

CHOES FROM THE HILLS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EMERALD HILLS





CONTENTS

KING'S CORNER

THE RESULTS OF THE HUNT FOR THE RELICS

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF RECEIVING AWARDS

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A KNIGHT

THE HISTORY OF MEAD

MEDIEVAL WAR MATERIALS

THE SCRIBE'S TABLET

THE CARAVAN TO THE WAR

THE RESULTS OF THE HUNT FOR THE RELICS

ODIN'S HAMMER- The Green Dragons team led by Yahoo Shroom.

ORB OF HEALING- Sable Pride team led by Sir Nevron Dreadstar, and consisting of Squire Naft, Squire Zenticuli, and M'lord Altair.

SHIELD OF REFLECTION- Team of Dread, Marik Stormbringer, It, and Dog.

THE HOMESTONE- The Corsair team, consisting of Lady Tyranny, Sir Xenos, Sir Caz (de kinky), and Sir Lorn.

THE GAUNTLET OF OGRE POWER- The Serecen team consisting of Squire Infinity, Lord Silverthorne, Adinroch, and Whisper.

THE SWORD OF FLAME- The team led by Falyn The Mad Scout.

THE DAGGER OF INFINITE PENETRATION-
The Green Dragon team led by Forest Evergreen.

THE RING OF POWER: The Serecen team consisting of Taldak, Sparrowhawk, Damon, and Tristen.

KING'S CORNER

Well midreighn has come and gone, and I'm still surviving. Sorry this newsletter had to be so late, I was kept awflly busy. I would like to welcome all the new groups to EMERALD HILLS, I hope you grow to love this club as much as I do.

I would hope that all of you outlying groups go to the war, they are perhaps the single most fun event an Amtguardian can attend. I'm truly sorry that I have not visited all the new groups, and this is something I hope to rectify in the comming weeks.

To our neighbors to the south, I bring warmest regards, and unfourtunately much steel. Ours is a warrior kingdom, filled with all the spirit that makes life worthwile, the spirit of rampant destruction!

And to my people, I have but one thing to say...

MAY THE GLEAM OF OUR SWORDS,
SHINE ON THE BLOOD OF OUR ENEMIES!!!

WELCOME

TO THE
EMERALD HILLS

THE COMMANDMENTS OF RECEIVING AWARDS

1. Never expect an award.
2. Never go around proclaiming that you deserve an award.
3. Never criticize another's award or question their merit.
4. Never do work just for an award. If you enjoy what you're doing, it in itself is a reward.
5. Always congratulate a recipient of an award.
6. Never belittle an award! It looks too much like jealousy.
7. PAPERWORK a knight does not make!
8. Being a squire DOES NOT insure knighthood!
9. Do not question the monarch on their choice and / or creation of awards, you may be in their shoes next time but not now.
10. APPRECIATE WHEN YOU ARE RECOGNIZED.
HOPEFULLY EVERYONE WILL BE IN DUE TIME.

What it Means to be a Knight

by : Duke Sir Nevron Dreadstar

This will be the hardest article I've ever written, and I'll be honest with the reader, I'm not really sure I totally know what I'm talking about. But I'll give it my best shot.

In Amtgard, there are four different types of knighthoods. Each of the four are given to someone who has repeatedly shown themselves as one who goes far beyond the normal populace member in a specific field of knowledge. Now that sounds like they're a science or an art form, well in some ways, their a little of both. The Knights of the Flame have mastered the science of giving their time and service to the club. Knights of the Sword have mastered the science of the sword. Knights of the Serpent have truly mastered their arts and science skills. Last but not least are the Knights of the Crown. While they may be more numerous, which would leave many to assume it's easier to obtain this knighthood. I would ask of the reader when was the last time he or she had tried to qualify during crown qualifications. If you have ever done this feat or watched someone else trying to, then you'll understand that Knights of the Crown have earned the white belt.

Although, just because you qualify you must then be elected into a ranking office. That's when the real work begins. Wearing the crown for six months can do a lot of things for you. No matter how hard you try, you'll never make everyone happy. You will change no matter what. Hopefully it will be for the better, but if not, you won't be the first.

Knighthood is a title that everyone aspires to gain. When you're a knight (of any order) people look at you quite differently. Your suppose to represent all that is perfect in Amtgard. Although not all knights are perfect, I'm a real good example of that. After all, some of us are only human (others being halfelves, elves, and even cyborg hobbits), and we will make mistakes. Yet the knights should be able to spot the error or at least be willing to listen to someone who feels the need to point it out. At no point in a knights life should they ever begin to think they're perfect. That's part of being humble, which is very important when you're a knight.

Another part of being a knight is respect. Respect is a two way street. Not only should the populace respect the knights for all the work they've done and continue to do. But the knights should respect the populace. After all every one of the knights came from the populace. None of us were born knights.

A few people have asked what it takes to become a knight. Well, that really depends on which order (knighthood) you are seeking to become a member of.

There are those of you whos answer would be "All of um", and I say to you "Good luck". I've been in this club for about six years and there are some who would say I've done it all. Well let me tell you, that's not entirely true. Sure I've trveled thru three long tunnels and I'm just now beginning to see the light at the end of the fourth. But that doesn't make me any better than someone who has just started into their first. If I should disappear tomorrow, there would be someone to step up in my place. But don't hold your breath, for you will die.

If you absolutely can't live without a white belt then you should spend a few hours looking at the requirements of Knighthood in the Corpora. According to our upcoming new and improved Corpora, a person must be a member in one of the six listed orders; Rose, Lion, Dragon, Owl, Smith, or Garber. You can also obtain a Knighthood by serving in two of the following positions, Champion, Consort, or Prime Minister. Or you could do two-terms as our Monarch.

Yet for some of us serving the club as monarch is out of question, and even doing time as PM, or such position is a bit unlikely. So we're stuck going for a Masterhood in the Service Guilds and Orders. Generally it takes at least ten orders of any one type (10 dragons, 10 roses, etc, etc) to achieve the basic criteria for Masterhood. Only the Smith and Garber orders require more (12), while the Lion and Griffon may be combined to equal ten. How you obtain those orders is another article.

Now lets say you've reached your goal of ten orders in the area you were seaking. "Yes sir, those ten dragons sure look good on your wall." The only thing missing is your Masterhood. Well my friend you just learned one of the first rules of the fameous "Ten Commandments on how to recieve an Award." #1, Never ever expect an award. That's a pretty tough code to live by, but it's something that works. Because while you may be aware of all your accomplishments, the reigning crown may not be. Especially if it took you more than a few years to reach the basic criteria. Nor would you be the first Amtgardian to be overlooked.

Now there are a couple of paths you could follow that would raise your chances not to be overlooked again. First, you could just sit quietly and continue to put out award winning stuff and take the awards and such as they come. Or you could start up a one man/woman public awareness drive. But be warned, for if you start speaking too much on your own behalf you could be accused of breaking the second rule of receiving Awards. #2, Never go about proclaiming that you deserve said award.

Another way would be to approach a Knight of the order you're seeking and ask him/her for a bit of help. This is still no sure fire way to obtain your award but when the right people are aware of your situation then it is more likely that you will be remembered the next time.

Now we come to one of the most important aspects of being a Knight. That being attitude. A lot can be written on attitude, and I've touched on it earlier when I spoke about respect and being humble. Not only do you need a good attitude, but you also need to be seen with a good attitude.

I have learned that as as Knight of any order, they all have one thing in common. That being the need to see Amtgard grow. Our love of the game and all it brings probably had a lot to do with us getting our white belts. Artisan who love to create, Singers who love to sing, and Fighters who love the fight. There are a lot of Amtgardians who love the game. To be a knight means to show it.

You can show your love by contributing to the growth of Amtgard. Sponsoring events is a good way, and with all the events to pick from it would be so easy. You can take it upon yourself and run an event. Of course you must remember that one event don't a knight make. No one should get a white belt for sitting on their butt. Although some knights do just that after they get their belt. I guess some people don't have as high goals as others. But if your only goal is to wear a white belt then you're doing it for the wrong reasons. There is more to Amtgard. A lot more.

I wish you good luck in your quest for the ultimate title.

Respectfully yours,
Duke Sir Nevron Dreadstar
{Knight of the Sword, Crown, &Serpent}

THE HISTORY OF MEAD

Within these next few pages you will hear the story of mead. Mead is a Medieval drink that is mostly forgotten in today's world, but was one of the first alcoholic drinks known to mankind. We will explore the first stages of mead within mythology and follow it through many centuries of changes, and finally to the decline of this beverage.

Let me first give you a dictionary meaning:

MEAD-A fermented liqueur made from honey, spices, and water.

in mythology, mead was rumored to be the liquor of gods and men alike. Tales of the gods often include the mentioning of mead and it's magical and sacred properties. Because of this not only mead, but also honey, and bee's were held in high places. Gods drank mead during ceremonies and used honey and bees in their rituals. No one knows how true this was, or in fact whether there were really gods, but maybe this can describe mead as "The Nectar Of The Gods."

The earliest factual mention of mead was between 3000 and 2000 b.c. No one can really tell which land this was in, but it is believed to have started in Prussia. In all accounts the word ale was probably the original word for all form of mead, and ale is a Prussian word.

As time passed honey was in great demand but not readily available, so the ancients began to weaken the honey and add more water, thus arose new kinds of mead, and many new names were needed. Since the word "mead" means honey, the strongest liqueur was called mead. All of these changes caused great confusion in what was mead, and what was not. The shortage of honey is why we have so many different kinds of mead. "Metheglin," was a spiced mead, "Sack-Mead," was a sparkling mead used for dessert, "Melomil", was a mead made with fruit juice instead of water, and so on. There even existed "Medicinal Mead." Most of the mead produced today, (what little there is,) is Metheglin.

In ancient times true mead was not made for the command man. Bards sang that it was the drink of kings, princes, and warriors. Even then it was usually saved for special occasions, and company. The common man usually drank ale or beer. Even priests used mead. It held a central position in the religious and ceremonial life of our forbearers. Our Norse ancestors were so addicted to drinking a goblet of mead to Odin, and then the next god, and then the next god, (you get the drift,) that the Christian Church was unable to abolish this custom. It was also drank by poets in order to receive inspiration from Brage, the god of poetry. Or at least that excuse was given.

As time passed it became the custom, (or at least a marked tendency,) to drink the mead young, while it was sweeter and stronger, straight out of the vat. Not even giving it time to be bottled. All of this drinking obviously led to much poetry about mead. Also many riddles:

"I am cherished by men, found far and wide,
brought from the groves and from the city-
heights, from the dales and from the downs.
By day wings bore me in the air, carried me
with skill under the shelter of the roof.
Afterwards men bathed me in a tub. Now I
am a binder and a scourger; straightway I
cast a young man to the earth, sometimes
an old churl. Straightway he who grapples
with me and struggles against my strength
discovers that he must needs seek the earth
with his back. If he forsakes not his folly ere
that. Deprived of strength, doughty in speech,
robbed of might, he has no rule over his mind
feet, nor hands. Ask what is my name, who
thus on the earth in daylight bind youths, rash
after blows."

This riddle tells of the origin of mead. from nectar born on the wings of bee's to how mead is made by taking the combs of honey and soaking them in water. It even goes on to describe the effects it has on you.

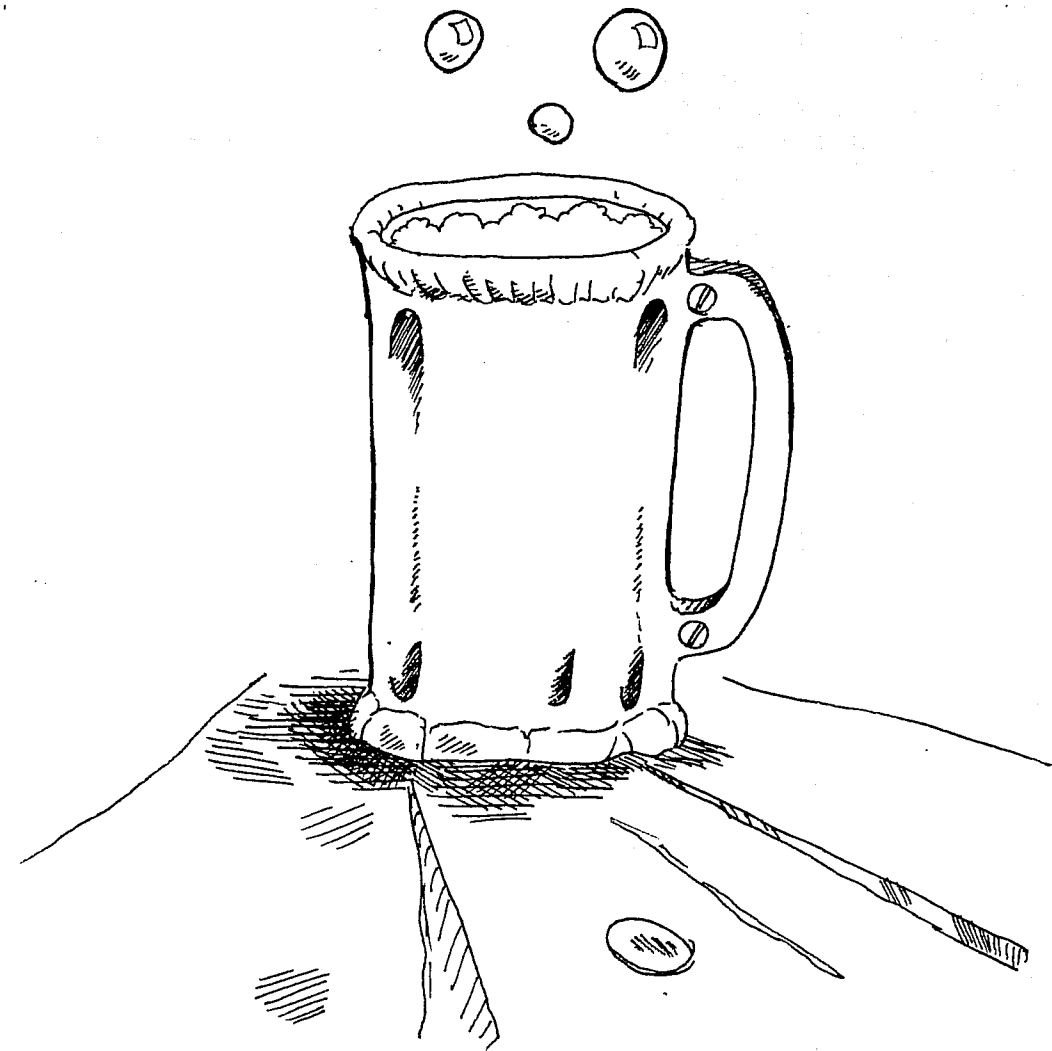
It was learned that the most important person in the King's household was the mead-maker. He had free lands horses clothing and lodging within the castle. With assistance and help in the knowledge of his craft, not only did he receive all of this but he usually kept 1/3 of all mead made as his payment. Though many others participated in the and keeping of the mead, no one else held such a high honor. Since mead was such a important part of life, It is thought to be the main cause of what we call natural conservation. To produce mead you must have honey which came from bee's, so no one was allowed to destroy one. In order for bee's to survive, they must live in trees. Most of the forests were protected for the bee's. Some of these forests still remain in Europe because of this protection.

The most surprising fact was that mead was not strictly found in the western world. It was also found in Africa and Mexico. Another form of mead was found in the Asian countries as well. The Mayans believed that mead had health giving properties, but most of everyone else used it for either religion or pure entertainment.

But like everything else, all good things must come to an end. The decline of the making of mead was slow but deadly. Many reasons caused this decline. New ways were discovered to make sweet wines and the fruit was more abundant. With the destroying of the forests, there were less bees and therefore less honey. The ultimate blow to mead came with the invention of the modern day beehives. With the new hives, the honey could be removed more easily and efficiently and all of it was sold as a sweetener. The old combs had honey left in them and they would throw the honeycomb into a vat of water to make mead, but the new combs were reused inside the hives. This was done because the peasant could use the money more than the liqueur. In todays world, the only people who make mead anymore are the Polish.

Today mead-making is almost a lost art. Very few people know how to brew it and very few recipes remain. Most recipes are in Old English. and hard to understand. Mead was the basis for all other alcoholic beverages that we consume today. It's a shame that something so important and historical is something that cannot be passed on to the next generation.

ASILYN



MEDIEVAL WAR MATERIALS

Although it seems that there is a great deal of information about medieval war materials, there is not. Many sources available on medieval war materials contain similar information. Most of the information in these books is derived from carvings in walls, sculptures, and paintings and book pictures. Also some remains of war materials have been found and put into museums. Those remains help tell what metals were used and how well people in medieval times could craft. It would seem that there would be books written during medieval times containing information about their war materials, but there are very few. They probably were not very interested in the war materials of their time because they were so common. Even though there is not much information on medieval war materials, sources today contain information about many different types as well as many different makers of war materials. Although there were many different makers and types of war materials in medieval times, all of the different types of materials fall into the three categories of shields, armor, and weapons.

Although a shield is not actually a weapon, it was often used by attackers and defenders in battles as if it were a weapon. Warriors could bash the enemies with shields while stabbing them with swords at the same time. This protected a warrior as well as provided an opportunity to wound or kill his enemy. Defenders using shields were well protected against arrows and other flying weapons. Strikes with swords required closer contact, therefore the man with the shield must have needed a well developed skill in blocking a sword. Because of this, it seems that the attacker would have considered the shield a weapon of defense.

Even people in pre-medieval times used shields of wood and dried leather. For instance, the Greeks preferred using very large shields rather than wearing armor. Their shields were somewhat worn like armor because they were hung around the neck by a strap. This enabled the Greek warriors to use both hands in battle. One type of Greek shield is called the Boeotian shield. This shield was most likely made by soaking leather hides and putting them over two pieces of wood. As the leather dried and shrank, it caused the edges of the wood to round. Eventually the large shields were replaced by smaller shields. The smaller shields were made in the same way as the large shields except for the neck strap. The small shields had two straps in the back for the arm instead of one huge strap for the neck.

As time and battles went on, people discovered the use of metals for making shields. This was the beginning of the Bronze Age. The first kind of bronze shields were used

before 1000 B.C. They were flat and covered with leather and wax for strength. These shields also had circular ridges in the center. With the use of bronze, shields could have various shapes. Some shields, like the ones used by early Mycenaeans, were shaped like figure eights, and they were big enough to stretch from neck to calves. Even though shields were larger, people were not protected enough. The later shields were bigger, stronger, and tougher because of the more durable materials the makers used. They were also becoming more elaborately decorated. The Roman legionnaire used shields that covered the body from head to toe. Since the Roman cavalry was less important, they used small circular shields. The Vikings treasured their shields to such a great degree that they named them. The reason was probably because the size of their shields was so large that they used them to sleep on when away from home. As time went on, smaller shields became more popular because they were easy to carry, and other tasks could still be performed while carrying a shield. Eventually other metals were used for shields, but armor became far more important to the people.

Through the medieval period, there were many different types of armor made for protection against various weapons and changing styles. Helmets were an important part of armor because any strike to the head by a weapon could lead to death. Great helms is the term used for early helmets. "Great helms were often decorated with crests in the form of birds, animals, banners, or even crowns." A bassinet is a helmet that covers the entire head. There are little holes around the mouth area for breathing. The nose of the bassinet is extremely pointed to protect against shots to the face. There were a large number of other types of helmets in medieval times, but there is not much detailed information about them. Almost every different style of body armor had its own design of helmet.

Body armor became more needed as people began using smaller shields. The first kind of body armor made for use with a small shield was called the cuirass. It consisted of a breastplate and backplate. These were usually made with cuirbouilli, boiled leather. While the leather was wet, it was shaped to fit the owner's body. When finished, the cuirass was as strong as metal but not as heavy. The backplate and breastplate were connected by straps. Sometimes the cuirass was made in one piece which laced down the front, back, or side. Eventually a shoulderpiece was made to fit the cuirass. This kind of armor weighed around eighty pounds. The reason leather was used for the cuirass was because there was not much metal armor in the Ancient World. Most metal armor was extremely expensive and hard to find. Usually kings and noblemen were the only people who could afford metal armor. Instead of using iron, the early smiths would use copper and bronze because their furnaces were not hot enough to melt iron. Also, iron had to be

shaped by hammering which took large amounts of time causing armor made with iron to cost five times as much as gold.

In Egypt the noblemen and the Pharaoh of the Hittites began to wear armor after using the chariot in war for many years. They wore two types of tunics made of scale. One type was a regular short sleeved tunic. The other stretched from the armpits to the hips. The scales were made of hard Egyptian copper. Sometimes people wore a gold or silver chest plate with a short tunic. The chest plate usually had an oval shape and was hung around the neck by a heavy chain. Iron became less expensive and more widely used by 1000 B.C. "The Assyrians were the first people to have both weapons and armor made of iron." There was a tribe called the Chalybes which were the first extremely good ironsmiths. They found a way to make steel out of iron. Steel is a lot harder than bronze. Therefore, steel caused the beginning of the Age of Iron.

One particular type of body armor was a short sleeved tunic which was long enough to reach the ankles. Rows of little plates of iron covered the tunic. The plates had various shapes for different people. The plates were tied on with knots, and no plates were overlapped.⁶ A battle-axe, war hammer, and mace were three very powerful weapons that could destroy a suit of chain mail armor (a large number of little iron ringlets fastened together forming a suit of armor big enough to cover a warrior's entire body). Therefore, a suit of steel plates was made for better protection. From the fourteenth to the eighteenth century people were using plate armor. During the latter part of these centuries people wore armor only to ceremonies. This armor was elaborately decorated. It came to be called parade armor.⁷

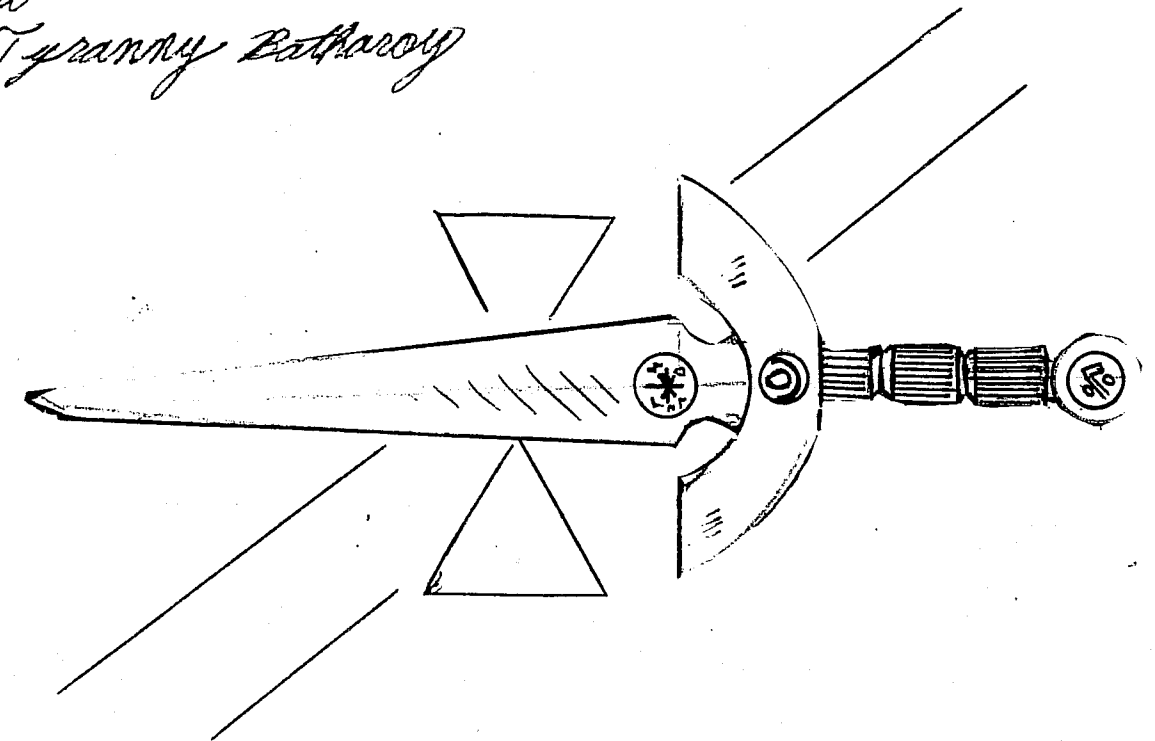
Most people in the Ancient World preferred to be archers. They used a powerful bow called the composite bow which might have been invented by the Semites. Since this bow was so powerful, it was necessary to be able to move freely. Therefore, armor could not be worn by archers because it was too heavy and stiff.⁸ Most bows were made of wood, horns, bone, and steel. Wood was the most popular for quite a while. Just like shields and armor, bows were made in a number of different styles. The English longbow was six feet in length. This bow was so powerful that hundreds of arrows could be flying through the air at one time in a battle.⁹ Bows never really faded like armor did. There are still many various types of bows in use today.

The most popular weapon in medieval times must have been the sword. The sword, as well as the spear and bow, derived from the making of clubs in the stone age. The earliest metal swords were made of bronze. Their hilts and blades were fastened together with rivets. This helped protect the sword when intense strikes were taken. Eventually the sword

was made all in one piece. The weapons of the Bronze Age were made by melting bronze and hammering it to the shape of particular weapons. Although bronze was very popular in the making of swords, the bronze swords were very fragile and were mostly used for thrusts. The bronze swords were being made heavier and heavier for sturdiness.¹⁰ Another type of sword was the two-handed sword. Two-handed swords had double-edged blades and long hilts. They were sometimes used by warriors on foot to clear way for horsemen.¹¹ Soon iron was used in making swords. In western Europe the Celts were the first to begin welding iron to make long sword blades. Most swords from then on were made of iron. "For more than twenty thousand years before the first crude cannon belched forth the stone projectile balanced on its muzzle, men made an extraordinary variety of ingenious, lethal, and often beautiful weapons - all of them completely independent of gunpowder."¹²

During medieval times there were many violent battles. The people of these times created from nature what they needed to survive and conquer in war. Their often beautiful creations of shields, armor, and weapons have left a great impact on the history of the world today, both artistically and technologically.

*Regent
Tyranny Betrayal*





THE SCRIBE'S TABLET

A collection of stories, poems, and art submitted by the populace. If you have any work to contribute, please contact your local monarch, or write me, Cabal at:
10805 North Central
Dallas TX. 75231 Apt. 1255

THE PERFECT PRIZE

Long, long, ago...

When far off places meant too far for one small Viking ship to travel, least it fell off the earth; beautiful young princesses were really beautiful, young, princesses (despite poor dental hygiene), and the only way to appease kingdom overthrowing dragons, was with mysterious fragrances, from mysterious lands, filled with mysterious people, there dwelt a most grand and splendid city. It was a city that even by today's standards was exceptionally clean, orderly, and harmonious. In fact, it was so peaceful, that as a foreigner, one would get a nervous, sick feeling in the pit of the stomach and choose to leave the very next day (You tended never to go out at night and neither did anyone else for that matter).

Now, the reason for all this orderly chaos, was that this one of a kind city, had happened to be nestled on the edge of a huge forest. In the day time, flowers which were more vibrant and colorful than those that grew in the garden of paradise, blossomed in the rays of a soft and happy glow of sunshine. There were also trees that bore the sweetest fruit than any which had graced the table of any king in any lands that ever there was. And the birds... they sang with harmony that even the devil himself, hardened and devoted to all things black and lonely, stopped to hear as though if in a trance.

But at night; well, no one knew, because no one dared go out at night. Hence, not many people lived there. "Why", might you ask, "would anyone live there at all"? Some had forefathers who built the town and had put their soul and bodies into the ground, some were afraid of what they did not know, for the town was all they had ever known, and some were afraid, perhaps, that they wouldn't be able to get out of the town fast enough and the darkness of night would overtake them.

Now, the night is fading, and this is where we find our hero on his lonely adventure; in the middle of town, at sunrise. The dark night was fading fast, and the young man was not aware of the danger he had so unknowingly escaped, literally, by the skin of his teeth.

The young man was a knight. His name was Sir Dale, from the Court of Bellvenheel, under the rule of King Velonon Shad III. Sir Dale had been sent to bring tidings to this strange city with no name and to enquire of the odd forest that spawned horrible stories for the bedtime entertainment of children.

Odd the city seemed, indeed. Back home, the farmers would be working long before the sun. Come to think of it, where were the animals? There were no pigs, no chickens, no cows, no horses; not even birds to answer the dawn.

Then, one creaky door opened and out stepped a very colorfully dressed elderly woman. Her hair was neatly done up in a bun and stuffed under the starched white hat that sat up on her head in a nurse's fashion. Layers upon layers of brown and white skirts ruffled as she blindly passed the knight almost as though he did not exist at all. "Good woman," the knight started..."but could you tell me where your king dwells? For I have searched this town and cannot find any sort of a castle."

The woman did not respond and kept walking. Soon more and more people came out of their huts and homes, and the whole town was alive in minutes with poor Sir Dale right in the middle of all the hustle and bustle.

Sir Dale was desperate for an answer from someone to lead him to the king of this city, but no one answered him, so he looked around and found the local blacksmith. If anyone could help him, the blacksmith could. For he was the son of a blacksmith and a code of honor decreed that the man must oblige him (Blacksmith were like a family, then, and it would have meant death to the faulty one if service was refused). So just a glance around, and Sir Dale found what he was looking for. He followed the sound of the hammering around to the back of the shed where the local blacksmith kept the blazing hot fire.

"Excuse me, sir, but I need your assistance. I am Sir Dale from the Court of Bellvenheel, under the rule of King Velonon Shad III." Said Sir Dale. The large, dirty man did not look up from his work. Then, louder this time,

"I am son of Sir Erick the royal blacksmith of the Court of Bellvenheel and I need your assistance, please." The blacksmith sighed and looked up from his work, "Yes? How may I help you, brother?" Ah, now the man was ready to talk. "If you please; I have come a long way to speak with your king concerning this forest that is your home. If you would so kindly direct me to him, I will be on my way."

The blacksmith shook his head. "You don't know our history. You see, we have no king, for this town was built before the time of kings, and after the time of wizards. The town, the forest, the mountain of Zeth; everything around here is cursed. I stay here for the same reason my father stayed here, and his father before him. I stay here because I die if I leave. The forest will haunt me wherever I go. Do not eat the food, son, for the food is fine until you step outside the boundaries of the county.

You see the forest that lies beyond this evil city? Each tree was a member of this community. Even my daughter, as defiant and unsuperstitious as she was, is now and forever shall be, on that same hill, looking back at which was once her home. She'll never move, save for the wind that whistles through the branches that were once her hair, her hands, and everything else previously mortal."

"So, you have no king?" Asked Sir Dale.

"None." Replied the blacksmith.

"So what about the high mountain that is in the midst of your enchanted woods?"

"No one knows for no one goes there. It takes almost a days ride there and it is almost a days climb to the top. The climb is treacherous and we have heard stories whispered on the wind at night of poor souls jumping to their deaths at their own will off of that cursed wall of doom."

Then an odd shadow went over the strange blacksmith's face. A look of a man who's just caught a leprechaun, and has found out that it's treasure has been buried right underneath his house. And again, the blacksmith spoke:

"There is something you must know. On top of the mountain, there is rumor of a treasure so great, it is the most great and perfect thing every man, woman, and child could ever desire. But listen to me; to get to the mountain is easy by day, but at night, can prove to be fatal in a way I cannot say. If you go, take care that you are well on your way to scale the mountain into dusk. The trees of that forest, though once loved ones, now are evil creatures without brains or souls. The only feelings they feel are anger and woe. They care not who they torment. They care only that they do torment. Even my beloved daughter's poor soul is now twisted and cold. I have lost all feeling of love and longing for her in the flesh, and care only to keep the memory of her former self alive. I have grown hardened and calloused, as have many villagers who dwell here in this nameless city. Please take heed to my warning and ride swiftly to your mountain. It is already growing late to start your journey."

Now we find ourselves and our hero almost to the base of the mountain and night falling rapidly. We could have walked with him on his journey through this enchanted forest but it would have been nothing you aren't familiar with, and, of course, would have just taken up space in this story. With the air growing darker and more heavy with each breath Sir Dale took, each step grew harder and harder for his steed to perform. But there was the foot of the mountain in front of him; or was it?

The rocks of the base of the mountain would somehow fade in and out of plain view. It was as if he were looking through water at it. The closer he seemed to get to his destination, the more his horse wanted to turn and run the other way. But soon, he was there. He dismounted and crawled upon the first boulder he came to. Suddenly, the sun vanished altogether, and a piercing cry echoed so loud that it seemed to split Sir Dale's ears. The sound came from his horse. The mount looked like it was writhing and sinking into quicksand. Only it was not quicksand it was sinking into. For every few feet it would lose, the earth would spit out what was left of the suffering animal. So it gave the impression that water would give a small raft bobbing up and down between waves. It was then, that Sir Dale looked down at what was agonizing his horse. The ground had formed a mouth. The teeth were jagged and crooked, and saliva made a crusty trickle along the corner of the satanic orifice.

As the mouth crushed and gnawed upon the bones of the now limp animal, he heard moaning and gurgling and choking that he decided came from the fact that there was no tongue that could lap up the nasty juices and bloodflow. The thing couldn't taste.

All of this took a good fifteen horrific seconds. Sir Dale did not wait until the thing asked for seconds. He got up on and behind the boulder and started to climb. The progression upwards was hard, steep, and hazardous. As shaken up as he was, he wasn't sure if his mind was playing tricks on him, or if he really heard voices on the wind. Anything was possible.

Now, above the clouds, he stopped to rest a while. How many hours had he been climbing? Every limb of his body ached and he needed sleep. Fear had never been a problem...until now. God, please, whatever that cursed monstrosity was down there, may Hell be kinder; and God, please don't let sleep overtake this tired body now, he thought. How he longed for his bed, his fire, and oh, yes, his beautiful wife, Meyrah. But she was not a comfort he could enjoy. Not now, not ever. He must stop thinking about what could not be in a million years. Sitting there on that cold mountain looking up at that starless sky, he dreamt of a time of happiness and love. A baby coming? Perhaps.

He was startled out of his dreams by a soft cry on the wind.

"Dale?" Said the voice. "Dale, come to me."

What was that? Who was that? Could it be, "Meyrah"? It was as if he was reliving a blessed nightmare he had missed for ages. It sounded almost like his wife. Her beautiful voice was like the sweetest sound of melting ice dripping upon spring flowers.

"Dale, my darling, please come to me. I am lonely for the touch of your hand." It was her blessed voice! It was coming from below. Towards the base of the mountain. The bottom of the mountain? Then a shiver ran down the center of his back. He felt the cold of the rocks under his back side and he knew what nasty creature imitated the voice of his late beloved.

"Leave me! Do not torture me further!" Crying, he covered his ears and reminisced of his beautiful bride, now dead at the hands of a madman. You see, Meyrah, was a bright-eyed, young, and sometimes naive woman. Sir Dale had married her when she was but fourteen and a half. He had hit the ripe old age of twenty. But they were in love and they were happy.

She was beautiful. Black hair down to her knees, death white skin, and her breasts; if ever there were two champagne glasses fitted for a man's lips to caress the nectar that flowed from the rim of the fragile crystal, they were sculptured from these two, firm, God-given molds. Her hands were delicate and flawless. Her feet were so very tiny, that it was rumored that the elves were charged with the job of crafting the very slippers that fit her feet. Her legs went all the way up to form her perfect, round, buttock which was silhouetted from time to time, by the firelight which shone through the folds of her long, flowing, white nightgown, as she strolled the castle corridors.

Everyone in the kingdom loved her. Perhaps they loved her a little too much. Sir Dale had often warned her about strolling the castle halls by herself in the dead of night. From time to time, he had appointed guards, but Meyrah would usually lose them. Then one day she came up missing. They searched high and low. A royal hunt for her had begun. Yet it was all for naught.

On the seventh day of her disappearance, a feast was scheduled with a neighboring barony. The feast could not be cancelled for the barony was too far away to get the word out. Reluctantly, the court sat down to the feast. One seat they left open in Meyrah's honor. The food was unusually good. So good, in fact, that at the bottom of the King's bowl, was a beautiful wedding ring. Just big enough for the finger of the most beautiful and petite woman in court.

Rushing to the kitchen, Sir Dale found his lost Meyrah; in the freezer, the pot, and the cubbords. It was there that he learned that there were two bodies in one and that he was a father no more.

'Why go on?' He asked himself. The torment was too great. It had been nearly two years since that dreadful night that he had found he had eaten his beloved and their unborn baby. They tried to lock him up after that. 'Therapy', they called it. Reliving that gruesome scene over and over again had made him paranoid. Perhaps they had all done it on purpose just to get at him and see how a subject would do locked up under extreme stress. This was, after all, a time of science. Scientific geniuses were a dime a dozen; what was that they said, that some fool had actually found a way to turn lead into gold? Probably just a lot of mumbo-jumbo and code words used to fool the government and the church into thinking those thoughts, just to get away with his soothsaying.

Yet, now, look at him. Climbing higher and higher towards a great prize. The greatest one could ask for. No, not really. If only to have Meyrah back in his arms. There was nothing up there for him. Not now, not ever. The only reason he was let out of that hellhole, was that he was expendable. He was sure of it. Of course, at one time, he was the best and brightest of all the kings men, and yes, some of the ways he accomplished his goals were a little... unethical; perhaps, but he did get the job done. Whatever that job was. Even if it did make the other knights a bit pissed off. Perhaps even jealous. Of course, with the most desired woman in the land by his side nothing could have stopped him. Except her loss. That might whittle him down a bit, yes. And, of course, with a spotless record, the only thing that could put him out of business would be a mental breakdown. And then, to get rid of him forever, well, wait a while, then send him on a morale quest. You know, some kind of quest to go on to prove your worth. Of course the king would never agree to Sir Dale, in his mental condition, to go on this alone. However, if there was someone at the top, like, for instance, captain of the guard, who was about as fond of him as the rest of the circle of knights were, could fix it to where the king never knew that he was going alone. Perhaps kill someone off that would have been insignificant yet useful. Then say that the men had gone with Sir Dale. there were numerous places to dump a body around the mote of the castle. Yes, it would all be very easy to kill anyone you wanted behind the back of an ailing and senile king.

As he climbed, this all whirled around and came to light in his head. Then, as he reached the top of the mountain, dawn broke, and so did the last of the poor man's fleeting sanity.

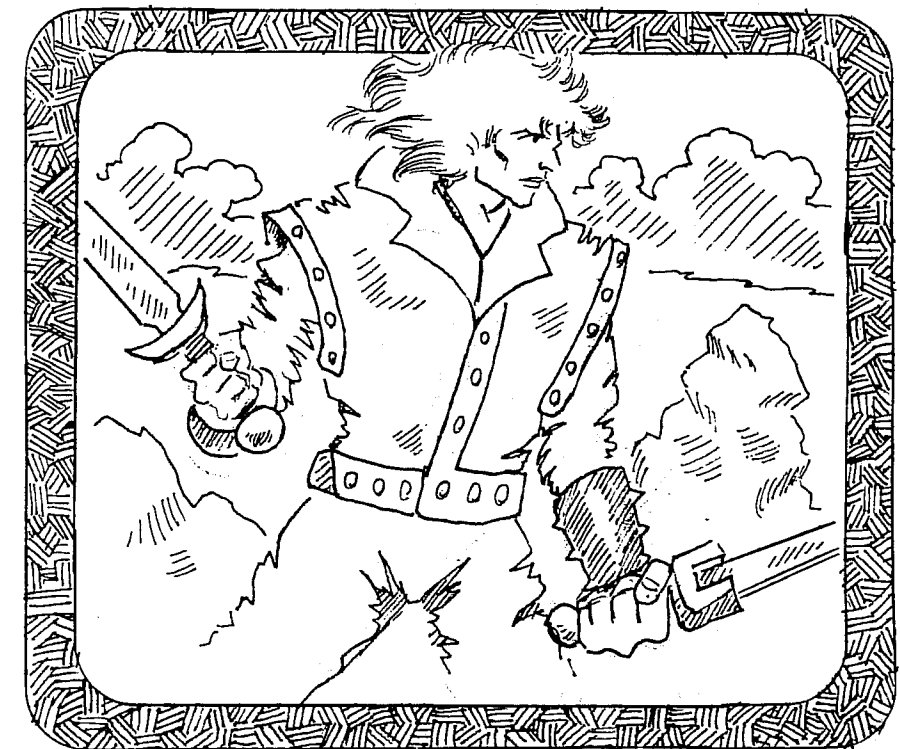
The siren woke up, startled. She had been having nightmares all night long. Vivid dreams of dead children; the offspring of humans. It had been a long time since she had dreamt of humans. But this dream was worse, for she thought that maybe she could have felt cold hard steel, the sharp blade of a knife, cutting her, and fire licking the flesh of her still living, breathing body. Yet, the most terrifying feeling of all, was the feeling of loss. There was someone that she would never see again. Someone that she knew would surly miss her. This is what hurt the most.

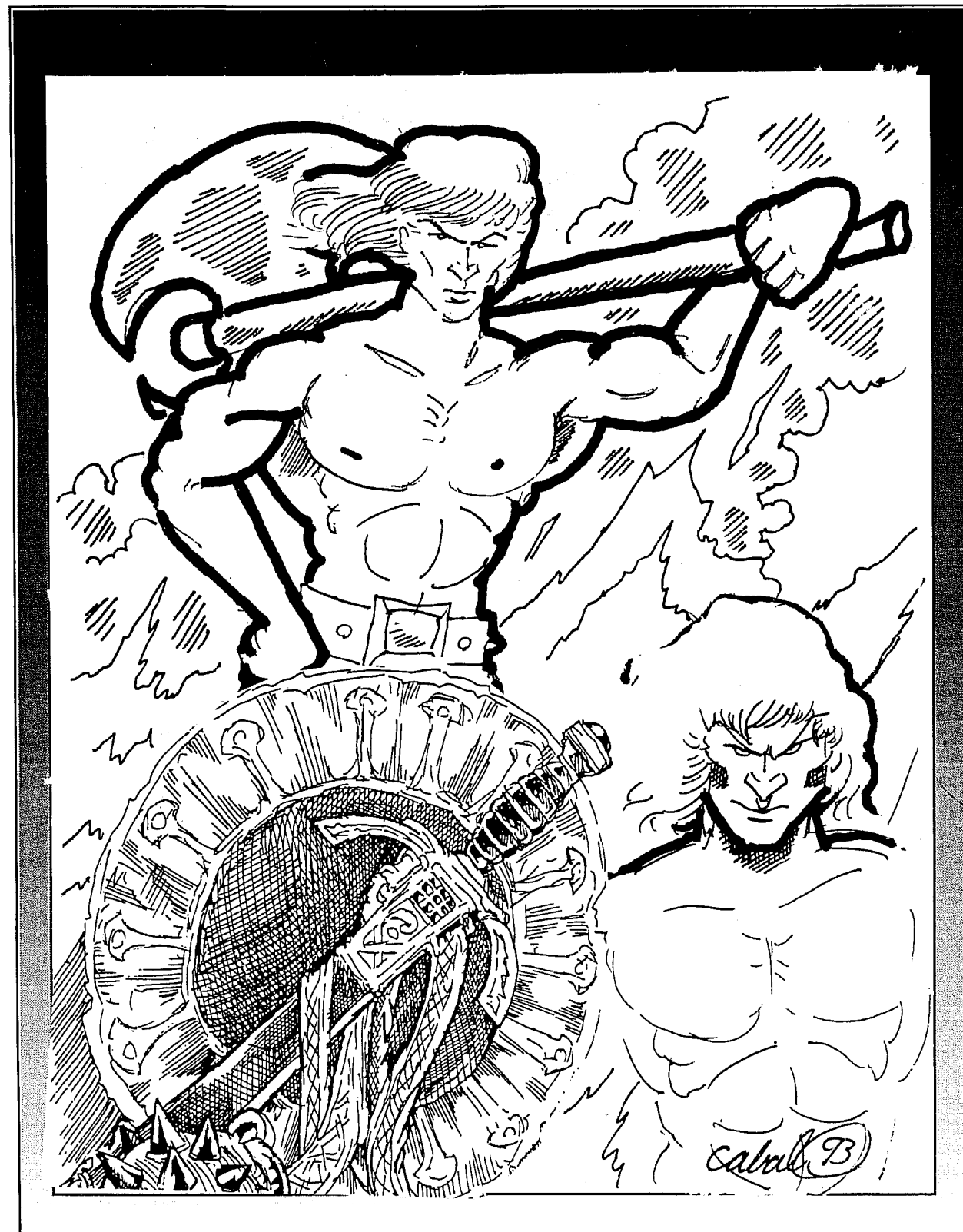
Sir Dale came up over the rocks. Now he had totally lost his mind and was looking around, eager to see anything that remotely resembled a treasure or prize. It was then that he saw her. A vision of loveliness, she was. It was as if God had granted him a second chance for there, naked and innocent, she stood. Just as if she had never left the world. Just as if she had never left his arms. However, already, the drug of disbelief was working. Another trick? Something of an amusement that the rest of his unworthy knights and 'commrades' had conjured up for his further mental anguish? No it was not Meyrah. It was some form of demon sent there from the depths of Hell to torment him to his death. Running from his fears, he hurled himself off of the side of the tall mountain. Death by that thing at the base of the mountain would be far better than to live with this brutal spawn of someone's evil mind. Meyrah was dead, and even through all of this insanity, he had come to terms with the fact that there was no bringing her back.

When Sir Dale came over the side of the mountain, his eyes caught those of a Siren that had been living up there on that stone fortress. She saw the remnants of a once great knight, now broken, beaten, and crazed. But yet, she knew him, and she loved him. Even now she could feel a kicking and swelling inside of her stomach. One that was not ever there before. It was then that she knew whose child she carried, even though she did not know why she carried it. Never coming into contact with another living soul, how could she be with child. Then she remembered her strange dreams and knew.

As Sir Dale jumped off the mountain, she jumped after him, for what treasure could be more perfect than destiny? She was not going to let herself die lonely like before. It was still dark at the base of the mountain as the two fell. Catching him in mid air, she hung on to him so very tightly. She whispered to herself, "I love you", and he wrapped his arms around her, too. Down they fell into the darkness, and into the gaping mouth that softly called to them, in a voice they both could understand.

BY: *DEVAN*





THE HONORABLE ART OF WAR

It was a hot summer day, in my sixteenth year,
With manhood mine, both free and clear,
And as my brother had done, and my father before,
I was to learn the family trade, the honorable art of war.

Mine was a warrior clan, both proud and strong,
With glory for every man, and traditions true and long,
These virtues we upheld, with our swords and our lives,
For honor and for glory and for justice we always strived.

Our clan had never wanted, in these goals we were secure,
For ours was a proven name, in the honorable art of war,
And the stories did abound, of our virtue on the field,
Of the foes we did face down, of how we would never yield.

And so it came to pass, on this warm and sunny day,
That it came my turn at last, and in blood my cost to pay,
For in my heart of hearts, I knew my foes should pray,
For I had my sword in hand, to kill a man that day.

My father donned his armor, grabbed his sword and shield,
My brother preferred a war-hammer when he would take the field,
I had donned my mail, my bracers, shield, and sword,
And off I pranced behind my kin, to the Battle Of Waylon's Ford.

To the bank we all lined up, all gleaming there with steel,
Our spears were all so sharp, as others soon would feel,
I looked up into my father's face, his bearded smile met mine,
" Prepare thyself young Uther, for soon we meet the line!"

Accross the bank I finally saw, the long tall line of men,
Their swords were gleaming also, like teeth in a lion's den,
I looked to my brother as if for help, my gut suddenly wrenched in fear,
" Prepare thyself young Uther, for glory is soon near!"

Suddenly a shout rang out, the Duke had made the cry,
And fifteen-hundred good, strong men, lunged forward to kill or die,
Now my stomach churned, my knees nearly gave way,
But I had my sword in hand, to kill a man that day.

There was a sound not soon forgot, of steel and clashing blades,
A sound of such force, that it nearly tore the glade,
It took almost twelve seconds, before I would raise my head,
But I knew I dare not tarry, or else soon I would be dead.

A man lunged at my father, his eyes and sword ablaze,
But father cut him down, on the ground he soon did lay,
I looked upon this warrior, he lay bleeding he did scream,
His body twitched with pain, but soon he slept death's dream.

Soon I noticed something strange, it was so strange to me,
We three stood well behind the line, and not in battle's sea,
" Should we not be at the front?" to my kin I did implore,
" For is not our's a proven name, in the honorable art of war?"

They never got to answer, for our line suddenly broke,
And suddenly our enemies came for our necks to choke,
I nearly fell, slipping so, on the bodies at our feet,
The bile lept up into my throat, my fear then did I meet.

I looked agasp for in my eyes my brother did then fall,
For though a warrior he did be, he could not slay them all,
That left only father and I , and father's leg lay broke,
And soon our foes would lunge for us, and our necks to choke.

But for one long, and awful time I looked down with regret,
And choked back a sob, deep in my throat, for what my eyes had met,
For at my feet, there lay the forms of the sons of Cutter's End,
Some of which had been my neighbors, many were my friends,

And deep inside there grew a rage that shattered all the fear,
For now I wanted our enemies to suddenly be near,
For now I'd make them bleed, for now I'd make them pay,
For I did have my sword in hand to kill a man that day.

I lunged forward with all my strength, and knocked down a tall sheild,
I smashed some bronze helmet, it's wearer surely killed,
I could not stop my heart ablaze, so quickly I did swing,
That my sword seemed as though quick and blazing thing.

I awoke from my rage, to my father's brow,
"Tis' over Uther, we have won! Stop the fighting now!"
At first the words did fail me, but then I understood,
And fatigue did take me, and as well It should.

Out into the field I stared, sitting on a stone,
And suddenly I felt dead inside, as if I was alone,
For fifteen-hundred good, strong men lunged forward to kill or die,
But after Waylon's Ford, a thousand there did lie.

Their voices stilled, their lives lay cut, their songs were never heard,
And none of the men there left standing, could say but nought a word,
We scant few, we lucky few, stood on that bloody shore,
And contemplated all we'd painted, in this honorable art of war.

BY :
CABAL

BARBARIAN!



WE'RE GONNA
KILL, RAPE, PILLAGE,
AND BURN!
KILL, RAPE, PILLAGE,
AND BURN!



CABLE 91

BARBARIAN CHEERLEADER



HERE BJORN, DRINK THIS!
DRINK ALL OF IT!

WHY ARN?

HEY! YOU WANNA
DIE
SOBER?

CABLE 91

REDGE
MATIC

I'm not Dead,
the entangle
hit first!

Or was it an
Ice Ball?



SURE, and what about all
the protect's I bet you
Have. REEVE!!!!!!



cabal 93

14TH CENTURY WIVES

Many people approach marriage with the thought that if it doesn't work out, I'll just get a divorce. Well, today that might just be true, but in the 14th century that was usually not an option. There are many differences between that time and this, as we will now discuss.

On the subject of chastity (virginity for you laymen), above all other virtues, this is the most important, at least for women. If a woman is so much as suspected of adultery, her reputation - which was everything to a woman at this time - was ruined. She doesn't even have to be guilty, just suspect. If this held true for men also, I'm sure the population of bastard children would be quite a bit smaller. The use of chastity belts for women was very popular at this time, and if any of you know what that is then you know how important it became to have your husband's complete trust in this matter. As a modern woman today, I would gladly create a chastity band for men's private parts. See how you like it. A woman also could not open a note in private from anyone other than her husband. If she received such a letter, it had to be opened and read by a companion.

As for caring for your husband's person, well, it appears that they had a real problem with bugs. You can either spread alder leaves around the room and the fleas that seem to be everywhere will stick to them, then you simply sweep them away. Or you can smear a trencher with birdlime and turpentine, light a candle in the center (it attracts the bugs) and they stick to the mixture. Again, you can remove them at your leisure. Luckily, today we just call Orkin.

About the household, a good wife must learn to order the servants around. I could handle that. The choosing of a chambermaid or housekeeper or cook is crucial. Check those references, ladies. You don't want to unknowingly hire a thief. On the other hand, if you're not lucky enough to be able to afford domestic help, I hope you can trust yourself.

In the kitchen : it seems that so long ago eel was a very popular meal. You must be sure to pick the right kind of eel. It seems the wrong kind of eel is quite poisonous. I could describe these two kinds of eel to you, but it isn't a very popular meal nowadays so we'll just skip it. As for chickens, back in the old days a wife had to cut the chicken's throat, boil it, pluck it, cook it, eat it, clean up, then prepare for the next meal. I'll just go visit Col. Sanders, thank you.

They would teach wives to make poisons to kill stags and wild boars. You should dip your arrows in this before shooting the animal. If I was married to a man and was expected to cook, clean, hire, fire, wash his feet, be constantly pleasant (no such thing as PMS), make love whenever he wants to, and kill all his food for him he had better be careful, he might just find himself skewered by a poisoned arrow.

I don't think I would make a very good medieval wife, do you?

*Countess Selka
Shadowcat*

READ MY LIPS...



THE ENTIRE WORLD TREMBLES
WHEN THE
EMERALD HILLS
SAYS ONE WORD...

WAR!

Yes once again it's time to visit our lovely neighbors to the
South...and kill them!

The Caravan will exit on Martin Luther King Blvd. It will travel West on M.L.K., (right for you barbarians,) to Lamar St. It will then take a right on Lamar, until reaching the 1st stop light, where it will take a left.

Quickest route from Dallas to Austin

Time 3 hrs 2 min. Distance 196 miles.

Time		Road	For	Dir	Towards
00:00	DEPART Dallas (Texas) on t	I35	16 miles	S	
00:20	At De Soto stay on the	I35	4 miles	S	(Red Oak)
00:23	At Red Oak stay on the	I35	70 miles	S	(Waxahachie)
01:23	At Bellmead stay on the	I35	2 miles	S	Waco
01:26	At Waco stay on the	I35	5 miles	S	Austin
01:33	At Robinson stay on the	I35	38 miles	S	Austin
02:06	At Belton stay on the	I35	30 miles	S	Austin
02:32	Go onto	No name	2 miles	S	(Georgetown)
02:34	At Georgetown stay on the	No name	3 miles	S	
02:36	Go onto	I35	13 miles	S	Austin
02:47	Turn off onto	U1	13 miles	SW	Austin
03:02	ARRIVE Austin (Texas)				

From there it will travel on to Pease Park...
WHERE WE WILL MEET THE ENEMY!