahead of the rebel’s foot so that he tripped and the arrow missed him.

“Aww! I missed him!” I yelled trying to make it seem that I had intended to kill him with the knife and not just trip him with it. He rolled and quickly got up, and before we could get to him, he had dissapeared into the woods.⁴

³That sentence is so awkward.

⁴Pacoitz doesn’t make it clear, but the rebel only got away with one sixth of that day’s plunder; remember, there were six mounted men each carrying a portion of it.

How amazing his physical ability! But also how foolish his actions! It would have been much easier to just break into the plunder room, I practically handed him the key for goodness sakes! This complaint in my mind was dwarfed by my amazement at his raw speed, how can anyone ever run that fast? Was he a ghost after all? He would still be dead if not for my intervention. Why is rebelling against me worth so much to him that he would nearly die with each encounter? What does he do with this plunder? Does he feed the beggars? How noble his intentions must be, I wish I could be so innocent.

We rode our horses very quickly back to camp. The camp had been broken into and the plunder room was empty. The soldiers who had been guarding it recounted how they had tried to stop a yellow clothed man from breaking into the plunder room, but he was quick and dodged all their arrows and caught all their swords in his hands and tossed them out of reach. He took many trips, but he emptied out the whole plunder room down to the last coin.⁵ “The month is ending.”⁶ Said Twizwa, “Do you really think the beggar will be able to calm down a people who are expecting riches but instead get nothing?”

“I don’t know.” We said.

...

⁵This part did not happen in the original. The rebel did not break into the plunder room at this time, he didn’t even try. There was no way he could have done all that in so little time even if he could out-run a horse. Pacoitz was just embellishing the story making it ridiculous.

⁶The original actually kept good track of time and had each day labeled. Pacoitz just lazily slops together a bunch of “the next day,” “the next week,” “one day,” et cetera, but worst of all is when he leaves whole days out, completely skipping them from the narrative.

I went to the lumberyard and found Paavo splitting wood. His form wasn't great, so I taught him to follow the grain and peel the logs.

"So are you loyal to the crown." I asked.

"What? No." Said Paavo. "Why would I be loyal to a piece of jewelry?"⁷

"No, I mean, do you revere and respect we the king?"

"Yes. Yes I do." Said Paavo nervously. "But I do disagree with some things my lord does."

"I appreciate your honesty, Paavo. What exactly do you disagree with."

"This whole raid Kaji and give the spoils to Zinodwo thing seems kinda foolish to me. I've been all over this country, and I can see how impoverished and suffering the people are. I can't help but pity them."

"You're so naive, Paavo." I responded. "A king can't just go taking care of other people's peoples. I'm responsible for, and must look out for, my own."

"There are some who think you're not doing so well at that."

"What! Who?! That crippled beggar? Because if it was him— was it?!"

"Yes." Said Paavo meekly.

I left. I was deeply offended. I had once admired Paavo, but I knew now for certain that he was an enemy of my country. Before I had excused it because he seemed so good intentioned, but good intentions don't matter if you have no knowledge of politics and are hurting by trying to help. Before he had done very little harm, but now he had stolen every last coin!⁸ I knew what I was

⁷Surprisingly, this is not a Pacoitz pun. This was in the original. This highlights Paavo's innocence and is funny at the same time; Pacoitz's puns just disrupt the story.

⁸In the original, the king was upset because Paavo had stole one of his crowns.

doing and knew how to save a country, who was Paavo or that beggar to think that they knew better? I am the king! Even still, I didn't want to be the one responsible for Paavo's death; so I left and went to Twizwa.

"Twizwa. How did we get rid of this wooden rebel last time?" We asked.

"Last time he was no problem. We killed him in his armor. But now he's a ghost, and now he's been freed from his armor. We might not be able to kill him, but perhaps if we were to trap him in a trap that immobilizes him, that'd be just as well. But once we move to the next town we'll have to face yet another ghost."

"Do it then!" We said. And I left and went for a walk alone (I had not done this before). For the first time I noticed the people, I saw the sad expressions on their faces, the pain in their lives; I had done this; I had ruined them. But they were not my people. Surely their pain was necessary to make Zinodwo's people that much happier.

No matter how much I tried to deny it, that lying beggar had put doubt in my heart, I had to go to Zinodwo and make sure that the people there were not beggars too.

Chapter 8

Pain

So when the treasure ship arrived, I took all the plunder we had acquired (which accounted to none at all), and boarded the ship. The shock and shame on every shipman's face embarrassed me. I knew they were thinking I was a terrible king and that they had sailed all this way for nought.

"Men," I said to them, "as you have probably noticed, there is no spoils this month. We have been thwarted by a ghost on many occasions; he's faster than our horses and very cunning. But fear not, Twizwa has assured me that by the time we return, the ghost shall be trapped in the town of Pwiibaa in a device that shall immobilize him. As for me, I'm taking a much needed vacation from this whole ordeal to make sure all is well in our fair land of Zinodwo."

We sank a couple of pirate ships (the treasure ship is a much envied target) before arriving home at the port of Shiizee¹. The dock is surrounded by cliffs on three sides which allows archers and catapult men to easily defend it. Again I was bombarded with lots of questions about the lack of the treasure.

Exhausted and sick, I suffered for the two day cart ride to Zinodwo's capital; unable to sleep on account of my pain. Surely this is how I'd die, vomitting out the

¹Fobwa for "Water hole."

window of this cart. My head felt light and my stomach heavy. Was I to die? To my relief I finally passed out.

I woke up in my palace. Still fairly sick, we wondered if these would be my last moments. No! I would not die without doing so in peace, and in order for that I needed to put to rest the nagging doubt in my mind: I needed to see that my country was well off and prosperous and not miserable and poor as that beggar had claimed. I called for my attendant Waterfall² and asked her to arrange a brief tour of the country going through three of our main cities for a week hence. This done, I laid in my bed and stared at the landscape through my purple curtain. (In the state I was in, I was too lazy to move the curtain, and didn't wish to call upon anyone to attend to it.) So I stared at the curtain (when I was not sleeping) for the remainder of the week as my health gradually returned to me. And with the arrival of my health came the dismissal of my fears. How ever did that sickness put us into such stupor that we actually almost believed the lies spewed by an uneducated uninformed beggar? There's no reason that a country, being well provided for with a steady income of treasure every month, should ever see the problems one finds in the abject poor places such as Kaji.

Nevertheless, the people expected us, and it would do no good to displease the people, who at a moments notice could take over the nation by force if they were not satisfied; so we embarked on our tour.

We stopped at each city and each of the mayors had a feast prepared of some of their best food, beef, oranges, and well aged wine. The streets were all clean with no beggars to be seen. The people had many a parade in each town and I was very impressed by their prosperity; that beggar had lied to me! So I stormed back to my

²*Baabiive* in Fobwa.

palace and was about to kill the beggar and to make him suffer long.

"I just completed my tour of the country. All is well, the people are joyous and have plenty. You deceived me." We said.

"I what?!" Asked the beggar who was now in charge of the treasury. "What ever did I tell you?"

"You don't remember?" I asked incredulously.

"Oh king, I say a lot of things, I can't be expected to account for all of it. You think maybe I could get my own page?"

"You said that Zinodwo was full of beggars!"

"I said that? Oh why I was so right. Now that I see it for myself there's not a doubt."

"I saw none of that. Nothing, no prostitution, no gambling, no drunkenness, no begging, nothing. Everyone was elegantly attired as well." We said.

"Of course you didn't see it," explained the beggar, "when a king comes, the people prepare themselves, they clean up the streets, they cast out the beggars, (or dress them up) and they put up facades where their shacks are in shambles. Then they set up festivals and parades and they—"

"So if I put on peasants clothes, forsake my entourage, and arrive unannounced I shall see the real Zinodwo?"

"I guarantee it." Said the beggar.

"That would be a disgrace to the crown. I think that you're only here to make a fool of me. I have not ascended to the heights of the throne only to lose it all chasing after your baseless claims!" So I cast the beggar into my dungeon and went to admire my treasure.³

³Of course none of this exchange happens because the beggar was never in Zinodwo, this is a corruption of the monologue Mwefu has in the original where he comes to essentially the same conclusion.

...

However, when day broke, I found that the nauseousness of before had returned with no chance of mitigation. I again fell into the stupor where I wished not to be ignorant of the plight of my people. I told Waterfall that I wished not to be disturbed. Then putting on some servants clothes, I snuck⁴ out of my palace by the secret passage known only to myself and the architect. (Don't think that I'll go into detail of that because to do so would be to open myself up to an assassination; not that that is of much concern at this moment.)

We walked alone for about two miles until we found a village. Their houses were thatch huts⁵, barely keeping out the sun. I saw that their fields lay fallow and hadn't been cultivated in years. The people pounced upon me to beg and told me how they were all starving. How could this be? So I gave them all the money I carried with me⁶.

But now I faced another problem, I was hungered. So I walked yet another mile and found a market. The combination of sickness and hunger weighed upon me as I demanded some meat from butcher.

"Not so fast!" Said the butcher, "You beggars can't just come up to me demanding food, you need money to pay for it. But as usual you already spent it on exotic spices⁷ and festivities."

"I am the king of Zinodwo and I need food and drink." We said.

"Well, if that be so, where's your assemblage of guards? Where's your robes, your infinite supply of gold?"

⁴sneaked

⁵Scholars think that the term "mud holes" is truer to the original Fobwa phrase.

⁶about 6 gold coins

⁷Probably opium or cinnamon

I had a fail-proof way to prove myself.

“Show me the coin you’d want to receive for a cut of steak.” I said wearily.

“Don’t try to pull a fast one on me.” Said the butcher as he waved a silver coin in the air.

“See that picture, and that signature?! I swear. They’re mine! I am the king!”

“There is a little bit of resemblance ain’t there.” Said the butcher as he hastily put the coin back in his pocket. “And I dare say you could probably forge the inscription if given a chance. But all logic points to your not being the king.”

“I’m in disguise. I wanted to see the country as it really—”

At that moment the butcher knocked me to the ground and tied my hands and legs. I would have been able to beat him any other time, but my sickness, combined with fatigue, thirst, and hunger, made me powerless.

“Now the king’s an excellent fighter they say.” Said the butcher. “So good there’s not one man alive who could take him. Fact, that’s how he became king. So I say, as I have just tied you up that you’ve failed ev’ry test. There’s probably a reward out on your head I shouldn’t wonder, despite as bad as your impersonation was.”

“I swear I could have killed you.” I said, “If it were not for the extreme state of sickness I am suffering.”

“Oh you’re sick alright. Sick of the mind.” And with that the butcher closed up his shop, threw me in a cart and hauled me back to the palace. The ride would have been a pleasure if it hadn’t been so bumpy and my bonds hadn’t chaffed so much.

We passed by the palace gardens, and the butcher explained the situation to the soldiers tending it.

“I caught this here impostor.” Said the butcher. “He claims to be the king.”

“I am the king.” I said.

“See? Just like that.”

“Let’s take you to the king then.” Said the guard who was thinning the turnips.

They led me into the palace and had me wait in the lobby.

“The king doesn’t wish to be disturbed. But no matter, we can carry on without him.” Said the turnip gardener as he took me to the doorway on the left into the court room. I had sat on the other side of the room many times, sitting on an elevated throne, but now I was the one looking up to my attendant Waterfall who sat in my throne while Vwumwaa sat at her side. Several guards were also in attendance around the many tree stump tables that symbolized justice.

...

There was a brief trial where all the evidence was presented and all my subjects agreed that I couldn’t possibly be the king. I was merely a shadow of my former self; I had not my vigor, not my kingly clothes, and my voice creaked from thirst. I had none of the qualities of a king. For all they knew, the king wished not to be bothered and he hadn’t gone out. I could have explained myself. I could have told of the state of the country and the poverty caused by my gifts of treasure. No, I couldn’t. To do so would be humiliating. I had ruined two countries, I had lost a fight, I had gone behind my servants’ back. No, to explain myself would mean that I’d probably be killed as a traitor, whereas to stay silent would mean that I’d probably only be locked up as a mad man.

They all concluded that I was most definitely not the king, all evidence pointed to it.

They congratulated the butcher on his capture and gave him 30 gold coins. Then they threw me into my own dungeon.

I noticed that there were beautiful poems etched into the walls.

“So I suppose this means I’m right.” Said a voice from a dark corner of the cell.

“Right about what? Who are you?” I asked.

“Oh, I used to be real important. I was once second in command of the whole country. I—”

“That can’t be,” I interrupted, “Bwaa was put to death. I saw the action myself.”

“Heads are easily reattached.”

“He wasn’t beheaded though, he was hind and quartered⁸.”

The voice laughed. And the man to which it belonged crawled out of his corner; it was the beggar.⁹

“That’s why I’m crippled.” Said the man.¹⁰

“So all of this is your elaborate revenge upon me then?”

“More or less, yes.”

“Will you ever be satisfied?” I asked.

“Does the grave ever give up its dead?” He asked back.

For the next two days I listened to his rambling and my heart grew heavier and heavier. I’d destroyed my country, destroyed myself, and now I had to listen to my ex-second in command speak incessantly. I could kill him, of course I could; but then I’d suffer the death

⁸This malapropism is atrocious. Pacoitz mixed-up the term *hindquarters* with *drawn and quartered*.

⁹You probably guessed that this whole idiotic scene with the beggar was not in the original. Bwaa really did die, and the beggar is not him! Pacoitz is once again abusing his power as a translator.

¹⁰I cannot stress enough how much Pacoitz’ obsessive fascination with the beggar is ruining the story.

penalty for sure or be moved to a cell that allowed no chance of escape.

Chapter 9

The Imposter

There in my own prison I despaired of life – was there none among my own court who knew me?

The first night in the dungeon came slowly. All I could hear was Bwaa’s incessant rambling and heckling. But then I heard the creaking of giant steel doors and the fall of footsteps; this was accompanied by a flickering red-green light.¹ The light, though dim, seemed as bright as the morning sun by comparison to the dank prison.

The persons carrying the lantern opened my cell.

“Ha! I knew justice would come to my aid.” Said the beggar.

“No, you fool.” Said a voice which I immediately recognized as Waterfall, my servant. “We’ve come to relocate the impostor.”

“But we are the king!” I protested.

“Keep up the act.” Said Vwumwaa, who evidently² was there also. They placed a sack over my head

¹In Fobwa there are only three colors: red, green, and blue (not unlike the RGB system used in televisions today). So the colors when mentioned for the same subject combined rather than remain independent, so *red-green* should be rendered as *yellow*.

²Yes, this is spelled wrong. My senior editor will not allow me to change any of Pacoitz’ text even if I believe there are terrible problems with it.

and led me out of the prison; whispering amongst themselves as they went. As soon as we were out of the dungeon, they slipped the bag off my face, and we continued to walk till we were to the Lead Hills; we sat down in a valley there between two gigantic rocks.

“How am I to die?” I said, interrupting their secret consul fearing that my execution was imminent.

“Who knows?” Replied Waterfall, less as a question and more as if to say that she didn’t see my death coming anytime soon.

“Listen to our cause and you may not die ever.” Said Vwumwaa.

“Vwumwaa! I hardly think that immortality as such is attainable.” Waterfall said.

“Well if it were, kingship would be the way.”³

“Pray tell, what are you proposing?” I asked.

“To supplant the current leadership and replace it with you of course.” Replied Waterfall.

“The resemblance is sufficient for all needs and purposes.” Vwumwaa explained. I saw now that they intended to plant me on the throne thinking I was an impostor who would enact giant favors on their behalf.

“So...” Vwumwaa continued, “we make you king, and you pretend to be Mwefu, and give me 1,000 gold coins.”

“For myself,” Interrupted Waterfall, “it is enough that you make me privy to all your councils and heed my advice. Refuse or deny us in any way and we will oust you as the fake that you are.”

Without their help I would not have been set free; so I complied.

...

³Said Vwumwaa.

“Traitor! Impostor!” Said Twizwa once again interrupting my story to berate me, “You thought you could hide the truth by lying, but instead you revealed it! You never were Mwefu, you replaced him on that day and the rest is a mass of half-truths.”

“Twizwa!” I interjected (his name had almost become a curse in my mind), “If I were not Mwefu, how ever did I, last week slay 30 men by myself when we were ambushed by the Hiikaga⁴.”

“So what? You just happen to be a fighter on par (almost) with Mwefu, that’s not impossible; but it does not prove you are him.”

“That’s ridiculous, what are the chances that I’m that skilled of a warrior, have Mwefu’s face (his voice even), yet am not Mwefu? Even two of those being true is unlikely, but three?”

“Well then,” Said one of my soldiers, “carry on.”

...

“Wait, what about the old king” I asked.

“Our bounty hunter assures us he’s already been disposed of.” Said Vwumwaa. They didn’t tell me who their bounty hunter was, but I knew that whoever they hired was an opportunistic liar.

So they released me from my bonds and returned me to my throne. After a week of listening to Waterfall’s and Vwumwaa’s demands, I’d had enough and arranged a tournament to prove beyond a doubt that I was Mwefu. Once I had proved myself, Waterfall and Vwumwaa would have nothing to blackmail me with.⁵ So I dominated every fight and cemented my sovereignty. And Waterfall and Vwumwaa were hanged as traitors.

⁴Fast dark blues

⁵How pathetic, every school boy knows not to end a sentence with a preposition.

I had portraits of myself painted and my scars and freckles documented so that never again would my throne be denied me. Though I never confessed (until now) that I had been mistaken for an impostor and imprisoned.

Being king again was most relaxing; I went and admired my treasury – gold, silver, topaz, onyx, jade,⁶ and countless other precious stones. (Though Vwumwaa claimed to have numbered and sorted them, he's as crooked as a rubber ruler.)⁷ The treasure shipments kept arriving and were distributed by Pinecone⁸, my new treasurer. I had considered stopping the raid entirely – but the people like being given an unearned income; I felt chaos would follow and they'd start a revolution if I was to stop supplying them.

After some time, I received a letter from Twizwa. It was very poetic and told of the success his trap had on the ghost.

“My lord, we have captured the wooden-armored rebel. We dug pits and covered them up with grass; then when the ghost was walking towards our plunder room, he fell into one of the holes. My men heard it and quickly closed it up so that he could not escape. Two days passed and out from the hole a voice cried for food and water. But why would a ghost need any of that? So we did not oblige him. After two more days he died. And do you know what? When the coroner was going through his belongings, do you

⁶Actually *emerald*

⁷This rubber ruler nonsense is so cliché and doesn't fit at all with the setting.

⁸No name was given in the original, this is another Paco-itiz fabrication.

know what he found? Nothing really; but it turned out that the ghost wasn't really a ghost, hence why it died. Woe, it was Paavo. He had fooled us all and was subverting your dominion. What a clever spy! What a nuisance!"

I immediately cast the letter into my fire. Paavo was dead. There was no escaping or denying it. Nevertheless, he cheated death once, perhaps he could do it again. So the next day, I departed for Kaji to see if perhaps Paavo was still alive. I sure hoped he was.

Chapter 10

Regret

I made my way back to Pwiibaa in Kaji.

“It’s simply dreadful.” Said Twizwa, “That a boy who you thought your friend would do such a thing to you.”

“Well, let us move on to the next village and see if perhaps we’ll not encounter any more opposition.”

Several weeks passed,¹ and we amassed much treasure, but did not encounter another rebel or “ghost.” Paa-vo was dead.

I had to be sure though, so I disguised myself and infiltrated a group of rebels who were giving us trouble and gained their trust. I asked them about Paa-vo.

A young woman spoke up:

Paavo was washed here from Zinodwo in the massive flood six years ago. He was just ten years old at the time. My family took him in and he helped on our farm. I was several years his elder and was like an older sister to him. I taught him how to fight and to care for politics and justice, but he was afraid.

Over the next four years we grew close.

One day, we found the copper armor in a river.

¹two months

“You could wear this and be like our heroes and it will protect you from harm.” I said.

“It doesn’t fit me.” He said.

“We’ll make it fit.” I said. So we worked with my brother and made it smaller so it would fit Paavo better.

“This is much too heavy for Paavo to move in.” My brother scoffed, and he was right.

So I made Paavo wear the suit every day for a year, and he worked in it and soon he became very used to it. He could then move in it as if it weighed nothing at all. And because of the strain that wearing the suit put on him, he was incredibly fast and nimble without it.

Eventually I convinced him to thwart king Mwefu’s ravishing of our land. But he insisted on wearing the suit because he was dreadfully afraid.

He grew in confidence and his fear went away. I loved hearing how he foiled the mighty king’s plans, and he loved to tell me.

He fooled king Mwefu and used him to gain information to stop his conquest; that was amazing! The king even taught him more techniques and secrets. In a strange way, the king was as a father to him. It defies explanation, but as fortune had it, the king taught Paavo the very strategies he needed when he needed them. I was concerned that the king had discovered Paavo’s secret, but that didn’t make much sense. It’s fun to imagine though.

“You seem to have some affection for that king.” I said.

“Not that I approve of his ruthless wars or his razing of the land, but he treated Paavo well, that’s all I have to say.”

If only Paavo had been up front with the king, he might have spared his own life and saved the king and the continent as well. But alas, Paavo could not live forever, but he died for what he believed in. I only wish I had died instead.

I shouldn’t have pushed him so hard, I shouldn’t have made him take on armies, but he had so much potential. I was so foolish and blinded by politics that I forgot about him as a person, I used him. And I think that maybe he loved me and that’s why he tried so hard and did what I said.

I cried with this woman, I felt her pain, and I could not bear to tell her that it was my fault that Paavo was dead.

I remembered back to the degenerate people of my country – beggars. I could have told Twizwa to stop the raid, since it obviously was doing no one any good; but would the people have sided with me? No! Of course not. I’d have been replaced with a tyrant and they’d be even worse off for it. If I were to put an end to it now, then Paavo died for nothing; he died because I would not relinquish my throne. However, if I were to spoil my own conquest, without anyone knowing, I could have both my throne and my conscience. I could honor Paavo’s death by taking up his mantle (or his armor rather) and fighting my soldiers when they go to plunder Kaji.

So I did just that and fought my own men in secret to stall the raids so that Kaji and Zinodwo would be less full of dependent beggars.

First I took up the copper armor, I had it modified to fit me by some rebel black smiths who I began working with. I formed a deep bond with this resistance group and they helped me acquire new armors and plan attacks on the Zinodwan invaders. They had no idea that I was the enemy king.

What in the world was I even doing? It sounds ridiculous now that I say it.

...

"I thought you would have the sense at least," Said Twizwa disapprovingly as he interrupted my story, "to only tell a story before your own execution if it would actually vindicate you. But it is clear not that you have betrayed us on nothing more than the word of Bwaa the beggar who conspired to kill you ten years ago."

"You masqueraded as a hero," Said a Kaji woman, "when all this time you had the power to stop *your own men!* You were a king and you did not lift a finger to help us while you were pampered on your throne!"

"Plainly," Said Twizwa addressing the woman, "he has wronged both of our countries; played us both. Let him be hanged!"

I had nothing to say – I had already said all they had care to hear, and what had seemed justified before, was now just cowardice on my part. In trying to keep my crown, I had become a burden to both countries and myself and Paavo – I was the chief offender on four sides! I should have tried diplomacy; No. I should have chosen a cause – one cause – and devoted myself to it wholly. I should have denied my security as king and defended Kaji. In trying to satisfy everyone, I had ruined everyone (and Paavo).

Others always rose up to oppose me;² I wouldn't mind so much if it was just them. For when I count my enemies and find myself in their ranks, I realize what a wretched creature I am. It's possible (though highly improbable) that I could overcome everyone else, but how could I possibly overcome myself since I am my own equal?

What a wretched creature I am. They pulled the noose tight on me.

"Aren't you going to remove me from these chains, it's my final request." I said.

"When by death you shall be free." Said Twizwa softly.

Before telling my story I had planned on escaping my fate; but after Twizwa's speech I knew that it was better – nay my right to die. I had betrayed everyone.

"Pshaw," said Twizwa changing his mind, "remove his chains. Even if he were to (which he can't) escape, he'd be apprehended – very shortly. Not a single person here would help him.

So my chains were taken off and the trapdoor on which I stood released. I tried to untie the noose as it choked my neck; it was supposed to be escapable, I had tied the crummy knot myself. My escape plan useless, I was filled with relief at not having to live any longer – to commit any more terrible selfish mistakes.

But just as I was about to die, a man named Pakojatiza shot an arrow and it cut me from the noose. Then in an explosion of light – that powerful angelic being who is the paragon of intelligence, strength, and morality – knocked all who were there at my execution to the ground. Then he picked me up and alighted me to the next town. Then Pakojatiza was gone.³

²There goes Pacoitz, inserting his "philosophical intro" into the story once again.

³If you could not tell by the sheer ridiculousness of this

I fled to the Woolly Wood in the north eastern mountain range of Kaji. I hunted my own food, made my own shelters, and avoided contact with people. Several days passed.⁴

...

Then a man approached me; his armor was hodgepodge and he pointed the tip of a longsword towards me.

"You! Help me." He said, "I'm looking for Zinodwo's ex-king Mwefu."

"I'm in the middle of a forest in Kaji, why would I have seen the king of Zinodwo here? And why do you say ex-king? What do you mean by that?" I replied.

"Only that he betrayed his country and did not help your country at all, and now there's a price on his head."

"Are Zinodwo and Kaji working together!?"

"Yes, they've made a pact and the raids and fighting have stopped until the traitor is at last dead." Naazwa-to couldn't imagine how comforted I was to learn that. Here was a reason for living, because what was not possible for me when I was king came to be by my becoming an outlaw.

"Too bad that their peace is only to kill me." I thought to myself, "As well I deserve. But if I die it will all be over; so I have to give them a chase."

"You're a bounty hunter then?" I asked.

"Indeed, and my armor bearer deserted me in an effort to get all the bounty for himself."

Pakojatiza character, it is a Pacoitz insertion. In the original, Mwefu did manage to untie the knot and escape on horseback. Pakojatiza is clearly just an idealized version of Pacoitz himself. How conceited! He obviously perceives himself as perfect and wholly worthy of being in the story; both of these claims are laughably arrogant and ignorant.

⁴27 days

I couldn't let him know about my expertise in combat, lest he realize who I was.

"Perhaps," I thought to myself, "he suspects me of being Mwefu. If I were to act as a servant and not as a king he might not suspect me. (Who would suspect an armor bearer of being the king?)"

"If it pleases my lord," I said, "I will bear your armor and help you capture Mwefu; though I must confess that I am not a good fighter."

"Just carry my armor. You'll get five percent of the bounty."

"It's agreed, then. My name is Goat."

"And I am Naazwato, future king of Zinodwo."

So I feigned ignorance and journeyed with Naazwato as his servant – me who had been king, brought so low. We spent the next four days exploring the Woolly wood but found nothing that could be linked to Mwefu (or so I let him believe). Finally we descended back down to the base of the mountain and stopped at an inn.

"Did you find that treacherous abomination Mwefu?" Said the innkeeper.

"No." Said Naazwato, "All I found in the mountains was this wretch who I've brought on as my armor bearer."

"That's fortunate," commented the innkeeper's daughter, "since you killed your last one I would have thought you'd have trouble getting another." At this accusation my "master" turned pale.

"No I did not." He retorted.

"Yes you did, the grave's out back." She said coolly.

"No use arguing with children. You know what they say, kids are as stubborn as goats; because well, they are goats.⁵

⁵This was in the original language, (more or less) but it was not a pun on the meaning of *kid*. Pacoitz apparently left it as is because his base interests found it "amusing."

“I am faithful.” I lied to Naazwato, “While I’m not always loyal, I fear the one who has the power to take my life.”

“As will everyone come my time.” Replied Naazwato.

We stayed the night at the inn. My “master” and I took our turns telling stories – I tried to tell ones which seemed more Kaji and less Zinodwo. To write down the stories we each told would be unnecessary, but here is a rather good one which Naazwato told:

“When Mwefu the scum was young, he aspired to become a fighter, but due to his poverty he could not acquire neither proper weapons nor teachers. But he drove himself to learn. He watched the great fighters who were the rebels and rioters of Zinodwo, and over time he defeated them.”

“I’ve heard as much, but how ever did he manage that?” I asked feigning ignorance and curious to know what this man thought of me.

“He took them on one at a time over the course of ten years. Mwefu noticed that each fighter usually had one trait, one skill, which was so developed as to make him unbeatable. So Mwefu took his time mastering the technique of the rebel till he was indeed better at it than the rebel himself who he was copying. Then Mwefu would challenge the rebel to a fight and humiliate him to death. In this way, he was able to rid Zinodwo of undesirable thieves and troublemakers while becoming the best warrior in the known world. Soon after, he lusted for the throne and demanded that a tournament for the crown be arranged (which is how a king is chosen in Zinodwo). Needless to say, none was his equal and he became king. But who could’ve known that he would be the most selfish and treacherous king ever to ascend the throne?”

“That is a very interesting story.” I said, “But in light of that, how do you ever think we will be able to overcome this traitor once we find him?”

“Oh that’s simple, because I am better.”

“Indeed?”

“Indeed.”

...

The next morning, Naazwato paid his dues to the innkeeper and we left the Woolly wood and crossed a papaya field. I said something which doubted his ability; then he swung his leg at me to knock me down; but I couldn’t control my reflexes, and before I knew it, I had counter-kicked his leg and sent him tumbling backwards.

“You said you couldn’t fight.” He said with a shudder. “Who are you?!” I feared that he had figured out that I was really the ex-king.

“But I can’t fight.” I lied, “I am however a wiseman who could probably devise strategies for fighting – but my body is not fast, nor strong, nor trained like yours. That move I performed was just something I came up with while inspired by your Mwefu story.”

So we fought again and I tried very hard to let him beat me; and so he did.

“Upstart.” He said, “Do you still doubt me. Just because you got on lucky hit on me does not mean that I can’t take on Mwefu.”

“No. You have proved yourself. But rather than wander Kaji and not find Mwefu, wouldn’t you be better off becoming king of Zinodwo?”

“No. Although I aspire to be king, (because I deserve it) I missed my opportunity because I was on a tradeship across the sea when the tournament for the crown was announced. And as it is I do not yet have enough standing to request another tournament; But once I catch Mwefu I will.”

Could this be the very same bounty hunter who told Waterfall and Vwumwaa that he had killed me? That

must be why he had gone across the sea, to get out before he was revealed as a fraud; and he returned on news that they were dead and could not seek revenge on him.

So we continued on and I resolved to not let myself be found out – not for my sake, but for that of Zinodwo and Kaji whose peace would only last while they both hunted me.

Chapter 11

The Monster

Naazwato took me deeper into the heart of Kaji till¹ we came to the Desecrated Valley.

“Why in Mwefu’s name would you bring us to this accursed place?” I asked actually afraid.

“Are you really that naïf?²” Said Naazwato, “One monster is just as good as another. If I can’t kill Mwefu I’ll kill this so called devourer.”

“The difference – is that you can actually kill Mwefu.” I said.

“Don’t tell me you believe all those myths and wives tales.”

“Why would you try to kill something you don’t believe exists then?”

“Oh it likely exists, but greatly exaggerated; maybe it’s just a badger or lion.”

We soon came upon a very large cave tomb that had thick metal bars over the entrance. But there was no monster to be seen; the bars, which could hardly be called that anymore, for they were bent every-which-way had impressions of massive hands. Something that had been locked in the cave had broken itself out.

Then we heard a cry, a sad and bloodcurdling wail.

“Let us leave before we too are the ones making that sound.” I pleaded.

¹He means ’til.

²naïf

“Do you think I’m a coward!? Come let’s seek out that sound.”

We climbed through a thin forest up the valley to a graveyard where the most frightful creature was cutting himself on the tombstones like a dog with fleas. He was the figure of a man, but a good two times taller and covered in fur. It was a sunny day, but a shadow fell on the beast and moved as he moved, not even the sun, who has shined on every being since creation would waste its warmth on this foul thing.

I was very afraid and could see that Naazwato was too. The creature galloped toward us and we drew our swords and slashed at it. But though it bled more, that was not enough to stop it; the creature swept me up with one arm, and Naazwato in the other. We both screamed in agony and it thrashed us back in forth. Then it dropped us and said, “Suffer me to live!” But it wasn’t talking to I³ or Naazwato, but to a feeble-looking unarmed traveler.

“I’ll suffer you to die. Release him!” Said the man; and a white flaming figure seemed to leap out of him and grabbed the beast before renting it in twain⁴. And where the creature had been there was a naked old man. Then the traveler threw his cloak over the man and embraced him.

“You’ve saved me.” Said the former beast overflowing with gratitude.

“He’s not defeated yet. I have to become you, so you can become me.” Said the traveler as a shadow passed over him. Then the traveler let out a scream more terrifying and filled with more pain than the one of the beast, as he turned into one. The former beast ran away from his rescuer-now-beast⁵.

³grammar

⁴two

⁵That’s not even an idiom.

“Maybe we can kill this one.” Said Naazwato.

“But he’s not a monster, he saved that man by taking his place—”

“He may have not been before, but he is now, someone ought to put him out of his misery before he slaughters anybody.” The creature made no attacks but writhed in agony. Naazwato began to strike it with his sword, and I did also. But still the monster did not return a blow.

Until at last, every drop of its blood was spilled, and the sky went suddenly dark. His cries had finally stopped.

“Wrap the body, we’re taking it to Zinodwo.” Commanded Naazwato. When the light returned, I wrapped the body, which was now that of a man, and placed it on a beast of burden.

“This isn’t much of a trophy anymore is it?” I said, “We killed an innocent man and have nothing but a tortured body to show for it.”

“Shut up.” Replied Naazwato.

After several days of walking north toward Zinodwo we had lost the body.

“It couldn’t have just walked away by itself.” I said.

“Of course not, that’s because you up and buried it.” Said Naazwato.

“I did not, but anyway the body would have been all rotted by the time we got back anyway.”

“Well then we’ll get the former beast, he’s the guilty one.” After a whole day of searching we found him – he was inside his old tomb weeping.

“You should have killed me instead, that was my sickness, it was supposed to be me!” He said.

“Il soupira profondément. Elle cependant lui souriait avec ce sublime sourire auquel il manquait deux dents.” I said. ⁶

⁶Translates to: “He sighed deeply. However, she smiled

“Well then, let’s kill the beast and go claim my kingdom.” Naazwato said.

Having compassion on the former beast, I spoke up, “Naazwato, he’s not the beast anymore, couldn’t we just leave him be?”

“Not unless I want to ignore my destiny and let the world collapse.” Said Naazwato.

“What if we found Mwefu?”

“Well in light of that we could.”

“I have a confession then, I am he.”

Naazwato let out a snicker and said, “That’s quite an amusing claim, but the resemblance is there I must admit. Whether you are or not makes no difference to me provided you can convince everyone else that you are.”

“That I probably could. Though we’ll have to make some preparations.”

I led Naazwato to Jaahwii and was greeted by the crippled nuisance.⁷

with that sublime smile that was missing two teeth.” As you can tell that is neither in the original, nor does it have any bearing on the story. Pacoitz is just trying to make the reader believe that he is sophisticated and can write French when it’s clear to anybody that all he can really do is open up Victor Hugo and copy the first sentence he reads. I once read a work that was so interspread with French sentences that I found myself reading the footnotes rather than the actual book, which I suppose is what you the reader have been rightly doing this whole time. What is really disheartening is when those French sentences add nothing to the story and one realizes that they can be skipped with their footnotes entirely and one will not miss out because the phrases were only there to pad the book – and the ego of the author.

⁷Pacoitz doesn’t even try to be consistent. One moment the beggar is the treasurer, the next moment he’s in prison, and the moment after that he’s back in Kaji?

“Ahoy, you’ve made it alive this far Mwefey my boy.” Said the beggar.

“So he really is Mwefu?!” Said Naazwato exasperated.

“You take the word of a beggar as fact?” I asked.

“Well you’re clever enough to fool him, but not me. What’s important is that everyone else believes it.” Naazwato retorted.

The beggar and I conversed and I paid him for one of his failed poems, for a reason that will later be clear.

Naazwato then bound me up, and the two of us boarded a merchant vessel headed for Zinodwo. When we arrived, we hired a wagon to take us to the capital. It took three days and then we waited for an audience with the king.

“Who is this new king?” I asked.

“Some bandit from the north.” Said Naazwato, “This system for determining the fate of the country on the outcome of a silly tournament is nonsense.”

The king’s guards led us in to his throne room. It was filled with gold and jewels, the obvious overflow from what was now an overfull treasure room.

“So this is the traitorous snake Mwefu?” Said the king.

“Indeed.” Said Twizwa who sat on the king’s side, “Naazwato, you would like the three and a quarter pound⁸ of gold reward then?”

“Actually,” I said standing up straight, “Naazwato feels he’s entitled to start an attempt at becoming king.”

“Silence!” Said Twizwa, “What kind of fools do you take us for?”

“Ones with the honor to see that your last tournament was lacking a real talent.” I replied.

⁸Ten vwas/zwas; but no one but Pacoitz has the audacity to actually claim an imperial weight off some unknown unit.

“He’ll lose just as everyone else lost.” Said the king.

“I apprehended the biggest threat to the crown, I deserve a chance.” Said Naazwato.

“Very well,” Said the king, “guards, have Mwefu beheaded and prepare the country for the tournament of kings.”

“Wait!” Said Naazwato, “For the moment this snake is my armor bearer and I need his aid in the contest.”

“Fine!” Said the king, “Postpone his beheading until after the tournament two weeks hence.”

So for two weeks I trained Naazwato and he got better and better at combat, but I was not very convinced that he could win.⁹

⁹Pacoitz actually ends his translation (if you can even call it that) right here. The original text goes on for another 30 years of intricate plot. So to remedy this injustice you can read *Appendix C* where I finish the story properly.

Appendices

Appendix A

Fobwa Language

A.1 Pronunciation of Fobwa Names

The chart that follows is of course the Pacoitz phonology. There are other phonologies such as the Joshua phonology which is much more likely to be what the actual language sounded like. There are guides and such to the Fobwa language (the good ones use the Joshua phonology) but all that suffices for this book is a pronunciation guide (if the reader cared any more about the language, they wouldn't be reading this edition).

a	<u>u</u> p	w	<u>w</u> ait
aa	f <u>a</u> ther	m	<u>m</u> other
i	<u>i</u> n	n	<u>n</u> ot
ii	f <u>ee</u>	ng	s <u>i</u> ng
u	b <u>oo</u>	p	<u>p</u> ay
e	m <u>e</u> t	t	<u>t</u> ea
ee	m <u>a</u> y	k	<u>c</u> art
o	n <u>o</u>	f	<u>f</u> ish
		sh	<u>sh</u> oe
		h	<u>h</u> ow
		b	<u>b</u> oat
		d	<u>d</u> og
		g	<u>g</u> o
		v	<u>l</u> ive
		z	<u>z</u> oo
		j	s <u>e</u> izure

A.2 Properties of Fobwa

Alongside *The Fall of King Mwefu* original text, Pacoitz found some poems which scholars have attributed to Twizwa. And in these poems, everything that the poet says has a most peculiar property: when the page on which Twizwa's words are written is rotated 90 degrees, a second message can then be read. Not only a second though, but on subsequent rotations, a third and a fourth as well, and all of these Twizwa had carefully crafted to have the meanings line up with what he wanted to say, to not be the same thing, but to be something different that expands upon the meaning of it. They call this "rotational shift poetry." This is similar to ambigrams where a word becomes a different word when read in the mirror or flipped upside down, but on a scale of paragraphs instead of just individual words. To write in Fobwa in such a way is a feat in itself, for even just one rotation, but to be able to do it for all four rotations and through speech alone (as Mwefu implies in the original that Twizwa does) takes unimaginable skill. Through speech, one needs to know where the line endings are in order to visualize what the block of text will look like, that way they know what it becomes when rotated; listening to something and being able to hear all the meanings is hard, but saying it so that all the rotations are what you want them to be is even harder. When listening, the line endings will usually be where the sentence ends most commonly are. This poetry is a very very beautiful thing, but as usual Pacoitz explains none of this and Pacoitz doesn't even make Twizwa speak in verse or say things in any way that would make it obvious. Twizwa's lack of poeticness in this version likely stems from Pacoitz's inability to write (poetry or otherwise).

Consonant → Vowel ↓	Grammar X<>	Good /<m> \<n> +<ng>	Bad /<p> \<t> +<k>	Sky /<f> \<sh> +<h>	Water / \<d> +<g>	Earth /<v> \<z> +<j>
/<a>	Past	Bright	Dark	Red	Blue	Green
\<aa>	Present	Strong	Weak	Gas	Liquid	Solid
/<i>	Or	Me	You	That	This	Location
\<ii>	End	Start	End	Fast	Move	Slow
√<u>	Future	Limb	Need	Sight	Male/Female	Scent
<<e>	So	Ability	Left	Up	Right	Down
^<ee>	And	x10	Null/Not	All	Three	One
≧<o>	Extension	*Name	*Extra	Speech	Mind	Heart
\<wa>	Question	Cold	Hot	Not-Heavy	Flexible	Heavy
∨<waa>	IndirectObj	Human	Dead	Plant	Animal	Mineral
\<wi>	Focus-S	Lord	Servant	Pertain	Parent	Child
∨<wii>	Focus-O	Thick	Thin	Tall	Short	Draw
√<wu>	Focus-V	Young	Old	Hair	Round	Sharp
∇<we>	Pass	In	Out	Front	Back	Hole
^<wee>	Progressive	Simple	Complex	Imprecise	Part/Whole	Order
∇<wo>	But	Good	Bad	Common	Rare	Shelter

A.3 Basic Lexicon

The chart above is a grossly over-simplified lexicon of the language. Each word or morpheme is just a consonant followed by a vowel. They combine to create complicated meanings based off of the basic ones.

Appendix B

Origin of Fobwa Manuscripts

In 1896, Pacoitz' worked in a restaurant located in South Dakota. But he tired of cooking and quit his job to take a vacation. (This is what Pacoitz claims, but I think it more likely that he was fired.) After a week, he found a cave in South Dakota wherein he discovered some Fobwa writing on the cave wall. Exploring further, he found some clay jars which had some poems and some historical documents as well as the original text to *the Fall of King Mwefu* in them. And after working on it for a couple years he had deciphered the language.

Many found it odd that Pacoitz had discovered a language that no linguist had ever seen before and that he was able to translate it without any formal training. Now, some people have theorized that Fobwa's emergence as a language, and the fact that only Pacoitz has found any major texts in that language, proves that he fabricated the language, the narratives and other documents. I shouldn't need to tell you how ridiculous this is, but since you're reading this edition instead of another, perhaps you might need me to explain. Pacoitz is constantly mistranslating phrases from the original text as well as changing various aspects about the story; if he really had written both, then he would know how to read it and would not cut out important sections from it. If Pacoitz had written the original text, then one would expect the original to be shorter both because it's a lot

more work to write in Fobwa and because Pacoitz only seem to care about his English translation.

Pacoitz is just not creative enough to come up with anything original, let alone create an elaborate well-thought-out hoax to purport a translation of what would be fake documents written in a fake language.

Not a single scholar of any standing finds any of *the Elevated Pacoitz Doctrine* (As some call it) to have even an inkling of credibility. The texts have all the evidence of older productions; Joshua Greenberg confirmed the works (via carbon dating some excess paper) to be at least 1,300 years old. So it is highly probable that Fobwa, and *The Fall of King Mwefu* are historical works and not apocryphal.

Appendix C

Robert Graft Finishes the Story

Whinery Press does not have any other translations of *The Fall of King Mwefu* licensed for use in this book, so I have paraphrased the parts of the story which the reader has been deprived of because Pacoitz left them out.

ROBERT GRAFT,
EDITOR AT *Whinery Press*

...

So I trained Naazwato. I purchased a book on fighting at Naazwato's request, however, upon reading it, I found that the contents themselves were pretty near worthless; pages and pages of names and dates and battles. There wasn't a technique or a strategy espoused in the entire volume which would be useful; all the better – I would substitute my words for its own.

While pretending that I was reading the lessons out of the book, I taught Naazwato many skills such as: sword disarming, kickboxing, and various dodging maneuvers. We also went to the tailor and the blacksmith to have Naazwato's armor properly fitted.

"I don't understand it," Cried the tailor, "your armor is all different sizes. Your mail shirt is too baggy, your breastplate is too tight, and your boots are just wooden blocks."

"How dare you! I – I –" Said Naazwato.

“They were on sale.” I said, interrupting him.

“The whole set would cost more to fix than to make new.” Said the tailor.

“How much?” Asked Naazwato.

“40 gold units.”

“And for new?”

“20 gold units.” So because Naazwato only had 5 gold units, we left. On the way out we were stopped by an old woman.

“Come with me.” She said. The old lady took us to an old house in the woods on the border of the lead hills.

“You don’t want metal armor, it’s too heavy and easy to cut and deform.” She said.

“Then pray tell, what could we possibly want? Leather?!” Said Naazwato.

“No.” Said the old woman followed by a fit of laughter, “You want wood.”

“But wood is flammable and fragile.” Said I.

“Not all wood. You’ve heard of iron wood? Well that won’t do. I’m the only worker of something much better, diamond wood.” She showed us to a small grove of a dozen trees with glittering bark. The old woman handed Naazwato an ax and bid him to fell one of the trees. He swung the ax at the tree, but the strike left the tree unscratched and Naazwato’s hands bleeding and his mouth cursing. The old woman laughed, “It’s funny every time. See? Iron can’t harm this wood.”

“Then what can?!” Demanded Naazwato still rolling on the ground.

“Oh I won’t tell you, but I will make you a suit of it if you can bring me three things –”

“I hate it when this happens.” I said aside to Naazwato.

“First I need an orange pear, a shoe from the most beautiful woman in Shiizee and a lock of Mwefu’s hair.”

“Why do you need that garbage?” Asked Naazwato, “Are you a witch?”

“No.” She said laughing again, “I’m just sentimental.”

So the two of us departed to find those things. We found the pear from an exotic fruit merchant – It was mostly orange. We inquired about and found that the most beautiful woman was actually a cobbler, so we tried to buy a shoe from her. But she protested, “Just one shoe? I can see by the boxes you wear that you need at least a pair.”¹

¹I let my wife read this manuscript. She hated it! She asked me why my writing was so much “worse” than Pacoitz’ – I had to explain to her that Pacoitz fabricates content and that I was staying true to the source material and that my writing was better no matter how you look at it. But even so, she said that she did not care and that she preferred that I would keep my editorial notes out of it.

Well, I can make stuff up too, in fact I will, I’ll be a better bad translator than Pacoitz could ever even dream to be.

Appendix D

Robert Graft Takes Liberties With The Text

“I can clearly see by the shoddy make of your shoes that you need a whole new pair.” Said the woman who was not in actuality very beautiful.

“Pshaw.” Said Mwefu, “We already bought a pear from the fruit merchant.”¹

“Oh, my apologies then.” Said the cobbler rather flustered as she handed the two men a size six leather boot, “This should work then . . . on the house.”

“Well to be honest,” Said Mwefu, “the house is rather too large for this shoe, particularly the big house which is where I’ll likely be going.”

“Ignore him.” Chimed in Naazwato, “He’s going to be executed, I doubt he’ll spend any time in jail.”

“Then that’s the abomination Mwefu.” Gaspd the woman running out of breath and passing out. (Corsets are an infernal contraption and I’ve never witnessed a woman faint who wasn’t wearing one.)

“You don’t think then that we could simply use a lock of your hair?” Said Naazwato.

“We could, but I doubt it’d keep any serious thief out.” Mwefu replied. (The reader should notice that this is all my own fancy now and that I switched the narrator from Mwefu to myself, just because I can. In the

¹Goodness, isn’t that pun stupendous? It really helps one to be immersed in the story’s setting.

words of my wife, “Who cares where the original story went? I just want to enjoy myself.” Well, I can write an entertaining story, never you mind about accuracy.)

So Naazwato cut a chunk of Mwefu’s hair and they both returned to the old woman who was a self-proclaimed expert in diamond-wood.

“Bah!” Cried the old lady, “This boot won’t fit on my house! This is not a pair of oranges! And anyone can see from the bald-spot on your armor bearer’s head that these hairs are his.”

So she expelled the two men from her house.²

Well because the two had wasted their time, (just like you did when reading this book) they rushed to the castle to register for the tournament.

“I didn’t need that decrapet³ armor anyway, the power is inside me.”

“Sure it is.” Mocked Goat, AKA Mwefu, “The problem is getting it out without hurting yourself.”

“Most indububabblabla – I’ll never be pompous enough to use that word.”

...

So they took a number and sat down in the bleachers.⁴ The tournament would not start for another hour; so Mwefu gave Twizwa that failed poem he acquired from the beggar.

²How’s that for a deviation from the original? The old woman was supposed to have made Naazwato the armor, but I changed it because I’m a bad translator.

³See, I can spell words wrong like Pacoitz too, does that me a better writer, darling?

⁴I just can’t do it! I was going to make a pun about the benches being used to remove dye from fabric, but I can’t. Maybe that’s why Pacoitz went mad because he doesn’t feel guilty about writing so poorly.

“This poem is pretty good – you didn’t write this!” Twizwa said to Mwefu, “The rotational poetry is quite refined, every rotation is a continuation of – oh dear! This is broken – it doesn’t work right. I can fix it. No problem.” Twizwa then furrowed his brow and was lost deep in thought. “This should buy us some time.” Thought Mwefu.

The former king recognized most of the people who registered for the fight, and from the glances they gave him, they must have recognized him too. However there was an old man who was very tall and fairly fat. What was left of his white hair hung down to his shoulders and his curly white beard hung down at his chest. Overall his skin was blotchy and scarred as if it couldn’t quite decide whether the man it belonged to was light or dark in complexion. He stood nearly seven foot tall. Perhaps he had been a great fighter in his prime maybe 40 or 50 years prior.

“Who is this man!” Demanded the king from his throne as the old man approached him, “Twizwa find out! Stop messing with those stupid poems.” Hurt by the insult, Twizwa began to thumb through the annals of Zinodwo. The old man handed the king a piece of paper which told about the leader of an independent merchant fleet whose name was Captain Seaweed. It had a poorly written poem about the sea on the back so Twizwa snatched it up and tried to fix that poem too.

“That’s Captain Seaweed then,” Said the king, “he was king of Zinodwo 50 years ago.”

“If you hadn’t let things get so bad I wouldn’t have had to come back.” Said Captain Seaweed.

“You’re not serious, you’re old and fat. You can’t win.”

“Oh yeah, you’re real tough. Killing women and children and robbing your own country. In order to win this tournament you will have to defeat myself, which will

be impossible due to the size of my feet. And you'll also have to beat that man over there," He pointed at Naazwato, "who I have no idea who he is, but Mwefu is his armor-bearer, so he must be amazing. Don't feel insecure due to your lack of skill or strength though, you might get really lucky." Captain Seaweed leaned against a young tree and acted like he was going to snap it in two, but he must not have been strong enough.

"Arrogant washed-up fool." Muttered the monarch as he meted out mutton to a mutt he had met that morn.⁵

...

The tournament manager blew the trumpet and called Naazwato and some farmer to fight. Just to clarify, and yes, I'm not even bothering to look this up but just asserting my own opinion as fact, the fights are done with only wooden weapons to prevent fatal injury to great fighters; people still die sometimes.

A farmer gave a good fight and had almost knocked Naazwato out of the ring with his club when Mwefu yelled, "Kick his right knee!" The farmer then panicked and Naazwato knocked him over the railing thus winning the fight. Mwefu had fought the farmer in the tournament after Waterfall and Vwumwaa tried to supplant his rule; at that time, Mwefu had hurt the farmer's right leg and likely it was still not fully healed.

Next the current king went up against the beggar. (Why not? If Pacoitz can insert him into extra situations that don't make sense, why can't I?)

"Why won't you stand up to fight me?" Asked the king.

"I'm a cripple, you blathering moron." Responded the beggar.

⁵Wow, doesn't that alliteration just make the story so much better? English teachers will be singing my praise.

“Then I suppose I win by default. What was even the point of –” The king was interrupted by a blow to his helmet and fell to the ground.

“I can throw rocks just fine from down here.” Said the beggar as he crawled towards the king.

“Twizwa! Find out who this fool is and tell me how to beat him!”

But instead of listening to the king, Twizwa was now mulling over what seemed to be a third poem, possibly given to him by the beggar in order to distract him.

The king got up, and the beggar hurled another rock, which hit the king’s hand and made him drop his club. The beggar then grabbed the club and struck the king’s leg.

“Oww! I was going easy on you, but no more.” Said the king as he grabbed the beggar by the legs, spun him around, and tossed him out of the ring.

“Watch it! You could have broke my neck and made me crippled!” Shouted the beggar.

“But you’re already crippled.” Said the king.

“He’s a paraplegic, he could have become a quadriplegic.” Muttered Twizwa, “It probably would be for the better though, considering his awful poetry and his penmanship that sails off the edge of the page.”

Next Captain Seaweed went up against the king’s brother Carl⁶. Carl swung his club at Captain Seaweed so hard that it snapped. Captain Seaweed stumbled and slowly layed down. Carl began kicking the large old man.

“You’re going to join a fight and not even fight back?!” Asked Carl. Captain Seaweed beckoned Carl over, and whispered in his ear something that no one else heard. Carl’s face immediately turned white as snow and he

⁶Doesn’t even fit the phonology of the Fobwa language and I don’t care.

screamed and threw himself over the railing. Seaweed was thus the winner.

Next the king went against a wild man who often wrestled the beasts – but man is no beast, and the king disabled him with ten hits of his club. After that he tossed his unconscious body over the fence.

Then Captain Seaweed fought Naazwato, or rather Naazwato fought him, for the captain didn't lift a finger to fight back. But Naazwato began to tire.

"You can't buy me like you bought Carl." Said Naazwato out of breath.

"That's not what happened. I told him I was thinking about hitting back. I hit hard – everyone knows it." This was followed by Seaweed punching Naazwato which knocked him to the ground and shattered his wooden breastplate.

"Here's a week's wages." Said the captain as he dropped some coins, one at a time, onto Naazwato, "Buy yourself some decent armor. This isn't even a fair fight. Honestly I feel bad."

"You're not even wearing armor yourself." Said Mwe-fu to Seaweed.

"Shut up. He's disadvantaged enough as is." Said Seaweed. Then he picked Naazwato off the ground and Naazwato thrashed like an angry cat. Seaweed then walked to the railing and gently set Naazwato down on the other side.

"That wasn't a fair fight!" Screamed Naazwato to the king, "You put me against him so you wouldn't have to fight me."

"True enough." Agreed Seaweed, "But now I'm his problem." The king began to panic and started muttering something to Twizwa who was still working on those poems.

"Give the boy a suit of armor." Said Seaweed, "Let him fight me again. You wouldn't want to fight me before

I'm fully tired."

"I'm not a boy. I'm the greatest bounty hunter in Zinodwo." Said Naazwato taking the suit of armor that one of the king's servants gave him; it was made of quality steel. He put it on and got in the ring to challenge the old captain again.

Maybe it was due to the confidence of a new suit of armor, but Naazwato fought much better. He struck the captain with a club and the captain struck back with an open hand, they exchanged blows for a while. Finally it looked like Captain Seaweed was beginning to tire as he stumbled and grabbed the railing. Naazwato beat Seaweed to the ground and grabbed his feet to drag him out of the ring.

"You should have thought about how you were going to get me out of the ring. I stood right by it to make it easy for you even." Said the captain kicking Naazwato over the fence with his powerful legs. Seaweed was the victor, but no one was happy.

"I hoped you would have put up more of a fight." Complained the captain, "Who's next on the bracket?"

"We can't let Captain Seaweed win." Muttered the king to himself.

"Don't you worry, there's still more people I can fight, Mr. King."

"There is no one." Said Twizwa. But Seaweed threw two daggers at Mwefu who gracefully snatched them out of the air before they could hit him.

"But Mwefu is not eligible –" Said the king. Twizwa immediately shushed him, "Don't interrupt your enemy while he's making a mistake." Seaweed nodded in agreement and smiled.

Mwefu then put on Naazwato's borrowed armor.

"All this time you were the real Mwefu." Cried Naazwato, "You really are a snake."

“He’s a snake? What do I get to be then?” Interrupted Seaweed.

“The loser I hope.”

“I don’t think I could be so lucky. That would make the king the winner by default though.”

So Mwefu and Seaweed fought, but rather slowly, Mwefu with his club, and Seaweed with his bare hands. Each blow was perfectly blocked by the other. After getting a feel for Seaweed’s strategies, Mwefu sped up and hit Seaweed in the chest and head many times.

“You’re holding back?” Asked Mwefu.

“Always.”

Mwefu feigned to hit Seaweed, but the captain didn’t realize it was a bluff so he put his hand out to block, and instead of hitting the club, Seaweed hit Mwefu and he crashed through the railing.

“Oops.” Said Seaweed, “You moved so fast I missed my parry. It was a fun fight.” But Mwefu wheezed and didn’t reply.

“To challenge that old brute to a fight is suicide.” Said Twizwa to the king.

“I just got the crown, I’m not losing it to a withered old man.” Said the king jumping into the ring, “Why are you even here you failed captain, why aren’t you out at sea smuggling apricots or something?”

“Oh believe me, I’d rather be doing that, but I gave it up. Or they gave me up, any way, I have nothing else to do.”

“I could make you second in command, you could lead my armies, surely we could find something for you.” Said the king shaking in fear.

“No. I think everyone has had enough of you. Please, pick up a real sword.” The king traded his club for a iron sword. The fight began. The king swung his sword at Captain Seaweed, but Seaweed slowly sidestepped it. The king swung again and missed, then the captain

grabbed hold of the king's empty hand and squeezed it. He crushed his hand so hard that the king dropped the sword out of his other hand and he fell to his knees on the ground.

"Won't you have mercy on me?" He cried.

"When have you once shown mercy?" Said Seaweed squeezing the king's hand yet harder.

"It's hard to think when you're breaking my hand."

"Very well." Replied Seaweed grabbing the king's wrist instead. The king reached for the captain's neck with his free hand but Seaweed squeezed his captured wrist until a crack was heard. The king let out a scream and went limp.

"I've been more than fair." Said Seaweed, whipping the king's body out of the ring like a wet towel.

Appendix E

Charles Barfoot's Continuation

I found Bob Graft's additions (Appendix C and D) crumpled up in the trash. I don't think he wanted anyone to read them, but wouldn't it'd be funny if they somehow ended up in the finished book? Bob is never going to read this book anyway, so I can probably get away with almost anything.

I'm going to pick up where Bob left off, but there's going to be some significant differences:

1. I don't care about texts, languages, footnotes and other irrelevant distractions from the story.
2. I care about the story. Bob's idea of a good story is the dictionary.
3. I have no idea what is supposed to happen next in the story, but I'll just do my best to make up something interesting. You may not like it, that's your right.

CHARLES BARFOOT,
JANITOR OF *Whinery Press*

E.1 Conspiracies

Captain Seaweed lumbered towards the throne and sat himself down on it. "I'm the king now," He said, "any questions?"

The old king, who I'll call Kevin, rallied the soldiers to attack king Seaweed.

"Seaweed is going to stop the Kaji tribute and leave this nation poor!" Said Kevin.

"Captain Seaweed is a ruthless man who killed lots of innocent people and conspired against the country. He actually makes Mwefu look innocent." Said Twizwa.

"That's fair." Said King Seaweed, "But I'm not the same person I was."

"You're right, you're old and washed up –" Said Kevin.

"Was that supposed to be an insult?" Interrupted Seaweed, "Because I beat all you easily. What does that make you?"

King Seaweed stood up and four guards rushed towards him and leapt upon him; but Seaweed threw them off and entered his palace.

"Something is going on here." Said Kevin, "There's no way he could beat me in a fair fight."

"He just brushed off four fighting men like they were nothing." Said Twizwa, "That's not natural skill. Some kind of evil power is afoot inside him no doubt. I propose the four of us (Kevin, Mwefu, Naazwato, and myself) team up to take him down before he ruins everything."

"It only took you three men 12 seconds to go from patriots to traitors." Muttered Mwefu.

"Touché. So you're on our side?" Said Twizwa.

"Might as well." Said Mwefu.

"I still can't believe you were Mwefu the whole time." Said Naazwato.

...

So the quartet schemed and set out to assassinate the king. Twizwa still had his position as second in command, so he convinced the cup bearer to poison king Seaweed.

...

Twizwa watched as Seaweed guzzled down a glass of wine. "Trevor, this is an excellent drink, what did you put in this? It tastes wonderful." The king said as he handed the remainder of the glass to his cup bearer.

"Take a sip, it's got quite a kick to it." Seaweed suggested. Trevor was confused, but thinking he had accidentally developed a novel wine instead of poisoning the king as he had hoped, he took a drink. But Trevor had not made a mistake, it was indeed poisoned; he convulsed and died.

"Trevor! Are you alright? What have I done?!" Cried Seaweed, "How was I supposed to know that it'd be too strong for you?" Twizwa ran up to the corpse and confirmed that he was indeed dead.

Seaweed, however, picked Trevor up and slapped him. Life shot back into the cup bearer's face as Seaweed told him to be more careful.

Because that plan failed, Twizwa met secretly with Mwefu, Naazwato, and Kevin. He told them what happened.

"Was the poison faulty?" Asked Mwefu.

"No." Said Twizwa, "That was the finest poison in the greatest quality. No one could have survived it."

"Perhaps he was immune." Said Naazwato.

"You're so naive, it doesn't work that way. That would be like saying that he's immune to beheading." Said Twizwa.

"But Trevor survived a small sip."

"No! He was dead."

"Then what happened?!" Asked Kevin.

“Power must have went out of Seaweed and into the cup bearer when he slapped him. He’s got some spirit or something about him.” Said Twizwa.

“I doubt it.” Said Mwefu, “Everything can be explained in the natural. Let’s try snakes, they are a much more reliable deliverer of venom.”

So they bought ten different kinds of venomous snakes and Twizwa let them out in the king’s bedroom while he was sleeping.

The next morning Twizwa went to see if the king was dead. Twizwa was wearing full armor so that none of the snakes could bite him. The king wasn’t breathing. Twizwa moved closer to be sure he was dead; but the king twitched, snorted, and started snoring. Twizwa pulled back the covers to find the ten snakes cuddled up with the king but it didn’t look like any had bitten him. So Twizwa shook the king’s bed and said, “King Seaweed! Some fiend has put venomous serpents in your bed!” A loud slithering could be heard and the king got up and let out a few cries.

“Darn snakes.” He said getting out of bed. All ten snakes were latched onto his body and he shook them off, and lifeless they hit the ground.

“Good thing you’re wearing armor.” Said Seaweed, “You could have been bitten, let me tell you, it stings.”

“You’ll probably die.” Said Twizwa sitting down in a chair as Seaweed got up and put on his kingly robes.

“If I could be so lucky.” Scoffed the king taking no mind of it. He walked to the throne room and sat on his chair and began reading through piles of reports and notes.

“We have to do something about the beggars, Twizwa.”

“Give them more money.” Said Twizwa.

“If only it were that easy. A dependence on other people’s labors makes them lazy so they don’t value the

money and they waste it on frivolity. We need to encourage working and craftsmanship.”

“You just don’t want to give them the treasure. Where’s your heart?”

“I don’t know, how ’bout you go find it while I get some work done.”

So the king went out to tour the kingdom while Twizwa stayed behind and studied.

E.2 Captain Seaweed

Twizwa read some books on astronomy, astrology, aardvarks, and finally he got to one about the kings of Zinodwo.

Here’s the part he read about Captain Seaweed:

As a boy, Sarnu was going by ship to the Indies with his parents when they got shipwrecked on an abandoned island. His father and mother tamed the wild island and it became quite hospitable, but still they died of disease eight years later. Eventually another man got shipwrecked and washed ashore to the island where Sarnu lived. His name was Max, and fortunately for Sarnu, he was an expert shipbuilder. Max was a man of perhaps 50 years, and Sarnu was now 17, and together they built a boat to make it to a populated island. From there they hired a crew and built a bigger boat which they could use to ship spices and goods.

Sarnu had a good head for numbers and good arms and back for labor. Max made Sarnu his partner and together they built

ten ships and amassed a good deal of profit. Max never called him Sarnu though, he was known only as Captain Seaweed.

After a dozen years, Max died in a shipwreck; so Seaweed sailed back to Zinodwo to see how his people were faring. He saw that the people there were lacking in leadership and were being destroyed by the Ka-ji.

“Ahoy.” Said Captain Seaweed to the people, where is your king?

“He’s dead.” Said a young woman, “They’re all dead. The royal bloodline is broken.”

“I am a busy man.” Said Seaweed, “But I’ll help the country out for your sake.”

So Seaweed and the crew of nine of his ships drove out the Kajin who had taken over Zinodwo and they killed all the bandits and murderers. Seaweed declared himself king and everyone agreed that he was the best king they had ever had.

He married that young woman, whose name was Heidi, and they had seven children.

He eventually stepped down from his throne and instituted a law that said that the winner of the tournament shall be king.

Twizwa read the above to his companions.

“Those are all lies.” Said Kevin, “I’ve heard stories of what he actually was like. They say he practiced witchcraft, sold his soul to some demon or something. They say that he actually killed the royal family.”

"I've just received word back from the pirates that Seaweed ruled." Said Naazwato, "They said that he is most definitely not Captain Seaweed."

"What makes them so sure?" Asked Mwefu.

"Seaweed has been dead for over 20 years." Said Naazwato, "They said they'll pay me 30 pieces of eight if I bring him to them."

"Why would they want him if he's a fake?" Said Kevin, "Sounds like they're a little sour that their captain abandoned them."

"Or they don't want his name sullied by old washed up bums." Said Mwefu.

"He beat all of you. He's defeated all of us, maybe he's not as innocuous as he seems." Said Twizwa.

"I've got a plan to get rid of Seaweed," Said Naazwato, "There are powers stronger than his."

...

So the next day, Naazwato went to the iron hills. He came across a mud hut with a lion skin entry rug. He whistled a tune and spoke an incantation that opened a hidden door beside the hut.

"What need have you of a sorcerer, Naazwato?" Said an old thin man who stepped through the door. He was perhaps 70 years old and was dressed in hippopotamus leather.

"Zinodwo has been taken over by an evil sorcerer I do believe." Replied Naazwato.

"Captain Seaweed is nothing compared to the power I have. Give me a sheep, some of his hair, and your shoes, and I will take care of him." Said the sorcerer.

So Naazwato went out and got these things and returned and gave them to the man. The sorcerer then made a magic wand out of the sheep and hair, but he set the shoes aside.

“What did you need my shoes then for? Those were brand new, beautifully hand crafted by the most lovely woman in Zinodwo.” Said Naazwato.

“I need them for payment. I don’t work for free.” He replied.

So they went to the palace to kill the king.

“You don’t have permission to enter.” Said the two guards he blocked the front entrance.

But the sorcerer waved his wand and the two men transformed into aardvarks and ran away. The sorcerer then blasted the door to splinters and led Naazwato inside the palace lobby. There were 20 more soldiers and they rushed toward Naazwato and the sorcerer with their swords drawn. But the sorcerer waved his wand and Naazwato grew to twice his height. Naazwato laughed as the blows from the soldiers glanced off of him and could not hurt him. He then struck the soldiers with his sword and slew them all.

Then Naazwato kicked down the door to the throne room. They found king Seaweed there calmly organizing papers.

“Do you have an appointment?” He asked, not even looking up. Naazwato ran forward to strike the king, but as he did he shrunk in size until he found himself back to normal.

“Why did you take away my giantness?!” Demanded Naazwato of the sorcerer.

“I didn’t do anything.” Said the sorcerer mildly offended.

“You’re probably wondering who I am.” Said the sorcerer to Seaweed, “I’m an old friend come to take your life.” The sorcerer raised his wand to smite the king, but nothing happened. He waved it again and tried various incantations but still nothing happened.

“What have you done to my magic!?” The sorcerer cried, “I’m the greatest sorcerer, I am your master, how

have you overcome me?”

Four guards carried Naazwato and the sorcerer away to the dungeon kicking and screaming.

Seaweed said not a word, but looked up and smiled.

An hour after this transpired, Twizwa ran in and attended to the king.

“What happened? I heard there was a sorcerer and that he and Naazwato killed some soldiers.” Said Twizwa.

“They were only sleeping.” Said Seaweed as he showed Twizwa that the soldiers were well and had already repaired the door.

“You’re hiding something from me.” Said Twizwa, “I can’t help you if you don’t tell me what is going on.”

“Sure you can.” Said Seaweed, “Find out which positions are redundant and retire the people from those jobs, we don’t need quite as much overhead. Also, take the treasure acquisition forms you’ve kept over the past couple years and use them to return what you can of my treasure to the Kajin we’ve wronged.”

Twizwa complied, but he didn’t like it.

...

The day after, Kevin was out robbing civilians with his old gang when he stumbled across a well-kept small red house which overlooked the river that flowed east toward the ocean. The door said, “Visitors Welcome.” Kevin opened the door and walked through the hallway into the kitchen. His men stayed behind him a few steps. But before he knew what was happening, he heard a loud snapping noise and was lifted into the air trapped inside a net. Realizing they had walked into a trap, the rest of Kevin’s gang abandoned him and ran out the door. An old woman left her position boiling tea on the stove to taunt the former king caught in the net.

“Sonny.” She said, “Can’t you lose gracefully, you go from king back to thief in the matter of a few days. I really hope Oscar doesn’t find out.”

“Who’s Oscar?” Asked Kevin.

“Oscar Seaweed. He’s king now, I hear.”

“Did you know him?”

“Only intimately. He was my husband.”

“What happened?” Asked Kevin as the woman handed him a cup and saucer of tea.

“Well.” The woman began her story:

My name is Rebekah. I was just a young woman at the time. I was 20, and I was making food for the less fortunate. Oscar Seaweed was a man of 22, and when he got off his ship he was instantly smitten with me. He loved me dearly, and I loved him. He had his ships bring many fish and spices and he and I cooked up a tremendous meal together. After a month or two of flirting, he finally asked me to marry him. My father was a bad judge of character, so I accepted.

Noticing that he was a smart man with lots of ambition, I suggested that he try to fix the kingdom since the royal family was wiped out. So he formed an army and kicked out Zinodwo’s enemies and the people made him king.

I gave birth to his daughter, we named her Edith.

But I soon found out that Oscar wasn’t the good natured merchant he seemed to be. He had a mean side to him, and his ships dealt in illegal contraband. That didn’t bother

me as much as his infidelity. I sneaked into his ship's cabin one day while he thought I was away; there I saw him with three or four woman who were caressing him. As soon as he noticed me there, the other women vanished into red smoke.

"Bekah." He said, "I love you."

"I don't feel loved." I said.

"But you know I do." He replied, "I know those other women must bother you, but they weren't real. I'm wholly devoted to you."

"You made a commitment to me. And I made a commitment to you. To give ourselves to none other but each other."

"And I haven't broken it." He said.

"But you have. You love your witchcraft and yourself more than you love me. Aren't I enough?" I cried bitterly.

"Sorry," Said Rebekah in between her fits of sobbing, "I don't usually share this story, especially not with thieves in my kitchen."

"Please go on." Said Kevin with a tear running down his cheek.

Well...

"Maybe the truth is that I don't feel like I love you anymore." Said Oscar.

"How could you not love me? What happened?" I asked.

"I just don't have that stirring in my stomach around you like I used to."

“That isn’t love. Love isn’t a feeling! Love is a bond of will towards another person. To be one and undivided.”

“You said before that you didn’t ‘feel loved.’”
Said Oscar.

“That’s different. I don’t feel loved because you always put everything else before me. I’ve been giving all of myself to you. You’re supposed to give all of yourself to me.”

“You sound jealous.” He said.

“I’m supposed to be jealous, I’m your wife. How can anything else compare to my love for you? I’m right here.”

“Maybe you should stay there.” He said as the tears ran down his face as well.

He dropped Edith and me off on the mainland, and I haven’t seen him since. I keep hoping he’ll come back. I’ve never remarried, his ring is still on my finger. I know he’ll never change, but I love him anyway.

Kevin looked at the ring, it was the finest ring he had ever seen, a fine work of gold, silver, and numerous precious stones. “That would fetch a great price.” He said.

“Take it. I’ve given up. I don’t want to be reminded anymore about how he broke my heart. I put so much in, and all I have to show for it is this ring.”

So Rebekah let Kevin go and handed him the ring.

“If you find yourself a wife, don’t abandon her.” She said.

The woman let Kevin go and he left her house as quickly as he could. He was furious at his men for abandoning him.

...

"I'll kill him when he's sleeping. Slit his throat." Said Mwefu.

So while Seaweed slept that night, Mwefu sneaked in through the secret passage way and swung his sword at Seaweed. The slice went through his neck and sliced into the mattress sending feathers everywhere. Captain Seaweed then sneezed and got up.

"Mwefu, what are you doing to my bed?" Said the king.

Mwefu swung his sword again but it was grabbed by an ethereal glowing hand which seemed to come out of the king's stomach. The apparition vaporized the sword and it too disappeared.

"What kind of witch craft have you been meddling in?!" Demanded Mwefu.

"I really ought to kill you." Said Seaweed, "But since you once had mercy on me, I will have mercy on you. I will also tell you what you want to know."

"But I never –" Said Mwefu.

"Just wait." Said Seaweed, beginning his story.

'What you read about me in the chronicles of the kings wasn't true. I made it up to cover who I really was.

I was a boy named Oscar who grew up in Zinodwo. My aunts were witches and they raised me and taught me to meddle in dark powers. I used that power to take over ships and kill anyone who stood in my way. I traveled all around the world amassing a collection of seven ships which I had stolen from their previous owners. I used them to smuggle spices and to demand tribute

from lesser lands and islands. I become very wealthy but I was not very happy.

Then I returned back to Zinodwo. Behold, I saw a beautiful young maiden making flour and preparing a large feast.

“What are you doing?” I asked.

“I’m making food for the poor of the kingdom.” She replied. Something stirred in my heart, so I helped her. I sent my ships out and they brought back thousands of fish and various exotic spices. The meal was so extravagant that the royal family was offended that the food was given to beggars and not to them. The king tried to have me killed, but I used my dark powers to kill him and his family, every last one.

I didn’t let that young woman, whose name was Rebekah, know that I had slaughtered the royal family. I loved her dearly and begged her to marry me, and she did. I made myself king, but it wasn’t enough. We even had a daughter who she named Edith. When she was two years old, Rebekah confronted me.

“Oscar,” Rebekah said, “I thought you loved me. Why is it that you still perform witchcraft and are always away?”

“I have important things to do.” I replied.

“I made a commitment to you. And you made one to me, to be wholly devoted to one another, but your heart seems to be elsewhere.”

“The feeling of love went away soon after we were married.” I said.

“Love isn’t a feeling.” She replied, “You don’t base your relationships off of feelings, you’re supposed to do it based off of your strength of will.”

“Alright.” I said, “I’ll spend more time with you.”

So I did, I spent more time with her, but still she was distraught.

“I’ve noticed you conjure up apparitions of other women. I thought you loved me.” She said.

“I do love you. It’s not like they’re real women, it’s just a little entertainment for myself.”

“I don’t care who or what I share you with, I want all of you.”

“If you can’t deal with me, maybe you should leave.” I said. So she left, and I felt the absence of her love. I realized that she was the only good thing in my life. But I was free now. I could do whatever I liked, and so I did. I abandoned the throne, it was too much work anyway, and made the winner of the tournament the next king.

I traveled around again, this time finding witch doctors, psychics, and sorcerers. I learned their tricks and engaged in their rituals, I was determined to be the most powerful sorcerer.

The crews of my ship became increasingly wary, as I became increasingly agitated. One

day, we landed at Kaji, and I went for a walk in the graveyard.'

"Did you encounter the beast?" Asked Mwefu, "Is that how you got your scars?"

"Actually yes." Replied King Seaweed.

'I saw a thousand shadows walking about with no owners. "Come to me!" I cried, "I'll be your master."

"You don't own us, we own you." They said as they grappled onto me. I could feel their power melding with my own. But I was still empty, even more empty. I transformed into a giant beast monster and demolished all life that was in the valley. They now call it the desecrated valley.

My crew put bars over a cave to try to keep me contained, but my power was greater than theirs, I swallowed many of them whole. I was in agony and spent my days cutting myself with gravestones and rocks to try to distract myself from the pain inside me. I tried to die, but I couldn't.'

"So you were the monster we killed." Said Mwefu.

'Not exactly. I saw you two approach that day, I picked you both up and beat you around. I was going to eat you, but someone greater than I appeared. I knew who he was, though I had never met him, the voices told me he would kill me, that he alone could kill me.

"Suffer me to live." I cried.

"I'll suffer you to die." He said as his spirit within him leapt out and rent my spirit in two. I was now freed from the evil spirits I had accumulated my whole life, in a flash I was made new. He gave me a hug, and I felt my heart that once was stone beat with love.

"You've saved me from myself." I said.

"He's not defeated yet. I have to become you, so you can become me." Said the man. He transformed as I had, and I knew how much pain he was in. Only, I had deserved it, I wanted it, I earned it, but this man was perfect, he had not committed a crime, yet he took on my evil which was repulsive to him.

"Maybe we can kill this one." Said Naazwa-to.

"But he's not a monster, he saved that man by taking his place—"

"He may have not been before, but he is now, someone ought to put him out of his misery before he slaughters anybody."

So you two beat him with swords and he used every ounce of willpower not to fight back. I knew he could have killed you even by accident with that much evil and power flowing through him. Finally, after many blows, he was near death. The sun stopped shining, and the earth grew cold. Then the sun came back, and the man who saved me was dead, the beast was nowhere to be found, only the body of the man.

“Wrap the body, we’re taking it to Zinodwo.”
Said Naazwato.

You could have killed me, I was the beast,
but you let me live.

After you two left with the body, I went back
to my tomb. I was there for three days, cry-
ing day and night. You came back after two
days and Naazwato wanted to take me, but
you said that I was innocent and you both
left. But on the third day, I had another
visit. The gravedigger approached me.

“What are you doing.” He said.

“I’m staying here where I belong, I’m a mon-
ster. I’ve killed countless people.”

“I’ve heard of the beast that lives in the des-
ecrated valley, but you’re not him.”

“Maybe not, but I used to be.” I replied.

“What happened?”

“A traveler came by, he took the monster
spirit off of me and he put both himself and
the spirit to death.”

“The beast is dead then.” He said, “Why are
you still living as if he were alive?”

“It’s my fault, I should have been the one to
die, I –” Then the gravedigger reached out
his hand and a flaming white ghost stepped
into my body.

“It’s you! You’re alive.” I said, recognizing
him as the traveler who rescued me.

“Yes. I wouldn’t let death separate us.” He
replied. “I gave all of myself for you. But

in order for you to have peace, and joy, and faith, and self-control, you'll have to give all of yourself to me. You're my son now. You can have my spirit. It's stronger than whatever you had before, don't turn back, the old you is dead."

"Sounds like marriage." I said.

"I know you didn't do so well at that. You've tried everything the world had to offer. But you're my son now, and I won't ever let you down."

This wasn't a regular man, he had absolute power. He had control over nature and all supernature, he was God himself. There's many multitudes of people on this earth, but he took time for me, and if he can do that, he has time for you as well.'

"You're saying that you have the spirit of a god in you?" Said Mwefu.

"Not *a god*, *THE GOD*. He directed me here, and I felt his spirit move me to enter the tournament, so I did."

"Can you perform some magic or something so I know you're telling the truth?"

"You mean apart from all your failed assassination attempts?" Said the king.

"Sure."

"God healed the beggar before the tournament." Said Seaweed.

"He can walk now?" Said Mwefu.

"He can. He just chooses not to."

So Seaweed took Mwefu out and they found the beggar.

"The king says you can now walk." Said Mwefu.

“He’s got you bewitched. That sort ’o thing is impossible.” Said Bwaa.

“If he doesn’t choose to embrace his new life, it won’t affect him.” Said the king.

“He really is a conman.” Said Bwaa, “He’s fooled e’ry one but me.”

So Mwefu went to Twizwa’s house and Seaweed went back to his palace.

E.3 The Ring

The next day, Kevin went to see king Seaweed, and he managed to get an audience with him.

“How much would you give me for this?” Asked Kevin holding up Rebekah’s ring.

“Where did you come by that?!” Said Seaweed.

“A woman gave it to me. She said her name was Rebekah, she said she was your wife. But the chronicles said your wife’s name was Heidi.”

“The chronicles are a lie, I’m sorry. Heidi wasn’t real, Rebekah was my real wife. She loved me, but I was too distracted by other things to love her back.”

“A pound of gold for this ring.” Said Kevin.

“Take it. Add it to the 20 lbs you’ve already stole.” Said Seaweed as he snatched the ring out of Kevin’s hand, “Where is Rebekah now? I need to see her.”

“She lives in a house on the eastern shore, I can show you.” Said Kevin.

So Kevin took king Seaweed to the house and left Seaweed to face Rebekah on his own. Kevin didn’t want to get caught by Rebekah again, and he hoped that perhaps she would kill Captain Seaweed, or at the very least distract him from their assassination attempts.

“Bekah!” Seaweed shouted, as he entered the tattered wooden shack. But he soon found himself caught in the same trap that earlier had caught Kevin.

“Who are you!?” Said Rebekah as she held out the point of a spear toward the hanging king.

“I’m an unworthy worm who has been unfaithful all these years.” Said Seaweed calmly, holding out the ring.

“Oscar, you came back. After all these years.” Said Rebekah.

“How is our daughter?”

“She’s a grandmother now.”

“I’m sorry I missed the life we could have had together. I’m sorry that I was never there for you. I’m sorry that I never loved you.”

“I still love you. I’ve never so much as looked at another man.”

“I’ve been so wicked, there was never anything in me worth loving.”

“Even so. I love you.” She said.

“You were right about everything.” Said Oscar.

“Stop it. You know I love it when you say that.”

“Every woman does.” He said.

“What do you know about other women?” She asked.

“More then I’d like. I wish I had been faithful, I wish I had given all of myself to you. Nobody can replace you.”

Rebekah smiled.

“However, I do have a commitment that might get in the way.” Said Oscar.

“You’ve remarried?” Said Rebekah beginning to cry.

“No, no, no. My thirst for power turned me into a literal monster and I killed many people. But I was rescued by God himself, he took my place and died and came back. So I’ve given my life to him, there may be room for you, but you’d be second.”

"EVERY SINGLE TIME." She muttered, "Don't you *EVER* come back unless you have the will to put me first."

"I'm amazed at how you put up with me. But I'm a different person now. I've learned to love, and it's because of God, and I want to give him all of me."

"You do that." Said Rebekah as she let Seaweed down out of the net and motioned him out the door. She weeped quietly, and Seaweed groaned within his spirit.

...

Later that day, Mwefu and Seaweed were once again talking to one another.

"Have you ever loved a woman Mwefu?" Asked Seaweed.

"Yes I have." Said Mwefu, "She was amazing, she was smart, beautiful, hard working, talented artisan, mediocre fighter even."

"Did you marry her?"

"No, we were engaged, but she drowned trying to save a child from the flooding river."

"So you've never found anyone else?" Said Seaweed.

"No." Said Mwefu, "No one else could possibly measure up to her. I loved her dearly, but she actually ruined me in a way; she was so perfect that I can never be satisfied with anyone else, because she made everyone else hideous, stupid, and hateful by comparison."

"You could stop thinking about yourself and get married to help the other person." Said Seaweed.

"Way too much of an investment for someone I don't care for." Replied Mwefu.

E.4 Barfoot Interrupts Himself

I'm sorry for doing this, I don't normally interrupt the flow of a story, but I thought it was important to get this out here.

Not sure why I put so many love stories into that last section, maybe it had to do with my infatuation and falling out with Bob Graft's daughter, I don't know. I'm only 19, so perhaps I'm a little naive.

Before I began writing my additions to *The Fall of King Mwefu*, I had been writing Bob's daughter Anne a lot. And somehow, Bob invited me over for dinner one night; I had no idea the kind of mess I was about to find myself in.

I arrived at his house at 5:30pm, 30 minutes early so that I wouldn't be late. The house was in shambles, the soffits were hanging and dented, the fascia boards were rotted, and the hedges were unruly and were being overtaken by wild grapes and mulberries. Bob's wife Mary answered the old wooden door that was in need of a new paint job.

"Oh, you're early!" She said flustered and slamming the door on me, "Give me five minutes to finish tidying up."

So I waited outside and cleaned up some garbage myself and found a rusty pair of loppers and began to trim the plants.

"What do you think you're doing!" Asked Graft, sneaking up behind me.

"I'm just trimming some weeds." I replied.

"Those aren't weeds, those are valuable trees, the world is running short on trees." He shot back.

"I'm sorry. They didn't look wanted." I replied. He grabbed the loppers out of my hand and threw them back on the ground where I had picked them up from; then he

led me inside. Bob was a man of 50 years, as was his wife. The house was fairly messy, so I couldn't imagine what it had looked like before they cleaned it. Bob sat me down at the table which was set for three and I could smell the spaghetti and Texas toast.

A loud mumble came from the other room. Bob twitched in annoyance.

"Honey." Shouted Mary from the kitchen, "Your dad wants you to help him to the kitchen." I thought that Mary was talking to their daughter Anne, but Bob spoke up.

"He was supposed to be napping." He said with agitation in his voice as he got up and went into the other room. He returned with his arm around a thin wrinkled old man. Bob sat the man down at the table and went to grab another chair and plate et cetera.

"You must be my future grandson." Said the old man.

"I don't know about that. So you're Bob's Dad?" I replied.

"Step father." Said Bob interrupting the same as he scooted the old man and his chair aside so that there was room for himself to wedge a chair in.

"Tell me. Have you ever heard of a book called *The Fall of King Mwefu*?" Said the step father.

"Now let's not bring this up, Al." Said Bob.

"Yes I have." I replied, "It's a great story."

"Ah yes." Said Al grinning, "But which is your favorite translation?"

"I've only read the original." I said.

"The original Fobwa?" Asked Bob seeming to lighten up.

"No. The Pacoitz translation." I said, "I tried the other translations, but I could never get into them." Al smiled at this answer and Bob's countenance sunk.

“Why must you do this?” Said Mary setting the pot of spaghetti down on the table, “Can we please talk about something else? Especially when we have company.”

“Oh come on. I hear that I’m all that Bob talks about at work.” Said Al.

“No, I didn’t even know he had a stepdad.” I said.

“I’m Allen G. Pacoitz. I was the first to discover and translate *The Fall of King Mwefu*.” Said Al.

“Oh.” I replied, “Then yes he talks about you, but he’s never told any of us that he *personally knew you*, let alone that you lived in his house and were his stepdad.”

“My house.” Said Al, “Yep, that’s funny, Bobby is such a hoot. I’m not sure who has more shame though, him of me, or I of him.”

“You’re insufferable.” Said Bob.

“Don’t mind Bob, that’s his little mind’s way of saying that he loves me.” Said Al.

“Why did you have to ruin a great work of literature by doing such a poor job translating it?!” Said Bob.

“I made it better. Charlie agrees with me.” Said Al, “Now would someone go get some apricot jam please?” I got up to look for some jam in the refrigerator, but Bob stopped me.

“No!” Said Bob, “You can’t let him put jam on cheesy garlic bread. Those flavors absolutely cannot go together.”

“It all mixes in my stomach anyway.” Said Al as I handed him the jam. He poured nearly the whole jar on his Texas toast. Mary, Bob, Al, and I all sat down and bowed our heads to pray.

Bob prayed: “Thank you *heavenly* father, for this food. Thank you that the people who translated your word were faithful and did not rewrite it. Thank you for Charlie who always does a great job at work and sometimes sticks up for me. Thank you for my beautiful wife that cooked the food, but sometimes she abandons me. God, change the hearts and minds of all of those peo-

ple that are deceived, show them the truth. I pray for all those teachers who have made people suffer throughout the ages, teaching literary elements and nonsense instead of teaching integrity and truth. God, bless myself. Bless president John Fitzgerald Kennedy, keep him alive for many years. This might be beyond your power, but forgive my step-father for ruining literature for all of time. Forgive Charlie for killing all the trees and turning the planet into a desert. Forgive my wife for under—”

“Amen! Amen!” Said Mary interrupting Bob’s prayer, “Honey, you know we were talking to God, right? Because it sounded like you were trying to criticize us.”

“I’m thankful, and asking for forgiveness for all of you. Didn’t you hear my prayer?” Said Bob.

“It was condescending.” Said Mary.

“It’s really hard not to be condescending when you really are better than everyone else.”

“Why don’t you write something of your own then?” Said Al.

“Ha, you’ve never written anything, you’ve just corrupted things.” Said Bob.

“Actually —” Said Al sounding as if he was about to confess to something.

“I don’t want to hear it.” Said Bob interrupting.

“Bob, you need to forgive.” I said nervously, “Jesus has forgiven you, pass it on.”

“I have! But I’m not stupid. Fool me once, shame on you, fool me twice, shame on me.”

“Jesus said we should forgive people 70 times seven times.” I said.

“Oh believe me, I’ve surpassed that number years ago.” He said.

“Love keeps no record of wrongs.” I said.

“Love takes two people.” Said Bob.

“Jesus loves even those who don’t love him back.”

“I’m not Jesus.”

“But you should be. That’s what being a Christian means.”

“Charlie, I think you’re getting too religious. You’re so heavenly minded you’re no earthly good.”

“Bob. Do you want me to apologize for focusing on things that matter instead of things that don’t?”

“Sometimes Bobby gets bogged down by details that don’t matter.” Interjected Al.

“But they do matter,” Said Bob, “Big pictures are made of an orchestration of little details. When those details are out of place, like those puns and errors that you put into your translation, it spoils the whole work.”

“To the victor belong the spoils.” Said Al.

“This isn’t the way to act around company. Both of you, be quiet!” Said Mary, “Let’s enjoy our food.” There was an awkward silence for a couple minutes as we quietly ate our food.

“Hey, umm. . . Is Anne coming to eat?” I asked, breaking the silence.

“Who’s Anne?” Said Mary.

“Your daughter?” I said slowly.

“We have no daughter.” Said Bob. I could see Al’s face strain.

“Oh, my heart. It’s not doing well, I think I’m having a heart attack.” Said Al his face turning red.

“I hope it’s real this time.” Said Bob.

“Bob!” Said Mary rebukingly as she rushed to her father-in-law’s side.

“In the name of Jesus, be healed.” I said, putting a hand on Al’s shoulder.

“My back was aching,” Said Al looking well, “but now it feels better.”

“And your heart?” I asked.

“Oh! It’s still bad. Just leave me be.” Said Al as he twitched and squirmed. I reached out to pray for him again.

“Don’t pray for me!” He said, “I’m having a heart attack beyond the power of Jesus to heal. I think he wants me to have it.”

“That’s not what a heart attack looks like.” Said Mary.

I spoke up: “Jesus is the one ‘Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;’ Jesus died not only for our sins, but to heal us, they go hand in hand.”

“I say we let him die.” Said Bob.

“He fakes this kind of thing all the time when someone asks him a question he doesn’t want to answer.” Said Mary.

“Fine. You got me.” Said Al sitting up straight again.

“I can’t remember asking him a question.” I said, “Does this have anything to do with Anne?”

Al started flailing his arms and complaining about his heart again.

“Allen Geoffrey Pacoitz!” Said Mary, “Stop it!”

Al burst out laughing, and Bob joined him.

“Dad, please tell me you didn’t.” Said Bob between chuckles.

“Allen!” Said Mary, “You wrote this poor boy love letters pretending to be a daughter that I don’t have? Is that your idea of a joke?!” I buried my head in my hands in shame, realizing what had happened.

“Honestly, I thought he’d find out sooner. I had no idea it’d last this long.” Said Al.

“Why in the world would you do that!?” Demanded Mary.

“I was bored. Bobby took away all my notebooks, all I had left was some scrap pieces of paper to write on. So I wrote shorter things, and I found Charlie’s address on a note that he wrote so that Bobby could pick him up for work that one time. So it just sorta happened, I can’t control my creative urges.”

“That’s why you’ve insisted on getting the mail every day then.” Said Bob shaking his head between chuckles.

I got up from the table in shame and left; Mary tried to stop me, but I didn’t appreciate being the butt-end of a joke like that. I forgave them all quickly, but finding that manuscript in the trash was surely a divine opportunity to play a little joke back.

I’ll get the last laugh in the end; not that I’m bitter or anything.

E.5 Rushing Wind

King Seaweed began his work of helping rebuild Zinodwo, he went out and he joined the royal building crews and they fixed up people's homes. But the people yelled at the king and tried to kill him to no avail.

"I hate you! You're a very wicked selfish king." Said a young man holding a sign that said, "*Death to all tyrants!*"

"That's fine." Said the king as he gave the man an orange. But this made the man even madder, "Don't you care what I have to say?!"

"Not really, but go ahead."

"The tribute of Kaaji has stopped and you've made us all poor!"

"Would you like a job? I'm sure I could find something for you to do."

"No I don't! I need the income that Mwefu used to give us."

"I thought everyone hated Mwefu."

"We did, before you came along. I'd give anything to have him back."

"Maybe I'll give him a job then."

"If you like him, then you're both tyrants. Death to you both."

...

"When are they going to execute you?" Asked Seaweed.

"It's strange." Said Mwefu, "I have no idea."

"They postponed your execution so that you could kill me."

"It seems to be. That doesn't bother you at all?"

"If it's my time to die, it's my time to die."

"I don't understand it." Said Mwefu, "You were able to leave your old life of sorcery and treachery and move

on, but my past is always going to haunt me and I can't commit myself to a side."

"Of course you can't." Said Seaweed, "If you're fighting yourself you're going to lose. Or at best you'll be stuck at a stalemate. You are your own equal, fighting yourself is unwinnable on your own, you need help."

"Even if I could stick to a side, I've still lost everyone's trust. I want what you have, that spirit that gives you power and peace."

"Ok." Said Seaweed touching Mwefu on the shoulder, "There you go."

"That's it?" Said Mwefu, "Nothing happened. I don't feel any different."

"Why would you feel any different?"

"I just thought that I'd feel a sensation or something."

"Walk by faith. Not by sight. If you rely on your feelings to guide you then you're going to be in trouble."

Seaweed got up and started walking east.

"Where are you going?" Asked Mwefu.

"To the sea." Said Seaweed

Appendix F

Sarah Foxe's Continuation

Charles gave me this copy out of the trash and it's actually better than Graft's finished copy, so I'm substituting that with this. The final manuscript that he gave me had no such footnotes and the introduction was much less genuine.

I also found some unpublished essays by Graft and others that could really use a home in a published work.

SARAH FOXE,
TYPESETTER OF *Whinery Press*

F.1 The Problems Inherent in Authors

BY ROBERT GRAFT

Sure nobody is perfect, but nevertheless, it is important to note their faults. Take fiction authors for instance, many of them either use a pseudonym or an over-aggressive abbreviation to mask their identities: Mark Twain, A. A. Milne, J. R. R. Tolkien, et al. This dissociativeness from their real names shows their insecurities, namely dissatisfaction with who they are, and a compulsion to create new worlds to numb the disorder of their lives.

Now those authors of fiction who do not hide their names have another issue: They are arrogant and seeking praise for themselves. One would then wonder if it were possible to write fiction without fault. No it is not. Whatever fault you possess will be evident by the way you sign it. Sure you could sign the opposite way you'd like, but you won't. Because if writers of fiction had *any* self-control, they would not be writing fiction.

Do not doubt for a second that non-fiction authors have their own problems. When faced with chronicling a rather boring event, their pride drives them to make it somehow sound interesting and epic through various superfluous embellishments. But in doing so, they have incidentally created an ungodly hybrid between non-fiction and fiction, having all the detractions of both and the benefits of neither.

As readers, we enjoy non-fiction because it is true. When a writer abuses this by sprinkling his work with lies and exaggerations and "literary elements" he betrays his readers. It should not be required for a reader of a work of non-fiction to still have to sift the fact from the fiction. If the author hates the truth so much, he should write straight fiction and label it as such so as not to deceive his audience.

F.2 Forest for the Trees

BY ROBERT GRAFT

There is no greater enemy of the English language than the ones who've been appointed to defend it, namely English teachers. They dissect mediocre works of literature like a man without teeth puts pasta into a blender. All of the texture is thus lost, the flavor becomes a bland

mix, and they wonder why their students fail to do the assignments. Literary elements did not exist until the advent of public schooling wherein teachers decided that narratives didn't matter and all that mattered was fine insignificant details.

Literary elements are the devil's substitute for real writing talent. By that I mean that the author intentionally uses them to muddy the story because he knows that that his writing will not hold up to fine scrutiny. By utilizing literary elements, he redirects attention away from plot, characters, humor, emotion, and logic, and redirects it towards vain tangles of words.

However, with skilled writers who don't pleasure in such esoteric banality, the teachers still strain to find the "literary elements."

"Why did the author use this technique?" They'll ask, when the answer is that there is no technique and they are merely seeing the floaters within their own eyes.

Teachers never select stories because they're good stories or because the writing is good, they select them based on insignificant details about the author.

"This author was a woman with dark skin color." Well that does not make a bad story a good one, regardless in how much one believes in social justice.

Or take "The Crucible" which teaches students that we should just let the communists win because they don't exist. The communists have won, they wrote the book and they are pushing it on students to weaken their aversion to broken economic systems. Nothing else about the book is noteworthy, and it is nothing more than a subversive brainwashing tool.

In a way it's reverse subliminal messaging. Normally the true message is hidden and only picked up by the subconscious, but with reverse subliminal messaging the true message is apparent but the focus is placed on "literary elements" and tiny details. The same effect

is achieved by both methods. It's hard for students to criticize the message of a story when they're not aware there is one because they're too busy reading it trying to find "hidden meanings." Not sure whether the irony of that is lost on the teachers, because as I recall they always did love pointing out irony, even if they were incapable of explaining what it was to students.

F.3 Music's Dark Secret

BY ROBERT GRAFT

With the emergence of radio and portable listening apparatus, music has become very convenient and available. One would think that this would be of benefit to mankind, but on the contrary it has weakened the constitution of many people. Music allows one to augment and to influence one's feelings; so as a consequence people are now unable to regulate their own emotions.

And because music is no longer live, it can be enjoyed by an individual on their own, thus isolating themselves from others and creating an unhealthy introversion. Not to say that introversion is always wrong, great works of literature can come from it, but when a person is alone only to consume music, it's a miserable existence. The industrial music complex has choked out smaller artists and have created a homogeneous degenerate culture devoid of creativity or individual thought. Why do people subject themselves to sing the inane anthems of corporations and immoral musicians, to be brainwashed by satanic beats and rhythms?

It used to be that people had their own patterns, their own thoughts, their own emotions, and their own desires. Oh how the mighty have fallen, entrapped by

mechanical bumps on vinyl discs. Who will set the zombies free? When will the crippled music driven weaklings wake up? Lulled to sleep unaware of the world around them. Moderation has ceased and self-control is nothing but a distant dream. Every note adds a strand, every chord adds a string, every lyric adds a rope, to the never ending stream of chords to bind their hands and feet; their ears inclined to subservience of the one pulling the strings.

F.4 Words Are Deception

BY ROBERT GRAFT

Writing is the art of manipulation, of making another think and feel the way the author wishes. It's all lies and fabrication, from whichever tribe and nation. Who's to say what's real or not? Do you trust the publisher's word, that the writer is who they say they are? There's no penalty for lying though the fake named coward is truly trying to enslave you with his vying.

"What's the harm, it's all good fun?" But people are distracted from eternal cares, left to tend their earthly wares.

Really, terseness and succinctness are more to be valued than every wordy sentence that requires complex charts and an assortment of dictionaries to comprehend. Communication in this world is fallen and so writers aim for professionalism over actually expressing what they want to say; or rather they have nothing to say; so they stretch it out to mask their insecurities.

F.5 Creativity

BY ALLEN G. PACOITZ

There's an enormous amount of freedom in translation and in the production of non-fiction. Some would say otherwise, but study any work with multiple translations such as the Holy Bible. You'll find that there's ambiguity that must be expressed in one form or another and that the selection of that form is left to artistic interpretation.

“Should I transliterate this name using voiced or unvoiced palatal fricatives? What phones elicit the proper feeling? Does the appearance of the spelling matter more than pronunciation since no one will say an unfamiliar name any way?”