

ELEMENTAL MAGIC

In the water
I am the stream
Though in control
I move in a dream
In the wind
I am the air
Weightless and free
With hardly a care
In the fire
I am the flame
The heat is around me
And I am the same
In the ground
I am the earth
Nor I am a child
From this world's birth

Death...Oblivion

Death comes to me
An answer to a prayer
For now my suffering ends
Or does it now begin?

The darkness surrounds me
Like a cold shroud
Fear compounds itself
Into great agony

I fear what comes next
For I see no light
Only a sable, starless sky
A nightmare of reality

A whirlwind of imagination
Ideas scattered throughout infinity
Opportunity lost forever
Trapped in a torrent of anguish

Then nothing
Silence
Darkness
Oblivion washes over me

P36

WATER, FLESH AND BLOOD

Fabricated of water, flesh and blood,
Leading the free
It broke the enslaving bonds
Of the southern states.

In times of war
Bodies cross the ocean blue
As life, blood red,
Runs into the snow blanketed earth.

In these dreary times
It reeks of death,
Limply it hangs, out of breath
Folding into a starred and striped pyramid.

At the head of a parade
With colors, unfurled
Its honours the glory of our country
And those who lived to die for it.
Preserving the freedom it represents to us all.

Unfurling to a new day,
One fourth a starry night,
Yielding to a striated sunrise
Bringing the promise of better times to come
Better lives to be led.

I

When chill November's surly blast
 Made fields and froest bare ,
 One ev'ning , as I wander'd forth
 Along the bank of Ayr ,
 I spy'd a man , whose agéd step
 Seem'd weary , worn with care;
 His face was furrow'd o'er with years ;
 And face hoary was his hair.

II

" Young stranger , whither wand'rest thou ? "
 Began the rev'rend sage ;
 " Does thirst of wealthy thy step constrain ,
 Or youthful pleasure's rage ?
 Or haply , prest with cares and woes ,
 Too soon thou hast began
 To wander forth , with me to mourn
 The miseries of man.

III

" The sun that overhangs yon moors ,
 Out - spreading far and wide ,
 Where hundreds labor to support
 A haughty lordling's pride ;
 I've seen yon weary winter - sun
 Twice forty times return ;
 And ev'ry time has added proofs ,
 That man was made to mourn.

IV

" O man ! while in they early years ,
 How prodigal of time !
 Mis - spending all thy precious hours ,
 Thy glorious , youthful prime !
 Alternate follies take the sway :
 Licentious passions burns ;
 Which tenfold force gives Nature's law ,
 That man was made to mourn

V

IX

His cruelty , or scorn ?
Or why has man the will and pow'r
To make his fellow mourn ?

X

" Yet , let not this too much , my son
Disturb thy youthful breast :
This partial view of human - kind
Is surely not the last !
The poor , oppressed , honest man
Had never , sure , been born ,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn !

XI

" O Death ! The poor man's dearest friend ,
The kindest and the best !
Welcome the hour my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest !
The great , the wealthy fear thy blow ,
From pomp and pleasure torn ;
But , oh ! a blest relief for those
That weary - laden mourn ! "

P31

... The Minstrel ...

Chorus

My love, my song
Of thee, of thee
I sing my love of thee.

If I were a royal minstrel
I'd sing our love to kings.
My voice would soar
Through pillared halls.
And all who heard would marvel.

My love, my song
Of thee, of thee
I sing my love of thee.

But I am a man of small measure
Working daily for my bread.
And though you're queen
My kingdom is small
And none may share my treasure.

My song, my love
Of thee, of thee
I love my song of thee.

But if I were a bard of renown
There would be lyrics of your grace
Your tender looks
Your loving heart
Are jewels by the goddess sown.

Our song, our love
Of thee, of thee
I sing a song of thee.

Though the royal reside in splendor
I am more blessed than monarchs high
The song no less
For being mute
A song does your love engender.

My love, our song
Of thee, of thee
I offer this to thee.

67-29

KINGDOMS

EMERALD

She comes to the glen
With the first silver moon
Dancing the earth anew.

The eyes of the woods
Devour her grace.
She is gone by the morning's dew.

TOPAZ

The Burning Sands
Fearsome breeds produce;
Races of gentle predators.

Wanting is gone
Being is all;
The unknowing, primal avatars.

ONYX

Black eats up her soul.
Greed but a pearl
Cast before blinded farrows.

Prosper she will
But balance is all
The path becoming more narrow.

SILVER

Silver plumes
Yearn toward the sun,
The fires of her birth yet sustaining.

Flight is the goal;
The birthright of all
Will Vanish for want of claiming.

MY LORD OF GREEN EYES

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I do not love thee, Lord, for the richness in your hand.
Nor do I court your favor for thy power in the land.
And though your brow is noble and your leg is finely turned,
All this I would forsake but for what of you I've learned.

You smile as you awake my love.
Your first thoughts turn to I.
I see myself reflected
In your strange and fey green eyes.

Let others fear your wrath for tasks they have not done.
Your heirs and nobles point with pride to races they have won.
And your men at arms may sweat their rounds in the formless dark
of night.
And thy wizards and the counselors but strive to prove your
might.

But with tenderness you kiss my brow;
And your show me rainbow skies.
I marvel at the wonder
In your soft and clear green eyes.

And should your power slip and fade with the passing of our
years.
The knights, the serfs and serving men look back on this with
tears.
I'll chide them for their blindness and not heed their sorrowing
cries.
For all that was the best of you was there in your green eyes.

My love is yours till mountain's fall
And the dove forsakes the skies.
For we both will live forever
In the memory of green eyes.

I passed a moment with you

A moment of tenderness

Where just we two were together...

Alone

I spent a moment with you

Where nothing was really said or done

Just together

Consumed by the joy of simply being

A moment with you

With us

Where words could never express

The message in your eyes

Or the love in your heart

R19

A Dryad's Sorrow

Autumn winds blow through my tree
Sending crisp red leaves cascading downward
They send ripples across a calm pool as they lightly land
Sending greetings to my sister the naiad

I am a prisoner, longing to be free
Of oncoming winter's icy grip
My tree will soon be bare of its leaves,
A victim of winter's sword of sorrow

My dwellings, the majestic forest with her trees
Will soon be bland and gray
The wonderful birds with their wonderful songs
Are absent from the branches

But all is not lost,
For winter must finally depart
Brilliant spring in its place
The leaves will return and the flowers will bloom
And birds will light on waiting branches
And happiness will have returned

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You have given me all you have to give
To share this world in which I live
Come and see this world, so desolate and bare
See the emptiness and loneliness you force yourself to share

You thought you'd find heaven when you broke my stubborn shell
Now look and see. This is not heaven but my private hell.
No, this is not heaven, where the angels sing.
But just another empty place, another empty dream.

You have asked me what it was that made me what I am today
And I must answer that the emptiness and loneliness are why I am this way
Yet I am no evil demon, I still watch and I still see
And I know the feelings that you have inside for me

But I am what I have always been, what I was meant to be
Go search somewhere else for love, don't waste your time on me.

The Rack

My whole world is pain
My reason to live is dispelled by agony
Life, joy, happiness...all forgotten
My life means nothing

Minutes, hours, days
Pass by unnoticed
Even years seem to pass
In a torrential blur of strained muscle and bone

Tortured
For information I do not have
Memory eluding me
Hiding in a realm of sorrow

This evil man wants answers
Answers that I know not
My mind searching for reasons
Exploding from within

Would that I could die
Leaving the cruel world behind
As though it never existed
But this man will have none of that

Blood, blocking my vision
A murky red sea of pain surrounds me
I attempt to cry out
But cannot

The question again
And again the same response
I know nothing
Nothing

The man is angry
An order is given
The machine does its job
A job it does well

I am stretched further
My arms pulled from their sockets
My bones unnaturally twisted
Oblivion comes with cold, black arms

A Call To Purgatory

I wake up
From an endless sleep
And with great fear see eternity lay me to rest

A shroud
Falling lightly over me
I scream out
I am not yet dead!

But perhaps I am
For no one hears me
I cannot move
My body is cold

My soul
Calls out to me
Crying
Do not leave me trapped in this shell

Sobbing
My loved ones
Staring down
Upon a lifeless body

Why am I not in heaven
Or at least hell
They are somewhere
I am nowhere

Purgatory
A soul in balance
I do not go up...
Nor down

Stuck for eternity
Infinity
In a chill body
That grows ever colder

The Last Hero

He was a tower of bronzed muscle,
Who waded in a crimson tide.
Warm red splashed upon his massive chest,
And his straight, black mane
Drenched with blood.
It all belonged to dead men.

He stepped toward the next three.
His blue eyes burned
With cold indigo fire.
Parry, counter, slash, thrust
And onto the next.

He was the chosen,
The last one.
To be a hero of the gods.
The final hero of the gods.

Now he and his gods
Dwell in the dark stone mountains
Of aged time.
They are gone,
But not dead.
They live
In Legend.

SEASONS OF THE NAIAD

The waters of my pond were calm and cool
But now autumn has chilled the liquid with cold winds
Leaves from the trees above send ripples across my surface

I fear that winter will soon freeze me over
Locking me beneath a sheet of ice
Making me a prisoner of my own home

But spring is the key to winter's icy lock
And it frees me from my prison
My waters once again flow free

It is summer now
The heat is unbearable
And Unicorns drink from my pool

I hear the birds in the trees above sing a sad lament
I know that summer will soon depart
And autumn will come once again

Dream?

I lie awake.
The soft embrace of darkness
in the midst of night
is comforting.
Then I remember her.

Skin, softer than the touch of a cloud.
Warmth, like a sleeping lover at dawn.
Beauty, in sapphire eyes that shine,
like stars on a moonless night.
Words, saying I love you.

Who is she?
I am confused.
Who is she?
The inky black night mocks me.
I don't know.
I love her.
Who is she?
Why don't I know?

She loves me.
She loves no other.
She is gone.

Nights grip holds me no more.
Now I truly lie awake,
Seeing in the darkness.
A crystal-cold tear
rolls down my cheek.
My heart screams I love her.

Black everywhere.
Her voice is soft.
She whispers I love you.
I hear her cry.
I have hurt her.
How?
I love her.
No one else can my heart hold.
She whispers again,
I will always love you.
We share a tender kiss.

It is morning.
I am alone.
Was it a dream?
I don't know.
I am confused.
It seemed real, so real.
Was it a dream?

Eastern Skies

In the grey of predawn the darkness
seems longest.
Lie with the night,
if only for a little while.
The world is a cloak of black,
and your fate is to deal with shadows.
Inevitable the gloom...
and subtle the siren song.
It lulls its victims;
Retired to their crypts of stone,
watery eyes dulled in bemused surrender,
never to know the laughter of light.
Dawn was ever and only in the
eyes of the hopeful.
Insist on your place in the sun.

Rendition

Winter he composed
 on the dank, lonely moors.
the dark depth of silence...
his hearth an open flame;
Welcome to those seeking solitude
 in the season of the night.
A brook flows unchanneled.
Its depths are broached,
scattered shards of memory served,
waning fruits for the sleeper awoken.

Kd

What was the Glory

Bring the whole together,
doing as they do it in Rome.
But the parts don't always stick.
Empires crumble.
And humans are a difficult lot.
Fighting for survival,
they seldom truly live--
more helpless souls drawn
into the inertia of the downward spiral.
The Caesar's lot is difficult.
He can only point, possibly lead to water,
and nary halt the decline.
His brier light extinguished
in the madness of the coming night.

Promised Shore

Astride golden chargers, equine glide.
Hearken the piercing cry of kestrels,
strumming rhythm on the waves.
Mark the banners' blazon glory,
finding pathways to the sea.
Flights into fantasy,
so the critics claim...
Those immune to hope,
even in these times of testing-
they have foresaken the children
of a better world.
My brother/sister, lover child--
we can make for the ocean,
a ship ready in port.
An elven galley sails the westerly way;
And all is possible in adventure to gain.

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THE WORLD IS ON FIRE

The world is on fire
With countries none can admire
Cities laid to waste and put aflame
No one wants to take the blame,
Unless it would bring global fame.

Politicians constantly lyin'
While people all around are dyin'
With widows and babies forever cryin',
Everyone's tryin' to turn a quick buck
Leaving the poor to run out on their luck.

No one wishes to share their wealth
Not even to better another man's health.
Nobody really wants to care,
Providing only a little welfare,
When they have all that cash to spare.

The world is choked with a thousand fears
From a thousand voices that nobody hears.
Is anybody out there who cares? Who cares?
If someone once did, no one now dares.
The world is on fire; watch as it flickers and flares.

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DUNGEON GRAFFITI

It takes balls to play a Wizard!

One dragon to another: "Antipaladin for dinner again? This is
third time this week we've had canned food!"

The Dagger of Infinite what--?!

HEALERS ARE ENCHANTING

Clawball -- play it!

The Sword of Flame is a medieval hot rod

Is that a codpiece you're wearing,
or are you just happy to see me?

A WENCH IS JUST AN ASSASSIN IN DRAG

CHAPTER ONE: FAMILIAR SIGHTS

As I stood listening to the orders that the prince was giving me, a dream cloud drifted between us. I remembered each word he was about to say from some shadowy past or some revealed future - present. I shook my head to clear my thoughts this feeling disturbed me. Suddenly the vision of a field scout returning from patrol entering the command tent with vital information smote my mind. I could see him and hear his words forming. I was feeling even stranger now, the cloud was getting thicker and my senses seemed to float in a cotton mist. My gaze turned toward the tent entrance, the door flap pulled back and the man from my mind walked in and bent down to one knee.

"Your highness," he said waiting for permission to speak.

"Report scout," my Prince replied.

The uneasy feeling that this had all happened before began to play havoc with my judgment.

"The enemy has been sited en masse twelve leagues from our northern frontier," I chorused with the scout, trying my best to match his words precisely. Suddenly I felt dizzy and a field of gray and black dots filled my vision. It was the strangest feeling hearing the words of the prince and scout around me and not really caring what they said. I felt so peaceful and at ease.

When I opened my eyes again the prince and scout were staring down at me, the prince's concerned look startled me. With a strange reflex I uttered the words I somehow knew would calm him and return us to more urgent matters.

"I am sorry your highness, I still feel a little shaken after that fall I took earlier today." Even as I said this I realized that I indeed had taken a fall from my horse some hours earlier; but somehow I felt as though it had happened in a dream and that I was now using it as an excuse to cover up something I really did not understand.

The prince sighed. "You had better take it easy for a while. I am going to need you at your best if we are to defeat House Tribana in battle. Squire," he called "take the lieutenant to his quarters and see to it that Thayer Rishkin sees him."

"At once your highness," the young man said crouching down and helping me to my feet.

"I shall be yours to command when the time comes your highness, no matter what," I said. A warm flush coursed through my body and I realized the sincerity with which I spoke. This man, Prince Raius of House Noventon, was my liege. There was no wiser leader, nor one as just and brave as he. I would fight by his side, I would die for the cause that had become my own, and I would crush anybody who sought to oppose us. I wondered at such idealistic thoughts coming from myself, but I noted them as part of the strangeness that was beginning to envelop me.

I began to walk slowly towards my tent with the young squire supporting me. All that was around me took on an unnatural familiarity. I recognized everything, but of course I had, this was the land of my youth, yet there was something about it, at the edge of my thoughts that I could not quite grasp. As we approached my tent I looked about me, my senses were sharp. I noted the smoke from the fires, the racks of weapons, the whinny of the horses and the men huddled together bantering about the upcoming battle, while checking their gear, and finally the setting sun. Yes I knew all of this far better than I could

explain. I felt a single word from my lips could bring it all together in a purity of understanding, but the word eluded me, it was just beyond my grasp.

In a few moments the squire had left me to my own devices. I lit a candle and settled back onto my cot to sort things out. My tent flap opened and Rishkin the prince's troubadour mage slipped in with his usual ease of movement. We had been friends for years and I considered him more of a brother than a man of power and position. We had many times almost faced our final day, together, in the service of our prince and there was perhaps no one that I trusted more than this strange union of poet and wizard.

He gave me his usual glance of greeting with eyes that penetrated the soul but judged not what they saw. A strange smile creased his lips.

"Your eyes take in much that they have not seen before, yes.?"

I looked up at him and knew at once he could sense the strangeness that I was feeling.

"There is so much that I recognize, everything seems to make sense. I know you, and I have known you for so long... I," At that moment I felt how strange my words must have sounded to an old friend.

"Do not feel embarrassed, as I have said you see things you have not seen before. Or more precisely you are seeing things in a different light. I welcome you. Here is where most men never come yet are always seeking. The road which leads here is one that is seldom taken. We are in a world within a world yet there is more here. More knowledge and more dangers." He sat down on my war chest and faced me again with a penetrating glance. "Tell me what you see."

I closed my eyes and just as if I had opened them I saw a scene unfold. "I see the enemy before me, my troops behind me. An overcast sky is yet holding back the rain that will begin to fall as we charge. I see young men with fear in their eyes and older men with the stare of steel and battle in theirs. The horses are stamping and champing at the bit in anticipation. A trumpet sounds and we begin a slow trot towards our enemy. Even as the trumpet's note is ending the dark cavalry of our foe begins their charge. A bolt of lightning creases the sky I drop my sword down to begin our charge. The blue and black standard of Prince Raius pops in the wind near my head then the thunder breaks and the sky begins to fall in sheets of water.

My eyes fluttered then opened and I saw Thayer still sitting on my war chest with his eyes closed and a furrowed brow.

"I feel you have come here before your time Regio, probably by accident. You have stumbled on a nexus point in your future. There are many paths that we can take in our life times, most do not stray far from a general direction that our inertia carries us towards; but you are now facing a crossroad of great importance to you, and I think future mankind. There are many ways to deal with what you face. I fear you have entered a level of understanding that perhaps you are not prepared to deal with."

"At the center of the nexus is uncertainty and power. There are those of us who sense such power. Many of us can see that which surrounds the nexus, that which is the past, present and future, but beyond the nexus no one can see. The nexus is the center of the balance which is tipped one way or another or not at all. What you must know now is that we are not alone in this sight. Do I make myself clear?" Thayer opened his eyes and I felt the weight of his statement as well as his gaze.

"You're saying there are others out there who know I am here.

"Correct, these others are not necessarily with us or against us, but one thing is for sure, they have their own interests and you stand in their way."

The words of Rishkin had both excited and shaken me. Being the military man that I was I felt that I must take what advantages I could and gather as much battlefield information as possible in this new world.

I closed my eyes and thought back to the battle. The overcast sky came back into view, the trumpets sounded, the lightning flashed and the horses surged forward again. I could feel the rise and fall of my horse's gait and the wet wind flying in my face. The sounds grew louder, the thudding of the horses' hoofs, the rhythmic clanking of armor and the battle cries of my men.

Finally I could distinguish individuals in the wall of opposition which faced me. I could see that we were on the enemies' right flank. This was fortunate for my dearest love in battle was to hit hard on the flanks. Already ahead of me a gap was forming in their lines. I knew my men would follow my lead, so I faced my horse, Aldebaran, towards the gap and spurred him on. I had flown past their first two ranks of cavalry before I met contact with my horse. I timed the collision with a shield bash and knocked my opponent from his mount. I pushed forward. I knew that our breach of their lines must penetrate through, past their last ranks, lest we be cut-off and surrounded. My goal was to shear off a large contingent of their right flank and annihilate it and then drive on into their rear. I could see a few of my men surge past me, their mounts heaving against the tide of horse and man. We were definitely waist high in the sea of battle.

Suddenly the silver and red banner of Trefaud Karanna, a lieutenant in the House Tribana loomed to my left. Battle ribbons flowed from its staff. I fought down the urge to spur Aldebaran towards this great prize. I drove on seeking the opening to the rear of Karanna's ranks. The rain continued to pelt down upon us. I finally spotted the opening which I sought as a trickle of water streamed down my hair and into my eyes. Instinctively I blinked my eyes and shook my head to regain my sight. At that moment I felt a blow strike my helmet and heard a ringing in my ears. The ground came spinning up before me and then darkness covered my vision.

I opened my eyes with a start and found that the candle on my field desk had burnt low. Another surprise greeted me, Thayer had returned to my tent and was now eyeing me with his all-knowing gaze.

"My you do learn quickly," he said. "I am sorry to bother you again, but as I was meditating a vision of battle filled my thoughts. I tried to shake it from my mind feeling it to be a mere distraction and yet it persisted. I then sought from whence the vision emanated and was led here. I rather guess you know that that path leads to your destruction and possibly the down fall of Prince Raius."

"Yes it rather seems that way," I said. "I hesitated and resisted an action for fear of seeking glory, yet the path of glory I feel was also the wisest course. What say you Thayer?"

"You have always seemed to me to be a man who follows what he feels is the just and right course. Your battlefield exploits have been many and you lead by example. The men see you as cut from the same cloth as Prince Raius. I believe you fear glory for the attention that you would bring to yourself. Do not fear to be a great man among men. It

only makes us stronger. Prince Raius knows of your loyalty to him and loves you as family. You do not lessen him with your successes, you bring the fist of power to our people without which we would not continue to exist. The Prince serves our people even as you serve our Prince. Any glory that you achieve is shared by our Prince and our people."

"Thank you for your pearls Thayer I will heed them."

"The sunrise is not far off and we ride at daybreak. Take another pearl from me Regio, get some rest."

That morning the sun refused to shine, but my spirits were high despite my usual tension before battle. We did not have to journey far. In the distance could be seen the banners of House Tribana and his lieutenants. Already Prince Raius was forming our regiments for battle.

An inspiration born of pearls came to me and I spurred Aldebaron on towards the Prince. He turned his head at the sight of my approach. I had already received my orders but I still had time for this act. I pulled back on Aldebaron's reigns and held him on his hind legs pawing at the air.

"My liege," I called, "I will bring you back the standard of Trefaud Karanna as a victory ribbon for your banner staff."

The Prince's personal guard let out with a cheer at my offer and Prince Raius called back "I will keep it in honor of your offer for one year and then tie it personally to your "own" banner staff."

Once again the Prince's Guard gave a cheer and I bucked Aldebaron to his hind legs. I raised my sword and saluted my prince and rode off to my command.

I saw the enemy before me, my troops behind me. the overcast sky still held back the rain that would begin to fall as we charged. I saw young men with fear in their eyes and older men with the stare of steel and battle in theirs. The horses were stamping and champ-ing at the bit in anticipation. A trumpet sounded and we began a slow trot towards our enemy. Even as the trumpet's note was ending the dark cavalry of our foe began their charge. A bolt of lightning creased the sky as I dropped my sword down to begin our charge. The blue and black standard of Prince Raius popped in the wind near my head then the thunder broke and the sky began to fall in sheets of water.

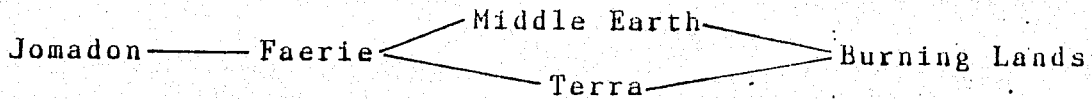
Amtgard Origins: The Claw Legion

Much has been written on the historical origins and storied exploits of the Claw Legion cohorts of the past (see "The Claw Legion" and "Origins of the Company"). Other pieces cover ancient events (such as Claw involvement in Jomadonese affairs - "A Dark Tide Rising"), and specialized information on certain company members ("A Legacy of Two Worlds"). However, little has been said of the arrival of the Company into the military and political context of the Kingdom of the Burning Lands. Again, a myriad of written pieces covering all manner of exploits from the year A.F. 2 (Amtgard Calendar: After Founding) abound, but little before this period referred to by Sultan Gilos of the Southern Wastes as the "Classic Claw Period". A gap exists, one this scholar will endeavor to fill.

What do Kings and rulers have in common? Recent surveys show Claw membership to be both heterogeneous and eclectic, a far cry from its ancient Esperai Jomadon origins. The first legion exodus into Terran environs was via Stonegate, an ancient artifact capable of one-way trans-dimensional transportation. Primitives called it magic. We "sophisticates" of modern intellectual derivation know better. The relic and others like it are obviously alien in manufacture and reflect a high order of technology, leading to a strong science-fantasy feel (that being our phrase substituted for "magic" when we don't understand things either). The important fact is that Stonegate and other such portals are scattered about the multiverse, some here on our adopted world, and traffic continues in a sporadic manner between the dimensions.

Time flow seems to vary between the gates, confusing the issue as which legionnaires departed for the Burning Lands first. The adventures of Orange in the early 4th millennium seem to indicate Esperin contact with gate technology before the exodus. Her experiences also reveal a linear effect to gate travel. The so-called elves reside dimensionally between Jomadon and Terra, much the same way as Terra occupies the niche between the elves and the Burning Lands. Can the linear method of travel be circumvented? - unknown, though evidence indicates more than one gate and destination both on Terra and in the Burning Lands. Point in fact, the elves in both Middle Earth and Terra departed over the Western Sea (to the legendary realm of Faerie? - the elven home dimension), yet both citizens of Gondolin and Numenor have sailed straight from their homelands to the Burning Lands. No evidence of a gate manifested in these journeys - though the common point of sailing over water is interesting. Repeated Terran human contacts with elven-kind also suggest

that gates may enhance (or focus) dimensional travel, though may not be required for such.



Many Burning Landers did not pass through a terran gate (assuming they did not arrive at all, but instead originated in the Burning Lands. However, archaeological evidence indicates that the Burning Lands was colonized by interdimensional travellers, it then in turn expanding to form other Amtgard groupings). However, all original Claw members either passed from Jomadon to Terra and hence to the Burning Lands, or joined the exodus from their original Terran habitats. The net result is that the Claw Legion had an impact on Terran history. This period of interaction roughly corresponded to that arbitrary cycle of events that Terran scholars consider to have divided their ancient and medieval historical eras. From the Charlemagne period through about 1400, there are references in Legion archives to involvement in Terran affairs. Indeed, whole clans of Esperin may have stayed to be assimilated in the Celtic societies of the British Isles. Stonehenge is thought to be an analogue to Stonegate, and similar artifacts appear throughout these islands. Certainly only a few legionnaires arrived in the Burning Lands, strong evidence that many settled on Terra.

The origins of several prominent Claw members lend credence to the theories already mentioned. Aramithris of Meadowlake and Covenant of Marcustar passed through Stonegate (the latter's origins portrayed in "The Summer Song") and resided for a time in Ireland. Witnesses have heard Aramithris castigate an Amtgarder of Norse extraction about the final victory of his people over the Vikings (a probable reference to King Brian Borus' victory over the Norse invaders at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014). Alrick of the Emerald Isle has a name that implies some Irish extraction. Joella Llewelyn Claromonde is a Welsh noblewoman from the same period who obviously emigrated with the Legion to the Burning Lands. Sterling # of Joatmon seems to be an English (Old) name. Though its origins have been recounted, the English translation of the Company name to "Claw Legion," both in the use of a dragon's claw and the military term of "legion" bear an uncanny resemblance to terminology referring to English society of the Pendragon period. Circumstantial evidence abounds concerning Claw Legion presence in Medieval Britain.

The existence of other characters in the Burning Lands is not so easily explained. While from a similar timeframe, Ariona Mixtlatl of the Bear Clan is of Aztec extraction. Perhaps Viking penetration of the Americas was more thorough than commonly accepted (a theory put forth by Aredhel Kemenva in "Vikings in America"), and Ariona became one of the first Americans to visit Europe; or there could have been gates in the "New World." Aredhel himself is obviously a Middle Earth Elf. In fact, a large minority of Burning Landers can boast of at least some elven blood. M'Deth of Benden heads a small Dragon-Rider contingent. It is assumed that they became lost while teleporting "inbetween" and accidentally arrived here in the Burning Lands. Some origins are not easily traceable, such as Gwynne of Tarnlea, and Naes Weissdrake. In both cases there is again a faint resemblance to Arthurian era terminology, although it is not an absolute correlation.

In summation nothing definite has been proved, yet indications are that there is a logical gridwork of dimensional pathways, that these pathways are frequently travelled, and that several waves of colonists, including the Claw Legion, utilized these pathways to arrive at and colonize the Burning Lands. It would seem that the Kingdom owes its existence to an older race of "super engineers." Perhaps one day we shall learn to utilize their legacy, and boldly stepping forth, venture to meet them on an equal basis, face to face, between the worlds.

THE BATTLE OF BARAD-DUIN

When Pharoah stood before his armies, and parlayed for tribute from royalty he sought to diminish, he dealt from what seemed an insurmountable position of strength. Encamped upon an unassailable position, with almost a 2-1 advantage in forces, and armed with the most powerful magics of this Duchy, Pharoah must have been confident indeed. Heading an army which one of his viscounts had termed "a force second to none", he could not have conceived of the wreckage his forces would amount to some 2 and 1/2 hours in the future.

THE BACKGROUND TO THE BATTLE

Ironically enough, the origin of this battle lay in Barad-Duin's status as a vassal and ally to the Kingdom of the Burning Lands. In the year 05 of this kingdoms, the dukes of Barad-Duin had sworn fealty as an eastern protectorate to their larger, more powerful neighbors to the west. Disputes did arise, such as the flap over the rights and duties of subject jurisdictions, yet the feeling remained that the Duchy was part of something larger. This feeling was magnified during the Burning Lands - Emerald Hill War of 06 when the Barad-Duin line was given the honor of the vanguard position during the final charge of the final battle. Pharoah, then an aspirant, was so enamored by this success that he made allusions to "the Empire of the Burning Lands". The seeds of desire had been planted. Border skirmishes, such as the so called "War for Waco" mounted, most of these utilizing Barad-Duin troops on this far eastern frontier. As their prestige and power grew, and more baronies fell under their sway, the Duchy grew more daring. In early 07 they declared independence, claiming all rights of kingdom under the jurisdiction of the Grand Duchy of Barad-Duin. The gauntlet had been thrown.

PRELUDE AND THE RIVAL ARMIES

Pharoah had good reason for his audacity. Having only to defend his home ground, he could count on the local levies to swell his forces. Inner turmoil had plagued the Burning Lands, their Corsairs having withdrawn to brood in their island fortresses. Further depleting the number of any expeditionary force was the distance of the Burning Land's vassal baronies. These troops couldn't possibly complete the journey before their service due for the summer campaigning season had expired. Perhaps the challenge could not even be met. Rallying his numerical might, Pharoah could field the equivalent of 12 Claw cohorts. These broke down as follows:

Archmage level magikers	25%
Lower level adepts	20%
Archers	13%
Medium infantry	12%
Skirmishers	10%
Light infantry	10%
Baronial levies	10%

Unfortunately, the renown Barad-Duin forte for guile had backfired. The Kingdom of the Emerald Hills had survived a period of civil war, and a new Queen had emerged, one friendly and generally beloved in the Burning Lands. Barad-Duin arrogance had helped dissolve the last potential stumbling blocks, and a informal treaty was concluded. When the challenge to Burning Lands sovereignty was made, the Emerald Hills were only too happy to crusade against their Austinite tormentors. Not one, but two armies were dispatched, their destination - The Grand Duchy of Barad-Duin. The Kingdom Allies forces were a smaller, but campaign hardened mix of 4 cohorts from the Emerald Hills and 3 from the Burning Lands:

Skirmishers	26%
Wizards and Adepts	22%
Heavy Infantry	19%
Barbarian Infantry	19%
Light Infantry	14%

STRATEGIES AND OPENING MOVES

Pharoah allocated de-facto control of his forces to his best general, the Viscount of Seregon. The apparent disparity of forces did not fool the Viscount, he had jousted in the West, and knew that Kingdom's resolve. Accordingly, he chose an easily defensible site and deployed his forces accordingly. The main Barad-Duin force was centered on a plateau with thick woods protecting the rear. The hill gently sloped to the right, but there was nearly impassable with thorns and brambles. A small force of wizards was deployed to hold the only trail up. The woods to the left were passable, but a steep slope covered in a carpet of slippery pine needles made any potential ascent a treacherous one. Here Seregon positioned a strong reserve to hold the heights. The bulk of his forces, particularly the missile troops, he positioned on an outcropping that jutted from the hill, its advance position allowing an enfilade fire on any force attempting to flank. Completing the defenses was a natural trench running the length of the hill along its base. A small force of adepts remained in reserve at the rear. The Barad-Duin plan was simple - wait for the allies to be funneled forward to the base of the hill, then slowly destroy them with missile fire. Their reserve could be destroyed thereafter in a general advance. To this end, the Barad-Duin army made no move and settled in to its defensive positions.

The allied army was by necessity somewhat of a split command, what with two sets of royalty and a host of proud and independent dukes. Lacking in numbers, they knew they still could defeat Pharoah's forces in open battle. The left (Barad-Duin's right) was impenetrable, but a trail led to the trench fronting Pharoah's forces. Prospects for an assault looked dubious, so it was decided to send the Emerald Hills skirmishers forward to draw the enemy onto the more level ground of the light woods below the hill. A flanking force would go right, and fall upon the Austinite's rear as the strong allied forces held in reserve moved forward to crush their trapped prey. The various elements were dispatched, the royalty settling down to see if their plan would bear fruit.

THE COURSE OF THE BATTLE

Soon the sounds of combat came drifting to the allied base camp. As the minutes sped by, it became obvious from the Kingdom's point of view that something had gone wrong. Additional elements were dispatched to scout the situation, successive units departing to learn what had become of their predecessors. In fact, things were going very poorly. The initial skirmishers had engaged the Barad-Duin center and were pinned at the base of the hill. A steady stream of refugees started to stream back up the trail. A black hole developed, additional waves of allied troops swallowed in the maw of the Barad-Duin trap. Becoming alarmed at the situation, the allied royalty called for a general withdrawal. However, the cohort leaders, locked in combat, and unwilling to admit defeat, continued to press the attack. As the battle passed its first hours, the allied leaders girded themselves for the possibility of defeat and prepared for the expected counterattack.

Matters elsewhere continued to favor Pharoah's forces. Seeing the desperate situation in the center, a unit of Burning Land's guardsmen attempted to scale the heights and turn the Barad-Duin left. Met by a hail of magic and missile fire, few made it to the top. The attack was defeated. The allies were stymied and confused, now was the optimum moment for a Barad-Duin advance. Inexplicably, with victory within his grasp, the Viscount never

ordered his army forward. Perhaps his forces feared the reputation of their enemies; surely the battle had gone far too easily. Surely it was better to err on the side of caution. The lightly armed mages were definitely leery of leaving the security of their fortified hilltop. In any event, the initiative was not seized, an error, that in hindsight, would haunt the Austinite generals.

As the attack slowed, allied morale faltered, and at last the futility of the situation began to sink in. The advance halted, and a lively exchange of missile fire developed between the two adversaries. In an ironic twist, the Barad-Duin ditch, which had served to defer a frontal assault, now became a haven for Burning Lands and Emerald Hills archers and skirmishers seeing cover. A sharp melee drove the Barad-Duin light foot from the base of the hill to safer heights. The two armies clenched like two panting bears, one incapable of pressing the attack, the other unwilling. An uneasy equilibrium settled in the center. No so was the situation on the flanks. On their own far left, a unit of allied light foot had finally penetrated the bramble to impinge on the Barad-Duin far right. They made no progress, but Seregon had to bleed off forces to face this threat. Similar was the case on his own left. A force of allied knights had crested the hill to be pinned down in the woods. Pressure began to mount along the entire Barad-Duin line.

Into this balance a new factor was induced. As each new threat materialized, Barad-Duin depleted its reserve, reaching a point where all forces were committed. At this juncture, the allies released another unit from their own base camp. These, a unit of Burning Lands Guardsmen, began to circle right, coming upon their own pinned knights. Continuing to move right, they soon attracted the attention of the Barad-Duin left. A hurried attempt was made to stretch Pharoah's forces even thinner to counter these guardsmen. A gap opened, and the heretofore frustrated knights seized their chance. Through the hole they plunged into the Barad-Duin center. Compounding Seregon's problems was a newly launched allied attack on the right center. It largely failed, but some skirmishers reached the summit to add to the chaos caused by the rampaging knights. At this moment the flanking guardsmen chose to strike, and the Barad-Duin left flank ceased to exist.

ENDGAME

Seregon immediately realized the situation and moved his forces right to escape the havoc in his rear. Sweeping down the hill, they demolished the allied light foot and took refuge in the brambles. The base camp was lost, but the Barad-Duin army was still intact, and soon began reforming. Casualties had slowed the allied advance, and a strong force was dispatched to drive the Burning Land's guardsmen back into the forest. The Austinites soon regained most of what they had lost. It was at this point that Pharoah chose to make an appearance and parley. Barad-Duin continued to reform and some saw this as a stalling maneuver. The Queen of the Emerald Hills had to restrain her guardsmen from striking down Pharoah on sight. He soon retired, his terms rejected, but his goals achieved - the last 15% of the Barad-Duin reserve had formed up. The order for a general advance was given.

At this late stage the prospect of a Barad-Duin attack was still daunting. The trench fell, and the retreating allied archers and skirmishers took to the woods, slowing the Austinite advance with a steady stream of projectiles. Both Queens brought up their diminished reserves for what looked like the final desperate conflict. It was here where the allies played their holecard. A strong force of Barad-Duin adepts and archers had been deployed to hold the rear versus the still present Burning Lands guardsmen. Into this fray leaped a small force of Imperial Sardakar which had hidden itself in a small cleft. Caught by surprise, the Barad-Duin rearguard was hacked down to a man. Hearing the sounds of combat before them, this victorious allied force crossed over the former positions of their enemies and came upon what was to them a beautiful sight, the rear

ranks of the entire Barad-Duin army.

AFTERMATH

Still sensing victory, the Barad-Duin forces must have been startled to hear a chorus of hostile war cries bursting from what they thought was friendly territory. Hardly missing a beat, the Sardakar flowed down the hill to slam into the Barad-Duin lines. Taking their cue, allied archers and infantry rose from rock and tree, and surged forward to join the slaughter. And a slaughter it was, a sudden anticlimatic ending to a three hour struggle. The Austinite forces, surprised and surrounded, panicked and were easily cut down by their more heavily armed opponents. One contingent sought to escape via the trench opening to their left, only there to meet their doom at the hands of the advancing entourage of the Allied royalty. Within minutes, the last backbone of resistance in Pharoah's forces had been broken.

The ink for this piece dried not long after the final clash of weapons in Barad-Duin, so the long term consequences of the battle will not be known for some time. Short term results were a raising of the military stock of both kingdoms, and a renewed spirit of comradery between the Emerald Hills and the Burning Lands. Barad-Duin was still granted its independence, but Pharoah did not receive the tribute he had so craved. Indications of civil strife implied the potential for a rough reign. For the moment, Barad-Duin foreign adventure was stalled. Reaction in the Emerald Hills was one of satisfaction, the hated foes had been brought down. The Burning Lands contingent returned west in victory, there to retell their story to the jealous many who had not been able to share in the glory and loot. And such is the telling of this story, that all might know what events took place on that fateful day in Barad-Duin.

61
"A Guardsman's Duty is Never Done"

(or, "I'll Drink to That")

The small, hidden cellar was damp and cold, as the only source of warmth and light came from the uncertain flicker of a candle's tiny flame. Two cloak-shrouded men stood opposite each other with a small, rotted table between them. The slightly shorter of the two pulled a roll of papers from the blackened depths of his cloak. Noislessly, he unrolled the parchment and placed it under the meager light.

"Here's a map of all the passageways and tunnels," he whispered, "so that you may find quicker and easier access."

The other man, as unmoving and seemingly lifeless as the dead, now spoke. "Half now, and it will be done." Again, the first man reached within his cloak. He drew forth a small sack. With a slight clinking sound, he placed it beside the papers. The silent, taller man plucked the bag and the papers off the table with a thick, gloved hand. A quick flash of candle light reflected off of his silver and black ring.

"It will be done," his muffled voice said.

* * *

Three young men sat at a clustered oaken table. Two drank from mugs filled with a sweetly blended, orange wine; yet the third, and youngest, drank a mug of watered wine. They rolled knucklebones amidst the food and coins on the table. They all wore the black-and-gold tabards of the queen's elite guard.

"Well, Naes, you've lost again," claimed the youngest. His face held a jovial grin and bright eyes. He wore his light, brown hair short, unlike his

comrades-at-arms. Twin swords, sheathed in black scabbards, hung on his back.

"That sucks, " muttered Naes. Of the guardsmen in the small, private, dining chamber, he was the only man not of pure human race. His face was unshaven and his straight, brown hair was brushed back, to fall just below the shoulders. His slender build and slightly upturned ears marked him as a elf-human mixbreed. " Okay, Tal, your turn. What's the bet, Caliban?" Naes was eager to win back his money.

Talinor laughed, thinking that if Naes didn't start winning soon, he'd be out of money. Tal was the largest of the three gamblers. His hair was a long, curly, dark brown mane that hung lower than Naes'. He reached for the knucklebones as Caliban was thinking of what to bet.

The gambling was cut short as sounds of steel upon steel erupted from the hallway. Instantly, all three drew forth their blades. Talinor gripped his dark steel bastard sword, while Naes bore a sabre. Caliban ,with both swords drawn, was the first to the hallway. Just farther up the hall, the ringing of blades ceased. Three bodies lay forever silent, butchered in a pool of crimson gore. Over them stood two men; guardsmen.

"What happened ?" Talinor asked. They were regular guard and each bore superficial wounds. As elites, Tal, Naes, and Caliban ranked above them.

" They drew weapons and rushed us. We cut them down," One of the guard answered.

"Have yourselves relieved, then see to your wounds." Tal commanded.

"These weren't weaponmen," Naes observed.

"Caliban, see to the queen. We'll get our shields and meet you there," Talinor said. "This was probably just a distraction," he muttered as they

strapped on their shields.

* * *

Caliban stood in the entrance to the queen's chamber, both of his swords bared to the hungry darkness. "Your Majesty, " he called. He barely caught the flash of a blade flying his way. Barely was all the warrior/monk-turned-guard'sman needed. His sword flicked like the tongue of a serpent and batted the dagger out of the air. The sound of boots down the corridor told him Naes and Tal were coming.

"Bring a torch, " he yelled.

A moment later, torch light flooded the room, exposing a passageway in the opposite wall, yawning like a bestial mouth. " I've got point," Tal said as he entered the tunnel. Naes followed, after telling Caliban to check on the prince, as his guard tended to be on the negligent side. The two elite guards then stalked down the corridor, wary as hungry animals.

They walked for about fifty feet before they noticed any sign of the intruder. "Look, Tal." Naes pulled the torch from Talinor and examined a section of the musty wall. Stuck in a hairline crack between stones was a torn piece of dull grey cloth.

"I'd have never seen that," Tal muttered.

"I know, " Naes replied. He examined the wall and found the trigger. The secret door opened with the creaking of rusty wheels. Tal grabbed the torch as Naes drew his sword. Spider webs dangled from the ceiling, torn halfway to the floor. Both saw the shuffled tracks in the dust. They ran through the passageway, following the tracks. Light flowed from around a bend in the corridor. They stopped so Tal could extinguish the torch and draw his sword.

Again they stalked like beasts. As they turned around the bend, a stench of carrion wafted from a door. The source of light was from an eerie, glowing orb, hovering outside the door. Immediately, it floated to the ceiling as the door burst open. Several men rushed out. The corridor was filled quickly as they charged, two abreast. The first two died quickly, one beheaded, the other gutted. That slowed the advance of the other six, while they warily eyed the better armed guardsmen. They each only fought with sword against the swords and shields of the guard.

Naes and Tal pounced on the next two. A blade skidded off Naes' shield as he thrust his well used sabre through the chest of his enemy. Tal easily parried the clumsy stroke of his opponent and countered with a blow that bit so deeply through the shoulder that it cleaved to the heart. Another two corpses littered the hall. The next two were more defensive and lasted a second or two longer. One was lucky enough to graze Tal's leg. The last two turned and fled down the darkened passages.

Tal and Naes entered the doorway, wary of more infidels. They caught a glimpse of a cloak-shrouded figure, before he vanished in a cloud of sulfurous smoke. As it was their duty, they searched the room. They found one thing of significance; a silver ring with a black double-headed pheonix on it. Naes placed it in his pouch and they returned to the queen's chambers.

* * *

"Well?" The queen asked, lounging comfortably in a padded chair. Talinor and Naes were both shocked to see her sitting there, as if nothing had happened. The two explained what had happened and showed her the ring. "... and so we thought you were with the one who teleported."

"Lucky for you two that I was out dining with the captain of my guard," she said.

"With your leave, we'd like to reassign an extra guard outside your door," Talinor requested. "The former one disappeared."

"Of course."

Naes and Talinor appointed two guards and went to check on the prince. The door to his chambers was open and the sound of laughter wafted out. They entered to find Prince Aramithris describing some war story to Caliban, over a pitcher of mulled wine.

"What have you two been doing?" the prince asked. Tal and Naes looked at each other, then at the prince.

"You don't know anything about what just happened?" Naes sounded baffled.

Caliban grinned. "He was explaining the finer points of ruling a kingdom to a young lady when I interrupted him. He was finishing as I knocked. That explains his good mood."

"Naes," Talinor complained, "I need a drink."

"I'll drink to that," Naes replied.

THE WARRIORS OF THE STARQUESTING DRAGON

C-12



In the peaceful center of a fertile peninsula with a thousand year old pact of peace with her two neighbors, Eldan was a land of content. Sheltered from the ravaging barbarians to the North and the pirates who harried the Southern coasts by Certes and Aldar, respectively, Eldan supported her sisterlands in those distant battles with foods and metals. The nobility and peoples of those three nations had so intermingled that they were as one land, with only the river Easy separating Aldar from Eldan, and the Stormtooth mountains divididing Eldan from Certes.

So had it been since the dawn of recorded history, so all thought it would always be. But there was a new power in the North, a magic older and darker than any seen before. Some said it was a god, waked from long slumber by the barbarians. Some said it was arcane knowledge dredged from the shattered cities where those now sunk to barbarism once ruled in splendor. Some claimed it was a mystery from beyond the sea, or beneath it, or past the night sky. Upon one thing they all agreed; where this power walked, the land itself trembled, and all that was left in its path was death and devastation.

Another power stalked the land before it, and its name was fear. The stream of Certesian refugees poured over the mountains, bringing terror with them like a plague. Certes had fallen, the barbarians were mad, drunk with rape, pillage and fire. The Eldaraans gave them food and drink and sent them on to Aldar. Many went with them, driving livestock and hauling families and all they could carry on wooden carts. But many stayed. Eldan had forgotten how to make war after a thousand years of peace. Those who had hungered for battle had journeyed to find it in other lands. But there is a fire to be kindled in the hearts of even peaceful peoples when their hearths and families are threatened. So the Eldaraans who stayed prepared to fight, with rake and shovel if need be.

Lothar, King of Eldan this past forty years, sent a desparate message to his cousin Sherit, regent of Aldar. The return messenger arrived only two days ahead of the first soldiers. Hearing of trouble in the North, the pirates had redoubled their assaults against Aldar's shores, so the regular army had to remain at home. But Sherit emptied his Kingdom's coffers to hire mercenaries to rush to Eldan's aid. If that peaceful country were to fall to the invaders, Aldar would also be quick to fall.

One such band of mercenaries was the Warriors of the Starquesting Dragon. Originally, they had crewed a pirate vessel named for her dragon shape and stellar navigation. A storm had left her shattered on the rocks at the foot of an Aldaran village they had meant to sack. In stead they were taken in, albeit warily, fed, and the injured cared for. By the time the soldiers came for them, they and the village had won one anothers' loyalty, and the soldiers were turned away at the gate. Led by their Captain, Krell Ironfist, they took hire as mercenaries and spent much of their time defending villages from pirates.

Krell led his mixed band of fighters North to kill barbarians only slightly less civilised than themselves. With them he took his captive bride, the amazon shamaness, Tawnee Darkfalcon. They battled savages every day for two turns of the moon, as the weather turned bitter and snow began falling at the Stormtooth's feet. Although the fighting was fierce, there were no magics brought against them. When Krell asked after the great power rumored to have laid waste to Certes, the locals muttered superstitious nonsense. It was said that the Stormtooth mountains were the last home of Faery. That the elves who had retreated to their forbidding slopes had no love of human magic, and would not allow it to pass through their realm. Krell snorted derisively at this nonsense, and surmised that either the magic had run out, or that there had never been any at all.

Winter settled over the land, and the mountains became all but impassable. Only a fool, or the hardiest of adventurers, would dare to brave the snow-clad peaks in the winter. The barbarians settled into their captured lands to the North and waited for Spring to give them access to their enemy once more. The mercenaries took shelter with their hosts, living among them in the villages and towns. The Dragons, having fought very well indeed, were invited to winter at Lothar's castle. Krell thought it a doubtful honor. His rough crew would be happier settled in a village like their adoptive one in Aldar. But they could hardly refuse the King. Krell led his band





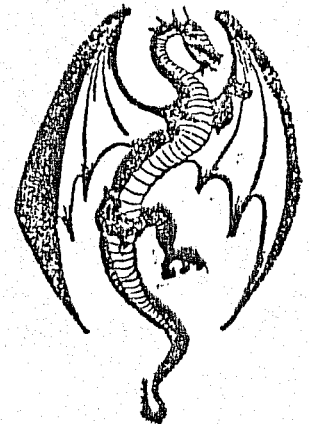
to Lothar's winter keep. The Dragons were every bit as uncivilized as Krell had feared, drinking and carousing into the wee hours every night, and he counted himself among them. But Lothar was a wise man, and he had guessed well, warning his staff and family what to expect. The Dragons were assigned quarters well away from the royal family, and their own feasting hall and wine cellar. Only Krell and his wife slept near the King and Queen. The amazon woman was an interesting creature, friendly enough in her blunt, abrupt way, alternating love and hatred toward her captor husband. She had no interest in women's pastimes such as embroidery or stitching, although she politely watched the Queen's frail, blue-veined hands show her how to do the work. She demanded her own turn at the walls, marching guard duty with her spear in the bitter cold. She had won a grudging respect from the pirates turned mercenaries, and Krell's love for her was open in his eyes.

Each morning they rose and tended armor and weapons, in the afternoon they took a shift of guard duty. In the evening they supped with the royal family, then joined the Dragons for wine and song. Near dawn, they returned to their apartment next to the King's and fell into drunken slumber. One morning like all the rest, Tawnee woke with her head heavy from the night's drinking. Turning to shake Krell awake, she found him dead, cold, throat cut, blood pooled on their bed. With a roar she burst from the

room into the hallway, to find the castle in turmoil. The King and Queen were slain, along with the Princess and the two young Princes. Vaguely she realized that Krell bore some small resemblance to the royal family, that the assassins must have thought him a Prince of the Blood. The Dragons rampaged through the castle, searching for the assassins. They found two dead guards where the killers had come over the walls, a nearly impossible feat. No trace of the assassins was found, not in the castle nor in the village outside its walls. It was as if they had never been, but their handiwork was all too evident. The advisors began turning suspicious eyes toward the Dragons, more from a need to find someone to blame than any real conviction. On the second day, Tawnee returned to the room she had shared with her husband. She had stoked the flames of her anger to keep sorrow at bay, and was not yet willing to surrender to despair. So much had been left unsaid between them, and now it would never be said. Hate carried her forward. Closing the door and barring it with a simple Ward, she began a complex ritual of magic unused since her capture in her native lands. Through this magic she sensed traces of the assassins passing. She tasted their aura, and found it alien, although human. These were no simple barbarians, but come from far, very far, to do this deed. Their trail, a faint amber glow in the air, led out through the door of their room. At the end of that amber glow were the men she would kill in Krell's name. Then she could mourn.

Several of the Dragons came across her while she packed travel rations. Joella Starwatcher, once navigator of the Starquesting Dragon, who now guided their travels on land. Ghislane, the axe-wielding barbarian who had fought beside them for years. The soft spoken desert nomad whose name no one knew. Ward Truestory, the Company's bard, who had written many a song and story of the Dragon's exploits. Pan Faarstar, ever torn between wielding a sword or a pen. And Dachs, escaped slave turned pirate. The most loyal of the band, they argued the right to travel alongside the amazon. They too hungered for vengeance for their lost friend and Captain. They left in the brilliance of a winter morning, against the protests of the advisors, who were not yet quite ready to make outright accusations. They followed the amber trail through miles of forestland to the foot of the Stormtooth mountains. Some of the band demurred assaulting the wintry slopes, but Tawnee argued that the assassins had managed it, without magic to guide or shelter them. Finally she started up, and even the reluctant ones trailed up after her.

The climb was perilous, and more than once Tawnee was forced to use her shaman powers to save lives, including her own. At almost the midway point, they followed the amber trail around the curve of the pass and abruptly found themselves in the midst of a green valley. Tawnee wanted to stop, to circle the valley, but the rest of the crew seemed ensorcelled by the place, and pushed past her toward the wooded copse at its center. Slowly, her sense of foreboding slipped away, and Tawnee felt the peace of this place settle in her bones. Only the hard knot of anger which armored her grief remained chill. A flare of panic sparked when they entered the copse and she saw that the trees formed a perfect circle. In the center, no grass grew. The whisper of softly chanting voices drifted to her ears as she fell into a deep and dreamless sleep.

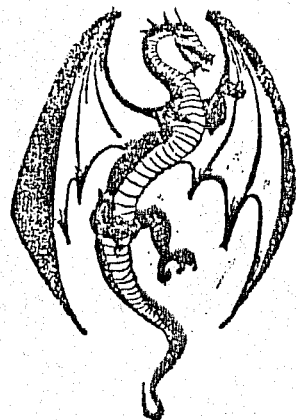




She woke with a sense of terrible wrongness. The air was dry and hot, and a searing wind blew against her. She was walking through a desert wasteland, yet she did not remember how she got here. The rest of the Company staggered beside her, in a daze like her own. A strange, low city was on the horizon. As they drew near, they could see the dwellings were built of sand made solid, with graceful curves and round windows. The streets were empty. but there was the sound of revelry ahead. They pushed forward, and came into a park, where brown grass struggled to survive in the sun and sandy soil. The crowd, which had been noisy before, had fallen to utter silence at their approach, and now stood staring in eery silence. From out of the crowd stepped the strangest man Tawnee had ever seen. He looked somewhat like the jester at Lothar's court, with his long curled blond wig and striped breeches. He came forward with a huge artificial smile and kissed Tawnee's hand as the courtiers had done. Looking up at her with eyes too bright for a human, he introduced himself. He was to be called Sir Peter Le Grue, although that was not his name. He had created this place, and the people in it.

When asked how, he turned with a glint of madness in those bright eyes and said, from his imagination of course. They were led to adwelling which they all swore had not been there when they first passed, and given food and drink. Their hunger overcame their caution, and they ate it all. When they had slept and rested for several days, they were summoned again to the park. The villagers were gathered all around, watching silently. A strange lot; Tawnee had the absurd impression they existed only when one was looking directly at them. Le Grue smiled, and she saw that his teeth were fanged. Remembering the Eldan farmers' campfire tales of men who could become wolves, Tawnee watched him suspiciously. He had the faint reek of black magic. He explained in grandiose style that it was time for the village to become a Kingdom. None among the populace were of noble blood, so it was left to the strangers to contest for the crown. Tawnee and the Dragons refused to fight one another. But Le Grue explained in his mad fashion that death and injury were but inconveniences here. Midway into his explanation, he suddenly plunged a dagger into the nomad's heart. With a shout, Ghislane beheaded the jester. The head lost its blond wig and rolled away, giggling hysterically. They all watched in horror as the body strode over and lifted the head back to its shoulders, recovering the wig with a fey grin. He pointed to the fallen nomad. The corpse stirred, and the nomad raised a hand to his head in confusion. Then he rose and bared his breast, where not even a mark remained. They experimented with cutting themselves, the pain dull and short lived. They duelled, killing one another, only to rise after a few minutes, ready to fight again. It was then that Tawnee realized they were in Hell.

Numb with the conviction that Krell's death would never be avenged, she joined the tourney. She was happy that Krell's soul had not been consigned to this bleak land, nor that of Shanna, her tribal mate, dead these past six years. She was gripped as by a fever, and slew her friends one by one till only she was left standing. Le Grue took her by the arm and proclaimed her Queen. Queen of the Lands that Burn. Queen of Hell.



C7

OF EVIL HEARTS

It was dark, very dark. The cavern was deep beneath the surface realms and a not a single stream of light made its way to this depth. The sable darkness permeated the entire underworld, broken in a very few locations by the soft glow of crystals which resonated with a deep hum. Most would say that these surroundings are unhuman, and they are. But that is the way the Gray Drow like it.

Roscuro Chia walked down the wide avenue that had been fashioned from the very rock which composed the cavern around him. He kept his gaze toward the ground, as was the custom, only lifting his head so as to keep his bearings correct.

He was going to visit the King's daughter; the two had been meeting in secrecy for a year now. The King's palace was a huge compound consisting of wide chambers and tunnels which snaked their way far into the rocky walls of the cave. It was easy for a couple to hide themselves in such a maze.

He snuck in through a fissure which made itself known in the floor. He wiggled his way downward, landing softly a few feet below. He then followed a narrow tunnel until it reached a crack which opened into a smooth-walled cave, a stark contrast to the entrance which he had taken. He waited for a guard to walk pass, scantily armed and very young, he was just a token guardian.

Roscuro then slipped through the crack and into the King's palace, far from the halls which were commonly filled with the

busy traffic of servants. He then followed a tunnel to his left until he came to a wooden door, strangely out of place in this underworld. He rapped softly upon the door, releasing a harmonious ring from it.

The door opened and a delicate face appeared. She seemed angry for a second and then recognized Roscuro, a look of pleasure then came to her countenance.

She opened the door wider and leaned against the support seductively, with a wide motion of her hand she motioned him in. "Come on in," she said, "I've been waiting for you."

"I would have been here sooner, but my father asked me to help him sharpen his blades. If I hadn't he would have suspected something." Roscuro's excuse, although true, did not persuade the princess to be so open to his needs as she would have been.

"You expect me to believe that?" asked the princess roughly.

"Certainly, its true."

"I have been waiting here for more than two hours! How long could it take to sharpen a blade?" The princess was used to prompt attention, for she was rather spoiled.

"Actually, there are twenty-four blades. My father would not give me leave until they were all sharp." Roscuro saw that his attempts to prove himself right were getting him nowhere. He tried a different approach. "I'm sorry, I really am."

The princess pouted, looking none too happy.

"I'm truly sorry, please forgive me."

The princess considered his plea, but decided against such premature forgiveness. "I'm afraid I don't believe you." A terrible thought then popped into her mind, her face reflected her emotions. "For all I know you've been with another woman for all these hours!"

"Now, you know that isn't true." Roscuro was a bit indignant. He then thought that he had seen through her game. She was playing with him!

A crooked smile came to his face. He reached out to grasp Princess Lurian's shoulders. He pulled her to him, and, though she struggled, he was far too strong. Roscuro chuckled to himself. This was yet another time that 'no' meant 'yes', so he continued. He exerted more pressure, and placed one hand behind her neck so as to force her lips to his. Strange...she was struggling harder than usual. Perhaps...

Roscuro Chia never finished his thought, as Lurian placed a well-aimed kick where it would do the most harm.

Roscuro's body tightened in intense pain. He felt a terrible, loud snap in Lurian's neck. He almost dropped her, but managed to lower her limp frame to the smooth floor just as two guardsmen burst through the door.

"But..." exclaimed Roscuro. He could not contemplate how this could be possible. They had taken many precautions to insure privacy and secrecy. How was it that these two guards entered at such an inopportune moment?

"Are you so foolish as to think we did not know of your little...escapades?" laughed one of the guards.

"But...how," Roscuro countered.

"The King has had us follow the princess for years now, she is, after all, his only child." The second guard exclaimed.

"Then why did you not stop us from meeting in the first place?" Asked Roscuro.

"What, and miss all the fun?" the first guard said sarcastically.

"Am I to be executed?" Roscuro queried.

"No...no, then we would have to explain to His Majesty how we let you and the princess have these nightly meetings. We would then be executed along with you."

"Then why aren't you going to kill me and hide the body?"

"That would not do," explained a guard, "The King would eventually find out...some blood here, a piece of tattered clothing there. Besides, he would scour the caverns looking for the body... Your body."

"No...no, the scenario will be like this. We were doing our duty, protecting the princess, when all of a sudden some Drow warriors burst in to assassinate the only heir to the throne. We did our best to fight them off, but Lurian was startled and tripped, breaking her neck. The Drow, seeing the job complete, retreated. And we, who were greatly outnumbered, did not get a chance to kill any of the assailants." A wicked smile formed on the guard's lips. "The story is totally believable, after all,

the Drow have wanted to take back this cavern ever since we, the Gray Drow, wrested it from their hands."

"But what of me?" Roscuro asked.

"You will be tossed out of the caverns, into the surface realm." The first guard announced. "We can't let you stay, you might reveal the truth."

"That would be foolish. To do so would mean my death." Chided Roscuro.

"Yes...yes, it would be foolish. But we can take no chances," said the guard. "It would not be hard to explain your disappearance, people will assume that one of the cave-monsters devoured you."

The guards escorted Roscuro out of the cavern, up into the winding tunnels. The path they took was steep, for they were going to the surface. They came up to a large granite door, smooth on the inside but rough where it could be seen by surface-dwellers. A guard stepped to a great iron wheel attached to a complex system of chains and pulleys. As he turned the wheel the chains began to move, producing a grating sound as they roughly slid through the rings and pulleys. The granite door swung open, and the guards pushed Roscuro out in the blazing sunlight.

Roscuro screamed and brought his hands up to shield his sensitive eyes. The two guards laughed, for they had successfully banished Roscuro, and had saved their own lives in the process. Roscuro brought a black veil up over his eyes to protect them as the door swung to separate him from his only home.

CS

Mournful Echo

Dawn; nothing more than a soft glow in what was once the East. A world of red and of grey, of fire and of ash. It is hot, the thick, ashen clouds containing and intensifying the dim suns' heat. Add this to the hellish inferno of magical devastation. All is rubble. The world is filled with the silent sounds of death. I am dreaming. Somewhere, off to my right, I hear the moaning, crying, screaming, groaning sounds of sickness and dying children; the smell of burnt flesh hangs heavy upon the air. I feel great pain, though I feel nothing at all. I am crying, moaning, and screaming with the rest, though I am not really here. I feel an immense grief, a sadness which is permeating and all-encompassing. A great sorrow presents itself, as I awake, sweaty, and screaming; my dream fading to a mournful echo in the nights' darkness.

Sweat drenches my large form, as numerous chills and shakes possess my body. My wife, Ann, places a gentle hand on my arm, and slides closer in the bed to comfort me.

"The dream again, Manor?" Her soft voice comes, a supporting influence in the dark, dark night.

I manage a gasping affirmative, the great emotions only now releasing their grip upon my mind. The dream remains near, a glowing ember in the empty mass some call a brain.

I closed my eyes and forced my mind to work. Through the tumult of jumbled emotions and thoughts, a idea filtered itself to the foremost of the muck and presented itself for inspection.

A dim, fleeting hour later, I discovered myself awaiting Streblon, one of many of Riechenbachs' mystics. A gauzy, misty rain blanketed the town, the shiny, glazed, wet stones of the walls and buildings possessing the vaneer of something newly forged. A figure forms itself from the mist, taking on a decidedly primieval appearance as it draws near, and coalesces into the form that I recognize as Streblon.

The mystic, a decidedly pudgy man, broke the ancient stereotype for thin mages. His well rounded form called to mind a half-festered yak. In any case, he approached and allowed me entrance. The interior was, of course, quite dim, four badly-placed candles trying feebly to dispell the darkness.

I was seated and he sat, also, across from me, and leaned his plump form forward...

This chamber was small. Too small for my liking, as I am a blacksmith, my body large, and honed like a powerfully sharpened sword. My voice echoes about me, as I tell Treant, Court Mage of my starttlingly vivid dreams, mere hints of my previous conviction remaining, for it has been a long day, and all whom I have spoken to laugh or shake their heads in disbelief when I tell them that the keep, the city, and the very land is doomed to destruction within weeks.

Treant stifles a small chuckle as I impart the last of my tale, shaking his head slowly in a mocking fashion, and I feel the control slipping from my mind. I attempt to cool my white thoughts, as a glowing sword in a criseren of water. I feel the

steamy emotions rake their sharp fingers into my mind as an irrational pain and fury caresses my logical self as a rust monster in a wooden box. My great hands are shaking through the force of my resistance, though it is a lost battle, and with a howling scream. I backhand Treant, who has backed up against the wall, fearfully observing me. His thin form is lifted into the air momentarily as the momentum of my swing hurls him against the wall, and he falls to the ground as a shower of used coals into their blivon. Sudden fear consumes me, and I leave the audience chamber shaking with fear and disgust, only to be stopped by the guards who were posted outside. Treants' scream, as well as my own, have alerted them into action. A part of me demands retribution for my crazed acts, while yet another screams for release as the only way to survive. I knock one man against the wall with my hands, and he has trouble drawing his sword. I begin to whirl about just as the flat of a sword finds purchase, forcefully, on the back of my neck. Darkness migrates from the void of my soul and consumes my consciousness.

I am in a small, dark chamber with but a single, half shuttered lantern. I do not like its glow, reminiscent of the dying embers of the life about me in the dream, the dream which does not exist, cannot exist, couldn't possibly happen. The lantern shatters under my fist, and the flames engulf my hand, my leg, and the floor with a bloody accompaniment of shattered glass as the guardsmen answer my screaming cries. Guards enter and look at me with startlement, a bloody, burning, laughing man, engulfed in flames, real and imagined, as my mind spirals into the maelstrom under which lies madness.

There is a strange man in yonder tower. Once a fine, strong man, he is now a burnt, ugly form, who points constantly to the horizon, and calls insistently in a cackling half-whine, half-yell about dragons free from banishment, and the destruction of the very land. They say he was once a blacksmith, his mind as sharp as the best blades, now dulled and chipped as a daggers' attempt to cleave marble. A strangely louder laughter than ever before comes forth from the tower, as I look yet again, mechanically following the purposeful, shaking arm denoting the east horizon just as the sun peers itself from behind the void in which it dwells for night, and, as I peer into the soft glow of early morning, five...seven...ten dots stretch forth and assume substance in the amber light as the strange laughter swells to great volume, and, as the dragons take more substantial presence in the heavens, the laughter fades to a mournful echo as the first flames writhe forth from the great demons of the sky.

A Falling Star

"This was never supposed to happen," fumed Cassandra. "No one ever listens to me."

She peered out the starboard porthole into the velvet blackness, sadly watching as the space station continued its slow disintegration. Below and to her left she saw the faint atmospheric haze of Earth. She was devastated that the people under her first command were dying and the station was as if it had never been.

Brushing tears out of hazel eyes, Cassandra hoped she could one day redeem herself for the opportunity to come back to space. The military had finally reached space and taken command as usual. As an officer she was subject to the whims of her superiors. It would be a long time before another station could be built and while she was just twenty-four, they would want younger people to command the new station that could take up to ten years to build. She had been the youngest to ever command a station of that size.

Alone in the escape craft, Cassandra reviewed all the possible errors that she should have prevented. As the commander of the station, she was responsible for the lives of all those on board as well as the cargo that was transferred through that point. Trying to calm down, she slumped into the rigid acceleration chair and slowly inhaled the stale air that was recycled through the cramped craft. She winced as she inadvertently touched a painful bruise on her long leg and briefly closed her eyes. She had not an ounce of extra flesh to help cushion her from bumps and bruises.

The escape capsules were not meant for long trips, and she hoped to contact another ship soon. She also hoped to communicate with others from the station. She was unsure how many had escaped. Everything had happened so fast; and now, away from the mass confusion, she tried to reconstruct all the events leading up to the destruction of the station.

A person could go insane out here, she thought. She drifted all alone with no point of reference, no up nor down, no day nor night. She was lucky that the ship had some form of gravity. It wasn't Earth standard, but it kept her feet on the tilting floor. Her mind wandered. Images from her childhood, her days in the academy and her promotion to Commander rose to the surface of her mind until they threatened to overwhelm her. She remembered first meeting Paul and the joy they felt when they were together. She thought of their children, Helen and Jack, still just babies in her eyes. Until her tour was finished and she was reassigned back to Earth, her husband Paul was taking care of their children. Wondering if she would ever see them again, she slipped into the realm of dreams and memory.

A shipment had come into the docking bay that was from a small Asian kingdom. The scuttlebutt going around was that the kingdom was on the verge of war with a nearby country. She had been nervous storing the cargo, especially when she discovered that the owner did not show up to claim it after two days. Cassandra had contacted her superiors on Earth asking permission

to jettison the cargo or at least to return it to the country in question. Company officials professed that never in the history of the company had a shipment been jettisoned and assured her that the owner would pick it up sooner or later. Cassandra requested to go on record as having lodged a protest and grudgingly followed her superior's orders. Within the day an explosion occurred in the cargo hold, alarms went off and the evacuation code was given. She had been correct, but no one had heeded her warning.

In an emergency evacuation, Cassandra was required to wait until all possible procedures were taken before leaving. No longer did the captain go down with the ship; competent officers were too hard to come by and fatalities in space were commonplace. Before leaving, she gathered the ship's log as a record of the incident and headed toward the escape capsules.

Running was difficult because the station's rotation rockets had been damaged, and the gravity was fluctuating. Distant screams echoed through the halls as people fled in panic. The alarm klaxon blaringly interrupted the emergency directions sounding over the intercom. The blue-white fluorescent lighting flickered and went out, causing the amber emergency lights to come on. Cassandra felt as if she were in a dream, feet moving through taffy, mind recording what it saw but thrusting it into the subconscious for later review. Nearer the rack of small escape capsules, there were the bodies of those who had been trampled in the rush or overcome by the smoke before the blowers could clear the air. Cassandra knew that many had not even made it that far. She whisked her sable hair, normally kept in a tidy knot, out of her eyes. She was filthy and had twisted an ankle; she didn't remember how nor when it had happened.

The first officer was trying to help other officers and personnel into the capsules. His jacket was ripped, and there was a gash on his forehead still oozing blood. He saw Cassandra and motioned her over.

"The engineer was unable to contain the fire before it spread. I stayed as long as I could before he sent me here," he shouted.

Knowing the sense of duty her engineer possessed, Cassandra knew he was still there, fighting to the last. He had once served in the Marines and fought for what he loved. His one passion had been the space station. Shaking her head to help clear her mind, Cassandra helped the second mate with loading the rest of the people. After she sealed the last capsule, it took a few seconds for her to realize that she was all alone. She leaned against the trembling corridor to catch her breath when the station lurched to one side. She realized that the station was now beginning its death throes and she must leave it at once. She viewed the wreckage around her one last time and slipped into the last capsule. Cutting loose the grappling hooks, she allowed the ship to drift clear from the station before igniting the rockets. She aimed the shuttle toward Earth and cut off the engines, letting the existing propulsion take her toward the planet while saving enough fuel for re-entry.

A loud crash and the sound of rending metal brought Cassandra back to the present. She wearily raised her head and

looked at the control panel with bleary eyes trying to discover what new disaster was happening now. The first thing the computer informed her of was that the shuttle's angle for re-entry had shifted making her projected entry head on rather than at an angle to the atmosphere. She tried to correct the damage to the course, but the ship failed to respond. With a dry mouth, Cassandra asked the computer what had gone wrong. It informed her that a piece of debris from the disintegrating station had struck the ship, coming to rest in the guidance systems. Cassandra's escape shuttle was now out of control and headed for a fiery meteoric entry.

Moving within range of Earth for her limited communications system, Cassandra tried to contact her superiors. After a brief discussion, she learned that a ship could not be readied in time to rescue her. Refusing to allow her to contact her family, her Commander insisted on debriefing Cassandra about the accident to avoid a similar situation in the future. Not wanting to relinquish her last human contact, Cassandra complied. She gave the run-down on what had happened before the explosion, reminding them that she had requested the cargo be removed.

"After all the training I was given in the Academy, the least you people could have done was give me the benefit of the doubt. Because of **your** shortsightedness, you've cost Earth a lot of money as well as killed us all!" she screamed, all control lost. "What is the use of having humans man the stations. Why not let a computer which can give all the safety statistics that you want command of the station? After all, a computer said the cargo was safe," she added in disgust.

Not even halfway through the session, she began to sweat heavily and feel lightheaded. Looking out the forward window, she saw the nose of her shuttle haloed by a red glow, an indication that she had reached the outer layer of Earth's atmosphere.

"I can't give you any more information, especially since you won't listen. Let me speak to my family before I die," she pleaded.

The impersonal communications officer once again said that would be impossible considering the delicacy of the situation. "We don't want the planet to discover what has happened before we write a press release."

"You people are dumb if you think no one will see the station's explosion. The whole planet will know that you people are incompetent."

"This emotional outbreak is why we won't let you speak to your family. We don't want our world to get the wrong impression," said the operator.

"Well, you people can go to Hell," and with a vicious twist, Cassandra cut off the communications link and leaned back in her chair. She remembered the promise made to her youngest child before leaving for her three month tour. "I'll be back in time for your birthday," she had promised. With a sob, she prayed that her children would forgive her for breaking her promise and never returning to them. She grew faint as the heat inside the cabin increased beyond the air conditioner's capacity. She

quietly slipped into unconsciousness seconds before the shuttle began to burn up.

* * * * *
"Look son! A falling star. Make a wish and it will come true."

"I want Mamma to come home!" the little boy cried.

"Soon, Jack. she did promise," said Paul softly, as he went inside to answer the phone.

F1

What makes a coronation a coronation and not just another feast? The answer to this question is "color." Putting aside such drudgeries as cooking and other preparatory necessities, we can take a look at such things as table arrangement, lighting, decorations (such as banners), music and most important of all the actual coordination of scheduled events. These are the things that will take your hum-drum park pavilion and change it into a royal feasting hall.

The first thing that will have to be drawn up into an outline is what exactly will be happening at your event. This is your program or schedule of events. Coronations just don't happen, they are carefully planned and revised. Of course, the Monarch will be the most important person in this planning stage (unless it is Landolf, in which case too many details will confuse him), and will need to sort through a number of ideas about when to enter, when to eat, when to have court, and when and how to crown the new Monarch. A very basic outline to follow is:

1. Crown Address to the Populace - The old Monarch welcomes the populace and gives them a feel for what is about to happen (i.e. the feast and then the coronation). The Crown Address is a brief way of orienting the audience and letting them know that the event has begun.

2. The Feast - Generally it is a good idea not to bore your audience before dinner. This can be accomplished by saving your awards ceremony and coronation until after people have filled themselves up with food and are then a little more complacent and torpid.

3. Crown Processional - The old Monarch makes his/her entry followed or preceded by the Royal Guard. An interesting variation is to have the Royal Guard form a corridor through which the Monarch and Consort will pass. This of course can be spiced up by the Guard forming an arch over their heads with sabers or banners. (really chic)

4. Awards Ceremony - It is a good idea not to bore your audience after dinner, so try to keep this part of the coronation short and sweet. Do any knightings, or titling and major awards but by no means keep the people waiting for hours as you go through everybody, individually naming their awards. The Monarch should present individual awards in person after court is over. This is a nice gesture and you can take the time to express your appreciation for their service to the club.

5. Dismissal of the Old Court - This is the time that the Monarch takes to thank his hand-chosen officers and the Royal Guard for their service. Calling them before the populace gives them some recognition and makes them feel important. Here again the dismissal can be handled in a number of ways. One way is simply to dismiss all of them at once and

let them scatter to the wind. Another way is to thank each individual, dismissing them one at a time; or you can have an outgoing processional led by the Royal Guard.

6. Incoming Court Processional - This is the incoming procession of the new Monarch and Consort accompanied by their Royal Guard. It can be handled similarly to the Royal Processional see # 3 above.

7. The Coronation - This is an area in which you can be most creative. To the populace, this is the moment when power in the club is changing hands, the end of one era and the beginning of a new era full of opportunities. A small speech to this effect can create quite an aura of mystique and increasing expectation. The actual crowning of the new Monarch should be accompanied by a speech of what is expected of the new Monarch and some vows taken by him/her accepting these responsibilities. The speech and vows can become a tradition repeated from Crown to Crown or can be changed with each new one. Now comes the time that the new Monarch must take up the Crown and perform before the club in a way that will lend credence to him/her, and affirm that it has not made a mistake in his/her election. Proper homage must be paid to the leaving Monarch and his/her new title should be the first order of business of the new Crown. Remember pomp and the aura of mystique are what you are trying to achieve.

8. New Monarch's First Court - This is the New Monarch's big chance to make it or blow it. He/She should provide a suitably regal air without coming off as arrogant. As stated before, the first order of business of the new Monarch is to pay proper homage to the old Monarch, as well as expressing the club's sincere appreciation of the old court. The next order of business is the expression of the new Monarch's hopes and basic plans for the coming reign. This is sort of a contractual agreement between the new Monarch and the populace. The next tedious task is the awarding of the new Guild-Master positions for both the fighting guilds and the service guilds.

9. New Business before the Court - Now that the tedium is over a little bit of fun is next in the form of business before the New Monarch. This is the time that "God" knows what happens. Often there are pledges of loyalty, gifts from visiting royalty or perhaps even declarations of war between Kingdoms. Play it up big, the opportunity for fun and creativity is knocking. Keep in mind that this is a one shot affair. If you want to do something awe inspiring or exciting, now is the time to do it, the eyes of the Kingdom are upon you.

10. Closing Court - Well it's almost over, and hopefully everything will have gone smoothly. This is the time that you must disengage the Kingdom from formality and help it along into blissful revelry. Tie up any loose ends, restate the basic intentions of the new Crown to serve the people, thank everybody involved for making the club a success, and remind the people that new things are afoot and opportunity is calling. Get the Herald to call an end to the Court, and go party.

Now that the basic plans are laid, you can truly look at the things that will make the coronation "colorful." The next area of critical planning and coordination is the music for the Coronation. In this area you will need a "sound engineer" with access to a cassette-recorder which can tape directly from a record, and from another tape player. Furthermore, this person must have direct access to the Coronation "schedule of events."

The sound engineer and the Monarch will have to spend a lot of time deciding on the music (fit for a royal occasion) and how long each selection can be for each segment of the Coronation. It is a very good idea for the sound engineer to make up his/her own schedule of events and break it down into time segments. The best possible situation is to go through several practice runs of the Coronation to get a more accurate time frame for each segment.

Another helpful hint is to make two copies of the Coronation music and to have two cassette recorders. The #1 copy is used to play on the master sound system. The #2 copy is used on the number two recorder with headphones. If the music on the master system is running over-time and is in danger of continuing into the next segment of the Coronation (a very real possibility), the #2 tape is already fast forwarded to the music for the next segment, and is ready to go as you fade out the music of the previous segment on the master system.

There is also the possibility that the music is not long enough for the segment. In a case like this the #2 copy is rewound to the beginning of the segment, and as the #1 copy is faded out on the master system, the #2 copy is placed in the master system and played as a loop. The #1 copy is then fast forwarded to the next segment and is ready to go back in after the #2 copy is faded out. If you think this is all terribly complicated, you're right. All that you have to do though, is set up the system, and go through a couple of practice runs. You'll get the idea.

Now that the major planning and coordinating aspects are over you can begin with the landscaping of your Coronation. This is indeed a fun and creative segment of Coronation development. You will need to be present at the hall for this segment and should have the basic materials you will need for the night of the Coronation, or at least a very good idea of what you will have to work with. When arranging the "landscape" for your feast you

will want to consider three major areas of importance: 1) The Crown table. 2) The Court area. 3) The audience.

The Crown table should be the magnet which draws the attention in your hall. For this reason it is a good idea to place the Crown table at one end of the room, placing it on a raised dais if possible. The dais is not a hard item to construct, and can be as simple as two pallets placed side by side with a carpet thrown over the top. You will be surprised at how much more impressive the Crown table will look when mounted on a dais.

The next area you will want to stake out is the Court area. The Court area is basically a large empty space in front of the Crown table used for the crown to conduct Court business. For example, this will be the area where the processional will stop, where the awards will be given out and accepted, and where any entertainment for the Court, such as dancing will be held. A nice touch you can add to this area is a large Persian rug, or if need be a large facsimile of a Persian rug.

Finally, where does the audience go, and how are they arranged? What you must immediately take into consideration is where you will place your visiting dignitaries. A good rule of thumb is to place them to the right and left of the head table facing the same direction as the head table. For visiting royalty it is preferable to place them at the head table, affording them the honor of their station. The tables to the left and right of the Court area should face each other, not the Crown table. This focuses their attention on the Court area where the bulk of the action will be taking place. At the lower end of the Court area tables should face the Crown and have a central aisle for which the processional can pass.

Decoration is another area in which you can have a lot of fun and produce great effects. Once again the Crown table is the magnet of the hall, and you want this area to draw as much attention as possible. For this reason you will want to place a large tapestry

(or if you have a club banner with the royal seal on it) on the wall immediately behind the head table. Try to cover as much space as you can on this wall, making sure that the tapestries are visible when the Monarch is seated. Other items you might want to place around or behind the Crown table are large plants, coats of arms, pillars, or any other item which will lend majesty to their Majesties. Use your imagination. You can really come up with some great ideas if you just think and experiment.

For the rest of the hall you can decorate the walls with personal banners (encourage the populace to bring their own), weapons, and tapestries. Suits of armor can really lend the medieval atmosphere you are trying to achieve, and plants can lend a royal air all of their own. Once again, think and experiment.

Lighting is the final area of discussion, and it also is an area in which you can really be creative and add a beautiful aura of grandeur to your Coronation. Candelabras are a must for the Crown table, and you will want to position them both on and around the table making sure not to obscure the Monarch or his/her view of the hall. Usually the rule of thumb is the more, the better. Be sure to encourage the populace to bring their own lighting.

If you are going to video tape any segment of the Coronation, set up the video camera and experiment with the lighting. Some video cameras now tape well in candle light, but in my experience this is not the case. You will probably need to use obnoxious electrical lighting to get really good video, but you can disguise the lighting by various methods such as lamp shades or placing the lights behind objects such as planters or suits of armor. Try to get away with as little electrical lighting as possible, and don't let this form of lighting ruin your Coronation. The Coronation is medieval and an event for the whole club to enjoy, so balance this fact with your desires for posterity. Maybe you will decide it's not worth recording the feast if you can't adequately disguise your lighting.

I hope this article will be of some use for your Coronation. The main point that I would like to get across is to start the planning segment of your feast well in advance. A month is not long enough. Get together some people who have the time, energy, and materials that you will need and discuss, plan, and revise your Coronation until it is organized the way you want it. The music segment is one of the rougher ones to master, and will take a lot of planning and consideration as well as rehearsal to get it right; but you will find it is well worth the trouble. The rest of the coronation is pretty easy and lots of fun. The point that I would like to get across here is to think about all the possibilities and be creative. Listen to every idea you can, experiment with them, and then decide what you want to use.

Amtgard is a fantastic outlet to discover skills you never knew you had, and to use them in a constructive, creative way. You will be very satisfied when all your hard work pays off by having a great Coronation; and even if the populace doesn't know how much work and effort was put into it, at least you do. Give yourself a standing ovation, and long live Amtgard!

THE BIRTHING, BATTLING, AND BABYING OF THE AMTGARD SWORD

In my seven years of Amtgard I've seen several editions of the rulebook come and go, a constant evolution of fighting styles, and the rise and fall of several weapon systems (along with their associated construction elements). Publications and articles showcasing Amtgard knowhow have proliferated in the last two years. Despite this "renaissance", not one serious piece has been undertaken to examine a critical "linchpin" of Amtgard battlegames, this being weapons, and more specifically, sword construction techniques. I've built over 300 weapons, accumulating some "small" store of knowledge and expertise in the process. However, owing to a divergence of fighting styles and requirements, along with the wide variance in materials available, no two individuals will turn out identical weapons. Rather than attempt to impart my (or any others') weaponsmithing style upon the Amtgard populace, this article is structured as an overview of the more interesting and useful sword building methods that I've encountered.

It is somewhat of a truism that a weapon is only as good as its materials; More important is to know what you want, and procure your materials with an eye towards battlefield application, cost, and the degree of maintenance you're willing to undertake after construction. Before you can choose materials, it's wise to understand the separate elements of an Amtgard sword. These are: the base (core), cylinder (blade), cap (point), cover, and hilt (with pommel). Two sub-categories that are not actual weapon parts but still require mention here are fixatives and accessories. I will examine each category with the emphasis on materials, with comments on the pros and cons of each material, and advice on construction where appropriate.

THE BASE

Popular vernacular refers to this as the core, a term that is slightly misleading. Two-foam weapons with a soft foam shell enclosing a tube of ensolite have an ensolite "core" and a pvc pipe (or accepted substitute) "base". It is a misnomer in the rulebook that refers to the pvc as a core. This has lead to an alarming trend of hard packed foam weapons, these engineered by weaponmakers fearful that their weapons will not pass because a reeve can feel the "core". Safety is the important factor, not a technicality in the rules. I will discuss this later under "cylinders". Most swords do (and should) utilize pvc. I've seen other materials used as a base ranging from an iron bar (alarming); to bamboo, aluminum pipes, and fiberglass; (all fragile and useless); to rattan (marginal). In other words, it is strongly suggested that you stick with pvc pipe.

Pvc comes in all forms and sizes. What will suit your needs depends on how you will apply your weapon. The harder you hit, and the larger the weapon, the heavier your pvc will have to be. All pvc has a psi rating, which is the pressure load it can safely handle. I've used psi ratings between 120 and 480 in my swords. Obviously there is a tradeoff, lighter pvc (lower ratings) makes for lighter, faster swords - they also break more often. I've had the most luck (best tradeoff) utilizing pvc with psi ratings around 300. For most practical usage I don't suggest ratings below 240. The other important quality of pvc is the diameter. For Amtgard swords this rating will usually range between 1/4 inch to one inch, with most swords either 3/8, 1/2 or 3/4 of an inch. I don't recommend 1/4 to 3/8 inch pvc, especially with lower psi ratings - this tends to form a whip-like sword that is both immoral (it curves around parries upon impact), and illegal (the additional torque created by the "ship" imparts more force to the target). Longer swords tend to require a larger diameter. When looking at pvc, choose diameter ratings with comfortability of grip in mind. Pvc should have the psi and diameter stamped on the side, and commonly sells from \$1.00 to \$2.00 a foot (shop carefully). You can find it at

hardware stores and warehouses or at any place that carries plumbing supplies. If you're willing to trade money for time, then the frequenting of construction sites and dumps can yield sizeable caches of Amtgard usable pvc.

THE CYLINDER

Most differences in swords begin with the type and amount of foam used. The foam is usually wrapped around the base to form a cylinder and is then affixed to the pvc. That's right, I've seen other methods: stiff ensolite with no base, thick foam slabs pierced with a knife and forced over the pvc base, sectional pieces of foam fitted together like a sandwich stuffed with small pieces, etc. Two methods predominate, wrapping and piercing. Foam itself comes in a bewildering array of sizes, colors, and shapes. I will describe the various "standard" foam types and how they are employed in construction:

- A. White 1/2" to 2" foam - the "normal" foam portrayed in the rulebook. It has fallen into disfavor recently, unfortunate since this foam is soft, cheap, and plentiful. It is wrapped around the base and taped (or glued) there. Best results are usually achieved when it is wrapped to a 1" to 1 1/2" thickness around ensolite tubing affixed to the pvc base. The 1/2" variety is more flexible in construction, but more apt to "slip" (the funnel effect) in combat. Prices vary widely, and it can be found in any foam and fabric store.
- B. Ensolite tubing - not for sword construction on its own, it provides an excellent core for white foam (as mentioned above). It is also standard fare for padding the edges of shields, javelins, and axes. Color is usually a variation of grey. Look for it where you find pvc. Prices are comparable to those for pvc.
- C. Blue (and white) ensolite - made popular by Ahira, it is the current "in" foam with many swordmakers. Found in most hardware stores, it offers the advantages of being firm and easy with which to work. Maintenance is simple since it doesn't give much (thus it doesn't tear). On the other hand, its very firmness tends to create a dense and hard weapon on the ledge of legality. Also, it is not suited for long weapons, it tending to display top-heavy tendencies not found in the other foams. It comes in 1/32" to 1/8" thick sheets. Again the thicker sheets are recommended, loosely wrapped to a constant 1 1/2" to 2" of thickness around the pvc base. Many swords with this foam do not pass weapon safety checks because their makers either wrap the foam too tightly, don't use enough foam, or put on too tight a cover. Each successive layer of foam should be taped together at the top of the sword to prevent the "funnel effect", this caused by the separate layers starting to separate and move upward on the sword. Letting this go will elongate your blade and eventually tear the foam off at the top. A quick (and almost absolute) rule for any foam: Simplicity is best - use as few layers as possible, all firmly attached to the base. One warning, only tape this foam where you absolutely need it, ensolite and tape have a special affinity for each other (they won't let go).
- D. Grey packing foam - my own first line weapons are made with this. Unfortunately you can't buy it; it's usually found as packing for computers and television sets. Another problem is quality control. Firmness ranges from very soft (light grey - tears easily with too much give) to very firm (dark grey - also tears easily because it has no give). You want to find something in the middle that's firm enough to protect your targets from the pvc base. Standard construction procedure is to punch a hole throughout its length, slide it over the base, and firmly affix it at its bottom end to the base. Care must be taken to

punch a clean hole; any tears or fissures will expand during use in combat and rip the cylinder. By the same token, the hole must extend throughout the entire cylinder lest the pvc base slide and tear through the top of the cylinder (especially a problem when stabbing). Packing foam is most useful for slashing only swords.

- E. Other foams - Dimpled packing foam (usually yellow or blue) can be utilized much like white 1" foam - pack it lightly. It looks like egg cartons. The thick foam used in furniture can be pierced as in the case of grey packing foam, though it will yield a heavier weapon. Not recommended are the clear bubble foams (they're light and soft - until all the air pockets burst), and foam rubber (too hard, too heavy).

CAPS

All swords require a cap. Even weapons not stabbing legal require a separate foam cover over the pvc edge. As per the rulebook, a cap should start with the taping over the pvc edge of a section of stiff foam. I recommend 1/8" white or blue ensolite. Tape it down well. Great care should be taken to insure that this cap will not slip or tear. Further modifications to the cap generally take one of five forms:

- A. Bulb: Much like the rulebook example, strips of soft white foam are taped over the ensolite to provide a safe stabbing point. The end result looks much like an Amtgard arrow. The cylinder rises flush with the bulb.
- B. Foldover: Developed by Hellspawn and utilized with 1" white foam weapons. The white foam is extended a couple of inches over the cap, folded over, then taped in a radial pattern (much like an iris). This makes a light, safe stabbing point, although the large amount of tape tends to induce tearing.
- C. Stuffed: Primarily for use with packing foam. A piece of soft foam is placed in the 2" or so of free space between the end of the pvc base and the top of the packing foam, and is then taped over. Such points are marginal at best for stabbing purposes.
- D. Stiff top: For use with blue ensolite swords. The blue ensolite is extended over the base, with an extended cap taped to the edge of the pvc base. The ensolite cylinder supports it and holds it in place. Again, this yields a marginal stabbing point.
- E. Hollow point: Stiffer foams can actually extend 1" to 2" above the cap, providing a cushion of air between the cap and the target. In this case care should be taken to reinforce the cap with more foam. The end result is a light tip, although a danger exists for ripping the top off in combat, especially if you tend to hit with the top 1/4 of your sword.

COVER

At one time this entailed surrounding the entire cylinder with duct tape. Clearly times have changed. It is not desirable to have weapons that are heavy and hard. Also, tape doesn't allow the foam to give, thusly inducing tearing wherever it is affixed. Modern swords need light, yet durable covers. Colored socks are not a bad bet. They instantly conform to the desired shape, don't tear easily, and are easy to mend. Image conscious weapons builders prefer cloth covers. Dark materials are popular, preferably something stretchy that can give a little in the strain of combat. Most cloth covers are made of non-stretchable materials such as broadcloth that either tear or gradually fray away,

leaving little or no hope for repair. I would recommend one of the synthetic cotton blends that have a little give. Another common mistake with cloth covers is "the sew a tube and pull it over the cylinder approach". This leaves the end of your sword looking like Micky Mouse on a stick, with those cute little ears poking out. A little more effort to sew in a round, flat "bottom", yields a more professional appearance and a longer lifespan. A drawstring on the bottom of the cover can serve to draw the cover tight over the base. A more common alternative is to tape the cover down over the length of the hilt. I don't suggest this if you intend on removing your cover for any reason whatsoever (maintenance, repair, etc.). I tend to tightly tie my covers down at the juncture of the hilt and end cylinder, bringing up the trailing edge to be hand sewn flush with the rest of the cover.

HILT (WITH POMMEL)

Pommels (at the back end of a sword) follow the same general rules as for caps. They have to be big enough around to render them incapable of entering an eye socket (a good rule, by the way, for any potential striking portion of anything brought onto the field). Many individuals make their weapon's pommels too small. Sword cover techniques apply to pommels, though the use of tape predominates. The hilt is obviously that part of the sword between the cylinder and the pommel. Grip is dependent on pvc diameter and weapon function. A two-hander might utilize a 12" hilt to facilitate power parries and control. A short infighting sword could have a hilt with a pommel as short as 4" so as not to interfere with the elbow and wrist action applied in the various derivations of the scorpion and rap-style attacks. An old Wandering Unicorn trick was to build swords with very slender and long hilts that could be released to slide out and then be caught at the pommel, thusly surprising an opponent with a sword suddenly 12" to 18" longer. Luckily this tactic died out, eliminating a class of weapons with an unsafe ratio of hilt to cylinder (blade) length. There are no hard and fast rules for this. Needless to say no weapon should be built or utilized in such a way that there is danger of exposed pvc forcefully striking a target. Shorter hilts will minimize those painful shots to your knuckles by encouraging you to parry more with the blade length.

FIXATIVES

Affixing foam to foam and to pvc generally involves the use of two broad categories, glues and tapes. Glues include contact cements and spray adhesives. Such products produce semi-permanent effects not conducive to maintenance (pvc breaks, foam tears), and are not highly recommended. Rather than examine particular types of tape, I will briefly list what I consider to be the best options for each area of sword construction:

- A. Affixing the cylinder to the base: To avoid the "funnel effect" when using multiple layers of foam, duct tape should be run vertically down the length of the pvc base, half taped to the pvc, half to the foam. This adds more weight, but you can't afford to let that foam slip. Ensolite cores, when utilized, and 1" or greater diameter foam, should be taped to the base only at the juncture of the cylinder and hilt. Several layers of tape cross-strapped at 45 degree angles to the hilt will prevent your cylinder from becoming a projectile in mid-swing. Such a taping approach (only at the bottom) allows more give to the sword at its upper striking edges, and this reduces the chances of tearing or ripping. Use strips of duct tape or strapping tape. Never use electrical tape for this purpose. It stretches, allowing the cylinder to creep up and ultimately off the base.
- B. Affixing foam to foam and/or holding a rolled cylinder of foam together: As

stated before, the less tape adhering to foam, the less chance of tearing. electrical tape is good for this - it stretches with little chance of tearing, and can be carefully removed from the foam at need. An interesting variation is to use plastic tape, which will not stick to foam at all (it only adheres to itself). The problem here is that aging plastic tape will just fall off - you take your chances. I've had good luck with it. If you are careful, you can split electrical tape down the middle with a razor blade to provide strips with less surface area in contact with the foam. If you must use duct tape, use the vinyl or cloth varieties, and split it into thinner strips before application.

- C. Other affixing methods: Some individuals elect to cover a "floating" cylinder and then affix the cylinder to the base hilt by taping the cover to the pvc base. It saves wear by negating tape tearing of the foam. However, inevitably the cylinder and cover will begin creeping up the base. This method is useless with layered foams. Nashomi applied a similar technique, using oversized bulb caps to keep his free-floating cylinders from sliding off his sword covers, these lightly taped to the hilt. A useful addition to any soft foam or pierced construction sword is to run a nylon over the cylinder then tape it to the hilt. This supports and reinforces the cylinder, providing extra support.

ACCESSORIES

In general these are additions to the hilt. Strips of leather glued or taped to the hilt look nice, provide a slip-free grip, and can be used to build up small diameter pvc to a more easily wielded size. Lanyards are best made by looping cord against the pommel. When not around a wrist, this cord can be used to tie a sword to a belt or baldric. Bells are an interesting variation. Take a circular or elliptical piece of stiff foam or thick leather and cut holes the diameter of your pvc at either end. Fit both ends over your hilt before adding the pommel, and bingo, you have a bell. For a small price in wrist flexibility, you have added protection for your aching knuckles, and less chance of drawing your fingernails across your opponents' aching faces. Crossguards have gone out of vogue, and good riddance. They're hard to make, harder to make safe, and interfere with your sword play, all the while offering little in defensive benefits.

UNUSUAL TECHNIQUES

Apart from the more successful standard construction methods, there have been a myriad of techniques employed, almost as many as there has been swordsmiths. While not standard practice, some of the more interesting of these methods are listed below:

- A. Mace edges: A marginal cylinder is placed over the base. Four strips of 1/8" to 1/4" foam, each about 1" wide, are taped to the length of the cylinder, providing 4 built up striking edges. A loose cover is then fitted over the cylinder. This technique provides 4 safer striking edges while cutting down on weight.
- B. Axe blade: Seen in many Ahira and M'Deth designs. The foam, usually a stiff ensolite, is stacked in layers on one (or two) side(s) of the pvc base. Unlike an axe, it is extended down the entire blade length in a uniform thickness. A specially sewn cover is required. Such weapons are especially thin, ideally suited to slot shots. They are also inappropriate to most wrist-torque blows, as they tend to strike flat with the unpadded portion.
- C. Scimitars: I've seen people heat the pvc then bend it to produce a curve. This

weakens the pvc's structural integrity and produces an unwieldy weapon. More successful is the building of a curved edge by taping successive layers of packing foam or ensolite tubing. Such weapons look nice, but are hard to the degree of being illegal.

- D. Convex folding: This works best with the stiffer packing foams. Two equal sized pieces of foam, each 2" to 3" thick are placed over the base and pushed together until their edges touch. They are then tightly taped together and affixed at the hilt to the base. An ensolite tubing core may be required. Both a nylon stocking and a tight cover are utilized to help hold the 2 taped halves together.

TYPES

Constructing any weapon requires tradeoffs. Such factors as weight and durability, safety, maintenance requirements, and flexibility and application in combat will enter into the formula. Below are what I perceive to be the typical Amtgard subtypes. Most swords will not solely fall into any one category.

- A. Two-hander: Typically with a blade length of 3 to 4 feet. They border the definition of "red" weapons, being both heavy and durable. Many have stabbing points. Most successful versions are built with the thicker white foams. Historical examples would include claymores and bastard swords.
- B. Long slashing: Shorter, thinner, and lighter than the 2-hander. Both types are seen in single sword tourneys. These are often made of blue ensolite, and for this reason seldom have legal stabbing points. Medieval broadswords and celtic leafswords fall into this category.
- C. Short slashing: Total weapon length is usually less than 3 feet. The weapon can be single edged, with most blows thrown at an opponent's extremities. An out-of-line, looping style of attack is preferred. These are among the lightest of Amtgard weapons. Such weapons include scimitars and katanas.
- D. Short hacking: Infighting weapons, usually wider than their slashing counterparts to provide a more viable parrying surface. Blows include an assortment of in-line (between the opponent's shoulders) chops and stabbing motions. The Roman gladius and the Aztec obsidian-edged warclubs were short-hacking weapons.

MAINTENANCE

Building your own mystical "Sword of Omens" is a fruitless endeavor if you don't take care of the equipment (even vorpals blades will rust). Most maintenance for Amtgard weapons is preventive and largely a matter of common sense. You don't expose your weapons to heat, thusly causing the tape to peel off (I'm appalled at how many Amtgarders store their equipment in the trunks of their cars). The other weather extreme to avoid is water. Wet foam will sag and tear. If you must fight in the rain, either scotchguard your swords or cover them in plastic wrap. Unless you plan on being responsible for the depredations of others, I don't advise loaning out your weapons. Sell them, or make them on commission, then explain the weapon's idiosyncrasies and construction techniques to the new owner. Better yet, teach them how to make their own. People using their own personal, homemade weapons are more prone to be conscious of and conscientious in the employment of said equipment.

Note that foam tends to break down as it ages. Taped foam has a significantly shortened lifespan. When using your weapons, feel the cylinder through the cover, especially at the cap. Fissures indicate tearing. By grasping the cylinder at the hilt and lightly twisting you can tell if the sword is working loose. Continuing to use a sword showing any signs of wear, be it tearing, looseness, or whatever, is an open invitation to disaster. You may or may not injure someone, but you will surely speed your weapon to its demise. Prepared fighters always have a second sword on hand. Every couple of months I subject my weapons to a "yard period", totally stripping them down, and replacing or repairing any aging or damaged parts.

CONCLUSIONS

As of late there has been resistance and resentment engendered in some quarters toward those individuals, reeves and otherwise, who strive to keep the Amtgard environment a safe place. Some folks think that you are "less of a man" if you don't stifle your complaints at the harsh treatment they deal out with their marginal weapons. I would add that these "he-men" seldom provide their own equipment, and will take what they can from Amtgard while contributing little or nothing. Amtgard is, among other things, a game. We owe it to ourselves to keep things as fair and fun as possible. I question the motives of an individual who won't spend \$5.00 and 2 hours of his time to construct a safe and viable weapon. I take a sense of pride in my work - I see it as an extension of my persona on the battlefield. What we make of ourselves in Amtgard, our feelings of personal worth, can readily be seen in the arms, armor, and garb that we bear onto the field. Our status as citizens, whether first, second, or third class, is a matter of personal choice.

Despite the many protestations to the contrary, the Amtgard rulebook does cover most situations and eventualities that will occur on the battlefield. The fact is that the rules are complex. This is not unusual (see the Dungeons and Dragons or Champions rulebooks, or even the S.C.A. Fighter's handbook). Roleplaying is by its very nature an intricate and involved endeavor. I will agree that steps can be taken to better educate participants on the Amtgard rules of play. This article is one effort to do just that. Concerning weapons and armor, I have compiled and charted their relevant applications to the game. It should now be possible to cross index the equipment and magic you either have or want to use, and then match that to the appropriate class(es). A second benefit is the ease in which classes can be compared with these charts. This article is divided into 6 sections:

A. Armor and shield eligibility:

	<u>Shield</u>	<u>Armor</u>		<u>Shield</u>	<u>Armor</u>
Antipaladin	any	4 pt.	Bard	small	none
Archer	small at 5th lvl.	3 pt.	Druid	small	none
Assassin	small at 5th lvl.	2 pt. at 4th lvl.	Healer	medium	none
Barbarian, nomadic	up to medium	2 pt.	Monk	none	none
Barbarian, tribal	up to large	1 pt.	Paladin	any	4 pt.
			Scout	small	3 pt.
			Warrior	any	4 pt., 6 at 2nd level
			Wizard	none	none

B. Armor and Shield parameters:

point value--typical armor types

1 pt.	cloth, soft leather
2 pt.	studded or hard leather
3 pt.	ring or scale mail
4 pt.	chainmail
5 pt.	platemail
6 pt.	plate armor

standard armor pt. value modifiers

-1 pt.	if thinner than 1/4 inch
-1 pt.	if non-period materials
-1 pt.	if too light for value
-1 pt.	if mixed or stacked armor
-1 pt.	for only partial coverage
-1 pt.	if does not look period
-2 pt.	for garb: boots, vests, etc.
-1 pt.	for metal less than 14 gauge
+1 pt.	for 6th level warriors
+1 pt.	for superb craftsmanship

shield parameters

small	up to 3 sq. feet surface
medium	up to 5 sq. feet surface
large	up to 8 sq. feet surface

C. Effects of Magic:

- *Bless- may not be stacked or combined with armor
- *armor type enchantments (barkskin, stonewall, protect, protection)- may be stacked up to 4 pts.; may not be combined with armor
- *Heal- repair up to 1 pt. of berserk barbarian armor on any one location
- *Mend- a. repair any one destroyed (i.e.- not "useless") weapon or shield
b. repair one point of one piece of armor
c. repair one point on one location of any armor type enchantment
- *Enchant shield, Harden (item)- enchanted shield or weapon cannot be destroyed unless specifically specified (i.e.- sphere of annihilation)
- *Bladesharp, Bludgeon, Shillelagh- red (two-handed) weapons do double listed damage; blue weapons act as normal red weapons, green and black weapons cannot be so enchanted.
- *Flameblade- as per bladesharp plus weapon is immune to flame attacks and the weapon bearer is immune to iceballs.
- *Enchant(ed) weapon- wounds inflicted instead kill the target
- *Stun weapon, stun arrow- treat hits as subdual style blows

*Magic arrow- arrow becomes a "red" weapon, add +1 pt. damage to armor per "level" attached (stacked) or this enchantment

*Heat weapon; Curse weapon- makes the affected weapon "useless" for a 300 count

*Warp wood- destroys wooden weapons, may be mended

*Pyrotechniques- will destroy a weapon or shield

*Shatter- will destroy a weapon, a shield, or a piece of armor

*NOTES ON ENCHANTMENTS:

1. an enchantment carried is considered to be an enchantment worn
2. armor is considered to be garb for purposes of wearing enchantments

D. Replacing items:

1. Relics are treated as normal equipment unless otherwise specified under the relic description. Note that a relic cannot be replaced.
2. The use of the "Mend" spell has already been listed.
3. All destroyed items are considered repaired when the dead come back to life.
4. Destroyed and useless weapons and shields may be replaced by taking a 100 count at your home base or nirvana.
5. Armor may never be replaced.
6. Warrior sharpen blade, harden shield, and repair are non-magical variations of the listed magic useable only on their own equipment.

E. Weapons costs for magic using classes (per 10 magic points):

n- non edged weapon e- edged weapon na- not allowed

	WIZARD	HEALER	DRUID
short (3 ft.)	2	4e/3n	2
long (4 ft.)	4	5e/4n	4
spear	3	na	4
staff	2	3	2
dagger (1½ ft.)	0	0	0
shield	na	3	4
short bow	na	na	8

F. The weapons (explanation of format):

Weapon name: accepted Amtgard (not necessarily the historical) name of that weapon

Code:

Color : Blue- cutting, smashing, or bashing weapon
Green- thrusting or jabbing weapon
Red- two handed, double damage weapon
Black- throwing weapons

C:

Parameters: typical accepted size of the weapon

P:

Description: outline of the weapon and its usage

D:

Tournament usage: listing of tournament events for that weapon

T:

Guild (classes): which classes may use the weapon. If the level for the weapon is available is above first, it will be after the class name.

G:

1. Axe, battle

C: blue, and possibly red

P: 3' to 5'

D: single headed weapon with one or two cutting edges, usually used with both hands

T: berserker

G: antipaladin, barbarian (nomadic), paladin, scout, warrior

2. Axe, hand

C: blue

P: 1½' to 3'

D: a one handed axe (not legal for throwing)

T: usually in short weapon

G: antipaladin, archer, assassin, barbarian, druid, healer, paladin, scout, warrior, wizard

3. Bow, long

C: arrows- green (never allowed in melee), bow- not applicable

P: arrows- up to 29", bow- longer than 5½' when strung

D: a non-compound bow of less than 35 lbs. draw. These do 4 pts of damage to armor. Crossbows fall into this category.

T: archery

G: archer, scout (6th)

4. Bow, short

C: as per long bow

P: bow- shorter than 5½' when strung

D: as per long bow, but only do 2 pts. damage

T: archery

G: archer, assassin (2nd), barbarian (tribal), druid, scout

5. Club

C: blue

P: 2' to 3'

D: a sword like weapon without a stabbing point and/or hand protection

T: sword, sword and parry

G: all but barbarian (nomadic), bard, and monk

6. Dagger

C: green, and possibly blue (if has a firm base)

P: ½' to 1½'

D: this is the non-throwing variety; slashing daggers must be long enough so that the user does not punch the target

T: short weapon

G: all

7. Flail, long

C: blue

P: longer than 3'

D: a non-standard hinged weapon that must be specially approved for use on the field. The chain must be specially padded.

T: none

G: antipaladin, paladin, warrior

8. Foil

C: green

P: up to 3'

D: a stabbing only sword

T: fencing, sword

G: all those that may use a longsword

9. Halberd

C: red

P: 5' minimum

D: single or double bladed weapon that can be used to cut or bash. It differs from a quarterstaff in that it usually only has one striking head. The lirpa and poleaxe fall into this category.

T: berserker

G: antipaladin, monk, paladin, warrior

10. Hammer, war

C: blue

P: 1½' to 3'

D: single headed weapon similar to a mace but with one or two smashing edges

T: sword, sword and parry

G: all but barbarian (tribal), bard, and monk

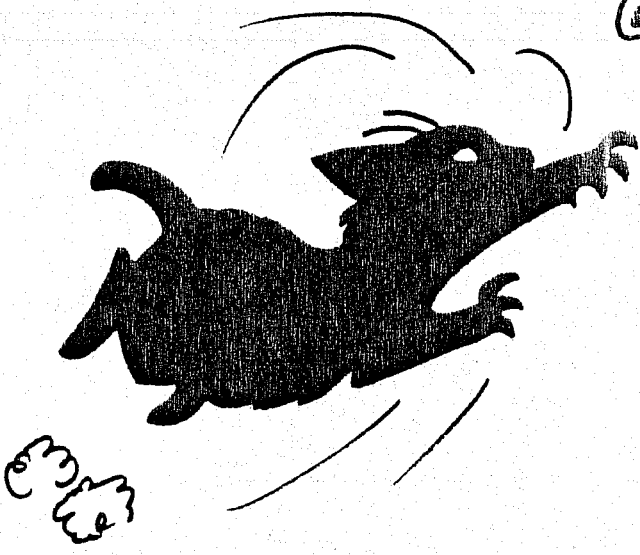
11. Javelin
 - C: green, may be thrown
 - P: 3' to 5'
 - D: a short stabbing and/or throwing "spear"
 - T: spear
 - G: antipaladin, barbarian (tribal), paladin, scout, warrior (3rd)
12. Mace
 - C: blue
 - P: 1½' to 3'
 - D: single headed bashing weapon
 - T: sword, sword and parry
 - G: same as war hammer
13. Mattock
 - C: blue, red if 4'+
 - P: 3'+
 - D: a large club with an oversized head; included are mauls and war clubs
 - T: berserker
 - G: antipaladin, barbarian (nomadic), paladin, warrior
14. Morningstar
 - C: blue
 - P: usually less than 3', the chain length must be less than 1½'
 - D: a regulation length hinged weapon with a single smashing head; chain hits do not count. This category includes saps. T: obviously morningstar
 - G: antipaladin, assassin (nunchuks only), barbarian (nomadic), healer, monk (nunchuks only), paladin, warrior
15. Naginata
 - C: blue and green
 - P: 5' minimum, striking head must be 1'+
 - D: a long slashing polearm, it cannot be thrown
 - T: spear
 - G: antipaladin, druid, monk, paladin, warrior
16. Net
 - C: none
 - P: 2' to 3' long
 - D: a hinged weapon not attached to any base. They do no damage, and may never be used to trip or otherwise impede a person's body. Their only function is to parry and entangle other weapons.
 - T: none
 - G: antipaladin, assassin, healer, monk, paladin, warrior
17. Quarterstaff
 - C: blue and also usually green
 - P: 5'+, striking heads must be 1'+
 - D: a double headed, bashing weapon used with both hands at once
 - T: quarterstaff
 - G: antipaladin, bard, druid, healer, monk, paladin, warrior, wizard
18. Spear
 - C: green
 - P: 5'+
 - D: a thrusting only weapon that may not be thrown. Includes tridents.
 - T: spear, jousting
 - G: antipaladin, druid, monk, paladin, warrior, wizard
19. Sword, broad
 - C: blue, and possibly green
 - P: about 4', hilt less than 1¼' suggested
 - D: sword used with one or two hands, includes hand & a ½, bastard swords
 - T: none
 - G: antipaladin, barbarian (nomadic), druid, paladin, warrior

20. Sword, long
 C: blue, and usually green
 P: 3' to 4', hilt less than 1' suggested
 D: a cutting and thrusting weapon used one handed; includes scimitars
 T: sword, sword and parry
 G: antipaladin, barbarian (nomadic), bard, druid, healer, monk (1 only), paladin, warrior, wizard, note- scouts without bow may use longsword
21. Sword, short
 C: blue and green
 P: 1½' to 3'
 D: short slashing and stabbing weapon, includes sais
 T: sword, sword and parry
 G: all but barbarian (tribal)
22. Sword, two handed
 C: red
 P: 4' to 6', hilt less than 1½' suggested
 D: two-handed cutting weapon
 T: berserker
 G: antipaladin, barbarian (nomadic), paladin, warrior
23. Throwing weapons
 C: black
 P: 4" to 1'
 D: missile weapons with no stiff base or which are firmly padded along their entire length. Examples include shuriken, throwing knives, throwing axes (francesca), sha-ken, darts, and rocks. As with all weapons, no part of the weapon can be small enough to enter a human eye socket. T: again obvious- throwing weapons
 G: assassin, barbarian, monk (2nd), note- suggested maximum of 7 throwing weapons for assassins, barbarians can carry only 1 missile weapon (including throwing weapons), only barbarians can throw rocks.
24. White weapons
 C: white
 P: variable
 D: examples include seige weapons and poison. A seige weapon shot will instantly kill a target, even a shot to the shield or armor. A poisoned victim will die within a 100 count unless cure poison is cast.
 T: none
 G: poison only to assassin (2nd, 1 weapon only), and antipaladin (5th, 1 poisoned edged weapon for one life per game). Seige weapons require 3 people to operate.

There you have it. Careful perusal should help define and refine your choices. I would not say that this article is the final word, but it does boil down the basics accrued from our seven years of experience with the Amtgard system. I hope the reader found it to be of some use.



F4



if the two of you plan on being room-mates, i.e.,

THE LITTER BOX FIXATION MUST BE IMPRINTED ON THE CAT'S BRAIN PAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

Failure to accomplish this basic training is not only CATastrophic it can result in CATatonia, CATalepsy, CATarrha, (a positive CATalog of disasters) and commonly leads to CATaclysms and acts as a CATalyst to immure the beast in a CATafalque or to use your little furry friend as the payload for a CATapult (preferably aimed in the general direction of CATalonia). Luckily, litter-box training is so easy that the word "training" is an overstatement. Usually all you have to do is take infant cat person, place gently in litter box (suggestively scratch at the litter as an incentive) and sit back while your 12 ounce tiger in training proceeds to dig furiously, centers fanny over resultant depression, assumes an abstracted expression and produces. Incidentally I have never figured out how an adorable little collection of fluff and buzzes can produce urine of a strength and potency that if you get any closer than 2 feet from the litter box you can go blind not to mention what it does to your nasal passages.

Some one once said "you can't train a cat. You can train dogs, seals, elephants, dolphins and snakes but you can't train cats." Let us examine this bigoted, biased and downright xenophobic statement. I can agree in part; true, you can't train a cat to do what he doesn't care to do. You can however convince a cat that he really does want to do something. First of all, where is the emphasis on the sentence in question? Is it on "you" or on "cat" or on both? Are YOU incapable of training a cat, is the CAT incapable of being trained or are the two of you hopelessly incompatible? To take it one step further; why on earth would you want to train a cat in the first place? Answers to all of the above are:

On the assumption both of you pass this milestone in feline etiquette we shall now speak of secondary encouragement. Under secondary we shall consider various desirable traits and the encouragement of same. Note that I did not use the words "teach" or "train" ... encouragement is the operative word. You probably do not want your cat to:

1. If you are possessed of basic common sense, a modicum of patience, and the guile and deceit worthy of a sixth level assassin then you are indeed capable of training a cat.
2. If the cat is possessed of basic common sense, a modicum of patience and rolls an 18 for ego (generally not a problem with any cat I've ever met) then the cat will indeed accept training.
3. Some training is absolutely necessary

1. Climb curtains .. so you give kitty something else to climb, i.e., yourself (wear jeans and heavy sweatshirt when dealing with kitten - attack dog padding ((4 hit point armor)) when dealing with mature feline). Encouraging a cat to climb you may sound wierd but it saves the curtains. The positive note is that as the cat matures and gains weight he will probably stop using your body as his own private jungle gym. After the cat reaches 6 to 10 pounds you will no longer provide a stable platform - and cats generally don't like to rock and roll.

Another positive note, cats can differentiate between your fragile nylons, silks, and heirloom sweaters and your 16 oz. denim work pants. Convincing them to do so however is another story.

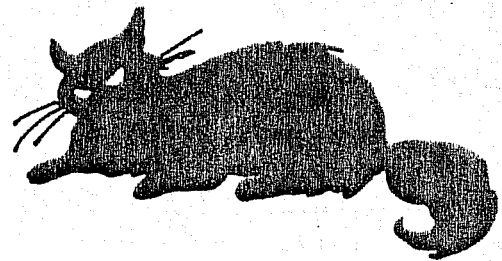
2. Scratch furniture (actually, CAT is not scratching per se - CAT stretching muscles and sharpening claws) .. so encourage (there's that word again) kitty to sharpen claws elsewhere. It is a fact, though little known, that fair to good quality wall to wall carpeting cannot be damaged by any cat smaller than a mountain lion. Here is how you do it: You and kitty get down on rug. You and kitty play. During the course of play pat (not pet - PAT) kitty firmly and enthusiastically on back right above hindquarters. This will make kitty feel so good he will immediately want to dig in claws and stretch and since he's already on the carpet that's where he'll indulge his exuberance. Encourage junior varsity lion in this and I can almost guarantee he'll never want to scratch elsewhere.

Also, cats understand "NO" when used sparingly, appropriately, and when delivered in a disdainful tone of voice. Actually what you do is embarrass the cat by intimating that no cat of any breeding whatsoever would commit such an incredible faux pas. I knew one lady who could accomplish a very effective "NO" by simply clearing her throat and raising one eyebrow (implying the cat was an uncultured nerd). Just be careful not to mortify the cat in front of witnesses. Not only will the cat not amend the erroneous behavior he will actively plot ways to get back at you - and will usually succeed.

3. Climb on furniture .. Forget this one. Cats are designed by the gods themselves to climb. Climbing is major point of existence for CAT - entire reason for being. Besides it gives cat one-upmanship elevation-wise (how would you like to be 10 inches tall for the rest of your life?!). It is possible to encourage CAT to climb on only certain things - barely! You do this by making certain allowable (allowable to you, that is) climbing areas more attractive than others. Don't want cat on table, kitchen counter or antique armoire then

open drapes to window with a view. Cat will probably opt for the window. You and the cat will work out a compromise. Note, you cannot keep cats from napping on your bed or investigating kitchen counter tops. The only solution is to have a bedspread that matches the cat's fur. Better yet get a furry bedspread to start with then the cat can only add additional fur which, if you have chosen your colors well, merely enhances the bedspread's ambiance. As for trespassing on the kitchen counter the solution is simple - don't leave anything on the counter for the cat to check out. Cats are the ultimate pragmatists. If it's not rewarding they won't do it.

All the above serves to emphasize two very important words when dealing with cats - "encourage" and "compromise". You cannot bend a cat to your will; you cannot force, coerce, or intimidate a cat. You can however negotiate. Detente is a good word. One last warning - NEVER, EVER hit a cat. Hitting a cat produces the exact opposite of what you're trying to get the cat to do or not do.



Advanced behavioral modification comes in several guises. I have seen everything from cats who could open doors, use people toilets as sand boxes, fetch better than your dog Rover, pick up their food with their paws, play a passable game of ping-pong, hold an intelligent conversation, watch T.V. (this is probably not an example of intelligence) to cats who routinely perform as extremely accurate alarm clocks. And all of us know more than one cat who can give a damned good John Wayne impersonation. You will not know immediately which form of advanced training the cat will choose. Make no mistake - YOU do not make the choice - CAT does. Your job is to

watch like a hawk and when you see apprentice cat (aka kitten) indicate clumsy preference for any form of advanced behavior immediately encourage the cat. EXAMPLE: Small furred person chases little wad of paper and carries it in his mouth for a short distance. Immediately go to kitten, *praise extravagantly pet encouragingly, toss wad of paper again. Repeat for as long as you have the stamina (world record currently stands at 27 fetches).

*NOTE: Praise is verbal and can loosely be defined as "baby talk". Sounds ridiculous if not disgusting but the higher you pitch your voice and the more you oooh and coo the better the cat will like it and the faster he'll learn.

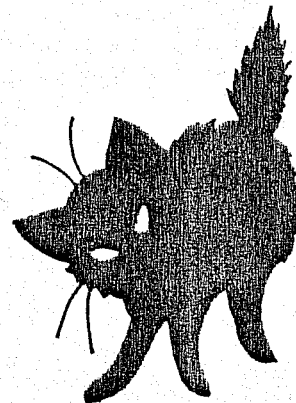
I note in reading over my words that I have been guilty of always referring to cats as "he". It is probably time to explain some the the positives and negatives of the male and the female cat.

Male or Tom: Toms, if unneutered, have several idiosyncrasies that are usually not considered socially acceptable. First of all they have 2-track minds. They are incapable of considering anything except sex and food (and in that order!). Toms will also be compelled via hormonal surges to "mark" their territory. To those of you who do not understand; "marking" consists of the cat spraying urine over the object he wishes to identify as his own personal property. Territory can be defined as everything from a new pair of boots to your grandmother. The "intact" Tom is also surly, self-centered, possessed of bad breath and incredibly stupid. If on the other hand they are neutered or "altered" sometime between the ages of 6 and 9 months the gonadal development will be redirected toward their brains and will commonly result in an amiable, congenial, good-old-boy with a kitty I.Q. ranging from the low 60's to the mid 80's - dumb but cool.

Females or "Queens": Females are almost always smarter than the males and, if spayed, usually develop the personality of a puff adder. Intact or non-spayed females, contrary to their barren sisters, embody all that is good in universal motherhood. They will however also produce two litters

of kittens a year with appalling regularity. They are also not as smart. Again, development is concentrated in the reproductive organs rather than in the brain. However the dumbest of females is at least as smart as the most intelligent male. All cat geniuses are spayed females and neurotic paranoids - smart but insufferable.

With all of the above in mind think twice and hesitate five times before you agree to share your life with a cat. Trust me. Once the cat has invested several years in training you they'll never let you go. A cat is a Chinese obligation. Once you decide to get a cat you have a 5 to 30 pound responsibility hanging around your neck for at least a decade (sometimes two decades). Right about now you ask yourself, "why on earth get a cat"? Well, if you require unthinking adoration and slavish devotion to the exclusion of common sense DON'T GET A CAT; get a dog. Dogs are amiable slobs (Ever checked out a dog's table manners? Yuck!) and if you don't mind a daily patrol of your back yard to scoop up the physical manifestations of doggy digestion then a dog should be your companion of choice. If on the other hand you enjoy critical acceptance, interaction with another thinking being, are fascinated by observing the endless permutations of a self-willed, painfully honest personality and are emotionally secure then maybe, just maybe, you are qualified to live with a cat.



ES

Richard I, Coeur de Lion;

The Knight and the King

What comes to mind when one hears the word "chivalry"? Often, one thinks of romantic sagas depicting the knight in shining armor gallantly riding to the aid of a helpless maiden. Another thought may bring noble warriors, fighting with the honor of the crusades, to mind. These thoughts are not always the true meaning of chivalry. Richard I, Coeur de Lion, the Lionheart of romantic stories, was the perfect example of a knight, and though in his later years he was a king, he was always more the knight.

Richard I was the third son of King Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. It seemed unlikely that he would ever succeed the throne of England, but he was made the Duke of Aquitaine at an early age. Henry II had planned to divide Britain amongst his sons so that all his heirs could have a part. His sons were displeased and openly took up arms against him. In the disputes, three of the heirs died, leaving Richard and John the sole heirs. Two weeks after the disputing had ended, Henry II died. Two versions of Richard at the king's deathbed are popular. The first says that as Richard's father was lying about to die, Richard forced himself to be named heir. The second version reveals that at Henry's Deathbed, Richard wept in sorrow and blamed himself for the king's fatal death, and thus was named heir. And so, he became king at the young age of 32. He was at the peak of his physical powers and was a vigorous and handsome young man.

There were two Richard I's. The first, foremost, and dominant was Richard I Coeur de Lion, the knight. Throughout his life, Richard was guided by a code of chivalry. The knightly code was a strict, formal code based on the military

discipline of battles and wars. Richard was considered the perfect product of the code, as he blindly followed it to the letter. Being the result of the code, he was fond of warfare at an early age. He had been on the battlefield several times before he was out of his teens. He came to regard war and fighting as a prized form of art. Some men love science or poetry; Richard's love was weapon skills and fighting. He loved it not so much for glory or politics, but more for a natural fascination. Richard was too impetuous to be either habitually cruel or treacherous, as some would suggest. He merely studied war and refined his own fighting abilities. He became a brilliant general and excellent tactician; as well as tall, strong in muscle and nerve, and a dextrous fighter. So great a fighter was he that the most admired heraldry symbol was given to him; the lion.

This great respect from his contemporaries eventually led him to be titled "Coeur de Lion", or Lionheart. This was possibly the highest honor that could have been bestowed upon any man in this time period. Richard I, Coeur de Lion, together with King Philip Augustus of France, led the third crusade with his feared lion banners at the head of his massive army of thousands of knights and men-at-arms. On the battlefield, he was seen as the perfect knight in shining armor. With this knight-general at the head of a great army, he conquered the island of Cyprus, recovered the city of Acre, and came within a dozen miles of Jerusalem. His opponent, Saladin, came to a respect that was mutual between Saladin and Richard. They finally made a truce, between knight and Muslim leader, that was to last three years, three months, and three days. Richard had led one of the most successful crusades.

As a king, Richard lacked some of the qualities that made his father

popular. His father seemed more concerned with diplomacy, whereas Richard was much more fond of warfare. When Richard began his reign, his first act was to free his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, from confinement at Winchester. This act was made from Normandy, where he was when he was officially declared king of England on August 13, 1189. When Richard arrived in England, he seemed to favor more of the people who had been loyal to his father against him than the people who had been his fellow rebels. The administrative system that his father had set up had begun to demonstrate its resilience. During the short time Richard spent in England, only two months, he appointed William Longchamp chancellor. This was possibly a combination of the best and worst thing he had done during his entire ten year reign. Longchamp was a dwarf who was cunning, conniving, and intelligent. Longchamp quickly began his new position by helping Richard raise money for the crusade. Longchamp proposed and launched a devious plan to raise the money by removing people from offices and making them pay a tribute to have it back. As the crusade was a noble cause and Richard needed money, this was done. After only about nine weeks of being in England, Richard left to lead the third crusade.

During the crusade, Richard's kingly arrogance had made Leopold of Austria an enemy. Leopold had set his banner atop the tower of a captured city, but Richard had the banner removed and set his own banner atop the tower. On his return home from the third crusade, Richard's ship was wrecked in the Adriatic Sea. He was picked up and kept prisoner by none other than Leopold of Austria. The Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI of Austria ordered Leopold to bring Richard to Henry's palace in Germany. Henry decided to set a ransom for England's king to be returned. Richard was kept for the grotesquely huge sum of 150,000 gold.

coins. This was twice the annual revenue of England. As the money was desperately needed, Longchamp again sold government offices. Only the sum of 100,000 was raised and Emperor Henry VI realized he would get little more. Thus he freed Richard. As Richard was at the crusade and imprisoned, his brother John tried to wrest the throne of England by claiming that Richard was dead. Longchamp took up arms against John and soon, the fact of Richard being alive and jailed set John to more treacherous means by tempting an open rebellion. Richard's eventual freedom ended the squabble and John quickly gathered his wealth and hastily fled to France for fear of his brother's mighty power. Longchamp, now unpopular as chancellor because of his relentless "power wielding" in the king's name, also fell from power at about this time.

Upon his arrival home, Richard summoned John to appear at the British court. He promised no harm to John and his brother answered the summons. Richard then proved he was not cruel or evil by pardoning John. Although pardoned, some of John's estates were removed for "governmental purposes". Perhaps those were removed to the treasury to help pay for war debts.

Now, as Richard was done with securing Britain to him, he turned to his estates in France, for fear of Philip's attempt to regain them. Philip, who was formerly amongst Richard's best of friends, was angry at Richard for not marrying Philip's sister. Richard left England, never to return, and went to his French estates. There he defended his estates admirably against Philip, who was thrown to the defensive as soon as Richard arrived. Now, Richard made perhaps his only major military mistake. As he was attacking a small and insignificant fort, its occupants announced a surrender, but Richard would not accept it. In his overconfidence, he rode towards the keep to shout a challenge.

unarmored. He rode too close to the keep, and a single bowman loosed a shaft. It wounded Richard mortally. His hardy knights, now severely angered, overran the fort. Through the carnage, several men were taken prisoner. Among them was the bowman who had wounded Richard. On his deathbed, as he was dying from that fateful wound, he declared John his successor, then summoned the bowman. On his last few breaths, Richard asked that the man not be punished, but rewarded. After Richard died, the man was flogged to death out of sorrow and anger for the great king, Richard I, Coeur de Lion.

Richard's whole life of 42 years was steeped in the fighting and warfare of knights, from his early childhood to his fatal death during March, 1199. His study of warfare through the chivalric code of knighthood and readiness of arms proved that, though titled king and knight, Richard was always the knight and rarely the king.

WEAVING IN HISTORY AND ON THE INKLE LOOM

Before weaving for clothes could make its appearance, thread had to be spun. There exist some examples of weaving with grasses, rushes, bark or even tree branches. There are many legends that exist telling of the first weaver. Silk was discovered in 2600 B.C. A woman picked silkworm balls off a tree and gave them to her daughter La-See to play with. The child separated the balls and embroidered with the resulting thread. Her daughter, Su-ling-shi invented weaving with silken threads.

It has been discovered that the lake dwellers during the Neolithic period, 10,000 B.C. wove linen. Weaving made its appearance in central Europe, the Middle East and Pakistan by 2500 B.C. It made its appearance in China between 2500 and 1200 B.C. Egyptian tomb paintings show weaving techniques from 5000 B.C. While they woven in wool and linen, only linen has survived the times, some pieces being dated about 5000 B.C.

The Copts, early Christians in Egypt, were recognized by the Romans as outstanding weavers and taken to France to teach weaving. Many settled near what later became Arras, the weaving center of France.

The Romans also taught the English to weave early in the twelfth century. The weaving guild was formed and is known as one of the oldest of all guilds.

Silk and cotton were not cultivated in Europe and silk goods were imported first. When the first cottons arrived from Dacca, they were more expensive than silk. The muslin was so fine and sheer that one pound is said to have contained over 250 miles of thread. Some of the weaving patterns from Dacca were so sheer that they were almost invisible. The Indians named each one--some were called Woven Air, Running Water, and Evening Dew.

Primitive weaving was done on a verticle loom that consisted of a pole laid across two forked sticks in the ground. The warp yarns were tied to the pole and weighted at the ends to hold them taut. The making and trading of wool cloth became important commercially around Mesopotamia in 5000 B.C. In 4000 B.C. the Egyptians used a horizontal loom. Early into the Christian era, the addition of the warp beam and cloth beam was added. Byzantium became the world's weaving center during the 6th century A.D. The two-bar loom was mounted in a frame and used in Europe by 1200 and was a highly developed art.

The Dutch word inkle means some kind of tape, band, belt or any woven strip that is long and narrow according to the Oxford English Dictionary. Some of its spelling variations are ync(h)ull, unkell, ynkle, inckle, incle and inkle. Some recorded examples of its uses are: 1541 "For a pece or brode uncull for gyrdlls. . .", 1567 "With baskets. . . on their arms, where in they have laces, pynnes, nedles, white ynkell". The inkle loom is a very simple two-harness loom used for weaving narrow bands or belts. IT is simply a frame with pegs. String heddles are used to make a shed, and one peg is eccentric-shaped to regulate the tension. The frame and pegs should be of hard wood to withstand the tension when the

loom is being used. The narrow belts and bands may be sen together to make wider pieces of fabric.

Some inkle loom patterns:

The various characters (X, O, W) stand for different colors.

Horizontal stripes

NO HEDDLE X X X X

HEDDLE O O O O ETC.

Thin verticle stripes

NO HEDDLE X X O X X

HEDDLE X O O X ETC.

Large zig zag

NO HEDDLE X X O X X X O X X

HEDDLE X O O O O O O X ETC.

Cross

NO HEDDLE X X X O O X X X

HEDDLE X O O W O O X ETC.

Small zig zag

NO HEDDLE X X O X O X O X X

HEDDLE X O X O O X O X ETC.

Large flower

NO HEDDLE X X X X X O O O O X X X X X

HEDDLE X O O O O X W X O O O O X ETC.

Small diamond

NO HEDDLE X O O X

HEDDLE X X O X X ETC.

Large Diamond

NO HEDDLE X O X X O X

HEDDLE X O O O X ETC.

Checks

NO HEDDLE X X X O O O

HEDDLE O O O X X X ETC.

Teardrop/Pebble

NO HEDDLE X O O X O O X

HEDDLE O O X O O X O X ETC.

Chain

NO HEDDLE O O O O O O O X O O

HEDDLE O O X O O O O O O O ETC.

Basket weave

NO HEDDLE OO OO OO OO OO OO

HEDDLE XX XX XX XX XX ETC.

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A person must ask themselves many questions before seeking major office in Amtgard. The first and most important is, "Do I have the necessary skills to fulfill the office?" All the major offices require good management, the ability to work with others, good speaking and writing skills, tact, and the patience of a saint.

The second most important is, "Do I have the time?" All the major positions require an astounding amount of time. Setting aside the time actually spent at Amtgard, much of which is lost to administrative duties, a minimum of ten hours per week must be spent in working with other officers, preparing publications, organizing events, and communicating with members both in town and out. Approaching special events, as many as thirty or more hours per week may be absorbed.

But a third consideration is beginning to become more important as Amtgard expands. "Can I afford to meet the expenses of the office?" As an example, in the past five months, I have paid over \$560 in expenses related to the office of Queen.

- \$150.00 Crown Qualifications: If you wish to gain the support of neutral voters, it is important to show club spirit by making an impressive showing at Crown Qualifications. It is by no accident that most elected monarchs placed in the top three at qualifications.
- 17.00 The Guard: Personal fighting tabard
- 26.00 Guard Tabards 5 guards, 1 page, 1/2 champion @ \$8 each = \$52/26 half repaid the costs
- 36.75 Guard Hats mine @ \$10.50, 5 guards @ 10.50 each = 52.50/26.25 half repaid the costs
- 12.50 Regalia: Upkeep on the Crown; Stone \$6, Brasso \$3, Enamel \$2.50
- 160.00 Travel: Alessandra's and Nithanalorn's Coronations, the Gathering of the Clans
- 80.00 Gifts: Crown gifts, prizes for tourneys, etc.
- 55.00 Phone: Long distance bills
- 15.00 Postage, Printing, and mailing

While it is true that I would have still travelled, entered qualifications, given gifts and prizes; it is not the same as being obligated to do so by your office. Not all club members can afford to invest \$100 per month in this hobby, and the cost of holding office will expand along with the club's size.

Unfortunately, many club members ask themselves only one question when considering running for office; "Can I get the votes?" This is the mark of someone who desires the office for its status, rather than for the opportunity to contribute. Either they are unaware of, or they do not care whether they can fulfill the office one they have attained it. It is the winning of it that matters to them.

For this reason, voters must ask themselves the first three questions about each candidate. Do they have the necessary skills to fulfill the office? Do they have the time? Can they afford to meet the expenses of the office? If the voters do not know the candidates well enough to answer the questions, they should ask. It is the voters' right and responsibility to know the answers, for it is in their hands to select who will guide Amtgard for half a year.

As long as the voters choose to vote responsibly, we will have responsible people in office.

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SOUL OF A LION

The sun beat down on my neck as I rode through the parched, arid land. It had only been a few hours since I had been separated from my caravan, but I was worried. My steed echoed my thoughts, it was acting overly nervous and its mouth was foaming slightly. I patted his neck reassuringly, and I wished someone was here to reassure me. But alas, I was alone, or so I thought.

Then I felt it...a sort of heat against my back. It was as though someone, or something, was staring at me, its glaring eyes burning a hole through my skin. My horse must of felt it too, for he reared backwards. I heard the sound of stones falling. Looking upward I saw a lion perched precariously on the edge of a small cliff. It roared and I saw past its gaping mouth and peered into the depths of its throat. I resolved that I would not end up in that black abyss. It leaped at me and I screamed, although somewhat prematurely. The lion had gripped my steed's leg with its teeth and I heard a snap as the leg broke. I fell backward, landing on the hard ground with a thud. I quickly yanked my scimitar out of its scabbard and stood up. The lion was looking at me, blood-lust in its eyes. I charged at it, scimitar raised above my head. It obviously did not expect this action, for it did not move. As I drew close to the lion I leapt into the air. As I plummeted downward I pointed the scimitar at the lion's head. The shining blade plunged into the creatures skull, the weight of my body drove it deep into its brain. The lion and I hit the ground simultaneously and some blood

splattered in my face. I raised myself off the ground and stood staring at my handiwork. A gory mixture of blood and brains drained out of the lion's skull, pouring into the thirsty ground.

I was amazed at what I had done. I looked around; both the lion and the horse were dead. Deciding that there was nothing left to do here I resumed my search for the caravan. It was well into the night before I realized I had left my scimitar in the lion's carcass. Oh well, it was too far behind me to return for it now. I journeyed for days to no avail. I just could not find that caravan! I stumbled, and then crawled across the arid land. It grew dark, and I had been drained of all my strength. My body had grown numb and I felt no pain as a lion's teeth sank into my flesh. The lion slowly devoured me and my soul went into an everlasting sleep. But something was amiss, for I woke up. How was this so, for I surely was inside the lion by now. Then I realized something. I had a tail! I began to notice other flaws in my anatomy. I was covered with hair, my arms had mutated into another pair of legs, and my teeth were quite sharp. Then reality hit me like a boulder. I was indeed in the body of the lion which ate me, in more ways than one! My soul had merged with that of the lion, we had become one. Now I walk upon the savannah in the shape of a lion, feeling what a lion feels and seeing what a lion sees. I, too, experience blood-lust, for now I am the soul of a lion.

SCIMITAR

Kierchan walked toward his palace in the middle of town, yet he knew that something was wrong. All was quiet, even the desert creatures. "No, I am being silly. The people are probably taking shelter from this horrid noon-day sun" he exclaimed.

He decided that all was as it should be. But wait...what was that...a glimmer of brilliant red?! Upon closer examination Kierchan found that it was a drop of blood, and fresh too! No, his first premonitions were correct, something was wrong! Terribly wrong!

Kierchan drew his cloak about him, to shadow his identity from any possible enemies. He jerked his head to the side, convinced he saw some movement. Now...behind him...a clatter of metal. His lip sporadically quivered and his eyes narrowed. As he drew closer to his abode he felt a presence.

"Mirana? Is that you?" No answer. "Answer me! Please? Damn it, if this is another one of your pranks you'll not feel my favors for weeks to come!" But his wife did not answer.

"Do not make promises you can not keep, oh great warrior!" Something was amiss here, that was no wife of his! No, that was a masculine voice! Kierchan spun around, drawing his scimitar as he did so. Poised for battle he peered into the face of one who would mock him, but his view was blocked by a shroud colored blood red. "Worried, oh great warrior? Quick to draw your blade, aren't you! They say I obtained the color of my cloak by soaking it in the blood of my victims! Are you to be the next to add your contribution of blood to dye my shroud?"

Kierchan stood dumbfounded, his mouth agape. "Who are you to insult me so?"

"Worry you not about that! I am here to keep you from escaping your destiny, the destiny which you wove for yourself!" The voice of the intruder grew even more sarcastic. "Now, treat yourself to the surprise which lay inside your home!"

Kierchan turned and entered his home through doors which were gilded with gold and silver. As he walked into the main chamber of his abode his footsteps echoed through the halls. The voice of yet another intruder, this time of a female, floated through the passages to great him. "Aha! It is you, Kierchan, I have waited long to give you this, my revenge!" The voice seemed somehow familiar. Kierchan gave no answer to this statement but instead walked slowly down the halls to the chamber from which the voice emanated.

As he burst through the door an awful sight awaited him. A woman stood above a body, the body of his wife! "No! Mirana!" he shrieked. He actually growled with anger. "Prepare to die, sly one, but first, I must know who you are!"

"You mean to tell me you do not recognize me! It is I, the one you promised to marry!" The anger in her voice was not restrained in the least.

"Uarshiva?" He slowly shook his head. "No, it is not so, you died by the hands of those vile slave traders. And mark my

words, they paid dearly for what they did!" Once again he shrieked out! "What is this you have done to me, oh gods!"

"Now now dear, don't be so melodramatic!" Varshiva snarled. "I am more talented than you know! Those slave traders never got closer to me than five feet before they felt the blade of my scimitar, and now it is your turn to feel the same thing. But promise me this, tell me how it feels to have a blade in your gut!" Varshiva laughed violently.

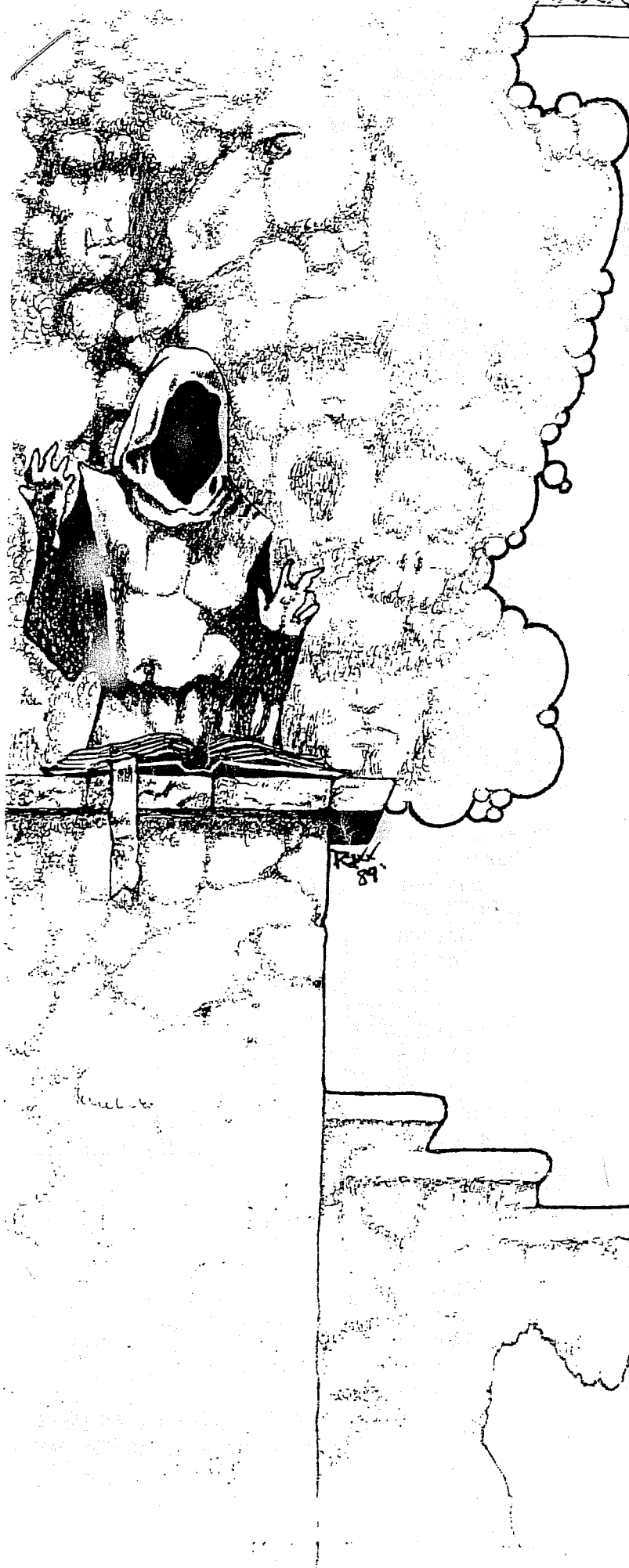
Kierchan fell to his knees. "Quickly, then." He noticed that Varshiva looked puzzled. "Kill me, and do it quickly!"

"Very well, if that is what you wish. I had expected more a fight from you, though." Varshiva drew closer and raised high her sword. But what was that? A tingling sensation spread from her abdomen to the farther reaches of her body. Varshiva looked down with a pained grimace on her face. In her abdomen was a single dagger, covered with blood. She followed the hilt of the dagger with her eyes until she reached a hand, then an arm, and a shoulder. Finally she looked at the face of Kierchan. She slid off the blade as Kierchan stood up, falling to the ground.

"No, it is YOU who will tell ME what a blade in the abdomen feels like!" He laughed insanely. He turned and ran back to the front entrance with scimitar raised high above his head. His blade swung in an arc above his head before plunging into the skull of the red cloaked intruder. Slowly he withdrew his scimitar. In no great hurry he walked back to his bed chamber, back to the bloodied scene. When he reached it he looked down at his dead wife. There was one single cut across her throat. This one cut produced a surprisingly large amount of blood.

"Now is my judgment day. If I have lived my life well I will join you, Mirana, up in the everlasting peace of heaven. If I have done evil I will join Varshiva down in the depths of the abyss!" With this he plunged his scimitar in his own chest. He sank to the floor and his body came to rest beside Mirana.

OVERALL STANDINGS
CROWN QUALIFICATIONS 10/89
ARTS & SCIENCES RESULTS



<u>NAME</u>	<u>POINTS</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>1ST</u>	<u>2ND</u>	<u>3RD</u>
Tawnee	29	1	5	4	6
Aramithris	25	2	6	2	3
Joella	20	3	3	5	1
Ariona	17	4	3	2	4
Gwynne	17	4	4	1	3
Delphos	6	6	1	1	1
M'Deth	6	6	0	2	2
Esuom	6	6	1	1	1
Talinor	6	6	2	0	0
Astrean	6	6	1	1	1
Amron	6	6	1	1	1
Raxx	5	12	1	1	0
Andralaine	4	13	0	2	0
Dracos	3	14	1	0	0
Kathon	3	14	1	0	0
Tyranny	3	14	0	1	1
Hagar	3	14	1	0	0
Caliban	2	18	0	1	0
Abedon	2	18	0	0	2
Argon	2	18	0	1	0
Tiguan	2	18	0	1	0
Ahira	2	18	0	1	0
Nanoc	1	23	0	0	1
Lynx	1	23	0	0	1
Naes	1	23	0	0	1
Aredhel	1	23	0	0	1

CROWN QUALIFICATION RESULTS - OCTOBER, 1989

Before I complete my term as Scribe it is my pleasure to report the results of last Saturday's Crown Qualifications. The first order of business will be to get the six Crown aspirants "off the hook" and list the results of their entries:

NAME	TOTAL CATEG.	TOTAL ENTRIES	AVERAGE OF 7 BEST SCORES
Tawnee	13	26	4.42
Aramithris	10	25	4.38
Ariona	9	9	4.35
M'Deth	13	15	3.94
Aredhel	8	9	3.76
Tyranny	7	20	3.07

Congratulations to all Crown aspirants in achieving over the minimum 3.00 average in order to qualify. (NOTE: Although not itemized all Crown Aspirants passed the Reeve's test.)

Others who entered the "qualifying minimum of entries" but who were not running for crown were:

NAME	TOTAL CATEG.	TOTAL ENTRIES	AVERAGE OF 7 BEST SCORES
Joella	12	16	4.378
Gwynne	7	14	4.05
Astrean	8	20	3.65
Delphos	9	11	3.48
Kathon	7	9	2.69

The following is a list of all placing entries per category (plus an occasional comment). The number immediately following the category name is the number of entrants in that category.

REEVES TEST (21)

1st Aramithris	100
2nd Caliban	95
3rd Ariona	94

HERALDRY TEST (5)

1st Aramithris	110
2nd Joella	99.5
3rd Abedon	75

CORPORA TEST (7)

1st Ariona	110
2nd Aramithris	97
3rd Abedon	94

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC (2)

1st Dracos	4.0
2nd Andralain	3.8

(My personal thanks to Dracos and Andralain - even though I was head down in tabulating scores I heard and enjoyed.)

SINGING (3)

1st Delphos	4.2
2nd Tawnee	3.8

ORATORY (3)

1st Kathon	4.6
2nd Delphos	4.0

ROSE/BANNERS (6)

1st Gwynne	4.8
2nd M'Deth	3.8
3rd Tyranny	3.8

(Personally I was a little disappointed in the small number of entries. However you can see by the number of entries in the next listed category that an "Owl" category is definitely justified for upcoming Crowns.)

OWL/PUBLICATIONS (8)

1st Aramithris	4.6
1st Tawnee	4.6
2nd Ariona	4.4
3rd M'Deth	4.2
3rd Joella/Ariona	4.2

PLACE ENCAMPMENTS (1)

1st Esuom	3.4
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(No reflection on the winner's dedication and effort in this category but unless more interest is evidenced by next Crown we might consider dropping place encampments.)

NEEDLEWORK (6)

1st Ariona	4.8
2nd Joella	4.0
2nd Joella	4.0

CONSTRUCTION-ARMOR (5)

1st Talinor	4.16
2nd M'Deth	3.83
3rd Delphos	3.50

(The last 2 Crowns have shown only a marginal number of entries - we need armor entries!)

CONSTRUCTION-WEAPON (23)

1st Gwynne	4.0
1st Astrean	4.0
2nd Astrean	3.84
3rd Gwynne	3.67
3rd Aramithris	3.67
3rd Tawnee	3.67
3rd Nanoc	3.67
3rd Tyranny	3.67

(No reflection on those placing in this category but ... I think the judges may

have placed more emphasis on looks than utility ... something we need to watch out for.)

CONSTRUCTION-PASSIVE (16)

1st Hagar	4.8
2nd Tawnee	4.6
2nd Ariona	4.6
3rd Tawnee	4.4

(A truly outstanding category. I helped judge and it was very difficult.)

FLAT ART (38)

1st Raxxx	5.0
2nd Raxxx	4.67
3rd Tawnee	4.5
3rd Lynx	4.5

(What can I say! Any time you have 4.33 scores that do not place you have an outstanding category! Congratulations to all entrants - especially to those placing.)

3-D ART (24)

1st Tawnee	4.6
1st Joella	4.6
2nd Esuom	4.4
3rd Esuom	4.25

(A good category however judges need to pay very close attention to origins of entries this category. As autocrat I fault myself in not providing those judging with more "background" information.)

GARB-BEST LOOKING (11)

1st Tawnee	4.2
1st Joella	4.2
2nd Andralaine	4.0
2nd Amron	4.0
3rd Ariona	3.8
3rd Gwynne	3.8
3rd Amron	3.8

(I can only note that being a Master Garber no longer guarantees placing in this category. The journeymen are bidding fair to surpass the masters! RIGHT ON!!!!!!!!!!!!)

GARB-BEST FIGHTING (7)

1st Joella	4.67
2nd Tawnee	4.16
3rd Ariona	3.67
3rd M'Deth	3.67

(Again, a journeyman pushing a master in placing. The winning entry was especially outstanding!)

HERBALISM (15)

1st Tawnee	4.28
2nd Joella	4.14
3rd Aramithris	4.0

(Voted ~~the~~ most fun category to judge! Also won the Miss Congeniality award .. boy were those judges ever congenial after

judging all 15 entries.)

COOKING (7)

1st Ariona	4.2
2nd Tawnee	4.2

FACTUAL WRITING (7)

1st Aramithris	4.33
1st Gwynne	4.33
2nd Aramithris	3.84
3rd Tawnee	3.67

(Delighted in the number of entries. Would like to see even more next Crown.)

POETRY (39)

1st Gwynne	4.33
2nd Gwynne	4.16
2nd Tawnee	4.16
3rd Gwynne	4.0

(Do we term the Burning Lands as the Kingdom of fighting poets or the Kingdom of poetic fighters?)

COMPOSITION (12)

1st Talinor	4.4
2nd Joella	4.33
3rd Aramithris	4.16
3rd Astrean	4.16
3rd Tawnee	4.16

(Please note the scores - a quality category!)

GAMING

PENTE (20)

1st Aramithris	4.67
2nd Argon	4.33
3rd Aredhel	4.0

BACKGAMMON (10)

1st Amron	3-0
2nd Tiguan	2-0
3rd Tawnee	3-1

CHESS (20)

1st Aramithris	4-0
2nd Ahira	2-1
3rd Naes	2-1

OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL EVENTS:

Over all quality of entries very high. Although judging was generally fair those judging need to continue to strive for objectivity and knowledge of categories.

It would appear that there is ample justification in splitting The Owl category off from The Rose and Herbalism from Cooking. (In both instances the "split" category entries substantially outnumbered the "parent" category).

Some thought should be given to having a

sub-category in Flat Art for next Crown (and more display boards!). The number of entries was almost overwhelming. The Art Guild could perhaps provide some insight.

My personal thanks to all those who volunteered their time and talent as judges and special note of Abedon, Ariona, Kathon, Gilos and Joella who's help in registering, organizing and tabulating produced a Crown Qualification with all entries judged and final results announced before 5:00 p.m.!

WAR EVENTS

JAVELIN THROW (12)

1ST Aredhel
2ND Raxxx
3RD Cirith

SWORD & SHIELD (19)

1ST	Zyax	6-1
2ND	Argon	5-2
3RD	Aredhel	5-2
4TH	Kurse	4-3
5TH	Larce	3-2
6TH	Cirith	3-2

TWO MAN TEAMS (14 Teams)

1ST	Zyax/Cirith	6-0
2ND	Lorn/Dirgol	4-2
3RD	Larce/Argon	4-2
4TH	Raxxx/Aramithris	3-3
5TH	Nanoc/Caliban	3-3

Yours truly left the site before the war events were concluded however I understand there was a serious shortage of reeves. I can imagine how this must have effected the war events. My apologies for not noticing this although I doubt I could have done anything about it "on the spot". The autocrat of the next Crown in April of 1990 might make a note of this weak spot and take steps. The Reeves Guild is rich in resources and qualified reeves.

