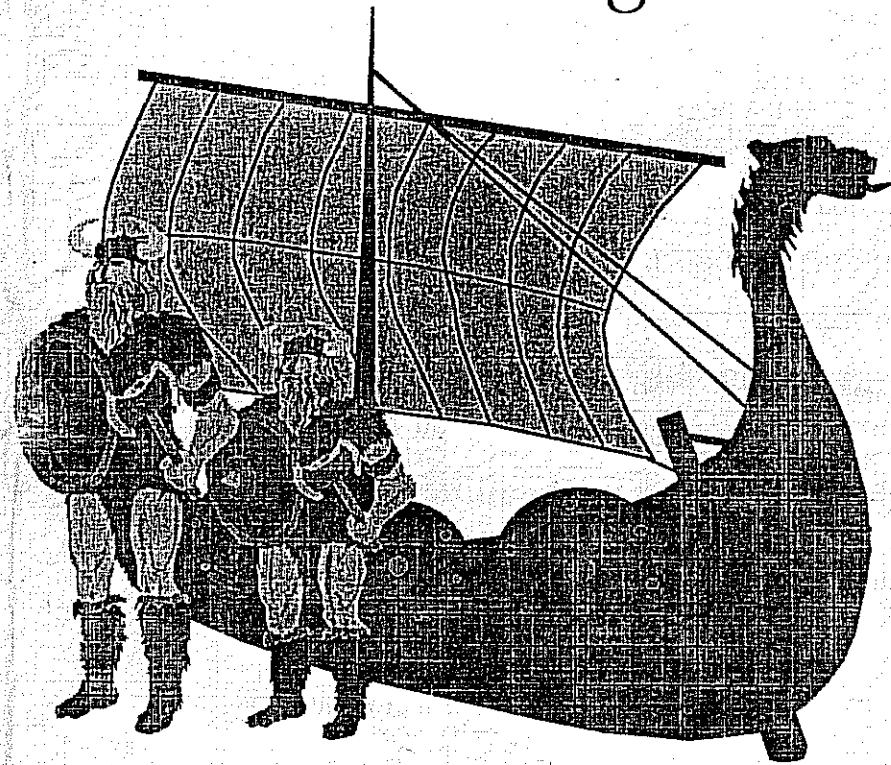


The Star Of The Celestial Kingdom



We're Back

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Credits

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	through the courtesy of
	Santa Rosa Hospital
Editing by	Squire Wilhelm and Griff

Kingdom Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Location
4-6 July	The Midreign of Queen Therressa Willowtree	Burnett County Fairgrounds Burnett, Texas.
10 Aug.	Kingdom Quest by Tiger Company	Time and location to be announced
17-19 Oct	Back up dates for Fall	Location to be announced
24-26 Oct	Coronation	
31 Oct -	Primary dates for Fall	Location to be announced
2 Nov	Coronation	

To the populace of the Celestial Kingdom

The last issue of the Star contained disclosures of the Kingdom's finances. This issue is for entertainment purposes only. I hope you enjoy it.

Queen Therressa Willowtree, Knight of the Flame

I would also like to thank Santa Rosa Hospital for their generosity and allowing us to make the copies of the "Star" free. Thank You.....

An Apology to the Populace

When I first took office as your Prime Minister, one of my first actions was to appoint Lord Squire Wilhelm and Griff as editors of the Star. During that first term, they produced four issues which contained numerous features - some entertaining, some informative, some thought-provoking. They may not have been the best issues of the Star ever, but they did produce **four**. When a new Prime Minister was elected, I recommended to him that he keep Wilhelm and Griff as editors, but he chose to allow someone else the opportunity instead. When I was asked to return to the office after only a short absence, I was persuaded to allow the new editorial staff time to prove themselves. The result? In a period of time which should have seen at least three Stars, we have had only two. The first, a long-delayed, highly critical issue, was full of negatives and pointedly questioned the performance of autocrats from one specific province, virtually accusing them of improper use of Kingdom funds. My first inclination was to make an immediate change, but I allowed myself to be talked into relenting, as some of the points raised had at least some merit, even if the presentation could have been more tactful. An apology or retraction was suggested to be in order for the next issue. The second issue was limited to financial reports generated by the Prime Minister and letters from the Prime Minister and Monarch, and a short paragraph from the editor leading off with "It's about the economy, stupid!", and continuing in much the same tone as the previous issue. There was no apology or retraction.

STUPID??????? I don't know about anyone else, but **I** find that extremely offensive, and totally unacceptable in a Kingdom Newsletter. I hereby offer my most humble apologies to you, the populace, for these classic examples of negativity. You should not have had to endure this.

Late the evening of Monday, June 23, I met with Wilhelm and Griff, and asked them if they could put together, in time for Midreign, a newsletter of positive, fun items. Their reply was an immediate, enthusiastic **YES!** By Friday afternoon they were calling me with a progress report of over 30 pages of material from a variety of sources and asking if my letter was ready.

Does anyone see a pattern here???

(I'm sorry, the opportunity was just too good to pass up)

Seriously, though - It is easy to stand back and criticize the efforts of others; but it is rarely productive, much less of any benefit to the organization. How much better if everyone instead had an attitude of "How can I help?" Wilhelm and Griff are prime examples of the latter attitude. We can all learn something from their dedication. I encourage everyone to read the remainder of this issue, then seek out these two characters and thank them for their efforts. I know from personal experience those "Thank You"s make the effort more than worthwhile.

Ever in Service

Kaderian

Bibhatsu
by Sir Narsya

Bibhatsu became a man yesterday. He endured the head shaving ceremony that accompanied his transformation from a boy happily. His happiness sprang not only from the realization that he was no longer a child fit only to help his mother manage the servants, but the gods could not have picked a more auspicious time for his coming of age. In two weeks time he, Bibhatsu, would fight alongside his father and brothers. No longer would they force him to wait behind, only to hear of the glories after the fact. Now those glories would be his too.

It was on this day that Bibhatsu's father, Asmaka, came to him to talk about coming events. Asmaka talked of war, and of things that men should not be forced to do and see. The old warrior never touched any point directly, though. The whole conversation left Bibhatsu confused and oddly unsettled. It was inauspicious to talk this ominously so close to a major undertaking.

Asmaka's visit and his disturbing advice was soon forgotten in the week that followed. Bibhatsu's chariot driver made him train too hard for him to think about anything. Vasishtha was the man's name, and he had fought in many battles. The young man was fortunate to have him for a trainer. Vasishtha had trained many princes in his time, including both of Bibhatsu's elder brothers. The entire kingdom held Vasishtha with great respect. By the end of the week, Bibhatsu hated him. The charioteer's horses were worked less than he. Despite Bibhatsu's complaints, however, Asmaka refused to give him a new trainer.

It did not make the week any better to have his brothers around, either. They would join with Vasishtha in pointing his every fault. Sometimes, they were cruel enough to suggest that he had been declared a man too early. Angrily, Bibhatsu tried to best them in the war practices, but they were too experienced. They beat him every time. Well, he would show them on the battlefield. He would make certain that he killed more of the enemy than both of them combined. Of course, they only laughed when he boasted this. Asmaka only looked on the trio with a grim face when he looked at all.

Even Bibhatsu's brothers lost their will to joke during the second week of his manhood. By the evening before the war, the entire household had grown still. This was no petty border squabble approaching. This was to be a real war. Every king Bibhatsu had ever heard of was joining one side or the other. Never had a fight this size occurred in his lifetime. The gods had provided a proving ground worthy of him, thought Bibhatsu. Visions of a homecoming covered in

glory danced through the new warrior's dreams in the few hours when he could sleep at all. The morning was so slow in coming!

Slow as it may be, however, morning is inevitable. The sun rose, an angry red over the raised spears of the two forces. The enemy stood in the dawn like some deadly field of wheat, each shaft bearing a single leaf of steel. Behind their spearmen, Bibhatsu and his family stood in their chariots. For the hundredth time, Bibhatsu tested the string of his bow and counted his arrows. Vasishtha seemed calm at the reins. The horses could smell the sweat of fear and anticipation from the warriors, and they danced and fought with their restraints.

Someone blew the horn to start the first battle, and the spearmen let out a great cry as they charged forward. The noises deafened Bibhatsu, and he almost fell out of the chariot as Vasishtha let the horses charge into the fray. Soon, Bibhatsu had no idea which of the footmen were on his side, and which weren't. He fired his arrows into the surging tide of battle, not knowing if they hit home or not. Arrows rained around him, and he survived the first day only through the expert maneuvering of Vasishtha. Bibhatsu got no sleep that night, despite having fought through the entire day.

The next morning brought the second battle. No longer did Bibhatsu look forward to the fight to come. For the first time, Fear seized him. His knees shook, and he could barely see straight. Vasishtha turned to him with words of encouragement, but he did not hear them. He almost cried when the horn blew.

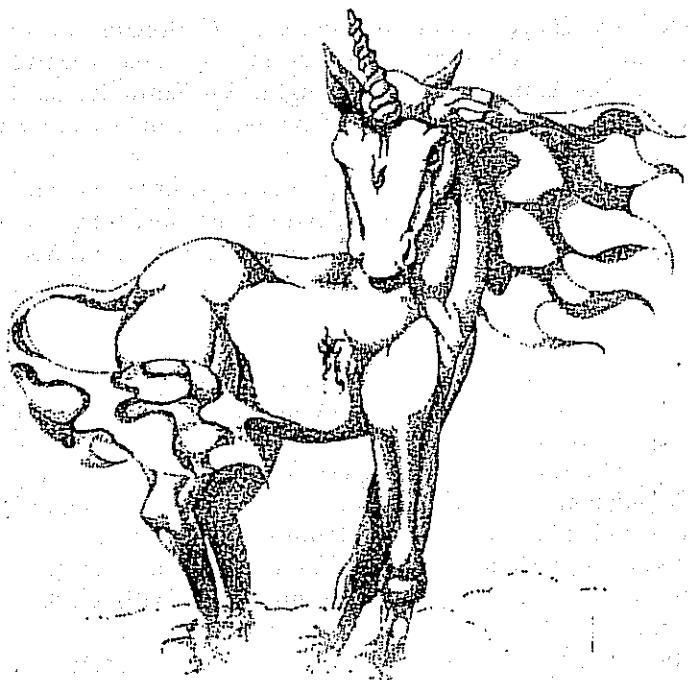
This time, the battle came closer to Bibhatsu. A knot of enemy spearmen charged him, trying to kill his horses. His bow sang over and over, and they fell one by one. Bibhatsu saw that most would not die immediately. The majority would live out the rest of their lives as cripples, or would be claimed by disease. That night brought the dreamless sleep of exhaustion.

The third morning brought the biggest and final battle of the conflict. Thousands of reinforcements had joined both sides. Only Bibhatsu's devotion to duty brought him to the battlefield today. Never had he wanted to do something less. The horn sounded, and his chariot jolted forward. Bibhatsu emptied his first quiver of arrows rapidly, and Vasishtha turned the chariot to collect more ammunition. As he did so, an arrow pierced his throat, and he died. The chariot, thus driver less, turned over and threw Bibhatsu into the bloody mud of the battlefield. Stunned, he crawled towards the wreck, crying Vasishtha's name.

Before he reached the chariot, three enemy footmen rushed at him. He grabbed his mace, and swung the force only panic can provide. In seconds, the trio joined Vasishtha in death. No knowing which

direction led back to his family's forces, Bibhatsu ran wildly across the plain. Everyone he met felt the weight of his mace until he came upon another young prince trying to free his chariot's wheel from the mud. The prince drew his sword and prepared to defend himself. The boy's eyes were wide with terror, and Bibhatsu imagined that the lad was crying. The other young prince's hair had not yet recovered from its own shaving, either. Bibhatsu lowered his mace and turned to walk away. As he did so, the other boy picked up his bow and shot Bibhatsu in the back.

The boy who shot Bibhatsu was named Purumitra, and he was covered in glory on his return to his kingdom. It was said that he killed many great warriors, and that he killed the finest of Asmaka's sons in honorable combat.



Good List Of Gear For Clan

A reminder that although CLAN is held in JULY in Cloudcroft NM, the climate at that time of the year is equal to that of SPRING WAR!!!

1. A good attitude and a sense of humor. (Most important!)
2. Fighting weapons - shield, 2 swords (in case one breaks) etc.
3. Tent/tarps/rope/extra stakes
4. Sleeping bag and extra blankets.
5. Thermal underwear
6. Small flash light
7. Lantern
8. Canteen - water
9. Food - Dry or Canned
10. Toilet articles : toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, soap, towel, sunblock, toilet paper
11. Medical kit - Aspirins, tums etc.
12. Fighting Garb, Court Garb, Social Garb
13. Winter Cloak
14. Change of mundane clothes
15. Mess kit - Pan, plate, fork, knife, spoon, glass
16. Map
17. Money
18. Jacket - Heavy/light
19. Earplugs
20. Rain gear.

That list should get most everyone by. You might want to consider the following items.

21. Air Mattress, Air Pump (cigarette lighter variety)
22. Citronella Candles
23. Gas Stove
24. Shampoo, hat, or bandanna
25. Can Opener
26. Camera and Film
27. Spare Car Keys
28. Matches
29. Those wipes that are supposed to be for baby bottoms but that are so nice for cleaning up when there's no plumbing.

A Knights belt

This belt has your body encircled within in
With a heart and soul of a true warrior spirit.

It's a material object of no off-colored white
To be looked at with honor and awesome delight.

It's your physical source of show and tell
Of all your deeds you've done so well.

It was not bestowed for lazy endeavors
Or given up hopes or long lost treasures.

So when they place it around you today,
Don't get in your head that you're able to say:

"No more must I do for this belt have I.
I've earned it well, I can not deny.

Now I'm better than most of those out there.
It's their turn to work and do their fair share."

Responsibility comes heavy this day
For one who has accepted this outstanding fray.

Conduct yourself the same as before
So you may hear people to others implore:

"There goes a knight who's earned it well.
You can see by his spirit and that his pride does swell,

Each time his honor is questioned not,
For he knows he still works at the things he's been taught."

Duchess Dame Andralaine
Queen Mother of the Celestial Kingdom
Who will never give up the belt because of other's stupidity

How To Run A Tourney

Written By Sir Squeak! The Mighty

Last Revised 1/28/97

Running an Amtgard tourney is much like running any other tourney, chaos embodied. No really, pretty much all you need are elimination brackets and some reeves. Make all clarifications ahead of time; it's usually good to have a meeting with your reeves before you start to make sure everybody is running with the same ideas. If you make any clarifications during the tourney, make sure, at the instant of clarification, that all reeves are notified. This way everybody is playing by the same rules. Depending on the number of people you have in the tourney, and the number of reeves available, you may want to set up multiple list fields. Each list field should have at least two reeves. As you call up people on each field, you can then call who's up next or "on deck" to fight, that way they have a few minutes to get ready.

Single elimination: Most tourneys are single elimination; these are easy to coordinate and run fairly quickly so you can have multiple events (ex. sword and shield, single sword, open class, florentine, etc.). You can run these with elimination brackets and a list of names (we usually like to mix them up in a hat or some other semblance of randomness). Two people fight, the winner goes on to the next round. If you come up odd at any point before the final round, a "bye" is pulled in to fight. The bye can be picked ahead of time and used multiple times, but is not actually a participant in the tourney. If the contestant wins they continue on; if the bye wins then the contestant is eliminated and the tourney proceeds. When you get to the final round, one of two scenarios can happen.

Scenario 1: The brackets all eliminate down to one happy tidy winner (yeah right). The loser of the final fight is second place. Then all you have to do is have one more fight for 3rd place between the losers two brackets back. Everything is simple and good.

Scenario 2: The brackets eliminate to an odd number. If you encounter this in a final round (3 people left) then you go to a round robin style. Each contestant fights every other contestant left. The one with the most wins, is first, etc. Its important to keep track of each fight in the round robin, since sometimes you'll have to go through more than once.

At the end of the tourney, the tourney records are tallied. If you have been accurate in your book keeping this should only take forever. Tally the kills for each contestant and he or she who killed the most wins the tourney. Orders of the warrior can be tallied by tracing the number of kills in a row along your elimination brackets. If someone wins an event and goes on to win in the next event, the kills are

cumulative. When they die, the tally stops. This is where it becomes important to keep track of the order events were fought and wins/losses for round robins. Someone may win an event, but die in the round robin, thus breaking their winning streak. Always consult your corpora for specifics on orders of the warrior and be sure that you are following the guidelines. There are maximums for local groups, whereas kingdom wide tourneys may produce a warlord. If in doubt, ask your king or queen.



Information on Chain Mail Links

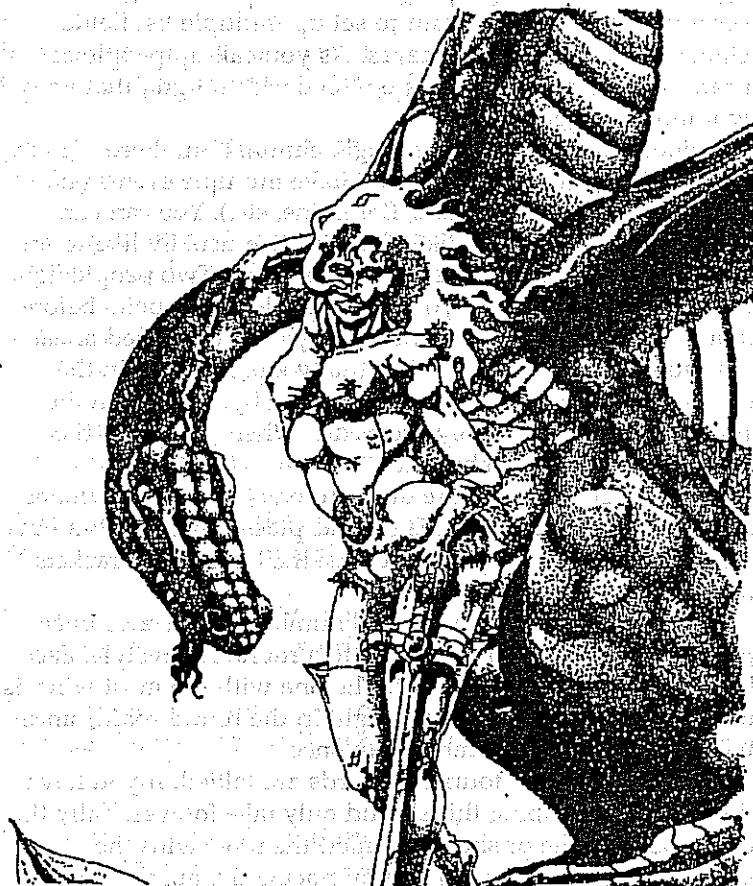
For those that want to build chain mail but don't want to make the Chain Mail Links here are two places that sell pre-made links

Links may be bought by the kilogram (2.2 lbs.) or the half-kilogram (1.1 lbs.). Minimum order of 1 kilogram, please. Half-kilograms are half the price listed. You can buy the brass and stainless steel in smaller quantities (by the tenth of a kg) since many people would like to use it for trim.

Metal Type	Gauge	Size (ID)	Approx. #/kg	Price per kg (\$US)
Black Steel	14	3/8"	1135	\$12.67
Black Steel	14	5/16"	1325	\$13.94
Galvanized Steel	14	3/8"	1135	\$13.10
Galvanized Steel	14	5/16"	1325	\$14.44
Galvanized Steel	16	1/4"	2700	\$21.20
Stainless Steel	16	5/16"	1960	\$27.20
Stainless Steel	16	1/4"	2410	\$32.11
Aluminum	14	3/8"	3000	\$27.05
Brass	16	3/8"	pending	pending
Out of stock				
1 kg = 2.2 pounds				

Shipping to anywhere in the continental US and Canada

# kg	Price (\$US)
1-1.5	\$6.00
2	\$7.00
2.5	\$8.00
3	\$8.50
3.5	\$9.50
4	\$10.00
4.5	\$10.50
5	\$11



Please send your personal check or money order (no credit cards or cash, sorry) made out to Sara A. Trice to:

Sara Trice
1013 West Ash St.
Columbia, Missouri 65203
U.S.A.

Some notes about metals:

1. Black steel is annealed galvanized steel; in other words, the color is baked on.
2. Aluminum is almost strictly for costume maille. It is very light, and your hands will blacken if you rub hard on it.
3. Galvanized 14 gauge steel is best for beginners.
4. Brass is used best for trim and jewelry.
5. Stainless steel is, in my opinion, the best for chainmail. It is light, very strong, and never rusts/needs polishing.

If you have any other questions, or are placing a large order, please feel free to email me at Sara@Cavalry.com.

Another Place

ROSCO - A Division of Rome Specialty Company, Inc.

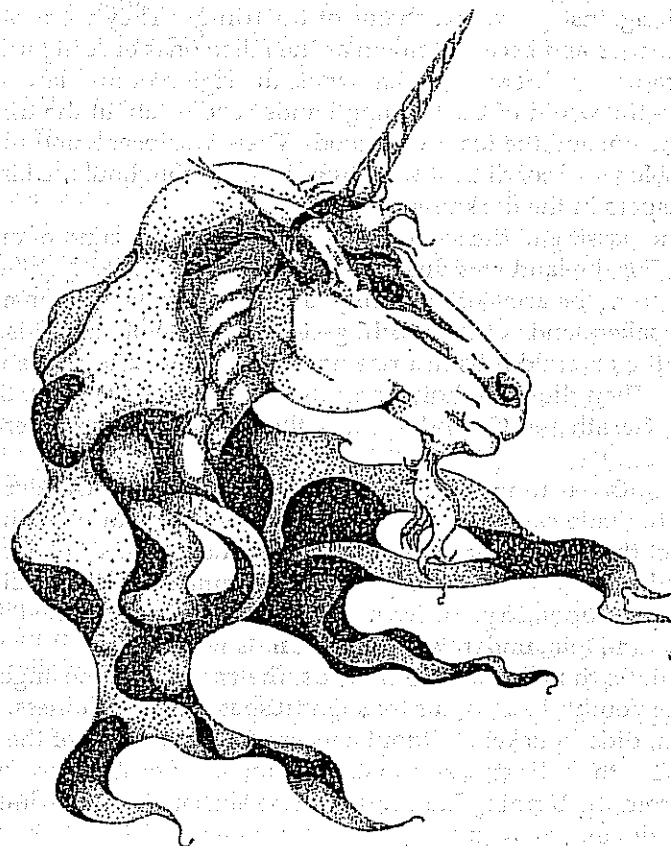
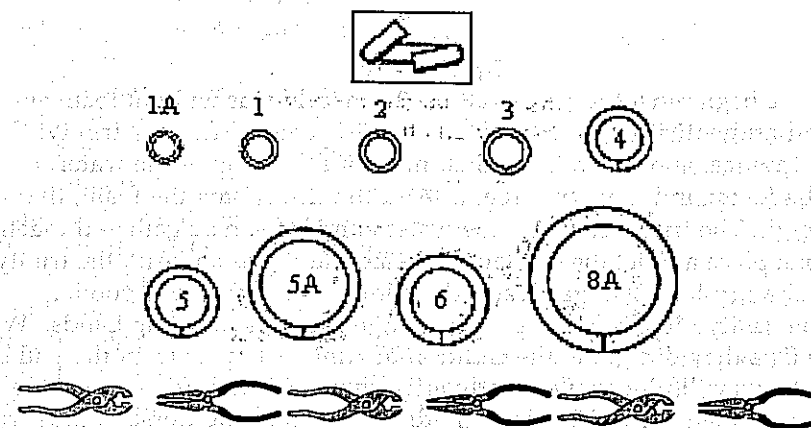
A "terminal tackle" company that sells butt rings, which are popular for armor. The rings are stainless steel, a variety of sizes, and come only in multiples of 5000. They have mentioned that sizes 5 and 6 are the most popular with chain mail customers. They have a detailed graphic on their page showing the sizes of these rings. Prices were not listed alongside the rings, so I have listed them here for convenience. Our Stainless Steel Butt Rings can be welded for applications needing maximum strength. Other uses include renaissance body armor and jewelry.

ROSCO Butt Rings 1300

Number	Wire	Size	OD ID	Cost	best for Chainmail
1A	.028	.170	.114		
1	.028	.186	.130	\$13.00	
2	.032	.214	.150	\$13.75	
3	.035	.235	.165	\$14.00	
4	.050	.325	.225	\$17.00	
5	.057	.364	.250	\$26.75	**
5A	.057	.564	.450	\$33.75	
6	.072	.459	.315	\$50.50	**
8A	.105	.757	.547	\$173.00	

See next page for picture of rings.

Prices as of 6/22/97 per 5000. Shipping is not included in the listed prices.



Genesis
By Sir Pebyr

In the beginning, there was rattan. The world was without foam and joy; and authenticity was upon the face of the deep. The holy trinity: Gilos, Tawnae, and Aramithris didst make manifest upon the water, let there be foam: and there was foam. And the trinity saw the foam, that it was good. The trinity said, Let the waters under foam be gathered together unto one place and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And the trinity called the dry land Amtgard: and the trinity saw that it was good...

The trinity didst bring to pass the kingdom of the Burning Lands. With gentle fists they did guide the children of Amtgard away from the paths of unrighteous willfulness. Low and verily, there was discord amongst the children of the trinity. The dark children known as the Corsairs didst rise up in revolt against the velvet chains of the trinity. They were cast out into the darkness and became known as the fallen ones of Amtgard. The highest became angels and were known as the legion of the claw.

So didst the world of the Burning Lands revolve about the trinity. There was foam: and the foam was good. There was peace: and the peace was good. No words of dissent were to be heard throughout the kingdom, except whispers in the darkness.

With the passing of the seasons, came a wish in the mind of one of the dark ones. For the land was dust and the land was sterile. Delphos didst wander far from the arms of the trinity and he did cause to be manifest, in the vast forsaken lands of the north, green the shade of emeralds. With his words, the emerald hills did rise up above the land to shake the firmament. Then didst the holy ones: Reyna, Nevron, Delphos, Selka, Alissandra, Garath and Gwyndon cause the kingdom of the Emerald Hills to be.

In the south, far from the arms of the trinity, an elven wanderer named Nithanalorn, made camp beside a river and spate to himself, "These lands are good: let there be towers of stone. These lands are fruitful: let there be artisans and poets". With these words he, Arhimaand, Selena, Chinok, and black made war upon Kryton. Vast was the blood that was shed, but the duchy of Barad-Duin, under the Burning Lands was born.

With gentle thoughts and iron deeds, the trinity and the angels sought to guide the youthful kingdoms through trespasses of willfulness. But Barad-Duin, didst quicken, without concern for the desires of the trinity. With volition, they didst desire to change the laws of Amtgard without guidance from the Burning Lands. For these sins against the trinity they were struck down.

But alas they did not learn, and did chafe under the velvet chains of the trinity. Keeping their tongues, they didst bide their time. One day the trinity didst give them their liberty, in hopes they would keep the laws of Amtgard inviolate. Deciding to distance themselves from the traditions of Amtgard, they remained the

independent Grand Duchy of Barad-Duin. For awhile the peace was maintained, and Amtgard did grow, within the confines of the Trinity's velvet chains.

But alas, aspersions cast upon the knights of the Emerald Hills, by Nithanalorn. In anger and bitterness they were returned, and bitter were the words between Barad-Duin and the Emerald Hills. Banners were stolen and relinquished. Raids were conducted and wars were waged and lost. Still a balance of power was maintained, until the paper wars were begun between Barad-Duin and the Trinity.

In the Burning Lands, the trinity and the holy legion of the claw, didst guide their populace with loving hands. It was during this time that the trinity evolved into two: Aramithris and Tawnae. It was by their gentle touch that the first barrages of the paper wars began. Then the holy ones of Barad-Duin conspired in the darkness, away from prying eyes. "Peace cannot be had with such as these", they said, as they ventured into the light. And lo the populace believed. Heated were the barrages that were exchanged, and sinners were to be had on either side. Insanity reigned, until even frogs were being executed in the courts of Barad-Duin. Before war could be waged, Nithanalorn and Aramithris did meet at the coronation of King Nevron, the opinionated. New heights of ego were reached, but in the end, peace was maintained.

Uneasy was the peace that was maintained, for King Nevron did seek revenge upon the "holy" ones of Barad-Duin for the insults heaped upon himself and the other "holy" ones of Emerald Hills. In the ensuing tumult, his champion Cain the obnoxious, didst cause a graven image of a finger to rise from his hand, and his crotch to manifest itself into his other hand. This was more insult than the populace of Barad-Duin could bear. Many were the spells that were chanted along the river that night. In the morning, a mighty cataclysm did cause the duchy to be swallowed in a great explosion, and the Grand Duchy of Barad-Duin was never to be heard from again.

Bitter were the words exchanged between the kingdoms of Amtgard that year. Accusations flew, until the unlooked for happened and revolution exploded upon the face of the Burning Lands. Aramithris and Tawnae, all that remained of the trinity, didst announce that they would rest and relinquish the guidance of Amtgard. Great was the pain caused by the explosions that destroyed Barad-Duin, but great was the good that resulted.

During this time, Riff didst cause the mountains of Iron to unite under his leadership in the farthest reaches of the north. Under his reluctant hand, the Barony of Iron Mountain arose. And Reinholdt, did wander out upon the vast plains to the north of the Emerald Hills. Lo, he said, "These plains are like gold in the hand of the gods. Let the Barony of the Golden plains arise". With these words, Flynn, Jasmine, Ulrich and Stone made foam in the palms of the gods.

Theodric Blackflame, did venture forth from the Burning Lands, into the lands far to the south and east and did form the Barony of Bifost, the rainbow lands. Unbeknownst to Theo and Amtgard, Michael, Hammer of God, ventured forth from the lands of Iron Mountain, into the lands near Bifost and caused to be a new barony. This barony became known as Turris Lunae, the "Towers of the Moon". Upon notification of each other's existence, Theo and Michael didst make pacts of alliance and union. With this alliance, a new form of Kingdom arose in Amtgard. A confederated union of independent monarchies, the Celestial Kingdom.

The ensuing years have been kinder and peace is to be had. The baronies of the golden plains and Iron Mountain, have since become Kingdoms. The Trinity is revered and respected, but no longer followed blindly. The Celestial Kingdom has grown and expanded into a vital and sometimes confusing alliance of many monarchies, thanks to the efforts of many. New gods walk upon the firmament and many are the wonders that have arisen. Strangest of all was the appearance of Rufus, long thought to have died along with the rest of Barad-Duin. Apparently Barad-Duin had transferred to another dimension and had not been destroyed after all. Boogah and he did cause to be a new monarchy, known as Torre-mare, where the lands of Barad-Duin had existed.

"Well my good friend, glad I am that you have stayed to listen to my tale of the beginnings of the universe of Amtgard. Have some Coke and catch the wave. My name? I am known as Pebyr, or Pooh-bear. I and others to numerous to name, have worked hard so that the holy foam could continue to exist. Drink peaceful and enjoy the holy foam. That is the true meaning of Amtgard!"

Knights Creed

A Knight is sworn to valor.

His heart knows only virtue.

His blade defends the helpless.

His might upholds the weak.

His words speaks only truth.

His wrath undoes the wicked.

From the movie Dragon Heart.

BLIVIT* FROM THE BOD

Several people have expressed a concern over the effect that the vendors that have set up their stands to vend their wares at our events may have on our non-profit status. This was brought up to the Board of Directors and was discussed at length. (Nothing is ever discussed in short order at a BOD meeting.)

It was determined that there is no concern regarding our non-profit status in that the club may earn up to 35% of our income from non members. So far our vendors are members and their clientele are other members. No Problem, mon!

A perceived problem of conflict between Kingdom activities and those of the vendors was also addressed. In order to differentiate between the activities it was decided to grant a franchise to the private (For Profit) individual vendors. We do not want to discourage the individuals who desire to set up shop as they do provide a very desirable and worthwhile service to the populace. At the same time the club does provide them with a market for their wares for which we felt should benefit the club. Therefore, a fee (Tax) of \$5.00 or 10% (which ever is greater) of the net income (profit) from the enterprise would be donated to the club in appreciation for the opportunity to set up shop. This "Franchise" will be granted by, and the "taxes" will be rendered to the Prime Minister. The "Franchise" will be posted in a conspicuous place so that all may be aware of the status of the enterprise.

Those Kingdom events of enterprises (breakfasts, slave auctions, etc.), which are run for the benefit of the Kingdom or for some other stated charitable organization/group, will not be granted a franchise as such. However, all of the proceeds will be turned over to the Prime Minister and a Czech will be issued to the charitable organization in the name of the Kingdom

* Blivit = 10# of s**t in a 5# paper bag.

'A Knights comment about Knighthood from the Internet'

With all the commotion and situations arising concerning knights and knighthood, perhaps its time to take a moment and examine Knighthood within Amtgard.

No other title or office holds such a fascination as knighthood. It is the only title that is always in evidence, whether on the Battlefield or off. The White Belt blazes around a person's waist declaring to all who see the person "this is a knight and they have performed the necessary requirements to achieve this title". You can wander Clan for hours and have no idea if the people you meet are Nobility or not, whether a person is a Club officer or not; but, there is no question if someone is a Knight. Only a Knight may play Paladin and Anti-Paladin. Nobility has no special class they play.

With this in mind, what is an Amtgard Knight? They have taken the time and energy to complete the Tasks outlined in the Corpora to be given the title of Knight. In essence, they have done more and accomplished more than many others within the club. They tend to be the most experienced person on the field and off. They have done so many things and been around for so long that they are a wealth of information. In simplest terms, they should be the BEST that Amtgard has to offer.

How is an Amtgard Knight viewed? Well, from experience (both as a new person and as a Knight), the Knights tend to be looked upon as demigods. They are almost unbeatable on the field, they have the coolest garb, they have many friends, they can answer just about any question, and they have what just about every new person wants.....the title of Knight. On the day I killed my first Knight face to face, I was flush with pride. On the day a Knight took the time to talk to me, I was flush with pride, and humbled. On the day I saw a Knight blow off an obvious shot, I was crushed. On the day I saw a Knight belittle another player, I was devastated. But I learned, and I grew up. This is just a game. These are just people.

But are they? Many Knights say that they have no desire to be a role-model. They do not wish to be one, nor do they want that kind of responsibility. For it is a heavy, bone-crushing responsibility to be a role-model every time you are around someone from Amtgard. A knight is human and allowed mistakes. A role-model is god-like and can never falter. Look at all the sports heroes, every mistake shouted to all the papers, and every kid who idolized the hero loses just a little more faith.

And what about our Amtgard Society? In every park I've played in, there have been people who's family life is so lousy that Amtgard is all the family they have. There are young adults trying to grow up

and find a place in a world that is intolerant. There have been people looking to find themselves in a world so mixed up, that Amtgard is considered a stable environment. Who do these people look up to? Who sets the examples these people use to justify their actions? Who becomes the Mother or Father figure that they are lacking in their own lives?
THE KNIGHTS.

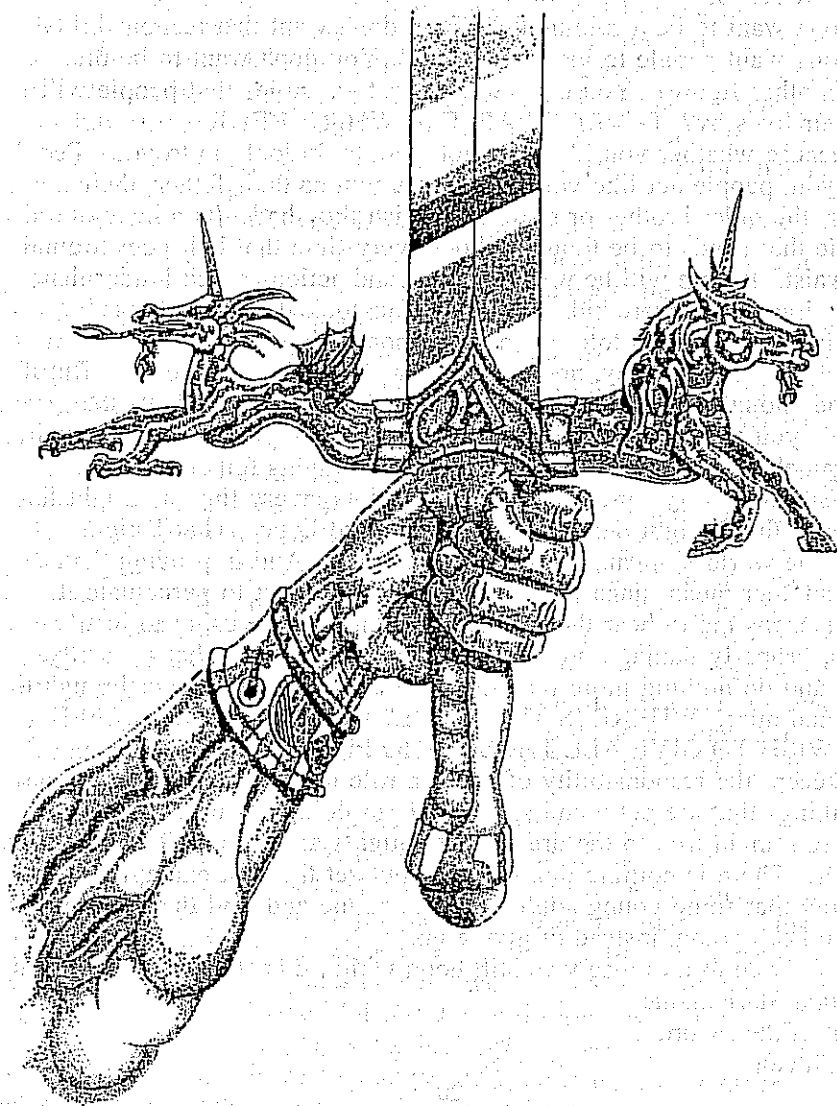
You don't want to be a role-model? You don't want that responsibility? You don't want people to look up to you? You don't want to be the father/mother figure? You don't want to set examples that people will live their lives by? DON'T WEAR THE WHITE BELT.

Because whether you like it or not, people do look up to you. People quote you, people act like you, people see you as their father, their mother, the older brother or sister they wish they had. Its a heavy burden and one that needs to be thought about every time that belt goes around your waist. People will be watching you, and actions speak louder than words. Each of us were kids, and each of us looked to our parents. Sometimes our parents told us not to do something, then did it themselves. "Do as I say, not as I do." was heard over and over. But if its good enough for my parents, then why shouldn't I do it? Its the example you set that is shaping the impressionable youth who join us in our "game" of Amtgard. And every time a Knights fails their responsibility, every time a Knight disappoints, every time a Knight lies or cheats, that Knight destroys a little piece of hope. That Knight proves the world is mean, uncaring, and selfish. And in proving that, sends another mean, uncaring, and selfish person out to perpetuate it.

It sickens me to hear the excuses that Knights are using to justify insults, property damage, violence, threats, and actions that are petty, mean, and do nothing more than drag the idea of Knighthood through the muck and mire. WHERE IS THE PRIDE? IS THIS THE EXAMPLE YOU WISH TO GIVE ALL THOSE WHO PLAY THIS GAME?

I accept the responsibility of being a role-model. I accept that I have done things that are petty and spiteful. I am doing my best as a human being to remain true to the dream that Knights are the BEST Amtgard has to offer. There is nothing that I can do but set the best example I can and pray that some young adult will look to me and find the faith they need to keep going, instead of giving up.

In Service to all those who still hope within this "Game" of Amtgard,
Sir Jetara Starlamaine
Knight of the Sword
WaveHaven



The Raid

By Sir Pebyr

Sponsored by the AACTW

Of late Aramithris, the self titled emperor of the Burning Lands, had apparently been going insane. It was rumored that he thought himself a god personified. Edict after edict was sent out from his vast fortress in the valley of Oakdale, detailing his imperial will. Vast mighty armies of Copyright Lawyers vigorously sued all those who dared attempt thwarting his wrath.

But Aramithris had not counted on organized opposition, so when the GRAND Duchy of Barad-Duin decided to brave the armies of lawyers, he was as surprised as everyone. At this time, a bloody war of secession erupted. Thanks to the awesome military genius of Ahrmaand and Tholden, the distances involved, and the reluctance on the part of the armies of the Burning Lands to fight, they had managed to hold their own so far, though badly outnumbered. Sometimes so badly supplied that they fought hand to hand, still they had outmaneuvered and outfought everything Aramithris had thrown at them. Maybe they weren't always textbook perfect and less than awesome in their strategy, but they still got an impossible job done.

All information indicated that Aramithris's power base was too secure, and his resources too vast, for them to hope to fend off his armies and lawsuits forever, let alone stop them. Even the citizens of the Burning Lands hated the way that Aramithris had taken all power unto himself, but what could they do? At least that is what they had told themselves, up till now. Rarely had so many felt so helpless before the might of one man.

For unbeknownst to all, Pebyr discovered the impossible. For in the ways of the world everything is a possibility. And no one is so mighty that they can never fall...

Knock, Knock, Knock!! Viscount Ahrmaand, irritatedly looked up from his battle plans and shouted, "Who is it? I distinctly left instructions not to be disturbed!". "Boss, it's me, Sinjen, your loyal squire". "Very well, if you must, then come in. What is the rush.", Ahrmaand said. It seemed there was always a rush where his squire was concerned. How so much energy could be in one person, he would never guess.

"Pebyr is back from the Burning Lands, and brings important news.", Sinjen said. "How that crazy bard, could know anything important would be a wonder?", Ahrmaand thought, but, knowing Pebyr to be his squire's friend, he said nothing. "He has found evidence of an underground organization dedicated to bringing about a coup, and removing Aramithris' tyrannical organization from power.", Sinjen said, without breathing even once, thus proving his ability to make use his mouth and tongue for long periods of time, without breathing.

"Anybody ever tell you, that you sound like a recruiting poster, Sinjen? This does change things dramatically. Who would ever thought that Pebyr of all people would give us this information. I thought he was on nobody's side. Are you sure that this information is good.", Ahrmaand said, "Do you think that this could be a lure?" "Boss, who knows? I know Pebyr. He wouldn't lie to save his life, but he could have been fed bad information. But where his heart isn't involved he can be very perceptive. Also I know the people that he claims are the principles involved. They have both the personal power and the desire to use it. I think that this information can be trusted. I would be willing to stake my life on it Boss!", Sinjen spoke, hitting the table with his fist.

"Myself, I'm not so sure, but I do admire your loyalty. Still I think this is what we need to win this bloody war. I just don't think we can afford to pass it up. A raid in strength would be necessary, and it would be a gamble, but there is a slim chance of it's success, if we can get local support. Sit down, because I think I will let you stake your life on it, so you had best help plan it. Send for Pebyr too, we will need his input, since he should be allowed to stake his life on it too. Besides it is too easy to forget that he is an Archmage too. That is too much power to allow to go unused for so long.

"I thought you might say that boss, so I asked him to join us. He's outside, awaiting your noble largesse.", Sinjen said. "Very well, send him in", Ahrmaand sighed. Pebyr walked in looking drawn and tired. "Now this is an unusual sight.", Ahrmaand thought, "usually he is making non stop bad jokes or singing songs.". "What is the matter, Pebyr? Someone making obscene comments about your playing again?", Ahrmaand said. "No, Tiberius is too busy with the war to pay attention to my music. It's just that I have had too many personal betrayals in recent months, Ahrmaand. So much has happened to me that it is tearing me to pieces. I feel fractured. I don't know how to describe it. I just want this war to end. I am tired of seeing friend against friend, and I am afraid that the only way to end the war, is to remove the sources of the strife. Otherwise, whether you or they win, there will always be another war.", Pebyr said.

"So tell me about this underground group, and do you really think they can help us?", Ahrmaand said, "We would be taking a big risk here if it fails". Pebyr said, "Well, unbeknownst to Aramithris, a rather large percentage of the Burning Lands are a part of this household. They have never banded together until now, but when they found out that he was the majority of reason behind for our secession, they decided to finally do something about a this very bad situation. So they banded together and spread the truth. To this end, they have established an underground free press, and soon will be strong enough to try and end Aramithris's reign of tyranny for good. But of course with outside help, they would be able to challenge his wrath much sooner. So maybe this damn war will be

for some purpose after all and there won't be another one. We can only hope."

Pebyr had indeed found an underground in the Burning Lands which was organized by hardy souls, desiring to bring the world of Amtgard, back to it's former greatness. The war of secession, as it was called in the Burning Lands, had awakened them to the need. Their name was the Household of the Burning Lands, and they were dedicated to a new order and a cessation of hostilities with Barad-Duin. Thereafter, if Barad-Duin still wanted to secede, then so be it. They would not interfere.

However they were indeed mistaken if they truly believed that Aramithris knew nothing. His sources of information were indeed as vast as his other resources. But in his arrogance he assumed that they could not assail his position. For how could the world of Amtgard function without him. It was indeed he that was there in the beginning. So would he be there through all the ages.

His genius was politics, and he was adept at keeping his enemies from banding together, by playing them off of each other. It is too damn easy to convince yourself that nothing can be done. Therefore his job was made all the more easier by the lack of widespread as well as organized opposition. Also, though he was an altogether lousy diplomat, giving credit where credit was due, he was indeed a damn good king.

Planning was difficult, involving as it did, the logistical considerations of supplying a sizable force in the desolate lands between Barad-Duin and the Kingdom of the Burning Lands. It would be virtually impossible to live off the land since even dirt had trouble surviving out there. There was no way they were going to be forced to fight badly supplied and armed. Not this time! The services of Sparhawk the honorable, the only vegetarian barbarian known to exist, were therefore sought after and obtained. Though his views were thought odd, no one doubted his honor or his abilities. It was said that he could track his way through the most desolate of wilderness country, and survive where any other could starve. Other than Pebyr, no one knew the desolate areas to the west as well as he.

Ahrmaand and Sinjen were extremely careful in choosing the rest of the raiding party. They could not choose anyone too highly placed in the Barad-Duin hierarchy. The participants in the raid were only too aware that there would be no rescue if the raid failed. Chancellor Sparhawk was enough of a risk. But his was a purely civilian office in a nation engaged in total war. No nobility or highly placed military official could be chosen.

Tiberius and Romerion were in charge of the hospital administration for the war effort and were too badly needed elsewhere. So with Guildmistress Alloran in charge, a small troop of healers, including DOA and Dargoth were sent on the raid.

Master Wizard Aurendir of the Scout's guild was sent as well as Pebyr. Of late the wizards guild found many of it's members gaining experience in other disciplines. This enabled both Pebyr and Aurendir to of increased value in this raid, as they were both Archmages and highly experienced in other disciplines. Nobody even dreamed of daring to forget Arthon, since it was assumed that he would simply ride after them if they dared leave him behind.

Mandrac, Pebyr and Amber Lee represented the Bard's guild and were responsible for keeping up the morale of the company. Or at least they were supposed to try. Dracnar, Matthieu and Deja Vu would simply kill a lot of people, which was something these individuals were depressingly good at. These were only a few of the many people sent on this raid.

Despite what Ahrmaand said publicly, privately he believed that entirely too much rested on this raid. For a continued war would so deplete Barad-Duin resources, that even an eventual victory would be disastrous to the duchy. Besides there would indeed simply be another war, as Pebyr had said. As they rode away from the city walls, he thought, "Fortune go with you, my friends. All our hopes for peace go with you".

Squire Sinjen tried unsuccessfully to ease his sore back, trying to settle himself comfortably in a saddle stained from days of sweat and grime. This raid into enemy territory had so far gone very well. In fact too well for his tastes. They had encountered no one in the desolate territories between the Burning Lands and Barad-Duin. Since they were sneaking, this was good since it indicated that they hadn't been spotted yet. It could also mean that they were so hopelessly lost the gods were laughing hysterically at their plight. Sinjen had never been that good with maps so they were depending on the Bard Pebyr's knowledge of these trails, to guide them. As far as he was concerned, just point and get out of the way.

"Pebyr, are you dead or just hard of hearing? Come on up here.", Sinjen yelled. As Pebyr rode up, he said, "Are you sure this is the right road. It is so empty out here, I can't see any landmarks".

Pebyr replied, "Don't worry Sinjen, I have been this way so often I know it like the back of my hand. See over there is a landmark used by the indians. I believe the name is Squaw's tit. The name is unusual, but it appears to be rather descriptive don't you think?".

Sinjen cut him off saying, "Should we expect an ambush. I know it's hard to believe anybody could live out here, but still anything could happen", Sinjen said. "I doubt it. I don't think anybody suspected me as being a spy, except for Sir Delphos. But you know him, he was born suspicious", Peby said, "Besides, like you said, how could anybody be able to sneak up on us here. Their wagon train alone would kick up a dust cloud visible for a hundred miles. No, even if they did attack us, it would be virtually impossible to surprise us. Sinjen replied, "Still a fast lightly equipped group could. But they couldn't carry the supplies necessary for survival that way.".

As the days went by, Sinjen and Pebyr traded stories of their past. Pebyr told of the horrible world he had lived in where magic didn't exist. There he taught something called a Kom-pu-tar to do tricks, and tried to write what music he could. "It was a relief to find this world. I have seen many strange things here, but without a doubt, the strangest person I ever came across was my doppelganger or twin, as you would say.", Pebyr said. "You mean there's another of you out there?", laughed Sinjen, "I thought one was bad enough." "No seriously, listen closely for someday you might run into him and think it was me. He's all right, but considering who he is, he also might be a hell of a lot of trouble.", Pebyr said. "So who is he and where does he come from.", Sinjen said.

"His name is Fahrinaie, and he is the chief torturer and lieutenant of Mephistopheles, the prince of lies. In some realms he has been called the Prince of Lies himself. Only Mephistopheles has a greater reputation for betrayal. So you might see why he could be a problem. You see Sinjen, one night as I was eating at my campfire, a cloaked figure dressed all in black and red rode up out of the darkness. I knew something was wrong, because his mount was a black stallion with strange eyes that fluctuated colors throughout the spectrum, including I would assume the infrared and ultraviolet, since they would go blank at times, indicating a non-visible color. I thought that it could be a Nightmare, but decided to say nothing.", Pebyr said ...

"Well hello there sir and what can I do for you? Could I offer you the hospitality of my camp?", Pebyr said. "Thank you, good Bard.", spoke the cloaked figure, "I think I'll do just that, since you are the person I was looking for. You are Pebyr ap Cucorin of Barad-Duin, are you not?". "That I am, though you have the advantage of me, since I know not of you.", Pebyr replied. "My name is Fahrinaie and I will refrain from telling of my origin for now. Rest assured that I bear no personal animosity towards you or anyone else in Barad-Duin, though I don't expect Ahrmaand to have much love for me, if he remembers me at all. Pray tell me of Barad-Duin. Is it as powerful as I have heard.".

"Well to be honest, we do not field the most powerful military force, but what we lack in ferocity and numbers, we more than make up for in the science of war. We are skilled in the sciences and in the magical arts. In fact our artisans are even now developing new weapons. And due to our many battles with magical beings, we can be said to have developed considerable skills in combating these beings. Our most noted adversary now is Mephistopheles. Perhaps you might know of him?", Pebyr spoke suspecting the worst. "Know of him? Pebyr I work for the bastard.", Fahrinaie said. With that he pulled the hood of his cloak down and revealed his face. Pebyr was so stunned that he spilled his drink, committing grave alcohol abuse, for Fahrinaie was his exact double. Except for his preference for red and black, he was literally Pebyr's twin in all respects.

"Don't be afraid Pebyr, for we are indeed mirror images of each other and I would wound myself as soon as hurt you. I have been trying for some time to get out of Mephistopheles' employ, but I cannot simply quit, since I know too much about him for him to just let me go. He has already sent Baesil to kill me, when he decided I was getting too powerful for his well being. After I killed Basil, I ripped his heart out and used it for my staff.", Fahrinaie said, indicating his ebony staff. On top of the wood, was a Black stone, with silver wire running from the stone into the wood of the staff. The stone as well as the staff gave off an aura of intense evil, as did Fahrinaie, Pebyr suddenly realized. Though seemingly intent on defecting, it would do to remember that he was a devil of importance in Hell.

"The only thing that has kept me alive is that I'm too powerful for him to easily dispose of and I have been very careful not to give obvious offense. Now I want out, for soon it will be him or me, and I am not powerful enough to fight him yet. Also hell stinks and I am not as thrilled with the idea of ruling as I once was. Right now I need a safe haven, where I can increase my power and perhaps work with others of like temperament. I understand Thariand the blue-star mage and Qadaf the necromancer dwell there. They would be the most inclined and therefore the most capable of helping me."

"I don't know about those things, but could the Duke trust such a powerful former enemy as yourself. You could do so much damage, if you were to betray us.", Pebyr said. "I don't know how he could trust me, since he would surely hear something about my past. I do not have a good history of such things. A long time ago, I betrayed someone very important and thus earned the title of Tizril, the Betrayer. Second only to Mephistopheles, I was considered the most treacherous being in the Nine Hells. My word is worthless, but I give it anyway. As long as I am in Barad-Duin and am treated honorably, I will respond in kind.", Fahrinaie replied, "I will try and think of something as proof, though it may be some time. This will be the last communication for some time Pebyr. Take care, for we have much to discuss.", Fahrinaie said.

"Sinjen, I don't know what has become of him. I spoke with Ahrmaand and Thariand. Ahrmaand didn't remember him, but was curious that he should. I guess when his mind was destroyed and put back together, certain memories of his sojourn in hell were edited. Thariand however was an excellent source of information. He it was who explained that Fahrinaie was the chief torturer as well as a powerful lieutenant of Mephistopheles. We surmised that he supervised Ahrmaand's torture sessions and there found out about Barad-Duin. I must admit that he sounds like a thoroughly disreputable scumbag, but I can't help thinking that he really did want to live in Barad-Duin. Sinjen, if you see him, give him a chance and you may be surprised. He knows of our friendship and of

you. In fact, I suspect that he knows everyone so well, that no one but you could suspect him. That is why I give you this information."

Sinjen pondered this long into the night for Pebyr talked like one that expected to die and welcomed it. He knew that Pebyr had had problems in the Burning-Lands but the only impression he had got was that it was female related. Why anyone could let women get to them like that was beyond him. But then he remembered one with eyes of steel and how low that had brought him, and it was easier to empathize. So with half forgotten pain searing an empty heart he went to sleep for the night, leaving Sparhawk and Aurendir having a quietly animated discussion.

"OK Sparhawk, try and remember, will you? It's rape the women and pillage the cattle. The women of the Burning Lands are too fine to ignore like that. They might kill you just for the hell of it if you do.", Aurendir said remembering a few, including one who had written him only recently. "Running deer, I'm not as stupid as my brother YOU, he would rape the cattle and forget to use protection. I would remember to do so. I don't want what happened to Daddy on Accident to happen to me.", Sparhawk said punching Aurendir playfully in the jaw. "Who? Oh, you mean DOA, yeah that was a real hassle for him wasn't it?", Aurendir said, rubbing a sore jaw, and at last understanding why Barbarians were all so bullish, "But try to remember. Not the cattle but the women, and try a little foreplay this time? Alloran has been complaining of headaches from being hit on the head and dragged into the bushes.", Aurendir laughed. "But Aurendir, I thought that was foreplay?", Sparhawk softly replied, looking completely confused.

"Gods above Sparhawk, you're hopeless. On another subject, are we lost yet? It's not that I don't trust Pebyr's sense of direction, but I don't. He's a bard not a scout. I only know that we aren't traveling in circles and are traveling in a generally westward direction. Beyond that I don't know for sure, since I haven't traveled these roads near as often as he has." Aurendir said. "We're traveling well and fast. I think that we are going the right way. Morale's good and Mandrac hasn't sang the song about bricks yet. What more could you ask for? There are even edible weeds as well as plenty of strange plants growing about with many spiked leaves. I caught some of the men smoking it the other day. It smelled like medicine herbs.", Sparhawk said.

"Uh oh, I better tell Sinjen that we might expect an attack by Corsairs. That sounds like Indian Hemp. With that stuff around they might be able to survive without food out here. Of course nobody knows for sure just what they live off of anyway. But if they do attack, we could be in for trouble. They are some of the toughest fighters around and could give the lot of us a lot of trouble if they surprised us.", Aurendir.

Sinjen took the warning seriously, as the Corsairs were renowned fighters. Every night heavy guards were placed about the camp

perimeters. He also had a small fort of dirt and stone built nightly. Enough to give some sort of defensible shelter, if they were, gods forbid, attacked. As they traveled, Aurendir led a party of scouts, to give whatever warning that was possible. Sinjen made it a point to serve on guard duty every night. He felt that he couldn't ask of the others what he wasn't prepared to do himself. The next week went by uneventfully, since not much really goes on in the middle of the desert. And a week later as they were sitting around the fire telling stories and singing songs, someone, probably Arthon, asked Mandrac if he would sing a song. "oh no.", Sinjen moaned, "He's gonna sing the Brick song again. I just know it!". Sure enough Mandrac got up and in his best voice, began singing the "Brick" song. Completely oblivious to the fact that everyone was also reciting one of the best known songs in Barad-Duin. But that night the gods must have smiled kindly on them, because just as Mandrac began, A resounding cry of "CORSAIRS!!!!", echoed through the night and the infamous Corsairs of the Burning Lands launched a vicious attack against the horrified force. Luckily the corsair's mission was a simple hit and run raid, not an all out attack. They were to hit hard and fast, taking as many prisoners as possible. If possible they were to capture Pebyr, as he was suspected as being their main contact with the partisans, as well as one of their guides. He never had a chance. He was woken up out of a sound sleep, by Sir Hellspawn, who said, "Sorry poohbooh, but we got orders", and subdued him. With Grimlock's help he carried him back to their horses. The rest of the Corsairs soon followed, after first pausing for a few random acts of destruction.

"Everybody, to me! To me! Damn where is Pebyr when I need his voice. Mandrac, use that voice to rally the troops.", Sinjen shouted, grabbing Mandrac by the tunic and forcing him to listen. Mandrac nodded his understanding and, grabbing the banner, he waved it high in the air and crying out at the top of lungs, "To arms! To arms! Rally to the flag of Barad-Duin". It took little time to gather the troops after this, but by that time the Corsairs had retreated into the night. Leaving only dead corpses and burning supply wagons.

"Sparhawk, give me a report. Aurendir, you and Dracnar check to see, if they are still in the surrounding area. I don't want to get caught with our pants down again.", Sinjen shouted furiously. Sparhawk ran up to Sinjen saying, "Sinjen, we lost few people, thanks chiefly to the fact that most people couldn't sleep during the "Brick" song. It may sound weird, but we were helped by that song. A lot of people retreated to their campsites and where their weapons were. That lessened the effect of the surprise. But there is some bad news, Sinjen. They got Pebyr."

"Shit, this means they know we're here. I hope Pebyr can keep from telling them the whole plan. They obviously know we're here. They must be using spells to keep track of us. Maybe they don't know the plan. Gods above, I hope Pebyr can last. It's bad enough that

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they captured our main contact, but he was our guide too. I hope you know the trails well enough to get us there Sparhawk. At least I know the leaders of the underground almost as well as Pebyr. We might still be able to pull this off", Sinjen said, "Now post additional guards, and tell everyone to grab what sleep they can. We ride on in the morning".

A week later around dusk Aurendir came riding up to Sinjen, informing him of a strange rider approaching their position on an obvious intercept course. "I don't know who he is, but he appears to be alone. He rides a large black stallion and is dressed in black and red. Also he is wearing a hooded cloak and we don't know who he is. He didn't see us, I am sure of that".

"Let's make camp and let him come to us. But when he gets here, surround the camp, so he can't get away.", Sinjen said. Aurendir rode off to carry out the orders.

Two hours later as they were eating their meager rations, Arthon ran up to Sinjen, informing him of the presence in the vicinity of the stranger. He's all dusty, like he's been on the trail a while. And he looks like he may be injured. He still has the cloak on, so we don't know who he is".

Arthon left the fire, just as a shadowy figure loomed up out of the darkness. A muffled voice quietly spoke out of the inner reaches of the huge oak, "Sinjen, can you help me get off of this damn horse. I barely escaped from the Corsairs with my life. I don't want to break my neck falling off this horse". Sinjen hesitated a moment, and leaped to the horse as the figure fell. He and Sparhawk eased Pebyr down to the ground. He had many injuries, including an arrow in his arm and numerous sword cuts on his arms and legs. He looked like he had been through hell. "What happened, we thought you had been captured by the Corsairs", Sinjen said.

"Yes, but I managed to escape. I was tortured to get information and was lucky to get out alive. While killing the Archmage interrogating me I did manage to steal his staff. It is very powerful, but I don't know how to use it. Let me show it to you". When Pebyr pulled the staff off the horse, Sinjen's blood went cold as ice. It was the staff of Fahrinaie, Pebyr had told him about. The same Fahrinaie that was the first lieutenant of Ephistopheles. He hoped very much that his service to the lord of flies was over, for the person before him pretending to be Pebyr could be none other than Fahrinaie himself. Remembering Pebyr's admonition to give Fahrinaie a chance, Sinjen said nothing. He realized of course that Fahrinaie would not be an ally of the Burning Lands, and therefore not an immediate enemy. He might even be able to help. Also there was a good chance that he would know the trails and contacts as well as Pebyr.

For the next two weeks the raiding party saw no evidence of intelligence life in the desolate lands around the Kingdom of the Burning Lands. As they neared the great caravan route known as the

"Gateway to the West", at a point approximately 5 days travel from the valley of "Oakdale", Sinjen ordered the supply train to set up camp in a hidden arroyo next to a large mesa. He left a small defensive force to guard and had every man carry light provisions for a two week journey. Sinjen had planned a smaller diversionary raid to "Borrow" supplies, in order to bleed off forces from the defense of "Oakdale" and supplement their meager supplies.

He figured that it would do well not to count on surprise, since the ambush indicated that at least Aramithris knew of the existence of a raiding party. In fact Sinjen was counting on this. Aramithris had only one major failing as a commander. Though a damn good in the field, he tended to underestimate his opponents. Usually this was no problem, since his troops were good enough to steamroll their way over most opponents. But this time it would cost him, on that Sinjen was determined.

Sinjen sent the diversionary force to attack the bastion of power, "Castle Memoria", with orders to make the attack convincing but to quickly withdraw down the gateway road liberating necessary stores and provisions for the journey home. Sinjen led his personal troops down the "Montana" roadway, which led to the valley of "Oakdale". They were guided by Fahrinaie, who was still pretending to be Pebyr. Sinjen hoped Pebyr was all right, because he had not showed up. He had to admit that he wouldn't have known if Pebyr himself had not told him. But was that Pebyr he had talked to? God only knows, he thought to himself. They were capable of being so much alike it was almost impossible to tell them apart. In the distance it was possible to see the Vast Bastions of Aramithris base of power. Sinjen sent Aurendir and the other scouts to investigate the position. He also posted pickets to screen the force from the surrounding countryside. He wanted them to believe that the main attack was on Castle Memoria.

As they reached the castle, Aurendir rode up with a burning lander in tow. He said, "This guy wants to see Pebyr, says he is with the Underground". Sinjen called "Pebyr" forward to talk to him. He hoped that Fahrinaie would indeed be able to convince the man that he was "Pebyr". He needn't have worried, since Fahrinaie was able to easily convince him of his false identity. The Burning Lander said to Sinjen, "If you will follow me I will show you a less traveled way around the ambush". Sinjen had the raiding party follow the Burning Lander off "Montana" road onto a smaller road. This road wound across the land following the path of least resistance. It was an excellent road for concealment and for the setting of an ambush. He certainly hoped that there were none ahead. As they neared the castle, he sent Dracnar to sneak ahead and see if there were troops around the castle. After a half hour, he returned telling of troops but not that many of the front-line troops. Sinjen guessed that they were either at Castle Memoria or at the Ambush on Montana Road.

"Well there's no sense wasting any time, so we might as well attack now", Sinjen thought to himself. He signaled the troops to attack and prayed to all the gods in the heavens that it wasn't a trap they were charging into. If it were, they were going to make their deaths memorable ones. They were met by scattered flights of arrows that quickly picked up in volume. Sinjen was able to adjust his lines accordingly, realizing that it wasn't a trap. But neither was it going to be a cake walk either. Just as he reached the wall and vaulted off his horse to scale the ladders, he noticed a horrible shimmer in the air as their appeared interspersed throughout his party, the ugliest most malevolent creatures that he had seen since his journey into hell after Ahrmaand. "Bone devils? What the hell are they doing here?", he frantically thought to himself, "Gods, I hope their on our side". Fahrinaie galloped up to him, shouting "Sinjen, don't worry they are with me. Come Pebyr is in this Castle, and is in danger of his life".

Fahrinaie grabbed Sinjen by the hand and shouted some words in a tongue that, as hardened as he was to such things, made Sinjen shudder in a primeval instinct of fear. If anything convinced him of Fahrinaie's identity, it was that. That was the spell that Mephistopheles himself used to teleport them out of his castle. Thariand himself would later tell Sinjen of the truth to that. Only devils of a sufficient rank can cast the spells of the highest order of magnitude such as the one Fahrinaie himself now spoke.

After a brief instance of disorientation and the sensation of traveling vast reaches of time and space, Sinjen and Fahrinaie appeared in the dungeons under the castle outside a particular doorway accompanied by a Bone Devil. Fahrinaie commanded the Bone Devil to rip the door off the hinges and to guard the stairs against interruption. Quickly they rushed into the cell as Fahrinaie's staff lit up with a cold light that reminded Sinjen of a light used to illuminate graveyards. He spied a figure huddling in the corner away from the light of Fahrinaie's staff, and Pebyr spoke in tortured whisper, "Who is it? Can't you leave me alone, haven't you done enough already. I hate this lousy world. Leave me to die, I don't want to live. Not like this anyway. Not like this".

"Hush Pebyr, it's me and Fahrinaie. We've come to rescue you. Can you stand? We'll get you back to the healers. They should be able to make you feel better". Pebyr slowly and painstakingly made it to his feet aided in large part by the wall, Sinjen and Fahrinaie. They slowly walked him to the doorway of the cell. Fahrinaie then called the Bone Devil to him and muttered another spell of teleportation. "I don't care how many times I hear that language. It will always affect me. At least I can learn to control my reactions", Sinjen thought to himself.

By the time they made it to the healers, Pebyr was out cold. Sinjen left him and Fahrinaie and joined the battle. It was rapidly over, since the Burning Landers were not prepared to fight three

battalions of Bone Devils as well as Sinjen's troops. Many were the people who blessed Alloran and the healers that day, for without their gallant efforts all would have been in vain. For it took 30 minutes and thirty deaths to break down the door.

Sinjen and Fahrinaie raced into the keep and up the stairs fighting for almost every foot, until they finally reached the door leading to Aramithris's inner sanctum. He commanded two bone devils to break down the door and enter. They were commanded to kill no one, or Fahrinaie would make them suffer for it. It was an unusual sight, thought Sinjen, to see 8 foot tall Bone Devil's shudder in fear. The door splintered under their massive bodies, as they charged into the room beyond, closely followed by Sinjen and Fahrinaie.

Aramithris stood in the room beyond standing with his back to a window. He stood tall in the room, and Sinjen could easily understand how he could single-handedly wield so much power. He had the kind of presence a man could die for. But not this one, Sinjen thought to himself. He has wielded too much power for too long, and it would have to end now. Fahrinaie wasted no time and Iceballed Aramithris. This was the only thing he had that could effect a paladin as mighty as Aramithris. He quickly teleported them down to Aurendir and Alloran. Together the three were able to bind Aramithris with spells and ropes. Upon seeing Aramithris in the hands of the Barad-Duiners, the remaining Burning Landers stopped fighting, realizing the reasons were now no more. Their path out of the Burning Lands would be hard fought, but the task was done. All that remained was to heal the wounded and the dead and fight their way back home past the troops that had not heard of the wars end. Thankfully there would guides out of as well as there were into the Kingdom.

The man who had led the party to the castle appeared at moment, on a balcony of the keep and shouted to all those Burning Landers who could hear his voice, "The Tyranny is over, power is returned to the people. When the danger of Tyranny is past Aramithris can be allowed to contribute again to the world. But remember so much power should not rest in one set of hands for too long. The Tyranny has ended. May it never rise again."

The trip back to Barad-Duin was long and difficult. Sparhawk's mission was a qualified success. Though it had achieved it's purpose of drawing off troops, he had not been able to liberate as much supplies as he had hoped for. But only one dark cloud hung over the party. Try as they might, Pebyr remained as if sunk under a dark cloud of doom. No songs were sung by him on the road home, and Fahrinaie said Sinjen, "Only time will tell if any songs will be sung by him again..."