

**THE ELDER SCROLLS TREASURY**

A REPERTORY FOR MODDERS

*NEW EDITION*

PART I

CORPUS TAMRIELICUM

VOL. II



THE ELDER SCROLLS TREASURY

## **Corpus Tamrielicum**

The Official Books, Scrolls, Journals, Letters,  
and Notes of *The Elder Scrolls* Games

Edited and annotated by

Zeph

Vol. II

The Texts from *Arena*, *Daggerfall*, *Battlespire*, and *Redguard*

Dortmund 2012

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*Dedicated to all devs of The Elder Scrolls series  
and  
all lore-friendly modders out there.*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. <i>The Elder Scrolls: Arena</i> .....	1
[1] Oghma Infinium* .....	3
2. The Elder Scrolls Chapter 2: Daggerfall .....	5
[1] The Alik'r .....	7
[2] Ark'ay The God.....	9
[3] The Arrowshot Woman .....	11
[4] The Asylum Ball .....	12
[5] Banker's Bet .....	14
[6] Biography of Barenziah* .....	16
[7] A Brief History of the Empire* .....	17
[8] Broken Diamonds .....	18
[9] The Brothers of Darkness* .....	20
[10] Confessions of a Thief .....	21
[11] Divad the Singer .....	23
[12] A Dubious Tale of the Crystal Tower.....	25
[13] The Ebon Arm .....	26
[14] {Engraved Card}.....	27
[15] The Epic of the Grey Falcon.....	28
[16] Etiquette With Rulers.....	30
[17] The Faerie .....	32
[18] The Fall of the Usurper .....	33
[19] First Scroll of Baan Dar .....	35
[20] Fools' Ebony .....	38
[21] From The Memory Stone of Makela Leki .....	79
[22] Galerion The Mystic* .....	82
[23] Ghraewaj and the Harpies.....	83
[24] The Healer's Tale .....	84
[25] A History of Daggerfall .....	85
[26] Holidays of the Iliac Bay .....	87
[27] Invocation of Azura* .....	89
[28] Ius, Animal God.....	90
[29] Jokes.....	92
[30] King Edward .....	94
[31] Legal Basics.....	168
[32] The Legend of Lovers Lament.....	170
[33] Letters .....	172
[34] The Light and The Dark.....	264
[35] {Lord Woodborne's Private Journal} .....	267
[36] The Madness of Pelagius* .....	268
[37] Mara's Tear .....	269
[38] {Message from the King of Worms} .....	271
[39] Mysticism*.....	272
[40] Notes .....	273
[41] Notes For Redguard History .....	277
[42] Oelander's Hammer.....	279
[43] Of Jephre.....	281

[44] The Old Ways*	282
[45] On Artaeum*	283
[46] On Lycanthropy	284
[47] On Oblivion*	286
[48] On Wild Elves*	287
[49] Origin of the Mages Guild*	288
[50] An Overview of Gods and Worship in Tamriel*	289
[51] {A Perfidious Document}	290
[52] The Pig Children*	291
[53] The Real Barenziah*	292
[54] Recipes	293
[55] Redguards, Their History and Their Heroes*	296
[56] Research Papers	297
[57] Rude Song	300
[58] The Sage	302
[59] A Scholar's Guide to Nymphs	305
[60] Scrolls	307
[61] Special Flora of Tamriel*	310
[62] The Story of Lyrisius	311
[63] A Tale of Kieran	313
[64] {Testimony of Arthago, Prince of Sentinel}	318
[65] {Tract}	319
[66] Vampires of the Iliac Bay	320
[67] Wabbajack*	324
[68] The War of Betony	325
[69] The War of Betony	327
[70] Wayrest, Jewel of the Bay	329
[71] Writs	331
3. <i>An Elder Scrolls Legend: Battlespire</i>	333
[1] Arcana Restored*	335
[2] Book Of Life And Service*	336
[3] Book Of Rest And Endings*	337
[4] {Book of the Wheels of Heaven}	338
[5] Codex Arcana	339
[6] Curiosities Of The Second Age	357
[7] Harvest's End, 3E 172*	359
[8] Letters	360
[9] Messages	361
[10] Notes	363
[11] The Kendhall Book Of Riddles	384
[12] The Legendary Scourge*	386
[13] Malham's Annotated Compendium of Arcane Contrivances of the Second Age	387
[14] The Posting of the Hunt*	389
[15] The Requisite Book of Daedra*	390
[16] A Short History Of The Augmented Craftworks	391
[17] Starkhorn's Compendium Of His Arts And Crafts In The Realms Of Lesser Enchantments	393
[18] Starlover's Log*	395
[19] The Vagaries of Magicka*	396
[20] The Waters Of Oblivion*	397

4. <i>The Elder Scrolls Adventures: Redguard</i> .....	398
[1] Book of Dwarven Lore .....	401
[2] Brother Kithral's Journal .....	402
[3] Elven Artifacts .....	403
[4] Ffoulkes Firmament* .....	405
[5] Flora of Hammerfell .....	406
[6] Iszara's Journal .....	407
[7] Keep Out .....	408
[8] N'Gasta's Necromancy Book .....	409
[9] No Trespassing .....	410
[10] Redguards. Their Heroes & History* .....	411
[11] Richton's Palace Expansion Schematic.....	412
[12] Text on Potions .....	413
[13] Tobias' Letter .....	414
[14] Wanted .....	415
Index.....	417
I. Names, Places, Titles, etc.....	417
II. Years .....	426



## **1. *The Elder Scrolls: Arena***



**[1] Oghma Infinium\***

See vol. I.



## ***2. The Elder Scrolls Chapter 2: Daggerfall***

*Editor's note: Some of the following texts are not found within the books folder. These texts have been taken from the qrc files and entitled by the editor. Although I derived most of the titles from the dialogues or the texts themselves, they are by no means official, hence they are given in {brackets}. Furthermore, in many non-book texts the reader will find variables instead of the names and places shown in game. For a more comfortable reading, I replaced them with {...}.*



## [1] The Alik'r

The Alik'r  
by Enric Milres

I might never have gone to the Alik'r Desert had I not met Weltan in a little tavern in Sentinel. Weltan is a Redguard poet whose verse I had read, but only in translation. He chooses to write in the old language of the Redguards, not in Tamrielic. I once asked him why.

"The Tamrielic word for the divinely rich child of rot, silky, pressed sour milk is ... cheese," said Weltan, a huge smile spreading like a tide over his lampblack face. "The Old Redguard word for it is mluo. Tell me, if you were a poet fluent in both languages, which word would you use?"

I am a child of the cities, and I would tell him tales of the noise and corruption, wild nights and energy, culture and decadence. He listened with awed appreciation of the city of my birth: white-marbled Imperial City where all the citizenry are convinced of their importance because of the proximity of the Emperor and the lustration of the streets. They say that a beggar on the boulevards of the Imperial City is a man living in a palace. Over spiced ale, I regaled Weltan with descriptions of the swarming marketplace of Riverhold; of dark, brooding Mournhold; of the mold-encrusted villas of Lilmoth; the wonderful, dangerous alleys of Helstrom; the stately avenues of grand old Solitude. For all this, he marvelled, inquired, and commented.

"I feel as if I know your home, the Alik'r Desert, from your poems even though I've never been there." I told him.

"Oh, but you don't. No poem can express the Alik'r. It may prepare you for a visit far better than the best guide book can. But if you want to know Tamriel and be a true citizen of the planet, you must go and feel the desert yourself."

It took me a little over a year to break off engagements, save money (my greatest challenge), and leave the urban life for the Alik'r Desert. I brought several books of Weltan's poems as my travel guide.

"A sacred flame rises above the fire, The ghosts of great men and women without names, Cities long dead rise and fall in the flame, The Dioscori Song of Revelation, Bursting walls and deathless rock, Fiery sand that heals and destroys."

These first six lines from my friend's "On the Immortality of Dust" prepared me for my first image of the Alik'r Desert, though they hardly do it justice. My poor pen cannot duplicate the severity, grandeur, ephemera and permanence of the Alik'r. All the principalities and boundaries the nations have placed on the land dissolve under the moving sand in the desert. I could never tell if I was in Antiphyllos or Bergama, and few of the inhabitants could tell me. For them, and so it came to me, we were simply in the Alik'r. No. We are part of the Alik'r. That is closer to the philosophy of the desert people.

I saw the sacred flame of which Weltan wrote on my first morning in the desert: a vast, red mist that seemed to come from the deep mystery of Tamriel. Long before the noon sun, the mist had disappeared. Then I saw the cities of Weltan. The ruins of the Alik'r rise from the sand by one blast of the unbounded wind and are covered by the next. Nothing in the desert lasts, but nothing dies forever. At daylight, I hid myself in tents, and thought about the central character of the Redguards that would cause them to adopt this savage, eternal land. They are warriors by nature. As a group, there are none better. Nothing for them has worth unless they have struggled for it. No one fought them for the desert, but the Alik'r is a great foe. The battle goes on. It is a war without rancor, a holy war in the sense the phrase should always imply.

By night, I could contemplate the land itself in its relative serenity. But the serenity was superficial. The stones themselves burned with a heat and a light that comes not from the sun, nor the moons Jone and Jode. The power of the stones comes from the beat of the heart of Tamriel itself.

Two years I spent in the Alik'r.

As write this, I am back in Sentinel. We are at war with the kingdom of Daggerfall for the possession of a grass-covered rock that belongs to the water of the Iliac Bay. All my fellow poets, writers, and artists are despondent for the greed and pride that brought these people into battle. It is a low point, a tragedy. In the words of Old Redguard, an ajcea, a spiral down. Yet, I cannot be sorrowful. In the years I spent in the glories of the Alik'r, I have seen the eternal stones that live on while men go dead. I have found my inner eye in the tractless, formless, changeless and changeable land. Inspiration and hope, like the stones of the desert, are eternal though men be not.

## [2] Ark'ay The God

Ark'ay The God  
by Mymophonous the Scribe

So be it known that the gods were once as we.

Ark'ay, the god of death and birth, was an ordinary shopkeeper whose only unusual characteristic was a passion for knowledge. To indulge his hobby he became an avid collector of books on almost any subject he could find in print. One day he stumbled across a tome which purported to tell the secrets of life, death, and the purpose of existence. After months of studying the convoluted logic, written in opaque language, he thought that he was finally beginning to understand what the author was saying.

During this time he became so intent on understanding the book that he ignored everything else: his business started to slide towards bankruptcy, his few friends stopped visiting him, he ignored the plague which was ravaging the town, and his family were ready to leave him. Just as he felt that the book was opening visions of new worlds, the plague brought him low. His family tended his illness out of a sense of duty, but he slowly sank towards death. So, as a last resort, he prayed to Mara the mother-goddess to allow him enough time to complete his studies of the book.

"Why should I make an exception for you, Ark'ay?" asked Mara.

"Mother Mara, I am finally beginning to understand this book and the meaning of life and death" he answered, "and with a little more time to study and think, I should be able to teach others".

"Hmmm, it sounds to me like that 'teaching others' is an afterthought to appeal to me", she replied. "What is the reason for death and birth?"

"There are far more souls in the Universe than there is room for in the physical world. But it is in the physical world that a soul has an opportunity to learn and progress. Without birth, souls would not be able to acquire that experience, and without death there would be no room for birth."

"Not a very good explanation, but it does have elements of truth. Maybe with more study you could improve it," she mused. "I cannot give you 'a little more time.' I can only condemn you to Eternal labor in the field you have chosen. How say you to that?"

"I do not understand, mother," said Ark'ay.

"Your choice is to either accept the death that is so close or to become a god with us. But a god is not an easy nor pleasant thing to be. As the god of death and birth you will spend eternity making sure that deaths and births stay in proper balance in the physical world. And, in spite of what you believe you understand, you will always agonize over whether your decisions are truly correct. How do you decide?"

Ark'ay spent what seemed to him as an eternity in thought before answering. "Mother, if my studies are not completely wrong, my only choice is to accept the burden and try to transmit the reasons for death and birth to humanity."

"So be it, Arkay, God of Birth and Death."

### [3] The Arrowshot Woman

The Arrowshot Woman  
by Anonymous

I heard this story on good authority from a good and honest friend, whose friend was witness to the incident. I do truly believe it happened, as fantastical as it may seem.

My friend's friend, Terron, was visiting the Elsweyr citystate of Riverhold during a very hot summer and went to the marketplace there. If you have never been to Riverhold, the marketplace is very crowded, much more than in comparably sized city states. People from the countryside flock to the marketplace daily in their wagons and carriages. Terron was passing one such carriage, and noticed that the sole occupant was a woman, seated with her eyes closed and her hands behind her head. An odd sight, to be sure, but he assumed she must be sleeping. Terron continued on. A little while later, after Terron had finished shopping in the marketplace, he passed the same carriage. The same woman was sitting in it. Her eyes were open now, but her hands were still behind her head.

"Are you all right, my lady?" he asked. "An arrow shot me in my head and I'm holding my brains in," came the woman's reply. Terron did not know what to do. He ran into the marketplace and literally bumped into a healer and his knight companion. They were good people and agreed to help. The carriage door had to be torn off its hinges, as the lady had locked it and feared to move to unlock it. What they found when they finally could get into the carriage was this: the woman was holding barley dough on the back of her head with her hands. Apparently, in the heat of the day, a jar of barley dough had exploded with the thwang of an arrowshot and struck the woman in the back of her head. When she reached back to feel what had hit her, she felt the dough and reasoned that she was feeling her brains.

## [4] The Asylum Ball

The Asylum Ball  
by Waughin Jarth

My great great uncle was a warder at an asylum in Torval (maybe he was my great great great uncle -- it was quite a long time ago), and this is the story that has been passed down in my family from his generation to mine. Perhaps it is purely apocryphal, but when I was told it, it was whispered in such a way that it was meant to be taken seriously. Not having any children of my own to whisper to, and being in need of some gold, I have elected to publish my story.

The asylum my great great uncle worked in was apparently very posh. Only the right class of lunatics were admitted. Eccentric dukes, mad baronesses, touched lords, and daft ladies filled the asylums tapestried and gilded halls. Still, it was a time of great excitement when the rumor began that the unhinged Emperor of Tamriel, Pelagius III, was transferring there from a resort in Valenwood. When the rumor became a reality, the asylum went into nice, calm, restive chaos. Pelagius was given an entire wing of the asylum for his own use, for, though he was madder than a jackal, he was still His Terrible Majesty, the Emperor of Tamriel.

The Emperor was remarkably well behaved, my great great uncle supposedly asserted. Of course, he did not have to face the commoners who came on all sorts of pretenses to gawk at their overlord, the loon. When one of the warders (not, I have been assured, my uncle) forgot himself and let His Terrible Majesty know that people had been there to see him, the Emperor grew very excited. He made up his mind right there and then to have a ball. A huge party with musicians, dancing, and dinner, right at the lunatic asylum. Or precisely, in his wing of the asylum.

Rumors of the Emperor's interest in holding a ball spread throughout Torval and eventually it reached the ears of the Emperess Regent Katariah, Pelagius' dear wife, in the Imperial City. Eager to make her husband happy, she sent a caravan laden with gold to the asylum so a ball might be held befitting the Imperial dignity.

The Emperor picked a date for the ball, and preparations began immediately. The old asylum walls were beautifully decorated, but needed cleaning. A pit had to be constructed to house the orchestra; servants for cooking and serving the food had to be hired; gold and ebony candelabras and matching chandeliers were ordered; the old rugs were destroyed, and new rugs embroidered with gems were weaved; lists of guests had to be compiled, reconsidered and recompiled. The Emperor knew that the guest list had to be very exclusive, and he relied on his advisors to tell him who was alive, who was dead, and who was imaginary.

The party was set to begin at nine o'clock. At six, the hairdresser he had hired from Torval finished his Imperial coiffure. At seven, he was fully dressed in the robes he had ordered for the ball: voluminous black silk and piled velvet crusted with red diamonds. At eight, he walked down the newly reconstructed staircase to supervise the final preparations -- the lighting of the candles, the opening of the wine, the murder of the first course. At nine o'clock, he took his seat at the facsimile throne he had ordered and awaited the first guests.

At nine thirty, his advisor, seeing the royal eyes beginning to glaze over with madness, said, "Your Terrible Majesty surely knows that it is not fashionable to arrive at any ball for at least an hour after the desired time, yes?"

The Emperor just stared.

At ten thirty, the Emperor called for some food and wine, and sat at his throne, looking at the open door, eating. Thirty minutes later, he ordered the orchestra to begin playing. For the next three hours, they played gaily for the empty, candlelit ballroom.

At one o'clock, the Emperor announced his intention to retire for the evening. My uncle was one of the warders who assisted His Terrible Majesty up the staircase. Halfway to his room, Pelagius threw himself on the floor in a hysteria, screaming and laughing, ordering more wine (my mother was good at this part of the story, rolling her eyes and shrieking, "More wine! More wine! Wine!"), and, in short, imagining that he was possessed by all the revellers at his party that never was.

Two days later, he was still not better. He had cut himself and those who tried to grapple him horribly with the red diamonds of his robe. Eventually it was decided that the Torval asylum was not equipped to deal with a lunatic of his severity, and he was sent to a more secure location in Black Marsh. It was only three months later, my uncle heard that the Emperor had died.

One of my uncle's duties was to clear out the personal property of the inmates after their death. Being primarily landed nobility, the personal property was often quite extensive. Several years after the asylum ball, my uncle was called to clear out the apartment of a duchess whose chief eccentricity was a propensity to pilfer. Kleptomania, I believe it's called. Locked away in a secret door in her desk, protected by a trap armed with a barbed needle, was a variety of jewels, piles of gold, and a five large stacks of beautifully engraved invitations signed in the Emperor's childlike handwriting.

**[5] Banker's Bet**

Banker's Bet  
by Porbert Lyttumly

It was a perfectly ordinary day at the main office of the Bank of Daggerfall. Normal transactions took place: deposits were deposited, withdrawals were withdrawn, house mortgages were collected, letters of credit were golded. When a teller named Clyton J. Wifflington saw the little old lady approaching him, dragging two large sacks, each nearly as large as her, he changed his mind. It was not to be a perfectly ordinary day at the Bank of Daggerfall after all.

"I would like you to take the thirty million gold pieces I have in these sacks and open me an account," croaked the little old biddy.

"Certainly, madam," Wifflington said, eagerly. He counted the gold in the sacks and found that it was thirty million gold exactly.

"One moment, sonny," the little old lady chirruped. "Before I open the account, I would like to meet the man I'm trusting it to. I'd like to talk to the president of the bank."

Wifflington wanted the president to know that he was the teller who had taken the largest single deposit that year, so eagerly sent word to the president's secretary. As it turned out, the president was equally eager to meet such a wealthy woman, so the old lady was brought to his office that very day.

"Pleased to make your acquaintance, milady. I am Gerander P. Baggledon," said the president, Gerander P. Baggledon.

"My name," said the little old lady. "Is Petuva Smuthworthy." That was, in fact, her real name. "Thank you for seeing me. I like to conduct my business in a more personal way."

"I can certainly appreciate that," said Baggledon chucklingly. "It is an appreciable sum of gold. Would it be rude of me to ask how you came by it?"

"Not at all," said Mrs. Smuthworthy.

"How came you by it?" asked Baggledon.

"I'll let you guess," replied Mrs. Smuthworthy, with a trace of unattractive girlish flirtation. Baggledon was a man of enormous imagination, for a banker. He guessed inheritance and longtime thrift, but Mrs. Smuthworthy coyly shook her head. Perhaps she had sold a large, old mansion? No. In a moment of chumminess, Baggledon asked if the gold came as a result of plunder or thievery. Mrs. Smuthworthy took no offense, but said no. Finally, he admitted defeat.

"I'm a gambler," she said.

"In arena fights?" he asked, interested.

"No, no, dearie. Different things. For example, I'd be willing to wager twenty five thousand gold pieces that at this time tomorrow morning, your testicles will be covered with feathers."

Mr. Baggledon was somewhat taken aback by the old woman's words. Could she be mad? Could she be a witch? He eliminated the latter possibility, for he had a sense for such things. If she were mad, she was still a rich madwoman. And he could use twenty five thousand gold pieces. So he took her wager. For the next twenty-four hours, Mr. Baggledon obsessed over his testicles. He checked his pants so often that afternoon, his subordinates feared the worse and suggested that he not touch anything and go home for the rest of the afternoon. He spent the night seated, his pants around his ankles, his beady banker's eyes focused on his scrotum. Every time he started to doze off, his vision was filled with images of Mrs. Smuthworthy plucking feathers from his balls, cackling.

Mr. Baggledon arrived at the bank late the next day -- only moments before Mrs. Smuthworthy's arrival. Accompanying her was a lean, bespeckled fellow she introduced as a barrister from the court. Her son, it turned out. Young Mr. Smutworthy always accompanied his mother when there was money involved, she explained.

"Enough banter," she crowed. "Our bet, dearie?"

"My dear, dear madam, I can tell you that your gold will be quite safe at the Bank of Daggerfall. I hope it will not cause you distress to discover that your gold will be safer here than in your own hands. My family jewels are quite, shall we say, featherless. And you owe me a sum equally twenty five thousand gold."

Poor Mrs. Smuthworthy's face fell when she heard this. "Are you sure?"

"Quite, madam."

"Not even one feather?" Her voice suggested doubt.

Mr. Baggledon could tell she thought he might be lying. "Not one, I fear, madam."

"It's not that I don't trust you, Mr. Baggledon, but it is quite a lot of gold. Might I -- would you -- could I possibly see for myself?"

As he knew he was soon to be a twenty five thousand gold pieces richer, and he was still a bit punchy from lack of sleep, Mr. Baggledon merely smiled and dropped his breeches to the floor. Mrs. Smuthworthy examined his testicles very carefully, under, to the left, to the right. At last, she was satisfied that there was not so much as a down feather anywhere in the region.

While she was looking under them one last time, Mr. Baggledon heard a thwacking noise across the office. Young Mr. Smutworthy was banging his head against the stone wall. "What in the Lady's name is wrong with your son, Mrs. Smutworthy?" he asked.

"Nothing, dear," she said. "I merely bet him one hundred thousand gold pieces that by this time I would have the president of the Bank of Daggerfall by the balls."

**[6] Biography of Barenziah\***

See vol. I.

**[7] A Brief History of the Empire\***

See vol. I.

## [8] Broken Diamonds

Broken Diamonds  
by Ryston Baylor

I remember as a young lad in Glenumbra Moors my first Broken Diamonds holiday. The big noisy festivals I remember very well -- Harvests' End, Mid Year, New Year, the Emperor's Day.

All of these I have memories of that stretch back before I became truly aware of the meaning of our celebrating. On the 19th of Frost Fall, every year, my family and I would walk to a ruined castle in the middle of the wilderness, together with everyone else we knew in the Moors. Hands clasped in hands, we would form an enormous circle around the ruins, and head reverently bowed we would sing a song, the Sepharve.

For years, we did this and I never asked why. It is an odd thing that normally curious children, from my experience, never ask questions about Broken Diamonds, and adults seldom volunteer information. Gradually, as we learn about our homeland through university or the prattling of ancient relatives, we come to guess and then know the meaning of Broken Diamonds.

I cannot be objective as a native of Glenumbra Moors, but visitors have told me that the sorrow -- more often they use the word shame -- of the natives is almost overwhelming. There is a sense that a great and ancient crime still burns in the conscience of the people of the Moors. Though it did not happen in our lifetimes, we know that the debt is not yet paid.

I refer, of course, to the murder of Her Terrible Majesty, Kintyra II, Emperess of Tamriel, on the frozen morning of the 23rd of Frost Fall, in the year 3E 123.

We do not know the name of the castle where she was held; we do not know the name of her murderer (though the man who ordered the murder was her cousin and usurper, Uriel III); we do not know where she was buried. But our ancestors knew that their rightful ruler was imprisoned somewhere in their land, and did nothing to help her. For that, we bear their shame.

On that morning, when our great-great grandparents heard of Kintyra's death, all were stricken with horror and regret at their lack of action. All the people of Glenpoint and Glenumbra Moors searched out those responsible in every Imperial castle. They formed barriers with their bodies to hold the killer within. Flags bearing the Red Diamond of the Septim family were torn and scattered, and broken diamonds littered the snow.

The song we sing every Broken Diamonds, as I mentioned before, is the Sephavre. I asked everyone in Glenumbra Moor what the meaning of the song is, for it is in Old Bretic, and each generation only knows it because they were taught by their parents. No one knew the exact meaning of the words, not even the tone and emotion the words can be easily translated. When I later talked to a scholar who gave me an accurate translation of the Sephavre, I began to understand both why our ancestors chose it as the anthem for the great injustice of the

murder of Kintyra II and the sorrow that still prevades Glenumbra Moors since that dark morn.

### The Sephavre

Souls of our fathers, suffer deeply,  
For you have led us to the dark time,  
When our own souls, filled with air,  
Allowed ignorance and villiany to thrive  
In what used to be our land.  
Howl, ancestors, howl and bring us  
Memories of our conformance with evil.  
We do anything we can to survive,  
Giving up our minds and hearts and bodies  
We will not fight, and we will be torn  
And like flotsam in a whirling tide  
We will be forever the agents of injustice  
But we will mourn it forever.

**[9] The Brothers of Darkness\***

See vol. I.

## [10] Confessions of a Thief

Confessions of a Thief  
by Anonymous

I'm a thief. Now, don't get me wrong. I ain't saying this out of pride, but I ain't ashamed of my occupation neither. Thieves got a perfect right to exist in the Empire. People say we're dishonest. Of course, those people are usually either merchants or priests, which really slays me. Sort of the snake calling the worm legless.

Rulers like us. Crime in moderation is good for the economy. The trick is to keep it at a good even pace, with a well timed lull and a minor wave to keep the fat bottoms from becoming compacent. Of course, stupid, but talented thieves will keep stealing, empty their pockets, and steal some more. This ain't good for no one. That's where the guilds come in.

A thieves guild is what they call a crime regulator. We protect each other and punish the clumsy and greedy. The kings depend on us to keep the amateurs out of business.

Yeah, occasionally, a king will come down on us. I've even seen my Thieves Guildmaster get himself stuck in prison once or twice. Some cohort of mine said her first Guildmaster got himself hanged. Then the Thieves Guild has to get foul on the king, and, let someone who knows tell you, the results ain't pretty.

I got into the guild, the way I've seen most thieves do it. It was a few years back, when that bully Jagar Tharn was sitting on the throne only everyone thought he was the Emperor. My parents farm turned into eight acres of dust and rock, and they threw me and my brothers out. I was always a skinny thing, but by the time I made it to the closest town, I was a good deal more skinnier.

Just cause the town had some dirt that plants could grow on didn't make them that much richer than my folks were. I tried to get all kinds of jobs, but the hungrier and more raggedier I got, the quicker anyone who might have work would kick me out. When the rainy season finally came, it came like a sea, and I didn't have nowhere to stay. Lucky I found the unlocked cellar door.

Turns out that the owners of the house slept like old dogs, cause I robbed them blind (and tripped into things like I was the blind one) and they never woke up. I sold all the stuff at a dirty pawnshop I knew and spent the next two days living like a potentate. Then I got my first visit from the local thieves guild.

I remember what the guy looked like, but not exactly what he said. Something like, "Hey, kid, if you want to steal in these parts, you're going to have to join the Guild. Otherwise, I or someone like me is going to break your skinny arms so you can't steal."

I've know some people who've refused membership in the Guild and kept on stealing anyhow.

I've broken someone of their arms. As for me, this was the first offer I'd had for a career since my pa told me that if I didn't milk the cow, he'd rip my head off. In comparison, this guy at the tavern was almost a gentleman. I agreed right away.

Sure, I had to prove my worth to the Guild before I could join and even now. But having two working arms is only part of the benefit. They trained me, taught me, and kept me out of prison. How many other guilds can boast a forgery expert on the premises?

So the next time you're calling some swindling merchant or usurious priest a thief, think about it. There is honor among thieves -- I should know.

## [11] Divad the Singer

Divad the Singer  
by Destri Melarg

Divad The Singer is in one body, two unique and distinct people. Divad is the most well known of the Redguard heroes. Frandar Hunding's son, probably the most accomplished Ansei who ever lived. Yet early in his life, Divad appeared to thoroughly have rejected The Way of the Sword.

Divad was the only son of Frandar Hunding, and was born late in Hunding's life (2396 in the old way of reckoning, probably about 1E 760 by the Tamrielic calendar), when he was away most of the time fighting the last of his duels and engaging in the many battles and insurrections of the period. At eleven, Divad entered the Hall of the Virtues of War and began training, but at 16, he finally let his anger at growing up essentially fatherless get the better of him. Divad broke his swords and left the Hall to become an acrobat in a traveling circus.

The life in the circus was unsatisfying to Divad, and after two years, his innate artisan heritage drove him to become a musician and finally a Bard. For two more years he traveled, singing in the cities of the empire -- gaining no small amount of fame and recognition for his stirring and popular songs and music.

Although Divad had publicly forsaken the Way of the sword, it would appear that he continued to practice the compulsory forms of training he was taught in the Hall. He carried no sword, but in the late evening, bright lights could be often be seen in his tent (my source says nothing more about this, but it may be assumed that the writer was suggesting that Divad was practicing the form of the Way known as Shehai Shen She Ru -- the Way of the Spirit Sword, or simply the Shehai).

Divad was very popular with the people of the empire, and his music and concerts were well attended. Still he could not escape his heritage of the sword. When the Last Emperor ascended to power and began to persecute the sword-singers, Divad was among the first to attract his attention.

Once the Emperor Hira and his consort decided to go to war with the Singers for control of the empire, he moved swiftly against those Singers who were visibly a part of empire society. Most he had killed, but Divad's music and fame were so wide spread that he sent a team of his personal guards to arrest him.

The Emperor's men were either very lucky or very unlucky depending on how you choose to view it. Being no fool, Hira sent 100 of his best guards, for even an unarmed Singer was a very dangerous foe. The luck was that they were able to capture Divad and place him in chains, for they came at him as he sat dining with his elderly mother. The disaster was that as he surrendered, they rashly struck the pleading old woman. Too hard, it would seem, for she fell dead with that single blow.

That single thoughtless deed, as is often the case in war, was the one pivotal factor causing their eventual defeat. That act ignited in Divad the spirit of the Way. Up until that careless stroke, Divad was an ordinary artisan, no, an artist, a great artist, but no warrior.

The moment of her death, Divad rose from his seat, took his chains between his two hands and began swinging the heavy chain in a deadly arc. He slew four of the guards, gaining enough space to run and dive through the window and into the river. He disappeared into the night.

From that point, Divad was spotted many times and told of in many more rumors all across the empire -- far more places than a mere mortal man could have ever been. At every point where Hira's men gathered to do mischief, the resistance was attributed to Divad.

As Hira moved against the Singers and began forming his army to invade High Desert, it was Divad who carried the news to the Singers. Divad was among those who climbed Hattu to find Hunding in his cave. What is not well known is that Hunding, at first refused to take leadership of the Singers. The first attempt to interrupt him at his death poem caused him to drive the elders from his cave, he even formed the Shehai in his anger. It was Divad who reentered the cave alone to speak with Hunding. To this day, no one knows what was said, what happened in that cave. Scribes of the time reported bright flashes of light and angry voices. Five long hours came and went, then both emerged from the cave, Divad, at Hunding's side. The rest, as they say, is history ...

Divad, who had not completed training in the Hall of the Virtues of War, became an adviser to Hunding and spent his time reading the newly completed Book of Circles, but his role in the Hammer and Anvil strategy was as a simple sword-singer and fighter. It was not till the Singers fled their native empire and landed in New Land that his story truly begins.

## [12] A Dubious Tale of the Crystal Tower

A Dubious Tale of the Crystal Tower  
by Bibenus Geon

This story was first told to me when I was a neonate, newly studying in the Crystal Tower of Sumurset. I was admiring the famous animal pens of the Tower when I was approached by an older student. The fellow who told me this tale seemed very trustworthy at first, but, as the reader will soon discover, the tale is very dubious indeed. Of course, I have told it since to other neonates of the Tower in the same spirit.

I offer the following for your august consideration, gentle reader.

Many, many years back, a talented but poor bard was passing through Sumurset, looking for work. He could sing, he could dance, he could act, but no one had any use for his performances. The poor bard was lugubrious, but he still visited the taverns and palaces, day after day, begging for a chance to showcase his talents.

One day, dejected from more bad luck, he was approached by a tall elf in a long robe. A Magister of the Crystal Tower, in charge of the animal pens. The elf tells the bard of the white ape they made a cell for at the Tower, how it had died en route. There was a royal party from Firsthold visiting who had been promised a glimpse at the rare white ape. The Magister had a costume for the bard if he would deign to act out the part of the ape for the visitors. The bard had promised himself to take the first part that came his way, no matter how minor, so he agreed. The elf promised that the charade would last no longer than a fortnight, when the visitors left.

For the first several days of the masquerade, the bard did nothing more than sit in the back of the pen. He was afraid to move and show the possible imperfections of the ape costume. In time, he became bored and began walking around. He suddenly noticed that the royal party was watching, fascinated. Happy that the ruse was working, he decided to enliven the act.

Soon he had both a performance and a crowd. Instead of dancing a traditional elven jig, he would swing around the cell with every acrobatic trick he knew. Instead of singing a ballad, he would roar a roar he imagined a rare white ape might roar. The crowd loved it. The party outside his cell grew larger and larger every day.

One day, he was performing for the crowd -- his finest work to date. He swung himself round and round, roaring and bleating. His hand slipped and he went flying through the bar and into the cell next door, where a Snow Wolf was in residence. Hackling its back and growling, the Snow Wolf began to inch toward the bard.

Seeing no other way out, the bard screamed, "Help! Help!"

The Snow Wolf whispered, "Shut up or you'll get us all fired."

### [13] The Ebon Arm

The Ebon Arm  
by Witten Rol

The ground shakes. The great armies continue to wage their unrelenting battle. The battlefield is red, the rivers flow crimson, the sky reflects a deep pink. In the distance lightning flashes, and thunder sounds. Two huge ravens begin circling the field; their blackness is vibrant against the various shades of red in this vista of death and suffering. The bright flashes of light and rumbling begin to increase. The redness surrounding the battlefield begins giving way to a golden glow from the east, almost like a summer's setting sun. From the false sunset a massive golden stallion and single rider approach. All become suddenly still on the field of battle as both sides recognize Reymon Ebonarm, God of War, and the companion and protector of all warriors, also known as the Black Knight and his mighty steed War Master.

He rides into the middle of the blood soaked field and dismounts. He is a very imposing figure. His very tall and heavily muscled body is encased in ebony armor. His ebony helmet does not hide the flowing reddish blonde hair and beard which appear almost as shimmering gold, nor does it shield the steel blue eyes that seem to pierce all they fall upon. In his left hand he carries a massive ebony tower shield on which is emblazoned a fiery red rose. As he raises his right arm, all see an arm and a magnificent ebony blade which are extensions of each other. The fused arm and sword are a result and symbol of the wounds suffered by this god during titanic battles in the youth of this world.

The ravens come to rest on his shoulders. And, as the point of the ebony blade seemingly touches the sky, lightning flashes, thunder roars. Then total quiet descends and a shudder rolls through both armies.

The leaders of both armies approach Reymon Ebonarm and kneel. In turn they tell their reasons for this war. Each asks for the favor of the Black Knight for their cause. Reymon Ebonarm listens, but there is no acknowledgment that he has chosen to favor one side or the other in this fight. However, each of the leaders has heard the other state his position. And, each now knows that this war is baseless. They embrace and turn to their armies. They instruct their forces to bury their dead, tend their wounded and return to their homes.

Reymon Ebonarm mounts his great golden stallion, War Master, and again raises the ebony blade skyward and extends the huge rose emblazoned ebony shield to both armies. A massive chorus of cheers rises from the armies. The ravens again take to the air. Lightning and thunder follow him as he rides into the sunset followed by the two birds.

The armies do as they have been bidden. They care for their wounded and bury their dead. As they retreat towards their homes each warrior is sure that the great God Reymon Ebonarm, the Black Knight, has responded to their individual prayers for intervention. Each side has won, neither has lost.

As the armies depart the field, the rivers begin to run clear, and a single red rose begins to bloom near the grave of a fallen hero.

**[14] {Engraved Card}**

King Eadwyre and Queen Barenziah, Sovereigns of the Kingdom of Wayrest

Are Proud to Announce

The Engagement of Morgiah, Princess of Wayrest, to Karoodil, King of Firsthold in the Isle  
of Sumurset.

## [15] The Epic of the Grey Falcon

The Epic of the Grey Falcon  
by Anido Jhone, editor

As uncovered and translated by Anido Jhone, Royal Archaeologist, from an ancient tome:

This tale comes from sometime in the 2nd Era, most probably after the time of the Knahaten Flu, or at least I have so surmised due to reasons in the text. Whether or not the tale is true, it remains an interesting story of survival.

The reader will, I trust, forgive me if I translated the epic somewhat informally. The message, I think, is universal, and should not be misread.

Enjoy, gentle reader.

A.J.J.

The Grey Falcon, a small warship of the Sumurset Isle, Was patrolling deep in the ocean for a pirate That had been looting the coast. The first three weeks out were uneventful. Two hours after sunset, on the 22nd day out of port, The lookout spotted a top of a sail in the moonlight, Just on the horizon. "Sail! To starboard, forward quarter!" The lookout of the Grey Falcon cried. The crew and captain of the Grey Falcon were quickly roused, And stumbled to the deck. "'Tis the ship we're looking for, Captain," said the lookout.

"All hands to battle stations! All archers to their posts," The Captain yelled, "Full ahead!" The two ships closed, And a dark figure stepped out onto the forecastle of the pirate ship. The figure made a gesture with his hands, And a giant ball of fire streaked towards the Grey Falcon. The ball of fire struck the Grey Falcon in her sails, Quickly catching them aflame.

The figure made another gesture. Large bolts of ice streaked out from his hands, And hit the Grey Falcon just above and below the water line, Gouging large holes in her hull. The Grey Falcon was mortally wounded. The Captain cried, "All hands abandon shi-" As he was cut off by a pirate's arrow shot into his throat.

As the Grey Falcon, aflame and listing badly, plunged into the sea, One of her sailors, Darik Seaspit, Managed avoid the pirate arrows and spells to make his way to a lifeboat, And lowered it into the darkness below. Just as the lifeboat entered the water, a quick grey shape jumped into it. Darik looked, and saw it was Helnor Snarlsbane, A Khajiit mercenary assigned to the ship. The two rowed the small boat away, As the Grey Falcon finished her descent into the sea. In the darkness, the Pirate ship missed their small craft. After the two rowed well out of the pirates possible view, They both collapsed from exhaustion.

Early morning the next day, They took an inventory of the lifeboats stores. Normally the lifeboat carries enough food and water To supply seven people for at least ten days.

In place of the food, though, Helnor found a note: "The food in this lifeboat was found to be in violation of Somerset Navy regulation during inspection. In accordance to that article, the food was taken away and destroyed. A replacement may be obtained by redeeming this letter at the Port Supply Office. Signed, Lt. Inspector Windhollow" Helnor read aloud.

Said Darik, to his Khajiit Companion, "We have plenty of water, but we are out of food. I don't know what we're going to do. I suppose we could try fishing, but we have no bait. "There's no chance we can make it back to land Before we starve to death - 'twill be over a month in this craft" "Wait, I have an idea" said Helnor, with a gleam in his catlike eye.

Six weeks later, the lifeboat entered the port of Corwich. As it was tethered to the dock, a solitary figure was pulled out, Looking weather beaten and thin. One of the dock workers peered into the life raft, After the figure was taken away to the port healer for treatment. "Hmm, what's this", a worker said to himself, As he picked up a large bone from the boat, A bone bleached white by the sun.

After the sole survivor of the Grey Falcon recovered from his ordeal, He was taken to the inquest for the death of Darik Seaspit, And placed on a chair before the magistrate. "We here in High Rock have a dim view of cannibalism. You'd better have a good reason for your actions," The inquisitor boomed at Helnor Snarlsbane.

"By the Lady, do you?" Helnor stood, and said, "Your Honor, I had no choice. There was no food, and it was at least two months to the closest port. We both decided this was the only way someone would make it" "Well, then, I suppose that is understandable, If somewhat distasteful," the inquisitor said. "You think it was distasteful?," Helnor muttered to himself, "I didn't have any seasoning."

"One final thing, Mr. Snarlsbane, How was it decided that you would be the one that would dine on the other? The toss of a coin?" Helnor drew himself up and said, "Your honor, it was very simple. Darik Seaspit was a vegetarian" "Case dismissed!"

## [16] Etiquette With Rulers

Etiquette With Rulers  
by Erystera Ligen

Because the rules are so complex and the stakes are so high, many people blanch at the thought of speaking with a noble with a title. For starters, it is important to address them correctly, for just as no one likes to be misnamed, no one likes to be mistitled. The problem is that in High Rock, traditions of the peerage differ slightly from region to region. The base rules follow:

There are eight kingdoms in High Rock in the following regions: Northpoint, Daggerfall, Shornhelm, Camlorn, Farrun, Evermore, Wayrest, and Jehanna. If a woman is ruling one of these areas, she is called the Queen. The husband of a Queen and the wife of a King is not necessarily of equal rank -- they may not be Kings and Queens themselves. Their children are Princes and Princesses. Their grandchildren are also Princes and Princesses. If a male ruler dies, his wife takes the title Dowager Queen, providing there is not a Dowager Queen already. Like all rules, there are exceptions. One noted exception took place recently in Daggerfall, when King Lysandus died. In most regions, his wife Mynisera would not have become Dowager Queen of Daggerfall, because Lysandus' mother, the widow Nulfaga, still lived. In Daggerfall, however, it is permissible for there to be two persons with the same title. Thus, both Nulfaga and Mynisera have the title Dowager Queen.

If a female ruler, who does not share rank with her husband, dies, there is no male equivalent to the word Dowager. Widowers of Queens usually take another title, either a lesser family title or one given by their children. There have been a few men in the history of High Rock who have fallen from being addressed as King to being addressed as Mister at the death of their wife.

Other regions are ruled by Dukes and Duchesses, Marquises (or Marquesses) and Marchionesses (or Marchionesses), Counts and Countesses, Viscounts or Viscountesses, Barons or Baronesses, and Lords or Ladies. This list is theoretically listed from highest to lowest rank, but the ruler of a territory outranks all other nobles, regardless of title. Dwynnen, for example, is a Barony, and the Baron or Baroness of Dwynnen outrank any other noble in that territory, even Dukes and Counts.

In theory, (again, this may not be the case according to local custom) the eldest son or daughter of a noble takes their parents highest family title below their parents. Thus, the Duke of Northmoor, who is also the Marquis of Calder, had a daughter who became the Marchioness of Calder.

Kings and Queens are always addressed as "Your Majesty" in conversation; Dukes and Duchesses, "Your Grace". All other rulers may be addressed with their title and name, or Lord or Lady and their name.

A few hints may be needed to determine exactly who rules a territory. You may rely on people on the streets to make reference to their ruler, but that may not be enough. After all, if

the gossip involved Lord Bemmish and Viscountess Byrd, neither or both could be the ruler of the territory. I have found that a more predictable method is to pay some attention to the names of taverns and shops in a region. By tradition, many of these are called "The Duke's Fox" or "The Lady's Provisions." This, more often than not, is the name of the ruler. If the shop's name is "Lady Annisa's Provisions" or "Lord Boxworth's Fox," that is probably the name of a local titled merchant, not the ruler. A store with a unnamed ruler's title has probably been around for some time, and does not bother to change its name with the new name of the ruler.

In speaking with any person, a ruler or not, it is best to know what sort of a person they are first. Rulers tend to stand on ceremony, and prefer that people addressing them speak politely and deferentially. There are, of course, exceptions to this, particularly among younger rulers, or rulers new to their positions. They may prefer a bolder, slangy style. If you are unsure, or unsure of your ability to adopt the vocabulary of either an aristocrat or a criminal, choose to speak as plainly and directly as possible. You will seldom charm someone by plain talk, but you will also not alienate by mangled politesse or dated slang. Alienating a ruler, I need not tell you, can be the last mistake one can make.

## [17] The Faerie

The Faerie  
by Szun Triop

Faerie have been on Tamriel, in all probability, long before recorded history, perhaps since or before the days of the Elder Ones. The tales of their mischief are found in every culture, in most every village, town, and city-states in the Empire. Alternately they are called Faerie, Fey, Illyadi, Sprites, Pixies, and Sylphim, and their natures seem to flit from one story to the next with the same variation. It could almost be said that Faeries are anything unpredictable in nature.

The noted scholar Ahrtabazus studying at the time in the Crystal Tower of Sumurset Isle developed an interesting if controversial theory about Faerie. He organized the Fey variants on a chain, beginning with the glimmering sparks called Pixies or Whilloki by the Redguards at one end and the godlike beings such as Gheateus, Chonus, and Sygria at the other. In the middle are human and semi-human beings generating up to intelligent trees, brooks, rocks, even mountains. All of this was a new and completely original theory and would have prompted enthusiastic, if somewhat skeptical response had Ahrtabazus not added this footnote: "It may be that elves as a whole are part of this chain, above whilloki and below nephrine. They certainly have similar features and propensities for magicka as the other Faerie." (Ahrtabazus, "The Faerie Chain" Firsthold, 2E 456)

No elf liked to be put in a hierarchy slightly above whimsical pranksters like the whilloki, and Ahrtabazus was challenged on his assumptions based on very slight coincidences. Nevertheless, with modification, his Fairie Chain theory has gained wider and wider acceptance since its publication.

The hierarchial chain is not, in the strictest sense, an order of command. While Gheateus and Sygria are said to be surrounded by a host of minor Sylphim, faerie on the whole are not followers nor leaders. Their plans and schemes are not governed by a higher purpose, simply by their own whim.

To this most faerie scholars agree. Because it is based on coincidental evidence and supported by auxiliary theories, it may very well be wrong.

## [18] The Fall of the Usurper

The Fall of the Usurper  
by Palaux Illthre

The people of Dwynnen celebrate Othroktide every 5th of Suns Dawn, the date when, according to legend, a man emerged from the wilderness of High Rock and defeated the undead of Castle Wightmoor to become the first Baron of Dwynnen. Few people believe the legend anymore, but there most certainly was a Baron Othrok of Dwynnen who was destined to become one of true heroes of High Rock, if not all Tamriel.

The legend, as most any Dwynnen child will tell you, is that years and years ago (archivists have agreed to the year 3E253), the people of Dwynnen were ruled by a lich and its armies of zombies, ghosts, vampires, and skeletons. Othrok was blessed with by gods and given an army of men and animals to destroy the dead. He brought peace and prosperity to the land, growing more powerful as the land improved. Years later, he led the tiny barony against the Camoran Usurper, and saved all of Tamriel.

How much credit the Baron ought to receive for the defeat of the Camoran Usurper has been debated, but it is an uncontestable fact that in the year 3E 267, the Camoran Usurper's relentless move north through High Rock was halted around the area of contemporary Dwynnen. Dwynnen is actually larger than it was in the first Baron's day -- it did not, in fact, have a sea port -- but the Battle of Firewaves was a coastal battle. The fact that the battle probably did not occur in Dwynnen does not in itself belittle the Baron's participation in it.

The Camoran Usurper had conquered Hammerfell and Valenwood by means of a large army, which by legend consisted entirely of undead and daedra, but was mostly composed of Redguards and Wood Elves. In all probability, the Usurper summoned the daedra and undead in Arenthia and slowly replaced the original summoned creatures with the armies of his conquered territories. Most armies of Valenwood have been historically mercenary.

Word of the Usurper's conquests reached High Rock in early 266, but preparations to repel the invasion did not begin until early the following year. Historians attribute two factors to High Rock's hesitancy. The primary powers of the Bay were ruled by particularly inept monarchs - - Wayrest and Sentinel both had kings in their minority, and Daggerfall was torn by contention between Helena and her cousin Jilathe. The Lord of Reich Gradkeep (now Anticlere) was deathly ill through 266 and finally died at the end of the year. There were, in short, no leaders to unite the province against the Usurper. Of the leaders with any influence, at least eight (the "Eight Traitors" of legend) made secret allegiances with the Usurper to protect their lands.

The secondary reason for the lethargy of High Rock had to do with the depth of relations between the province and the Septim Empire. For the first time since the beginning of the Dynasty, an Emperor ruled Tamriel who was neither Breton nor had spent any of his childhood in High Rock. The difference between Cephorus II and his cousin Uriel IV who preceded him was appalling to the people of High Rock. Even mad Emperors like Pelagius III revered the Bretons over all other races, and cousins and younger siblings of the Emperors

have ruled in High Rock since the foundation of the Empire. Cephorus was a Nord, with Skyrim and Morrowind sympathies. The attitude of the common men of High Rock was sympathetic toward the Camoran Usurper as an archfoe of this hated Emperor.

The Baron and his less legendary allies, the rulers of Ykalon, Phrygia, and Kambria, changed this favorable perception. News of the Usurper's barbaric treatment of captives and abuse of conquered lands, mostly true, spread rapidly through their territories, and then to other neutral lands. Within a few months, the greatest navy ever combined organized along the High Rock edge of the Iliac Bay. Only the navy of Uriel V's illfated invasion of Akavir was comparable.

How the combined forces of High Rock defeated the endless army of the Camoran Usurper is certainly worthy of a lengthy book in itself. And perhaps, it is best left to the public imagination. Certainly the weather worked against the Usurper, which is reason in itself to attribute divine intervention.

Baron Othrok's divine purpose is the central theme to Othroktide, after all. And as the poet Braeloque wrote, "To find the facts, the wisest always look first to the fiction."

## [19] First Scroll of Baan Dar

First Scroll of Baan Dar  
by Arkan

What follows is a translation of the first fragment from a series of vellum scrolls found in 3 Alabaster jars sealed in a cave. The discoverer was a nomad wanderer somewhere on the shores of Lake Vread in the Province of Elswyer. I can neither vouch for nor deny its authenticity or veracity - only that the scrolls, as such, DO exist. Read and judge for yourself:

Baan Dar, The Legend... Thief, Warlock, ShadowMaster, Ruthless Assassin, Undying Avenger, Dark God, Robber Baron, MasterMind of Nefarious Plots. All these things and more are the Legendary Baan Dar, he who is called The Bandit God. But what is the Truth? Baan Dar, The Man is a much more simple and complex being. I pen this tale as I slowly die of old age and a mortifying arrow wound. I cannot decide if the truth will add to or subtract from the legend that is Baan Dar, nor if the original Baan Dar would want the truth to be known. Therefore, I will leave this tale hidden when I am done and gone, and let Fate (which was ever Baan Dar's true master and motivator) decide.

I was a child of 12 Seasons when I first met Baan Dar. Orphan of a Slaver raid during one of the many inter-provincial border wars. Living by my quick wits, nimble fingers, and the grace of Lady Luck in the back alleys and byways of my birth city. I had just "liberated" a loaf of bread and a few small apples from a local street vendor in the Bazaar on the edge of the city near the tumbled outer wall, and had withdrawn down an ill-lit alley to feast on my bounty when I was beset by an older band of my ilk. The older and lazier variety which were want to engage in the easier and less dangerous art of stealing from the stealers. There were 5 of the bully boys who had decided they were more deserving of my booty than I, and they were beating me half to death with staves in between bites and laughter at the time.

Lying on the ground curled up into as tight a ball as I could manage, trying to protect my head and groin, I heard a quiet voice ask if they were not "more suited to go down to the wharf and take food from your brother rats, or would you care to try your tricks on game a bit more your size and number?" Since my "companions" had become otherwise engaged with the newcomer and had for the nonce ceased thumping, kicking and cuffing at me, I looked up to see a dark shadow of boots, cloak, and chainmail hood leaning against the wall at the end of the alleyway.

The others, being what they were, took this as a challenge to their manhood - and easy prey to their superior number with a promise of coin of the realm as added reward (else the first part would have been overlooked). The leader of my band of playmates suggested that the stranger take a leap off the mentioned wharf unless he wished to join me there when they were done with their evening meal. Having drawn chuckles and courage from his underlings, he then proceeded forward with staff at high port. I'm not quite sure exactly what followed, but within a short space of time, Lead Bully was lying in the dirt with a thrown dagger in his chest, number two bully had lost three teeth to a boot (I still carry them in a leather pouch as a keepsake), and number three bully was brought short by his own staff applied forcefully up

between his toes (the two big ones!). Bullies four and five thought better of the entertainment and departed rapidly for parts unknown.

Baan Dar picked me up, dusted me off, and dragged me round to a near tavern where we shared a meal and a mug. I attempted to thank him for saving my life. How can I ever repay this favor, I asked? His reply was short, to the point, and has driven my actions in life ever since... "THE PROPER WAY TO REPAY A FAVOR, IS NOT TO - PASS IT ON INSTEAD."

Things having not progressed well along the lines of health, wealth and welfare for me until that point in my life came upon a sudden change that night. I later learned (along with MANY other things) that Baan Dar had decided to take a direct and immediate interest in me because my situation reminded him very much of the bad start his own life had taken, and the odds he had faced to survive it. On that night he took me under his wing as a kind of apprentice. He saw to it that I learned weaponcraft and stealth, that I learned to read and write! He took me along when he traveled for the next year. I served as messenger, valet, packmule, lookout, cook - many things. I saw other towns, cities, races, provinces, and broadened my view and knowledge of the world far beyond belief. He taught me both morals and coldhearted ruthlessness - and when and how to apply each as the ethics of the situation required.

At the end of the year, he gave me good dagger, and decent horse, the 3 teeth, and leave (nay, Command) to make my own way in the world from that day forward - but to remember all I had been given, and to attempt to pass such a gift to another when and where I should find need and opportunity. That I have done, several times... as I assume he has also, and as I hope my various charges have after me (and they theirs).

Thus has the Legendary Baan Dar been seen time and again in various lands of our world at numerous and the same times in days of need. Thus also is the description so very hard to obtain and track - for in truth, there have been, and continue to be, many Baan Dars in the world. The most valuable lesson he ever taught me was that "for Evil to triumph required not so much that many bad men to do wrong, as for One good man to fail to do what was right." We only hope that our combined and concatenated efforts have produced enough single men and women that will not fail to do the right thing, regardless of current local, morals, laws, religion, creed, or lure of coin of the realm.

The Legend grows still. Of the Dark Avenging Blade on the Wings of Night that make no sound. The Patron Saint of the Lone Wolf. The Thousand Eyes and Ears, the Hundred Arms disrespectful of Time or Distance. Undying, Master of Disguise, Man of a Thousand Faces, Shapes and Sizes, Gentle, Rough-Edged, Gay, Stern. All the Mystery of the "Man Unknown and Undying"... not a single man nor God at all, but a string of seeds sown upon the land and left to grow into a forest. How to reconcile this truth with the tales of cruelty and the gangs of "Baan Dars" or "Bandits"?

Some are jealous Thieves who take the name only for the cloak of mystery and hope of hiding in it's Shadow. Others are tales twisted to reverse by those justly served by Baan Dar's unfettered by technicalities of law and custom. Some are backsliders drawn of the true path by temptation and returning to their old ways. Many are the things that any one Baan Dar cannot answer for, as others did the deeds in the same name. Some are tales of fishwives, made up to scare the child into doing what is wanted. Some are left as part of the "Mystery" that is both cloak and shield to the hidden purposes - a case where the fear of the tale serves to save the

need of arms or action. But, by and large, the true Baan Dar is a string of beings taught to act upon what they believe in, and stand to take the yoke of needed action upon their own shoulders.

Don't fight if you can avoid blood or war, But if you must make War, do so with all your Heart and Might. Leave it at Threats if Threats be enough - but never make threats you are unwilling to carry to conclusion if required. Use all the arts at hand. But ever keep the true purpose in mind. Stand Tall, but never forget how to bend your knee to help another.

Note: The rest of the scrolls are tales and tellings of various parts of the Legend, some as passed from Bard to Bard, some as the true tales underlying the Ballads. These fragments are still to be translated and debated. This fragment, however, contains the kernel of the Revelation and the true source of the questions surrounding the Baan Dar Legend. What Say You, Reader? For myself, I do not know... but God or unrelated string of linked souls as laid out here... I do know that Baan Dar IS a force in our Land and Lives, and one that gives Hope to many that need it, and pause to many I despise.

-- Arkan, Scribe of Daggerfall in the year 2E24

**[20] Fools' Ebony****[20.1] Fools' Ebony I**

Fools' Ebony, Part the Oneth  
by Frinchepts

Dramatis Personae

Prologue

The Adventurer, A Dark Elf Rascal

Komon, A Priest of Akatosh

Lheban, Another Priest of Akatosh

Epilogue

Stete, A Priest of Julianos

Raic, Another Priest of Julianos

Shub, A Mage

Shub, A Different Mage of the Same Name

Nephron, A Somewhat Sleazy Merchant

5 Armorers

Ortho

Crunn, Husband of Millie

A Lusty Contessa

Millie, Innkeep and Philosopher

Gurnsey, Bovine Wench

Assorted Wenches and Cads of the Taverns

Soldiers

Dwarves

Giants

Part The Oneth - Concerning Priests and Nackles

As related at length by two Priests of Akatosh to the Adventurer, who at the time was not having an adventure, and had nothing better to do. In which some (probably unwanted) light is shed upon the Priesthood and its members, and upon an old peasant myth of some significance, especially common in High Rock. And in which the mysterious Fools' Ebony appears, that strange material that could bring either drastic cultural change for the many, or just great profit for a few, or death for a bunch, or have no result whatsoever.

Daggerfall and Environs in the Doldrums of the 3rd Era

Early in the month of Frostfall. The Dead Daedra Inn. Enter Prologue

PROLOGUE: Our poor players will try and remember their lines and not trip over our meager set. I beg you, the audience, not to heckle, badger, or throw rotten foodstuffs. You will only make this short play last longer. The Guild of Playwrites, Actors, and Dramatists wish any of you who are sensitive or allergic to rambling dialogue, wooden acting, incomprehensible exposition, or unsatisfying endings that leave one confused and unhappy to exit the theatre

immediately. Your gold will, alas, not be refunded. As a saving grace, this series of vignettes contains gratuitous references to all pleasures of the flesh. You may enjoy it. Ah, here comes our hero, the roguish Dark Elf called the Adventurer. It is time for Prologue to trip merrily away.

Exit Prologue

Enter the ADVENTURER

ADVENTURER: What an odd conversation I just heard between those two mages. It is best not to speak of such matters next to privy hedges.

Enter 2 Priests of Akatosh (LHEBAN, KOMON)

LHEBAN: Mind if we join you, fellow? ... Good, need some company ourselves. I am named Lheban, my fellow priest here is Komon. We both serve Akatosh, all in our own ways, of course ...

ADVENTURER: Make yourselves at home, it's not my bench. But I thought that priests ... didn't go to ... er ... places like this, Inns. I mean ... unless on duty?

LHEBAN: Oh, we're not on duty. Got to regenerate our internal vital energies, so we can go on blessing and curing ...

KOMON: We often come here, hike up our robes, kick up our heels, as it were. Fill up with some bottled energy ...

(Komon snickers)

LHEBAN: Looking for those in need of comfort and blessing, of course ...

KOMON: Oh, yes, Oh yes ... like that young girl outside the other evening ...

(Lheban kicks Komon)

KOMON: ... and anyway our High Priest told us to get lost...

LHEBAN: He means told us to get some air. We've been having visions, you see...

KOMON: Yes, sort of weird, really ... and we hadn't even been taking any of that ...

(Lheban kicks Komon)

LHEBAN: Both of us been having the same visions - real odd.

ADVENTURER: Do tell, I'm not going anywhere in a hurry.

LHEBAN: Well, we've both been hearing sort of ... words ... for a start. Like 'Sir Nich' or 'Sain Nack' ...

ADVENTURER: You said 'Nick' or 'Nack'? Just a minute ... let me have a swig from your bottle, Brother ... Ah! That's better - high-class stuff you fellows drink! Yes, I recall - some story or old legend about an elf, name of Nuckle, I think -- from Morrowind?

LHEBAN: You know, maybe you're on to something there -- there is a old legend around these parts, comes from deep in High Rock I think ... hmmm ... Nackles, that's it!

ADVENTURER: Nackles, eh! Seems that several Dark Elves use that name ... particularly the ... more peculiar ones...

KOMON: Yes, I guess that the bad ones are into all that weapons magicka stuff ... very nasty fellows ...

LHEBAN: (to Komon) Komon! This fellow's got pointy ears and red eyes ...

KOMON: Pardon me, friend ... it's sort of dark, and I didn't ... uh ...

ADVENTURER: Oh, that's fine. These are strange times. You know, live and let live -- or die -- as the case may be. Now ... suppose you tell me about this Nackles myth? Here, let me help you with that bottle ... Ah! Thanks.

LHEBAN: Er ... sure, if you want to put it that way ... Here, have another swig! Sure, we've got the time, and I recall it clearly now.

KOMON: Yes, we've a couple hours 'til that little blonde shows up at her lamp...

(Lheban kicks Komon)

LHEBAN: (to Komon) Quiet! Remember, we had to tell the High Priest her address, so she won't be around for a while!

(to all) Very well, here's the story, best as I can recall it. This is a tale the peasants up in High Rock tell their kids to scare them into being good for a while, I guess. They tell it, let me see ... either on Tales and Tallows, or is it Witches' Festival? -- just before the kids are sent out to the barn or pigsty to sleep.

KOMON: Nasty cruel peasants! But then, I'd send them all out to the midden ...

LHEBAN: Really, Komon! Remember, those poor souls need our compassion and blessing, we are their salvation!

KOMON: Now who's in Old High Mucky-Mucks' study?

LHEBAN: Er ... anyway. It goes a bit like this. If the kids have been real good during the year -- filched enough in the market, mucked out the stables every day, not gone playing with goblins, left the sheep alone, and so on. If they have been real good, they've nothing to worry about. But if they haven't been real good then there is this nasty, horrid Dark Elf spirit called Nackles. Doesn't look like your typical Dark Elf -- thinner, taller. Pasty white face, long as your arm. Walks like his knees and elbows bend the wrong way. Snickers like when you drag

your fingernails across slate. Wears a tight black suit (not Khajiit, more like a formal suit with buttons) but too tight and small. He visits the bad girls and --

KOMON: Why are you talking about Old High Mucky again, Lheban?

(Komon hiccoughs) (Lheban kicks Komon)

LHEBAN: You really must excuse Komon here: overwork, you know. Too many curings and conversions ... Anyway, Old Nasty Nackles is supposed to wander under our Tamriel, in dirty deep dark dwarven tunnels. Everywhere under the lands, if you can believe that! Rides in a rusty squeaky old mine cart, on old mine tracks ...

ADVENTURER: I saw some of those in Fang Lair once, down in Hammerfell a long long while ago ...

KOMON: (to Lheban) What the Sheogorath was he doing in Fang Lair!?

LHEBAN: (to Komon) Hush! If he's who I think he is, you do not want to know! (to all) Um, yes. Well, Nackles gets pulled all around these deep tunnels by goblins -- not your usual dirty yellow ones, but nasty black things. Anyway, they pull Nackles round and through these dark tunnels, and then, late at night, he stops below each and every bad child's hovel or house or castle - makes no difference. Then he slides up the drainage pipes ...

KOMON: Creeps up cracks ... crawls through holes ...

LHEBAN: Oozes up oubliettes ...

KOMON: Climbs giggling up garderobes...

LHEBAN: Right into the kid's place! Then, if the kid's only been sort of bad, Nackles will just mess things up in general, so the kid gets blamed. Make greasy dirty marks everywhere (more than usual, anyway), break some things, steal some things, so on and so forth. Maybe take the sugar sweets, leave some lumps of fools' ebony instead ...

ADVENTURER: Fools' Ebony - what's that? Heard mention of that, oh, a few hours ago ... Some Mages ...

LHEBAN: You did now? Interesting ... Very ... Well, lets talk of that in a bit ... just let me finish this Nackles thing. Where was I -- Oh yes ... Now, if the little brat has been real bad -- then all the little brat's toys get taken. The copper dagger, the wooden sword, the little whip, and so on. All the usual favorite kids things.

KOMON: Whips? I like those.

(Komon hiccoughs) (Lheban kicks Komon)

LHEBAN: Now if that little brat has been very, very bad then Nackles grabs the brat. Pops him or her in his dirty great sack. Hauls the sack off down the holes and cracks, down to his rusty old mine cart! And away they go!

KOMON: Hope he leaves some bad little girls behind.

(Lheban kicks Komon)

LHEBAN: Er ... so we can save them, of course, friend ... Well. Sometimes, so I've heard tell, the brat never comes back. No great loss, I guess, peasants just breed another.

KOMON: Know 'bout that, I do, I do ...

(Lheban pinches Komon's nose)

LHEBAN: But, as the story goes round here anyway, often the brat is just put to work, digging out lumps of Fools' Ebony, shoveling dirt, bagging it. Extending the tunnels of the Nackles. After a while, Brat is pushed back up to where it came from. Seems that Brat might think it's spent a year down there, but only a day has passed up top ... Brat comes back real thin and dirty though, covered in black mess ... You know, come to think of it -- on the day past Witches' Festival, I've often seen some little brats, scrawny, real dirty black mess on them, looking terrified, too. Parents drag them into Temples to get blessed and cured, if they have the gold. By the Beard of Sheogorath, the wailing and noise! Enough to drive a priest to ... er ... well, never mind ... that's our problem ...

KOMON: Nah ... it's a problem with our suppliers, I tell you ...

(Lheben throws Komon through a screen)

LHEBAN: Anyway, that's the short of it, this Nackles legend up around here. I recall now, it's widespread all over Tamriel ... and knowing the place, probably more than a grain of truth in the tale, much, much more ...

ADVENTURER: So, I guess some of the ... er, darker Dark Elves sort of identify with this Nackles. Take on the persona, so to say ...

LHEBAN: Yeah, that sort of sums it up, I guess ... though we don't see those types hauling off brats in sacks, now do we?

KOMON: Nah, that's wot we does, girly brats anyway, isn't it not?

(Komon hiccoughs) (Lheban breaks a bottle over Komon's head)

(Komon falls unconscious)

ADVENTURER: That's a very interesting tale, gentlemen. Say, let me repay you with another bottle -- what's that you're drinking? Ah, thought so - Innkeep! More holy wine for these holy men!

LHEBAN: A blessing on you for that kind gesture, friend.

ADVENTURER: I thank you, I sure could use one or three ... Anyway, this 'Fools' Ebony', I've heard mutters and murmurs about that of late -- mostly eavesdropping ... pardon me ... listening ... to Mages and the like. What's with this stuff? Here, have another swig ... good!

LHEBAN: Well, we're not supposed to tell outsiders ... but then, you seem to know something already. And if you have been hearing Mage gossip ... Why, maybe we can do some business. Profit all round! Well ... for the Akatosh Chantry, of course, and your fee, good Sir.

ADVENTURER: More and more interesting -- tell on, I pray you.

(Komon staggers to feet) (Komon hiccoughs)

KOMON: Time for me to go convert that little lamppost girl ... no, no, no - not last nights one, but the blonde ...

(Exit Komon) (Female squeals from offstage)

LHEBAN: Friend, you'll have to excuse Komon. He's a bit ... you know strange ... Got these ...

ADVENTURER: Oh, that's all right, we've all got our own...

(Exeunt Lheben and the Adventurer) (Enter EPILOGUE)

EPILOGUE: Our apologies for the quality of this drama so far. If those of you still present will wait for a few minutes while our bard plays "Silence Implies Consent," we will change the set for the next act, Part the Twoth. Please don't forget to tip your wench. Do you believe there's such a thing as Fools' Ebony? Maybe we'll find out in Part the Twoth. Or maybe not.

(Flourish) (Exit Epilogue)

End of Part the Oneth, Being Mostly Concerned with The Legend of Nackles.

**[20.2] Fools' Ebony II**

Fools' Ebony, Part the Twoth  
by Frinchepts

Dramatis Personae

Prologue

The Adventurer, A Dark Elf Rascal

Komon, A Priest of Akatosh

Lheban, Another Priest of Akatosh

Epilogue

Stete, A Priest of Julianos

Raic, Another Priest of Julianos

Shub, A Mage

Shub, A Different Mage of the Same Name

Nephron, A Somewhat Sleazy Merchant

5 Armorers

Ortho Crunn, Husband of Millie A Lusty Contessa

Millie, Innkeep and Philosopher

Gurnsey, Bovine Wench

Assorted Wenches and Cads of the Taverns

Soldiers

Dwarves

Giants

Part The Twoth - Bearing Mostly on Fools' Ebony and Temples

Same place, same Inn, A bottle or two later. Enter Prologue, the Adventurer, and Lheben

PROLOGUE: Little has occurred so far in our comedic drama. The Adventurer, our Dark Elf rascal, has bought drinks for two priests of Akatosh. All have drunk considerably. One of the priests has rushed off in pursuit of his lamp girl. And, unless I've forgotten something or something happened when I was paying attention to something else, that's a complete synopsis of Part the Oneth. Ah, here come two more priests. Humble Prologue must depart.

(Enter RAIC and STETE)

RAIC: Evening Lheban! Evening stranger. My fellow priest here is Stete, I am Raic. We are honored to serve Julianos.

ADVENTURER: What is this, anyway - Priests night out? And ... I thought that your Temples - Akatosh, Julianos, the rest ... I thought them all cut-throat competitors. In theology and gold, if you will forgive my bluntness. Yet you all seem the best of friends ..? Come to think of it, didn't I have words with Stete earlier, you said you were of the Temple of Stendarr?

RAIC: A common misconception, friend ...

LHEBAN: ... but one that we ... encourage ...

RAIC: Really, we all work together closely, move between the Temples as needs dictate ...

LHEBAN: ... exchange information ...

RAIC: ... share funds ...

STETE: ... swap our sisters ...

(Lheben kicks Stete) (Enter Prologue)

PROLOGUE: Sorry to interrupt the merry slapstick, but I neglected to mention earlier that the Fools' Gold saga -- if that is the word -- contains gratuitous reference to priestly misdeeds and sexual excess. I hope those of you in the audience of peevish, prudish, sullen, frumpy, or grumpy demeanors are not offended. Now then, on with the entertainment.

(Exit Prologue)

LHEBAN: ... and all that ...

RAIC: But it helps in our ... holy work, if we are perceived as separate and, uh, competitive...

LHEBAN: Mind you, there are one or two, er ... religious organizations ... well, sort of ... that we do not have anything to do with ...

RAIC: Nothing at all, nothing at all ... animals, just animals ...

ADVENTURER: Such as ..?

LHEBAN: Weeell -- the Dark Brotherhood for one ... nasty bunch of thugs ... and then there's the Afterdark Society ...

(aside to Raic)

This fellow, seems a decent sort of chap ... seems to know something about Mages and Fools' Ebony ...

RAIC: (aside to Lheban) Really now ... how interesting...

(to all) Hey fellow, have another bottle -- this will bless you throat. My, my, yes indeed it will...

ADVENTURER: Thanks Raic, don't mind a bit ...

LHEBAN: But let me continue -- I was explaining about this Fools' Ebony to you ...

RAIC: Yes, Fools' Ebony ...

LHEBAN: Well. Fools' Ebony now. Well, you know about ordinary Ebony, how it's rare, only some dwarven clans dig it and sell it. And not too many, these days and times ...

STETE: How's that popular song go ..? (singing)

Where have all the Old Dwarves gone, Long time ago ...

(Lheben throws Innkeep at Stete) (Raic breaks chair on Innkeep and Stete) (Innkeep loses consciousness)

LHEBAN: There's a pile of real ebony up in the Wrothgarians somewhere north, I hear tell. You know how that dullish black ebony gets worked over by Mages, by some skilled armorers, made into all kinds of potent weapons, amulets, belts, what have you. All fetch a huge price, when you can find any. And how the best was made long ago, by those old dwarves ...

(Stete rises to his feet) (Lheban kicks Stete back down) (The Adventurer loosens his tunic)

LHEBAN: Oh my! Oh, my apologies, friend, Sir! I see you have -- what's that? An ebony torc? Oh my, and an ebony katana! Oh My! Oh My, My! So, of course, you know all that, sir.

ADVENTURER: Oh, that's all right, you didn't know. Here, have another bottle ...

LHEBAN: Many thanks, kind Sir. Well, then you know how every adventurer, even snotty kids, all the dungeon-delvers, are always looking for ebony artifacts, weapons, whatnot. But what you may not know, some of the more experienced delvers hunt for raw ebony lodes, piles, dwarven leavings. That stuff, the raw ebony, is far more valuable.

ADVENTURER: The raw unshaped material that provides work ... and power ... for so few? Apparently just loaded with negative magicka?

RAIC: Right, right!

LHEBAN: Yes, right so! Quite so! Well, Fools' Ebony now. Looks just about like the real raw stuff. Runs in veins in the deep rocks. Feels the same, smells almost the same. But the big difference: it's not real ebony. No power at all. If you pick some up, it gets you hands a bit dirty. Softer too, by all accounts. But sort of shiny too. But who can tell all that, deep in some old mine, maybe a ghoulish breathing down your neck! So it's just grab and run, I guess, down in those nasty holes. So the fools, the kids, the crazy delvers, are always hauling up a bag, a sack, of Fools' Ebony. And getting laughed at by the merchants, dealers, mages, us ... hence the Fools' part. Stuff just gets thrown into the Bay ...

ADVENTURER: Yeah, that's sort of what I ... er ... heard from some Mages. But I heard something else, too ...

LHEBAN: And just what was that, friend ... if you want to tell us, of course ... Sir.

ADVENTURER: Oh, of course! I think that we can come to ... er ... an arrangement?

LHEBAN and RAIC (Together): Certainly, Oh Yes!

ADVENTURER: So, yeah, so these mages -- Shub and Shub, they are always called Shub, aren't they? -- anyway, these old guys were saying how this Fools' Ebony can burn. Not magically, but like an ordinary piece of wood. But the flame lasts far longer, gives off lots more heat, makes no smoke to speak of, no noise ... very interesting ... Mages were saying as how the alchemists want it, to heat the retorts and flasks ... How the Mages Guild wants it, to make and sell ... er ... fake amulets and the like ... rotten trick that! And especially the Armorers, they want it bad, for their forges, I guess. And the Alchemists, for their alembics ...

LHEBAN: Precisely my information! Now... gets cold up here in the winter, doesn't it? And everyone is cutting down all those trees, making siege engines, boats, all that evil war machinery! All those rich royals and merchants got to heat their great big piles of homes. So their Contessas can run around in next to nothing, instead of furs...

STETE: ... just like my sister ...

(Lheben bites Stete's arm) (Stete shrieks and falls unconscious)

ADVENTURER: All those armorers got to keep their hearths and furnaces running...

LHEBAN: ... All the Mages got to keep their familiars warm ...

RAIC: ... All those royals got to keep the contessas running ...

LHEBAN: ... All those peasants got to keep their animals warm ...

ADVENTURER: And To Sheogorath with the wife and kids, right? Ha! And, I guess, its sort of hard for you Priests to give blessings and cures, when your fingers are all cold and stiff ..? Makes getting corks out a tad hard, to say nothing of opening those little twists of parchment ..?

RAIC: You speak truly, indeed!

LHEBAN: A man of wisdom, indeed! Yes!

ADVENTURER: So, where do we find this Fools' Ebony -- in quantity?

LHEBAN: You put your finger (you have six, I note -- oh, excuse me, Sir) on the crux of the matter. I have heard rumors, just rumors, mind you, that there are huge enormous veins of this stuff, at one place on the surface, far up in the Wrothgarians. Bad, bad place to go. But, if you can get there and back, cartloads of the stuff!

ADVENTURER: Thats just what I overheard from those Mages -- far up there in the Wrothgarians -- orcs, dragonlings, daedra, Sheogorath only knows what ... Those Mages seemed to know the spot, though. Mages wanted someone to ...

RAIC: You didn't ... talk ... to the Mages. I mean, you haven't ...

ADVENTURER: Oh no. They didn't even know I was there...

(aside) Not yet, anyway...

LHEBAN: Good, good - can't trust those Mages, you know ... old fossils would turn their own mothers into sludge-toads, just for a bit of gold! Gold-mad, power-mad, Mad-mad, the whole rotten lot of them! But then they don't have mothers!

RAIC: Excellent. Seems to me, friend -- or, can we call you partner? Yes? Excellent. Seems tome, partner, that my brother priests and you should do some digging and poking around - see if we can get to those veins, those deposits, eh!

ADVENTURER: Yes indeed, partners! But it would cost a fair pile of gold to get up there -- weapons, spells, women, clothing, carts and horses, women, food, potions ... Best go well-prepared, up there.

LHEBAN: No problem, partner. Our Temples have ... certain resources, such that if we were guaranteed ... sole access, sole knowledge of the location, then we could finance someone ... someone with the requisite skills, such as yourself? Just by happenstance, I am Keeper of the Books ... you see the opportunity?

ADVENTURER: Oh yes! Oh yes! Well -- lets split a last bottle, and shake on an agreement?

LHEBAN: Indeed, let us! We first need information -- who knows about the site up there, where it is, how to reach it ... Why don't we meet back here in, say, a week, to the hour. And see what we can learn, meanwhile?

RAIC: We need to find a merchant, too. Someone who can handle it for us ... warehouses, distribution ...

LHEBAN: And keep a shut mouth!

ADVENTURER: I'll make some inquiries about merchants ... got a contact or two ... Trouble is -- well, you know how these things go -- few golds here, few there, before you know it you've bribed half the town, or so it seems. Now, as luck would have it, I don't have much -- got swindled by a wretched Mage, some town south of here, and lost most of my belongings in a shipwreck ...

LHEBAN: Ah Yes! You need some ... seed money as it were.

RAIC: (To Lheban) Let me lift old Stete's purse, he made a lot renting out his sister last week ...

LHEBAN: Thank you, Raic. Here, about 100 gold -- enough ?

ADVENTURER: Oh yes, more than enough for a start, Gentlemen. Good, good, good ... so we have a deal?

ADVENTURER: Yes! It's agreed. One week!

(Exit Lheban, Raic dragging Stete) (Exit the Adventurer)

(Enter Epilogue)

EPILOGUE: Ah, things are happening now, I doubt it not. Patrons, I request that you recall that this is a work of fiction created by one of the finest writers of the asylum, Frinchepts, Archprince of All Sumurset. There is no such thing as Fools' Ebony. Furthermore, Ebony is not mined as the priests have described the process. Grasp that please. If you can still enjoy the play as a rude work of fiction, stay with us for Part the Threeth. If you can't, farewell. And don't forget to tip the wenches.

And so endeth Part the Twoth

**[20.3] Fools' Ebony III**

Fools' Ebony, Part the Threeth  
by Frinchepts

Dramatis Personae:

Prologue

The Adventurer, A Dark Elf Rascal

Komon, A Priest of Akatosh

Lheban, Another Priest of Akatosh

Epilogue

Stete, A Priest of Julianos

Raic, Another Priest of Julianos

Shub, A Mage

Shub, A Different Mage of the Same Name

Nephron, A Somewhat Sleazy Merchant

5 Armorers

Ortho Crunn, Husband of Millie A Lusty Contessa

Millie, Innkeep and Philosopher

Gurnsey, Bovine Wench

Assorted Wenches and Cads of the Taverns

Soldiers

Dwarves

Giants

Part The Threeth - In The Mages' Guild, One to Three Days Later

(Enter Prologue)

PROLOGUE: We are now at the halfway point of our disjointed epic. If you are just arriving, you have missed little. The Adventurer, our rogue Dark Elf, has joined with a quadripartite (that's a triumvirate plus one) of priests intent on discovering a burning metal called Fools' Ebony and becoming wealthy. The priests have given our hero some gold for bribing merchants, but the only people who know where the Fools' Ebony is are the mages of the Mages' Guild. As the Epilogue pointed out at the end of Part the Twoth, there is no such thing as Fools' Ebony and real Ebony is not mined. Something our playwright apparently did not research. Well, accept it as high fantasy, if you will. Or whatever. Hark, here comes our hero now. Imagine the miasma (if that's the word I want) of magical elixirs, bubbling cauldrons, hovering balls of sparkling whatnot. And now, the Prologue must depart.

(Enter the Adventurer and SHUB)

ADVENTURER: Ho! Anyone around?

SHUB: Over here, young man, in the corner ...

ADVENTURER: Morning. Do I call you ... Shub ..?

SHUB: Oh yes, Shub is my name, Shub it is ... How on Tamriel did you know?

ADVENTURER: Can we have some ... privacy ... I have a somewhat ... er ... delicate matter to discuss..?

SHUB: No need for privacy here! We Mages do not hide anything!

ADVENTURER: Fools' Ebony?

SHUB: Quick through this door ..! Turn right ... Turn left ... Ah ... just let me throw a privacy spell around us ...

(Loud zap sounds) (Enter SHUB)

Good! Now Sir -- Oh, by the way, meet my fellow Mage, Shub.

SHUB: Mmmm.

SHUB: Now, you mentioned Fools' Ebony ..?

ADVENTURER: Well, I fancy myself a bit of an expert in ebony. Had quite a bit come and go through my hands in my time, I have ...

SHUB: We notice that you have an ebony amulet, and an ebony katana -- Of Lightning, no less! And an ebony belt ... ...mmm...

ADVENTURER: Hands off the toys, gentlemen, please!

SHUB: Forgive us -- but we so appreciate such fine items ...

SHUB: ... collect them too ...

ADVENTURER: Well, the other day, just by chance of course, I just happened to hear two priests of the Temple of ... er ... Stendarr, I think it was ... They were a bit high in their cups, I think, a bit loud, and never noticed me skulking -- I mean, standing -- there. They were going on about this Fools' Ebony - stuff like the real thing, only no magicka at all. None. But it burns like wood, only longer, hotter, no smoke, nice even heat.

SHUB: Yes ... we have heard similar rumors. Seen a bit of that stuff -- lumps from a sack or two that some crazed delver dragged up, that kind of thing. Right, Shub?

SHUB: Oh - Oh yes, right, that kind of thing ... right ...

(aside) I must remember to keep the secret, whatever it is.

ADVENTURER: Well, these fool priests seemed to talk as if they knew a location for lots, I mean piles, of that stuff -- somewhere up in the Wrothgarians ...

SHUB and SHUB (Together): Where! Who! Did they say? How? When? Where?

SHUB: You didn't let them know you were listening, did you?

ADVENTURER: Of course not! What do you take me for, a priest lover?

SHUB: Calm yourself, my lord ... that's better...just don't go fiddling with that katana so much. Makes us nervous.

SHUB: Yes, nervous, very ...

SHUB: Here, sit down. There. Want some mulled wine? No? Oh well, just have to finish it myself.

SHUB: So they seemed to know the location.

(aside) Hmmmm. This means we have to act fast, quickly, speedily, and with great rapidity.

ADVENTURER: Oh yes! They were talking like they were going to get a load in a few weeks or so ...

SHUB: Oh My! Oh Dear Me! Ohhh...

SHUB: Now then. Seems you know a fair amount about this Fools' Ebony. And you realize the potential -- just think, big warm fires in all our study rooms ...

SHUB and SHUB (Together): ... Selling it to the Palace... selling it to those stupid Alchemists ... the Armorer's Guild would be good for a lot ... ..keep out familiars nice and warm ... .. and our posteriors ..! ... just think how Daedra Seducers love a nice warm fire ... Giving smoldering lumps to the peasants to warm their hovels with - in return for some gold, of course ...

SHUB: ...just think of all that gold...

SHUB: Trouble is, son - we would like to get that stuff by the cartload, bring it down here ...

SHUB: Have some trustworthy merchant ...

SHUB: Put a spell on him!

SHUB: ... Have some merchant act as sort of, middleman, for us ...

ADVENTURER: But ... then why the delay, gentlemen?

SHUB: You seem like an honest fellow. We'll tell you -- mind you, you let out a word of this, and there will be a Fire Daedra in your bed ... but no threats between gentlemen, right!

ADVENTURER: Very well -- I shall be the very soul of discretion.

SHUB: You see, we know where the stuff it, cartloads and cartloads of it. But we can't get there and back ...

SHUB: We are not the outdoorsy types.

SHUB: Far safer here in town.

SHUB: Much warmer too.

SHUB: Think of all the supplies we would have to take.

SHUB: All those nasty things out there.

SHUB: Did you know that seducers won't come to us in the wilderness?

SHUB: We'd have to hire guards, to keep those awful priests away.

SHUB: And the strain of dealing with all those coarse types ... the Merchants.

SHUB: The Armorers.

SHUB: The Royals.

ADVENTURER: Mmm. I think I comprehend. You want some -- experienced explorer-hero type, someone used to the wilderness - to go get it for you, set up a supply line, so on ..?

SHUB: Exactly. And find us a nice, useable merchant. Someone we can control.

SHUB: With a big, big warehouse, delivery service, that kind of thing ...

ADVENTURER: Well, gentlemen. Let me volunteer my services! I have always admired you Mage gentlemen -- so clever, so sharp. No fooling you in anything, is there?

SHUB: No, no fooling us ...

(Enter Prologue)

PROLOGUE: This, ladies and gentlemen, is irony.

(Exit Prologue)

ADVENTURER: Tell you what, I can probably arrange a suitable merchant or you. Take some gold though -- those thieves know the value of a gold piece! As luck would have it, my last gold was swindled off me by a thieving priest, in some little town south of here. And I lost a lot of good stuff in a shipwreck just before that ...

SHUB: Well ... since you have agreed to help us ... we can spare some gold from the treasury, can't we, Shub?

SHUB: Oh! Oh yes, lots there ... always make more ...

ADVENTURER: Now, I do need to know roughly where this site is, got to pick the right breed of horse, calculate my supplies to the last drop, figure out what weapons I might need ...

supplies, like food, little things like that ... diameter of the cart wheels in square yurts ... ambush points for the priests, in case they try to get up there ... mmmmm ...

SHUB: Tell you what - here is 500 gold. Go get things started.

SHUB: Yes ... we can always make some more.

SHUB: (aside, to Shub) Shut up!

(Shub fires a spell at Shub that burns him to a cinder and then reconstitutes him)

(to all) Excuse us ... where was I ... Oh ... get a merchant, guards, carts, whatever you think it will take. Come back if you need more.

SHUB: But what about those priests?

ADVENTURER: I've an idea or two there. Let me get friendly with them - maybe hire a couple of good lamppost girls, lay in a few cases of holy wine ... I'll have them eating out of my hand in no time. And if you show me where this Fools' Ebony is ... why, I can misdirect them, send them straight into an trolls' den or something.

SHUB: You're the expert! Here, let me show you on a map ... and I don't need to mention Fire Daedras, do I?

ADVENTURER: So ... seems to be ... hmmmm ... only thirty days there, this time of year. Maybe forty back, with the loads. Let me study this a bit more ...

SHUB: Can't take it with you, of course ... don't want this getting out now ...

ADVENTURER: Oh no. That's fine. Look, let me have a bit more gold. Going to need some heavy-duty carts. See here, this section ... cut by all these washes ... hmmmm ... the flummox there will be something terrible ... Oh, and these ruins, full of ghosts, I bet ... hmmmm ... and this pass, just full of willies too ...

SHUB: If you say so ... My, seems that we picked the right man, right, Shub!

SHUB: Oh yes, indeed.

ADVENTURER: So -- why don't I make arrangements, get back to you in ... er ... say a week? Say -- sure that you don't want to come with me. After all, there's nothing like the wilderness life. Waking up with the sun, shaking off the frost. Catching an orc for breakfast - ever have orc guts fried over stinkwood? Oh, that's a treat! Checking each stream for dead giant spiders - or live ones! Imp jerky for lunch! Scanning the ridges for dragonlings! Standing guard against Ice Daedra in a blinding snowstorm! Oh, what a life!

SHUB and SHUB (Together): No, no ... we, we better stay here at the Guild. Got our duties after all ... someones got to mind the store ... someones got to get the word out to selected customers ... No, thank you kind Sir, it does sound such a lovely life, but I think we best be here ... yes, indeed ...

ADVENTURER: A pity, gentlemen. Well, I'll be about it then. And don't worry if you see me with those priests -- got to mislead and misdirect them, haven't I!

SHUB: One week, then!

(Exeunt Shub, the Adventurer, and Shub) (Enter Epilogue)

EPILOGUE: Shub and Shub, ladies and gentlemen. Implausibly retarded mages, yes, but perhaps there's something more to them than this act suggests. Do you think so, maybe? Well, if you are not in the theater for Part the Fourth, you won't know for certain, will you? Don't forget to tip your wenches and think on that while we change the set.

So Endeth Part the Three

**[20.4] Fools' Ebony IV**

Fools' Ebony, Part the Fourth  
by Frinchepts

**Dramatis Personae:**

Prologue

The Adventurer, A Dark Elf Rascal

Komon, A Priest of Akatosh

Lheban, Another Priest of Akatosh

Epilogue

Stete, A Priest of Julianos

Raic, Another Priest of Julianos

Shub, A Mage

Shub, A Different Mage of the Same Name

Nephron, A Somewhat Sleazy Merchant

5 Armorers

Ortho Crunn, Husband of Millie A Lusty Contessa

Millie, Innkeep and Philosopher

Gurnsey, Bovine Wench

Assorted Wenches and Cads of the Taverns

Soldiers

Dwarves

Giants

Part The Fourth - Mercantile Dealings, The Armorers Involve Themselves. After some general discussion and verbal dancing around, finally the topic of Fools' Ebony is explored ...

Somewhere near the market, in the back of a store called "Nephron's General Mercantile".

The day after.

(Enter Prologue, the Adventurer, and NEPHRON)

PROLOGUE: Whilst the actors playing the Adventurer and the merchant Nephron dramatically move their mouths to pantomime a conversation, it is on poor Prologue's shoulders to update the audience on the play's actions in its first three acts. The Adventurer, a rogue of a Dark Elf, has been hired two different groups -- four inebriated priests and two greedy mages -- to delay the other group, and find the lost cache of Fools' Ebony in the Wrothgarian Mountains. Now, picture this clownishly decorated set as the back room at a prosperous merchant's shop. And before the Adventurer and Nephron develop lockjaw, Prologue will leave you thus.

ADVENTURER: So you see, friend Nephron, just what an opportunity we have here. We have this new commodity, for which you agree there will be a huge demand.

NEPHRON: Especially from the Royals -- once one of them has something new, they all want it, of course.

ADVENTURER: And do not forget the Armorers for their forges, and the Alchemists for their retorts and whatnots...

NEPHRON: You seem to have the Mages lined up nicely, got their location, memorized the access map, and so on - you know, we merchants have had a suspicion for quite some time that those old twits had some deep dark secret of interest to us... Now, the priests - the School of Julianos we already work well with, hand and glove, you might say. But of course we shall cut them out of the major profits -- maybe let them distribute some to their flocks? And their Temples make good, how can I say? -- storehouses? But the Akatosh Chantry is a problem, always running off and doing things on their own initiative, no cooperation, just crazy people ... we really need to do something about them, to ... er ... ensure their cooperation ...

ADVENTURER: I have a suggestion that might help ... you recall how old Komon left and apparently dragged off some little blonde lamppost girl ... just suppose, that just by chance, in his state of ... befuddlement ... he dragged off someone important by mistake..? Might be a lot of trouble for the Chantry, if word got out?

NEPHRON: Hmmm. Indeed ... there's this silly little blonde Royal who's all excited by the 'real life' down in these parts of town. Disguises herself (or so she thinks), comes on down here and plays at being poor. Stupid little twit ... Komon is still in hiding with his blonde, right?

ADVENTURER: Yes, in that 'retreat' the Priests have, down near the waterfront.

NEPHRON: Oh yes, I know that place - often sell them some 'spiritual powders' and so on ... Good ... you see, just imagine what would happen if Komon, by mistake, had grabbed this slumming little Contessa ... Akatosh Chantry would have no end of trouble from the palace if something nasty happened to her ... and then we could move in, offer to 'help' the Chantry during their hard times ... Hmmm. Yes! Leave it to me, I shall contact a few of my ... er ... business associates, as it were ... make some arrangements.

ADVENTURER: And I'll keep up chatting with the priests, get them to support our little business venture?

NEPHRON: Right! And I should introduce you to some of the more senior members of our Brotherhood ... excuse me, Guild. Let me contact you in a few days, when everything is all set. You are here every evening?

ADVENTURER: Yes, not particularly safe outside after dark these days.

NEPHRON: I see. We shall have to arrange some ... protection for you. Well, in a few days, then.

(Exit Nephron, inconspicuously) (Enter FIVE ARMORERS)

(Armorers and the Adventurer fight) (The Adventurer falls)

(The Armorers tie the Adventurer up and then wake him up)

ARMORER 1: OK, fellow. Lets not spriggen-foot around! We know about this Fools' Ebony thing. And about the Mages who apparently discovered the location. And we have been watching you dance around with the Priests, the Mages, the Merchants. Just about everyone with two feet!

ARMORER 2: And how you are really working with Nephron.

ARMORER 3: And how you are double-crossing the Priests and Mages ...

ARMORER 2: You and Nephron are really doing a good job on the Akatosh Chantry, we must admit.

ARMORER 1: But now, we want that Fool's Ebony supply. We need it to increase our production, our quality -- and our prices. We can work with Nephron and his gang, we need warehouses and distribution anyway.

ARMORER 4: We could torture it out of you ...

ARMORER 3: We could let the Priests know about your plans -- they would throw you to the Afterdark Society in a flash!

ARMORER 5: We could let the Mages know -- they would send you to Oblivion for a very, very long time!

ARMORER 1: But we would rather you 'joined' our Guild. We cannot afford to leave Daggerfall for some hairy wilderness trip. Too much demand these days, for our services.

ARMORER 2: But we can send a group of our apprentices along to keep you company.

ARMORER 4: Our apprentices usually test all our products ... and will be just itching to test out there.

ADVENTURER: Gentlemen, gentlemen! Please - I really was going to give the whole deal to you, once I had gotten gold from everyone else.

(Armorer 5 slaps the Adventurer with a hot poker)

Ohhh ... well, I thought of it...

ARMORER 5: Sure! And I'm a Nymph!

ADVENTURER: Yes, Yes, Yes, you are very persuasive. I would welcome an ... er ... escort and guard of such tough gentlemen. Be very handy out there.

ARMORER 1: Good. Thought you would see it our way! Some of our other members are presently having a little ... chat with Nephron. We can handle him. And from now on, two of our bigger apprentices will always be close at hand. Protection, of course - this town can be quite dangerous at night ...

ARMORER 3: So continue with your arrangements, work with Nephron. You can always leave word about your departure date with any weapons shop. And about any problems you may have ...

ADVENTURER: Certainly, gentlemen. Yes, you are indeed very persuasive. I shall keep you up to date. And, er...thanks for the protection.

(Enter ORTHO, the very large apprentice) (The Adventurer is untied) (Exeunt Five Armorers)

ADVENTURER: Hello, who are you?

ORTHO: Me am Ortho!

ADVENTURER: My ... protection?

ORTHO: Me am Ortho!

ADVENTURER: You look very familiar to me for some reason. Have you every been to Morrowind?

ORTHO: Me am Ortho!

ADVENTURER: Fine then. (aside) My old man used to say the very worst thing that can happen to a fellow is an evening spent in the company of an earnest politician. This, I think, is a close second.

(Exeunt the Adventurer and Ortho) (Enter Epilogue)

EPILOGUE: Our play has six parts, and we've just finished the fourth. It's interesting I think that the Lusty Contessa has not made an appearance yet. You don't suppose our playwright forgot he put her in the Dramatis Personae, do you? Well, you'll only know if you come back for The Fools' Ebony, Part the Fiveth. And if your neighbor decides not to return, don't tell him what happened. We actors have to make a living too, you know. Don't forget to tip your wenches while we change the scene.

(Exit Epilogue)

So Endeth Part The Fourth

**[20.5] Fools' Ebony V**

Fools' Ebony, Part the Fiveth  
by Frinchepts

Dramatis Personae:

Prologue

The Adventurer, A Dark Elf Rascal

Komon, A Priest of Akatosh

Lheban, Another Priest of Akatosh

Epilogue

Stete, A Priest of Julianos

Raic, Another Priest of Julianos

Shub, A Mage

Shub, A Different Mage of the Same Name

Nephron, A Somewhat Sleazy Merchant

5 Armorers

Ortho Crunn, Husband of Millie A Lusty Contessa

Millie, Innkeep and Philosopher

Gurnsey, Bovine Wench

Assorted Wenches and Cads of the Taverns

Soldiers

Dwarves

Giants

Part The Fiveth - Back With The Priests, Final Plans, and a Killing or Two is Reported...  
Nearer the middle of the Month of Frostfall, The Inn of the Pink Nymph.

(Enter Prologue, the Adventurer, Ortho, Nephron, the Five Armorers, and Prologue)

PROLOGUE: Our roguish Dark Elf, the Adventurer has plummeted before our stunned eyes, from the king of the spider web of intrigue to a pathetic, crawling lump of Argonian excrement. In the quest for Fools' Ebony, that substance that all would kill for, the Adventurer attempted to play Mage against Priest with the help of the merchant Nephron. Alas, that is to say, alackaday, the five armorers have trapped Nephron and the Adventurer and taken over their scheme. The hulking Ortho now watches the Adventurer's every move. But I get the feeling -- to be honest, don't you? -- that beneath the Adventurer's defeated quivering jelly lurks a jungle cat of such cunning and resource to shatter all his enemies when the time is right. Of course, I could be wrong. Ah, I see one of the priests of Akatosh who believes himself a friend of the Adventurer. I, Prologue must away.

(Exit Prologue) (Enter Lheban, a Priest of Akatosh.)

LHEBAN: Evening there, mind if I join you?

ADVENTURER: Well ... since you already have - no. And where is our esteemed brother Komon this chill evening?

LHEBAN: You mean you haven't heard -- Oh, I guess you have been busy with the ... preparations?

ADVENTURER: Right, right, very busy...

LHEBAN: Then let me tell you -- Oh, what a bad business. What trouble ... Oh Dear ... Well ... you doubtless recall that poor Komon had this ... er ... problem -- overwork of course!

ADVENTURER: Oh yes -- you fellows do work exceeding hard, seems to me.

LHEBAN: Well ... recall how Komon left, somewhat erratically as it were, and ... er ... made off with that young blondie under the lamppost outside? Well -- in his ... er ... state of confusion - he grabbed the wrong blondie - Oh My, indeed the wrong one ...

ADVENTURER: They all look pretty much the same to me, but of course, I do not look too hard!

LHEBAN: Oh My! Well, to cut a short tale to the bone, old Komon grabbed a Contessa, who had thought to 'disguise herself.' Oh Dear!

ADVENTURER: Well -- did she get away? Did they catch Komon? What happened?

LHEBAN: Well, old Komon, tipsy as he was, was quick as spit in a gale. Eluded all pursuit, took the lady to a small private ... retreat house that we have. Oh Dear Me! Well, the City Guards, Palace guards, half a dozen Royals, all caught up with Komon 3 days later. One day too late for the poor Contessa -- I hear that they had a hard time locating all the ... er ... bits and pieces. Komon was there, passed out cold. And another body, some common blond lamppost girl. And by now he is cold -- permanently, most likely at the bottom of the Bay.

ADVENTURER: Oh well. Serves the Contessa right, coming down to this area. But I suppose that there are repercussions?

(Enter two more Priests, Raic and Stete of Julianos, and four armed City Guards.)

RAIC: Evening, Lheban. Evening, Adventurer. And --

ORTHO: Me am Ortho.

RAIC: Yesss. Charmed. And Lheban, you indeed have my sympathies ... if there is anything we can do to help -- our Temple of Julianos, that is ..? But really, you should have kept Komon on a tighter leash - or preferably a noose!

ADVENTURER: Hello Raic. And hello to you, Stete - how's your sister?

STETE: Oh, she's great.

(Raic sets Stete on fire, but it goes out)

LHEBAN: Yes, I know I know. Oh the repercussions! Do you know that the Priests of Akatosh to Daggerfall Castle, Wayrest Palace and just about everywhere else have all been

thrown out? That the Royal tax exemption for the Chantry has been revoked? That the Akatosh Chantry has just received a 'past due taxes' bill? Oh My!

ADVENTURER: Well ... I suppose that we could help somewhat, maybe? Maybe a small loan from Julianos for that tax bill? With, say, a Temple as security? Oh -- are not the taxes based on the number of the Priests of Akatosh? So, maybe ... the School of Julianos could take over a ... significant number? Reduce your tax bill? You realize that this is not the best time for this -- just as we need a lot of funds for that expedition that I am arranging for you.

LHEBAN: Oh, I am so sorry about Komon! But, yes, maybe if good brother Raic could -- I hate to say this -- take over a greater share of the financial burden ..? In return, of course, for ... er ... considerations ..?

RAIC: Hmm. Like a good number of 'permanently' loaned priests? A long look at your books? At your cellar? Your name-lists? A Temple as security on our loan? And, of course, a bigger cut in the proceeds of this ... expedition? Names of your ... er ... suppliers ..?

LHEBAN: Oh. I foresaw something like this, talked a bit about it with old Mucky-Muck - livid, he was. But, as I am a Senior Brother, he finally authorized me to 'take care of it.' Those weren't his exact words, mind you, which were quite a bit ...longer, more explicit ... but the gist, at least.

ADVENTURER: Of course, Lheban. If -- and note I say 'if' -- if we are successful, why then you can easily get back into good graces at the Palace. Merely sell them the goods, as a good low rate! With first refusal on any shipment you have? What's one Contessa to them, anyway?

LHEBAN: Yes, yes! That could work! Worth a try. But how? Royals will not talk to anyone from the Akatosh Chantry now.

ADVENTURER: Leave that to me, I can make ... approaches to certain ones. Yes, I can probably persuade them to let up on the Chantry, in return for... future favors ...

LHEBAN: Oh, Oh how can I thank you?

ADVENTURER: Well, I need a fair amount of gold to finish setting up my little trip. Maybe 10,000? Special horses, reinforced carts, cartiers, guards ... the list goes on and on. And the cost of keeping our little trip quiet is really quite high.

LHEBAN: Well, yes, we can afford it, I guess -- you do have the map now, don't you? I know we can afford 8,000 gold. Given the potential profits ...

ADVENTURER: Rest easy! - it's all here in my cloak -- show you in a bit. I've also managed to ... hire some good young hefty fellows, like old Ortho here, to manage the carts, dig and load, act as guards, and so on ...

LHEBAN: Good, good - I can relax a bit. Oh my, the fellows back at the Chantry will be so relieved. We really owe you, the Brotherhood does -- Oh, I mean the Akatosh Chantry, of course!

STETE: Brotherhood ..? What about our sisterhood, eh?

(Raic grapples Stete, allowing Lheban to hit Stete with a large mallet)

ADVENTURER: Well, Raic, what about you and the School? How much are you good for, the extra 2000? And maybe some more - always lots of last minute expenses on a trip like this, you know.

RAIC: Well now. Since we seem to getting a whole extra sect of Priests, and ... other considerations ... Certainly!

ADVENTURER: Well, gentlemen -- Oh, and Stete -- here it is!

(The Adventurer pulls out a map, gives it to Raic)

Oh, by the Arms of Zenithar, did I ever have to work hard for this! Those cagey Mages! But, in the end, just greedy old fools! ... Oh, just in case you or your, er, Head Priest, hasn't seen the goods -- here's a sample. Play with it.

(The Adventurer hands Raic a small leather bag)

RAIC: Thank you, thank you. I must admit, I had some ... well, some doubts. You know - dealing with a stranger, so on ... No more. Partner!

ADVENTURER: Good, good!

(Stete hiccoughs)

STETE: Say, you fellows ever hear this one -- what's a Priest keep under his robe? Haha -- His sister! Haheheha!

(The Adventurer, Lheban, and Raic beat Stete into unconsciousness)

RAIC: You know, I fear that we really have to do something about young Stete here ... his sister thing ... ugh!

ADVENTURER: Yes, he could be another Komon -- just what don't need!

LHEBAN: Hmmm. This sister of his -- does she really -- exist?

RAIC: Oh yes. My. Oh yes. We know her well - I mean, we have often seen her ...

LHEBAN: I think, Brother, that she should be made to see the errors of her ways. So she is no longer an influence on Stete ...

RAIC: Yes, most certainly ... Hmmm ...

LHEBAN: A somewhat Dibelytical theological point -- Oh, please excuse the technical discussion here - Raic, if we are to make her see the errors -- well, how shall I put it -- we first have to know just what the ... ways ... are, correct?

RAIC: Indeed, an astute observation! Hmmm ... so you are suggesting that ... in a nut, we should first determine her ... ways, so as to be able to then show her the ... er ... errors?

LHEBAN: Precisely! Mind you, a difficult, arduous, tiring project, I fear. One that will take all our ... will and energy.

RAIC: Hmmm, true. But challenging, eh? Take all our time - but then, we shall have some time, while friend the Adventurer here is off hauling and carting.

LHEBAN: And ... I personally, would feel far safer if we were ... in retreat maybe. Studying the ways ..?

ADVENTURER: Yeah -- be a good idea for you two to, maybe, disappear? For a while, of course. Cut down on the chances of a ... rival faction catching on? Or catching you?

RAIC: Very well! Lheban, why don't you and I take his sister off with us on a ... theological retreat, as it were? Study the ways in details, and so on ...

LHEBAN: We could go to that unused little Temple, up on that shoulder of Edward's Mountain ... out of the way, quiet ...

RAIC: Door has locks ...

LHEBAN: Thick walls ...

RAIC: A big cellar ...

LHEBAN: Good! It's settled then. A theological retreat! Oh goody!

RAIC: Of course, once we know the ... er ... ways in detail, we can of course tell old High Mucky-Muck, and let him take care of the ... er ... showing of the errors ..? Yes, that would improve his mood quite a bit ...

LHEBAN: Then it's agreed. Let's start, say, day after tomorrow?

RAIC: Yes! Adventurer, why don't I meet you at, oh, that horrid ugly statue of ... what on Tamriel is it? - a harpy and a gargoyle? Called something silly like 'Vendigao and Her Lover' or some such? Up in the north west corner of the town. Oh, and can I keep the map?

ADVENTURER: Sure, keep it, I have a copy. And you will pass me a small bag, there at that nasty statue?

RAIC: Have it all ready for you -- say, ten o'clock sharp? Oh, Lheban, another thought about young Stete here. He really needs some ... seasoning in the field, one might say ...?

LHEBAN: Hmmm. Good point ... I know! The priest who handles field assignments is coming by tomorrow. We could arrange an ... educational ...assignment for Stete?

RAIC: Very good! But where ... hmmm ... Winter's coming soon now. There's a vacancy up in Solitude, far north Skyrim, I believe. Night collections at street corners, or some such. Very

Good! Come on, Lheban. We have accounts to work on. Good night to you then, Adventurer. Ten tomorrow morning! (Lheban, Raic rise to leave, picking up Stete)

Lheban and Raic (Together): ... have to arrange some supplies ... leather, rope ... holy wine .... lots of that pink powder ... I prefer the green, myself ...

(Exeunt Lheban, Raic dragging Stete, and City Guard)

NEPHRON: Well?

ADVENTURER: Excellent. Went just as I said it would. Got 5000 gold from them. And, thanks to your work with that Contessa ... we have the screws on the Chantry. And the School of Julianos is going to be ... otherwise engaged ... on a theological retreat. More like a Sanguine retreat!

NEPHRON: And those Mages Shub and Shub seem to have disappeared ...

ADVENTURER: So we are set?

NEPHRON: Yes, you can come by my warehouse tomorrow afternoon. Have the heavy carts waiting.

ORTHO: And Ortho ...

NEPHRON: Oh yes, must not forget you fellows. How kind of you to ... volunteer your services ...

ADVENTURER: Tomorrow, then!

(Exeunt omnes) (Last person to leave looks just like a Royal in disguise ...) (Enter Epilogue)

EPILOGUE: Well, we only have one part left to this play and I've run out counting the number of loose strings. Either Part the Sixth is going to be eight hours long, or we're going to leave some parts unsolved. I for one hope that they don't chose to drop the character of the Wanton Contessa. For Jephre's sake, she's been on the Dramatis Personae since Part the Oneth. Ah, well. Nobody leave your seat. Your gold will not be refunded. Any gold you can spare to tip your friendly wenches will be greatly appreciated. We just have a quick costume change and a set to put together and we'll be back. In the meanwhile, enjoy our bard's rendition of the Nordic classic "Alas, The Fleeting Years Glide By."

So Endeth Part The Fiveth

**[20.6] Fools' Ebony VI**

Fools' Ebony, Part the Sixth  
by Frinchepts

Dramatis Personae:

Prologue

The Adventurer, A Dark Elf Rascal

Komon, A Priest of Akatosh

Lheban, Another Priest of Akatosh

Epilogue

Stete, A Priest of Julianos

Raic, Another Priest of Julianos

Shub, A Mage

Shub, A Different Mage of the Same Name

Nephron, A Somewhat Sleazy Merchant

5 Armorers

Ortho Crunn, Husband of Millie A Lusty Contessa

Millie, Innkeep and Philosopher

Gurnsey, Bovine Wench

Assorted Wenches and Cads of the Taverns

Soldiers

Dwarves

Giants

(Daggerfall and Environs in the Doldrums of the 3rd Era)

Scene 1: In The Adventurer's suite at the Dead Daedra Inn.

Enter Prologue, the Adventurer, and Ortho. Ortho climbs into bed.

PROLOGUE: Thank you for allowing us the time to change the meager set, while our bard sang that old favorite, "Hail and Farewell." Now then, imagine, if you will, the luxuriant and langorous suite of that Dark Elven rogue, the Adventurer, at the Dead Daedra Inn. The time is shortly after the last scene, which if you've forgotten, ended with our hero and his partner-in-crime, Nephron, making some arrangements to swindle from the mages, priests, and armorers. All are interested in getting their hands on a lode of Fools' Ebony, a miraculous burning mineral, and the priests and mages each consider the Adventurer their ally. The Armorers know better and have assigned one of their apprentices, Ortho, to watch the Adventurer's movements. Now, as Ortho slumbers, the Adventurer has his first moment of peace in days. I should mention that in the interest of common decency, this scene has been abbreviated from the original by order of the Guild of Playwrites, Actors, and Dramatists. It now contains little material of relevance. A full copy may be obtained from the playwright after the show for a mere 50 g.p. copying fee. Now is the time for poor Prologue to shuffle away.

(Exit Prologue) (The Adventurer begins to get undressed)

(Tap-tap at the door. Adventurer jumps, startled) (Snore from Ortho)

ADVENTURER: Who's there? I'm coming!

(Opens door - carefully) (Enter CONTESSA)

ADVENTURER: Er, well ... er ... Come In! Please.

(The Adventurer steps back, tripping over his trousers around his ankles ...)

CONTESSA: So sorry to surprise you, but I thought that we might find something in common ... Oh! You poor man, you have a wound! Here, let me fix that bandage ... it looks very fresh.

(Fixing bandage, properly this time)

ADVENTURER: Well, I ... just opened it up again. Evening exercises, calisthenics, so on...

CONTESSA: How did you get this cut - if you do not mind me asking?

ADVENTURER: No, not at all. I was ... in a fight, earlier. These three crazy people jumped me.

CONTESSA: Really? This cloth looks like part of a Mage's robe.

ADVENTURER: Well, yes, two of them were Mages.

CONTESSA: Oh My! You must have been very good, to defeat them.

ADVENTURER: Oh, ah, well, I've been in one or two fights. Not to be rude, but who are you?

CONTESSA: Oh, I am so sorry, I quite forgot the proper introductions. I am the Contessa Aveet Videspeed -- call me Ave. From the Court at Daggerfall.

ADVENTURER (aside): By Oblivion, what now?

CONTESSA: Here, help me off with this robe, these inn rooms are always ... so hot. And let me check that bandage again, poor man. Ooh, you are wearing an ebony belt of stamina, and bracers of strength. Ooh, a bracelet of endurance. This is my lucky night.

ADVENTURER (aside): Help.

CONTESSA: Here, let me help you off with that old shirt - got to check you for any more cuts - they can go bad so easily, you know.

ADVENTURER (aside): Well, it's not the Armorers this time. Maybe my luck has turned.

CONTESSA: Well, everything seems all right...very all right, in fact...

ADVENTURER: Er...well, Ave - tell me about ... er ... yourself.

CONTESSA: If you want - just for a bit -

ADVENTURER: Here, have some wine ...

Enter Prologue

PROLOGUE: Here our worthy playwrite's speech has been heavily edited by the Guild of Playwrites, Actors, and Dramatists. I will endeavor to fill in those removed passages. I should first mention that the Contessa is not meant to be a relative of any noble currently in Castle Daggerfall. The Contessa Aveet regales the Adventurer with tales of the peculiar and hearty members of her royal family. She has many brothers and sisters. They are all very -- close.

CONTESSA: I think I must have been a bastard. I was the only one with red hair, and an affinity for magicka. Everyone else tried to hide this skill of mine. I remember one spanking very well ...

PROLOGUE: The Contessa relates further differences between her siblings.

CONTESSA: While my sisters were learning to curtsy in ten different modes, and my brothers were learning flower-arranging, I used to sneak off into the woods or town. I soon learnt how to get what I wanted, from just about anyone. Just for example, there was this merchant who had three sons ...

PROLOGUE: The Contessa goes into detail about her training.

CONTESSA: I became quite good at the school of illusion. You never noticed me, downstairs, did you?. I also learned how to use some weapons. Let me tell you how I learned hand-to-hand ...

PROLOGUE: The Contessa relates an amusing anecdote, and then continues.

CONTESSA: And on bad days, I used to dig in my father's library. He had a marvelous collection of old texts. I was fascinated by Old Dwarvish, managed to learn it quite well, I think. Of course, no one has seen or spoken to one in years and years. So its probably perfectly useless knowledge. But I've always had an interest in collecting new knowledge. At the Mages Guild, they taught me an old High Elven tradition. You spread this potion all over your body...

PROLOGUE: The Contessa relates her current state of boredom.

CONTESSA: The life up at the Palace bores me so. My sisters ...

PROLOGUE: The Contessa's sisters are entertaining some visitors.

CONTESSA: And my brothers are now studying Advanced Floral Theory, so I come down here, do a little ... er ... business. I keep all my relations supplied with their favorite vices -- so I can blackmail the whole rotten lot.

ADVENTURER: But isn't it dangerous, down here? Did I not hear that some young Contessa got killed, recently?

CONTESSA: That little twit was my cousin, and as far as I'm concerned, she got what she deserved. She thought she could just borrow a maids dress, muss up her hair, and pass for commoner. She was spotted the first minute she left the Palace gates. Now, I use illusion, craft, guile -- and I carry weaponry. By the way, that was a neat scheme you and Neph cooked up.

ADVENTURER: Well, lets change the subject, can we? ... Just what do you carry? I can't see anything ... like a weapon, I mean ...

CONTESSA: Here, let me show you ...

ADVENTURER: Oh my, those are nice ... knives...

CONTESSA: And there're more ...

ADVENTURER: Oh yes...

CONTESSA: But we don't need these silly nasty weapons now, do we?

ADVENTURER: My, my -- now those are what I call weapons ... Oh yes ... heavy duty, high class ones too, my ...

CONTESSA: I think its time that we put that ebony to the test ... to say nothing of your Mages Staff ...

PROLOGUE: At this point, extensive material has been removed. However, please remember that any scholar who truly wishes to peruse this material can obtain a copy for only 50 g.p. - hand-drawn illustrations are of course extra. The Contessa, after a bit of fun, volunteers to be a part of the Adventurer's party to find the fools' ebony lode. I know, I know. It didn't make much sense in the original draft either, if you want to know the truth.

(Exit Prologue)

ADVENTURER: Sure you want to go out there in the wilds?

CONTESSA: Oh, yes. I am so bored here. Well, not right here and now, but generally. And I can really be of assistance. I'm pretty good with woods survival, knife work, hand-to-hand ... and it gets cold out there at night, even for big ebony-wearing men like you ...

ADVENTURER: All right, then. Do you know where and why we are going?

CONTESSA: Oh, of course. It's all over Daggerfall. Everyone is watching and waiting to see what happens. There is even a lottery or two running ...

ADVENTURER: On what ..?

CONTESSA: Oh, your life.

ADVENTURER: Oh dear Oh dear! Oh my!

CONTESSA: Look, don't worry -- I know all about the double-dealings with mages, priests, merchants, those crude armorers. And I intend that we come out on top. I love being on top. With the goods and the profits. I'll have yet another vice to sell to my stupid relatives in their boring palaces.

ADVENTURER: But won't it be us two against hordes?

CONTESSA: Oh no. Most everyone is waiting here in town to see what and who comes back. And I will have a surprise arranged for our 'escorts' - Ortho included. Out in the wilderness, they can be dealt with easily.

(Ortho snores)

ADVENTURER: Tell me more.

CONTESSA: Certainly. But first ... lets see how many uses you have left in that ebony. Mmm, your Mages' Staff is in good shape ...

(Enter Prologue)

PROLOGUE: Exactly. Sorry to interrupt again, but we're going to have to stop this scene right here. After a frenzied night comes the placid dawn, tripping onto the sky like a budding rose. And then another day doth dawn, and then another. Ten dawns and ten frenzied nights pass as our wily Adventurer, the wanton Contessa, the clever and naughty Nephron, the loutish Ortho, and an assemblage of randy armorers and backsliding maidens take to the road. Imagine now that we are in the wildy wilderness of High Rock near the Wrothgarian Mountains.

Scene 2

(Enter Nephron and assorted lads and lasses) (Exit Prologue)

CONTESSA: I do so love a bucolic frolic.

ADVENTURER: It's getting pretty wild now. I guess the dangerous part is coming up tomorrow...?

CONTESSA: Yes, one last stop tonight, at that old inn up here -- Minnie's Inn.

ADVENTURER: Minnie's Inn? Oh, those two old scholars who gave it all up, came to run the inn out here. they must get all of two customers a year.

CONTESSA: I think they like the solitude. It gives them time to study. They know a lot about old Dwarvish stuff - get them started on that, they will wear you ears out.

ADVENTURER: Er ... when does your surprise happen? I should probably know.

CONTESSA: Don't fret, dear. At the Inn tonight. Just sit back and enjoy the show.

(Enter Prologue)

PROLOGUE: Time passes, the carts roll, things happen in the backs of the carts. And there are strange furtive movements unnoticed by all, on the high ridges around. When next we see our players, they are at Minnie's Inn, home of Minnie and Crunn, the philosopher- innkeeps. Imagine, if you will, the rather dusty dining room of Minnie's Inn.

(Enter MINNIE, CRUNN, and GURNSEY) (Exit Prologue) (Gurnsey goes to Orthos' table with more ale for him. She sits down suddenly. She stares into Orthos' eyes, Ortho stares into hers. Mouths drop open.)

MINNIE: ... er ... Crunn ...

CRUNN: ... yes ... Minnie ...

MINNIE: ... I was thinking ...

CRUNN: ... yes, you were thinking, Minnie ...

MINNIE: ... er .... thinking ...

CRUNN: ... yes ...so was I ....

MINNIE: ... can't remember now ...

CRUNN: ... yes, Minnie ... Minnie ...

MINNIE: ... Yes ..?

CRUNN: ... Shut up ...

GURNSEY and ORTHO (Together): Moo ... oooh ... moo.

ADVENTURER: Moo?

CONTESSA: See, Adventurer, Ortho's fixed.

ADVENTURER: Is he?

CONTESSA: You just watch.

ADVENTURER: And what about the other armorers?

CONTESSA: Any minute now.

(Ortho and serving girl arise, approach Adventurers' table. The floor shakes.)

ORTHO: This Gurnsey. Ortho love Gurnsey, oooh.

GURNSEY: Gurnsey love Ortho ... moo ...

ORTHO: We go get marry, we is.

ADVENTURER: Well, congratulations! And that was a fine long speech, Ortho!

ORTHO: We go raise piggies.

GURNSEY: Grows animals too, farmers be we.

(Exit Ortho and Gurnsey)

ADVENTURER: Extraordinary. Ave, I think that you must have been up here before.

CONTESSA: Oh yes. I often come up here to get away from the Palace and talk dwarves with Minnie and Crunn.

ADVENTURER: You mean that these two ancient ... er, Scholar-InnKeeps can actually talk and about dwarves?

(All but Adventurer, Contessa, Minnie, and Crunn fall asleep in their meat pies.)

CONTESSA: Oh yes, you must just be very patient. But look over at our other escorts ...

ADVENTURER: By the Lady!

CONTESSA: Minnie was an Alchemist before she met Crunn, and knows a lot of old forgotten Dwarvish potions.

ADVENTURER: But what do we do with the bodies?

CONTESSA: Wait ...

(Enter MAJOR)

CONTESSA: Adventurer, meet Major Bloodnok, head of my own ...private little bodyguard. He's been with me since I was a mere girl. Served me very well, haven't you, Major?

MAJOR: We give our all, milady.

ADVENTURER: Pleased to meet you, Major.

CONTESSA: How are my other men?

ADVENTURER: (aside) Other men?

(Enter Other Men in Khajiit suits)

MAJOR: All present and accounted for, milady. Had a spot of bother with what looked like a party of Merchants following you. But they are out of the picture now, down a ravine. Only one thing.

CONTESSA: Yes?

MAJOR: Me and my men, we've been noticing sort of furtive movements, up on cliffs, on ridges -- always just out of the corners of our eyes. And we keep getting this feeling of being watched. Now, me and my men, we're the best but there's something out there. Don't like it, not one bit.

CONTESSA: Oh Dear - and just when it was getting to be fun.

MAJOR: Its not anything human. Not Mages, Armorers, Priests. And its not the usual werewolves, harpies, orcs, daedra. Nothing like that, not at all.

MINNIE: Dwarves!

CRUNN: Where? ... oh ... Minnie ... you mean ... up ... there ... here ...

MINNIE: ... Dwarves, up there ...

CRUNN: ... How exciting ... mmmm ...

MINNIE: ... There, there, Crunn, calm down ... just dwarves ... I knew that one day they would ...

CRUNN: ... Wake up ..?

MINNIE: ... Come back ...

CRUNN: ... But ... I didn't go anywhere ...

MINNIE: ... The dwarves, Crunn ...

CRUNN: ... Oooh ... Back ... So excited ... Dwarves! ... oooh ...

CONTESSA: Well Major, is it possible?

MAJOR: Anything's possible, especially up here. Dwarves? I don't know. Me and my men, we'll get rid of this lot. There's a good deep mine shaft out back.

(Exit All, but the Adventurer and Contessa)

ADVENTURER: Dwarves, Ave! Is that trouble? I mean, they sort of own all the ebony down here, don't they?

CONTESSA: Maybe. I guess we just have to push on, see what develops. I can try to talk to them, maybe? Oh, and Adventurer, you'll have to drive the first cart. I'll take old Nephron's. We'll leave the other here -- Spares for later.

ADVENTURER: What, no more bucolic frolics?

CONTESSA: Sorry, but we've got to get to the site and out again before the weather goes bad.

ADVENTURER: Can't your Major and his men, handle the carts?

CONTESSA: Oh, no. They will cover us from all sides and make certain there are no surprises.

ADVENTURER: Oh well. All good things end, I guess.

CONTESSA: Not quite. If you have any charges left in your bracelets of endurance, we can go upstairs and see what develops.

(Enter Prologue)

PROLOGUE: Well, I guess we all saw that coming. Scene 3 takes place some time later at the site. Flanked by the Major's men, the Adventurer and the Wanton Contessa successfully follow the map of the dear, departed mages. Imagine great veins of glistening ebonyesque material piercing the surface of the ground, and a nice warm fire of Fools Ebony where the Adventurer and the Contessa sprawl. To the west are signs that the weather is turning and the first major snowstorm of the year is coming. For some time, they have been mining and the Adventurer is beginning to feel the strain of actual labor.

(Exit Prologue)

### Scene 3

ADVENTURER: I've got blisters on my hands from shovelling that black rot, blisters on my rear from that cart bench, and we are running out of ale. My bracelet is running down and my fingers are getting frostbite.

CONTESSA: What, your bracelet is running down? Oh, now that is serious.

(Enter Major, running)

MAJOR: Dwarves! Milady, dwarves, dozens of the little buggers caught my men! I'm sorry, milady.

(The Contessa jumps to her feet)

CONTESSA: Major, get out of here now. If you get away, you can maybe help us later. I'll try to talk to them.

(Exit Major) (Enter DWARVES)

CONTESSA: Hhgyss jjvvu klpss Jjqqx zzyzx.

DWARVES (Together): Jjpoo Kalagloo gashnoo bibloo franoo Xxnadoo

CONTESSA: Jnik? Balpo?

SWARVES (Together) :Gabloo! Wazzikoo! Eppapupu!

CONTESSA: Glooky, glooky, glooky.

ADVENTURER: Ave, whats going on?

CONTESSA: Relax. I think I've impressed them by talking their language. I don't understand everything, but it seems that they have only just 'woken up' or something. And that they will not let us take any of this Fool's Ebony -- it's somehow related to the real stuff or something. And it really belongs to the Lords of Oblivion -- the Dwarves are just care or something.

ADVENTURER: Very interesting. Now, what about us?

CONTESSA: I made a deal with them the only way I could see. I told them about Minnie and Crunn, how those two old ones know lots of dwarven tales and legends. The dwarves tells me that, having just 'woken up' or something, they want three things -- ale, women, and us to leave the Fools' Ebony alone.

ADVENTURER: Ah, flog my log.

CONTESSA: Well, I told them about all the ale down at Minnie's Inn. And about the 2 redheads there. They are going there, leaving right now. We may take one empty cart, 2 horses. And they will keep us guarded all the way there. They also said that they will -- I don't know how -- destroy all the Fool's Ebony here. It shouldn't be on the surface like this, they say. (aside) Dwarvish is a remarkably compact language.

ADVENTURER: By the great roaring buttocks of Sheogorath! All these blisters and backache for nothing! Ah well. At least we are still alive. For now ...

(Exeunt) (Enter Prologue)

PROLOGUE: Farnoo Lickety Kanoo Gadfloo. Oh, I'm terribly sorry. As Scene 4 begins, we are back at Minnie's Inn, where the dwarves appear to be on holiday.

(Enter the Adventurer, the Wanton Contessa, Minnie, Crunn, and Dwarves)

(Exit Prologue)

Scene 4

MINNIE: ... ga ... sszx ... spnoo? ...

CRUNN: ... glurky ...

DWARVES (Together): Jotcha potchka lazzo lanni joopy hoopy qui me amat, amat et canem meam

ADVENTURER: Ave, any ideas? I can't seem to work my magical items. And when the ale runs out ...

CONTESSA: Your ebony material is useless against them. Dwarves fashion the ebony, so I guess they can suppress it or something. Don't worry - just think, these dwarves have been asleep or something for hundreds of years. And Minnie has a huge stock of ale. Not many

customers come this way, and she knows how to salt the ale just right to keep from spoiling for decades.

Adventurer: Oh, that's why my tongue always looks like a chunk of leather after a pint or two.

CONTESSA: Dwarves apparently love ale. I expect them all to pass out in an hour or so.

(Dwarves fall into comas)

CONTESSA: If not sooner. Come on, Adventurer. Grab a sack and start collecting! When the dwarves wake up, they'll finish the ale, and then us.

(The Wanton Contessa and Adventurer pillage the dwarves)

ADVENTURER: South, as fast as our horses will take us in this weather.

CONTESSA: If we make enough distance before they wake up, we'll be all right - I don't think that they will leave their precious mountains. I hope not.

(Enter Prologue)

PROLOGUE: The wailing wintery wind whirls wickedly, wafts whipping, wading waist-high, oh never mind. The Adventurer and the Contessa get lost in the snow storm. Several days later, we find them desperate for warmth and exhausted.

(Exit Prologue)

ADVENTURER: The horses have had it. They can't go another step and its going to snow again. No ale left, and just one loaf.

CONTESSA: It will have to do.

(Suddenly, a party of giants leaps on our hero and heroine. But after some quick work with Bracers of Firestorm, really dead giants lie around in heaps)

ADVENTURER: Anything left, Ave?

CONTESSA: No, no more fire anything - just my daggers

ADVENTURER: Same here, just a common shortsword. Curse Sheogorath for those dwarves! Those oafs chewed up our horses! Do you think the Major made it out?

Contessa: If anyone can, it's him. Guess we'll find out in town. Interesting thought just occured to me. Don't giants hunt in several groups? Is that more I hear?

(sound of grumbling and gargling offstage)

ADVENTURER: Yes, there are more giants out there. Quick, Ave. Help me with this one.

(The Adventurer starts to disembowel a giant's body)

CONTESSA: What on Tamriel are you doing? This is not the time for studying anatomy!

ADVENTURER: Don't argue, climb inside!

CONTESSA: Poppydash and Baldercock! Inside that smelly dead giant? My dear Adventurer, I'm a Lady.

ADVENTURER: It's our only hope! The giant smell will hide our scent, and live giants never touch dead ones. Quick!

(The Adventurer and the Contessa climb inside the steaming giant's body)

ADVENTURER: Here, help me pull the skin shut - and try not to throw up. Don't make a sound.

(Enter Prologue)

PROLOGUE: A few hour pass.

(Exit Prologue) (The Adventurer and the Wanton Contessa poke their heads out of the giant's belly.)

ADVENTURER: They've all left, but it's snowing hard. Definitely getting real cold. We better stay here.

CONTESSA: It indeed is warm.

ADVENTURER: It will keep us warm, safe from the storm and giants, for a day or so if we can stand the smell. Here, want some bread?

(The Contessa falls victim to nausea)

(Enter Prologue)

PROLOGUE: For this, the last scene of the play, please forgive us, but we need to change the set. Remove the "giant corpses" and whatnot. Please be patient while our bard performs the timeless classic "Whither Goest Thou?"

(Bard plays "Whither Goest Thou?" If the scenarists take too long, he also plays "For Further Consideration.")

PROLOGUE: Ah, here we are, back at the Dead Daedra Inn. The Contessa and the Adventurer made it, after all. They had to pay three times the normal rate, for they were very dirty and stinky. Now poor Prologue will bid you farewell, goodly people.

Scene 6

CONTESSA: Thank the Gods for hot water and soap! I thought I would smell like a giant forever.

ADVENTURER: Me too. Where did you go while I was bathing? And why no mages, priests, armorers, or merchants outside yelling for our blood?

CONTESSA: I took a quick trip to the Palace. I've fixed it so some cousins have told the armorers and merchants that we don't have cartloads of the Fools' Ebony.

ADVENTURER: Pity that that's actually true.

CONTESSA: But at least no one's interested in us anymore. Seems that some priests turned up dead in an old temple, up on Edward's Mountain. They were found with some girl, all dead from 'bad green powder' or something. And some old mages named Shub have gone missing...

ADVENTURER: Now then, what did you stuff in those sacks that's so important?

CONTESSA: Here, dump them out, take a look.

ADVENTURER: By the Gods, just look at that!

CONTESSA: Yes, those dwarves were just loaded with ebony. Look. Rings, torcs, bracers, belts, helms All solid old ebony.

ADVENTURER: And this stuff feels just loaded with magicka. Why, I bet that this ring alone has a thousand uses... whatever it does.

CONTESSA: Ooh! Look! Bracers of Extreme Endurance and a Belt of Strength! Put them on, Adventurer, let's celebrate!

ADVENTURER (aside): Help!

Enter Epilogue

EPILOGUE: As I feared, all the loose threads of the play were ended by wholesale slaughter. More of the adventures of the Adventurer will follow, unless, of course, they don't. We thank you for your tempered patience. Don't forget to tip your worthy wenches on your way out this evening, and enjoy our bard's rendition of the Khajiiti classic, "It's A Matter of Luck." Goodnight.

(Flourish)

(Exeunt Omnes)

**[21] From The Memory Stone of Makela Leki**

## From The Memory Stone of Makela Leki

This is a faithful reproduction of the thoughts recorded in Makela Leki's memory stone, found in the Bankorai pass, in the year of reckoning 1E 973. Seven years before the fall of Orsinium due to the combined efforts of the armies of Daggerfall, Sentinel, and the Order of Diagna.

Almost all of this is in the first person, as Makela was unfamiliar with the protocols and scholarly formalities of recording herself into a memory stone. None the less, her heroism and heroic deeds live on, her memories fresh in the stone for all to feel and hear.

\* \* \*

"... muuu uhh, I wonder if this will really work?"

"The Mages guild took me for 25,000 gold crowns if it doesn't. Imagine? This stone will record my thoughts? What did they say? Just unwrap it from the silver foil and leather bag and as soon as it touches my flesh it will begin to record.

"Ahhhh, the pain, I must block it out, no one would want to hold my stone and hear my thoughts if I let it record my pain. Thank the Ebonarm and the training I received in The Hall of the Virtues of War. I CAN block out this pain. Ummm just, ah, there, it's walled off.

"Yes I can still see it there just beyond my consciousness lurking like a hungry wolf - a wolf that will soon consume me. I see also my inevitable death from these damned wounds. No potions left, the healing crystal and ring are used up, and me, with not even magic enough to light a candle. Oh but the gods did give me other gifts, the gift of sword singing, the thrill of battle, Frandar Hunding's Book of Circles, THE WAY OF THE SWORD. Ah but then that is my story, I get ahead of myself.

I am Makela Leki a warrior, a sword-singer, a second level Ansei. In my cradle I could form the Shehai, the spirit sword - The mystical blade, mine formed of pure thought serpents intertwined with vines of roses to form the blade, as beautiful as ...

Ah, but I'm about to tell you all about that, to tell you my story, a story of valiant battle, of my loves, of my wars, of betrayal and of this last glorious victory. To tell you of how I came to this distant lonely pass me and five companions, to fight these men and monsters to defeat the army that would fall on my people like cowards in the night, but again I get ahead of myself.

I am a simple warrior. I grew up as a Maiden of the Spirit Blade. As early as I can remember I wanted to be a Singer, to feel the hunger of the blade in my hands, to feel it come alive and take my enemies. I am told our people were artisans and poets long ago in our desert homes. Here in new home now known as Hammerfell, many of us have returned to those ancient ways, but to me there is but ONE WAY. THE WAY of the SWORD.

Ah this is hard to tell. I grew up in my noble family, the only one of three brothers and two sisters that felt the calling, the Song of the Sword. Father understood, for he too had felt the call. He had become a master, and Ansei long before settling down with in our estate to raise a family. At eleven, I entered the Hall of the Virtues of War and joined the Maidens of the Spirit Sword. In my band there were six of us. Daring Julia, solid Patia, big Kati, svelte Cegila, wise Zell, and me - all are gone now, save me, and soon I will join them. ... Join them in the halls of the unknown gods of war.

We drank together, we fought, we wept, we grew in the way of the sword. We joined in our learnings in the Hall with our Brothers of the Blade. Learning from each other, we all sat at the feet of the Hall Master striving to learn the depths of the Shehai - making the spirit blade into a real weapon as Frandar Hunding had. Only a few have the purity of heart and virtue to be able to take the step and learn the mysteries of Ansei. Sword Sainthood.

Somehow, of all the Brothers and the Maidens, I only possessed the unique qualities, the faint but strong enough flicker of magicka to call forth the Shehai. Many times I called it, seldom would it become substantial enough to be a weapon. To be a Ansei of the first level you just need to be able to call it, and that I could, so I became the first Ansei from our local hall in two generations.

Oh I have so much to tell, so many memories, so many treasures to share with you, my unknown companion. How do I start?

Umhhh, the pain is still out there lurking hungry, slowly consuming what's left of me. I guess I had better tell of the final battle, the one that has left me here, and then if I have the will left tell you of my life, of my love Raliph. Oh what a lad he was. What times we shared ... Ebonarm ... Forgive me, my mind wanders ... Let me go to the Final Battle.

Umm to start, in the middle humm. Yes. We Maidens grew, learned, mastered the Way, and upon completing the Walk-About. To you who are not Singers, this is a wilderness trek emulating the times of Frandar Hunding - where we each wander the country side righting wrongs, defeating monsters, performing quests in the name of virtue. Some of us in our Hall took years to finish. Always there is danger, we six Maidens each returned in our own good time, but many are they who do not live to return from the Walk About.

We returned, each to our own lives, to meet in the hall once a week to tell our stories to the new Maidens and Brothers, and to perform as instructors in the Way of the sword. All was well till the night of the MidYear Festival.

All our people were reveling and ... excuse ... enjoying the repast, but for we six Maidens. It happened that the festival day fell on our day of meeting in the hall, our day of prayer and fasting and honor to the Way of the Sword.

As we met, late into the night, a knocking rang on our door. When I opened, it there was a guardian the Bankorai Pass in the Wrothgarian Mountains, wounded and near death ... He told us of betrayal from the north, an invasion sponsored by the Crystal Tower of High Rock, led by King Joile of Daggerfall -- our ally in the war with Orsinium!

Quickly we used up a crystal of healing in restoring him to vitality. We sent him on to the king, while we six grabbed our weapons and armor of power, and as many potions, marks, and crystals and rings as we could carry.

We flew to the pass hoping upon hope that we would not be too late. Our journey was not in vain, for we arrived just at the very point where the last three guardians were overwhelmed by the horde. Into the pass we ran forming the old battle line, six abreast.

Oh did we FIGHT.

The Song of the Sword was a joyous noise slicing through the ranks of evil. We fought for hours. Julia was the first to fall, a cowardly poisoned dagger finding a rent in her armor. Then one by one all fell, save me.

... oh cruel Ebonarm ... Then my beloved sword, the sword of my father, the one with the serpent's crest, fashioned by the master sword smith Singer Tansal broke in my hands. All was lost, our six lives spent in vain. Now, many many of them would pour through the pass. I would be easy prey for them, like a newborn child. I wept in frustration.

Then I remembered the hearth in our home - the book. Frandar Hunding's Book of Circles, the Way of Strategy. I reached for the Shehai the spirit sword, that which I could never reliably form when I needed it, and behold ... it was alive. Alive with fire. It formed in my hand. Ablaze with power ---

Oh I slew mightily, right and left, like a scythe through wheat. All the way to the Lord of the Tower I fought. With one blow I cut his magical armor asunder, one more took his head.

But to do that deed cost me dearly, wounds by the dozen, for although I had magical armor, it was not formed of spirit like my blade, it was not as invincible as my blade or my own spirit, and I was sorely wounded.

With the felling of King Joile, his army crumbled. They fled before my wrath. All ran back through the pass not even pausing to collect their dead and wounded. All who could stand ran for their lives, and I slew all I could reach, but my breath was coming short, and the pain ...

Finally I rested, on this rock where you find me now. I don't know why I chanced to bring this stone along. I bought it on a whim really, with the loot from ... ah well I guess I need to really stop and tell my story in order. I feel able to go on to tell you more ... the eternal night is descending more slowly than I thought.

Not just yet, am I ready to compose my death poem. A little sip of water and ... well I think I will go back and tell you of my life, maybe some details about the battle. And Oh yes. About Raliph and our children, humm where will I start.

... oh ... rrr ...

I am ... a simple warrior ... I grew up as a, a Maiden of the Spirit Blade ... As early ... as early as I can ... remember ...

**[22] Galerion The Mystic\***

See vol. I.

## [23] Ghraewaj and the Harpies

Ghraewaj and the Harpies  
by Tidasus

On the twelfth of Hearth Fire every year, the people of the Hammerfell township and barony of Lainlyn celebrate Riglametha. Riglametha in the Banthan dialect of the ancient Redguard tongue means "grateful-offering" and is a festival of the graces the gods have granted the people of Lainlyn over the centuries. Tradition dictates the performance of a number of plays about the great moments from Lainlyn's past, and one of the most popular is Ghraewaj, which may be translated as "The Crows Who Were Punished" or "The Crows Who Punish." Old Redguard is somewhat vague with its objective case.

The story of Ghraewaj, as any Lainlyn child will tell you, is of the wicked sisterhood of daedra worshippers who craft lies, curses, murders, and suicides to hurt the people of Lainlyn. Most of all, they use their beauty as a weapon to drive men to mayhem. Their leader, the temptress Noctyr-a, seduces the unnamed baron of Lainlyn and is about to force him to commit suicide to prove his love, when the baroness arrives. The baroness tricks Noctyr-a into wearing a beautiful white robe from the baroness' closet: "See how the robe glows with the lumniscience of pearl, but the inside is soft, feathered with down." Noctyr-a puts on the robe and the trap is sprung: the robe is magical and transforms Noctyr-a into an giant black bird. The baron, no longer enchanted, slays the great bird and calls in his cook. The sisterhood has, by this time, taken over Lainlyn castle and turned it into a orgy-filled den of decadence. At the height of their frenzied debauch, the cook arrives with an enormous roast to keep their energy high. They dig into the deliciously prepared meal, and at the crescendo of their gorging, the baron and baroness appear to tell them all that they have just devoured their leader, Noctyr-a. The women scream and caw and suddenly they too are transformed by the magic of the robe, into harpies, vicious half-bird creatures.

The interesting thing about Ghraewaj from a scholarly perspective is how much the story has changed and continues to change over the years. In some versions of the story, Noctyr-a is an innocent peasant seamstress and it is the baroness who is the cruel and wicked leader of the harpies. Noctyr-a prays to Dibella and is given the charm to make the magical robe, and she and the baron live happily ever after once the harpies have feasted on the tranformed baroness. During the long reign of the virgin baroness of Lainlyn, Viana the Pure (2E 120 - 2E 148), the baron was portrayed as a willing conspirator of Noctyr-a. The harpies thus have two birds to dine on. It is unlikely that trying to find the truth in the story is profitable research. Harpies are indeed a common nuisance in the Iliac Bay, particularly around Lainlyn. They do have their own tongue, and the few who have mastered it and not been devoured by their interviewees suggest that the harpies have no more idea about their origins than we do. In a different vein, one of the best known of the Daedra Princes is named Nocturnal, who is often portrayed as a beautiful dark woman holding two black crows. It is not a difficult etymologic trick to derive the name Noctyr-a from Nocturnal, or vice-versa.

## [24] The Healer's Tale

The Healer's Tale  
by Anonymous

For over twenty years, I have been a healer at the Temple of Stendarr. As the reader is doubtless aware, we are the only temple in the Iliac Bay that offers wound healing and illness curing for both the faithful and the heathen alike, for Stendarr is the God of Mercy. I have faced people at their most miserable and their most terrified. I have seen brave knights weep and strong peasants scream. I like to think that I've watched the masks drop from faces, and seen people as they truly are.

A healer's job, after all, is more than simply binding wounds and stopping the flows of poison and disease. We are counselors and comforters for those who have given up all hope. Sometimes, it seems like our kind words and sympathy do more for our patients than our spells.

I am reminded of a very sick young man who came to the temple, suffering from a variety of maladies. Once I had given him an examination, I told him the results, careful not to alarm him. I let him decide how he wanted to be told the news.

"I have some good news and some bad news, my child," I said.

"I better hear the bad news first," he said.

"Well," I said, gripping his shoulder in case he should faint. "The bad news is that, unless I am wrong, you will sicken even more over the next day or two. And unless Stendarr chooses to be merciful to you, you will pass from this existence. I am sorry, my child."

As soft as the blow was, it stung nonetheless. The boy was, after all, very young. He thought he had his whole life ahead of him. Tears streaming down his face, he asked, "And what is the good news?"

I smiled: "When you came in, did you notice our proselytizer? She was the enchanting, voluptuous blonde in the antechamber by the foyer?"

Color returned to the young man's face. He had noticed her indeed. "Yes?"

"I'm sleeping with her," I said.

If more of the healers of Tamriel would consider their patients' feelings, not just the quickest way to heal them up and get them out, we would have a far, far healthier society. I truly believe that.

## [25] A History of Daggerfall

A History of Daggerfall  
by Odiva Gallwood

There is sufficient archaeological evidence for the modern historian to believe that there has been some variety of human settlement in the city-state of Daggerfall starting at least a thousand years before recorded history. The first use of the name Daggerfall to refer to the area around the current capitol was most probably in the 246th year of the 1st Era. The north half of the Iliac Bay, in fact all of the current province of High Rock, was conquered by invading Nords who brought a rough sort of civilization with them. One of the first civilized acts the Nords performed was a census -- the so-called Book of Life. Listed on page 933 of the Book is this entry:

"North of the Highest bluffs, south of the moors, west of the hills, and east of the sea is called DAGGERFALL. 110 men, 93 women, 13 children under 8 years of age, 58 cows, 7 bulls, 63 chickens, 11 cocks, 38 hogs live here."

Nearly four thousand years after this census was taken, we can see that these two hundred and sixteen people have multiplied heartily. The last census, in the year 3E 401, lists the population at over 110,000. It is always difficult to find an exact number, but the capitol city of Daggerfall certainly outnumbers her rivals, Sentinel and Wayrest.

It has been a consistent, if not actually helpful amusement of historians to find the origin of placenames. Daggerfall, by tradition, is said to refer to the knife the first chieftain threw to form the borders of his lands. But there are other legends that may have equal validity.

The Daggerfall entry from the Book of Life actually supports one theory about the reason for Daggerfall's longevity. The people were coastal fishermen, but they also found the land itself sufficiently rich to support raising livestock. This inclination of the early citizenry toward reinforcing their principal products brought stability to a fickle land.

Daggerfall thrived during the years of the Skyrim occupancy. When the Wild Hunt killed King Borgas of Winterhold in 1E 369, the northlands engaged in the War of Succession and Skyrim, greatly weakened, lost her holdings in High Rock and Morrowind. The Iliac Bay had become important strategically, and Daggerfall began to expand her military.

There were multiple opportunities for her to exercise this army and navy during the Direnni conflicts with the force of the Alessian Reform. The Dirennis were native Bretons, and Bretons are hardly ever given to excessive religion. Daggerfall became a minor base of operations for the Dirennis and their allies. Raven Direnni, the enchantress whose magic helped secure the final victory over the Alessians in the Glenumbria Moors, was one of the earliest occupants of Castle Daggerfall.

Over the centuries that followed, the Dirennis fell into obscurity, but Daggerfall continued her growth. In 1E 609, King Thagore of Daggerfall defeated the army of Glenpoint and became

the preeminent economic, cultural, and military force in southern High Rock. A position the kingdom has precariously kept ever since.

Ironically, it was another successful military exercise three hundred and seventy years later that ended Daggerfall's monopoly of Bay trade: the annihilation of the orcish capitol Orsinium by a joint effort of Daggerfall, the new kingdom of Sentinel, and the now extinct Order of Diagna. The scattering of the orcs from southeastern High Rock made the river route to the Bay more accessible. The tiny village of Wayrest grew like a flower that no longer feared the mow. In twenty years, Wayrest's trade profits equalled Daggerfall's. In forty years, Wayrest was the acknowledged master of Iliac Bay trade. In one hundred and twenty years, Wayrest became the Kingdom of Wayrest.

The Kingdom of Sentinel did not exhibit Wayrest's aggrandizement during the First Era. The Redguards were warriors learning the ways of the merchants, and their land was enemy enough to keep their population checked. Indeed, the number of people in all areas of the Iliac Bay was halved once in the First Era by the Thrassian Plague, once again by the War of Righteousness, and a third time by the invading Akavari. If Daggerfall had not spent its first thousand years preparing for the battles of the next thousand years, it is indeed conceivable that the Iliac Bay today might be Akavarian.

The Second Era, like the latter part of the First Era, is a tapestry of wars, insurrections, and plagues. Daggerfall, Sentinel, and Wayrest continued to expand and improve their military and economic positions in the Bay. Daggerfall and Wayrest would transpose positions as major trading center of the Bay, and Daggerfall and Sentinel likewise bandied over which was the superior military power.

The Iliac Bay has continued to hold an important position in the Imperial government of the Third Era. Rarely allies (though the combined armies in opposition to the Camoran Usurper in the 3rd century of the 3rd Era is a notable exception), but not always enemies, Daggerfall, Sentinel, and Wayrest have weathered the storms of contention, plague, famine, and pestilence. The recent War of Betony was typical of Iliac Bay warfare: sincere, frighteningly violent, and peaceably resolved.

## [26] Holidays of the Iliac Bay

### Holidays of the Iliac Bay by Theth-i

The region of the Iliac Bay has a rich history, and not surprisingly, a number of holidays unique to it because of this history. The Breton and the Redguard cultures have many similarities, but just as many distinctions. An analysis of the holidays is one way to study the people.

As any schoolchild could tell you, the Redguards are a relatively new culture to Tamriel. Their arrival from their homeland is actually well recorded, though it occurred several thousand years ago, in the 808th year of the 1st Era. Hammerfell was a great desert encompassed by almost impassable mountains -- unclaimed and unwanted. Many of the holidays extant in modern Hammerfell seem to be direct translations of older Redguard festivals before their migration to Tamriel.

The orgiastic seasonal celebrations seem unusual in a province with few changes in the weather from month to month. Yet on the 28th of Suns Dawn, the Redguards of the Banthan jungle celebrate Aduros Nau to relieve the wintertide lethargy; on the 1st of Mid Year, the people of Abibon-Gora celebrate Drigh R'Zimb in honor of the sun, which no normal Redguard worships in this day; similarly, on the 29th of Suns Height, the festival in the Desert called Fiery Night, seems almost perverse in such an environment; the Koomu Alezer'i on the 11th of Last Seed in Sentinel has been translated as a harvest thanksgiving, though many scholars have suggested that it was once a springtide holiday; similarly, the Feast of the Tiger in the Bantha on the 14th of Last Seed was probably once a religious holiday to a Tiger God, instead of a thanksgiving.

Other old Redguard holidays have either been acknowledged as part of the old culture or adjusted to fit with the climate of Hammerfell. The Serpent's Dance, for example, of Satakalaam is patently an old festival honoring a Serpent God of the homeland who evidently did not survive the journey to Hammerfell. The significance of the date, the 3rd of Suns Dusk, has been lost with the Serpent Priests. Baranth Do, on the 18th of Evening Star, and Chil'a, on the 24th of the same month, are both New Years festivals. Most likely, they have been moved from their original dates to correspond with the notion of the year defined in Tamriel.

The Bretons have been in Tamriel since before recorded history. Their holidays have remained almost unchanged since primitive times, though new holidays have been created to replace those which have lost popularity.

The oldest holidays still observed in High Rock must include Waking Day, on the 18th of Morning Star, when the people of the Yeorth Burrowland wake the spirits of nature after the winter, very nearly in the tradition of their more reverential ancestors. Flower Day, held on the 25th of First Seed in the smaller villages of High Rock is most likely just as older or older. The old cult of the flower is also remembered as Gardtide in Tamarilyn Point on the 1st of Rains Hand. Daggerfall's Day of the Dead, on the 13th of Rains Hand, suggests the ancestor worship that marked the Breton religion of antiquity. Finally, the ancient goddess of the

moons, Secunda, is remembered in the Moon Festival in Glenumbra Moors on the 8th of Suns Dusk, just as the nights begin to grow longer.

The more recently created holidays of High Rock are those like Tivedetha, "Tibers Day," celebrated every 24th of Mid Year in honor of Alcaire's most famous, son, Tiber Septim. Likewise, Othrokide on the 5th of Suns Dawn is held in honor of the first and most illustrious Baron of Dwynnen. In quite extreme contrast, Marukh's Day on the 9th of Second Seed, is a solemn holiday, immortalizing the lessons of the equally solemn 1st Era prophet Marukh. My favorite of the modern Breton festivals has to be Mad Pelagius, held in mock honor of the most eccentric of the Septim Emperors. Pelagius was, after all, a prince of Wayrest before he became King of Solitude, and then Emperor of Tamriel. The Bretons like to boast that it was his time in High Rock that drove him mad.

**[27] Invocation of Azura\***

See vol. I.

## [28] Ius, Animal God

Ius, Animal God  
by Buljursoma

The statues one sees throughout Valenwood and parts of Hammerfell and Elsweyr that seem to be of a misshapen humanoid carrying a rod are of Ius, the God of Animals.

The rod He carries has its origin in the tale of The Ox and The Evil Farmer. It seems that one day an evil farmer decided to kill all of his animals and have a big party. As The story unfolds, animal after animal is killed and prepared for a big meal. Lastly the farmer comes to the ox and prepares to slit its throat. The ox, not wishing to be anybody's dinner, prayed very vocally to Ius. This came out as a loud Moo, of course.

At that very instant Ius appeared carrying a rather large set of balance weights. Without explanation, Ius ate the farmer and vanished. Ever since that day Ius The Extremely Agitated, has always been portrayed as carrying a large set of scales with him. The local Ius worshippers have no idea why and do not seem to care. Although this story has been called fanciful at best, I personally know a racoon who had actually talked to The Ox. That is, before the Ox became filler for the local inn's larder.

I do not have any information one way or the other about the validity of this second myth. It is, however, quite traditional.

It seems that many, many years ago, before the reign of Uriel Septim VII, before the reign of Cephorus Septim II, yes, even before the age of Pelagius Septim III (long may his name be praised!), there lived a wombat who was the pet of Lady Greelina, daughter of the Lord Prufrock of Rockcreek. Lady Greelina loved her wombat so, and it loved her too with all the passionate intensity a marsupial can muster.

Unfortunately, it was a time of great sorrow in Rockcreek. A pestilence had come through the town, destroying all their cash crops (which consisted of raspberries and a few scraggly odd weeds that caused Argonian women to look very attractive to those who partook); Then a plague had come, inflicting nearly every cobbler with chronic hiccoughs; finally a witch had cursed the townspeople so the only words any could utter were "Hmmm. Precisely." All the businesses, stores, and guilds fled from the town faster than an extremely fast thing.

Lady Greelina saw her father despairing the loss the town was suffering, so she brought her wombat in and told him, "Father, my wombat can save us all, for it is sacred to the god Ius, God of Animals. The only reason I didn't tell you earlier is because I am an early adolescent going through that period when I don't like to communicate. But please, ask a wish of my wombat, and Ius will fulfill it, for my wombat loves me."

The king thought this was fairly flakey, but he had nothing to lose so he uttered a modest wish to the wombat, "All I want is for one business to come to Rockcreek that will never leave no matter the calamity."

I probably should have mentioned before that the king had always been cruel to the wombat (he used to lick it and try to make it stick to walls), so the wombat had Ius create an equipment store in front of the palace gate that would never go away. The royal family ended up going mad and eating one another (and ironically, the wombat was one of the first to go). But that is why there is to this day an equipment store blocking the palace gate in Rockcreek. If you don't believe me, go there and see.

## [29] Jokes

Jokes  
by Butha Sunhous

"How is your wife," asked Zalither. "She's in bed with laryngitis," replied Harlyth. "Is that Argonian bastard back in town again?"

"I keep seeing spots before my eyes." "Have you seen a healer?" "No, just spots."

A big Nord named Julgen was set on by a gang of thieves. He fought them furiously, but in the end, they beat him into semiconsciousness. They searched his pockets and discovered that he only had three gold pieces on him. "Do you mean to tell us you fought us like a mad lupe for three lousy gold pieces?" sneered one of the thieves. "No," answered Julgen. "I was afraid you were after the four hundred gold pieces in my boot."

During the War of Betony, the Bretons in the Isle of Craghold were under siege for several days. After the island was liberated, Lord Bridwell found the ruins of the castle where a crowd of survivors were hidden away in the dark. It was going to be a difficult job freeing them, as part of the roof had collapsed trapping them all within. Bridwell stuck his head in the only opening and shouted to the Bretons below: "Are there any expectant mothers down there?" "It's hard to say, your Lordship," said a young woman. "We've only been down here for a few days."

An elderly Breton met with an contemporary of his at a guild meeting. "Harryston, old man, I wanted to express my sympathy. I hear that you buried your wife last week." "Had to, old boy," replied Harryston. "Dead, you know."

Why was the Sentinel army so useless during the War of Betony? The cannons were too heavy, so all three garbage scows sunk.

What does a new Sentinel private learn first as a combat technique? How to retreat

What is the thinnest book in the world? "Redguard Heroes of the War of Betony."

A Dark Elf man killed his wife after catching her making love with another man. When the magistrate asked him why he killed her instead of her lover, the man replied, "I considered it better to kill one woman than a different man every week."

A Dark Elf woman was being shown around Daggerfall. When she was shown the magnificent Castle Daggerfall, she smiled sweetly to her guild and whispered, "It reminds me of sex." "That's odd," said her guild. "Why does our Castle Daggerfall remind you of sex?" The Dark Elf sighed, "Everything does."

Yelithah told Vathysah that she was having dinner with a Dark Elf named Morleth that night. "I hear he's an animal," said Vathysah. "He'll rip your dress right off you." "Thank you for telling me," said Yelithah, "I'll be sure to wear an old dress."

How do separate sailors in the Khajiiti navy? With a hammer and tongs.

"This orchard has sentimental value to me," said Mojhad, the Khajiit, to his friend, Hasillid. "Under that tree, for example, is where I first made love. And that tree, is where her mother stood, watching us." "She watched you while you made love to her daughter?" said Hasillid, clearly impressed. "Didn't she say anything?" "Meow."

What do you call a Wood Elf who doesn't lie or cheat or steal? A dead Wood Elf.

## **[30] King Edward**

### **[30.1] King Edward I**

King Edward, Part I  
by Anonymous

#### Chapter One: Departure from Daggerfall

Long, long ago, when the world was in its springtime, before the Redguards came and the glorious Septim Empire was formed, but after the goblins had driven the dwarves out of Hammerfell, a son, Edward, was born to King Corcyr I of Daggerfall and his Queen, Alieria of Wayrest.

The young boy lay drowsing in the palace orchard, high on a breezy hill overlooking the deep blue bay of Daggerfall. The constant autumn fog of Daggerfall had blown away for the nonce and the sky was a deep endless blue. Moments like this were rare for young Prince Edward; this afternoon was the result of days of scheming, for he craved solitude as the other nobles he knew craved companionship. Now his tutor believed him engaged in extra arms practice, the master of arms believed him to be chasing deer with the huntmaster, who thought he was studying Elvish. His father had no idea where he was and didn't care, being occupied with his young wife and their sons and other pleasures of noble life.

At the plop of an apple barely missing his head, he opened his pale grey eyes; there was a sweet rotten smell in his nostrils. He sighed and stared up into the blue. Why should things fall down instead of up? If you stared at the sky long enough you could feel as if you were falling into it his eyes glazed and the pupils grew huge as the dark-ringed irises dilated. He was weightless, drifting another apple fell, grazing his ear, and he thudded to earth, crying out as first his rump struck and then his head. A silvery laugh sounded. Edward sat up abruptly and stared around, jaw hanging slack.

Two mounted men stood ten feet away, still as if they were carved from stone, regarding him intently. Princes are not easily intimidated, not even the gentle souled kind, but Edward had never seen or imagined anything like this pair. One had golden skin and eyes, was clad in white cloth trimmed with gold and rode a (Edward blinked. It is was still there) a unicorn! Beside the unicorn was a golden dragon, wings neatly folded. And on his back was a man clad in dark chain mail, a long sword at his side. He was bareheaded; his eyes glowed red in his dark face and his pointed ears "You're elves! What!"

"He's a clever child." The dark elf's voice was sardonic. He spoke perfect Bretic, Edward noticed, his mind still working, although something seemed to have gone wrong with the rest of him.

"So it would seem. He did that mostly of himself. Remarkable for an untrained child. I merely helped him to concentrate." The high elf also spoke Bretic, but hesitantly and with a slight singing accent. Edward's tutor said that elves were incapable of human speech.

Edward's gaze shifted rapidly over the four beings in front of him, unable to find a comfortable resting place. He hoped briefly, fervently, that he was dreaming. His mind seethed with questions and demands, then quite suddenly his tongue came unstuck. "But I wasn't concentrating at all! My masters all say I'm incapable." Edward clamped his jaw down hard, suddenly realizing that it might be unwise to argue with beings such as these.

But the golden elf smiled broadly, showing perfect white teeth, "Exactly." He radiated such warm approval, that Edward felt his skin tingle pleasantly. It was a feeling that he'd only known with his long-gone mother. But the other elf's face was expressionless; the red eyes bored into Edward as if they would pierce his soul.

"Moraelyn! You're Moraelyn! The witch-king!" He jumped to his feet and faced the dark elf. "You stole my mother! My father will kill you."

"I am. I did. Will he? Shall we call him and find out?" The dark elf straightened and his eyes glowed deeper. A tiny puff of steam escaped the dragon's nostrils. A glowing aura appeared around his companion. Edward knew he wasn't going to call the guard. Why should they be slaughtered? These two looked capable of anything. Quite suddenly he was no longer afraid. If they were here to hurt him, they'd have done it by now. But a feeling of impotent rage remained. They'd taken his mother. And now.

"Why are you here?" he demanded.

"Edward, will you come with us?" The high elf spoke. Hearing him was like hearing a harp, cool as a breeze, warm as a fireside.

The boy stood very still. He wanted very much to say yes, to his own amazement. He wanted to ask if he would see his mother, but instead: "My father..." he croaked.

"Will miss you no doubt." The irony was back in Moraelyn's voice, a voice that make Edward think of icicles sparkling and dripping in winter sun. But there was a sort of hunger in his glowing eyes, a longing?

His father wouldn't miss him and he knew it. Shame ran through the boy, but he looked up at the broad-shouldered elf defiantly. "Are you my father?" Edward had meant the question to match the elf's sarcasm, but his hand crept to his ear as if of itself. He wasn't anything like his short-tempered, hearty, red-haired father and Roane often said he had an elfin look.

There was a heavy silence and Edward sensed that Moraelyn was taking the question at face value but that truth had nothing to do with what Moraelyn would say next. He would give the expedient answer. Still.

"No." It came reluctantly. He might be lying, of course, but Edward felt a deep wave of relief.

"Does my mother have other sons?" Suddenly Edward knew she did not and that the question would hurt the dark elf. And was glad.

"Your mother might be dead, for all you know. Or care, it seems." The dark elf's narrow nostrils twitched as if Edward stank, and the lines around his mouth deepened. She was not

dead. Edward would have known. The bitter injustice of Moraelyn's contempt stung. "Did she send you to me?"

"Do you take me for an errand boy!" he snapped, and spoke to his companion: "Let us take him now and be gone; we may discuss it at leisure."

The golden elf held up his hand, "Patience, my cousin." and, to Edward, "Well, youngling, will you come?"

Dark tales were told of human children kidnapped by elves, who hungered for young humans

"I don't know your name," Edward temporized.

"Do you love your life here so much?"

Edward looked at the palace in the distance, the banners floating lazily above the town below, the sparkling bay, the distant mountains. "I love Daggerfall."

"Ah. And you shall return to hold it, Prince Edward. I, I'ric Harad Egun the ArchMagister, swear it to you." Moraelyn swung about, protesting sharply in Elvish. The dragon spat a bit of flame, but the unicorn did not move; its golden eyes regarded Edward steadily. "Unicorns do not abide any sort of falsity." The words floated through his mind in his mother's voice.

"I'ric Harad Egun the ArchMagister, I will come with you."

"You must ride with Moraelyn. The Lord Akatosh has consented to this--necessity. The elf made a sweeping gesture toward the dragon."

He wasn't fit to touch a unicorn, of course. "Very well, then. I...I don't suppose I could bring my dog?" Where was he? Shag was always with him. Asleep in the grass! Shag, the ever-alert? Edward knelt to touch him. A heated discussion in Elvish ensued, during which the dragon scorched the grass. Moraelyn swung down and picked Shag up with distaste. "Very well, then, but I warn you that Akatosh is at the limit of his patience. Mount, then."

"Lord Akatosh, I am most deeply obliged by your indulgence. If ever I may repay it."

"You will," Moraelyn interrupted; he seized Edward by the belt and tossed him up onto the dragon. Edward settled himself between the dragon's neck and wings and the sleeping Shag was draped limply in front of him. "There isn't room for..." Edward began, and jerked in astonishment as the dragon shifted beneath him and grew larger. Much, much, much larger. Moraelyn vaulted up behind with a prodigious leap for one in armor. The unicorn jumped the nine foot wall, clearing it neatly. The dragon's great wings stretched; he crouched, then leapt into the air. His riders swayed wildly. The dark elf muttered something Edward couldn't understand in elvish and they steadied. The wings beat strongly and the dragon circled low over the Keep, gaining altitude slowly. People were running about now, shouting and pointing. Edward saw his old nurse and waved and shouted, "Goodbye! Goodbye! I'll be back sometime..." Arrows flew through the air as bowmen shot, while the nurse screamed and clutched at the arms of those nearest. King Corcyr ran naked onto the battlements, screaming and waving his fists. "Child of a demon, come back and I'll thrash you within an inch of your worthless life. Moraelyn, come down and fight, like the man you aren't."

Moraelyn's loud laughter rang clear as temple bells, cascading over the Keep. He shouted, "Be glad I don't, little King of the Small Cock!" The dragon circled almost lazily and let out a huge gout of flame. Arrows clinked harmlessly off his golden scales. "I'm off to see my mother!" Edward screamed down, noting the upturned faces of his stepmother and her red-haired sons. Roane had a fur-trimmed robe clutched round her, but her long hair floated wildly. Four pairs of eyes fastened on him, not Moraelyn, glittering with fury and hatred. Edward stopped waving and clutched Shag tightly with both hands. Moraelyn's mail clad arm was securely about his waist. Edward slumped against him, feeling quite safe for the first time in a very long while. The bowmen had stopped shooting; most of them were looking at the royal family. The king danced with rage. The great dragon's wings beat harder now and they headed due south out over the water.

"Aren't we going to Ebonheart?" the boy twisted round and looked up at Moraelyn. "Your mother awaits you at Firsthold in Sumurset, little Prince."

"Why did you wait so long to fetch me?"

"Querulous child, do you think dragons and unicorns do the bidding of elves or men? Your mother came to me full willing, but she could not bring you; you were too closely guarded by your father's men. Would you have had us lay waste your land to take you by force? She thought you would be safe and cared for and she was desperate. No, this was the dragon's plan."

Of all the astonishing events of the afternoon, this was the most surprising: the notion that a dragon should take an interest in him, when not even his own family did. But, willing, the elf said, full willing!

"You are the focus of large events, youngling. Your task is to prepare yourself to be a king; a king such as your people have never known. Our task is to aid you. Sleep now."

Waves of sleep assaulted Edward's mind, one after another. "But..." he meant to ask Moraelyn about his mother, but the last wave was too big; it crashed right over him and he slipped into dark fireshot dreams.

**[30.2] King Edward II**

## King Edward, Part II

by Anonymous

## Chapter 2: Reunion at Firsthold

Edward woke to a red sky. The sun was just peeking over the western mountains. They were nearing a glittering tower, fire flashing from every facet. The dragon veered to fly nearer and shot a long blast of flame. A light flashed several times from the tower's top as they dropped suddenly. Edward's stomach felt very peculiar. He sighed and stirred and felt Moraelyn shift so that his right arm now held Edward. He stretched and yawned.

"Not much longer now. It's several days by horse from the Crystal Tower to Firsthold but I judge that Akatosh will have us there within the hour."

"We're not stopping at the Tower? I'ric..."

"Do not use that name so lightly, not even to me. The ArchMagister will not return for days yet. Unicorns are brothers to the wind and travel as fast, even burdened, but not as fast as dragons fly. You see the Elven homeland at dawn from the back of a dragon. Count yourself fortunate among men."

Edward's gaze roamed the deep green woods and rugged hills. There was no sign of habitation. "It's lovely," he said politely, "but not so beautiful as High Rock," he added out of loyalty and truth. "Are there no towns or villages or farms?"

"The Firstborn live nestled deep in the trees. And they do not tear up the earth and plant anew, but take gladly what Auriel offers, and make return. Ahhh, the green smell of growing things."

Indeed, the air was as heady as the wine Edward used to sip from his father's cup, before...  
"I'm hungry."

"I expect so." A bit of shifting and Moraelyn's left hand produced a small leaf-wrapped package. The dusky hand was large and strong and looked neither human nor animal. Edward stared at it with revulsion, then took the package gingerly so as not to touch the hand. He felt Moraelyn stiffen and the hand that held Edward relaxed its grasp a bit. Edward felt ashamed of his reaction. It was neither kind nor wise to give offense in the circumstances. Moraelyn could quite easily drop him overboard. "I need to bathe, but so do you," he said stiffly. Moraelyn was deliberately misinterpreting the reaction, Edward knew. "Yes, I'm very dirty," Edward bit into the cake which proved much better than it looked. "My lady mother's used to seeing me like this, at least she used to be. But perhaps I should bathe first?"

"I think you will not be offered that choice. Ah, at last!" The dragon spread his wings, sent a huge gout of flame soaring skyward and dropped to earth in a large clearing. The landing was

abrupt and jarring. Elves appeared quite suddenly and arms reached up to take him and Shag, who woke at last, ran frantically in circles, and then sat panting at Edward's feet.

A tall elf with fiery hair like copper greeted them formally. "Greetings, my lord King. Your lady wife awaits you. Prince Edward, I welcome you to the land of the Firstborn on behalf of all its people. May your stay here prove pleasant and productive."

Moraelyn nodded deferentially. "Thank you, my host. My Queen has waited long enough; we will go to her now." Moraelyn's hand on his shoulder steered Edward toward the largest tree he'd ever seen. The trunk was hollow; steps inside led up; openings gave out onto more steps and bridges along and among the mighty branches. They proceeded along these until they reached a large canopied platform, furnished with seats and chests as if it were a room. A golden skinned woman smiled at them and waved them in, then left. A tall slender, pale-skinned, dark-haired human woman paced toward them, her eyes on Edward. Only Edward.

"Why did you leave us!" The cry came from deep inside, ringing through him. It stopped her several paces from him. Now her eyes lifted to Moraelyn, who said in a harsher tone than Edward had yet heard from him. "Thou wilt address thy Mother with respect, cub!" A glancing blow made his eyes water.

Aliera crossed quickly to Moraelyn and placed her hands on his chest. "Greeting, my husband. All praise to Notorgo for bringing you and my son safely to me."

"Thank also the Lord of the Dragons and the Bandit, who could not have lifted the boy more neatly himself. The ArchMagister had somewhat to do with it as well." Moraelyn's dusky hands came up to hold her bare arms lightly and tenderly. He laughed, looking relaxed and happy. But the hands against his chest formed a barrier as much as a caress.

"I am blessed indeed. But it has been long since my son and I have spoken. We may find words more easily if we seek them alone together."

Moraelyn's smile vanished instantly. "Are words then a thing which two can find more easily than three? Well. Perhaps. At times. Wife." He turned on his heel and left. The bridge swung and creaked, but his feet made no sound at all.

Aliera watched after him, but he did not look back. Edward felt again the curious mix of satisfaction and regret that came with giving pain to his enemy. "Edward, my son, come and sit by me."

Edward stood where he was, "Madam mother, I have waited many years and travelled many leagues to have an answer. I will wait no longer, nor go one step further."

"What have you been told?"

"That you were most treacherously kidnapped by night with the aid of magic, while my father slept, trusting in the honor of his guest."

"Your father told you that. And Moraelyn?"

"Said that you came full willing. I would hear what you say."

"Would you hear why I left your father or why I did not take you with me, having chosen to go."

Edward paused, thinking, "Madam, I would hear the truth, therefore I must give the truth. I would hear why you left me behind. The other, I think I know, as much as I can or would know, unless you wish to tell me more or other."

"The truth? Truth is not a single thing existing apart from those who apprehend it. But I will tell you my truth and perhaps then you may arrive at your truth."

Aliera walked back to a softly pillowed chair and composed herself. Nearby a small ruby colored bird settled on a branch and trilled an accompaniment to her soft voice.

"My parents arranged my marriage as is the custom of our homeland. I did not love Corcyr, but in the beginning I respected him and tried to be a good wife. He did not care for me, nor did he take care. And so he lost my respect and I died a little each day, withering like an untended plant. I was happy only with you, but Corcyr thought I was making you too soft. "Womanish," he said, and so, after your third birthday I was allowed to spend only an hour each day with you. I listened to your cries and sat weeping, without heart for anything. Finally, you ceased crying and asking for me, and my heart was left empty. I formed the habit of walking and riding much of the time, alone save for a guard or two. Then Moraelyn came. He wanted to mine for ebony in the Wrothgarian Mountains. The land he wanted to use was part of my dowry. He was willing to train our people in the arts of its use and even to give them weapons of Dark Elf making. In return our people were to aid him in keeping the goblins away, and allow him to form a colony of his people in High Rock. Corcyr had no use for the land and he wanted the weapons very much indeed -- there are none better -- so he favored the proposal. There were many details to be discussed and arranged and it fell to me to conduct these negotiations. Corcyr despises Dark Elves and he was jealous of Moraelyn, who was already famed as the finest fighter in all Tamriel.

"But Moraelyn is more than a skilled fighter; he's well-read and interested in everything under the sun. He sang and played as if taught by Jeh Free and Jhim Sei both. He was a companion such as I'd only dreamed of...that and no more, I swear. We both love to be outside, so our discussions took place while riding and walking, but always accompanied by his men and Corcyr's. When all was arranged, Corcyr gave a great feast to celebrate the treaty. All of High Rock nobility came and many from other provinces. At the end Corcyr was deep in his cups and let fall an insult that could only be washed out in blood. I had long since retired with the other ladies so I know not what it was, but I'd heard enough in private to know that Corcyr had a store of such to choose from. Moraelyn gave the challenge and gave Corcyr until noon, that he might recover such wits as he had.

"Then Moraelyn came to me, alone in my chamber, and told me what had befallen. 'Milady, I think he will choose your brother as his champion; in any case there will be a river of blood between us that may not be crossed in this life or any other. I can live without your love, but I would not have your enmity. Come with me now, as wife or honored guest, as you choose. And you shall serve as blood price in stead of your kith or kin.'

"And there, in the moonlight, in my terror, with my ladies sleeping about me, I knew I loved him. Doubt that I could live without him. And yet, I loved you more! 'My son,' I whispered. 'I can't.' 'Milady, you must choose. I am sorry.' You see, don't you, Edward? If I stayed, it

meant my brother's death his innocent young blood. Or your father's! Or possibly that of the man I loved, though I counted that most unlikely. Moraelyn's fighting skills alone were supreme, and in an affair of this sort he would be entitled to call on magic aid as well. 'We could take him with us.' But Moraelyn shook his head sadly, 'That I will not do. It would go against my honor to part father and son.'"

"Leaving love alone, I am trained to duty", Alera said proudly. "Should I have robbed you of your father or your loving uncle? And I thought it likely that Corcyr, should he survive, would somehow blame me for the affair and use it as an excuse to put me away. I thought that Corcyr would be pleased to have me gone. I knew he wanted the weapons very much. I could trade them for time with you, I thought." All this passed through my mind while Moraelyn stood waiting, not looking at me.

"Lady Mara, help me to choose wisely, I prayed. 'You truly want me as wife? I could bring you nothing but trouble.'"

"'Alera, I would have you to wife. And I want nothing but yourself.' He shed his cloak and wrapped it round my body, pulling the bedclothes away."

"'Moraelyn, wait is this right, what I do?'"

"'Milady, if I thought this wrong, I should not be standing here! Of the choices you are given, this one seems to me most right.' He swung me up in his arms and carried me to his horse. And so I left your father's house, clad only in his cloak and riding before him. And wild joy mixed with my sorrow, so that I scarce knew how I felt. That is my truth."

Edward said quietly, "But he has parted my father and me in the end."

"With great reluctance. And only because the dragon says that you and your father were in truth already parted in heart. It is only a matter of more leagues. Which provide a measure of safety for you. Moraelyn insisted that you should freely consent to come. You are as free to return any time you wish."

"Moraelyn would have just taken me! It was I'r...I mean, the ArchMagister, who insisted that I must consent."

"He's not a patient man by nature. And he is anxious to do Corcyr no harm. Doubtless he felt the discussion could be carried on as well elsewhere."

"He called him King of the Small Cock. And laughed. Why? Are Daggerfall cockerels smaller than Ebonheart birds? And what does it matter, anyway? My father was very angry; I think he would have liked to fight. But it's true he hates me. I knew that, but I didn't want to know, so I pretended not to. I don't suppose Moraelyn would do that."

"No."

"He'd lie, though. He thought about telling me he was my father. I could see it."

Alera threw back her head and laughed her pretty rippling laugh; he remembered it from long ago, and it sent shivers down his back. "He must have wanted to claim it very badly indeed if

he let you see it; he's usually quicker than that. And he does not lie under oath, or to hurt those he loves."

"He doesn't love me; he doesn't even like me."

"But I do, my dear son. You..." Edward thought she was going to say he'd grown; adults always remarked on his growth, even if he'd just seen them a week ago. Very strange, since he was small for his age. Instead she said, "You're just as I thought you'd be," with deep maternal satisfaction.

"And he loves you. But he said he was no one's errand boy. Yet you dismissed him as if he were."

Aliera's face and neck burned a deep crimson.

"Nay, though I am reduced to serving man, it seems." Moraelyn had entered silently, bearing a huge tray piled high with food. "Get me a stool, boy, you can play page if I can play server. You must be famished and I thought I'd best return before my wife gets round to the rest of my faults. Could take her most of the day listing them." He'd shed the mail and bathed and dressed in fresh black jerkin and hose with a silvery sash tied round his narrow waist. But the black sword still swung by his side.

"Mara help us, you've enough food for a small army. And I've broken my fast." Aliera's small hand reached for the elf's arm, slid down it caressingly, then clasped his hand and squeezed it, lifting it to her still hot cheek, brushing it with her lips. Edward looked away quickly, discomfited by the sight of his dusky skin against her fairness.

"This's for me, and a bit for the boy. But pray join us, my dear. You've grown thin. Pining for me, no doubt." He wrapped a lock of her dark curly hair around a finger and tugged at it, grinning, then fell on the food like a starving wolf, attacking it with small silvery weapons instead of eating with his fingers as humans did. The food was wonderful. Edward ate until he could eat no more.

"Eavesdropping," he murmured thoughtfully. He'd been mulling over a list of Moraelyn's faults while he ate, and realized too late that he'd spoken aloud.

"By Zenithar, boy, if you humans will shout your privy conversation all over the tree, d'ye expect me to shut my ears with wool?" He tapped one of his large pointed ears. Edward hurriedly tried to remember what they'd said. What he'd said. Lying. Oh dear. Maybe he hadn't heard.

"So I'm a liar, am I, boy?" Vir Gil help him, Edward felt he was drowning. Could the Elf read minds? He hoped that wasn't the insult his father had used! "I...I meant I thought that you were thinking about it. You did hesitate," Edward gulped. He was making matters worse.

"Possibly, I was trying to remember." the sardonic tone was back.

"You don't even like me!" Edward burst out.

"That doesn't seem to have stopped your true father from claiming you."

"Moraelyn! Don't!" Alieria interrupted, but the Elf held up his hand to quiet her.

"I'm not so sure." Edward flashed.

"Why do you say that?"

"I don't know...Roane says...things...and I'm not at all like him. Everyone remarks on it. And then stops talking."

"What things? Speak, boy!"

"About how fond Mother was of her brother when they were young. How sad and angry he was when she was carried off. More like a lover, she said, than a brother. She says it very sweetly, but like she means something by it. Something too dirty to say. Other times she talks about how elfin I look. And how quickly after marriage I came. Not as quickly as her first son, though."

Moraelyn leaped up. "By the Avenger, I will go back and wring the vixen's neck! The human", he bit off the insult, but his red eyes flamed rage; his muscles swelled and his hair stood on end. "You do not look half-elfen. I never met your mother until four years after your conception. Roane, it seems, cannot decide which lie she wishes to use. But incest! May Kel strike her down if I may not." The tall elf paced furiously about the room, lithe as a Khajiit, hand fondling his sword hilt. The platform swayed and dipped.

"She's ambitious for her sons, at Edward's expense. The question is, how many will believe her. Not enough if she was planning to have him killed instead." Alieria's smooth brow wrinkled a bit.

"I never disliked her, you know. Nor she me. She wanted my place and I was glad enough to let her have it save for Edward."

"You want me to be king so I'll let you have the ebon mines." Edward had just worked out the puzzle.

"Oh, devil take the ebon, which he probably will. I've a better chance of getting co-operation from Roane's boys once your father's dead. They'd have reason for gratitude and the bargain's a good one. Although the chances they could keep a civil tongue long enough to sign a contract seem poor, given their parentage."

"Then why? You don't even like me."

"Mara, help me! 'Liking' a person is a human concept. One day they like you, the next day they don't. On Tirdas they're back to liking you again. My own wife does this to me, but claims to love me even when she doesn't like me. Except of course on the days when she doesn't do either, and talks about joining the Order of Riana. Fortunately that only happens once a year or so. I go hunting until she comes to her senses."

"You exaggerate; that only happened once, and well you know it."

"I remember enjoying the recovery period. Maybe it should happen more often." They grinned at each other.

"But why do you want me to be King?" Edward persisted.

"I told you; it's Akatosh's notion. And the ArchMagister's. I just came along for the ride. Ask them."

"I shall ask the ArchMagister when I see him."

"An excellent plan. You'll spend a few weeks at the Tower before heading north with us."

"Only that?"

"Does the prospect of spending the winter with your mother and me displease you so much?"

"No...no, sir. But I agreed to go with I'ric." Not you. The words hung unsaid between them.

"You will, in time. A few weeks there now will fit you to begin your training in magic; I can teach you spells. But you need hardening; your body must catch up to your mind. It is the ArchMagister's will."

"Fighting magic? I want to learn other things. How to call beasts. How to heal. And float..."

"You'll learn that, I doubt not. And d'ye think a fighter can't Heal? It's the first spell you'll learn. But a King must know how to fight."

"I'm not good at it."

"Dragon's Teeth, boy! Exactly why you must learn!"

"If I cannot?"

"You've courage and a clear head and the potential to learn magic; that's more than most people ever have. I can teach you the rest."

Edward's head whirled with the unaccustomed praise. "I do? I have? You can?"

"D'ye think any of your father's fool court would stand naked before a dragon, a unicorn, the ArchMagister, and the Champion of Tamriel and demand justice of them? Justice! Faced with such, they might have managed to beg for mercy, if they could speak at all, which is doubtful."

"I did that? I did, didn't I?" Edward was astonished; he wanted to add that he hadn't known, hadn't thought about it.

"Aye, you did. And it's a deed that shall be sung from here to Morrowind; I'll compose the ballad myself--as soon as I have a nap. I don't sleep as sound as some on dragon's backs."

"You enchanted me and Shag asleep!"

"And the rest of the castle, with the help of my friends."

"Oooooohhhh. Can you levitate? Will you show me?"

"Not so fast. I kept a holding spell on us all night to keep us on the dragon's back. Until I'm rested I couldn't light a candle with the aid of a match."

"Oh. Well, I'd still rather be like the ArchMagister than be a fighter."

"Hah! It'll be news to the ArchMagister that he cannot fight! I hope he'll find time to show you how to wield a staff. No better weapon for early training. And no better trainer. Now, of the four you saw before you, which would you say could best the others?"

Edward thought carefully for several minutes. "Sir, my judgement is poor indeed, but if you would still have my answer, it would seem that the one who claims the title Champion of Tamriel must be the best. Yet must not the ArchMagister be your master in magic? And trained to arms as well, it seems. So which should prevail? Could any mortal stand against the dragon's fire and claws and teeth? And I know naught of the unicorn, save that it is fleet and has a very sharp horn, and hooves as well. So I will guess the unicorn; it had the mildest manner. And since you asked the question it seems the unlikely answer may be correct."

"Well answered, youngling! The unicorn would win easily in any single close combat. No mortal or even dragon can move quickly enough to land a blow and it cannot be burned or touched by any magic or elemental power. Its hooves are deadly and a single touch of its horn will kill any enemy, although the horn itself will burn away. The most powerful can regenerate it within moments, however."

"And of the four the Champion of Tamriel would probably be the loser against any of the others, although the title is no idle boast!" Moraelyn is not accustomed to being so outclassed. "My manners may have suffered in consequence."

"Milord King, I am most deeply in your debt. You have done me great honor and service. If ever

I can repay you, I will. Forgive my brash words and ill manners. I have dwelt among the rude and boorish. And it seems I have no father, unless I may call you so?" The elf held his hands out to the boy, who placed his own in them. Edward's feeling of distaste was quite gone as if by magic the thought drifted through his mind and then he released his hands and clasped Moraelyn about his waist. The elf's hands stroked the dark hair and clasped the thin shoulders.

"I thank you, my wife. After only five years of marriage, you have presented me with a fine son, nine years of age. Remarkable. In fact...magical."

**[30.3] King Edward III**

## King Edward, Part III

by Anonymous

## Chapter 3: Lessons

The golden days passed swiftly. Edward spent most of his time in the company of his parents. He saw few other children. None at all lived in 'their' tree, only their wood elf host and Moraelyn's six Companions, an oddly assorted, cheerful lot. Disrespectful, Edward thought. None of the Daggerfall court or servants would dare have addressed his father as these did Moraelyn and Alieria with their constant raillery. But these weren't servants or courtiers. Just Companions. Only one was a Dark Elf. There were a Khajiit woman, two wood elves, brother and sister, a Nordic man, even bigger than Moraelyn and a strange looking lizardlike man, who spoke with such a hissing accent that Edward couldn't understand him at all. The Nord man was called "Slave of Moraelyn" or just "Slave" for short, although Moraelyn usually called him "Mats" or "My-slave." Mats tended the group's weapons and gathered wood for the evening fires. But it wasn't unusual for the others to bring wood; Moraelyn himself often borrowed Mats' axe and fetched and split wood if there was need, or if he just felt like it.

They spent much of their time roaming the woods and fields, hunting and gathering produce, in twos and threes. Usually Moraelyn, Alieria and Edward and Shade went off together. They carried bows for hunting. When Edward asked Moraelyn to teach him to shoot better, he was told to ask his mother, as she was the better shot. And it was Alieria's arrow that brought down a handsome buck, although both arrows had struck, and they quarrelled over who's arrow had killed as they ran toward the buck.

"Bah!" Moraelyn exclaimed as he pulled his black fletched arrow from the hindquarters. "I don't know how I managed to feed myself before I married you."

"You had the Companions."

"Aye. Mats, Mith and I starved together, before we met Beech and Willow." Moraelyn pulled out his black dagger, Tooth, and began to skin the animal's body, calling Edward to come and watch. "You want to learn about animals, don't you?"

"Live ones." Edward said with distaste. His dainty mother was ripping the skin away with enthusiasm.

"Such make tough eating," the dark elf said. "Give me your cloak; I'll make a package for you to carry."

"I am a Prince, not a pack horse!"

"You'll carry your share or you'll be a hungry prince this night." The elf had lost his good humor.

"I won't. I don't want any. You can't make me."

Moraelyn stood erect and appeared to think this over. "Can't I?" he taunted.

"Edward, please..." Alieria appealed to him.

"Tell me, Lord Prince, how then does one get the meat to one's table if one may not carry it. If Princes may not carry meat then certainly Kings and Queens may not, or do Princes grow out of the incapacity when they become Kings?"

"They have servants!"

"Serve ants? What a clever idea. Only a human could think of that! Ants are excellent at carrying, I have noted, although I have not the trick of commanding them. Perhaps you can teach me."

"Servants! Like Mats here," Edward shouted. He hated being teased. Mats and the other companions had come up, having heard their shouts over the kill.

"Mats? You think I cannot make you carry deer meat, yet I could command Mats to do so?" Moraelyn stared up at the blond giant. "Well, one never knows until one tries. Mats, carry the deer."

The blond scratched his head and jaw thoughtfully. "Highness, nothing would please me more but it is a large deer and my old wound is troubling my back, perhaps if you kill a smaller one."

"Well, Prince, what now?"

"You beat him."

"At what? I can outrun him. Mats, if I reach that oak first, will you carry the deer." Mats shook his head slowly.

"You beat him with a stick!" Edward yelled.

"What promise you show as a Healer, my Prince. You will forgive me if I refrain from consulting you until you have further training. It is my judgement that beating with a stick will not improve Mats' back. Of course, I may be in error.

"Silk, you carry the deer."

"Me, milord? I am sorry, but I have just remembered that I am fourth cousin to the fifth house of Dibella, Queen of Heaven. My dignity forbids that I carry anything at all."

Willow and Beech claimed that a mage had forbidden either of them from carrying any part of an animal while the moon Jone was risen.

"Prince, are you truly certain about this rule? It seems to make life most inconvenient. We could bring the wood to the deer, which will take many hours and leave us benighted here. We could consume the meat raw on the spot, but I own my belly is not yet empty enough to

make that option attractive. Alieria, can you help us? How do the High Rock folk get meat to table?"

"Milord, when I lived there it was my firm belief that it appeared by magic. There were servants, but they were an irritating, lazy lot, more trouble than they were worth. Edward, my son, is it possible that this rule applies only in High Rock?"

"I suppose so..."

Edward carried a share of meat that bent his back, but he did not complain. And so it was settled, and the meal that night was a merry one. But for several days after, if the Companions caught him carrying anything at all they would inquire anxiously as to whether a High Rock Prince might do so.

"If Mats is not a servant, then why do they call him 'Moraelyn's Slave'?" Edward asked one drowsy afternoon.

"Well, he is my slave. I paid gold for him, all that Mith and I had. We came on a man beating him near Reich Parthkeep. He looked near death; when Mith and I tried to stop the beating, the man said Mats was a runaway slave, and he'd do as he liked with him. So I threw down the gold and told him he could take it and leave, else I would kill him out of hand. He chose the latter, so I told Mats to take the gold as his master's heir and go where he would. He chose to come with us, so we buried the gold with his master and Mats has been with us since."

"Could he leave if he wanted to?"

"Of course."

"May I go pick some of those berries over there?" Edward asked, and Moraelyn nodded.

Alieria was sleeping curled on her side. Moraelyn sat next to her, leaning back against a tree, his hand playing with her long dark curls. His eyes and skin were sensitive to the bright sun. Shade slept stretched in the sun nearby, his dark fur glinting with silver in the light. Edward wandered over to the bushes and picked the bright glowberries, so called because they glowed at night, although right now they were a rather dull gray. But they tasted very good. If he ate enough, would he glow at night, he wondered. Or if he smashed them and collected the juice, the bushes caught at him, then he found a sort of tunnel through them and trotted along it, wondering where it led.

It ended in a small clearing before a pile of rocks. There was a hole and something in it. Edward stepped back, making a small noise in his throat. The something heaved and presented a tusky snarling face and hooves that pawed at the earth.

The boy backed away slowly. The beast's head went down, the shoulders heaved and the immense bulk lumbered into a charge. Edward tried to throw himself into the bushes - there was no room - and then, incredibly, Moraelyn was in front of him, between him and the beast. There was a flash and a crash, and the elf seemed to leap backwards for several feet, landing crouched just in front of Edward's face. The air whistled as his blade seemed to jump out of the sheath of its own accord. There was a sparkle in the air around him, and a burnt smell. Silence.

"Get out of here, boy! Now!"

Edward fled, yelling for his mother, who was running toward the bushes and calling him. She clasped him to her, and began shouting for Moraelyn instead. There was no answer, then, somehow the elf was there, unharmed, his blade sheathed again. But he was breathing hard.

"Did you kill it? Are you hurt?"

"No and no. I was shielded. Barely. You disturbed a sow in her den with her litter. Fortunately, she thought she'd had enough after the first impact. I daresay she's unaccustomed to finding her enemies still standing afterwards."

"Why didn't you kill her?" Edward demanded, feeling bloodthirsty after his fright.

"A katana, even the Ebony Blade, is not the weapon I'd choose against a mother sow. A spear, maybe. The longer the better. Besides, if we leave her be, there'll be six pigs here next year, with luck."

"You made a magic shield," Edward said, wide-eyed.

"Aye, barring the shield, she'd have left a few marks even on a tough old dark elf."

"Edward, it would be gracious to thank your rescuer." His mother prompted.

"Thank you," Edward said automatically, his mind busy with more questions. How had the elf known of his danger? How did he get there so quickly?

"There is scarcely need to thank me for saving my son's life. Thank Shade," Moraelyn said. "The cat told me there was trouble."

Edward knelt and hugged the smug purring cat. "Good old Shade. I can always count on him."

"My son". "Our son". The words rang proudly out at the least excuse. Edward puzzled over this for awhile; it wanted an explanation. The one he favored was that Moraelyn simply didn't know him very well yet, and was prone to give the benefit of the doubt to strangers. Eventually, but in the meantime he might as well enjoy it. It was nice. Having a father that was proud of you, that liked being with you, took you places, talked to you, listened to you. And most remarkably of all, let you alone when you needed to be. Moraelyn only really liked being alone when he was composing a ballad.

Edward told Beech and Willow about the mother pig. "I ran when he told me to. Would you? Because he said to. I couldn't think of any way to help, but..." Willow and Beech listened carefully, exchanged glances, and said they'd think about the problem.

After supper around the evening fire, Willow took up her small harp and began to sing about the joys of an autumn afternoon and berries...except that Moraelyn sent the boy off to pick berries. They'd got that part wrong. Moraelyn sat up sharply and looked around, but the others had slipped away into the darkness and Willow wasn't looking at him.

Mith strolled into the firelight, taking mincing steps, picking pantomime berries and eating them noisily. Moraelyn put his head down and groaned. Mith pantomimed finding something then skipped along in delight. Mats' head and shoulders lurched into the firelight. Mith reached a hand to pat him, then leapt back with a squeal as Mats tried to rip him with a tusk. Huge tusks and a pig nose adorned his face. Mith crouched, hands to his face in exaggerated horror. And Silk, clad in black, leaped between Mith and Mats with a shower of sparks, jerkin backwards, hose about its knees, shoeless. It reached for its sword, but Mats charged and knocked it flying; it spun out of sight. Mats, scrambling on all fours, missed Mith, but tore his hose. Mith scampered around the fire with Mats after him. Silk, sword in one hand, the other tugging at the hose chased after Mats, beating him with the sword.

Another figure appeared, clad in Alieria's blue gown with Beech's head sticking out above wearing a long dark wig. Mith cowered behind her skirts. She glared at Mats and he froze. Silk tripped and sprawled behind him. Beech tossed his hair back, patted Mith reassuringly on the head, wet one finger and smoothed an eyebrow, then leisurely picked up his bow, aimed and twanged.

Mats leaped backwards, collapsing on top of Silk with a very realistic death rattle. Beech and Mith embraced, ignoring Silk, still flat beneath Mats.

Moraelyn had begun laughing when Silk first leaped out. Alieria had waited for Beech's appearance. Now tears were running down her cheeks. Moraelyn was doubled over, pounding his fist against a tree. Ripples and giggles of silvery laughter sounded all around and showers of gold coins fell into the circle. The Companions gathered themselves together and bowed, as humans did.

"Again, do it again!"

"Nooooo!" Moraelyn gasped, still laughing. "Ah, you came nearer killing me than the sow did! I beg mercy!"

"Another night, gentle persons...our king has had a very long day. We thank you all."

"Gods, had the entire town seen?" Edward stared behind him, but they were all melting away into the dark. "That's not what happened." he yelled. "You were a hero. They made fun of you."

"Yes, yes and yes. Especially the last. By Jephre himself, that was funny!"

"They all saw that! And you're going to let them do it again?" Edward was scandalized. They had all looked ridiculous.

"Let them? It'll be done all over Tamriel for centuries to come, I doubt not. But never again so well."

"But it didn't happen like that at all."

"It would have if Mats...I mean the sow had charged again. Ariana's bow would have been far more effective than my poor blade. And she'd have seen Moraelyn leap like a khajiit!" His finger smoothed an eyebrow in a gesture typical of Alieria and he went off again into a long

laugh. "Aye, she'd have slain the beast with a look, if she couldn't find an arrow. Mats, you were more like the sow than she like herself. Bigger, too, I swear! Mith, you old rogue, only you could look so innocent."

"Buuut, it's not true!" Edward protested.

"Boy, you think there's only one truth? Was what you saw today truth? Did you see all the truth? Even of what did happen? What you saw here tonight will light up truths unseen, if you allow it, you could spend a lifetime reflecting on it and yet not see it whole, for it goes ever further and deeper, spreading like ripples in a pool, beyond us all and out into the deep stillness of forever. What happens is only a tiny part of truth...maybe the least part. And what you see is smaller yet."

Edward still thought that a king really ought to have more dignity. But he didn't say so.

**[30.4] King Edward IV**

## King Edward, Part IV

by Anonymous

## Chapter 4: Stories

Edward faced his mother defiantly. "I'm not sick and I'm not a baby. I can stay here by myself. I don't need Mith." There was a dangerous glint in Moraelyn's eyes. Alera's lips thinned. "You will mind him, Edward."

"Yes, madam," Edward said sulkily.

"Come on, wife. Mith knows how to deal with princes who don't want his company." The three adults laughed a bit in their irritating way at a joke he didn't understand.

The weather was drizzly and Edward had the sniffles. His mother had decided that he shouldn't go out, even though they were only going visiting. Moraelyn had taken his side, but threw out his hands and raised his brows at Edward in a helpless gesture when Alera insisted that he stay behind. Mith, whom Edward liked the least of the Companions, had volunteered to stay with him. Even Ssa'ass would have been better. Mith was scruffy looking. Like a stableboy. And cheeky, even for a Companion. Edward sulked silently for awhile longer. Mith had fetched a broom and was sweeping the house out, brushing dirt from the room above into the room Edward was in. What on earth was the use of staying in when there wasn't really any 'in' to stay in? Edward got tired of sulking, fetched a broom and went up to help sweep.

"Mith", Edward said. "have you ever been to the Crystal Tower?"

"I have. It's an unchancy place at first, but you'll grow used to it." Mith was applying his broom with energy and whistling. "Sweeping was kind of fun here. There weren't any sides to the platforms so all you had to do was brush the dirt and leaves over the side. You started at the top and worked your way down."

"You're quick with the broom, Mith. I haven't half finished my side yet. Will there be others there like me?"

"Oh, some children, I'd think. Most'll be somewhat older. I should be quick with a broom. My father had me sweeping out the king's stables when I was your age. I used to dream and talk too much like you; he beat me for it. So I learned to be quick."

Edward swept faster, stirring up dust. "Not like that, boy. Watch me. Anyway, there's no hurry; it's just habit with me. Moraelyn'd serve me my head on a platter if I touched you. My father, heh, he was always...well, he was a hard man to please. He was a Nord."

"Your father?" Edward stared at Mith, but Mith looked much like the other Dark Elves he'd seen. Not many. Dark elves didn't come to Daggerfall; Gerald had banned them. But he'd seen

some on his rare trips to other courts. And there were some in Firsthold besides Moraelyn and Mith. "Did he have red hair?" Mith's hair was a dark red. Gerald had red hair. "He tended the stables for Moraelyn?" No wonder Mith looked like a stableboy. But Edward kept his tone polite. Mith had a sharp tongue...and Edward knew that neither of his parents would be sympathetic if he complained that Mith had been impertinent.

"He did have red hair. Maybe I got mine from him...but mostly mixed elf and human children come out dark elf. No, Moraelyn wasn't a king then or expecting to be...'sides this was in Blacklight, where I was born. Moraelyn's brother was king in Ebonheart in those days. He came up to visit our King and brought Moraelyn along. To keep him out of trouble, he said." Mith grinned. "I grinned when I heard him say that, and I saw the boy looking at me out of the tail of his eye, but he wouldn't take notice. Like I was the dirt or something worse. His brother tossed him a pouch and told him to go into town and get his knife mended. Jerked his thumb at me and told me to show him the way."

"Moraelyn said he didn't need an escort to find a store and stalked off like princes do." Mith grinned knowingly at Edward. But the grin wasn't unfriendly. Edward smiled back a bit, and Mith went on. "Our king eyeballed me, so I took off after him. Moraelyn didn't spare me so much as a glance. Went four blocks out of his way, down by the wharfs, and when I tried to tell him where the store was he shoved me right off the pier. I could Levitate, of course, but he caught me by surprise and I went in with a big splash, and everyone laughing like jackasses. I got myself out and went straight to the store and waited for him - but not so he could see me - and when he finally showed up, I lifted the pouch right off him. He didn't even know it was gone. So in he goes and tosses the knife on the counter and tells the smith to fix it right off. Which he does. Only then Moraelyn can't pay him, tells the smith he's the King of Ebonheart's brother, the smith just laughs and says, 'And I'm the Archmagister.' Then the smith calls the guard and three of them show up. Well, Moraelyn wasn't what he is now - three guards wouldn't even warm him up nowadays - but he was even faster then. He was out of there so fast he nearly knocked me over at the door. He lost the guards pretty quick; all that armor slows 'em down. I found him crouching in one of those hedge mazes in the park. He was doubled over out of breath but still I stood a good ways off while I asked him real nasty if he needed an escort back to the Palace. Not that I was planning to go back! I was gonna take the money and run and never look back, I tell you! But I had to have the last word. I wasn't born high but I was born proud."

"He glared at me for a minute or so, catching his breath, then he just rolled over and started to laugh that laugh of his. Prince or no, I started to like him then. When we'd finished laughing, more or less, we started talking. I told him I didn't want to go back. Nor dared to. 'Princes don't get blamed, Prince,' I said, 'Stableboys do.' He said that wasn't entirely the case, but he saw my point. Then he said that as I was his escort then he must obey his brother and come with me. And that his name was Moraelyn, not Prince. We've been together ever since....more or less."

Edward smiled politely. He could see why Mith had run away, but not why Moraelyn had gone with him. Unless he was afraid to face his brother about the stolen money. Edward tried to imagine Moraelyn being afraid to face anyone and failed. "I wish I was brave. Like you and Moraelyn."

"Why, you are brave. And your courage will grow with the rest of you."

"Are there only High Elf boys at the Tower?"

"There'll be other sorts, too, most likely. A few Dark Elves, for sure. D'ye miss your own kind?"

Edward shook his head. "Human boys don't like me much anyway. Nor High Elf boys..." His eyes filled suddenly and he turned his head away. But Mith's voice was unexpectedly gentle. "I thought you wanted to go to the Tower."

"I do. But..."

"You'll be lonely."

Edward nodded.

"That's a hard thing to face."

"Did you go there alone, Mith?"

"No. Moraelyn did, but he was older than you, by a good bit. A grown man, in fact. They didn't take any but High Elf students in those days, you know. But Moraelyn heard of them and said he wanted to go there. We were together already, the seven of us, save for Alieria, and a handy bunch in a fight. Moraelyn had already gotten that Dragon's Blade he wears, and the Dragon's Tooth to go with it - remind me to tell you about that sometime - and he was a famous fighter already. And the rest of us aren't slackers. But he thought we could be better at the spellcasting and the Tower was the place to learn that. Well, no one goes near the Tower without an invitation. No one! No one would even tell you where it was. But they'd tell you where NOT to go. So he went there. Alone. One morning he was gone and there a note saying for us to wait for him. So we did, here in Firsthold. He was gone two weeks, then he came back one night, rowing across with the tide. He just said they'd accepted him, but he couldn't say anything more about it. But he asked me to come back with him."

"'They want me?' 'Well, they've accepted one Dark Elf,' he said. 'One more shouldn't bother them too much.' So we go there, and bless me if the Archmagister himself didn't meet us at the door and demand to know the meaning of this. I wanted to turn myself into a rock! I was wishing hard that I was stable dung! And figured I was like to get my wish soon. But Moraelyn speaks up real polite that this is the friend he'd mentioned and the Archmagister had expressed an interest in his abilities, and naturally he'd want to see for himself."

"But the Archmagister was real interested. See, they don't wear armor or carry anything but a staff and a dagger. They think it interferes with their spellcasting, all that metal. But Moraelyn could cast pretty well even with chain and with any one-hand weapon at all. And I could cast wearing leather and as much as a saber, though it's an unwieldy weapon; I like my short sword better. Truth, they didn't think that much of me, but Moraelyn...he'd camped outside their door. And when they tried to move him he just sat there! They threw all the spells they had at him, the troll guards, everything. Nothing. He laid the trolls out flat and left 'em to regenerate. If they tried to beat him with their staffs he'd ward them off with his blade and the spells didn't turn him a hair."

Edward's mouth gaped open. "How'd he do that!?!!" He said.

"Well, it was a trick, in a way. He'd picked up something that came natural to Willow. See, Willow is different."

"I didn't know Willow could cast!"

"Well, she doesn't have any mana, ordinarily....but she can absorb it if you cast a spell at her, see. O'course it wasn't much use to her, since she'd never been able to learn what t'do with it once she got it. Couldn't get it back once it was gone, so she couldn't practice. Until Morelyn got hold of her and trained her. Well, Moraelyn had figured out pretty much how Willow did what she did....though it cost Moraelyn mana to do what came natural to Willow. So Moraelyn sat there absorbing everything they threw at him and burning it off into a big shield. Drove 'em wild."

"He said the Archmagister could best him, though." Edward suspected that Mith was making up the whole story.

"Well, so he did, when he finally came. But all the rest of 'em together couldn't do it. And all Moraelyn wanted was to study with them. We were a sight, the two of us dark elves in our battle gear among all that white and gold. I felt like a fish out of water, but Moraelyn was interested in what they had to say....and you can bet they hung on every word he said. Not too many words at first. After a fortnight or so, he told me one night to tell the Archmagister that he'd be back in a couple of days. And he shows up with Silk! 'Course he'd been telling 'em about the Khajiits...and they'd been asking questions."

"The Archmagister's no fool. He just stared at Silk, and she purred real loud and rubbed up against him and asked 'How ya doin', Archmagister, baby?' The Archmagister kinda pushes Silk away and says in a whisper, 'How many more?'"

"Just two, sir."

"What are they?"

"Wood elves, sir."

"Just wood elves. Plain ordinary wood elves. No horns, hooves or tails."

"Yes sir. Ah, one of them has an extraordinary Absorb ability with some very unusual features. The other's just a Bard."

"Very well. You may bring the one with the Absorb. We don't want a Bard! They are not true mages."

"Well, that's most generous of you, sir, but the Bard's her brother, sir and I swore to their parents that I wouldn't separate them. So it'll just be the three of us."

"Her brother."

"Aye, a pair of twins."

"You may bring them both."

"So three days later he's back with the twins AND Ssa'ass AND Slave. The Archmagister looks at them and sort of bobs up and down, but he speaks real quiet. 'Dark Elf, by pair of twins, did you mean TWO SETS of twins? Are you going to tell me that these...these are twins???' Well, I could see that Moraelyn was kinda sorry he hadn't thought of trying that, but he said, 'No sir, the twins are Beech and Willow. The Argonian and the Nord are not prospective initiates. They are specimens. For your collection. You don't have any like them so I thought...'"

"'You thought. I do not have a dragon either! Are you going to think to bring me that next?'"

"'Oh, aye, I could. Would you like one?'"

"'Tell me you are not serious.'"

"'Well, I couldn't promise. And it would take quite a long time, a year maybe, but...'"

"The Archmagister's eyes rolled up toward heaven. 'Thank you, All-Mother, I have at least a year to prepare.' he whispered."

"I don't think Mats and Ssa'ass should have been made specimens. They're people. Even if they aren't elves."

"Oh, they made Ssa'ass an initiate when they found out that he had some interesting Heal spells."

"But Mats?"

"Mats never minds anything. He hasn't a bit of magic; he couldn't be an initiate. Anyway he'd have hated it. He spent his time gaming with the guards. When he wasn't being studied. Seems he has some interesting magic resistances. Anyway, since then, the initiates aren't just High Elves. And they don't all follow the Mage way."

"I shall. I shall be just like the Archmagister."

"Oh, aye, exactly," Moraelyn's voice sounded lightly behind him. "I'll cut the ears off a donkey for thee and dye thy skin with saffron. Bleach thy hair white and stretch thee a foot" Moraelyn swung him high. "Art well, son? I told thee so, Alieria. He's not ill at all. Good, because the Archmagister's returned. We go to the Tower tomorrow."

'We' was just Moraelyn and Edward. Alieria had caught Edward's cold and they took some pleasure in insisting she remain in bed. Moraelyn rowed them across the river in a small boat and they walked for most of the day, resting a little at midday. It was evening when they reached the tower and the setting sun was glinting off it. Even the sea far below looked red. There was a hush over the countryside.

"It's tall, isn't it?" Edward paused to look.

"Towers generally are."

"Did you really..." Edward broke off. Questions starting in that fashion did not draw satisfactory answers from the elf.

"Has Mith been telling thee tales? He's had ten years to polish that one. I doubt not it glistens like the Tower."

"He told me how you met, too."

"I thought he would."

"I didn't understand why you went off with him? He was a thief and a stableboy and you were a prince."

"You have just named three excellent reasons, Prince."

"You never give me serious answers."

"A serious charge. Very well, then. I saw myself through Mith's eyes and disliked what I saw: a callous bully and a coward, fit to be neither boy nor man nor prince. Why did you run off, Prince?"

Edward hung his head mutely. "Nay, I do not require answers. Come, it grows late." Moraelyn reached his hand for Edward's, but Edward shook him off. If Moraelyn was a coward what did that make Edward? He looked at the Tower door where Moraelyn had demanded and won entrance, though all would shut him out. Edward could never do anything like that, but at least he could walk in on his own as an invited guest.

**[30.5] King Edward V**

King Edward, Part V  
by Anonymous

**Chapter 5: In the Crystal Tower**

Inside the Tower, Edward's first impression was of whiteness. Floors, walls, ceiling, all were white and radiated light. Their footsteps made soft crunching noises on the rough floor surface. Except for that, it was very still, with occasional soft, unrecognizable far-off sounds. Moraelyn moved confidently through winding halls and long rooms. He seemed very black in all that white. They passed long pools of water with fountains that sparkled in the light.

"Where is everyone?" Edward whispered.

"At table, I hope. I'm hungry. Aren't you?"

"No." Abruptly a big, broad ugly shape appeared in front of them and roared a challenge. Edward grabbed for Moraelyn's arm with both hands. Moraelyn shook him off irritably. "Gods, boy, don't grab my sword arm if ever you do spot a monster. Stay clear!" But Moraelyn didn't reach for his blade. He stood still while the monster wrapped its long arms around him and pounded on his back, still roaring. Moraelyn roared back and pounded on the monster's chest. Then he introduced Edward to the Captain of the Archmagister's guard.

"Don't hug him," Moraelyn warned the troll, who grinned at Edward showing pointy teeth. "He'll break."

"I thought trolls were dangerous!" Edward gasped as they ascended a long winding stairway.

"They are. I'll have bruises for a fortnight. I'd have shielded, but I didn't like to hurt his feelings."

"He likes you?!"

"Oh, aye, it can be done, you see."

"Why does the Archmagister keep troll guards?"

"They keep the rats down."

More trolls, but these paid them little heed. Another long stairway. More corridors. A sort of guardroom where three trolls appeared to be gaming with bones. One of them shambled to his feet and led them down a shadowy passage. A row of cages with huge rats, then some with small odd creatures that looked rather like elves seen in a badly distorted mirror (though Edward kept this observation to himself). They gobbled and squeaked as the elf and boy paced quickly by.

"Goblins," Moraelyn said with distaste. They turned a corner and went past two cages that held only large stone statues. There seemed to be more cages off down other hallways. The troll unlocked a huge black metal door. It clanged shut behind them. A very large green and yellow hooved creature sat man-like in one corner. Its unwinking eyes didn't flicker as they passed quickly and climbed still another stair. More white halls. These were patrolled by huge black dogs that sniffed at them as they passed. Edward stretched a hand to pet one, but it snarled at him.

"I wouldn't." Moraelyn said.

"Yes Sir."

They came to another massive black metal door. A voice sounded. "What is black and white, has one body, two heads, four arms, four legs, two red eyes and two brown?"

"That's disgusting!" Moraelyn yelled at the door, hands on hips.

"You are correct, mortal. You may pass." The door swung slowly open, creaking. There was no one behind it, just a narrow stairway that wound sharply. It seemed dark above. Moraelyn raced up the stairs, leaving Edward clinging to the bottom rail, shaking. There was not a thing to do but follow.

"Welcome, Edward." The Archmagister stood white and gold in the center of a large dim room. Huge windows looked out on the purple twilit sea below. "Come here, child. Give me your hands."

Edward put his hands in the Archmagister's who smiled down at him. Edward's fatigue and fear vanished instantly. He smiled back at the Archmagister, who said softly. "It is well. You may go," to the furious dark elf who stood glowering to one side. Edward was barely aware of him, his whole attention occupied by the Archmagister.

"Goodbye, Edward."

"Bye." Edward didn't take his eyes off the Archmagister. From far away he heard the dark elf go down the stairs.

"He calls you son," the Archmagister said.

"Yes sir. I asked him if I might call him father."

"But you are not entirely comfortable about it."

Edward sighed. "No sir."

"That may be as well. You will return to Daggerfall one day. And then you must be Corcyr's son. So let the claim be on Moraelyn's side." The Archmagister moved companionably to the windows with him. The dusk was fast gathering as Edward stared out over the hill through which they'd journeyed. A dark figure appeared below and strode swiftly off into the night.

"That's Moraelyn! I thought he was going to stay the night. It's dangerous out there alone in the dark. There are evil things out there. Can't you..."

"Dangerous for any evil that meets Moraelyn in his present mood. He will go safely, I promise you."

"Oh. But I haven't thanked him. He's been very kind, really. Why was he so angry about the door? It was just a silly question. The answer was him and my mother, when they're asleep and I'm not there. How do you make a door talk? Is it an illusion?"

"That's three questions. Which of them do you want answered? Aren't you hungry? Would you like a bowl of stew?"

"Yes, please. I'd like to hear about the door, please."

"Ah. You think the talking door may prove more comprehensible than a surly dark elf? More interesting? Or safer?" The Archmagister's large golden eyes regarded the boy thoughtfully.

"I don't know if I, uh, like him. Sometimes I think I...and then other times I...do you understand about liking? He said he didn't."

"You would be more comfortable if you felt the same way about him at all times, yet you do not."

"Yes, that's it, exactly. You do understand."

"Moraelyn is not a comfortable man."

"Well, I don't mean that exactly. Sometimes he is. Like when we rode the dragon."

The Archmagister laughed aloud. His laughter reminded Edward of chimes. "Yes, yes. I find comfort myself in having Moraelyn near at hand when dragons are about."

A young high elf brought in a bowl of stew and set it down on the table. Edward felt a bit disappointed that the stew had come in such an ordinary way. Until he remembered that the Archmagister hadn't sent for the stew.

"The priest at home in Daggerfall said it was a mark of evil things, that they cannot bear the light," Edward said between mouthfuls. "Moraelyn doesn't like sunlight. And he's black."

"I see. Do you know what evil is?"

"Um, well, if you do bad things, then you're evil?"

"I see. If the cook had burnt the stew, would he then be evil?"

Edward grinned. "No, just a bad cook. But if he did it on purpose, then I guess he'd have done an evil thing...but maybe he wouldn't be altogether evil. Maybe he was just angry about something."

"Or perhaps the sort of person who is pleased by spoiling others' pleasure?"

"I guess that'd make my little brothers evil. They sure like to spoil my fun."

"And you?"

Edward felt his face redden. "I don't take any notice of them," he said quickly. The Archmagister's large golden eyes regarded him steadily. To his own dismay, Edward began to cry. He bawled like a baby. "I don't know what's wrong with me," he gasped. "I never cry, really, I don't...hardly ever..."

"Why ever not?" Edward looked up. His tears had blurred his sight, but there seemed to be tears on the Archmagister's face. His hand reached up to feel the wetness. "You have been very alone, have you not?" the Archmagister said.

"Yes. Until you brought the unicorn for me, I was all alone. They endure no evil," Edward sighed with satisfaction, feeling relaxed and comfortable. The Archmagister was wonderful.

"We summoned the unicorn, Moraelyn and the dragon and I and others. It's a great magic and one no single man or woman may command. But don't trouble yourself overmuch with judging good and evil. That's a human notion. Life is complex; I know of nothing that is wholly good or wholly evil. Not even the unicorn."

Edward's time in the Tower passed quickly. There were few other novices and the youngest of these was several years older than Edward. The boy spent several hours each day with the Archmagister. He learned to cast a few spells and to open his mind so that he could renew his magicka quickly while he slept. But often they just talked. Sometimes Edward was given a book to read. Other times he was allowed to choose one from the thousands in the library. He usually tired of them quickly. He didn't read Elvish script easily; his tutor had taught him the letters, but their few books were in Bretic.

Spellcasting was more fun. Fire spells came easily to him and he learned to shield himself readily, but to his chagrin, he couldn't Heal at all. He invariably made things worse for the unlucky rats he was allowed to practice on.

"I don't know what I'm doing wrong!" Edward cried out in frustration. He sent a dart of fire at the writhing rat and it turned into a charred corpse.

"Edward, it will be well if you let the Heal spells wait awhile yet."

"Moraelyn said Light Heal is the first spell anybody learns," Edward said sulkily.

"Did he? Well, he is a practitioner of magic, not a theorist. Even I would hesitate to say what a Breton might or might not learn, and when he might learn it. You are the first of your people with whom I have worked. Certainly Moraelyn has had no experience with your race, except for your mother, of course."

"My mother can't do magic."

"No, but we think the ability lies within her. She has not been able to learn to master it, possibly because she was too old when she first tried. If you want my opinion it is your thoughts and not your hands which are causing your difficulty. Weeping might help."

"I don't feel like crying," Edward said rather sullenly. He felt more like kicking something, although incinerating the rat had helped relieve some of that.

"Meditation might help, then."

**[30.6] King Edward VI**

King Edward, Part VI

by Anonymous

## Chapter 6: Training

The day Edward was to leave the Archmagister summoned him, presented him with a mithril staff and bade him farewell.

Back in his small cell Edward removed his novitiate robe and donned the grey shirt, black pants and red sash he'd worn to the Tower. He fingered the sash lovingly. His mother had purchased the shirt and pants, saying they looked sturdy and maybe wouldn't show the dirt from the journey. Moraelyn had given him the silk sash with its embroidery of twined leaves and flowers, birds and butterflies in mithril, dwarven and elven metallic threads. But he'd waited until they were across the channel. Alera had said it cost too dear; she'd suggested cutting down one of Moraelyn's old ones to fit, but the elf had adamantly refused to let her have any of them. Edward smiled, remembering, and wrapped the sash twice round his waist then knotted the ends carefully. He took the staff and ran down to meet his parents.

He'd meant to fling himself at them, but Moraelyn was alone and Edward stopped still. "Where's my mother? Is she...?"

"She wanted to stay and choose a horse for you. Didn't trust it to Beech."

"A horse? For me! Really?"

"Of course. You can't walk all the way to Morrowind."

"I thought I'd have to ride behind...someone. Look, the Archmagister gave me...my staff! Isn't it beautiful?"

The elf took it and hefted it, trying a few swings and feints. "Good balance and weight for thee, I think. Light for me. Show me how you use it. Suppose I attack you." He used his bare hands and Edward fell into a defensive position, blocked him, then thrust the staff toward Moraelyn's ribs. He danced easily aside, but praised the boy.

"A mage should have a dagger, too. I thought you might like to have Tooth here." Edward's eye popped. Tooth had an ebony blade and a hilt made from a real dragon's tooth. The elf slid it from its sheath and handed it to Edward who took it carefully. The blade had a wicked point and the edge was sharp enough to shave with. Mats borrowed it sometimes. He'd carved the hilt, too.

"Are you sure Mats doesn't mind?"

"Quite sure." Moraelyn unbuckled his belt and slid the sheath off it. There was a new belt for

Edward of snakeskin, soft and pliable and a buckle with the black rose of Morrowind on it, just like Moraelyn's. "It's from the Companions." He knelt to fit the belt and dagger and the sash over it properly, and Edward threw his arms about his neck. "It's wonderful. I do thank thee and them, too! And oh, I've missed all of thee so much."

"We missed you, too, son. Let's go or we'll miss our tide."

"I wouldn't want to worry mother," he said, trying to sound casual about having a mother that would worry about him.

"No fear; I told her not to look for us until tomorrow night....just in case. But we'll surprise her."

"Good thinking."

They made good speed and reached the inlet before the tide was full.

"Shall I show you how to use Tooth, or would you rather rest?"

"Tooth! I can rest in the boat while you work."

Moraelyn shielded himself and Edward too, saying that Tooth's bite was no joke. "I could have shielded myself," Edward said proudly. "I'm good at that. But my Heals go all wrong."

"It'll come. Give it time."

Evidently Tooth wanted time too. Try as he might, he couldn't get near the elf with the blade, even though Moraelyn kept his feet planted and simply swerved his body, ducking and weaving...and laughing. Frustrated, Edward sheathed Tooth and picked up the staff and whacked at him, swinging it with both hands. It wasn't doing any harm, but it made satisfying sounds as it thwacked against the spell shield. Moraelyn let him hit, but stopped the staff easily when the spell had been used up. Edward threw it on the ground and turned away; the elf reached for him in consolation. Edward snatched Tooth from the sheath and thrust it straight at the elf's heart. The blade was knocked spinning from his hand. Edward had braced to stop the thrust and hold it and he felt the shock even through his shield. Then Moraelyn was kneeling before him, nursing his left hand across his right knee, his face grey with shock and disbelief. Blood was gushing from his wrist like a fountain. "Give me thy sash!"

"I...I didn't..." Edward's teeth were rattling in his head. He felt sick and dizzy. Bile washed up in his mouth. "D-d-didn't--m-m-mean." So much blood.

"Boy, don't faint now. I need thy aid. The sash. Now, Edward! Pack it into the wound. Gods, what a mess!" The hand was half severed at the wrist. Edward sat down abruptly, shaking all over, but his hands packed the sash into the open wound, then he wrapped the rest round the hand and wrist.

"Take my sash and make a sling." Moraelyn eased the injured limb into the sling and then released his other hand. He took the water bottle from his belt and drank it down. "I need more water. Where's thy staff? There's a well two miles back. Where's Tooth? Go find it and don't cut yourself on it."

"I don't want it."

"Not many blades have bathed in Moraelyn's blood. 'Twill bring you luck. Do as I say."

"The tide's in."

"Aye and Firsthold could be on Jone for all the good it does us. I can't row one handed."

"I could..."

"No, you cannot. You haven't the strength. The current's swift here. I prefer to die on land. Edward, we cannot stay here. The blood smell will draw beasts. If I faint, get well away and climb a tree. And pray." He climbed to his feet and leaned on the staff, breathing hard. "Stay close, but don't grab at me, no matter what happens." He took a small step, then another.

"I'm sorry."

"Doubtless. You picked a poor time and place to turn assassin. A good assassin always has an escape planned."

"Yessir." Edward sniffed back his tears. "Sir, I cannot Heal you, but I can restore some vigor."

"Can you? 'Twould be of great help." The spell Edward cast shook the elf; he gasped, but stood straighter and firmer after the shock wore off. "I can do it again," Edward offered eagerly.

"Nay. You have plenty of power but want finesse. But 'tis much better, now."

Moraelyn was walking better; he sounded better too. Edward tried to blot the picture of the injury out of his mind. They moved slowly, Moraelyn leaning against a tree from time to time to rest. Nothing molested them. After an interminable time of silent travelling they reached the old well. Moraelyn drained the first bottle and Edward refilled it, drank himself, then filled it yet again.

"We'll spend the night in there." 'There' was a large ramshackle building, apparently deserted. The elf kicked the locked door open. Inside it was pitch dark. "Light?" Edward offered.

"Nay. I can see. Save your power and stay by me." There was a skittering noise. Rats! Edward shielded them both without thinking, pulled Tooth out, and placed his back to the elf's. A rat leaped and drove itself onto the blade. Moraelyn swung the staff and laid out two more. Others scurried off.

"Well done, lad!" They found a small windowless room and shut the door behind them. There seemed to be some wood about; probably it had been some sort of storage room off the kitchen. Moraelyn sat down against the wall.

"So. You can use a knife. Was all that pretense? To put me off my guard?"

Edward was appalled. He burst into tears, protesting that he'd never harm Moraelyn willingly. "I meant it for jest; I thought it'd make you laugh...I was angry, at first, but at myself, my clumsiness, not you...it was a sudden thought....I love you dear!"

The elf reached out with his good arm and pulled Edward down to him. "That's worth a hand, then, any day."

Edward sobbed against his shoulder while Moraelyn soothed him with pats. "You are my real father."

"Edward, I am not..."

"Nay, thou art. Thee puts my well-being ahead of thine and loves me when I least deserve it. Thee's been kind and generous and never asked anything of me save to my own profit. Thee'd give thy very life for mine. That's what real fathers do. And I've given thee naught but pain. He who sired me despises me and my mother because we are unlike him. We are not like you either, and yet you love us well. I will do better by you, dear Father."

"I gave thee cause enough for offense. I took thy mother from thee."

"You risked losing her because you would not part me from my father. You did not know me and my father was your bitter enemy. And yet you took thought for us. You could not know how unnatural he is. It isn't in you."

"Granted. And yet the offense and your anger at it remain."

"I love you!" Edward protested. But he heard an angry edge in his voice.

"And hate me." Moraelyn's voice was so calm and quiet that they might have been discussing the weather.

"I can't do both....can I?"

"Can you?"

"I didn't mean to hurt you."

"I believe you."

"Am I...am I, evil? I was sorry; I'd give anything if it hadn't happened, but...I..".

"Took some measure of satisfaction in it."

Edward's throat was choked with sobs; he couldn't speak, but nodded into Moraelyn's shoulder. The elf's hand stroked him gently.

"Did I'ric tell you of the Daedra?"

"The demons? No. Is it a demon makes me do such things? I am evil, then."

"No, you are not. But the daedra feed on actions such as that. They encourage them. And your anger draws them. But they can't make you do anything. And they or it's not inside you. But it is connected to you."

"I don't want it. I want it to go away. How can I make it go away?"

"Why don't you want it? You draw power from it. That's what let you shield us both with the rats attacked."

"Mana? That doesn't come from demons."

"No, but the ability to use it can. Look, some of your deeds feed the daedra. But you draw power from it at the same time. Then the power's yours, to use as you choose."

"Do you have a daedra?"

"I do and it's a big one, too, but I think everyone has one or more. Some are stronger than others, that's all. But don't go around asking after them. It's not polite."

"I want mine to go away!" Edward wailed.

"So you say. But pretending it isn't there will not accomplish that. Having a daedra is a bit like riding a horse. You must keep control. The daedra do not care for you. It would as lief feed off your pain or injury or death as any other, and find a new host. They do not think or plan as we can and I do not think they experience time as we do. So acts that feed the daedra take place in the moment and while you are caught up in them, past and future cease to exist for you too. It is an intensely pleasurable experience, but it can also be very dangerous. And very addictive, so that you begin to think only of feeding your daedra. You cease to think of the gods and those you love and even yourself. When you have walked too far along that path, you lose the will to choose another."

"How terrible! What must I do then?"

"It is terrible, the worst that can befall a person. Remember this night. How you felt. Learn to recognize the daedra's hunger for what it is, and think about what you do. You are young and this is heavy for you, but you are at risk. Ah!" The elf's body stiffened and he caught his breath. Edward guessed that the wound was painning him.

Moraelyn said that he must sleep a bit, and could Edward keep watch and wake him in an hour's time. Then he could set a lock on the door and they could both rest.

"Aye, sir...and I might do somewhat more. I cannot set a lock, but..." The door would not latch, nor would it stay open, but would swing nearly shut. Edward felt about near the wall behind it and found a wedge. He shut the door and drove the wedge home with a chunk of wood. "I thought so. 'Tis awkward to pass such a door with both arms full of wood. We have such at ho...in Gerald's palace. Now anything trying to come in will rouse you; you can use your power to cast heal instead of lock."

"Why, well thought of, indeed." He freed his blade and laid it on the floor beside him. "We may as well both sleep then."

They slept fitfully. There were often scrabblings at the door and in the walls, but nothing entered their small closet. Moraelyn cast Heal several time during the night. By morning he pronounced himself as fit "as a one-handed man can be." He unwrapped the sash-bandage and inspected the wound. The bleeding was stopped; the hand was still warm to the touch; it no longer hurt him nor was it swollen or discolored. But the wound was still open and the hand useless. Nerves and muscles had been severed and some of the small bones broken. Such repair was beyond his skill. Edward, feeling the daedra feed on the sight, turned quickly away.

Moraelyn grinned. "You may as well let it feed; it's a harmless sort of feeding. The damage is done."

"I mean to starve it," Edward said firmly.

"You can try to do that or you can learn to control it instead, and still walk with the gods. I think we'd best go back to the Tower."

"Aye, they'll be able to heal you there, will they not?"

"I know not. At the least they'll be able to attach it more firmly than it is at present. Ah, do not look so downcast. The skill to mend it is somewhere, if not in the Tower. Ssa'ass is good with battle injuries and there are Temples which know more of the healing arts than the Tower mages. Besides, it's only my left hand." He held up the wadded sash, stiff with his dried blood. "The color's more practical than thy mother thought. Let's see if we can wash it out a bit. Never have I come so ill-equipped on a journey. I might have been strolling down the main street in Ebonheart. Thy mother will kill me."

"Right after she kills me," Edward sighed. "At least returning to the Tower will delay that." They came out into the bright courtyard. The morning sun was already high in the western sky.

"Not so. Edward, the Companions are coming now! I hear them. Mara, let me think of a real good lie!"

Mith trotted into the courtyard. "Here they are!" he called back to the others. "By Torgo, you ARE injured. Let me see that. We thought to row across to meet you; we saw the blood on the shore and tracked you here. What attacked you?"

"A demon."

"A demon! What!? In the open like that in daylight? Gods, what was it carrying, an ebony dai-katana?" Mith whistled as he inspected the injury. Alieria and the others ran up. She hugged Edward, "Are you all right, darling? I was worried." then paled as she saw her husband's hand.

"You must be slowing down. How'd you let a demon do that to you?" Mith demanded.

"It was the boy...he grabbed at my arm in fright and my shield spell failed. It wasn't his fault; it was an accident. Ali, don't look at it. Edward, why don't you take thy mother to see the rat you killed?"

"I want to watch Ssa'ass," Edward objected, then remembered that it would feed his daedra. But he might learn something about healing if he watched, which would be a good thing. This was going to be more complicated than he'd thought.

"Oh, Edward," Alieria said. "You must keep clear in a fight."

"He killed a rat in the old inn there, after. Did right well. Kept his head, put his back to mine, shielded us both. Anyone's apt to panic in his first fight. Especially if he isn't expecting it."

Ssa'ass came up last, as usual, elbowed the others aside and inspected the injury, hissing. "I cann fixxxx thissss. It'ss cleann." He looked it over carefully, bending the hand back to open the wound. Then he brought the hand forward, so that the edges of the tissue met. He was very particular about getting it aligned just so. Then he had Mats hold it in place while he cast spells over it. All outer traces of the injury vanished, leaving not even a scar. Moraelyn swung it with satisfaction, twitching his fingers. "Thanks, Ssa'ass. It's stiff, but..."

"Tomorrow, I ffinisshhh."

"My poor baby," Alieria fussed over Edward. "You must have been so frightened. And you spent the whole night in that awful house?"

"I'm not a baby. I wasn't afraid; my father was there."

**[30.7] King Edward VII**

King Edward, Part VII

by Anonymous

## Chapter 7: Dragon

"So you saw a demon? And killed a rat with Tooth? That's a fine ebony dagger, Tooth is. They're rare so you want to take real good care of it," Mith said. "I can't tell you about the blade except it came from Moraelyn's father. It's the one his brother sent him to repair just before we ran away. Would you like to hear about how they got the dragon's tooth that Mats carved the hilt from?"

Edward nodded, caressing the curved hilt with its lightly carved intertwined roses, thorns and leaves. It was well after supper and everyone but him and Mith had left the fire for one reason or another. Alieria and Moraelyn had gone for a walk hand in hand, Alieria holding Moraelyn's newly healed left hand in both of hers. They'd laughed and shaken their heads when he'd offered to come along, "Not tonight," Alieria had said. "Go to sleep soon. We'll be leaving before dawn." Willow had gone to visit a High Elf friend. Beech, Ssa'ass, Mats and the Khajiit woman, Silk, had also gone off together, laughing. They'd invited Mith to come along, but Mith had declined.

"Khajiits! They're all turning into a bunch of shameless Khajiits," Mith said. The short Dark Elf sat close to the glowing embers, knees to chest. His hair and eyes glowed in the dim light. "If you're going to pair, you should pair, not turn it into an tourney. They'll be selling tickets next. But each to his own. Khajiits think we're weird because we like eating as a group. Silk says it put her right off her food at first, listening to everybody chew. Well, having a bunch of watchers puts me off. I s'pose you're too young for this kind of talk."

Edward shrugged. It was a beautiful night, crisply cool, no moon, but the stars were very large and bright.

"Anyway, it was just a few months after Mats had joined up with us. We were up in Skyrim, travelling from town to town. Just three kids seeing the country a bit, picking up odd jobs where we could. Moraelyn entered tournaments if we heard about them, but he wasn't winning that much...just about enough to cover healing him up afterwards. You can get beat up pretty bad fighting Skyrim style - that's without shielding spells, or any other spells for that matter, no magic allowed - even if it isn't to the death. And he drew a few types that didn't mind seeing a little dark elf blood spilled in the sand. Or a lot. And the crowds were against him at first. It can get pretty lonely in the arena, especially if you're beating the home town favorite. And it's even worse if he's beating you. "Mats and me 'ud be the only ones for him, and sometimes we didn't dare cheer too loud. They'd look real funny at a Nord boy cheering a Dark Elf back then. 'Course Mats was so big, not many wanted to start anything with him. That was a long time ago. Moraelyn's the favorite now if things get tough. 'Course the crowds will cheer for a good match, but hardly anyone really wants to see him lose now. They like seeing the best, even if it comes wrapped in a dark elf hide. And when he walks into an arena you know you're seeing the best. Not but what they'd like seeing a Nord that's better. And

Mats may get there soon. He doesn't fight his best against Moraelyn, though. Maybe he doesn't want to, or maybe Moraelyn just knows him too well. Oh, well, you want to hear about the dragon..."

"So Moraelyn was gambling with this Nord in a tavern one night, trying to pick up a little easy gold. The pot's pretty big, and the man can't match his bet, so he says he'll put this map on the pile and tap Moraelyn. Says it's a map to the hiding place of the best blade ever made. Says there's a spell on it so that if you hit your opponent, you get as much heal as he gets hurt. That some Mage hid it just before he died so's only someone worthy of it can get to it."

"And you think I look worthy?' Moraelyn says, grinning. We were young and dumb, but not all that dumb."

"The Nord grins back and says 'I saw you fight in Falcreath, kid. You look like you'd take a chance.'"

"Why not? The story alone is worth the gold. You ought to be a Bard.' So anyway Moraelyn wins the pot and tosses the man enough back to keep his throat wet all evening. Just for laughs we look at the map. It showed the Dragon's Teeth Mountains down in Hammerfell. Real wild country. And there's an 'X' and some writing saying 'Fang Lair'. Mats gets excited and says he's heard of the place, but he'd never known just where it was."

"And you still don't,' I say. 'Any fool can draw a map, just as any fool can look at one. I could do as much myself.'"

"Mats says Fang Lair is an old dwarf mine, but there's supposed to be a dragon there now, and the dwarves are gone. Moraelyn looks real interested at the mention of a mine, and asks what they mined there. Mats says mithril and gold."

"Moraelyn says, 'Hmmmmmm.'"

"The mithril had him interested. We couldn't afford really good weapons. And mithril's scarce, but it's light to carry for its worth, and easy to mine and work if you know how; and he did. He didn't believe in the magic blade or the dragon, but he thought the mine might be real. Mining's in his blood, as it is in all the R'Aathim, the royal Kin of Ebonheart."

"It took us a couple of months to get there. We couldn't afford horses. We never would have found it without the map. It's tricky country, full of canyons and hidden valleys. We sure never expected what we saw when we did get there. You could see the towers from the canyon mouth, way back in there. Dark elves live right in caverns if they mine, but the dwarves had built a hall over the top of their mines. It's a pretty thing on the outside. Narrow towers, and arched bridges between them. Delicate looking; you wouldn't expect work like that from Dwarves. Merged right into the rocks too. And there was a big stone dragon mounted above the gate."

"There's your dragon, Mats,' I said. The inside wasn't much to look at, just rock wall. The doorway was enormous, but the doors were gone. There was a balcony running right around a big open pit, probably the start of the mine, turned into a hall. And right in the middle was more treasure than you can imagine piled up almost like a haystack that'd been flattened out. And what had flattened it was a golden dragon curled right over it; we didn't even see him at

first, 'cause he blended with the rest of the gold. Well, we just froze in place. We hadn't seen a sign of live dragon outside. The place smelled of brimstone, but most mines do. And there that dragon was, just lying there. And it's gotta be two miles to any kind of shelter."

"I told you there was a dragon,' Mats whispers."

"Shhhhhh,' Moraelyn says. 'Look what's in front of his nose.'"

"I'd been busy looking at his nose, believe you me. But there was a sword lying right there naked, sure enough...and the blade was dark metal that looked just like his dagger."

"You two start back,' Moraelyn says, 'I'm going to try for that blade, anyway. If that's not ebony, I'm a wood elf. Maybe the dragon's dead, or asleep for the winter, or maybe it's not alive at all. Just something the dwarves made to guard their treasure. Like the scarecrows the Nord farmers put in their grain fields. At worst, I'll distract him long enough for you to get clear.'"

"I'd a mind to take him up on it, but Mats just shook his head, and I was kinda ashamed to go back alone."

"Let's all just clear out,' I said. That thing looked real enough to scare me away. But Moraelyn casts Invisibility and heads on down the stair, not making a sound that even I could hear. I could see Mats hated letting him go down alone, but Mats couldn't sneak past a blind, deaf beggar in a fish market. So we strung our bows and figured we could try to get off a couple of shots and maybe get lucky and take out the eyes if the dragon woke up and went for Moraelyn. Mats and I move around to where we can get onto a tower stair fast if we have to, figuring the dragon can't get in there. Then we scrunch down and peer between the railings. Not that there was anything to see except the dragon lying there. Which really is a lot to see, at that."

"Then those dragon eyes popped open and my heart gave one big jump and then seemed to quit entirely."

"Ahhhhh! Dinner comes to me today,' the dragon says. 'Take a good look at my hoard, dark elf. You will not steal it nor even view it long, but your bones will keep it company...forever.'"

"I don't want your hoard, dragon, just the sword you guard. I'll trade you mine for it; mine's bigger.' I couldn't see Moraelyn, but his voice was coming from right near where the sword was. Which was practically in the dragon's mouth!"

"I get a meal and both swords. Why should I settle for just your poor sword?"

"Let me pass and I'll get you more gold from below.'"

"I have gold enough.' The dragon yawned and I thought he was going to swallow Moraelyn right then, but he turned his head away, away from us, too. Mats was looking to get a shot, but it was really dark in there for Nord eyes and he was scared of hitting Moraelyn, since he couldn't locate him that well by sound. 'Course Moraelyn's too smart to get between us and the dragon, but Mats wasn't smart enough then to think that far along. Slavery dulls the wits in

some ways, Mats says, and he hadn't been free very long. I could see well enough, and I could tell by sound exactly where Moraelyn was, but the shot was clean out of my range."

"The dragon goes on, 'But there is something you can do for me, elf, and prolong your life a few more minutes.'"

"A few more minutes sound pretty good just now, dragon. What would you ask of me?' Moraelyn's voice sounded as calm and easy as if he was asking if there would be rain tomorrow. 'He can keep his head in a tight spot, I'll give him that.'"

"I have a toothache. It's too far back for me to reach it with my claws. Canst see it, elf?' The dragon gapes his jaws to bare his teeth."

"Moraelyn's invisiblity spell wore off about then, and I could see him standing there staring up into that cavern of a mouth. 'Lower your head a bit so I can get a good look.' He puts out his hand and pulls the upper lip aside, cool as you please, and examines the inner gum carefully. Damndest thing I ever saw."

"It's abcessed. Thy gum wants lancing, and the tooth should come out. I can lance it if you trust me in there with a sword."

"And why should I trust you, dark elf? I hear no good of your kind."

"You must be spending too much time with Nords, then. I wouldn't be able to kill you before you killed me. Why should I even try? Listen, I have some friends up above. Suppose they hunt you up a nice fat deer. I'll lance your gum and you can let me go and eat the deer. Else you can just eat me now, toothache and all."

"Hssssssss. What makes you think your friends will return once they're away?"

"They're not very smart. I think for them. They'd be lost without me. Good hunting, guys! Uh, if they can't find a deer, is there anything else you'd like? Pig, maybe? A few rabbits? Nuts? Berries? Hurry up, will you?' But we had hand signals and his hands said to get out of there and stay out! I'd a been glad to; I mean I'm fond of Moraelyn but I didn't see my dying alongside would bring him any comfort. I'd a been glad to see him clear if it was me that was on the menu, and I figured he felt the same way. But that thick-skulled Nord wouldn't listen to me! Said if dying beside him was all we could do, then that's what we'd do. Nord nonsense. Sounds good in a song, though."

"So we took a couple hours getting a deer and headed back with it. I figured Moraelyn was filling the dragon's belly by now, and the dragon would be happy to add a deer, another Dark Elf and a Nord to round out his day's rations. But Moraelyn was still sitting there, chatting with the dragon. He didn't look that pleased to see us, either. Told us to leave the deer and go and he'd lance the abcess once we're away. But Mats says he's been thinking. Oh, brother, I thought. Mats doesn't think too often, and that's a good thing, really. He's decided he can get a chain round that bad tooth, fasten down the end to the floor, and then the dragon can give it a good yank himself."

"The dragon likes the idea, so Moraelyn lances that abcess to take the swelling down to where the dragon can gulp the deer with some comfort. And then they rig up a chain and get that

tooth out. Made a hell of a mess, that. Blood and pus everywhere. And Moraelyn's got us casting Heal spells on this dragon to stop the bleeding and close up the wound."

"Ah, hum, good, very good. All right, Moraelyn, you've proven yourself. Take the sword and go."

"Moraelyn looks at him. 'You mean this was some kind of test?' he says. 'How long have you had that toothache?'"

"Long indeed, as you measure time, mortal, yet not very long at all for dragonkind. Hear my story then: a scraggly young mage came along, hoping to steal my gold. I caught him at it; we had increasingly harsh words, and he attempted a spell aimed at me. His pitiful spell affected me little, and I killed him. But ummmm...' The dragon looked away briefly, then resumed his tale. 'The little runt had apparently cast a home-made Curse spell upon himself, and when I crunched him...' The dragon scowled fiercely, remembering, then continued, 'Anyway, the ache only came on bad when someone came along to try for the sword. The sharpest pain went away if I ate the intruder...but I usually didn't, though I've singed a few in self-defense; heh, waft a bit of fire and most of them fled. Deer are plentiful; there is something er, ah, unpleasant about eating someone you've talked to. That greasy mage gave me indigestion for days. Cramps and runny bowels and too much gas, even for a dragon. So that toothache never did completely go away. And the people who've come along haven't been very pleasant either...all in all one of the most unpleasant stretches in my life. I couldn't stay away from the vicinity of the sword for very long of course. Part of the curse."

"We could stay on for awhile, if you like. We're good company. I'm Moraelyn; my red-headed friend is Mith, and the big guy is Mats. I'd still like to look for mithril below and I've never had a dragon friend before."

"I might like that. You have good friends, and even though you have said that you must do the thinking for them. I think that they can do some thinking on their own, and it would appear that they have decided that you are a worthwhile fellow,' The dragon hesitated for a second and actually managed to look shy! 'You can call me Akatosh."

"So we stayed for a couple of weeks. Hunted with the dragon; now that's an experience! Searched the mines...didn't find much down there. But the dragon gave us the jewels from his hoard. Said he only needed the metal; they absorb it into their scales while they lie on it. So we did pretty well out of it after all. Moraelyn tried to give Mats the sword. Claimed that he'd have sure tried to kill that dragon if we hadn't come back, and would have been toasted. But Mats wouldn't take it. Said the dragon gave it to Moraelyn so that was clearly who was supposed to get it. Mats took the tooth, but he made the hilt you've got now and gave Moraelyn that, too. Told me he'd never had anything worth giving before, and it made him feel good. He's real pleased Moraelyn chose to give it to you."

"I think Mats should have got the sword," Edward said. "He didn't try to steal anything. It was really brave of him to come back, even when he didn't think it'd do any good. Moraelyn tried to steal, got caught and then just tried to talk his way out of it. You could all have been killed because of him."

"That's just what Moraelyn said. Ah, well, Mats likes that big axe of his better than a blade anyway."

Edward sighed. "I wish I was brave like Mats. I guess I'm more like you."

"Aye," Moraelyn's voice sounded behind him, startling the boy. "Tart tongued, like Mith. No matter. I'll be well pleased if you're as brave as Mith. And if once I'm gone they say no more of me than 'he did what he had to do', my spirit will be at peace."

**[30.8] King Edward VIII**

King Edward, Part VIII

by Anonymous

Chapter 8: Wilderland

The journey through Valenwood was pleasant. The weather held fair for the most part, with sunny days and cool nights. Bright leaves of scarlet, crimson, gold and green drifted down to form a carpet beneath their horses' feet. Valenwood was very different from the somber, steep forests of High Rock. When they reached the northern border, Edward, looking back, saw that the trees were mostly bare, shorn of their glory. Before them lay a wide green land of rolling hills with only a few stands of trees. It seemed to spread on forever.

"This is Wilderland, Edward," Moraelyn said. "Be on your guard. It seems a pleasant land, but no king's writ runs here. Each man's hand is against every other's and there are worse than men. All the races of Tamriel meet here, and clash, save thine, perhaps."

They journeyed for some days more with small incident, save one for a band of Khajiit raiders that crept up on their camp by night. These were easily repelled. Silk slew one and the rest ran off yowling. The gentle wood elf girl, Willow, lobbed fireballs after them. There were no roads, just small paths that criss-crossed one another and seemingly led nowhere.

After two weeks of steady riding they came to a bowl shaped place in the hills where the land was tilled. The fields looked fair and were stacked with harvest, but the folk were dispirited, ragged, and unfriendly. Questions about inns got only shrugs and puzzled looks. Armed bands challenged them at times and demanded to know their business. When Moraelyn said they were bound for Morrowind, they were told to pass through quickly and mind they stole nothing.

"Passage is all we wish," Moraelyn said quietly.

"Someone should teach these folk manners," the usually placid Mats growled.

"Thou mayst stay and open a school of etiquette, if it pleases thee," Moraelyn said, "I fear my life's too short to teach the lessons these villains require. Still, I like not the look of the sky; it looks even more evil than the folk. I think we'll try our luck in the town."

The town was surrounded by a palisade of wood and had a stout gate. Guards looked them over and refused them entrance. "None but humans enter here, elf. Take thy rabble and begone."

"I see. Ali, Mats, Edward, thou seemst to qualify for the hospitality here. The rest of us will shelter elsewhere."

Aliera announced that she would see them all blown back to Firsthold by the storm before she'd step within these gates. So they circled the town, passing a moat with stone walls within

and a keep of some sort within that. A track north took them past a small house with a large barn nearby. Both looked in poor repair, but Moraelyn sent Alieria and Edward to knock at the door and ask if they might sleep in the barn. The rest waited in the road.

An elderly woman answered their knock; she looked pleased to see them. "Stay? Aye, I'd be glad of the company. No need to sleep in the barn, though, lady. I've a room to spare. My name's Ora Engelsdottir." Alieria gestured toward the waiting Companions. The woman squinted toward them. "Thy man's there and some friends? Aye, we'll all squeeze together then. T'will be warmer so. I've a pot of soup on the fire; made it to last me a week but you're welcome to it. I can make more."

"My husband's an elf."

"Is he so? He looks to take good care of thee and thy son. Thou's fat as pigs. Bring them in. I wish my grand-daughter had such a one to care for her."

Ora refused payment, saying she was not yet at such a pass that her guests must pay for her hospitality. She said tales and song and an evening's merriment would be payment enough. Pots and dishes were set out to catch the worst of the leaks; she knew them all well. They gathered around the hearth and made very merry while the storm raged, banging the shutters and doors and threatening to blow the roof away altogether.

"Tell me, my lady," Ora whispered apart to Alieria, "He's truly good to thee? He's so big and so black."

"Truly good," Alieria said keeping her mouth serious while her eyes laughed.

"Aye, 'tis well, then. He put me a bit in mind of our baron, who's big and dark...oh, not so dark as thy elf. He took my grand-daughter, Caron, and he does not treat her well. He...he hurts her, my lady. And she dare not run away. Where would she go?" Tears gathered in Ora's eyes and followed worn familiar tracks down her cheeks.

When their hostess had gone to sleep in her own room, Alieria repeated what she had been told.

"Let's rescue the girl," Beech said, "we grow stale with inaction."

"Aye!" said Silk and Willow at once.

Mats growled an agreement. Mith and Ssa'ass looked interested.

Moraelyn looked doubtful. "We cannot right every wrong in Tamriel. This baron offers his folk shelter of a kind. They could leave if they liked it better outside."

"Aye," Mith said, "he keeps the bandits off so he may rob the folk at leisure."

"And we pull him down? There'll be another to take his place. Or else the outside will come in and there'll be nothing left at all."

"Nothing would be better than this filthy something," Mats said.

"There's that." The storm seemed to have moved away. Alieria went to the door and stared up into the sky where clouds raced past the eastern moon. A single large brilliant blue star hung near the moon. "Zenithar hangs near Tamriel tonight. Moraelyn?"

"I'd thought to mend her roofs tomorrow if it's fair," he said as she returned to the fireside. "We'll do so much at least. As for the rest, Alieria?"

"She asked for my help, in a way and I...I think I hear Zenithar's voice in the wind and feel his hand in the rain on this night."

"Thy quest, then, wife."

Alieria nodded, unsmiling. She curled up with Moraelyn in the chimney corner and they whispered and laughed together for awhile. Edward fell asleep. In the morning he was sent up on the roof to help Beech and Willow place new shingles. Moraelyn wrote a letter which he gave to Mats, telling him to take it to the baron, to arrive at the castle around dinnertime and to go afoot.

"You're going to challenge him for the girl!" Edward grinned. "But will he fight? And wouldn't he take her back again once we're gone?"

"Mmm. Since he wouldn't let me in his town, thy mother thought to invite him to our house instead." Moraelyn stamped the letter with his sealing ring and handed it to Mats.

"Oh. It's a long way to your house still, isn't it?" Edward felt a bit of disappointment that no rescue seemed imminent, but he supposed it really was not reasonable to expect eight people to take a keep, even if they were Moraelyn's Companions. Probably the songs exaggerated their deeds.

Moraelyn grinned, ruffled Edward's hair and told him to cease his questions, get up on the roof, and mind his mother. Moraelyn and Mith set off together on foot. Alieria said they were going hunting. They did not return even at suppertime. Alieria told Edward not to worry; they'd meet later.

It was well after sundown when she bid their hostess farewell. They took all the horses with them and left them in a grove near the north wall of the keep. Alieria asked Edward if he wanted to wait for them with the horses. Edward asked where they were going.

"We have to enter the keep to get Ora's grandchild out. No questions, Edward. If you're coming, then stay with me and do exactly as I say. Levitate across the moat: I must swim. Once across we'll scale the wall. Once inside, just follow me and be as silent as you can."

Edward gaped at his mother and the other Companions. How could the six of them possibly storm a keep? Three women, two men and a boy? There would be guards up on the wall and a lot more inside. Mats would be inside too, though, he guessed. But where were Moraelyn and Mith?

There were fearsome things in the moat. Edward began a protest, then thought better of it. Ssa'ass slid into the moat first. There was some splashing and hissing, then the water went quiet. Alieria entered the water. The others levitated.

"Here's the ropes," Beech said, feeling along the wall. There were three ropes. Edward, Beech and Ssa'ass went up first; Alieria, Willow and Silk followed. Moraelyn and Mith were waiting above. Two guards were snoring softly in a heap.

"How..." Edward began, and found his mother's hand clapped over his mouth. A guard from another wall section called out and Edward's heart stopped beating. Mith called something back to him and tramping footsteps moved away.

The Companions went silently down the stairs and slipped across the yard like shadows. There was no guard on the door to the keep itself. Inside the passages were eerily quiet. They stopped at an imposing door and flattened themselves against the wall beside it. They could hear voices within. A thin chilling wail sounded and died away. Moraelyn whistled a snatch of song into the silence that followed. The door swung open and they raced inside, falling on the startled guards like furies.

Edward was last inside, Tooth in his hand; he stabbed the nearest guard in the side, and Beech finished him with a blow to the head. Mats had been inside; it was he who had opened the door. His axe clove the head of one guard, then swung against the inner door. Alieria and Willow had barred the strong outer door. Moraelyn's opponent was a very young man. He'd taken one look at the big dark elf, dropped his sword and fallen to his knees, praying for mercy.

Moraelyn eyed him with disgust and said, "Greet Zenithar for me; tell him Moraelyn of Ebonheart commends you to his mercy. I have none for such as you." He slashed the young guard's throat. Blood sprayed over Moraelyn's leathers. His victim fell over, gurgling horribly. A burning acid rose in Edward's throat; he swallowed hard and looked away.

The guards inside the anteroom had been dispatched, but outside the door shouts and footfalls thundered and there was pounding on the door. Edward followed his mother into the inner chamber, which was empty save for a naked girl tied spreadeagle on the enormous bed, her eyes starting from her head.

The Companions cut her free while Alieria caught her shoulders. "Thy grandmother sent us, child. Where's the baron?"

The girl pointed at a bookcase, then clung to Alieria. She was no bigger than Edward and seemed not much older. Her breasts were just beginning. She was covered with welts and blood and purple-yellow bruises. Alieria flung her own cloak over the girl. Beech picked her up. Mith's fingers were feeling over the bookcase; there was a click and a section slid aside. He went through cautiously. The others followed and the secret door closed after them.

"I think it's just a bolt hole," Mith said, "but there'll be traps, no doubt."

"Go warily, then, friend," Alieria said. "There's no hurry. I think the baron plans to show his departing guests the door, as a good host should."

A narrow passage opened to the left. Mith sent a bolt of light down it. The floor was littered with bones. Human bones. Small skulls stared eyelessly. "I'm going to enjoy killing him," Moraelyn said.

"No!" Alieria protested. "My quest, my kill!"

Moraelyn swung to face her. "Alieria..."

"I want it sung that he died by Alieria's hand! I claim my right to face him, king."

"Leave him to me and we'll sing it your way! He's twice your size. D'you want to fight me for the right?" The elf leaned over her, a full head taller.

"If I must." Alieria brushed past him, slinging her shield on her arm, and drawing her short sword as she ran. Moraelyn grabbed at her, missed, and ran after her. His size hampered him in the low, narrow passage. Sparks flew from his spell shield as he caroomed recklessly off the walls.

"Come on, you two," Mith yelled from ahead. "I'm not promising to save him for you."

"Moraelyn," Edward gasped, running after him. "You're not going to let her!"

"Let her! How d'ye propose I stop her? I'm open to suggestions, short of actually fighting her myself." He seemed half-angry, half-amused.

"M-maybe he's gone by now."

"Nay, he's locked in here with us; we found the exit earlier from the other side and Mith set a lock the baron will not undo."

"Well, paralyze her. You can carry her."

"She's activated her shield; it reflects spells, among other things. I'd only paralyze myself and I'd be inconvenient to carry. She'll be all right. It's an excellent shield. It casts a very powerful protective spell. Iric himself devised it."

"Having a spot of trouble with your locks tonight, baron?" Mith's voice came clearly from ahead. They emerged into a larger space where the baron had been clawing vainly at switches beside a massive door. "Shoddy work. You should get another smith."

"He won't be needing one," Alieria snarled. The Companions spread around her in a semi-circle. The baron set his back to the door and set himself in a fighting stance. He was a big man, as big as Mats, and he was holding an axe as big as the one Mats wielded, and wearing a breastplate and helm. He addressed Moraelyn.

"Nine against one. I'd expect odds like that from you black devils," Moraelyn was at the back of the group, yet the baron had singled him out as the leader. People did, somehow.

"You prefer the advantage of weight, do you not? But my wife wants you to herself. She cannot resist your charms it seems. Nor can I; I could not wait for you to respond to my invitation, so I came to you instead."

"I beat her and the rest of you kill me? Hah! It might be worth it at that," he added, staring at Alieria with cold dark eyes.

Aliera smiled a terrible smile. Her dark hair swung free about her shoulders and she seemed to glow. "You will not beat this woman, baron, but if you do, then you go free. You are mine alone tonight. Swear it all, by Zenithar! If he haps to kill me, my ghost will hound him to his grave and beyond." She sounded rather pleased at the prospect. Edward began to shiver.

"By Zenithar!"

The baron laughed, "I don't believe you, but one last female for my collection then. Are you so wearied of her, elf?"

"Are you so afraid of her that you'd rather face me instead?" Somewhere deep in his mind Edward realized that the elf was right. Despite the baron's bravado, he was afraid of Aliera. Edward hadn't sworn with the others. He clutched his staff tightly but his feet seemed rooted to the floor.

The baron laughed again and swung a mighty blow at Aliera in answer, but it deflected harmlessly off her shield. His eyes widened as he realized she was spell shielded. Aliera danced aside and cut his arm. She was nimble, but he managed to land many blows. If her shield went...Edward did not finish the thought.

But he was leaving himself somewhat open in the hope of wearing her shield down and she was scoring hits against his limbs. She kept her blows low, trying to cost him the use of his legs and drain him of blood. All the while she taunted him about his manhood, saying she would geld him ere he died. A great blow knocked her back; her shield flashed and was gone.

The baron raised his axe high to cleave her skull with a single blow. Her arm drew back and she threw her slender short sword straight into her enemy's eye. He dropped the axe and fell screaming to his knees, hands clawing at his face. Aliera stepped forward and thrust the sword home, piercing deep within the brain. The body fell over, twitching and jerking.

"Well fought, wife!"

"I had a master trainer, and a better armorer!" Aliera laughed, then she threw back her head and shouted wordlessly in triumph, raising her arms, fists clenched.

"That you did!" Moraelyn grabbed Silk in a rough hug and kissed her noisily. "It's a neat trick you taught her, Silk."

"I'll thank you to cease flirting with my trainer, husband!" Aliera said, wiping her slender adamantium blade carefully.

"Me flirt? Not while thy blood's up, and thy shield's still charged. I'm just thanking her. I'll kiss I'ric too when next I see him."

"Is he truly dead?" Caron had clung to Beech throughout the fight with her eyes closed. Now she regarded Aliera with Awe, Edward thought was the right word. Edward felt something of the same, although it was akin to horror.

"Dead enough," Aliera said, regarding the still faintly twitching form, with satisfaction. The girl drew closer, then knelt beside him. She picked up a stone and smashed it into the face

again and again, sobbing. When she had done, Ssa'ass cast some healing spells on her. Mith unlocked the door. They'd come out quite near to where they had left the horses.

They took the girl back to her mother's house and left her there, instructing her to tell anyone that ventured to molest her, that Zenithar's servants would return if she were harmed. The bewildered old woman clasped her granddaughter to her. As she bade them farewell, she whispered to Alieria to look after that man of hers.

"Oh, I do," Alieria said. "I do."

\* \* \* \* \*

When they stopped for rest Alieria came over to Edward to talk to him, but he protested that he was very tired and just wanted to sleep. Moraelyn tugged her away, saying that if her son did not need her then she could see to her man, who did. They moved out of the circle of firelight. Edward lay wakeful, listening to their small, stifled sounds. That was not unusual. It had troubled him at first. "I can't sleep; you're too noisy," he'd protested one night. "What are you doing, anyway?" That had drawn giggles from the Companions. "Can't you at least pretend you're sleeping?" Moraelyn had asked plaintively. "Now I know why dark elves seldom have more than one child. What I do not understand is how humans manage to get so many." Moraelyn and Alieria had come back to lie by him that night, but after that he had pretended to sleep, like the others.

And the noises were too familiar now to keep images of the night's adventures from flashing through his mind, as vivid as if they were happening again in truth. He could feel his daedra feeding and could not stop it. It just wasn't fair, he thought, but now he was beginning to see what Moraelyn meant by feeding his daedra and yet walking with the gods. With Zenithar.

Moraelyn came back, carrying Alieria. He set her gently down, then stretched himself out between Edward and her.

"It must be difficult, being a woman," he said softly. "It was hard, watching her. Just watching."

Edward nodded.

"I've asked it often enough, of her," Moraelyn continued. "She told me how hard it is, but I never knew until tonight. I knew she'd win. Zenithar was with her, and all the baron had was his daedra. And still it was very hard to watch. She makes that cast nine tries out of ten, and there were more uses on the shield if she missed, he'd have dropped of exhaustion before he wore it out entirely."

"I keep thinking about it, too...and the guard you...he asked for mercy?"

"I know. And yet, he listened to that night after night. And still he remained the baron's man."

"Most men are not as strong as you are. Maybe he couldn't help himself?" Why was he pleading for a man already dead? His mind kept replaying the night's events as if they might yet come out differently, for better or for worse.

"Even to witness evil such as that corrupts the soul. To watch and do nothing, Mats would have stayed my hand had there been anything there worth keeping. And it's worse for the young; I am sorry you had to pass through this night."

"Is my soul corrupted now?"

"You feel the acid's bite, as do we all, but you'll heal."

"Can you Heal me now?"

"Aye." Moraelyn gathered the boy in his arms, then rolled over so that Edward lay between his parents. Alera put her arms around him without really waking. Her strong woman smell mingled with Moraelyn's musky dark spice odor in Edward's nostrils.

"She was so angry," Edward whispered. He'd wondered if he would ever really feel the same toward her again and yet her arms were still as comforting as before. Maybe Moraelyn too had needed that reassurance and had been wise enough to ask for it.

"She's a woman. That sort of injury to another touches her near," he said.

How near? The boy looked the question he dared not put.

"Thy father's not a monster. But she was wed to a man who did not care for her, and she could not leave him. It's common enough among thy race, which makes it none the easier to bear, I think."

"She has a daedra, too, then?" Edward asked sadly.

"You must speak with her about that."

"It wasn't really a fair fight, her shielded and not him."

"Fair fighting's for the arena, boy. Would you fight a wolf or hell hound without weapons, spells and armor, though they have none? I would not."

"What will become of Caron and Ora? And the other folk, now that the baron's dead?"

"Do I look like the prophet Marukh? How should I know? We can stop here in the spring and see what's been planted in the field we burned tonight. I've no mind to stay and plow it. I've my own fields to tend, listen to me, I sound like a Nord farmer. Mines to dig is more like it." He yawned.

"The others didn't think about afterwards. You did."

"I'm a king; it's what we do."

**[30.9] King Edward IX**

## King Edward, Part IX

by Anonymous

## Chapter IX: Luck

Edward knelt behind Moraelyn, leaning over his shoulder so that he could see the cards the elf held. He was sitting away from the fire, so it was dark for human eyes, but Moraelyn was the only one of the group who would allow Edward to see his hand. The other players, Beech, Mith and Mats said Edward brought them bad luck. Moraelyn said that it was not really a question of luck, but that their hands were reflected in Edward's face for those that had the eyes to see such images. It was too dark for Beech and Mats to see Edward now, and Moraelyn blocked him from Mith's view. And yet, the pile of coins in front of Moraelyn had grown smaller since Edward had taken a place behind him. But this time he had been dealt a good hand. Edward could see that. It was Mats' turn. He was cogitating.

"You're shivering, son," Moraelyn said, "Have you no warmer clothing? We must find something for you. Here, come share my cloak, then. You can hold the cards if you like." The wind was chill; there was a bite to it now that they were farther north and the year had grown older. Edward accepted the shelter of Moraelyn's arm and warm fur cloak and sat close against his side.

"I think I'll just play the cards I hold," Mats said at last, and pushed a pile of coins into the pot, then with sudden resolve, added a few more. "There."

"Throw the hand down, Edward, we're through."

"But there aren't many better hands than what we've got!" Edward protested.

"Edward!" Moraelyn growled.

"Well, how'm I s'posed to learn?" Mats didn't have to show his cards unless they matched his bet.

"By watching. Silently. Oh, very well. No one ever told me that fatherhood came cheaply." He shoved most of his coins into the pot to match Mats' bet and Edward laid the hand down.

"Ah," Mats said, "you needn't do that, my friend. I'll show the boy my cards for free."

"You filthy Nord," Moraelyn said in disgust, "put down your cards and take my gold, if you can beat my hand. Let's see if I'm the one who needs educating on how to play this game."

"You don't," Mats grinned. "Except that you could have accepted my generous offer instead of throwing an insult at me." Mats laid down the perfect hand called The Ladies.

"A taunt like that rates an insult. Mats, that hand is almost worth the viewing price. Five beautiful Ladies! You don't see them together every day; they're not that fond of one another's company."

"How'd you know?" Edward demanded.

"Ah, that'd be telling," Moraelyn grinned. "Some things you're supposed to learn for yourself. That's part of the game. But remember that a good hand's worthless if someone else holds a better."

"I'm sorry." Edward looked ruefully at the few remaining coins.

"No matter. It's foolish to play with Mats on those nights when the God of Luck himself stands at his shoulder and all I have at mine is a runaway Breton prince who should be in his bed. He'd have had that money off me i' the end. This way we'll get a bit of sleep."

"Spoilsport," Mats grumped. "It's not every night Sai visits me and I do enjoy his presence."

"He can leave as quickly as he comes. Sai's not someone you want to get overfond of, Mats."

"Who should know that better than I? Nay, do not apologize. I appreciate your concern for me, my friend. It's not altogether unwarranted, but I am mindful of the temptation. I know how undependable Sai's favor is, and how capricious. I play only among my friends, whom I do trust."

"Goodnight, then." Moraelyn and Mith went off to join those who were already asleep, leaving Mats and Beech and Edward by the fire. The dark elves' natural sleep pattern was a period of five or six hours during the day, and a short nap of two or three hours after midnight. Now that they were travelling, they were sleeping only at night, which was a difficult adjustment for Mith and Moraelyn, who had to use spells to cope with it. Edward had slept a bit as soon as they had stopped for the night, while the others prepared supper. In consequence he was now wide awake. Beech was yawning. Mats seemed to require less sleep than the rest.

"Tell me about Sai, Mats. I've never heard of him before. I didn't know there was a god of luck. I thought luck just happened."

"Being as you're Breton, I can understand that. Bretons like things explained, clear and reasonable, in sequence, so one thing follows from another, and you know where you are. Most gods are like that. They lay down rules and if you obey them and pay homage to the god, why then he or she grants you favor. And the better you keep the rules and the more you worship the god, the higher you rise in his favor. Those rules aren't always easy to keep, and one god's rules may require you to violate another's but you know where you are. Well, Sai's not like that. He's not a daedra, but he's got a daedric side to him, for sure. One thing, if you worship him too much, he'll abandon you altogether. They call it 'Sai's Affliction'. It's an overwhelming desire for the god's constant presence. My father suffered from it, poor man. The disease is more than just a desire for the god's presence. The sufferers require continual proof of the god's favor. So they gamble incessantly. Not to win, for all they do with winnings is keep on gambling until they lose. Then they do what they must to raise a stake so they can gamble again."

"Oh, it's a terrible thing. Terrible. My father sold me as a slave because of it. Later he sold my oldest sister. Then, when he was in debt yet again, he killed himself in one of his rare lucid moments when he could see what was happening to him. What he was doing to his family, himself. 'Course I was just a kid when I was sold. I didn't understand. I thought it was because of some fault of mine that I'd been sent away, laziness or stupidity or disobedience, and that if I'd only been a better son it wouldn't have happened. That's Auriel's way. It's intended that children should respect their parents and learn from them, but some parents aren't deserving of respect. Well, it was a sickness in him, so my mother says. I don't know that he should be blamed for it, any more than if he had red plague or leprosy. I believe her, yet sometimes I still feel it was my fault. Well, that was bad luck you might say. But Sai sent me Moraelyn and that was a lucky day indeed.

"What other god would put it into his head to stop one human from beating on another? Any other elf in Tamriel would have turned away in disgust or stopped to watch and laugh at the stupid humans. Two dark elf kids against four grown Nords, and for all they knew I deserved what I was getting. I could have been a thief or murderer. I suppose I was a thief. I'd stolen myself, so to speak."

"Moraelyn can't say himself why he did it. He says he was spoiling for a fight that day and seeing slavecatchers on Morrowind soil did nothing to ease his temper. That's why I say: it was Sai. But it was Moraelyn that listened to the god.

"There's no doubt it's a grand thing to feel Sai's hand on your shoulder. It's like riding the finest horse, like love itself. You're one with the world, and everything goes your way, everything's on your side, instead of being the constant struggle that life really is. You don't have to be smart or handsome or kind or witty. Things just go your way. If you do something dumb it doesn't matter. It'll turn out to be the right thing to have done. Lucky. Some folks do seem to be born lucky, others unlucky. I don't know why. Most everyone feels Sai's presence sometimes, I guess. You have, haven't you?"

Edward shook his head. He'd no idea what Mats was talking about.

"Well, it's a kind of greed, I guess, this Sai's Affliction. You see, there's only so much luck to spread around, and if a few folks got it all, there'd be none left for the rest. Like tonight, I won that last pot, but the others had to lose it. Everyone can't win with Sai. That's not true with other gods, not necessarily. You still don't understand, do you? Would you like to hear a story about Sai?"

Edward nodded. Mats was a good-natured fellow, but usually quite silent. Edward had thought him rather stupid. Mats' luck at cards seemed to have loosened his tongue, and now Edward saw that he thought a lot more than he talked.

\* \* \*

Long, long ago, when people were fewer and wolves more numerous than now a young widow named Josea lived smack in the middle of what is now the province of Skyrim. She was an ordinary sort of woman, neither plain nor pretty. She had smooth brown hair, warm brown eyes, a short nose, a full round face, and body to match. She'd been born the only child of peasant farmers. Her parents had been carried off by typhoid when she was seventeen. Shortly afterwards she had married Tom, a strong young woodcutter with a cheerful

disposition and a roving eye. He'd gotten her pregnant quickly, then turned his attentions elsewhere. Shortly before the babe was due he'd been killed by the local goldsmith who'd come home unexpectedly, found the handsome woodcutter in bed with his wife, and stuck a knife in his back.

Tom's death had occurred on Heart's Day. The babe, a boy, was born four months later during Mid Year. Two neighbor women came to help her birth him and one stayed a few days. After that she was left to cope with caring for child and smallholding as best she could.

One evening in the next Morningstar, Josea went out to the small barn to do the evening chores, leaving the babe asleep in his crib. The wind was howling. She had to clutch her cloak tightly around her. She milked and fed the cow, fed the pigs and chickens. When she left the barn she walked out into a fierce blizzard. The wind had risen so that the barn door was wrenched from her hand and slammed back against the side of the barn. She couldn't even see the house, which was near the road, and some little distance from the barn, but she set off toward it with confidence.

She'd lived here all her life and knew every inch of ground, although she'd never seen a storm quite this fierce and sudden. Already there were two inches of snow beneath her feet. She struggled against the wind for some time, until at last she realized that she must somehow have gone past the house. She turned back and tried to follow her own footprints, reasoning that at least she'd warm herself in the barn before setting out again. But the snow was falling so thickly that her footprints vanished before her eyes, and she was quite lost, and cold.

Josea struggled on, hoping to come across something recognizable, a boulder or a tree or the road if not house or barn. Her hands and feet were wet and numb. She hadn't dressed heavily and was now chilled to the bone, with ice forming on her eyebrows and lashes.

"Timmy! Tiimmmeee!" She cried her child's name, hoping against hope that the babe would wake and cry and that she might follow the sound to him. She stood and listened, gasping the cold air into her lungs, but there was only the howling of the wind. The wind, or something more? A grey shape took form in front of her, staring at her with slitted yellow eyes. A great grey wolf.

Her heart seemed to stop. Her eyes filled with tears as she thought of her child lying helpless in the house alone, and his mother dead outside. How unlucky, to die so close to shelter! Unlucky. But she had always been unlucky, the unluckiest woman she knew. It might be days before any thought to visit her. She sank down to her knees, exhausted. The wolf sat before her, threw back its head and voiced its dreadful howl.

Her frozen hands scrabbled in the snow, looking for stone or stick, anything with which to defend herself against the pack. Another dark shadow appeared from the whirling white snow. She scrambled backwards in a panic. This one was also gray, but tall and two-legged, gray cloaked and hooded. Its gloved hand reached for the wolf's head and patted it. Her scream died in her throat.

"No need to fear, lass. We'll not bring you harm, nay quite otherwise. Be you the mother of yon child?"

She nodded dumbly. His voice was deep and kind, clear in the high whistling of the wind, but her eyes went to his dread companion.

"No need to fear," he repeated. "My friend Grellan here will lead us back to safety. Unless you indeed do wish to spend the night here." His hands reached for hers and pulled her up, and she leaned on his arm and hobbled alongside him.

When at last they reached her door, he said, "I stopped here hoping for shelter from the storm. I hope you don't mind?"

How could she refuse? Men too could be wolves, but if he were it wasn't likely he'd take no for an answer anyway. "P-p-please come in. I l-left the k-kettle on the boil but I expect it's empty by now," she said inanely.

"I did go in, when there was no response to my knock, and found the babe asleep and alone, and the kettle boiling away. I took the kettle from the fire, but left the babe be. I knew his mother would not be far, and sent Grellan to find you. Lucky for you, but then I have always brought luck to those around me."

He threw back his hood and she saw that he was tall and pale, with silver hair and eyes, but a young face. His countenance was grim, but the silver eyes were kind and his mouth gentle. "My horse too will want shelter on this night. Have you a shed to offer him?"

While he stabled his horse she changed out of her wet clothing and fixed a bit of supper for them: soup and bread and cheese, and elmroot tea. As she dished it up she apologized meekly for the meager fare.

"Why, 'tis a feast compared to my efforts!" He smiled, and fell to, hungrily. Grellan lay by the fire, his eyes fixed on his master, who occasionally flung him a morsel. "He ate well yesterday, luckily for your chickens, else I'd have to buy one from you."

"Nay, nay," she protested. "I'm deep in your debt and glad to share anything I have with you." The babe stirred and cried then, and she picked him up, changed his wet diaper, and put him to her breast.

"Where's your husband, lady?"

She hesitated a moment - the thought flashed that she should not tell this stranger how alone and unprotected she was - then told him the truth.

"A sad tale, truly," he said, "but he's left you a handsome child, and you seem quite comfortable here." His eyes went round the humble one room cottage, crib and feather bed at one end, covered with a quilt of her mother's making, and stone hearth at the other, table and chairs made by her father in the middle. A ladder led to the loft where she'd slept as a child. Suddenly the simple room seemed a palace to her. They were warm and dry and well fed, and indeed what could be better?

"Why, you're right, stranger. I am lucky after all. Now, will you tell me something of yourself?"

"I am less fortunate than you in some ways. I am a wanderer, and born to wanderers, a tinker by trade, though I can turn my hand to most things. I have never been married and have no children, nor have I ever had a home other than the wagon my horse pulls. I've never stayed long in one place. My parents named me Sai, but most folks call me Lucky."

"Lucky is what I will call you then, for you have indeed been lucky for me."

He stood and stretched, and began clearing the remnants of their meal from the table. He poured water from the copper kettle into the basin and washed and dried the dishes, something she had never seen a man do before. After the babe was fed they played with him on the hearthrug while he told her of some of the odd and wonderful places and peoples he had met with on his journeys, and once again her life seemed very narrow and dull. After an hour or two the babe grew tired and cranky, and she took him on her lap and sang to him until he fell asleep. She laid him in his crib and wrapped him warmly in a rabbit fur bunting.

When she went back to the fire, Lucky reached for her hand and held it for a moment, without a word, then they were in one another's arms and kissing hungrily. They shed their clothing and lay together shamelessly, enjoying each others bodies in the flickering rosy firelight. He loved the roundness of her breasts and thighs, belly and buttocks, and said she was as juicy as an apple. His bleached lean muscular body and silken hair fascinated her as much. She had loved Tom and known pleasant moments with him, but nothing like she felt with this stranger.

She woke in bed in the morning, to the baby's crying as usual. Lucky wasn't there and she thought he must have been a vivid dream. Then the door opened and shut, and he was striding toward her, fully dressed, and motioning her to stay where she was. He kissed her lips, then brought the babe to her and stood watching as he suckled. "What a pity that we remember not the pleasure we once knew."

"Yet we have pleasures still that we will remember," she said, and felt her cheeks redden at her boldness. What a wanton he must think her!

"Indeed," he said, and laid his cold hand against her hot cheek.

The storm had stopped during the night, but the snow was deep on the road, and it was clear that it would be days before the horse could pull Lucky's small wagon along the road. That wagon was brightly painted with leaves and vines and flowers in red and blue and green and yellow. The wheels were red with yellow spokes. It had a canvas top, also painted, blue with white fleecy clouds. Josea loved the wagon but it sorted oddly with Lucky's quiet greyness.

Lucky did small jobs for her, mending tools, hinges, and utensils. He cut more wood for her, saying that if she did not need it this year, there would be another. He stayed a week and a thaw came and then a freeze, and the road was rutted but fit for travel. They looked at one another in the morning light, and he said that it couldn't hurt to stay another day, or maybe two, if she was not yet tired of him. She wasn't.

After another week, Lucky asked her if she would come with him. Her heart leaped at the question, but she looked around the little house where she'd spent all her life, thought of her land and village and her babe, and said, "I can't go. I've no desire to travel, and I don't want to bring my babe up as a homeless waif."

Pain flashed across Lucky's pale face, but he only nodded, harnessed up his horse, and kissed her goodbye. Tears clouded her eyes and blurred the gay wagon colors.

Sun's Dawn passed very slowly, with rain and sleet and snow, but nothing like the storm that had brought Lucky to her. Occasionally there was a knock at her door, which started her heart pounding, but always it was just a villager, come to buy the dried herbs she sold. Then, on the first night of First Seed, she heard the creak of a wagon and knew. She flew to the door, her face alight and flung herself into his arms.

"I can't stay," he said. "I'm just passing through..." and that was all the talking they did for quite awhile.

Spring came and crocuses poked their noses up through the snow. Lucky spaded up her garden. Curious neighbors came to call, but found out no more about him than she knew. She sold them eggs - her chickens were laying very well - and dried herbs and an elixir she made from her grandmother's recipe, which was sovereign for headache and rheumatism. They hired Lucky for odd jobs, despite their suspicion of him.

Lucky continued to come and go, never saying where or when he'd be back, but he seldom stayed away more than a few days. He spoke no words of love, but loved her fiercely all the same. Josea's round belly grew rounder, and she weaned Timmy to cow's milk. Lucky's trips became shorter and less frequent. All around the land prospered. Even the oldest could not recall a better harvest. In Hearthfire Josea birthed a beautiful baby girl with silver hair, but eyes of cornflower blue. Lucky held his child and joy radiated from him, so that he seemed to burn with a white fire.

**[30.10] King Edward X**

King Edward, Part X  
by Anonymous

Chapter X: Josea and Lucky, Part II

Mats continued his story of Lucky and Josea.

The years passed, twenty of them. More children came. Timmy took a bride. The land continued to prosper. Few died, so there were many people now, and much of the forest was cleared for farms. Others became soldiers or sailors. Their voyages and battles all prospered, and they returned home laden with booty. The gods were with them, people said, for they were virtuous and deserving folk. Skyrim was united now under King Vrage the Gifted, second and noblest son of the legendary Harald of Ysgramoor, thus Josea's king was high king of all Skyrim. The Nords under Vrage's leadership spread into Morrowind and High Rock, conquering some of the sly and thievish dark elves and the weak and superstitious Bretons.

Josea and Lucky had opened a store and built a fine big house for their family. One night Josea awoke alone, and heard voices in the hall. She left her bed and crept to see. The voices sounded angry!

Lucky was standing there in his nightshirt; the passing years had changed him little. He looked no older, but he had grown leaner and paler, and somehow less substantial. Standing with him were a tall matronly woman, dark haired, and clad in a fine blue robe, a knight in black armor, carrying a black sword and a handsome blond man, greenclad, with a bow. Two elves were there as well, one fair and one with golden skin; one had a harp, the other a lute. Elves had not been seen in Skyrim in years! How did quiet simple Lucky come to know such grand people?

"Is this how you keep your pact with us? Did we not make the rules clear to you?"

The woman was shouting at Lucky, who only muttered, "Lady Mara, I didn't realize it had been so long. It was only for a few days, and then a few days more. And then there were the children and Josea needed me. I thought no harm. Things seemed to go well for everyone. It hasn't been so long. Tamriel did well enough without me before." Lucky spoke softly, yet his face was set and Josea knew how stubborn he could be.

"Everyone! What of the Bretons? What of the dark elves? And the wood elves. Of the ice elves I say nothing. They are gone, gone altogether and forever."

"Such shy folk...I tried," Lucky faltered. "I did try. The ice elves were very hard to find, and not that friendly when I did find them."

"Are all the elves to follow them, and the Bretons, and then the other races?"

"I'll go; I will go. But High Rock and Morrowind are so far from here. And how can I leave my children? Surely, I am entitled to children? And my woman..."

"You could have arranged matters as I did," said the green clad ranger. "Now it's too late for that. Matters have gone too far. We trusted you. It was a simple assignment. Yet we should have watched him." This last sentence was addressed to the black knight.

"I did watch him," the knight snapped, waving his sword, which Josea now saw was actually a part of his arm. "Yet alone I could do nothing! I'd few devotees in either High Rock or Morrowind. Once I realized I knew I had to find the rest of you; alone I could do little. What I could, I did. They're halted for now, yet the damage must be repaired, and he who caused it must do the fixing, Tinker! It won't be easy. You'll have to avoid the Skyrim folk altogether for a couple of hundred years, I think."

"No! My Lord Ebonarm, no!" The cry was wrenched from Lucky's heart. "I cannot. I implore you. Do not ask it of me...leave me something of my own! Why must I always give it all to others? I'm tired of it! You promised me a life, and what you gave me, that endless wandering, was not a life!" The black knight Ebonarm scowled back at Lucky.

"We are a gentle folk," the wood elf bard said in his musical voice, "yet Zenithar can no longer be restrained. And if he wars against you, the other elven gods stand with him! If the gods war, Tamriel itself may be destroyed. You may find daedra to stand with you; they love chaos. But I think you will find that not even Springseed, Ebonarm and Mara will fight for you if you defy them further."

"Jephre speaks truth, as ever. Let us not speak of war among ourselves, my friend. We wished your folk no ill. We deeply regret what has happened and will labor to repair our fault. I regret our long absence, yet it was necessary. Raen and I were needed...elsewhere." Mara said. "And not even a god, or a goddess, can be everywhere at once."

"As for you, Sai," she said, turning to Lucky, "One night a year with your woman and your children I will grant you. But not in the flesh. The temptations are too strong for you, I see. It was a mistake to let you hold the flesh so long. I apologize to the rest of you. Now, go and make your farewells. You are dismissed."

The knight and ranger vanished, but the elves remained. The golden skinned one spoke to Mara, "Watch these new folk of yours more carefully, Lady Mara. We are a patient people, and kindly disposed to other sentient races, yet there are limits to our patience. Take warning." Then the elves too were gone.

Lucky fell to his knees, clutching at Mara's robe, his face a mask of anguish, "Lady, wait! I implore you. Am I never to feel again? Never? It is more than I can bear. The rest of you can assume mortal form on occasion. Better I should have died naturally, and gone to rest," he added bitterly.

Mara considered, frowning. "Others have paid dearly for the life you have stolen. Their spirits are not at rest; they too will exact payment. And yet...very well. If you will labor to repair the damage you have done, then you may on occasion assume bodily form, but not as human. Wolf shape shall be yours, in return for the kindness you showed Grellan."

And she was gone, leaving Lucky standing alone, barefoot. Josea ran to him and clasped him...oh, how thin and cold he was!

"What is it, dearest? Who were they? What does it mean? Oh, don't leave us!"

"I must," he said, shivering. "I have stayed far too long. My dearest, I am Luck itself. I was born with the talent, though mortal as yourself. My lord took me for a soldier. I was killed in my first battle, even as the battle was won. I ever brought luck to others, never to myself, never. Ebonarm appeared to me, said I had an interesting talent and offered me immortality if I would agree to spread my luck about."

"He said the gods were overworked, seeing to events, and constantly quarreling over what should happen. He thought that I could balance things out naturally with my inborn talent. I was young. I'd barely lived. I didn't want to die, so I agreed, and Ebonarm said that I could keep my body for a time. I wouldn't age or die, but I would fade slowly, as you have seen. I am nearly eighty now. I did as he bade for many years. Then I met you, and found myself trapped by your need, I think. I was your Luck, you see, what you needed. And truth is, I needed you, too, my dear love.

"Yet while I've stayed here, my luck has spread like ripples, strongest in the center, weak along the edges until there's none at all in Morrowind and High Rock and the Wilderness to the south, and the folk are dead or chained in slavery. Also I've brought luck only to the Nords among whom I've lived, so that the wood elves have fled and the ice elves have died. Now I must go, and bring Luck back to them and redress the balance, as it should have been."

He went to the children's rooms and kissed them as they slept, while his tears fell on them. Then he said, "I'll be with you one night each year, though you will not see me. Yet you will feel my presence, dearest. Oh, and I could never speak of love or marriage...but know I love you, as no man or god loved woman." Then he kissed her one last time, and was gone.

\* \* \*

Mats stopped talking at last. The fire had burned down to ashes. Edward drew a long breath.

"That's some story," Edward said. "Is it true?"

"Are you calling my grandmother a liar? I know she used to leave a bit of food and a bowl of milk out on winter nights. 'For the Wolf,' she said. And we Nords hold it very unlucky to attack a wolf unless it attacks you. It just might be Sai!

"My grandmother said she got the tale from her great-grandmother, and her great was Josea herself. So she said. Or maybe it was her great-great-grandmother. I get lost there. Anyway it happened during the reign of King Vrage the Gifted, like I said, when the Nords invaded Morrowind and High Rock. It took Sai a hundred and fifty years to get things set right again, and he needed a lot of help. From Moraelyn's brothers and father, among others. The dark elves and Bretons have been lucky to get their lands back, you see, and it's been hard times for Skyrim folk, although once your luck builds up the way theirs did, it takes a long time to really run out altogether. And Sai didn't make the same mistake again. He's been spreading luck around ever since. Otherwise folk get arrogant and start thinking they're entitled to more

than others. Yet he's kept his promise. You see, I'm his descendant and once a year I feel his presence. That was tonight."

"I thought being a god means you can do just as you please," Edward said.

"Well, they can, you see. Sai did, for awhile, but he and his fellow gods weren't pleased with the results. There's rules to being a god, it seems, just as there are rules to being a man or a boy."

"Who makes the rules then?" Edward demanded.

Mats laughed. "Best save that question up for the Archmagister. It's much too deep for me! Well, I don't know about you, but I'm going to have a drink. I'm parched after so much talking and then rouse Mith, so I can sleep myself."

"Mats, I was taught that Moraelyn's father and brothers were just raiders and that the Nords were the real owners of the lands they took. That the dark elves come up out of the ground and raid for meanness and profit."

"Moraelyn's father, Kronin, and his brothers, Cruethys and Ephen, took to raiding after the Nords drove them out of Ebonheart. Guerilla warfare isn't pretty, but neither is losing your homeland. Human memories of that time are faded hand-me-downs, but there's a fair number of dark elves who lived through it still around. Moraelyn's aunt Yoriss for one, she who rules in Kragenmoor. Oh, there's some dark elves still, along the borderland in Blacklight, who are just thieves and kidnappers, no question. They have holds up in the mountain caverns and raid farms and villages in east Skyrim. But Moraelyn's folk have naught to do with them, leastways not since they regained their own lands in Morrowind. Moraelyn hates the raiding. He'd stop it if he could." Mats sighed.

"Why can't he?"

Mats yawned widely. "That's a matter of politics and power, boy. You ask him about it, and you'll likely get more answer than you want, for once. Me, I'm off to bed. Good night."

**[30.11] King Edward XI**

## King Edward, Part XI

by Anonymous

The Companions stayed the night at a crude but comfortable inn at a tiny village that called itself Raven Spring, located in the foothills of the Wrothgarian Mountains. The next morning they resumed their journey eastward, moving through rolling hills towards the Skyrim and Hammerfell borders, and camping the next two nights under clear early summer skies. When they resumed traveling the third morning, Moraelyn told everyone to watch the slopes north of the road for a notch opening to a high meadow that faced to the southwest. Shortly afterward everyone spotted it almost simultaneously when the group completed a bend around a rocky outcrop.

Silk and Beech went ahead to scout a good route, and to look for a campsite for the evening ahead. By dusk they had covered most of the distance to the meadow, but still faced some stiff climbing the next morning. They agreed that it was time to camp once again, but happily a lunchtime picnic seemed very likely the next day.

By mid-day the next day, which was Loredas the 5th of Mid Year, the Companions were sprawled across a grassy slope within the Dragon Village, having been joined by Akatosh and one other dragon. This second dragon was smaller than Akatosh, and seemed to be a female, although characteristically Akatosh had just introduced the dragon as Debudjen, with no further explanations being forthcoming. The two dragons politely chatted with the humanoids as they enjoyed their repast, though Debudjen flew off afterwards, to arc gracefully above, and then swoop down upon a steer in a grassy field some distance away.

Akatosh had been watching Edward's reaction to this, and asked: "Why did you flinch, Edward? Debudjen had not eaten recently, and really behaved no differently than you just have."

Edward replied with a small smile, "I don't think that our meal was quite that violent in nature."

Akatosh returned the smile, but then responded. "A good reminder then, that we are only similar, rather than the same."

Edward paused, squinting into the mid-afternoon sun, and then turned to the golden dragon: "Akatosh, why did you choose this spot for your village?"

"Well, it was high enough up into the mountains to suit us, but flat enough for raising the cattle with trees for the deer and it is very defensible for all of us. There is plenty of room for the humans to build their ranches and farms, and the elves are quite comfortable in the dense trees along the cliff edges. The adits in the surrounding cliff faces provide us the access to our lairs, which we have located within the mining tunnel system. All in all, an ideal site for such an experiment involving this many races of beings. It even opens to the southwest, providing

reasonable warmth for the smaller beings, with some protection from the elements during the colder months."

Edward responded, "It is difficult for me to get used to the notion of a village without some central concentration of buildings, but perhaps these will be developed in the future; at least, a few buildings for meetings and socializing. And, I suppose that there are also some beautiful sunsets to be seen."

The dragon smiled again, but replied "Quite so, but I am the only one of the dragonkind to show any interest, and that was not a legitimate consideration when we chose this site." Then wistfully: "I wish that I could assemble the words to describe some of them. I have attempted this many, many times, but the results just are not...very admirable." More briskly: "And by the way, we do intend to erect a meeting hall for the humanoids, and also some stores for barter and other exchanges of goods."

Moraelyn had wandered over and seated himself, and he asked, with a notable absence of the usual humanoid respect for dragons, "Whatever possessed you to attempt such a crazy experiment, Akatosh?"

The dragon paused thoughtfully, and then replied "As is my wont I had been analyzing, in this case one might say the history of dragon behavior. Clearly our lengthy contest of resistance to these new Aurielian gods was futile, but it took many of our generations for us to realize and accept this. Then, our next pattern was to isolate ourselves, even from each other, and to resist intrusion from any and all beings. The exception of course was to mate among ourselves and procreate our race. However, aside from that one activity, we fought any and all for our precious privacy, and really for no good reason except that we can be an especially stubborn race."

Edward said, "Then you maintained a pattern of behavior long after the reason for it was gone?"

Akatosh looked a bit embarrassed. He said stiffly, "I believe that is what I just said. We are not the only sentient race to fall prey to that."

Edward said, "The Archmagister has told me that much behavior is inborn."

Moraelyn smiled at him, "And inborn behavior patterns are a particular problem for long-lived species who change slowly as conditions change. We elves suffer from it even more than you short-lived humans, which is why we like to keep things as they are, though life is change and to resist it utterly is death. Dragons live far, far longer than even elves, and, in consequence, breed even more slowly. Still, who can say what alterations being born into a social setting may produce, for good or ill, in dragon behavior."

Aliera had by this time joined the conversation, and observed: "The Daedra must have been long pleased with dragon behavior."

Akatosh responded, "Perhaps so, but I approached our queen with this suggestion moreso because it seemed clear to me that as a race we had fallen into a stasis, and we needed to break this shell in order to invigorate ourselves. She didn't quite agree with me, but, perhaps because of my reputation, she told me to go ahead and make this attempt."

By this point, all of the Companions were sitting within hearing range, and Mats asked: "Did you have to get your queen's permission? And have there been many difficulties among the various races?"

"Permission is not quite accurate in this case, Mats; being the beings that we are, it was moreso that I was obliged to tell her of this so that she would have the information. For example, other dragons regularly come to me with potential military intelligence, following this same philosophy of preparedness."

Mats grinned and said, "You mean 'just in case', right? But what about these elves and humans?"

"Ah, our humanoid Lord and Lady do set a most remarkable example of tolerance and respect for differing shapes and customs. I owe a debt of gratitude to Moraelyn for the loan of his smiths and miners, who have been most generous in sharing their knowledge and skills with the Bretons that my young friend Edward and I have, ah, persuaded to attempt settlement here. It is my experience that Bretons, well, many Bretons, will do virtually anything so long as it is profitable and they gain skill and knowledge from it. The Nordic lust for individual honor and glory makes the mithril armor and weapons produced here extremely profitable - t'was sheer genius that inspired Alieria to insist that we sell only to the nobility while the delving opens new tunnels and provides access to - that which we dragons require." Akatosh smiled a little slyly. He was very reticent on the subject of exactly what dragons required. "Beech and Willow have made it known among their people that wood elves are welcome here, so those who have long missed their ancient High Rock homes have returned to these hills."

"Fortunate for me that I'm now a Duke, and thus qualified to wear and carry mithril. If only I could afford more than a piece or two! But for the cost I might retire." Mats said.

"If you retired you would not require the mithril," Moraelyn pointed out.

"And what of my son and daughter? Thinkst thou I will beg from thee for them?" Mats said indignantly. "My knees and wind may not be what once they were, I grant you. I fact I'm somewhat tempted to remain up here, now I am here, yet I can still swing my axe with any!"

Mith grinned delightedly, "Nords can't count. It's why they seek honor and glory, not profit. Honor and glory are not amenable to enumeration much past what one can tally on the fingers. Mats, if thou art but thirty-nine, thou wert the largest ten year old humanoid I ever met or hope to meet!"

"But what then are these benefits to those who neither delve nor smith?" Mats persisted, ignoring his old friend. "I would think that many would be terrified to live so close to such... formidable beings" Mats spoke the last of this with a sly grin.

"Well, on the other hand, the presence of the 'formidable beings' means that they are certainly well-protected. And this area is surprisingly fertile, so the crops seem to be growing well, and although they provide the meat for us, we allocate one fifth of each herd to them for their own consumption. We've also been finding out what I have long suspected - the three sets of races, when combined, fight much more effectively than the sum of each when considered in isolation - that is, each race covers or cancels weaknesses of the others. At least it is certainly

true that the local goblin population has been drastically reduced in a very short period of time."

"Aye," Edward responded, "so Moraelyn proved in Morrowind."

"With a bit of help from his friends," Moraelyn acknowledged. "I reap the praise, but in truth I'm little more than the standard they wave -- and at times I feel more like the target they set up!"

A wave of laughter greeted this remark. Edward persisted, "With you and the others up here, Akatosh, I feel my borders are well guarded, should Skyrim ever feel the urge to move its borders west again."

Aliera asked: "Was it easy to convince the other dragons to move to here?"

"Actually, the most difficult part of that was moving our hoards to our new lairs" Akatosh responded with a lazy smile, "although once it was known that we had no use for the metals, gems and jewelry that we accumulate, everything went much more smoothly." But then more seriously: "Essentially I had to approach each dragon personally, and convince them that this idea had merit. Again, once I had persuaded a couple of our especially independent specimens, things went much more smoothly. However, there are only nine of us living in this area and there is really only room for two or three more of us. We shall have to see what develops hereafter."

Aliera now observed: "I think that now the gods and goddesses might look very favorably indeed on dragon behavior."

"That may be so, Aliera, but again that was not really why this was done. Besides, they still may remember and resent our long opposition to them."

Beech asked deferentially "But what is the name of this village?"

Akatosh sighed, and then responded "I fear that we shall never reach a decision, since each race has decided opinions in that regard. Perhaps once the initial building phase is completed, we will be able to be more contemplative about such matters."

Beech replied "That just doesn't seem right; everywhere should have a name, shouldn't it?"

Willow chuckled and then said "Perhaps to us this is so, but who knows how dragons think; and I'm sure that the humans and elves will squabble over the style of the name, besides the specifics of it."

Moraelyn interrupted with great drama, "Surely you don't mean to imply that an elf can be overly stubborn!?" and the discussion dissolved into a period of laughter and teasing amongst the group.

Presently, Akatosh said, "I favor the name 'Section 22.'"

Beech stared at him, "Akatosh, I see what thou dost mean about thy difficulties with the poetic. If you will allow my frank opinion? That is the single worst village name I have ever heard."

Akatosh sighed gustily, then pardoned himself hastily to Beech - humanoids found dragon sighs quite unpleasant and sometimes actually hazardous. "Then thou seest what I mean by differences. To me, it is very meaningful, and most appropriate. Is 'Section 16' any better as a name? Not? Then is it the word 'Section' that offends you? In what way is it inferior to 'Keep' or 'Reich' or 'Glen' or 'Hold'?"

Edward said, "But Akatosh, a name should make some sense. At least humans think so. You should have 21 other sections first, if you're going to name this place '22'."

"Really?" Akatosh said, "Why is that? Are not all numbers equally valid? They serve well to distinguish one place from another. There could be many 'Greenvales' for instance. I myself know of four such villages. The number 'Twenty-two' does appeal to me....aesthetically, as well as possessing some 'sense' - at least to me," he smiled secretively.

Moraelyn said, "I think Lord Akatosh is enjoying what some call an 'in-joke'. Were I so rash as to instruct a dragon in manners."

"Who," Silk said, "would e'er accuse Moraelyn of being rash?"

A bit later, Edward asked Akatosh: "Do you think that we could play a game or two of Battle? I brought the board and playing pieces with me."

Moraelyn interrupted "I'm afraid that Akatosh and I must discuss some matters this evening - and you'd only lose again anyway" he added with a fond smile.

Edward replied "But I can beat everyone else. Akatosh, will I ever win a game with you?"

"No, Edward, you won't", and Akatosh was slightly bemused by Edward's startled expression, and then the hearty laugh that quickly followed it.

"That wasn't very diplomatic of you, Akatosh. But why won't I ever win?"

"Because I have been playing for much longer than you have Edward, and so long as I continue to play, you will not be able to catch up to me. Besides, this game is what I am starting to think of as a 'bounded problem', and that sort is most easily dealt with."

"What do you mean by 'a bounded problem', Akatosh?" asked Mats.

"That is a problem that has a countable number of possible actions and results, Mats. There are only 81 squares on the board, and each side has exactly 27 playing pieces, each piece moves in a specific way, and so on."

"But the game is like a real battle, isn't it?" asked Ssa'ass.

"No, it is very good practice for learning, and for thinking about how to execute a battle - but my Elven Archers never become tired or demoralized, and my Master Mage always does what I want. Such things seldom happen in a real battle."

Moraelyn nodded in agreement, and asked with mock slyness "Then what is an example of an unbounded problem?"

"Certainly a real battle...but also, to me a poem is an unbounded problem"

"But any poem can be analyzed, Akatosh" Alieria said chidingly.

"Of course - but only after it is written. I am unable to define, or bound, the act of writing it, though...that is, the act of creating it. If I start to write a poem...there are so many possibilities" and then wryly "I never get beyond the first line, because I start imagining all the things that I could put into the beginning and...."

**[30.12] King Edward XII**

## King Edward, Part XII

by Anonymous

The dragon had paused, so Edward interjected, "Mother and I have been discussing the nature of the gods recently, Akatosh, and she thinks that poetry would be a godly activity. What do you think about that notion?"

"I am not so certain that one can attribute anything to the gods, Edward. They are another example of an unbounded problem, of course, but also, their characteristics are just not very well known to us."

"But surely one can determine things about any being that is a god?"

Akatosh replied, "I do not think that we can, at present; they are not like the Daedra, who have a nature that is with them at their birth. That is, the Daedra capabilities are inherent in them, and not are the result of any changes that have occurred to them."

Willow interrupted: "Akatosh, we can determine that the gods have a few basic characteristics, can't we?"

Edward added "Of course, Akatosh - they are powerful beings who can perform acts that are incomprehensible to us. That in itself must signify their difference."

Akatosh nodded and replied "I understand your point of view, but to a farming community on Tamriel in our southern lands, that could also describe how they would perceive me. Perhaps this is attributable to the fact that they seldom see a dragon nowadays, but it also does not mean that I am a god ... neither does it mean that I am not a god."

Willow giggled, and said "Of course you're not a god, Akatosh" and Edward, smiling, nodded agreement.

Akatosh replied "How do you know, Willow? I can understand that you would guess that I am not a god, particularly since I am a dragon." He grinned, and then continued "But how can you know that I am not a god?"

Edward scoffingly replied "Well, I know that I'm not a god anyway. And I've certainly never seen you perform any godly acts, Akatosh - you also don't seem to have any worshippers about either."

The Companions were smiling and generally agreeing with this, but Akatosh responded "But that does not mean that I have no worshippers, nor does it mean that I cannot perform any godly acts - it just means that you have not seen either of these. I am not yet certain that gods and goddesses require worshippers to maintain their existence. And as I said, I can perform magic that would look like 'godly acts' to many Tamrielians."

"But the gods must have worshippers, Akatosh" said Alieria, "That's how they get their ... sustenance, or whatever it is that allows them to continue ... to be godly. Husband, you must know more about this subject. After all, you made a god of your brother S'teph." "

"I did no such thing!" Moraelyn responded, with a touch of indignation. "His godhood is between him and his worshippers, among whom I am numbered. I did establish a temple cult in his memory. Anyone with the worldly means could do as much for anyone, living or dead. That alone is not enough. Maybe it helps -- facilitate matters, but I think it's not really necessary. I know no more of it, but if you want my opinion--" he paused politely for confirmation that it was indeed still solicited, as elven etiquette demanded if one were giving opinion at length.

He continued. "There must be something, well, godly, in the person's soul or essence or whatever part it is that does not die with the body. I know not whether that capacity is innate in the person, from birth or conception, or quickening ... whene'er it is that soul and body are wedded for a life span, or whether great deeds and great generosity might breed it, enlarging the soul and transmuting it, so to speak. We all change and grow with each passing day, with every breath, some more than others. What else is life about?"

He went on without pausing for an answer to his rhetorical question, probably for fear that he might get one. "In other cases, gods seem to arise from a locality, a mountain, or a spring, or wood, or a collection of localities, such as Tamriel itself. Places, like persons have souls, some greater than others. This place might produce a god or a daedra -- or maybe it already has one or more. As it changes, so do its gods and daedra, I think. Maybe they can choose to resist the change or aid it, if propitiated."

He looked at Akatosh inquiringly. The dragon had stopped fighting the new gods, he said, but would he go so far as to worship them? "That speaks to the question of whence gods arise, but source is not nature: of that I know as little as the rest of you, maybe less, since the question does not truly interest me. The gods are; my worship of them benefits me and mine. It is sufficient."

Akatosh did not respond immediately and Alieria refused to be distracted, "But suppose such a cult were established and worshippers provided for one of small and mean spirit. Would that spirit not become a god?"

"I suppose it might be done, if one were determined enough and had a sufficiency of means to pay worshippers to perform rituals without -- spirit -- behind them. Maybe that's where small, mean gods come from, wife. Or maybe daedra? Maybe I'll raise a cult to thee and see what happens."

"Are you calling my spirit small and mean?" Ali glared at him.

"Only by comparison -- you don't fancy yourself a goddess, do you? You might make a daedra, though. The experiment might be a bit too chancy. Could I just mourn you for a century or two instead?"

"Mm. I'll think on it. What about you? You've deeds enough already to qualify for godhood, surely ... although if you plan on many more such you may not outlive me."

"I'm doomed to be R'Aathim, living and dead. It's godhood of a sort, but what a sort! Don't begrudge me my long life span. Think of me doomed to eternity in the gloomy Ebonheart council chamber listening to the eternal wrangles ... small wonder the dead R'Aathim pulled the place down on the live ones twenty years ago, thus causing my brother and my mother to join their number. The dead R'Aathim must have welcomed the century and a half of respite while the Nords held Ebonheart."

"But your brother S'ephen was killed too, as well as your brother King Cruethys, and S'ephen wasn't R'Aathim, being your mother's son and not your father's, if I have the story straight -- that's why he got his own temple," Edward said. "So why did they kill him, too? The story sounds very daedric to me."

"You'd have me justify the ways of the gods to you, would you? I think they act for ends we cannot see, and slay the just and the unjust together -- not that I'd label any of my Kin as either -- not altogether. We see only the means -- how can we judge? Gods too face choices; I do not think their power supreme. They can overrule nature on occasion, as can any Mage, yet they, like Mages, are in the end bound by it -- and their overrule must answer other rules still - - and in those rules, whatever they be, I think lies the answer to your questions. I think it's not something men and women may know while living."

Akatosh smiled and replied "It is not so easy to describe the gods, is it? This is true even though, myself included, each of us thinks that we have a mental picture of what godliness means. On the other hand, the gods and goddesses certainly do exist - and I also believe that there is a connection of some sort between them and the Daedra, and another connection between these entities and the power associated with performing magic."

"The priests of Julianos have been calling this power 'Magicka'" said a stranger who had joined the group.

Akatosh replied "Greetings bard. Please allow me to introduce ... Geoffrey, a ... wandering poet who has been visiting our village for these last few days." The Companions greeted the wood elf newcomer, some rising to their feet to do so according to their individual customs, and then all resumed sitting (actually sprawling about) and conversing.

"A number of priests are theorizing that the gods and goddesses live on another plane, as do the Daedra - there is some debate amongst these priests as to whether they share the same plane of existence, or whether each has their own. And some of the Alessian priests are claiming that we can visit these alternate planes in our nightly dreams" added Beech.

Edward asked "Why doesn't someone just ask a goddess or a Daedra about this?"

Geoffrey chuckled and replied "Most of us are not able to be so thoughtful when confronted by one of these beings, Edward. Also, there is a common belief that the gods and Daedra are as reluctant to discuss their own natures as dragons are to reveal anyone's True Name."

Edward looked quizzically at Akatosh, but Beech stated to Geoffrey "Well said, Bard" ... and that pair shared the slightest of smiles.

Beech then said, "Do you know what the Resolutions of Zenithar has been saying about the gods and magic? This magic power, or Magicka, is just the power generated by the existence

of, well, existance itself. When it becomes focused by living beings through natural processes, then it becomes accessible to the gods and goddesses as worship power, which is the next level of Magicka. After receiving some from their worshippers, the gods can then concentrate it up to god-level power - the true Magicka. The gods themselves can't generate the mid-level Magicka, since they are dependent on it for their own existence, but they can 'convert it' to Magicka, which can then be used by mortals to cast spells. This Magicka is usually dispersed widely across the planes but there are areas of greater and lesser concentration due to interferences with the dispersion process."

"When a goddess loses worshippers, her inflow of mid-level Magicka is decreased, so she in turn produces less god-level Magicka. With less Magicka under her control (for providing to worshippers, or dispersion), her influence is decreased in the mortal planes - of course the converse is also true. In the extreme, she receives nothing, and is relegated to a state of Stasis, barely existing from the ordinary Magicka generated by her few remaining Consecrated lands, zones of influence, and so on."

Beech continued, "On the other hand, Daedra receive very specific, or 'modified' mid-level Magicka from a few mortals with specific areas of interest, and these Daedra are normally tied to very specific circumstances. Because of their nature, they gain much more power from their small worship base, but the gods, with their much broader base, generally have greater overall power, even though the amount of concentrated worship that they receive from any one source is much less than a Daedra's. Most of the Magicka that the gods 'process' is dispersed into and throughout the universe, no longer under their control, thereby making it available for everyone. It's not really something they do consciously, but as a natural process that happens automatically - in other words ... just because they are divine."

Aliera said, "I would think that Magicka is simply available to sentient beings, although the gods and Daedra could facilitate its usage. I would think that the gods and Daedra have other influences on us as well, because not everyone has spellcasting ability! Maybe in those 'alternate planes' it's actually existance, and not sentient entities, that radiates Magicka, just as the stars give off light in our dimension. I just assume that Magicka is 'out there' in the ether, or maybe sentient consciousnesses automatically tap into an alternate plane as they sleep. I think that everyone has some supply of Magicka, but most don't know how to use it very well, or else they adopt a way of life that inhibits or forbids its use. Maybe certain gods and Daedra serve as facilitators for the entire process; that is, both obtaining and using Magicka? But how do priests heal and cure and bless? Is Magicka involved at all or do they invoke their goddesses directly?"

Ssa'ass said, "I am not ssssure that Magicka isss usssed; perhapss there isss yet another capability involved here. Thisss capability would be unknown at thisss time, and maybe even unsssenssssed... but I feel fairly certain that sssomehow it is a godly 'force' that they are employing."

Then Geoffrey responded: "Ssa'ass, I believe that Magicka fills the universe of planes. All things are infused with Magicka to one extent or another. In this regard Magicka is attracted to some people and things over others, and some people with talent or training can control and even release Magicka in new forms. There may be other sources of Magicka available by tapping into alternate and otherworldly planes. There is also the possibility of alternate planes that are entirely void of Magicka. Regardless, certain beings of great power, such as the gods and Daedra, can not only control Magicka, but can see, absorb, and transfuse Magicka to and

from objects and people. By employing this ability, worshippers of these beings are sometimes capable of greater acts of Magic than they could accomplish otherwise. Also in this way, some items sacred to powerful beings can be said to be holy, with additional amounts of directed Magicka provided by gods or goddesses."

"Magic items fall into two main categories by definition. Items that draw on the surrounding Magicka to create spell-like effects, and items that hold Magicka in reserve for their own internal effects. Normally magic items which absorb Magicka, giving increased abilities to their wielders, only affect themselves and are considered to use internal Magicka. In some areas where great amounts of Magicka have been used, the surroundings may be completely devoid of it. This of course negates the ability of beings to produce magic effects in these areas, although gods and Daedra carry their own supplies of Magicka, as do magic items that do not depend on the use of surrounding Magicka."

Alera said, "We've been investigating some rumors and stories concerning something that might be called anti-Magicka. I think the presence of a powerful Daedra with whom you weren't in 'tune' could cause interference with spellcasting - maybe even cancel out existing spells. Perhaps particular Daedra simply favor thief or warrior types. Or some goddesses, and their priests, might frown on 'competing' magic in certain areas, for example in locations dedicated to them. So then unauthorized spells could interfere with their rituals."

Willow asked, "Can Daedra supply Magicka? And how about both a god and a Daedra being nearby? - wouldn't they sort of nullify each other's powers? This might be the cause of the anti-Magicka effect."

"I've experienced an anti-Magicka zone myself" inserted Mith. "It felt a lot like the effect of casting a spell like Dispel Magicka. At the time, I thought that a truly powerful spellcaster could still effectively cast spells, but their resulting power would have been much reduced. I didn't get a chance to test this out though" added Mith with a smile.

"We can also assume that certain powerful spells, creatures and even magic items might actually drain the surrounding area of Magicka," replied Geoffrey. "This could be extended to places where great amounts of magic energy were once gathered and expended, for example in ancient temples where great spells were cast, or battlefields where powerful mages contested. Perhaps certain metals or stones could act as absorbers of Magicka, allowing for whole structures of anti-Magicka zones. If so, you might be able to wear a amulet made out of anti-Magicka material and gain a good advantage against spellcasters. Perhaps the purity of the material used would allow for better and better magic resistance".

Akatosh spoke: "Dragons have long been interested in the anti-Magicka effect, naturally enough. We have found some amulets that appear to act as Magicka absorbers. They might contain something like Negative Magicka, in which case they would attract any 'stray' Magicka floating free in the local area. They are made of a stone, or mineral, resembling marble - it is very rare, but could be extracted, and shaped by skilled craftsmen. For example, I'm sure that the dwarves could have worked with this material. They might have made these amulets - or even that statue that I once saw ... it was taller than any of you humanoids. Regardless, in these mountains we have found deposits scattered throughout the halls and tunnels at random, sometimes deep within the walls. Consequently, one appears to go in and out of these anti-Magicka zones of varying intensities, with little or no warning. I have been imagining that this material works almost automatically; it seems to 'reflexively' absorb

Magicka if given a chance to. However, we cannot rule out the possibility that they have been magically charged somehow - perhaps this happened long ago, but the charge has somehow remained."

Moraelyn asked, "Would the amulet affect its wearer, or would he be immune?"

"Maybe a blocking spell could be developed, and then cast, to shield the wearer from the effects of the substance."

Moraelyn then asked, "But Akatosh, getting back to our earlier discussions - what do you think of the speculations concerning the connections between the gods and goddesses, Daedra and Magicka?"

Akatosh replied, "I think that there are many truths that we do not know, and perhaps there are some truths that we are not meant to know."

Moraelyn asked with a smile, "All right then, I've always wanted to know this - considering the shape of your mouth and teeth, how do dragons manage to speak the humanoid languages so clearly?"

Akatosh paused, and then carefully responded, "Why, in much the same way that we can fly, even though our wings are not naturally strong enough to support such heavy torsos."

"Speaking of dragon flight and sunsets..." Mith said, rising to his feet and squinting into the red-gold eastern sky, "We have a visitor, Dragon Lord. That's not a bird."

Akatosh's head came up and he too scanned the sky. Tension grew in him, and one by one the Companions rose, watching as the distant dot grew nearer and resolved itself into the largest dragon they'd seen yet.

"Ma-Tylda!" Akatosh exclaimed, "She deigns to bestow her presence on us!" His wings lifted and unfurled, and the Companions broke and ran for cover as he took flight. The two dragons wheeled through the sky, spouting great gouts of flame against the purpling sky.

"They're fighting," Edward cried, "what does it mean. Who is Ma-Tylda?"

"I don't know who she is, son," Moraelyn replied, "but they do not fight. You behold a dragon greeting ceremony." The pair alit beyond a rock outcropping out of sight.

"Should we go greet the stranger, too?" Edward asked.

"Nay," Mith said. "They'll let us know if our presence is wanted -- look, even the other dragons stay away." It was true. Dragon heads had poked from the caverns to witness the event, but none of them had taken wing, and now they were retreating to their hoards within.

The Companions ambled back into the meadow together and built a fire as a chill wind had sprung up. The elves sang an evening hymn to the stars, deftly weaving the dark elf version with the wood elf form. Alieria added her voice to theirs, but Mats and Edward and Silk and Ssa'ass sat listening silently. They couldn't manage elven music of this kind. Geoffrey had a particularly clear sweet voice, Edward thought.

Akatosh returned presently, smiling in satisfaction. "Ma-Tylde's going to join us here, at least for awhile," he said. He was actually glowing in the dusk, each scale giving off a golden radiance.

"Is she your queen?" Edward asked, feeling very small and human.

"She -- just is. Maybe she'll want to meet you all some day. I hope so. Until then, well, I don't talk about other dragons, you know."

To which Edward blinked in surprise and then surmise, and the discussion dissolved into jokes and songs for the remainder of that clear and beautiful evening.

## [31] Legal Basics

Legal Basics  
by Anchivius, M.Z.F.

Ignorance of the law is no defense. Be forewarned that the following are but the most universal of Tamrielan laws and regulations. Your own local province or principality may have unique laws of its own. As a citizen of Empire, it is your right and responsibility to know and follow these laws of the land.

**Breaking and Entering:** This refers to any act including, but not limited to opening, breaking, incinerating, magically transporting, or in any way causing a door, window, or other portal that has been magically or mundanely locked or which a reasonable person would assume to be so restricted to be passable, and the act (though the act is not required for the definition) of entering the house, business, or public location through said defined portal. The punishment for this crime may include a fine or incarceration, or a fine and incarceration. The fine and incarceration, or both, or neither, may be less in a crime of Attempted Breaking and Entering.

A crime of Attempted Breaking and Entering is defined as an any act that a reasonable person would perceive as the preparation for, an attempt (whether successful or not, or perceived to be possibly successful or not) to bring about the opening, breaking, incinerating, magically transporting, or in any way causing a door, window, or other portal that has been magically or mundanely locked or which a reasonable person would assume to be so restricted to be passable, and the act (though the act is not required for the definition) of preparing or attempting (whether successful or not, perceived to be possibly successful or not) entering the house, business, or public location through said defined portal.

**Trespassing:** This refers to walking, flying, riding, teleporting, floating, or in any way moving or existing on a property without the explicit written or spoken permission (or permission a reasonable person might infer) of the owner or caretaker of the property. The punishment for this crime may include a fine or incarceration, or a fine and incarceration.

**Assault:** Any threat or attempt (whether successful or not) to do physical, emotional, mental, or magical harm or injury to another person, group of persons, or entity a reasonable person might assume to be sentient. The punishment for this crime may include a fine or incarceration, or a fine and incarceration.

**Murder:** Any act of premeditated or malicious or premeditated and malicious (or an act that a reasonable person would call premeditated and malicious or premeditated or malicious) or accidental but criminally intended (or what a reasonable person would call criminally intended) purpose that results directly in the death (or destruction with implied death) of a person, group of persons, or entity a reasonable person might assume to be sentient. The punishment for this crime may include a fine or incarceration, or a fine and incarceration.

**Criminal Conspiracy:** Any meeting, communication, or encounter with the purpose (or which a reasonable person might assume had the purpose) of preparing or arranging a crime of any

kind (or crimes of any kind) to be committed or caused to be committed. The punishment for this crime may include a fine or incarceration, or a fine and incarceration.

Vagrancy: Any act of idleness, disorder, begging, or conduct unbecoming a person with occupation, gold, or a home, (or occupation, gold, and a home, or occupation or gold and home, or occupation and gold or home, or occupation and home or gold), or what a reasonable person would consider idle, disorderly, beggarly, or unbecoming. The punishment for this crime may include a fine or incarceration, or a fine and incarceration.

Smuggling: Any act of bringing in, taking out, teleporting, or causing to be brought in, taken out, or teleported an object considered illegal or, if not illegal, requiring an import or export tax which is not paid. The punishment for this crime may include a fine or incarceration, or a fine and incarceration, and will include confiscation of the offensive or illegal object. It may also include, but not be restricted to, execution or banishment, or execution and banishment.

High Treason: Any act against (whether directly or indirectly, or any nonaction which results in circumstances, directly or indirectly, against) a allegiated sovereign or by a vassal to a liege, resulting (or what a reasonable person would assume would result) in physical, emotional, mental, or magical harm or injury in said sovereign or liege. The punishment for this crime will be death.

Pickpocketing: Any act of stealing, taking, or, without explicit written or verbal permission (or what a reasonable person would infer as implied permission) an item or items a person, group of persons, or entity a reasonable person might assume to be sentient has on his, her, its, or their own person. The punishment for this crime may include a fine or incarceration, or a fine and incarceration.

Theft (sometimes called Larceny): Any act of stealing, taking, or, without explicit written or verbal permission (or what a reasonable person would infer as implied permission) an item or items from a person, group of persons, or entity a reasonable person might assume to be sentient's place of residence, business, person, or other location a reasonable person would assume is secured from looting. The punishment for this crime may include a fine or incarceration, or a fine and incarceration.

These are the usual, day-to-day definitions used by legal experts (like myself), but both the definitions and punishments may fluctuate wildly according to location and situation. In the Imperial City, legal counsel is available by persons like myself, but the provinces have no such system in place. Perhaps that will change in time. We can all hope so.

As a final note: the Tamriel legal system has its basis in the civilized, reasonable credo uttered by the prophet Marukh in the first era: "All are guilty until they have proven themselves innocent." Were truer word ever spoke?

### [32] The Legend of Lovers Lament

The Legend of Lovers Lament  
by Croll Baumoval

The night is very dark. Wind gently ruffles the willow trees. All is quiet, or it so appears, around the shores of the small lake. Tamriel's moons reflect in the slightly rippling surface of the water. An owl's questioning call echoes. No lights are shining from the castle nearby; it appears deserted.

As the night wears on and the planet's satellites moves across the heavens, a faint glow appears near the castle. The light slowly moves towards the lake, and upon reaching the shore, stops. A figure, a beautiful woman by any measure, stands looking wistfully into the dark water. Her lantern flickers in the breeze, and illuminates her. Tears are streaming down her cheeks; her gown, once beautiful, is now tattered and stained.

The surface of the lake becomes agitated, but not from a wind as the night has become as still as it is dark. Slowly from the water emerges the figure of a man, a warrior, fully adorned in the armor of a knight on the field of battle. He seems to float over the water towards the woman and stop just short of her.

"Madylina," the ghostly warrior intones.

"My Lord, Gerthland," whispers the lovely Madylina as she kneels. "You have come to me again."

"Yes," Gerthland responds, "My days are long waiting for the night in which I can see my love."

The lovers stand looking wistfully at each other, unable to touch, unable to kiss, unable to satisfy their unrequited love until the first tinges of dawn start to color the western sky. Gerthland drops something to the ground as does Madylina as each depart. The waters of the lake again take possession of the handsome knight and the beautiful maiden walks slowly back to the castle. As the waters of the lake settle into a gentle ripple and the light of Madylina's lantern disappears, dawn breaks over the lake.

On the shore are two beautiful roses--one crimson and the other white as fresh cream. Ripples from the lake overtake the two flowers and pull them into the lake leaving the shore bare as it was in the hours before darkness fell.

\* \* \*

The townfolk around Gerthland Manor tell often of seeing these lovers in their nightly meeting. The Boar's Bristle Inn is always rumbling with conversation about them. Lord Gerthland and Lady Madylina who were betrothed. Lord Gerthland called to battle to defend the land. Hergen, the castle's resident sorcerer, becoming enflamed with love and lust for Madylina only to be rebuked by her. Lord Gerthland's death on the field of battle. Lady

Madylina's death by her own hand at the news. Hergen's curse on both their souls that will not allow them to rest until Madylina will agree to become Hergen's consort even in death.

Hergen, to this day, wanders the deserted halls of Gerthland Manor hoping that Madylina will agree to his demands. And the lovers continue to meet for a few moments each night on the shores of the lake now known as Lover's Lament.

**[33] Letters<sup>1</sup>****[33.1] {Anonymous Letter}**

Dear Friend,

I know you didn't do it. You didn't steal that {...} outta {...} any more than I did. Who do I suspect? Well, there's this {...} in {...} who would be just as happy stealing gems and framing people as I would be drinking a cool ale on a hot summertide day. I don't have any evidence, but you might wanna check into {her/him}. The name of this cleric is {...}. Good luck.

A Friend

---

<sup>1</sup> Actually, the following letters are described as "parchments" in game and are untitled.

**[33.2] {Anonymous Letter}**

{...},

You dont know me and I dont owe you any favors and even after this you dont owe me nothing, you unnderstand? I used to work for this {...} by a name of {...}. Now {she/he} was a crazy one, {she/he} was. Allways trying to find a way to get rich. And always quick to blame someone else when {she/he} got caught with {her/his} hands in the cookie jar. That's how I got put away. If I was you Id look to see if my old freind had something to do with the steeling at {...}.

A Friend

**[33.3] {Anonymous Letter}**

Dear {...},

Please forgive this intrusion. I am quite certain that your mind is on other subjects than polite chitchat, so I will come right to the point. I do not believe that you were responsible for the burglar in The Screaming Fawn, but unless you prove yourself innocent, you will be forevermore persecuted for it.

There is a adventuresome woman of my acquaintance who I believe knows more about the affair than most. It may be that she even arranged or even committed the crime. I can say no more, except that her name is Barbabyth Greensly and she lives in Penwall Derry.

And one final thing: she has very powerful friends. Do not face her at a disadvantage.

A Friend

**[33.4] {Anonymous Letter}**

Dear {...},

Perhaps it would interest you to know that there is at least one person who doesn't think you did it. Or maybe I should say two people in {...} don't think you did it. Me and the one who did it -- a {...} who did do the burglary. Now, the truth is that I don't have any proof, but {...}, that's the {...}, has done that kind of jewel-robbing before. {...}, {she/he} even spent time in jail for it. So, maybe {...} didn't do it. Maybe. But if {she/he} didn't, I can tell you this -- {she/he} knows more about who really did it than you do. So if you want to find out who did it and who's framing you, go find this {...} and ask {her/him} some questions.

A Friend

**[33.5] {Anonymous Letter}**

Dear {...},

You have probably not heard the fairy tale of Numidium, but you need to. The legend dates back to the earliest parts of the third era. Numidium was supposed to be a giant so big his hands could knock the moons from the sky. I do not recall from the stories whether Numidium was supposed to be good or bad, but the legends used to scare me as a child. The legends are, in fact, true. There was a Numidium, and, if situations continue, he will come again. The Totem of Tiber Septim is used to control Numidium. However, legend has it that great Numidium lost his Mantellan heart, whatever that is, in the final with Tiber Septim's Battlemage. Until his heart is found, the Totem is useless.

A Friend

**[33.6] {Anonymous Letter}**

Dear {...},

Numidium was Tiber Septim's secret weapon in his bid for supreme power: a thousand foot tall automaton, a golem or an atronach of sorts powered by a gem called the Mantella. The Mantella was infused with the life orce of Tiber Septim's Imperial Battlemage, and with it, Septim crushed all who stood in his way. After the complete and total defeat of all his opponents, Septim began using Numidium to crush the neutral royal families of Tamriel so that he could enthrone only persons he knew to be loyal. His Imperial Battlemage was furious at this use of his creation, and fought to reclaim the Mantella. In the ensuing battle, both the created and the creator were vanquished: the heart they shared blown out of this reality into the netherworld they call Aetherius. Numidium's body was scattered throughout Tamriel and the Imperial Battlemage, without his life force went into a semi-slumber in a subterranean vault. In the centuries that followed, the Emperor's elite soldiers, for generation after generation, collected the pieces of the Numidium and became known as the Blades. Tiber Septim's Imperial Battle Mage became known as the Underking, and sent his forces out to find the Mantella. Be warned, therefore. Those who search for the Totem of Tiber Septim are searching for the mechanism the first Emperor of Tamriel used to control Numidium. Should Numidium return, he or she who holds the Totem will control Tamriel's fate.

A Friend

**[33.7] {Anonymous Letter}**

Dear {...},

I must tell you about the Totem of Tiber Septim, which all covet. You must know the truth about what you are asked. The Totem was crafted by the original Imperial Battlemage of Tamriel, by orders of Tiber Septim. It is essentially a means of controlling a gargantuan creature called the Numidium. Without it, the Numidium would simply not function. The Imperial Battlemage placed a seal on the Totem so that anyone not of Septim lineage or possessing a special supernatural affinity, such as himself, would be instantly killed if they attempted to use it. The Totem, with the rest of Numidium, was lost during the epic battle between the Imperial Battlemage and his own creation.

A Friend

**[33.8] {Letter}**

Dear {...},

Or should I call you "{...}," as you are known to the common folk of {...}, who bar their doors against you in fear each night? Yes, I know who and what you are, and your days of terrorizing the Iliac Bay are numbered. I offer you a simple choice: renounce your lycanthropy, or be hunted down like the wild beast you are. Let no one say that {...} lacks compassion. I offer you one last chance to save yourself. Go to {...} of {...} in {...} if you wish to live. {He} is wise in the ways of lycanthropy, and if anyone can help you, {he} can. I will wait {...} days before sending my hunters after you. Use the time wisely.

{...}

**[33.9] {Letter}**

{...},

Malacath wishes {...} dead. {her/his} agents have uncovered one too many of our plots. {she/he} must be stopped before all our plans for {...} are ruined. You will find {her/him} in the Palace of {...}. Make sure {her/his} death cannot be traced back to us. Once you have carried out the assassination, wait for me in {...}. I will bring your reward and your next assignment from Malacath.

{...}

**[33.10] {Letter}**

{...},

You are a most spiteful man. How could I ever have thought that I loved you. Since you caught me on the balcony in the arms of {...}, I can now reveal that we are indeed lovers. {she/he} is able to give me everything that you cannot. You made me feel unclean with your disgusting gifts of gold. Do not ever darken my doorway again.

{...}

**[33.11] {Letter}**

My Dearest {...},

I know you are angry and hurt. I would do anything to regain your love. What you saw on the balcony was not of my desire. I had too much to drink that night and {...} took advantage of the moment to steal a kiss. {she/he} has been flogged and is no longer in my service. Please forgive me. I love only you.

{...}

**[33.12] {Letter}**

{...},

Your price is a fair one. This letter is my bond of payment for the goods. Present it to my factor when you deliver them.

{...}

**[33.13] {Letter}**

Honorable {...},

I have decided to cast my vote for {...} at the next guild meeting. {she/he} has shown {her/his} faithfulness to the guild many times.

{...}

**[33.14] {Letter}**

{...},

My words will be quick. {...} is too much as you have said, and a little scare may be what is needed. I'll be leaving on a trip tonight, so tomorrow at sunset you should take him. I'll be in touch again, but I don't imagine we will need to continue for more than a week.

{...}

**[33.15] {Letter}**

Dear Stranger,

I hope you will forgive me for what I have done, but I had no choice. The mummy has haunted me every night since I found this cursed finger. I've tried throwing it away, but it did no good. A learned sage advised me that only by finding the mummy's tomb or by giving the finger away could I be rid of its hateful curse. I am no warrior, and who would knowingly take up this burden for me? You looked brave enough to endure the curse and perhaps solve it. Please understand, I meant you no harm, but I would have been killed or driven mad otherwise!

**[33.16] {Letter}**

Dear {...},

If you were hesitating in that quest out of reasonable fear that your dear friends, the {...}s of {...} would not want you to foil the rather lascivious plans of one of its order, do not fear. {...} is about as precious to our cold hearts as a puddle of month old spew. Enjoy yourself. And, if you are so inclined, enjoy {...}.

Your Dear Friends,

The Oldest Power in {...}

**[33.17] {Letter}**

{...},

Your offer is ludicrous! I can buy at half that price from any other merchant in {...}, and I will.

{...}

**[33.18] {Letter}**

Honorable {...},

I have decided to cast my vote for you when the guild ballots for treasurer. Of course I expect to be treated well in the near future.

{...}

**[33.19] {Letter}**

{...}  
{...}

{...} {...},

{...} has failed to meet with the man to whom {she/he} was to report {her/his} findings in {...}. We must assume the worst. You are hereby ordered to find either {...} {her/him}-self or {her/his} body in {...} and report back to me. All other assignments and investigations take lower priority.

{...}

**[33.20] {Letter}**

{...}  
{...}

Dear {...},

There's been a horrible accident here at {...}, involving {...}. Please come here when you can.

Yours sincerely,

{...}

**[33.21] {Letter}**

{...}, My Love,

First, forgive the silence of your love. It was not another attack of brain fever. For some months now, I have been in spiritual turmoil, unfit to for any company, even for the comfort of your dulcet fellowship. My days of pain are over, but for this -- I can never see you again. My life has a higher purpose than the fulfillment of a ridiculous love affair now.

No longer can I suffer the evil of {...}, the evil they did to me, and the evil they are doing to all of Tamriel. The days the prophet Marukh spoke of are on us again. I must rally the people by any and all lies, innuendo, bigotry, and threats to rise against the spiritual tyranny of {...}.

Forgive me, my former love. And if you can, forget me. And if you can do neither, do not see me. If you do, I will slay you and stick candles in your eyes and twine your organs with beads for the greater glory of the gods of the universe. Filthy {...}, torment me no longer

{...}

[33.22] {Letter}

{...},

Fine security for your security.

Your Dear Friend

**[33.23] {Letter}**

{...}  
{...}

Dear {...},

I received your note. Very amusing. Now I have a proposition for you to consider. Bring me the stolen {...} and I will recompense you with a {...}. If you bring that {...} to your employer, you will have made an enemy.

{...}

**[33.24] {Letter}**

Dear {...},

You have been set up. {...} is not at {...}. A knight named {...} is waiting there to ambush you. If you want to get rid of that {...}, bring it to me at {...} here in {...}.

{...}

**[33.25] {Letter}**

{...}  
{...}

Dear {...},

{...} has not been kidnapped by any tribe of orcs or any such thing. In fact, {she/he} is with us, as protection against {...}, who is a notorious drunk. If you want to see for yourself, with your own eyes, come on over to {...}.

Yours respectfully,

{...}

**[33.26] {Letter}**

{...}  
{...}

Dear {...},

I hope everything in {...} is fine and that you and your family are in good health. The weather, I understand, is clement, so I must commend you on ordering it for my visit. On to business. You mentioned in your last letter that you were interested in a discount for my services because the {...} is not of top quality and you have already found a convenient scapegoat for the crime. I agree to your terms, provided that you make certain that this {...} mercenary is the fool you suggest. If the worm turns, you know as well as I do, that it's every man for himself. And if that {...} {...} gets involved, {she/he} can destroy the whole affair. I will see you soon, my friend.

{...}

**[33.27] {Letter}**

{...}  
{...}

My Darling {...},

What a crafty, wicked thing you are. Don't think for a minute that I didn't suspect you were behind poor {...}'s misfortune. It was very sweet of you to get the {...} I wanted, but I somehow thought that you were going to pay for it. I don't want you to think I'm unappreciative, my dearest darling, but if that {...} is taken out of {...} and anyone traces it to me, you won't even be able to count how many fingers'll be pointing at you. I'd watch out particularly for that nasty little {...}. This is the sort of blackmail {she/he}'d love. Nevertheless, the {...} was a very sweet thought and I thank you.

Love,  
{...}

**[33.28] {Letter}**

{...}  
{...}

Dear {...},

Ignore my last letter when I applauded you for your enormous contribution to {...}. That {...} that you said was a donation was stolen from {...}. If it becomes known that the gem was stolen for our temple, our prestige in {...} would greatly suffer. {...} already hates us, and with {her/his} influence on the royal family, {...} will have much for which to answer. We will discuss at our next meeting what appropriate castigation this situation merits. Do not think of challenging the temple.

Yours Regretfully,  
{...}{...}

**[33.29] {Letter}**

{...}

{...}

My Dear {...},

So, you're back in business, are you? When I heard about the affair at {...}, I had a pleasant rush of nostalgia. Shall I ever fully forget the good old days when the two of us were partners? Surely no more than I shall forget when you framed me for a jewelry job in precisely the same way you're framing that {...} mercenary. That was at {...}'s business, wasn't it? Don't worry, this is not a blackmail note. I will not tell anyone a word ... unless, of course, they ask. Naturally, my memory may fade should you tell me where in {...} you hide that {...}. Please write back with your own reminiscences.

{...}

**[33.30] {Letter}**

{...}  
{...}

Dear {...},

I am sorry to annoy you while I'm sure you're busy, but I received a caller from the Fighters Guild on the subject of {...}, that mercenary I first hired to clean out {...}. Without boring you with the details of the interview, let me tell you that I promised the Guildmaster I'd ask you to look for {...} while you're in {...}. {...} looks is a {...}, so {she/he} should stick out at {...}. Well, I've fulfilled my promise to the Guildmaster. Personally, I don't care if you throw this letter away and let {...} rot in {...}. I am eagerly awaiting your return.

Yours truly,

{...}

**[33.31] {Letter}**

{...},

If you are anticipating a long and healthy career in the Bay area, I would advise dropping your pointless and doomed hounding. Tragedy is the only possible result, and the tragedy will be your own. I won't be caught, {...}. I have too much money to be caught.

Yours truly,

{...}

**[33.32] {Letter}**

Dear {...},

I might have some information that might help your search for that rat {...}. If you're interested, ask for me in {...} at a dump called {...}. And bring 10 gold pieces with you. This information ain't free.

{...}

**[33.33] {Letter}**

{...}

{...}

Dear Old {...},

Well done, {...}. {...} was characteristically pigheaded about giving us {her/his} research notes, but [she/he]'d be pleased as a pumpkin to give it to a "representative" of the right-minded Mages Guild. You'll have a lovely bit of gold waiting for you here in {...} when you get here with the notes.

Yours,

{...}

**[33.34] {Letter}**

{...},

We have heard that once again the {...} is considering increasing the number of patrols in {...} during the night to combat the unexplained attacks. {...} {...} will be receiving a visitor from {...} so this situation will be reasonably resolved. Please assist in this matter as per the usual plan. {...} are not amused that we must continually address this same potential problem. The {...}'s family has grown quite healthy incidentally. Not a coincidence. Or a situation without a remedy.

-- {...}

**[33.35] {Letter}**

{...},

{...} summon you to {...}. Look for me there and present this letter.

With dying breath,

{...}

**[33.36] {Letter}**

Dear {...},

{...} have a potential problem I fear. Come to me in {...} soonest.

In death,

{...}

**[33.37] {Letter}**

{...}

{...}

My Dear {...},

Perhaps you remember a warrior you met once, {...}? Taut, succulent, slightly thin-blooded, but all in all, a memorable meal. Well, {she/he}'s back from the grave now. {...} have rather mixed emotions about your progeny's existence. Come see me and we'll discuss it.

Yours in Death,

{...}

**[33.38] {Letter}**

{...}  
{...}

Dear {...},

Those doddering, unenlightened barbarians who call themselves the Mages Guild are involved in yet another rather pointless endeavor. This time, they may, though accidentally, be on a path toward breaking the shade and exposing {...}. It seems inconceivable that the Mages Guild actually accomplish anything, but we must make provision for such an eventuality. Come see me as soon as possible at the address above.

Yours in Death,

{...}

**[33.39] {Letter}**

My Dear Old {...},

Whenever you might find yourself in the vicinity of {...}, your ubiety at {...} would be most efficacious to our present needs. In return for your support in an endeavor, I can offer you the gratification of personal economonic prosperity and the more sublime pleasure of aiding your Mages Guild compeers. I hope to see you very soon.

Yours and all that,

{...}

**[33.40] {Letter}**

My dear {...},

We have a small task for you to perform to prove your resolution to be one of us. There is a {...} of ours sequestered like a bit of trite incunabula in the Mages Guild of {...}. Liberate it from its prison within {...} days when they plan to move it to a more secure location. Once you have the {...}, come to me. I will wait for you for {...} days at {...} in {...}. I am easy to recognize. Look for a {...}. I am looking forward to making your acquaintance less formally, {...}. Do not fail to come.

In death,

{...} of {...}

**[33.41] {Letter}**

{...}  
{...}

Dear {...},

{...} need you. Come immediately.

Yours in death,

{...}

[33.42] {Letter}

{...}

{...}

Dear {...},

{...} have need of you. Come immediately.

Yours in death,

{...}

**[33.43] {Letter}**

Blood Sponge,

My coven tells me that your monsters, your weird little pack of blood snorting bugaboos, have a monopoly on the terror business in {...}, and that my own children are afraid to expand their dominion because of the raw power of {...}. The cowards have been appropriately punished and now my coven moves forward. If the complacent vultures who call themselves {...} truly have an ounce of the potency my coven once believed, answer my challenge. Otherwise, be prepared for there to be a little less room in {...} for {...} and your petty criminalities. I am {...} of The Coven of {...}. Consider the gauntlet dropped. I await your response in {...}.

[33.44] {Letter}

{...}  
{...}

Dear {...},

{...} need you. Come immediately.

Yours in death,

{...}

**[33.45] {Letter}**

Dear {...},

{...} have a potential problem I fear. Come to me in {...} soonest.

In death,

{...}

**[33.46] {Letter}**

{...},

The mark is a {...} named {...}, who will pick up a {...} from {...}. Bring the {...} to me. The courier is of no importance, dead or alive.

{...}

**[33.47] {Letter}**

{...},

That thrice-damned {...} has finally acquired the {...} {she/he} has been looking for, and is sending it over to {...}. You know as well as I that {...} cannot allow it to arrive. {...} is expecting us to try to stop {her/him}, so {she/he} is looking for a {...} named {...} to act as courier. Do not underestimate this one -- {...} has quite a reputation. Bring the {...} to me at once -- I will wait for you at {...} in {...}.

Yours in death,

{...}

**[33.48] {Letter}**

{...},

I agree to your terms. I will give you my first and you will exert your influence on the King of Firsthold on Sumerset Isle. Only you can let him speak with his dead son. For that, he would even marry Nulfaga!

-- M

**[33.49] {Letter}**

Dear {...},

Queen Akorithi of Sentinel spoke highly of you as a brave, able, and unprejudiced {...}. Her actual words were 'a hero.' For some time, we have been looking for someone like that. I will not lie to you about our loyalties. We serve the Underking. If you are a believer in fairy tales and consider the Underking the ultimate force of evil, we apologize for misjudging you. Otherwise, we need your help. You can find me at {...} of {...} in Sentinel. I will wait one month.

-- {...}

**[33.50] {Letter}**

Dear {...},

If you are a friend of {...}, please meet me at {...} in {...} as soon as possible. This is a matter of life or death!

{...}

**[33.51] {Letter from a Vampire}**

Dear {...},

For some time, we have watched you. In fact, we have watched you since you received the unholy blessing of vampirism. You have had your odd and awkward moments, but we are not displeased with the vampire you have become. The time has come for you to learn of your heritage, the proud lineage of {...}, the greatest of the vampiric bloodlines. To prove your allegiance, however, we require a sacrifice. There is a haunt nearby where lodges a member of a lesser bloodline. Go to the place called {...}, and slay {...}, this foul insult to our race. When the deed is completed, come to {...} in {...} and find me. I am instantly recognizable: look for a {...}. I will wait for {...} days, {...}. After that time, I will leave. I hope we do not miss one another.

{...}

**[33.52] {Letter from a Vampire Hunter}**

Dear {...} of {...},

Let me introduce myself. I am {...}. You may have heard of me -- the renowned vampire hunter? Do not be hasty in your judgment of me, however. I am not your enemy, at least not yet. While I abhor vampirism with a passion, and have devoted my life to stamping out this dark plague from Tamriel, I understand that many are innocent victims like yourself. The will to live is not of itself evil, and I always try to offer my quarry one chance to prove that their bloody work is based on necessity, not love for killing. I am sure that your "kinfolk" have not told you this, but vampirism can be cured. To do so, you must kill your "bloodfather", the ancient evil that created the line of vampires leading to you. In doing so, you will not only free yourself, but rid {...} of a cancer at its heart. (continued) I myself do not know where to find your "bloodfather," but my sources have revealed the name of one high in {...} who should have this information, {...} of {...}. I will wait {...} days before moving against the vampires of {...}, to give you a chance to save yourself. Consider my offer well, {...}. You have {...} days, then you and the rest of {...} will be hunted down like vermin.

{...}

**[33.53] {Letter from Akorithi, Queen of Sentinel}**

{...},

You are on a quest to retrieve the Totem of Tiber Septim. Do not deny it. My spies have confirmed this. The Totem is not for commoners, and you cannot use it. Bring the Totem to me and I will pay you 100,000 gold pieces. It is a king's ransom by any measure. You should be warned, neither Wayrest nor Daggerfall are loyal to the throne. I am the only regent on the Iliac Bay that can be trusted. The others will only use it to destroy me.

Akorithi  
Queen of Sentinel

**[33.54] {Letter from Aubk-i, Queen of Daggerfall}**

Dear {...},

I need your assistance once more. Your valor and discretion were invaluable when last you served me in the matter with Nulfaga. Please meet with me at Castle Daggerfall when next you pass through.

Aubk-i  
Queen of Daggerfall

**[33.55] {Letter from Barenziah, Queen of Wayrest}**

Castle Wayrest

Dear {...},

My beloved son has brought your name to my attention, and suggested that we might have some business to discuss. I understand that we have a mutual interest. Please visit me at Castle Wayrest at your earliest possible convenience.

Yours,

Barenziah  
Queen of the Kingdom of Wayrest

**[33.56] {Letter from Barenziah, Queen of Wayrest}**

Castle Wayrest

Dear {...},

My beloved son has brought your name to my attention, and suggested that we might have some business to discuss. I understand that we have a mutual interest. Please visit me at Castle Wayrest at your earliest possible convenience.

Yours,

Barenziah  
Queen of the Kingdom of Wayrest

**[33.57] {Letter from Brisienna, Lady Magnessen}**

Dear {...},

I heard about your accident at sea, and feared the worst. Now that I've heard you're alive and well, I would like the opportunity to meet with you and discuss our beloved Emperor's mission in the Iliac Bay.

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Lady Magnessen, the Emperor's agent in the court of Daggerfall. My position is not so official as an ambassador. None but other agents of the Emperor know of my true affiliation.

The Iliac Bay is rife with rebels against the Imperial throne, so your discretion is required.

For the purpose of our meeting, I will take a room at an inn, {...} in {...} of Daggerfall, for a month. After that, I will no longer be available. I will expect you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Brisienna, Lady Magnessen

**[33.58] {Letter from Brisienna, Lady Magnessen}**

{...},

I sent you a letter weeks ago. I only hope it caught up with you. If this one crosses your path after you have visited me on your way to see me in {...} please do not take offense.

As I mentioned in the previous letter, I am the Emperor's agent in Daggerfall and it is imperative that I speak with you. I have extended my stay at {...} in {...} for two more weeks.

Of course there is the possibility that you have intentionally snubbed me and shirked your duty to the Emperor. I hope that is not the case. If you fail to arrive, I will be forced to assume you are a traitor to his Imperial Majesty, Uriel Septim VII.

Yours sincerely,

Brisienna, Lady Magnessen

**[33.59] {Letter from Brisienna, Lady Magnessen}**

{...},

I waited and you never arrived. I shall report this to the Emperor. If I have my way, you will be barred from service.

Lady Magnessen

**[33.60] {Letter from Brisienna, Lady Magnessen}**

{...},

Come at once to {...} in {...}. I will be waiting at {...} for you. The fate of the empire could be at stake.

-- Lady Brisienna

**[33.61] {Letter from Brisienna, Lady Magnessen}**

{...},

If you are reading this, you must have gotten the Totem and escaped from the dungeons of Castle Daggerfall. I am in {...}, of {...} at {...}. Bring the Totem there as soon as possible.

-- Lady Brisienna

**[33.62] {Letter from Eadwyre, King of Wayrest}**

Noble {...},

My ears have picked up rumors that you are searching for the Totem of Tiber Septim. I too have hunted for this wondrous artifact for many years. Should you find it, I would pay you a healthy ransom, enough to buy your own ship. I will match or exceed any price that Gothryd or Akorithi might offer. Never forget your real friends.

King Eadwyre, of Wayrest

**[33.63] {Letter from Elysana, Princess of Wayrest}**

{...},

My good friend Lord Woodborne says you are a hero that can be trusted. I would be truly indebted to you if you would stop by some time to chat. Maybe you could even do something for me. I would be oh so grateful.

Princess Elysana  
Castle Wayrest

**[33.64] {Letter from Gortwog, King of Orcs}**

{...},

You are not orcish. How could you possibly understand what it is like? My people are treated like barbarians. Slaughtered upon sight. Is it so unusual that we respond in kind? Violence begets violence. I aspire to raise my race from the mire. I will bring them to equal standing with the other races of Tamriel. To do this I must have the Totem of Tiber Septim. I will not insult you by promises that no blood will be shed. I do swear by my crown and by my heirs I shall not attempt to hold sway beyond the borders of Orsinium. My goal is not to conquer Tamriel, but to create the orcish homeland. I am in possession of an artifact that I am sure you would want to possess. It is yours if you but give me the Totem of Tiber Septim.

-- Gortwog, Warlord and King

**[33.65] {Letter from Gortwog, King of Orcs}**

[This parchment was used as a wrap for the packet of powder. Some of its message is now illegible.]

Lady Med...

...favor. They intend to slay him. I am sending .....ers to stop them. You must support me. If the empire finds I have attacked royal advisors of Wayr.....ven if they are assassins, my people will never win the same status and respect as the Khaji.....ians. However, with your support I c..... a hero of the empire, and win respect for my people.

Gortwog Warl...

**[33.66] {Letter from Helseth, Prince of Wayrest}**

Dear {...},

Due to the recent marriage of my sister Elysana, I shall not be needing your services with regard to the delivery of the letter to Lord Castellian. Since you have acted on my behalf with honor, I have instructed the courier to give you 100 gold pieces for your time and effort so far.

Yours,

Helseth  
Prince of Wayrest

**[33.67] {Letter from Helseth, Prince of Wayrest, to Lord Castellian}**

My Dear Lord Castellian,

Forgive this rough delivery, but it would have been impolitic to approach you at the palace with this potential problem. Unfortunately, your much deserved vacation will have to temporarily suspended until this matter is settled. I refer to your sister, Lady Pasipha. For years, she has been one of the most glamorous figures at the Wayrest court, the darling of all who appreciate beauty and grace. Rather recently, rumors have circulated that the gold she has spent on her gowns and jewels could not have possibly come from her husband, who is at present, impecunious. Distasteful conjectures followed, none of which worth the ink I would use for recitation. To be quite blunt, a person, who must remain anonymous, postulated to me that you were borrowing funds from the royal treasury to support your sister's extravagance. Of course, I defended your honor, but copies of the Royal books were produced that seemed to support the allegation. I am thus uncertain of the best procedure to take next. Do not doubt, sir, that I am convinced of your integrity as senior member of the Elder Circle of Wayrest. I only wish for the matter of the financial records be straightened so if they are brought to Eadwyre's attention, they can be confidently defended. Please send a reply with this trusted courier. I would prefer to meet with you as soon as possible, of course.

Very truly yours,

Helseth

**[33.68] {Letter from Helseth, Prince of Wayrest, to Lord Castellian}**

My Dear Lord Castellian,

Sorry about the necessity of delivering this letter by the roughest possible service, but it would be unthinkable to approach you at the castle on such a delicate matter. I have long admired your loyalty to the crown and neutrality in internal affairs. Understand that I only want to save your dignity from a possibly embarrassing scenario. The problem rests in your sister, the Lady Pasipha, who though she resides abroad still communicates regularly with members of court. I understand and respect the depth of your sibling love and affection for one another, for, in response to a curious inquiry of mine, Lady Pasipha sent me several touching letters penned in your hand. "Have you ever espied with delight a red berry half-drowned in cream? So I dreamed of you, my dearest love, pouring my soul into you, sweet, for your touch, dear, my soul is quite forfeit." While you and I know the innocence of your fondness for the lady, the more prurient minds at court, as you are aware, are inclined toward grotesque misintepretation. Her husband, I understand, is famous for his jealous rages. I am of several minds on the matter, how to best avoid possible negative reaction, and would appreciate your response at the soonest possible opportunity. I will await you at Castle Wayrest.

Helseth, Prince of Wayrest

**[33.69] {Letter from Lhotun, Prince of Sentinel}**

Castle Sentinel

Dear {...},

You do not know me but I know you. I know that you were shipwrecked. I know that you are trying to dispell the ghost of King Lisandus. If you want, I can tell you what I know, but I need your help in return. If you want to talk, my name is Prince Lhotun and I live in Sentinel at Samaruik, which is usually called Castle Sentinel. I hope that we can meet soon.

Yours truly,

Lhotun, Prince of Sentinel

**[33.70] {Letter from Lhotun, Prince of Sentinel}**

{...},

Greetings and salutations. I hope your trip was uneventful. They say that you are keenly interested in the haunting of Daggerfall. My father and King Lysandus were somewhat close. Should you come visit me, I might be able to shed some light upon recent events involving Lysandus.

Prince Lhotun, Caste Sentinel

**[33.71] {Letter from Lord Castellian to Helseth, Prince of Wayrest}**

Prince Helseth,

I appreciate your kindness, and I will meet with you very shortly at your convenience

Lord Castellian

**[33.72] {Letter from Mannimarco, Lord of the Necromancers, King of the Worms}**

{...},

You will soon have the Totem of Tiber Septim in your hands. It is foreseen in the stars, and I have read them. Know you this. All of mortal stature are filled with pride and greed. To give the Totem to any of them is to let loose mortal vanity upon this world. They will destroy the very thing they covet. I have no earthly desires. I have no mortal pride, no petty greed. Only one such as I can wield the Totem safely, for I would take it into the Aetherius and leave behind this earthly shell. So long as the Totem exists, it is a danger to all on Tamriel. Bring me the Totem and I will safeguard the world. I will not offer you gold or gems. I will offer you what only I can give. Fame. Your reputation throughout Tamriel will soar.

Lord of the Necromancers, King of the Worms

**[33.73] {Letter from Morgiah, Princess of Wayrest}**

Dear {...},

My eyes and ears abroad say that you are interested in the fate of a certain letter. Any emperor should not be so careless, nor should a queen. You really should come visit me in Castle Wayrest. I have some most interesting tidbits that I am sure you would enjoy hearing.

-- Morgiah  
Princess of Wayrest

**[33.74] {Letter from Mynisera, Queen of Daggerfall, to Gortwog, King of Orcs}**

Lord Gortwog, King of Orcs, Warlord of the Subterranean Realms

Hail and long life King Gortwog. Long have you and the Orcish people sought formal recognition by the empire. My dead husband King Lysandus supported your claim to sovereign rule. I would now help you in your cause. Sadly, a minor missive from the emperor has been misplaced. For me to truly hold the trust and ear of Emperor Uriel Septim, I need to reclaim this note. Should you be able to place in my servant's hand this trifling letter, I would be far better able to forward your claim to the emperor and his court.

The Dowager Mynisera,  
Queen Mother to King Gothryd of Daggerfall

**[33.75] {Letter from the Acolyte}**

Dear {...},

Far have I come to speak with you on behalf of the Oracle, the wise woman of Hammerfell. The Archmagister of the Mages Guild has spoken highly of you as an honorable and talented caster of magicka. Please come meet with me as soon as possible; time is a circumscribed commodity. Without your help, the Oracle's dark prophesy will come to pass in {...} days, and all {...} will weep. I must see you soon.

Yours cordially,

The Acolyte

**[33.76] {Letter from the Acolyte}**

Dear {...},

It is imperative that I speak with you as soon as possible. I represent the Oracle of Hammerfell. For the next several days I will be staying at {...}. There are but {...} days before the future is irrevocably set, so I must see you soon.

This matter is grave indeed. Please do not fail to meet me.

The Acolyte

**[33.77] {Letter from the Agents}**

Dear {...},

We know all about being falsely accused of crimes, but we are seldom in a position to combat the accusations. In your case, we are at least aware of the name of one of your accusers -- {...}. I do not know if {she/he} is working for one of your enemies or ours, or is a completely innocent pawn, but {she/he} was allegedly the witness to the burglary at {...}. Be careful speaking with {...} -- {she/he} may have powerful friends. Your best bet may be in speaking with {her/him} in public. I understand that {she/he} frequents {...} in {...}.

The Agents

**[33.78] {Letter from the Dark Brotherhood}**

Nightside Asylum

Dear {...},

We understand that you are looking for {...}. Because we respect you and your work, we have decided to help you in this matter. {...} used our services once some weeks ago, and we received our payments through a small but fierce band of {her/his} allies garrisoned at a camp called {...}. If you are truly interested in finding {...}, you would be smart to start there. Good luck and may Mephala steady thy aim.

-- The Brotherhood

**[33.79] {Letter from the Dark Brotherhood}**

{...}

The Dark Brotherhood has been watching you. You have slain without sanction several times. You must now join us, or be counted as our foe. Travel to {...} in {...} and see {...}, who will give you further instructions.

A Brother

**[33.80] {Letter from the Dark Brotherhood}**

{...},

Do not make an enemy of the Dark Brotherhood. We can be great help to one another, but you could not wish for a worse enemy. When you have {...}'s research paper, bring it to me here at {...} in {...}. Fail not, or the wrath of Mephala, Queen of Oblivion be on you.

{...}

**[33.81] {Letter from the Necromancers}**

My Dear, Dear {...},

Sorry for this inelegant but expedient means of communication. Our enemies have made quite a mess of your, well, shall we say, not-quite-but-almost snow white life. As much as we respect and admire thievery, as you did not commit these particular honors, we think it best that you expose the true architect to the eyes and nooses of the admiring public. The person with whom it would be most efficacious for you to speak is {...}, a {...} you may find lolling about {...}. You will probably not find {her/him} the friendliest of persons. After all, {she/he} is the witness who saw you at {...}'s, stealing the {...}. Nevertheless, with a little effort, you might gain some information from the encounter. Good luck, my dear. There is surely nothing more tiresome than being accused of an act of wanton, diabolic avarice for which you are uncharacteristically innocent.

-- The Necromancers

**[33.82] {Letter from the Thieves Guild}**

{...},

Awright, this is gonna be a quick note, but your pals in the Thieves Guild want to help you out. Now we don't know who actually took that {...} from {...}, but we know you didn't. Let's face it -- if you had taken that {...}, you wouldn't be in near as much trouble. You're a smart kid, smart enough to get away with it. But someone is framing you. The person who identified a {...} who looked like you stealing the {...} was a certain {...} by the name of {...}. Couldn't tell you whether {she/he}'s telling the truth or not, whether {she/he} saw someone who looked like you or not, but we figure you can make those inquiries yourself. You can find this {...} in a tavern called {...} right in {...}. Just watch out for yourself. This ain't a game.

The Thieves Guild

**[33.83] {Letter from the Thieves Guild}**

{...},

{...} is being held in {...}. Do your worse. We don't mind. The kidnappers are bloody freelancers.

-- The Thieves Guild

**[33.84] {Letter from the Thieves Guild}**

{...},

{...} is a thief, but not one of ours. We would like {her/him} to be caught as well. Please accept this contribution to your expenses, and this other bit of information: {...} is not working alone. There is a gang of mercenaries under {her/his} direction in a place called {...}. Some of {her/his} treasure may be kept there as well, but I do not think {...} is there. Good luck, {...}, and walk with Baan Dar.

-- The Guild

**[33.85] {Letter from the Thieves Guild}**

{...},

You are a thief. Do not try to deny it, you have been seen in the act. There is honor among thieves. Either join the guild or face the consequences. Steal the {...} from {...} in {...} if you desire to join us.

You have {...} days.

**[33.86] {Letter from the Underking}**

{...},

Centuries ago, Tiber Septim ruled the land and forged an empire with great Numidium. The secret of Numidium's power lies in its heart, carried within the Mantella. It is the heart of Tiber Septim's battlemage. It is my heart. It is my Mantella. It is my Totem. It belongs to me, and to none other. I have won and lost an empire. I have no desire to tamper further with mortal affairs. I have in my possession {...}, one of the world's greatest artifacts. You may have it in exchange for the Totem. My most loyal agent will await your arrival in {...} of {...}, at {...}.

Underking

**[33.87] {Letter from Uriel Septim, Emperor of Tamriel, to Mynisera, Queen of  
Daggerfall}**

Queen Mynisera,

I have grave news. The Totem of Tiber Septim has been found. You know what this means. The power behind Tiber Septim could be unleashed upon Tamriel again. Rumor has it that Lord Woodborne, a minor lord of Wayrest, has possession of it. He will doubtless "lose" it soon. You must persuade him to turn it over to you or Lady Brisienna. The court of Wayrest has no love of King Lysandus, but you still have influence there. I am asking you to use it on my behalf.

Uriel Septim  
Emperor of Tamriel

**[33.88] {Letter to a Baron}**

Baron {...},

Count {...} will have {his} forces waiting to ambush you in the pass. Do not fall for his trap.

{...}

**[33.89] {Letter to a Baron}**

Baron {...},

Count {...} will be waiting for you in the pass. {his} truce agreement is an honorable and fair one.

{...}

[33.90] {Letter to a Princess}

Princess,

Done.

-- {...}

**[33.91] {Parcel of Letters}**

[The letters are badly burned, but some words can still be read.]

(first page) ... been from thee too long, my heart doth ...

(second page) ... you loveth my lips, but forget the words they breath ...

(third page) ... she doth suspect you cuckold her ... and I worship and adore all parts of thee but thy hollow crown and thy hollow wedding ring, those two empty circles that trap and bring thee pain ... an I be so vain to be Lysandus' Medora evermore ... body and sip nectar from thy hand ... love m ... forever ...

(fourth page) ...rcs. But they did assume the worse of the settlement, even after all the stallion orcs had been killed and the stro ... (for mare orcs are seldom weaker than stallion orcs in an ... only old and sick remained in the rude cam ... who could speak base Cyrodil ... ied and begged for mercy for the children, but Prince Klaius said that the children would grow strong and hearty and and only an unwise leader would show mercy to the subhumans. He gave his men leave to make sport with killing the children, and they were all murdered in ways that I cannot pen. I witnessed it, my lady, and though I beg your pardon, your father did great evil th ... the shame of mine that I didn't say no ... shame to all ...

(fifth page) ...shall abandon mine responsibilities. You and... together. The rest of the world be damned. Let me put this...Betony behind. I shall crush them at Cryngaine. During...dead. No one will suspect that a king would give up...

**[33.92] {Unsigned Letter}**

Dear {...},

If you are interested in learning the truth, about {...}, meet me at {...} in {...} of Sentinel.

(unsigned)

### [34] The Light and The Dark

The Light and The Dark  
by Irek Unterge

"Yes, children, it is no accident that this land of Tamriel has been called 'The Arena'." The old man altered his position on the large rock that bore his weight, and straightened his long gray robe. Rheumy eyes lost their focus as they gazed out over the sun-warmed valley in the mountains of High Rock. For a moment he saw a vision of ancient horrors instead of the fresh greenery of spring. A chill washed over his aged bones.

"Is this a suitable topic for the young and innocent?" he asked himself. The young must be taught, but must they learn of such things now, when they should be playing in the sunlight? This is a tale for the dreary winter, with the wind howling outside a walled town and the doors and windows closed and bolted against the blast and cold and -- other things.

He glanced with affection at his two grandchildren: the little towheaded boy with a hint of mischief dancing in his eyes even on those rare occasions when sitting quietly, and his older sister. A serene lass, the old man thought. Her hair like a dark flame and her slightly pointed ears were the only obvious signs of elven blood. So like her grandmother, the old man thought. The past is past, and Ishira had brought him so much peace and happiness after a lifetime of battle. He forced his thoughts back to the present.

"Sorry, children. I was remembering things. Old people do that, you know."

"Are you going to tell us the story of Jagar Tharn and the Emperor and the Eternal Champion?" His grandson asked. "That's my favorite!"

"Not exactly, son. They were a part of it, in a way. As are I'ric and Moraelyn and Edward and Reymon and many others. Even the gods play a part. This is a far older story, and even the priests won't tell it my way. They have their own interpretations, and their fears as well. I'm too old and have seen too much to have any fear left, except that our people will forget. And forgetting is dangerous. So I, and a few others, carry this tale and try to spread it among the younger generations. You aren't really old enough to understand it all, but I can feel that my end is not far off. I must ask you to remember anyway. In a few years, perhaps, if I still live, we can discuss it again. If not, well, you must seek out others who know, and compare notes."

"You talk as if you are going to die, Granther," his granddaughter spoke up. "That can't happen. You will live forever!"

Chuckling, "I'm afraid not, dear. But I have a little while left, enough for the story".

The children settled back against the bole of a large oak, knowing that the old man could not be hurried. Leaning forward, he began:

"Long, long ago, before there were any people at all; even before the gods, Tamriel was chosen as a battleground by two -- things. It is difficult to find words that fit them well. I call

them the Light and the Dark. Others use different names. Good and Evil, Bird and Serpent, Order and Chaos. None of these names really apply. It suffices that they are opposites, and totally antithetical. Neither is really good or evil, as we know the words. They are immortal since they do not really live, but they do exist. Even the gods and their daedric enemies are pale reflections of the eternal conflict between them. It's as though their struggle creates energies that distort their surroundings, and those energies are so powerful that life can appear, like an eddy in a stream."

"Do demons and trolls come from the Dark, Grandpa?"

"Not exactly, son. The undead evils we know, and the demons that live on Oblivion tend to align with the Dark. Their natures are more akin to it. Humans and the other peoples of Tamriel, even the misunderstood Dark Elves, are more aligned with the Light. Our evils are not always of the Dark, but some are, and these are the truly dangerous ones. Jagar Tharn was almost wholly aligned with the Dark, and that is really why he was so monstrous. It was not because he was a black mage, as some would have it."

"Did his magic come from the Dark, Granther?" The girl's interest was piqued by mention of magic. Her heritage is beginning to show itself, thought the old man.

"No, magic power comes directly from the energies swirling about both entities. These energies are impersonal and all mixed up. Black magic is more a matter of intent than effect. The Mages' Guild holds that a fireball, say, directed against a creature intent on causing harm, is not black magic; but the same spell directed at one seeking peace is. In this, they are right. Destruction of a fire daedra strengthens the Light and weakens the Dark just a little. In the same manner, destruction of a unicorn strengthens the Dark."

"What about the gods? Do they come from the Light?" The boy's eyes were animated, but tinged with apprehension. He adored stories of the gods and goddesses of Tamriel's pantheon, and the heroes who served them.

The old man chuckled. "The gods have an unusual origin, if some of the oldest tales are true. The oldest inhabitants of this world -- no one seems to be sure what race they were -- had a system of myths that they believed in for a thousand years. The people of et'Ada believed for so long and so well, that their beliefs may, just may, have drawn upon the energies surrounding Tamriel to bring the gods themselves into being. If that is so, the conflict between the Light and the Dark provided the energy, and the et'Adans the structure, that created the gods of Tamriel. No one really knows since it was so long ago and so little survives from that time. It no longer matters; the gods have their own existence now, and mostly align with the Light, except for a few who are, shall we say, a little ambiguous."

"Why do we have to remember, Granther? What is the danger you spoke of? If the Light and Dark are so big and powerful, can we influence them? Should we try? What should we fight for?"

"I see that your critical faculties are developing, Solara. That is good. The answer is simple, but quite large enough for mere mortals like us. The Light and Dark are evenly matched, and perhaps will never resolve their conflict. Mortals and the beings of the Aetherius sometimes can perceive traces of them. Therein lies the danger; to most of us the Light is more congenial, even inspiring, and moves us to behavior that we would call good. To creatures

like us, the Dark is -- horrible. Those who have visions of it are often driven mad, and the ones who are not would be better dead. The Dark is to us a monstrous emptiness, an emptiness that sucks the soul toward it -- to be twisted, maimed, and ultimately destroyed. What we can see of it seems utterly evil. Perhaps somewhere else this would not be so, but in our world, it is."

The old man paused to gather his thoughts, gazing once more at the fresh new life of spring.

"What we must do is never to forget that the Dark is always there, beckoning to the weak-souled among us. Should it gain ascendancy over Tamriel, through agents perverted by its awful attraction, terrible things could happen. All that we hold beautiful or desirable, even love itself, would be swept away. Peace and hope would be no more. For Tamriel, that would be the worst possible disaster. What I saw during Jagar's reign nearly killed me, almost destroyed my mind. When he was destroyed, I thought the worst was over, but it was not. The forces of the Dark are on the march again, and new heroes must rise to join the Eternal Champion in the fight against them."

The old man and the two children sat in silence for several minutes. Finally, the children assisted their grandfather to his feet, and they walked slowly away. Toward home, and hearth, and lunch.

**[35] {Lord Woodborne's Private Journal}****[35.7] {Lord Woodborne's Private Journal VII}**

Lord Woodborne's private journal.  
Page 7 from childhood

I know that Gothryd would not refuse his aid, but I must bide my time to ask. After all, Elysana is still heiress of Wayrest and I am her bethrothed. So it should be that when Eadwyre dies (which he is bound to do, sooner rather than later) I will be king. If it weren't for that bitch queen and her brats, I would and could be patient. Never trust a dark elf the old saying goes, for you cannot read truth in their eyes. If Barenziah has her way, Helseth will be heir and Elysana will be married off to some far-off kingdom. Morgiah is already promised to the heir of Firsthold, but they keep her around to spread the poison against Elysana, and especially, me. Barenziah doesn't trust me, this I can tell. I will deal with her just as I did with Lysandus. The fool should have agreed to support me. Gortwog and his orcs almost saved him. I'll deal with those sub-humans once I sit upon the throne of Wayrest. First it is important to solidify my power base. I can (almost certainly) rely on Gothryd to support my bid for the throne, if Helseth is made heir. I have a spy network equalling Eadwyre, Gothryd, Akorith-i, or the Emperor. Perhaps the Necromancers and the Underking's networks are more extensive, but I doubt it. The problem is raw physical power. I do not have a standing army. I need the gold to raise<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The text ends as abrupt.

**[36] The Madness of Pelagius\***

See vol. I.

## [37] Mara's Tear

Mara's Tear  
by Zhen

Well, children, if you all gather round, and sit quietly, I'll tell you the story of Mara's Tear and Shandar's Sorrow ...

Long, long ago, long before your grandmother and I were were born, long ago, there were two young children growing up in a village far, far from here. They played together, and ran through the woods together, exploring their little world and learning to see things through each other's eyes.

This was very different from their parents because Shandar was the son of Maldor, who was captured in a war and forced to work as a slave for the village baron. Their village and another both needed the land between them to feed the villagers, and fought and fought, until many of the villagers died. Maldor was wounded in battle, and left for dead by his fellows. He was captured and forced to work in the fields as punishment. Shandar was not allowed to play with Mara, but she was very small and the other children didn't like to play with her, so she played with Shandar against her father's command. And they learned that they were really not very different at all. They couldn't understand why their parents hated each other so.

Well, Shandar and Mara played together for many years, and learned to love each other as they grew up. They knew that they couldn't let their parents know, because it was forbidden for them ever to marry, since they were from different villages and the war was still going on. They tried and tried to figure out how they could be happy together, and finally decided that they must run away from their village. They would try to make a new life for themselves in another village, far, far away from where they grew up.

One night, while planning their escape, they were discovered by the town guards. Shandar tried to fight them, but they tied him up and dragged him away to the prison inside town. Mara was taken home, and her father was very angry with her, and told her that she could not leave their home again. He went to the house of another farmer, and asked if their son would marry Mara, so that she could never see Shandar again. The marriage was planned for the next week.

Shandar, meanwhile, was to be killed for daring to be with Mara. He was beaten, and placed in a stockade. He was placed in a stockade, and they were to hang him the next day. When Mara found out that Shandar was to be killed, she knew that she could never live without him, and climbed out her window and ran into the woods, crying and crying. She ran and ran, and soon was lost.

It was very dark, because back then they did not have any moons in the sky back then to make it safe for little boys and girls. Soon she found herself in a part of the woods she had never been before, and sat down on a rock since she was very tired. Well, the rock was a secret entrance to a cave where a very mean orc lived. When he came back from his hunting, he found Mara curled up asleep on his rock, and thought to himself, "Hmmm, a tasty little girl. I

shall save her for my breakfast!" He grabbed her and took her into his cave, moving the rock back so that she could not escape. She was sure to die, and tried to escape, but the evil orc just laughed and laughed at her, until she finally gave up.

When the villagers found out that Mara had run off, they were very worried. No one knew the woods very well, and all were afraid of the evil orc that lived there. Only Shandar was not afraid, and he begged and begged for the baron to set him free, so that he could go look for Mara. The Baron finally decided to let Shandar go, for no one else was brave enough to go and rescue Mara. So Shandar was set free, and he set off into the woods to go and rescue her. Shandar searched and searched, but could not find poor Mara. Finally, he sat down on a rock to rest for a moment, and as he sat down, he noticed a piece of cloth under the rock. It was a piece from Mara's cloak!

He realized that she must be under the rock somehow, and knew that the orc had captured her. He pushed and pushed on the rock, and finally was able to roll it aside. He climbed down into the orc's cave, but it was very dark, and he could not see anything. The evil orc, when he heard his front door moving, hid in the shadows to see what was coming into his home. When he saw that it was just a little man-boy, he grinned to himself and thought, "Now I have lunch, TOO!" When Shandar came near, the orc grabbed him, and began to squeeze the life out of him.

Back in the village, the people soon realized that they were foolish to let a young man go off into the woods by himself. They gathered all of their weapons, and set off to find the two lost children. When they finally came upon the clearing near the orcs' cave, they saw a strange and wondrous sight: A slain orc near the entrance to the cave, and Mara holding the head of poor Shandar in her lap. Shandar had killed the orc, but not before the it gave Shandar a mortal wound.

Mara's tears flowed freely from her eyes and splashed upon Shandar's face, reflecting the light from the villager's torches. Shandar was filled with sorrow at the thought that he had saved Mara, only to lose her because of his own impending death from the battle with the orc. He cried out to Mara's namesake, the goddess of love, to help them. The Goddess Mara recognized their true love and wept at their loss.

Not having power over death, she could do nothing to save Shandar, but she knew that she could not let their love die. She reached down from the heavens and picked up Mara and Shandar in her arms, and placed them high in the heavens. They could be together always, and provide light in the dark night to others so that they may be safe from the evils in the world. The villagers were amazed at this sight, and vowed to honor the love of Shandar and Mara by learning more about themselves and their neighbors, so that the war that had been going on as long as anyone could remember would end. Shandar's sacrifice for the one he loved showed them that he was worthy of their respect, and that those from his village were just as proud and worthy as themselves.

And, that's why, children, every night we can see Mara's Tear and Shandar's Sorrow spending their lives together high in the heavens, lighting the way for all the little boys and girls like you.

**[38] {Message from the King of Worms}**

[Stitched into the zombie's decaying flesh you see the following message:]

{...},

It would be an honor to have you visit me in my demense at your convenience. I have a small matter that you are ideally suited for. As always, my servants will test your mettle. Feel free to dispense with them. They can always be raised again.

The King of Worms,  
Master of Scourg Barrow

**[39] Mysticism\***

See vol. I.

**[40] Notes<sup>1</sup>****[40.1] {Note}**

{...} is your target, a {...} adventurer and mercenary. Use extreme caution and be prepared for a fight. No jellyfish this one.

-- {...}

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<sup>1</sup> Actually, the following notes are described as "parchments" in game and are untitled.

**[40.2] {Note}**

Change of agenda, folks. I need you in {...} right away. Get over there and wait for my response. Shouldn't take longer than a few days.

-- {...}

**[40.3] {Note}**

I'm going to need some reinforcements if the rumors about this {...} are correct. Keep the deed in hiding in {...} but bring the gold and your men over here to {...}. We'll discuss this further when you arrive.

-- {...}

**[40.4] {Note}**

Kill {...} before too much is learned. Use any means.

-- W.

## [41] Notes For Redguard History

Notes For Redguard History  
by Destri Melarg

Biographical Note: Destri Melarg was a well-known historian and translator of old Redguard verse, born as simply Destri in the city-state of Rihad in the 20th year of the 3rd Era. At the age of nineteen, he went to the Imperial City to study. There were few Redguards who had been to the Imperial Province at the time, and it may be that he took the last name Melarg in order to assimilate with the Breton, Nordic, and Dark Elf cultures he encountered there. When he died ninety-four years later, he left numerous unfinished histories and untranslated verse. Very few of this fragmented work has found its way out of collections. What follows is an unmailed letter to Melarg's publishers in the Imperial City. The insights into the man who put the oral traditions of the Redguards to paper impressed me enough to seek its publication. Melius, it should be noted, was Melius Kane, Melarg's publisher in the Imperial City.

--- Vune, Redguardic First Scholar Imperial University

Melius,

This is the outline of my final chapter for the series on Hammerfell heroes. I condensed Dendle's storytelling. I have my notes, but the story gets long with all the quotes. She puts a lot of dialog in her storytelling. I am amazed that the old stories about the 5 swords keeps cropping up. It's been a thousand years since Hellion's time, yet people continue to believe in the stories. The wagon master sat with me after listening to her story and smoked a pipe with me. In discussing the story, he said that his storyteller used to say that one of the five swords survived the closing of the Goblin gate, and is yet hidden here in Hammerfell. It was the least of the five, but the story has it that it exceeds any modern blade magical or ebony by several orders of magnitude.

Of course I take this with a grain of salt, since an ebony weapon is unparalleled in its keen cutting ability and personally I can't imagine a weapon doing more damage than a Claymore of Firestorm or a Saber of Life Steal. Dendle even believes that out in the countryside outside of Skaven in one of the Halls of the Virtues of War, there are still people who follow the old ways and can from a Shehai or spirit sword.

In collecting these stories, I once thought I was seeing a Shehai being formed, by an old Hall master, but the thing, if it was a spirit sword was so faint that even the sword shape was questionable. I didn't want to insult the old man so I claimed I saw it too. But if that was a Shehai, I can't imagine it possibly used as a real weapon.

Here's my outline of the new story: At the time of this story, Hammerfell is fully occupied by Redguards. All the old cities of the Dwarves (but one - the Ghost City of Dwarfhome) are now the cities of today's modern Hammerfell. A second invasion of the giant goblins comes. Hammerfell is unprepared, except for a few faithful followers, all youths in the rural Halls of Virtue.

Hallin, being the only Ansei, rallies the armies of Hammerfell. After a defeat, he brings back the old ways by telling each warrior to read the Book of Circles. The army fights the Goblins to a standstill, but things look bleak, just as in Divad's song. Somehow the goblins keep being resupplied both with arms and troops. Eventually the Army of Hammerfell will lose.

The old master of Hallin's Hall of the Virtues of War has an ancient copy of Divad's will and testament, and reads it to Hallin. It tells him that the 5 swords aren't lost, just hidden and well guarded in 5 caves. Each cave is home to a master guardian, one of the old blind Ansei -- and also a maze. According to the will, Derik must, along with a virtuous companion of pure heart enter the cave, defeat each Ansei Master and retrieve their sword. Dendle went into great detail here. It seems that each Master had an outstanding trait -- one Katrice, possessed feline grace, and had become very catlike; another, who had icy calm was something much like an Ice Golem. On each blade is inscribed part of an intricate message on how to use the power of the swords combined.

Derik scours the rural Halls for Brothers of the Blade and Maidens of the Spirit Sword to accompany him in the quests. He finally one by one finds his companions, and wins each sword. They learn from the blades and together wield the force of the 5 swords to seal the rent in space time that the Goblins have made and from which springs their invasion. Hallin's companions avoided blinding by the magic swords by hurling the swords together into the void, and sealing forever the giant Goblins in the void between their world and ours. The land is saved and Hallin and his companions (3 women and 2 men) become Ansei and restore the teachings of Frandar Hunding to Hammerfell.

That's the story in brief. I welcome any comments from you or one of the other editors. One other concern of mine. I understand that you are considering using a better known writer, Uthilla Abuhk or Casmir Kreestrom, to write the stories I've researched. I can understand that a better known writer may mean that a few more copies of the books will be sold, but that should not be your only concern. Abuhk and Kreestrom, while fine writers and poets, will need to be lectured on the true history of the Redguards. Even if you are willing to pay me to do that, you will have to acknowledge that the books will take longer to write than if you just allowed me to do it. Just something to consider when you make the decision. I hope this letter finds you, your consort, and children to good health and humor.

Yours faithfully,

Destri Melarg

## [42] Oelander's Hammer

### Oelander's Hammer: An Instructive Tale For Children by Krowle

The two children, Froedwig and his younger sister Silvanda, had been exploring all morning. The noon sun was directly overhead and everything was warm and bright. They had left their Redguard village, Granitsta, early that morning for a day in the wilderness, a picnic, and with a stern warning from their father to be home before dark. They crossed a huge field that was bare save a single rose bush right in the middle. The little girl asked Froedwig about it.

"Well," he said, "according to father a great battle was fought in this place many years ago. The battle was visited by the God of all warriors, Reymon Ebonarm, who caused the leaders to end the battle and return to their homes. It is said that the rose bush grows where he stood that day."

"Oh, how exciting," giggled Silvanda.

The children continued their trek approaching some woods. As they entered the forest the air became very cool and a deep quiet seemed to envelope them.

"What is that?" Silvanda pointed to a large hole in the ground from which protruded a long, thick pole. Around the hole thorny plants had grown into an impenetrable wall.

"I don't know," said Froedwig, "but let's see if we can get a closer look."

"Stop!" They did. Looking beyond the hole, the children saw an elderly Redguard of many years. His gray beard, scraggly hair and stooped shoulders certainly did not support the authoritarian command he gave. But the children stopped just the same as he approached.

"Who are you?" stammered Froedwig as Silvanda carefully tucked herself behind her brother's back.

"My name is Hoennig Groevinger, and I live in these woods."

"Why can't we examine yon hole, Master Groevinger?" asked Froedwig. "Because, my dear children, it and what it holds are cursed. Now just wh-h-h-o are you?" he stuttered, mimicing Froedwig.

Finally gaining his composure, Froedwig said, "I am Froedwig-aj-Murr of the village Granitsta. This is my sister Silvanda. We are on an outing. Can you tell us about this mysterious hole?"

"Well," said the old man as he slowly settled to the ground, "Why don't you sit here with me for a while and I will tell you about Oelander's Hammer. That's the handle of the fabled weapon sticking out from yonder chasm."

With this the children also settled into sitting positions in front of the old Redguard ranger. Groevinger began, "Many year's ago there was a huge battle fought in this very field ..."

"Oh, yes, I know," said Silvanda, interrupting the old man. "It was ended by the Warrior God Reymon Ebonarm, and the magic rose bush grows where he stood that day..." she continued breathlessly. The old man sternly cleared his throat causing the little girl to again shrink behind her brother.

"Now, if I may continue without interruption... On the day that battle ended, a young Redguard soldier stopped in this spot as he was leaving to go to his home. He carried the equipment he had used on the field which included a marvelously fashioned war hammer that had been given to him by his father. The weapon was beautifully made and unknown to the young warrior carried an enchantment that had protected him through the vicious battle just ended. The young man, Oelander by name, rested by this very tree. Suddenly he was confronted by a wizard dressed all in black from head to toe. Without so much as a how-do-you-do, the wizard demanded that Oelander give him his hammer. Still flushed from the battle, the young man just looked at the dark man and laughed. The wizard shaking with rage raised his hands to cast a horrible spell against the soldier. However, the young man was quicker. The huge war hammer whistled through the air smiting the wizard a mortal blow just as the spell left his fingers. There was a loud explosion."

The children stared at the old man. He suppressed a grin and continued. "Clouds of dusk and smoke covered the forest clearing, and when the air settled, yon hole was there with the hammer's handle protruding from it. Oelander and the wizard had vanished! The thorny vines you see grew up immediately around the hole, and to this day no one has been able to approach it close enough to remove that marvelous weapon. Many have tried and all have failed. It is said that only someone of tremendous merit can take it." All of a sudden, both children in unison stood and shouted, "Oh, look how the day has gone. We must go. If we are late getting home, our father will be most unhappy with us." As they turned to leave, Froedwig said to the old man, "Thank you, Master Groevinger, for telling us of Oelander's Hammer. You know, I may just come back one day and try to retrieve it!" As they disappeared from his view, the old man said to himself, "Ah, yes, Master Froedrig aj-Murr, you just might do that."

## [43] Of Jephre

Of Jephre  
by Anonymous

When the elven folk walked the land alone and sang songs of power amongst the trees and stars, Jephre the Singer walked with them. Jephre gave heed to the nature of the forests and delighted in the gurgling streams and brooks. It was Jephre who taught the birds to sing their songs of the seasons and He that taught the streams the tinkling ethereal tune. The very trees are said to have moved close to hear him sing on the warm summer nights of those elder days. It was in this time that the first great ballads of the elves were made, crafted from the songs that Jephre taught to the sylvan youth who frolicked to his lively tunes and ballads of nature and the unspoiled forest. In truth, He is worshipped as god of song and forest.

In Valenwood, Jephre is considered one of the Major Sylvan gods with temples and altars in the deep woodland places. Elven tradition holds that children with a gift for song have been blessed by Jephre himself. Legend has it he blessed the Wood Elves with a natural affinity for nature and particularly the forest. Most Wood Elven Rangers worship Jephre.

It was his great eagerness for natural beauty that led him to the Isle of Sumurset. He taught the great sea birds to sing and molded the crash of wave against beach into a song of whispers and power. It is said by the high elves that Jephre hears and sees all within distance of water, whether it be beach, brook, stream or fall. It is further said that the very birds keep watch for Jephre, in repayment for the songs he taught them. It is further said he blessed the high elves with a beauty to match the beauty of their island home.

The dark elves have a legend that Jephre walked the earth before the first day, and in the light of the stars weaved a song so beautiful that the very stars moved to its sway. Some of the stars to this very day still wink and blink in memory of the song of night and darkness. Due to his influence most if not all Elven Bards pay homage to Jephre.

The natural order of things is the basis for Jephre's temples in Valenwood and the Sumurset Isle. The one thing Jephre will not tolerate is the harmful manipulation of the natural order of things.

**[44] The Old Ways\***

See vol. I.

**[45] On Artaeum\***

See vol. I.

## [46] On Lycanthropy

On Lycanthropy  
by Varnard Karessen

How does one become interested in studying the disease lycanthropy? I have interviewed a number of my peers, and discovered that to a man, they have all entered the field fter a horrifying encounter with a lycanthrope of some variety. I am no exception.

In Skyrim, it is an old tradition to rub canis root on the trees surrounding your house as a ward against werebears. When I was young and stupid (as opposed, I guess, to being old and stupid as I am now), I always had hoped to meet a werebear to see if they were as impressive as legend suggested. I would follow strange tracks in the woods until they disappeared, with no fear or even thought about what I would do after I had found my quarry. By Thorig's beard, I was lucky that my investigations were fruitless.

When I did finally see a lycanthrope, it was not a werebear. It was a werewolf, the "common" lycanthrope, which can be found in every part of Tamriel. My father was a priest and during the coldest part of the winter, he allowed the beggars and riffraff of Falcrenth to stay in the relative warmth of the cellar of his temple. We would even supply warm barley stew. My sisters and brothers and I actually enjoyed this bit of philanthropy, for in the cellars during the winter, it seemed there was a constant party. There were always travellers with interesting stories and eccentricities, and the atmosphere in the cellars was always light and friendly. Until that night.

By an established tradition, the beggars who were sick or wanted rest more than food and companionship would go to the cots at the farthest, darkest end of the cellar when they could be assured at least relative quiet. We were enjoying a song, and my sister Gethessa was dancing to the amusement of all. The song ended, but a chorus continued from the darkness at the far end of the cellar. As drunk and incomprehensible as most of the carolers were, it took a minute for us to realize that the sound we were hearing was not singing, but screaming.

No one was too concerned, for some of the older tramps often suffered from vivid nightmares. Nevertheless, one of father's priests went to silence the screamer and the moment he disappeared into the murk, we heard another sound. The snarl of a wolf. Then we heard the priest screaming as the original scream died off. "Werewolf!" cried the old bard who had been leading the song. The cellar exploded into chaos.

I was pushed out the cellar door into the snow with the first wave of panic, but I could see that some of the more brave (or more drunk) hobos were rushing into the darkness to do battle with the lycanthrope. They were all, of course, almost instantly killed.

My father, upon hearing of his unwelcome visitor, sealed off the cellar after the last survivor of the carnage had left. A seasoned battlemage from the Falcrenth Mages Guild, who owed father a favor, went into the cellar and slew the beast.

"Not too tough," he said as he emerged, carrying the carcass with him. "Winter must have been tough on him too." Despite his bold words, the blood on his face and chest did not only come from his foe.

Werewolves do not revert to their human forms upon death, despite what legends will tell you. I had the opportunity to look at the monster's steaming body out in the snow before it was carried away to be burned. The teeth, clotted with the flesh of the beggars, were horrifying, but the claws shocked me even more. I have since seen live lycanthropes battle golems, atronachs, and other beings not harmed by mundane weapons, and concluded that they act as naturally enchanted weapons.

Because the werewolf is the most ubiquitous of lycanthropes, the term lycanthropy has been used since ancient days to describe the disease that transforms men into half-beast, although lycanthrope only strictly should refer to men who change into werewolves. But that is semantics. There are certainly differences between the seven documented forms of lycanthropy in Tamriel, but more similarities.

In Black Marsh and southern Morrowind, werecrocodiles stalk the swamps. Black Marsh also shares with the Imperial Province and the wetter parts of Elsweyr the vile presence of werelions. Valenwood's werevultures are not found in any other province. The wereboar has found both the climates of High Rock and Hammerfell amenable. As I mentioned before, the werebear is the most common lycanthrope in Skyrim, and is also found in the northern parts of High Rock, the Imperial Province, and Morrowind. The werewolf can be found in every province. The seventh lycanthrope, which I have never seen but my trusted peers have assured me exists, is a wereshark that roams the oceans around Tamriel.

I have spent my life categorizing and observing lycanthropes, but I sometimes feel that I am still a child trapped in a cellar in my attempts to understand them. I know, for example, that lycanthropy can be cured shortly after infection, but after that time, the victim is doomed. No one of my acquaintance has cured themselves after undergoing the first transformation. On the other hand, I have a colleague investigating a coven of witches in the Glenpoint foothills of High Rock who are rumored to have a cure. I remain dubious.

Perhaps it is because they are doomed that makes lycanthropes so aggressive. I have removed the contents of a werewolf's stomach and found more remnants of roots and berries than animal flesh. My conclusion is that they do not need to attack and devour humans to survive. Yet, for some reason they do. Does lycanthropy drive them mad, or do lycanthropes feel the need to spread the disease as a form of procreation? I do not know. I am not certain that any of us who are not lycanthropes ourselves will ever know. And then, of course, it's too late.

**[47] On Oblivion\***

See vol. I.

**[48] On Wild Elves\***

See vol. I.

**[49] Origin of the Mages Guild\***

See vol. I.

**[50] An Overview of Gods and Worship in Tamriel\***

See vol. I.

**[51] {A Perfidious Document}<sup>1</sup>**

Among the more fiendish practices of the {...} is the rite they perform in honor {...}. The flesh of a newborn infant is boiled over the flames of burning brimstone for three and a half days until it is hard and leathery. The resultant fiber is sewn over the head of a black cat, who is kept in a cage until it has chewed through the caul or has died of suffocation. If the cat dies, the witches know that {...} will not answer their entreaties, but if the cat lives, {...} may ask {...} for anything -- the death or mutilation of princes, economic catastrophe, famine, plague, war ...

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<sup>1</sup> Actually, the following text is described as "parchment" in game and untitled.

**[52] The Pig Children\***

See vol. I.

**[53] The Real Barenziah\***

See vol. I.

## **[54] Recipes**

### **[54.1] Recipe for Potion of Cure Disease**

{Recipe for Potion of Cure Disease}

Elixir vitae  
Fig  
Big tooth

### **[54.2] Recipe for Potion of Cure Poison**

{Recipe for Potion of Cure Poison}

Ichor  
Giant scorpion stinger  
Small tooth  
Pearl

### **[54.3] Recipe for Potion of Free Action**

{Recipe for Potion of Free Action}

Ichor  
Spider's venom  
Twigs  
Bamboo

### **[54.4] Recipe for Potion of Invisibility**

{Recipe for Potion of Invisibility}

Rain water  
Nectar  
Ectoplasm  
Diamond

**[54.5] Recipe for Potion of Resist Fire**

{ Recipe for Potion of Resist Fire }

Ichor  
Amber  
Red flowers  
Fairy dragon's scales  
Cactus

**[54.6] Recipe for Potion of Resist Frost**

{ Recipe for Potion of Resist Frost }

Ichor  
Turquoise  
Pine branch  
White rose

**[54.7] Recipe for Potion of Resist Poison**

{ Recipe for Potion of Resist Poison }

Ichor  
Snake venom  
Golden poppy

**[54.8] Recipe for Potion of Resist Shock**

{ Recipe for Potion of Resist Shock }

Ichor  
Lodestone  
Red berries  
Cactus

**[54.9] Recipe for Potion of Restore Power**

{Recipe for Potion of Restore Power}

Nectar  
Silver  
Werewolf's blood  
Saint's hair

**[54.10] Recipe for Potion of Stamina**

{Recipe for Potion of Stamina}

Pure water  
Aloe  
Ginko leaves

**[54.11] Recipe for Potion of Waterwalking**

{Recipe for Potion of Waterwalking}

Pure water  
Yellow rose  
Palm  
Sulphur

**[55] Redguards, Their History and Their Heroes\***

See vol. I.

**[56] Research Papers<sup>1</sup>****[56.1] {Research Paper}**

{Research Paper}

The manner by which the diastolic pressure of any two scarce commodities (creating atype of propulsion with no moving parts and virtual silence) has been postulated by thyrionic mathematicians for many years. In conventional thinking, the default parameters of any formula (objectively speaking, it is essential to remember that objectivity is indeed subjective) will always return to what Mornthaur called the "back medium." However, starting with a grid of complex numbers that more than covers the unit circle and three cube roots of one, we can backtrace, by uptracking the negative "half numbers," and create an infinite basin with dual natures of blackness and whiteness. The rate of adiabatic cooling or warming inunsaturated air can thus be made directly proportional to the fourth power of its absolute temperature.

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<sup>1</sup> Actually, the following papers are described as "parchments" in game and are untitled.

**[56.2] {Research Paper}**

## {Research Paper}

When white light is passed through a gas under a medium dense gas at a high temperature, a dynamic thermal instability occurs. Since magicka is usually a very faint source of illumination, gases, under much greater pressure, are forced to combine with degenerated matter, creating dual forces, beyond and beneath. The end result is a quasi-horizontal chonolith composed of an astomosing ductoliths, whose distal ends curl like a harpolith, thin like a sphenolith, or bulge discordantly like an akmolith or ethmolith. There are thus five elements that must be contributed towards a universal confederation of what Galerion Vanus called "gray matter" -- perception, evidence, essence, morality, and extraction.

**[56.3] {Research Paper}**

## {Research Paper}

{...} are the dominant tribe of {...}, though they are by no means the dominant tribe of the whole Iliac Bay region. (Fill in this about the Montalion, Vrasethi, Ghulari, Selenu, et cetera, blah, blah, blah Different powers but basically same internal structure, blah, blah, blah). How is one cured of vampirism (find that Vampires of the Iliac Bay book, references to a society of former vampires)? Slaying the preeminent member of the same bloodline, from what I can gather from personal interviews and whatnot. (Note to me: that rather {...} in {...} has expressed interest in my work. Possible interviewee or trap?) Vampires infiltrating royal courts, Dark Brotherhood, even the Mages Guild in {...} and else where. Is the {...} of {...} under influence of {...} or perhaps more than under the influence? Run the standard test (pend that patent) and see what's what. Need Nymph Hair, holy symbol, et cetera, et cetera, fresh this time for {...}'s sake. Talk to {...} about increasing funding. Going nowhere.

**[57] Rude Song**

Rude Song  
by Anonymous

In the spring of the year  
Doth propriety disappear  
In the courts and the ports  
Of the Bay.  
Drinking new beer,  
Everybody feels queer  
And the Earls and the churls  
Go astray.  
The bee and the bird  
Don't have to tell us a word.  
Our bodies for naughties  
Are prime.  
If you haven't heard,  
You can let yourself be lured  
For the youth, for things uncouth,  
It is time.

Oh, it's lovely to sit in a field, harvested into rows  
It's lovelier still to do the same not wearing any clothes.

People of the Bay bless  
The flowered court of Wayrest  
For showing us the gentle way of sin  
The bonny Dark Elf queen  
Likes to see and to be seen  
With cobblers, thieves,  
And tavernkeeps,  
And slaves, and fish-er-men.  
In the court of Lainlyn,  
Right upon the mainland  
With sex, the whole place is in a whirl.  
The Baroness likes to play  
With men who come her way,  
While the Baron likes the little boys and girls.

Oh, it's lovely to give your lady a kiss upon her nose  
It's lovelier still to do the same not wearing any clothes.

In Daggerfall, they hold a ball  
And all of society indulges in a variety  
Of scandal, they can handle --  
A lot.

The Captain of the Guard  
Has to search very hard  
For a bean that the Queen Has in her pants.  
And the Court Sorceress  
Will grant you a wish  
To cause the King to fling  
About his lance.

Oh, it's lovely to give your love a single perfect rose  
It's lovelier still to do the same not wearing any clothes.  
Oh, it's lovely to abandon all your cares and fears and woes  
It's lovelier still to do the same not wearing any clothes.  
Yes sir, it's lovely not wear any clothes!

**[58] The Sage**

The Sage  
by Aegrothius Goth

Crackle, snap, hiss ... Flicker, bright, dim ... The fire in the hearth provides light and heat. Neither seem to affect the old man. His reclining figure stares into the flames and flames reflect back from his deep dark eyes. Indigo blue robes reflect and yet absorb the firelight and highlights of golden threads twinkle as the flames flicker. His beard and hair are long and snowy white; in the firelight they almost appear to be ethereal like that of a godling. At his side is a tall pointed hat which is the same color as his robe and also twinkles with highlights of gold. The face is lined with age, yet almost appears youthful; wisdom and intellect exude from his personage. This is the Sage who is known in all of Tamriel as the champion and counselor to all users of magic. His thoughts wander, and he remembers ...

\* \* \*

Gyron Vardengroet was born to a poor and humble Breton family in the village of Moonguard. The only child of Frieda and Horstle Vardengroet entered life during a rare eclipse of Tamriel's moons. It was soon apparent that he was unusually gifted in the magical arts. He was found levitating the family dog when he was only a year old. Most Bretons have a great talent for magic, but as he grew Gyron displayed a talent far greater than that of his peers. The village wizard began to take an interest in young Gyron and soon took him under his wing. In spite of the young man's proclivities for being rowdy, the old Wizard Grungdinger liked him and worked hard to teach him the magical arts to the extent of his own skills.

Finally the day came when Grungdinger could teach Gyron no more. The young mage had surpassed his master, and he was somewhat unsettled with the apprentice mage's questions about life, death and immortality. Grungdinger called Gyron to him and gave him a letter addressed to Morkledder, the Guildmagister of the Mages Guild in Shornhelm. The young mage told his parents of his fortune, packed his meager belongings, and set out for the journey to Shornhelm. After many months of travel through the foothills of the Kurallian Mountains, Gyron arrived at the gates to the great City-State of Shornhelm high in the mountainous terrain of High Rock.

After the life of a quiet Breton village, Shornhelm was a wonder to Gyron. He explored the city from one end to the other, and eventually found the Mages Guild. Presenting Grungdinger's letter to Morkledder, Gyron was received warmly. Morkledder explained to Gyron that he would need to be tested before any commitment to further training could be made. After a night of rest and meditation, Gyron was shown into the main hall of the Mages Guild which was now filled with magic users of all kinds. It was very quiet. The young mage felt as if his heart was in his throat as he approached the Council of Three, the leaders of the mages in this City-State. Morkledder rose and explained to Gyron the various tests he would be subjected to to prove his worth as a mage. The youth then turned and left the Council Chamber, the eyes of the many mages on him, and went forth to complete the tasks that had been defined for him.

Returning to Shornhelm several years later, Gyron was admitted to the Mages Guild and shown to the Council Chamber where he was met by Morkledder. The ancient mage reviewed the journal entries, the artifacts gathered, and most especially the spellbook entries presented to him by Gyron. An expression of amazement spread across the old wizard's face; there had never been a novice to accomplish what Gyron had during the testing. Morkledder then called a full session of the Guild presenting Gyron as a full Wizard.

Gyron remained with Morkledder for several years and studied hard. In private session several years after the testing, Morkledder admitted to Gyron that the Guild at Shornhelm could teach him no more and that he should seek further enlightenment at the Crystal Tower on Sumurset Isle.

After packing his possessions once again, Gyron set off on another long journey. He arrived at the Crystal Tower several years later after having traversed the province of Hammerfell where he had many adventures, met many other mages and shared his experiences and knowledge with them. He heard stories of wonderful plants that when combined with other elements could restore life to those dead, prolong life to those yet living, and in the proper combination bestow immortality on the user. Gyron was always quick to advise and guide mages who were less experienced than himself. He loved being able to help. He made many friends and stories began to spread across the land about this exceptional user of magic.

When he entered the Crystal Tower, he was greeted by several mages all clamoring for his attention. His reputation had preceded him. However, the crowd hushed and parted at the arrival of a very imposing figure dressed all in indigo blue robes trimmed in gold, wearing a high pointed hat and carrying the most beautifully carved staff Gyron had ever seen. The Elder of the Council of Wizards, Esthlainder, looked closely at the young wizard, nodded and turned to walk back into the tower. Without delay, Gyron followed him. The audience that followed stunned the young mage.

Esthlainder explained to him that Gyron's coming had been foretold for many years, and he had been expected. The mages had been told by the Gods that one of their own would come along to provide guidance, knowledge and aid. Gyron was that promised champion and leader. Gyron was confused and uncertain. How could he be such an extraordinary person? What must he do to fulfill his destiny? Many questions spilled from him to which Esthlainder could not provide the answers. The Elder suggested that Gyron stay with them in the Crystal Tower for a while and study. This he did.

The day finally came when The Elder admitted to Gyron that the Crystal Tower could no longer provide anything new and that he needed to travel the lands of Tamriel and seek the wisdom and knowledge. The Elder sighed and told Gyron how sad he was that the Crystal Tower was losing him, but that his destiny must be fulfilled. With this, the Elder presented Gyron with a package wrapped in the same beautiful indigo blue as the Elder's Robes. Gyron was told to take the package with him but open it only when he was at least a day's travel from the Crystal Tower.

After a long day's walk, Gyron set up camp in a beautiful glade next to a brook of crystal clear water. Finally, he thought, I can open the Elder's package. As he untied the golden cord that had bound the package, he found that the wrapping was not wrapping at all but an exquisitely tailored robe identical to the one worn by the Elder. As he opened the robe, a high pointed wizard's hat popped out of the package, and with a "whoosh" and "pop," the same intricately

carved staff that the Elder had carried appeared. A note from the Elder advised that the garments were indestructible and that the staff had many magical properties for Gyron to discover. It went on further to explain that from this day forward Gyron would be known as The Sage.

Tired from his walking and with an inner glow of accomplishment, The Sage settled down for the first night of his long pilgrimage across the lands.

After many months of further travels and adventures, The Sage returned to Moonguard and was warmly welcomed by the villagers and most especially by his parents, Frieda and Horstle. News of his coming had preceded him and the whole village had worked hard to build and furnish a cottage for the mage in the pleasant forest just outside the town. After a festive banquet that evening, Gyron retired to his new home.

The Sage settled into his life outside Moonguard. He received many visitors who have traveled from near and far to seek his guidance, help, and training. The years passed. It was not long before first Horstle and then Frieda died. The Sage was devastated by his loss. In his grief he swore to dedicate the rest of his life to defeating death so that grief like his could be avoided by others.

He returned to the Great Library at the Crystal Tower and researched the many flowers, herbs and plants that he had heard about and seen during his travels. In his cottage, he labored tirelessly over the spellbooks, vials and collection of flora from all over the lands. He tested the potions on himself. The years went by, but The Sage seemed not to age anymore. At some point he had found the right combination in his experiments, but could not determine which combination it had been as the change had been most subtle. He had secured a life without end. And the years continued to pass.

Mages came to him for help which he freely gave. The Sage settled into his life of advising and guiding and the years continued to pass. Unfortunately, his fame became so great that the call for his help was unmanageable. He reluctantly packed his possessions for the last time, and moved far into the Kurallian Mountains and built a magical fortress. Only the most worthy magic user could gain access and help from The Sage.

However, following his heart, even today The Sage often leaves his mountain abode and travels the land helping young mages gain experience and to grow.

\* \* \*

Snap, crackle ... The firelight flickers... The old mage stirs as the memories fade and flicker like the firelight. Bang, bang, bang... echoes from the pounding knocker on the great oaken doors of the fortress... The Sage rises and heads for the doors knowing that yet another mage in need has found him and is worthy of help.

**[59] A Scholar's Guide to Nymphs**

A Scholar's Guide to Nymphs  
by Vondham Barres

I grew up a scholar, an ascetic devoted to knowledge, with eyes that saw beauty in a fascinating passage in a dusty tome, love in the candle that allowed me to study on starless nights, passion in a well-reasoned argument of a long dead issue. I was a student who never graduated and was never expelled. Though I am not defending myself, I should further define myself. I am not what you would call a prude. In fact, I can speak of subjects in a detached way that would make the most debauched strumpet in Skyhawk blush with discovered modesty. I wrote an essay, "The House of Dibella," as a scholar should, analysing the cult of beauty and physical relations as one might study crop rotation or the digestive system of an orc. The acquaintances of mine who were inclined to wink and giggle I tolerated, but barely. With all that said, the reader will understand that when I decided to study the language of the nymphs in order to study their character and culture, it was not a decision I made on account of prurience or lust.

Scholars have historically neglected the nymph as a subject worthy of research, and this neglect I attribute to prejudice. The sages with whom I have spoken on the subject have eloquently and intelligently formed sentences which, boiled down, can be translated as: "Nymphs look like beautiful, naked women who skip along tra-la-la and like to have indiscriminate sex. What could they have to say that would be of any interest?"

So here I was faced with the most daunting of projects -- to study and research a species unstudied is a potentially rewarding challenge. If the subject was unstudied because the scientific community had deemed it beneath interest, a potentially rewarding but decidedly frustrating challenge. If I spent months in serious study of their language and culture and additional time in their company, and discovered nothing more than that the common prejudice is correct, the term "laughing stock" would not do me justice.

So, excited and nervous for reasons unrelated to the notoriously promiscuous behavior of my subjects, I began my studies. I mastered the language, a melodious tongue that sounds like wild elf and faerie but share no vocabulary with them. I studied the lore, and found it to be on the whole, little more than pornography and crude conjecture. I next had to find a nymph.

From my centralized location in the Imperial City, I found it easy to send word around to several wellknown temples and guilds devoted to study in all the provinces. Not all replies back were serious in nature, but one, from the School of Julianos in Sentinel helped me considerably. To Magister Oitos and his disciples, I here offer my sincere gratitude. Nymphs are extremely shy creatures, no matter what the more obscene stories will tell you. No one who I've spoken with has had one seek him or her out. Thus to speak with a nymph requires energy and patience.

Out of courtesy for her privacy, I will not here give the location of the little grotto off the coast of Hammerfell where I found the nymph. It took three months of patient waiting, leaving presents where I knew the nymph would be, before the nymph stood still at my

approach. I remember I was carrying a bouquet of purple and white tetias, and she looked at them and then at me, and smiled. The effect of her smile was truly magical, I'm convinced. Her body was, of course, perfect; her face lovely and serene; her hair like silk flame. But until she smiled, she was beautiful in the abstract, a perfect statue by a master. The smile made her approachable and, thus, terrifying.

"For you," I said, attempting my first utterance of Nymph to a real nymph. Her smile grew into a grin which became a giggle and then a laugh. The reader has doubtless heard of the silver laughter of the elves. The nymph's laugh is earthy and spontaneous, and very ... suggestive.

"And what do you want from me in return, mortal?" she asked.

"I am ...," there is no, I should say, known word in the Nymph language for scholar, "I am a man who likes to learn things. I want to learn things about you."

And I did. Nymphs are the wisest, most wonderful creatures in Tamriel. My nymph, her name is Ayalea (a poor phonetic transcription of a word that sounds more like a light wind blowing through a small crack in a hollow chamber) and she knows more about the behavior and varieties of the deep woodland creatures than the greatest wood elf scholar I ever met. She taught me of flowers and ghosts and creatures too fast and timid to have ever been seen by man. Ayalea taught me how to learn for the very first time. How to open my mind to all of the possibilities of life and how to use that knowledge, not just to hold in my cramped brain like a dragon's horde. If you ever meet a nymph, speak to her.

\* \* \*

Editor's note: the writer Vondham Barres is no longer a scholar at the Imperial University. He deposited this manuscript and disappeared from the civilized world. His current whereabouts are unknown.

**[60] Scrolls****[60.1] A Rare Old Scroll**

{ A Rare Old Scroll }

Zephrim alga n' nagog. Carti alga n' belyl. Azuth Zephrim ne' nagog. Partik aloy partik frae i eyominathraq n' toyl. Berik azuth n' nagog. Charlaq gimle n' maluk Zephrim qork.

{ Note: "Could be quite dangerous if you pronounced "nagog" with the hard g, as laymen are apt." }

**[60.2] {Scroll of Imprison Daedra}**

{Scroll of Imprison Daedra}

[This scroll contains a spell to momentarily imprison the daedra using its true name.]

Zanoth na' {...}. Zanoth na' {...}. Senet seneth mor.

**[60.3] The Bothdorjii Scroll**

## The Bothdorjii Scroll

Breathe candent smoke on the veil of Oblivion  
And force the line dispelled  
Awaken the sleepless, unquiet Princes  
And bid Their standing servants rise  
It is the night when frost will burn  
When flame will freeze the lamplit lake  
When clouds of bats devour clouds of birds  
When boils and sores afflict the rich  
When a boy with wings doth curse the land  
If knowing lies fester on my tongue  
And such whens are but whispers in the night  
These words form a sentence of death  
But if the Day of Oblivion is indeed at hand  
Servants of the Dark, obey me

**[61] Special Flora of Tamriel\***

See vol. I.

## [62] The Story of Lyrisius

The Story of Lyrisius  
by Bresne Smythe

In ancient times, there lived a hero named Lyrisius. He fought against the Akaviri slavetraders and single-handedly slew hundreds. Despite his valor, Lyrisius' army was routed and scattered to the four winds. Lyrisius fled into the moors to escape the Akaviri chariots.

Far from the lands of men, Lyrisius entered the blasted lands. At the heart of this forsaken landscape, he met the wyrm. The great scaly beast mocked the mighty blows of Lyrisius' enchanted spear. It melted the shield Fearstruck, gift of the Daedra Boethiah, with a single blast of its fiery breath. Lyrisius, seeing that he could not defeat the creature by force of arms, surrendered.

The wyrm intended to devour Lyrisius when the hero offered to be its slave and manservant. Ever prideful, the wyrm agreed. Seeing that the wyrm was vulnerable to conceit, Lyrisius spoke, "Oh great wyrm. For my first service, I beg that you allow me to polish your one tarnished scale."

Indeed, centered between the great wings of the creature was a dull scale, clearly out of reach of its long neck. Its vanity was such that it immediately lowered one wing for Lyrisius to climb upon.

Once astride the great lizard, Lyrisius slid his dagger underneath the scale and into the tender flesh of the beast. Though it spun and twisted in all directions, the wyrm could not get at the hero. Finally it took to the air. Lyrisius clung to the neck with all his strength as the wyrm banked, rolled, and dove.

Seeing that Lyrisius could not be shaken free, the wyrm demanded that he remove the stinging blade. Lyrisius answered, "Fly straight on until you see a great army. Destroy that army and I will remove my blade."

With a great roar, the scaled creature set off. The Akavari army had no chance against the fire-breathing beast. They have never plagued Tamriel since.

"I have done as you bid. Now sheath your stinger," roared the wyrm.

Knowing that he would be devoured or worse, Lyrisius pulled the blade and then leapt from the back of the flying wyrm. Indeed, the foul monster had intended to slay the hero. The wyrm pursued the plummeting Lyrisius. Boethiah appeared beside the falling hero. Praising him for ultimately destroying the army of Akavir, she turned him into a raven. Lyrisius quickly lost the wyrm in the clouds.

Legend has it that the wyrm still lives, though this happened in the first era long, long ago. The dragon nurses a grudge against Lyrisius and all of his kind. It has vowed never again to trust two legged bearers of weapons.

\* \* \*

Scholar's Note: If this legend has a basis in fact, the artifact Fearstruck was utterly destroyed. No other reference to it has ever been found.

## [63] A Tale of Kieran

A Tale of Kieran  
Vegepythicus, editor

Librarian's Note ... The recorded tales of Kieran the Bard fall into three categories: the Woodland Cycle, Castles and Kings, and an unnamed cycle of lusty tales (recently destroyed by mysterious accident). Some are in the bard's own hand, while others, mere shadows of the originals, remain only as bedtime tales for children. The structure exemplifies the helical form favoured by listeners about the hearth on a long winter's eve. As to whether they describe real events, be allegory, or be mere entertaining fancy, the reader must decide.

### I.

Kieran was on the road from Wren to Fairtree, when he grew weary from the midday sun. His boots were tight and he thought to remove them for a bit in the shade of a nearby oak (oaks being a favourite of bards). This particular oak was venerable and gnarled, with sturdy branches that dipped and swooped, nearly touching the ground in spots. From its shade Kieran watched the forest creatures playing in the warm sun. But for the rustling of leaves, high above, the only sounds were of butterfly wings and birdsong.

"What a peaceful day," Kieran thought as he watched a butterfly drift by, "What a beautiful day! In truth, since bards first told tales, has there ever been a day more peaceful and beautiful than this?" He drank from his waterskin and, taking his lute from its sack, cleared his throat and began to sing: "Oh, the maidens of Wren are passing fair ... ..with breasts like melons, and flaxen hair ..." He had just taken a deep breath to bellow the lusty chorus when a small, feminine voice said, "Kind sir ..." He leaped to his stockinged feet, his face flaming red. "Who's there?" he cried. The small voice repeated, "Please, sir, if you will be so kind ..." Kieran looked about but saw no person or creature addressing him. "Pray thee," he cried. "Show thyself or have cause to fear my dagger." (He tried desperately to remember where he had last seen it.) "Whether thee be friend or foe, pray thee show thyself now." The small voice replied from above him, "Kind sir, thou hast no cause to fear me, and I am in need of help. Can thou find it in thy heart to aid me?" He looked up and saw naught but a small robin's nest, three branches above him. Climbing swiftly, he found a robin with three tiny robinlings, their mouths open wide. "Good mother robin," he asked, "Can it be thee who addresses me thus?" "Kind sir," she replied, "I have hurt my wing and it will be at least a day before I might fly. If my children do not eat soon, they will die. Would you be so kind as to bring a fat, juicy meal? Would you find a caterpillar or earthworm or grub for my children?"

Now, Kieran was kind of heart and it was not within him to refuse a plea such as this, so off he went into the forest. Searching under some mulberry leaves, he soon found a small green caterpillar. It seemed a perfect meal for young robins. Plucking it from the leaf upon which it fed, he prepared to hurry back to the oak when he heard a tiny voice. He opened his hand and the caterpillar looked up at him with her big brown eyes wide with fear. "Kind sir," she said, "wouldst thou kill me so thoughtlessly?" Kieran scratched his head in puzzlement and the caterpillar continued: "When thou cooled thy feet beneath the oak, didst thou not find joy in my parents' beauty as they danced before thee in the sun? I, too, am soon to change. Wouldst

thou deny thy successors the joy of my dancing? And if I do not live to have children, how will thine own children find such joy? Please, sir, would not an earthworm serve the needs of the robinlings just as well? Kieran looked into the eyes of the caterpillar and knew that he could not feed her to the robins. Carefully, he placed her beneath her mulberry bush and continued his search.

Near a rushing brook, Kieran found a flat stone that, when moved, revealed a juicy earthworm enjoying the cool moist earth. "Aha," he thought. "As nice as the caterpillar may have been, this truly seems a more fitting meal for young robins." He had no sooner plucked the earthworm from its cool abode (where it had been frantically trying to burrow away from him), when he heard a voice so faint he might have imagined it: "Kind sir," he thought he heard, and Kieran looked in his hand. The worm continued: "I am but a lowly creature, it's true, but might I plead such case that I have?" Kieran rolled his eyes skyward as the worm sat up and seized its chance. "I am not a lowborn worm like others you might find. No, I am a prince among earthworms. I come from an ancient lineage. My ancestors burrowed the earth when fires belched from black pits throughout these lands. I command millions like myself. Were it not for my loyal followers, you, good sir, would be up to your neck in leaves, tree trunks and mouldy carcasses. I'll make a bargain with you. If you release me and choose, instead, a pathetic grub for the robinlings, I will dispatch an entire clan of earthworms to keep your foreyard clean and sweet-smelling for as long as ye shall live." The earthworm looked hopefully at Kieran (while calculating the distance to the ground). "Good sir, what say ye?" Kieran was beginning to lose his patience, but, seeing the value of the earthworm's offer, decided that a grub would, indeed, make a tasty morsel for the young robins. He returned the earthworm to its moist haven and carefully replaced the flat stone above it.

And, true to his desire, a short while later, in a forest glade, beneath a wide slab of discarded bark, Kieran chanced upon that which he sought: a fat white grub that would grow the robinlings into beautiful songsters. He plucked it from its hiding place and set forth. It was a beautiful day, indeed.

## II.

Nearby, in stately Trowbridge, King Caladan did live with his lovely daughter, Einlea. The princess was the apple of the old man's eye and the crown jewel of his small kingdom. He looked upon her with the blind pride of a doting father, and she, for her part, did naught but bask and flourish in his bounty. Trowbridge was quiet now, the chief sounds being the clatter of cart wheels and the cries of street vendors, but it was not always so. Three years earlier there had been trouble with Carthan to the west. It was not much, a border dispute, but the king persuaded a wizard named Loziard to come to Trowbridge in his employ, to aid him in the contest. Loziard was unknown by all in Trowbridge and kept to himself within the palace, coming and going as he pleased. When Trowbridge prevailed, with almost no loss of life, there was joyous celebration for days and weeks thereafter.

Time passed, yet Loziard remained. The King, not wanting to seem ungrateful, said nothing, but became increasingly discomfited with the wizard's presence and wished for his departure. On Einlea's twentieth birthday, King Caladan called for a celebration and holiday through all his land. Unknown to his subjects, he intended to proclaim his retirement and the transference of his crown to his beautiful daughter. Out of politeness, and nothing more, he invited the wizard Loziard to aid him in devising a proper speech. Loziard was furious. He paced his chamber, his black brows knitted with intensity that would have soured any cow's

milk. "Why," he cried aloud, "am I treated so unjustly by the old buffoon? Were it not for my skills, the border contest, mayhaps even the kingdom itself, might have been lost. I deserve more. I deserve the crown. To give it to that primping simpering daughter of his, who thinks naught of more than her own whim, is a slap more stinging than that of gauntlet. I will have justice. I will demonstrate, amply, for all to see, wherein lies true power."

Thereupon, Loziard made his preparations. Princess Einlea's birthday came on a summer morning. Everyone within the city, and from the farms without, gathered to the palace for the festival. Banners waved from every rooftop. Fiddlers fiddled and dancers danced. Bakers baked wonderful sweets for the occasion. It was a day long to be remembered. At noon, precisely, King Caladan and Princess Einlea emerged onto the main balcony to the cheers of the kingdom. "Good citizens of Trowbridge," called the King, "We are but a tiny kingdom, but we prosper, do we not?" Loud hails (mostly) erupted from the crowd below. Encouraged, Caladan continued, "But now I am an old man. The day has arrived when younger blood can better attend to the needs and events of the kingdom. My subjects ... My loyal subjects and friends ... It is with honour ...and pride ...and the greatest of expectations ...that I transfer my kingdom and my crown to my loving daughter. To one and all, I give you" (a long pause here) "Einlea."

As cheers filled the air, Caladan made a grand, sweeping gesture with his arm, intending to make the presentation as spectacular as the pride that filled him. His robe went "swoooooosh" and his hand pointed to ... nobody. What was this? Where had she gone? Where Einlea had been, moments earlier, there now was naught but vacant air. "Er ...Einlea ...?" he called, uncertainly. But there was no response. Silence fell over park and courtyard. People glanced at each other nervously. Old Loziard clapped his hands in glee. He danced. He hugged himself with uncontained laughter. "How wonderful ..." he cried. "What a breathtakingly stunning and talented a wizard I am.." For what he had done, of course, was to rid himself of Einlea for once and for all. With one stroke, crafty and evil, he had removed the vain creature from the palace. Nought else remained between him and that which he desired.

Now, magic is a tricky thing. Like all forces in the world, it must be kept in balance. As surely as day balances night and summer balances winter, so too must positive magic balance negative. For every hurtful or destructive spell, there must be an act of equal goodness or charity lest trouble overflow into the world. For every black wizard, there must be a white. For every spell of combat destruction, there must be healing. Know ye this ...if all who practice magic cast naught but healing or protective spells, dark, horrible forces would build up until chaos and ruin would burst forth and rain our doom down upon us. Thus may spells of healing be broken by harm, and the worst of spells be broken by charity. Knowing this, Loziard planned well his act of vengeance.

To permanently rid himself of Einlea (short of killing her outright) he must devise a spell so cunning that no act of kindness would ever break it. He was pulling lice out of his long beard, late one evening, when he burst into laughter. He would make her into something ...disgusting. "I will make her into a frog," he laughed, then frowned. No ... that had been done. People might expect it and go around, like mindless idiots, seeking frogs, hoping to earn a king's ransom. And then, a brilliant plan occurred to him. "I will make her into a bug, an insect, a WORM ..." He almost choked on his wine. "Oh. How perfect.. I will make her into something so truly loathsome that she will spend the rest of her little bug life in terror of being squashed by the first person who sees her." He squealed and his rings jangled and his fat jiggled and he snorted wine out his nose in laughter. "Oh, how absolutely delicious ..."

And that's exactly what he did. While King Caladan and his subjects scratched their heads in puzzlement, nobody saw a small fat white tree grub plop to the cobblestones beneath the main balcony and immediately curl up, glistening and quivering.

### III.

Einlea was terrified. What had happened? Well, she had seen enough of Loziard's magic to know what had happened. But why? Why would he do this to her? She didn't have long to ponder the question. A huge black hound, hundreds of times her size, ran to the cobblestone where she lay, and almost gobbled her with one slurp of his tongue. From somewhere, she found the wherewithal to roll out of his way and into the crevice between the stones. His HUGE slurpy tongue followed her, drooling and panting great hurricanes of hot awful breath down at her. But just as the tongue was about to lick her into the waiting stomach, the hound's owner yanked his massive chain and pulled the beast toward home. It is true that Einlea, in her life as a human, was self indulgent and not inclined to effort or resource, but that was merely because she had no need of either. In the following days, she had cause to discover plenty of both within her. After the incident with the hound, she knew she must go far away from people and dogs. And she knew what kinds of creatures dined on grubs, too. She slept out of sight under leaves, in places where grubs would not likely be sought.

Even so, Einlea's days were filled with terror and adventure. There were circling hawks by day and owls by night. A bear, tearing at a rotting tree trunk, gobbled grubs, indistinguishable from Einlea, by the hundreds, as she watched in horror from behind a nearby rock. The smallest stream was now an enormous, gushing torrent, to be crossed in a nutshell under the greatest of peril. Einlea passed these tests, along with many others, and she passed them well. It was on her tenth such day that a clumsy boot kicked aside the piece of bark under which she had sought shelter from the sun. Blinded by the sudden light, she heard an exclamation from high above. Then, before she could react, two fingers dropped from the sky and plucked her up and deposited her firmly inside a huge fist.

Ten days ago, Einlea would have been paralysed with terror. But that was ten days ago. Her mind raced. "Who is this clumsy idiot, anyway??" she thought, "and what on earth does he want with a tree grub? At least he didn't squash me on the spot. That's encouraging, isn't it? So he must be here to rescue me.." She wriggled and squirmed in his fist until she could see his face, high above her, between two of his fingers. "Ugh. A beard. If I'm going to be rescued, why can't it be by a fine young prince?" But it then occurred to her that she was speaking from old habit. "I wonder how many of those foppish boys could have survived these past ten days?" She laughed, thinking of them. "Not many, I bet. Those who wouldn't have curled up and died immediately would, by now, be whimpering and crying for their mothers." She looked at Kieran again. "Well ... maybe he would look better if I wasn't looking straight up his nostrils. Ouch.. Why isn't he more careful with me??" And then it occurred to Einlea that, if this oaf were truly rescuing her, he probably would have said something to her. "Uh-oh." Einlea's heart raced and she started wriggling furiously, imagining the worst of all possible deaths. "He must be going fishing." Einlea couldn't do much in her current state, but she could spit. And spit she did. In quantities unimaginable for so small a grub. She spit and spit and spit until her tiny grub mouth was too dry to spit another drop. She felt Kieran's hand squirming and thought, "It's working.."

## IV.

Kieran was fair disgusted. Twas bad enough that he had to touch the slimy thing, but now it was oozing something and becoming truly revolting. Finally, just before he reached the robin's oak, he could take it no longer. He stopped and examined the creature in his hand. White and plump and glistening, it was, in truth, a repellent creature. Yet the poor thing was obviously terrified. It gazed up at him with what he imagined to be minuscule grub eyes, pleading. Kieran thought of the caterpillar and the earthworm, and his heart gave in. Heaving a great resigned sigh, he found a nice clean root and placed the grub upon it. And thus was Loziard's spell broken. None could have been more astonished than Einlea when she unexpectedly grew to her former size, except, perhaps for Kieran, who nearly died of fright. He was no more than catching his breath when Einlea regained her wits. Raising her index finger, warning Kieran not to say even ONE word, Einlea snatched Kieran's coat to cover herself. Then, with fire in her eyes, and as much dignity as she could muster, she was off to Trowbridge, leaving Kieran to stare, open-mouthed, at her departing figure. Einlea knew she could not simply enter the city and confront Loziard. The moment he saw her, he would but cast another enchantment upon her. So, disguising herself as a shepherd, she found an abandoned house on the moors and began to make her plans.

What happened next is a tale worth hearing. But it is a tale for another evening. Indeed, it is a tale to be told over many an evening, and many a good pot of ale. And what of the baby robins? Having no alternative, Kieran climbed the tree and took from his pack his last piece of fatty mutton. Tearing it into small shreds, he gave it to the grateful mother robin, who fed it to her family. Upon returning to the ground, Kieran looked first toward Fairtree, his former destination, then, grinning, set off after the most surprising young lady, for whom he now had many questions. "Who knows ..." he called back to the robins, "It may be fate. And besides, I need my coat." He was heard, late that evening, far down the road, singing: "Oh, the maidens of Trowbridge are passing fair ... ..with breasts like melons, and flaxen hair ..."

**[64] {Testimony of Arthago<sup>1</sup>, Prince of Sentinel}**

23 Morning Star 3E 400

{...}

Two days I was sealed within this crypt without food or water. I do not know whether hunger or poor health or one of the creatures who share this dank hole with me will kill me first -- I only know that I will soon be dead, and not even my bones will remain. My hope is that in the years that come, this letter will be read and the sad story of {...}, Prince of Sentinel will be told. I am fifteen years old at the time of this writing, and have been plagued with bad health for most of my life, to the frustration of my hearty parents. The finest healers and apothecaries in western Tamriel have labored over my every cough and fever, but while they could save my life time and time again, they could not improve my sickly constitution. In retrospect, I received little real affection from the king and queen, embarrassed as they were about begetting such a cripple as the heir of the kingdom. I cannot say I missed the love; I received much attention from the doctors, priests, and herbalists constantly at court. Certainly I was not to be the sort of warrior that King Cameron was, but one of my dearest friends, a priest of Stendarr said that I might be the first scholar-king in the history of Sentinel. My younger sister Aubk-i was the true favorite of my parents: athletic, beautiful, and charming. It is hard to think of an uncomplimentary word for her. I am resigned to my imminent death, and yet, I would like to see her once again. For six years, Aubk-i and I were the only children of Sentinel. Eight years ago, the queen had a boy child and named him Greklith, after the ancient Redguard word for Strong King. Few speak that tongue any longer, but all the scholars and nobles of Hammerfell understood. And Greklith is a strong boy indeed -- I have never so much as seen him cough. The Queen's next child, born only a year after Greklith, had an even more ominous birthname -- Lhotun. Second Boy. Perhaps had I been less sheltered, more suspicious by nature, I might have read into these nominations. Lhotun and Greklith are common enough names in our family, I reasoned. Now I know that even then, I was disinherited -- even if it was not official yet. For several months before Lhotun's birth and over three years afterward, I was in the throes of a very serious fever. The doctors despaired of me, but somehow and very, very gradually, I recovered. For the first time, and the last, I read an expression on my father, the King's face that was not indifference. It was disgust. That was a fortnight ago. Three nights ago, I was seized by men I had never seen while I was having a walk. My nursemaid stood by watching placidly as I was gagged and tied and thrown roughly into a sack. I do not know how long they rode with me, but I was eventually left here. When I finally freed myself from my bonds, I found that I was alone. My wanderings have gotten me nowhere. This place is filled with undead creatures that prevent me from finding any exit. I have no hope left, but no fear either. A few regrets. Perhaps had I studied magic instead of history and science I could free myself of this place. One of my tutors told the story of the Underking, how he had placed his lifeforce in the body of a powerful being and had thus conquered all Tamriel long, long ago. Had I only had the strength of a more powerful body like that. But I did not study magic. I studied history, so I leave this letter -- not to revenge myself, but as an historic document.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. BOALI, *Night Falls On Sentinel* (CT I-61).

**[65] {Tract}**

{Tract}

I scarcely remember my voyage to the place called {...}: I expect I was still partly dreaming. Deep within the stinking recesses of the profaned temple, I was met with a great fire and from the flames I heard the same voice speak: "Welcome."

"Who art thou?" I addressed the flame.

"I am what {...} doth proclaim to worship, but with every act and thought defile my divinity. To thee I called so that a new {...} might be created, one led by truth and true insight, and understanding of my Being. The heathen need insight, and you shall be it."

The God told me more that day, but while the wicked {...} continues their policy of quashing any who dare to challenge their corrupted, contemptible theology, I must keep my tracts short. More will follow shortly hereafter.

## **[66] Vampires of the Iliac Bay**

### **[66.1] Vampires of the Iliac Bay I**

Vampires of the Iliac Bay, Part I  
by Anonymous

There are over one hundred distinct kinds of vampire in Tamriel. The Iliac Bay region alone has nine variations with unique powers and abilities. I have this information not only because I have been researching this blight of the world for the last ten years of my life, but because for the seven years before that, I was one of the creatures.

Vampirism is a disease, like brain rot or cholera, but far, far more insidious. One can become a vampire through certain magical items or by the curse of a powerful wizard, but the most common cause is the bite or scratch of a vampire. There are no symptoms of vampirism except this -- if the victim sleeps after the attack but before he becomes a vampire, his sleep will be plagued with nightmares.

During this two to four day period, when the disease has been spread but the victim is still mortal, most any temple healer can remove the curse of vampirism. There will be no further warning.

I do not remember dying. I had been a scout for an order of knights which shall go nameless for this. A daughter of a local nobleman had been kidnapped by a mysterious character, and my captain had located his hideout. Deep in the dank underground chambers, I searched until I found the girl. Or what remained of her, a corpse the color of snow, drained of every drop of blood. I knew what the mystery man was right then, but he found me before I found the exit out. He took a good sized hunk out of my fighting arm before I managed to outrun him. I figured I was lucky to be alive. Some luck.

My trip back to the knightly order was a five day journey. I decided to get some rest early to get my arm in better shape in case I found any more trouble. I can't remember the dreams I had that night -- only that I was doing something horrible and I couldn't stop myself. I woke up screaming. The next night, at an inn a little closer to my destination, my sleep was deep and dreamless. On the third night, I died.

Of course, I didn't know that I died. I had gone to sleep in a nice warm feathered bed and I woke on a cold wet stone mortuary slab. Dazed, I opened the door to the masoleum I was in, which I think must have been locked. I was in a cemetery not far from a town I knew, so I wandered in. It was late at night, so there were precious few souls in the streets. I paused to read a public notice and noticed the date. The date was two weeks later than I thought it must have been.

As I puzzled over that, I saw a girl, a wench at my favorite tavern in that town, wandering toward me. I hailed her. She ignored me. I called her by her name, and she turned to me, smiling, but with an expression that told me she did not know who I was. I had visited her tavern on my way over to the mystery man's hideout, but she didn't know me!

I told her my name. She angrily told me that it was a very poor joke, that I looked nothing like the brave knight who used to visit the town, and that if I didn't know he was dead.

My emotions were a tangled skein. I could tell she was not joking, that I looked nothing like myself. I was touched by her sorrow at my death, and horrified by the idea dawning on me of what I had become. Suddenly, an overriding instinct overcame all my thoughts -- hunger. Without even thinking about what I was doing, I reached out and tore her throat open. I drained her until she looked like the corpse in the mystery man's dungeon.

The rest of my story is told in *Vampires of the Bay*, Chapter II.

**[66.2] Vampires of the Iliac Bay II**

## Vampires of the Iliac Bay, Part II

by Anonymous

I told in the first chapter of my story how I became a vampire and of my first kill. While it might (and, indeed, should) horrify the reader that my first victim was a friend of the mortal I used to be, it is my understanding that they are not uncommon first kills.

I left the snow white corpse in the alley and ran to the only place I felt perversely safe, the masoleum. For the first couple days of my undeath, I starved myself while I considered my fate. I relearned what I was capable of doing, and found that I was stronger, faster, tougher, and more agile than before. I had powers that as a knight I had only seen powerful mages wield. Later, I discovered additional abilities, such as a total immunity to disease. Helpful when descending on a plague-stricken city like a jackal.

I also found my weaknesses. I could no longer stand the light of the sun -- exposure to it for longer than a few seconds burned me terribly. It also pained me to enter temples and other places of worship. The worst effect, of course, had to be my blood lust. If I did not kill a warm blooded creature once a night and drink its blood, my hunger would gnaw at me, and any wounds I suffered would not heal no matter how much I rested.

Is this the moment for me to admit that there was a time I loved being a bloodsucking creature of the night? It is not impossible to live only at night, merely occasionally inconvenient. And I wouldn't have to kill humans every night, merely warm-blooded creatures. Orcs have a delicious, rich brothy blood; rats are a little sweet for the only meal of the night; werewolves are a real treat, almost decadent the tincture between human and beast. A real gourmet's delight.

About a month after I died, I was having the best time of my life. One night, I received a letter from someone who said he was "family." Curious, I went to visit him at his tavern, and was told about the tribe of vampires to which I belonged -- the Montalion. In return for me performing certain duties for the "family," the man at the inn would train my in my vampiric abilities and skills.

Though I never got very much detail, I surmised that the two main differences between the different vampire clans is geography and powers. Montalion alone have the gift for teleportation, but the other eight have powers of their own.

My mentor (that is the title he used) would congratulate me after each mission I performed, and came to trust me more and more. If asked, he would tell me about the Montalion's newest alliances, who they were manipulating, who they were stalking. It was then I started to become frightened at last. They, and all of their rival clans, were draining the blood of Tamriel itself.

I panicked. I had to find a cure. But nowhere could I find any book or rumor suggesting that vampirism is anything but permanent. So I resolved to kill myself, but I wanted to bring the

Montalion down with me. I joined guilds they opposed, and failed any mission given to me spectacularly. I thought my mentor would turn against me, but he only became quieter, less forthcoming with information, never violent. He was not concerned. He had probably seen vampires like me before.

Here's why he never attacked me: immortals can afford to be eternally patient.

At last, he refused to give me any further missions. He wouldn't even talk with me, but he never left his tavern. I could come and go, and he'd watch but never talk. That's when I got another letter.

There are several of us, you see, former vampires who know what to look for. We're patient too: we learned it in our unlife. We watch and listen, and anonymously contact the vampires we know wish to end the curse.

Ending the curse is possible, but only just. It is very dangerous, but when you are cursed, the only real danger is no escape.

**[67] Wabbajack\***

See vol. I.

## [68] The War of Betony

The War of Betony  
by Fav'te

Could there be a better proof of the natural perversity of Bretons than their conduct before, during, and after what history will remember as the War of Betony? By the most depraved of motivations, the most despicable of tactics, and the most ungentlemanly of triumphs, the kingdom of Daggerfall changed the nature of warfare in the Iliac Bay and perhaps over all of Tamriel. In Sentinel, we call the recent carnage the "Siege of Betony," but as the book of history is writ by the victors, let us speak instead of the "War of Betony."

Redguards by their nature are a modest and practical people. We are not phlegmatic like the High Elves, nor cowardly like the Wood Elves and Khajiiti. But what would infuriate and enrage the swaggering, vainglorious Nords and Bretons would not merit a shrug from a Redguard. Had any Breton kingdom possessed the little island of Betony, it would have been covetously guarded. Betony's trade would have been seriously restricted; its religion subjugated; its people bound by active and constant pledges and duties of vassalage. But Betony was not a Breton dominion. Betony was part of the Kingdom of Sentinel.

King Lysandus -- may the Old Ones continue to torment his soul for his wickedness! -- saw the prosperous island which is closer to his land than to Sentinel, and his black heart turned to avarice. Through threats, lies, acts of piracy and, finally, invasion, Daggerfall illegally took possession of the Island of Betony. His court sorceress, the Lady Medora, his enchantress mother, and other experienced counselors were horrified by the brutality of his campaign and begged him to abandon his tyrannical act of war. Gradually, all dissentors were removed from court. None but the ignorant and the warmongers remained.

Our late king Camaron tried to employ civil diplomacy with Daggerfall, but in the end, he made the formal declaration of war. Daggerfall and Sentinel have fought many times in their two thousand years of coexistence, and Camaron knew the black magic and espionage the Bretons considered honest warfare. Never debasing the Sentinel character by duplicating the Breton villainy, Camaron knew best how to combat Lysandus. King Lysandus' knavish battle tactics were even more perfidious than his ancestors', and the war continue to rage until it began to involve more than Sentinel and Daggerfall.

Lord Graddock, ruler of Reich Gradkeep, acted as conciliator between Sentinel and Daggerfall, and eventually convinced both monarchs to meet and make peace. The ill-fated Treaty of Gradkeep began civilly; the terms of peace were discussed, agreed on, and set to paper. The terms were excessively generous. Camaron had agreed to give up some of his rights to Betony in order to placate the madness of Lysandus and bring peace back to the Iliac Bay. It was not until King Camaron read the Treaty he was about to sign that he realized the outrageous perfidy of the Bretons: the Treaty had actually been purposefully miswritten by the Daggerfall scribe in a desperate and ignominious attempt to trick Camaron into signing a contract different from the one to which he had agreed. The castle of Reich Gradkeep erupted into bloodbath, and the war continued.

The Battle of Cryngaine Field was the tragic ending of the senseless war of attrition. The Cryngaine Field is located in between the Yeorth Burrowland and the Ravennian Forest where the armies of Sentinel and Daggerfall respectively made camp after the massacre at Reich Gradkeep. As the battle began, Daggerfall proved that she had some foul daedric magical tricks left by blinding the Redguard army with a wall of mist. Lysandus did not have the opportunity to gloat over his cozenage for long, for the sure arm of a Sentinel archer struck him in the throat even through the thick, swirling fog.

Lysandus' son, Gothryd, who had spent the battle in lugubrious relaxation, was crowned without ceremony, and thereupon demanded a duel with King Camaron. Camaron was many years Gothryd's senior, and though a superior warrior, was exhausted from the endless warfare the boy king had been spared. Nevertheless, as a point of honor, our king agreed to the duel. The new king of Daggerfall, by dirty trick and black magic, managed to backstab our king before the duel ever began. Thus, the victor of Cryngaine Field, and the War of Betony, was Daggerfall.

Daggerfall's wickedness continued even after her inglorious victory. While the widow queen of Sentinel, Her Majesty Akorithi, mourned and tried to mend her shattered lands, Gothryd demanded the Princess of Sentinel as a hostage of war. To save her homeland, the Princess Aubk-i agreed to leave Sentinel and even marry the murderer of her father. But we true Redguards of Sentinel know where her love and honor lies. The Queen of Daggerfall is the Princess of Sentinel first and foremost.

## [69] The War of Betony

The War of Betony  
by Vulper Newgate

The history of the Iliac Bay, if told in its entirety, would horrify readers more than the most gruesome legend of the Underking. In comparison to the wars of the first and second era, our most recent appeal to arms, the War of Betony pales.

The Siege of Orsinium lasted from 1E 950 until 1E 980 without a pause. A thousand years later, the Thrassian Plague coupled with the War of Righteousness slayed over half the population of the Iliac Bay. And yet, the War of Betony fascinates us, and not just because of its immediacy.

Ironically, Lord Mogref of Betony was seeking peace when he asked for Daggerfall's protection on the Isle of Betony. The island had long been independant, but as the piracy in the Bay increased, Mogref truly realized Betony's vulnerability. King Lysandus agreed to be Betony's liege, on advice of many, including his archpriest of Kynareth, Lord Vanech.

While Betony is a prosperous fishing island and well-placed strategically, the vassalage of Betony was primarily an act of charity. Lysandus knew that if someone did not help Betony, it would fall to the pirates, if not to someone worse. Unfortunately, King Camaron of Sentinel did not agree. Citing a two hundred year old contract, obliquely if not illegally written to suggest that Betony was a "traditional holding" of the Kingdom of Sentinel, Camaron declared war. The majority of his advisors, being warlords in a traditionally bellicose country, supported their king in this.

The Chief Counselor, a woman called The Oracle, foresaw death and defeat in the war, but her wisdom was stifled and she was banished from court. Camaron should have listened to her. A few scrimages of the War of Betony went to Sentinel, but the major battles were all won by Daggerfall. King Lysandus, his heir Prince Gothryd, and the general of the army Lord Bridwell were fine leaders and warriors as well, and the Battle of the Bluffs and the Siege of Craghold both went to Daggerfall.

The war might have been won with one more victory, but for an unusual domestic incident in King Lysandus' court. The king's mother, the dowager queen Nulfaga, had been uneasy about the war since its beginning, but she now began to have visions of cataclysm. She saw the death of her beloved son should the war continue. Ebullient by his success, King Lysandus refused to listen to her fears until Nulfaga left court. Lysandus then realized how certain she was about his impending death. He began to actively negotiate a peace treaty with Sentinel, using the neutral lordship of Reich Gradkeep as facilitator. The Treaty of Reich Gradkeep was never to be.

King Camaron was initially civil, as the losing side of a war is often civil, but when he realized that the proposed treaty would have included a formal declaration that the kingdoms of Sentinel and Daggerfall would share Betony, he flew into a rage. With no thought for the protocol of attacking a neutral peaceable lordship, Camaron ordered his army to riot through

Reich Gradkeep. First the halls of the palace, and then the streets of the capitol ran red with blood. It was only with the support of the Daggerfall army that the chaos was brought under relative control.

The Sentinel army fled to the Yeorth Burrowland, and the Daggerfall army chased them as far as the Ravennian Forest before making camp. One week later, after each had a chance to send for reinforcements and plan their strategies, the armies met in the field that separated them, the flowering meadowland called Cryngaine Field. In the heat of the clash, an unnatural fog spread over the field, blinding all combatants. When the mist finally lifted, King Lysandus' body was found, his throat pierced by an unmarked arrow.

Daggerfall did not waste any time in mourning; young prince Gothryd, who had shown great bravery in battle and was very popular among the troops, was crowned King of Daggerfall just behind the battle lines, and he ordered the army onward. Perhaps it was the sight of the brave young warrior turned king appearing on the battlefield in full regalia that inspired the Daggerfall army, perhaps the battle would have turned regardless, Sentinel began to panic. King Gothryd met King Camaron before the Redguards had retreated, and the two monarchs fought. Both were excellent warriors, but Gothryd was a more skillful swordsman, and Camaron fell that day. Lord Oresme of Sentinel formally surrendered to Daggerfall, giving up all rights to Betony officially. He later committed suicide on the ship back to Sentinel.

Peace was a difficult process for the cities and towns on both sides of the Iliac Bay. As part of the formal peace treaty, King Gothryd asked for the hand of Princess Aubk-i, only daughter of the late King Camaron and the Queen Regent Akorithi. The request was intended to restore friendship between the kingdoms, and it was partially successful though many in the royal court of Sentinel viewed the princess as more a prisoner of war than a bond to Daggerfall. The only surviving member of the ruling family of Reich Gradkeep was a sickly infant, so the councilors of state appealed to Lord Auberon Flyte, a cousin of Lord Graddock, to rule the lordship in regency.

Lord Flyte accepted, and his strong, almost dictatorial style was just what Reich Gradkeep needed to restore order after the bloody Treaty of Reich Gradkeep. His subjects were grateful that when the infant heir died, they not only elevated his wife Doryanna and him from regents to rulers, they agreed to rename the lordship in his honor. Reich Gradkeep became Anticlere, named after his ancestral home. The horrors of the War of Betony still live on, even in Anticlere. Whether Daggerfall and Sentinel will be able to use the marriage of King Gothryd and Princess Aubk-i as a symbol of peace rather than discord is something that only the future can show.

## [70] Wayrest, Jewel of the Bay

Wayrest, Jewel of the Bay  
by Sathyr Longleat

Wayrest is one of the most glorious cities of western Tamriel: sparkling in her contemporary beauty, lustrous by her past. She is prized above all cities in High Rock -- no other city has contributed, and continues to contribute so much to the culture of the Bretons. The spirits of her genius children continue to haunt the streets; you can see them in the gabled roofs, grand boulevards, aromatic marketplaces. The people of Wayrest have an instinctive appreciation of their past, but are not obsessed by it, as the people of Daggerfall seem to be. One feels that one is in a modern city when one visits Wayrest, but there is a magic in the air that could only come from thirty-two centuries of civilization.

It is difficult for historians to declare a certain date for the foundation of Wayrest. A settlement of some variety had been existence where the Bjoulsae River feeds the Iliac Bay possibly since the 800th year of the First Era. The traders and fishermen of Wayrest were surrounded by hostile parties: the orc capitol Orsinium had grown like a poison weed to the north, and the Akaviri pirates and raiders crowded the islands to the west. There is no mystery to Wayrest's name. After the fighting most travellers had to endure passing through the eastern end of the Iliac Bay, the little fishing village on the Bjoulsae was a welcome rest.

Nowhere in the much vaunted censuses of the Skyrim Occupation is Wayrest mentioned. In the Annals of Daggerfall, King Joile's letter to Gaiden Shinji of the Order of Diagna contains the following reference: "The orcs have been much plaguing the Wayresters and impeding traffic to the heart of the land." The date given for the letter was 1E 948.

Wayrest only truly bloomed after the razing of Orsinium in 1E 980. The hard-working traders and merchants were instrumental in forming the Masconian Trade Way and thus reducing the pirate activity on the Bay. At this time, Wayrest occupied both banks of the Bjoulsae. A successful mercantile family, the Gardners, built a walled palace on the High Rock side of the river and, over time, allowed banks and other businesses within its walls. It was a Gardner, Farangel, who was proclaimed king when Wayrest accepted ambassadors from the Camorian Empire, and was granted the right to call itself a kingdom in the 1100th year of the 1st Era.

Although Wayrest became a kingdom under the command of one family, the merchants continued to wield incredible power. Many economists have alleged that Wayrest's eternal wealth, despite all her hardships, comes from this rare relationship between the merchants and the crown. The Gardner Dynasty fell, followed by the Cumberland Dynasty, which was followed by the Horley Dynasty, and finally, in the Third Era, the Septim Dynasty. No citizen of another kingdom of comparable age can, with one hand, name all the families who have ever ruled. Never has a king of Wayrest been deposed by revolution or assassination. Except for those of the Septim family, every king of Wayrest can trace his line back to a merchant prince of Wayrest. The merchants and king respect one another, and this relationship strengthens both.

One need only walk down the great boulevard of Wayrest to see physical proof of this unique alliance. Going north to south, Wayrest Boulevard suddenly divides, one half going west and the other going east. Both halves end in identical squares: one at Castle Wayrest, the original palace of Aphren Gardner, and the other at Cumberland Square, where the oldest and wealthiest marketplace in Wayrest. The message here is clear: the king and the merchants are joined and equal.

Wayrest has survived blights, droughts, plagues, piracy, invasions, and war with good humor and practicality. In 1E 2702, the entire population of the city was forced to move into the walled estate of the Gardners as protection against the pirates, Akaviri raiders, and Thrassian plague. A less resourceful community would have withered, but the Wayresters have survived to enrich Tamriel generation after generation.

**[71] Writs****[71.1] {Writ}<sup>1</sup>**

This document bears witness to the ownership of {...} of {...} in {...}. Let all who read this know that {...} is the sole and rightful owner of the afore mentioned property.

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<sup>1</sup> Actually, the following writ is described as "parchment" in game and untitled.



### ***3. An Elder Scrolls Legend: Battlespire***

*Editor's note: The following texts are derived from the game's TXT.BSA and TXT.RSC files, with some of them entitled by the editor and their titles given in {brackets}. Furthermore, in many non-book texts the reader will find variables instead of the names and places shown in game. For a more comfortable reading, I replaced them with {...}.*



**[1] Arcana Restored\***

See vol. I.

**[2] Book Of Life And Service\***

See vol. I.

**[3] Book Of Rest And Endings\***

See vol. I.

**[4] {Book of the Wheels of Heaven}**

{Book of the Wheels of Heaven}

[The book is written in Daedric, but the illustrations of various complex wheel, gear, and pulley arrangements suggest that this could be the Book of the Wheels of Heaven. By studying the tables of codes in the back, you discover that the code you are looking for is Doht Yoodt Seht Koht, or DUSK in Tamrielic. The table also displays the codes written as numerals, which happily are the same in Tamrielic and Daedric -- 4-21-19-11 -- which corresponds to the number of the letters in the alphabet sequence.]

## [5] Codex Arcana

### [5.1] Codex Arcana I

#### Codex Arcana, Volume I

STUDENTS AND SCHOLAR: Attend our Abjurations!  
SHOWING DUE PROPRIETY IN THE CUSTODY OF BOOKS

We not only render service to the Emperor in preparing volumes of new books, but also exercise an office of sacred piety when we treat books carefully, and again when we restore them to their proper places and commend them to inviolable custody; that they may rejoice in purity while we have them in our hands, and rest securely when they are restored to their repositories. And surely next to the vestments and engines dedicated to the Emperor's glory, arcane books deserve to be rightly treated by the battlemage, to which great injury is done so often as they are touched by unclean hands. Wherefore we deem it expedient to warn our students against various negligences, such as might be easily avoided and which do wonderful harm to books.

Being a partial index of arcane contrivances known to the scholars and alchemists of Battlespire, that these contrivances might more readily be known to all students, and neither abused, nor neglected, nor wasted in their employment.

"Art of Corruption"

Produces the casting of Major Poison Damage Range

"Beaks of Lightning"

Casts the spell of Major Shock Damage Range

"Bite of Fleshrime"

Renders the power of Medium Frost Damage Range

"Blossom of Chastening Fire"

Produces the casting of Minor Fire Damage Range

"Boils of Handfire"

Produces the casting of Minor Fire Damage

"Bone of Resolve"

Produces the casting of Spell Resistance

"Breath of the Vampire"

Produces the casting of Vampiric Drain

"Candle of the Lesser Vigil"

Renders the power of Minor Shield

"Coals of Bonesear"

Renders the power of Major Fire Damage

"Din of Revelations"

Renders the power of Major Delayed Damage

"Dove of Blistering Fire"

Renders the power of Medium Fire Damage Range

"Ewer of Purity"

Renders the power of Cure Poison

"Excrescence of Ice"

Produces the casting of Major Frost Damage

**[5.2] Codex Arcana II**

## Codex Arcana, Volume II

**STUDENTS AND SCHOLAR: Attend our Abjurations!  
SHOWING DUE PROPRIETY IN THE CUSTODY OF BOOKS**

We not only render service to the Emperor in preparing volumes of new books, but also exercise an office of sacred piety when we treat books carefully, and again when we restore them to their proper places and commend them to inviolable custody; that they may rejoice in purity while we have them in our hands, and rest securely when they are restored to their repositories. And surely next to the vestments and engines dedicated to the Emperor's glory, arcane books deserve to be rightly treated by the battlemage, to which great injury is done so often as they are touched by unclean hands. Wherefore we deem it expedient to warn our students against various negligences, such as might be easily avoided and which do wonderful harm to books.

Being a partial index of arcane contrivances known to the scholars and alchemists of Battlespire, that these contrivances might more readily be known to all students, and neither abused, nor neglected, nor wasted in their employment.

"Faremyle of Burning Blows"

Renders the power of Medium Fire Damage

"Father of Blight"

Produces the casting of Medium Continuous Damage to the victim

"Fin of Spite"

Produces the casting of Minor Continuous Damage to the victim

"Flakes of Snow"

Produces the casting of Minor Frost Damage

"Flame of the Greater Vigil"

Casts the spell of Medium Shield

"Forks of Bonefrost"

Casts the spell of Major Frost Damage Range

"Glaze of Mysteries"

Produces the casting of Medium Delayed Damage

"Gleam of the Shock Ward"

Produces the casting of Resistance to Shock

"Harkenor of Agony"

Renders the power of Major Continuous Damage to the victim

"Harrow of Wizardbrand"

Casts the spell of Major Magic Damage

"Heart of the Subtle Force"

Produces the casting of Minor Shock Damage

"Horn of Magepain"

Renders the power of Medium Magic Damage Range

"Hue of the Journeyman"

Casts the spell of Medium Poison Damage

"Husk of the Fiery Ward"

Casts the spell of Resistance to Fire

"Incidence of Biter Bitten"

Produces the casting of Fire shield

**[5.3] Codex Arcana III**

## Codex Arcana, Volume III

**STUDENTS AND SCHOLAR: Attend our Abjurations!  
SHOWING DUE PROPRIETY IN THE CUSTODY OF BOOKS**

We not only render service to the Emperor in preparing volumes of new books, but also exercise an office of sacred piety when we treat books carefully, and again when we restore them to their proper places and commend them to inviolable custody; that they may rejoice in purity while we have them in our hands, and rest securely when they are restored to their repositories. And surely next to the vestments and engines dedicated to the Emperor's glory, arcane books deserve to be rightly treated by the battlemage, to which great injury is done so often as they are touched by unclean hands. Wherefore we deem it expedient to warn our students against various negligences, such as might be easily avoided and which do wonderful harm to books.

Being a partial index of arcane contrivances known to the scholars and alchemists of Battlespire, that these contrivances might more readily be known to all students, and neither abused, nor neglected, nor wasted in their employment.

"Knight of the Grand Vigil"  
Produces the casting of Major Shield

"Lot of Fate"  
Produces the casting of Medium Continuous Damage to the victim

"Maid of Rime"  
Casts the spell of Medium Frost Damage

"Mote of Cleansing Fire"  
Produces the casting of Major Fire Damage Range

"Plume of Baleful Woe"  
Renders the power of Minor Magic Damage

"Prayer of Fleshfire"  
Casts the spell of Medium Poison Damage Range

"Principle of the Broad Force"  
Renders the power of Medium Shock Damage

"Ribs of the Mana Ward"  
Produces the casting of Resistance to Magic

"Root of the Hero"  
Renders the power of Medium Cure Health

"Rose of Weirdbane"

Produces the casting of Medium Magic Damage

"Seal of the Grand Force"

Casts the spell of Major Shock Damage Range

"Seed of Healing"

Produces the casting of Minor Cure Health

"Shells of Magewrack"

Casts the spell of Major Magic Damage Range

"Shimmer of the Frosty Ward"

Produces the casting of Resistance to Frost

"Sifting of Stain"

Produces the casting of Minor Poison Damage Range

"Skein of Convulsion"

Renders the power of Confusion

"Skins of the Poison Ward"

Casts the spell of Resistance to Poison

"Sliver of Skinchill"

Produces the casting of Minor Frost Damage Range

"Sweetpin of Secrets"

Renders the power of Minor Delayed Damage

"Swirl of the Bright Well"

Renders the power of Spell Absorption

**[5.4] Codex Arcana IV**

## Codex Arcana, Volume IV

**STUDENTS AND SCHOLAR: Attend our Abjurations!  
SHOWING DUE PROPRIETY IN THE CUSTODY OF BOOKS**

We not only render service to the Emperor in preparing volumes of new books, but also exercise an office of sacred piety when we treat books carefully, and again when we restore them to their proper places and commend them to inviolable custody; that they may rejoice in purity while we have them in our hands, and rest securely when they are restored to their repositories. And surely next to the vestments and engines dedicated to the Emperor's glory, arcane books deserve to be rightly treated by the battlemage, to which great injury is done so often as they are touched by unclean hands. Wherefore we deem it expedient to warn our students against various negligences, such as might be easily avoided and which do wonderful harm to books.

Being a partial index of arcane contrivances known to the scholars and alchemists of Battlespire, that these contrivances might more readily be known to all students, and neither abused, nor neglected, nor wasted in their employment.

"Tale of the Whole Flesh"

Casts the spell of Major Cure Health

"Tear of Despair"

Produces the casting of Major Continuous Damage to the victim

"Thimble of Magefire"

Produces the casting of Minor Magic Damage Range

"Thread of Sparking"

Renders the power of Minor Shock Damage Range

"Tides of the Between"

Produces the casting of Teleport

"Tinct of the Apprentice"

Produces the casting of Minor Poison Damage

"Waft of Lightness"

Produces the casting of Jumping

"Web of the Master"

Renders the power of Major Poison Damage

"Whim of the Grand Warding"

Renders the power of Resistance to All elements

"Wind of Swifttness"

Renders the power of Running

"Winds of Storm"

Produces the casting of Medium Shock Damage Range

"Wing of Spellshifting"

Casts the spell of Spell Reflection

"Withy of Withering"

Casts the spell of Minor Continuous Damage to the victim

**[5.5] Codex Arcana V****Codex Arcana, Volume V**

**STUDENTS AND SCHOLAR: Attend our Abjurations!**  
**SHOWING DUE PROPRIETY IN THE CUSTODY OF BOOKS**

We not only render service to the Emperor in preparing volumes of new books, but also exercise an office of sacred piety when we treat books carefully, and again when we restore them to their proper places and commend them to inviolable custody; that they may rejoice in purity while we have them in our hands, and rest securely when they are restored to their repositories. And surely next to the vestments and engines dedicated to the Emperor's glory, arcane books deserve to be rightly treated by the battlemage, to which great injury is done so often as they are touched by unclean hands. Wherefore we deem it expedient to warn our students against various negligences, such as might be easily avoided and which do wonderful harm to books.

Being a partial index of arcane contrivances known to the scholars and alchemists of Battlespire, that these contrivances might more readily be known to all students, and neither abused, nor neglected, nor wasted in their employment.

BattleAxe of Scathing: causes Minor Magic Damage, and is informed by the arts of ILLUSION

BattleAxe of Marvelous Extension: provides castings of the spell Slow Fall, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of MYSTICISM

BattleAxe of Heaven's Teeth: causes Minor Shock Damage, and is schooled with crafts of RUNNING

Boots of the Creeping Things: enchanted with the spell of Summon Brute, and is informed by the arts of THAUMATURGY

Boots of Glacial Hue: wreaks Major Frost Damage, and partakes of the excellence of THAUMATURGY

Boots of Consuming Indwelling: provides castings of the spell Spell Absorption, and is schooled with crafts of RESTORATION

Boots of Exquisite Perfection: provides castings of the spell Resistance to All elements, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of SHORTBLADE

Broadsword of the Biting Pains: engenders Medium Frost Damage, and partakes of the excellence of DESTRUCTION

Broadsword of Uncertainty: casts the spell of Invisibility, and is schooled with crafts of ALTERATION

Broadsword of the Firmament: provides castings of the spell Resistance to Shock, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of MISSILE

Broadsword of the Unnatural Essence: engenders Medium Poison Damage, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of BACKSTABBING

Claymore of Mysteries: conceives the spell of Chameleon, and partakes of the excellence of THAUMATURGY

Claymore of Sulphurous Death: wreaks Major Poison Damage, and is informed by the arts of JUMPING

Claymore of Glacial Hue: wreaks Major Frost Damage, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of RESTORATION

CrossBow of Pleasure: conceives the spell of Minor Cure Health, and partakes of the excellence of THAUMATURGY

**[5.6] Codex Arcana VI**

## Codex Arcana, Volume VI

STUDENTS AND SCHOLAR: Attend our Abjurations!  
SHOWING DUE PROPRIETY IN THE CUSTODY OF BOOKS

We not only render service to the Emperor in preparing volumes of new books, but also exercise an office of sacred piety when we treat books carefully, and again when we restore them to their proper places and commend them to inviolable custody; that they may rejoice in purity while we have them in our hands, and rest securely when they are restored to their repositories. And surely next to the vestments and engines dedicated to the Emperor's glory, arcane books deserve to be rightly treated by the battlemage, to which great injury is done so often as they are touched by unclean hands. Wherefore we deem it expedient to warn our students against various negligences, such as might be easily avoided and which do wonderful harm to books.

Being a partial index of arcane contrivances known to the scholars and alchemists of Battlespire, that these contrivances might more readily be known to all students, and neither abused, nor neglected, nor wasted in their employment.

CrossBow of Sulphurous Death: wreaks Major Poison Damage, and is schooled with crafts of RESTORATION

CrossBow of Grotesque Liveliness: engenders Rapid, Medium Continuous Damage to Target, and is informed by the arts of THAUMATURGY

Cuirass of the Dusk and the Dawn: casts the spell of Shadow, and is schooled with crafts of RESTORATION

Cuirass of the Outermost Wastes: wreaks Major Delayed Damage, and partakes of the excellence of THAUMATURGY

Cuirass of the Scaly Pelt: enchanted with the spell of Minor Shield, and is informed by the arts of BLUNTWEAPON

Cuirass of Final Virtue: wreaks Major Fire Damage, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of RESTORATION

Dagger of the Capering Dog: conceives the spell of Summon Smart Guard, and partakes of the excellence of DESTRUCTION

Dagger of the Shrew: engenders Medium Magic Damage, and is informed by the arts of MYSTICISM

Dagger of the Tongue of the Wyrn: engenders Medium Fire Damage, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of ALTERATION

Dagger of the Winter's Night: casts the spell of Resistance to Frost, and is schooled with crafts of HANDTOHAND

Gauntlets of Scathing: causes Minor Magic Damage, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of MYSTICISM

Gauntlets of the Rain of Fire: causes Minor Fire Damage, and partakes of the excellence of ILLUSION

Gauntlets of the Summer's Day: enchanted with the spell of Resistance to Fire, and is informed by the arts of LONGBLADE

Gauntlets of Expectant Wonder: casts the spell of Summon Smart Monster, and is schooled with crafts of MYSTICISM

Greaves of the Biting Pains: engenders Medium Frost Damage, and is schooled with crafts of ALTERATION

**[5.7] Codex Arcana VII**

## Codex Arcana, Volume VII

STUDENTS AND SCHOLAR: Attend our Abjurations!  
SHOWING DUE PROPRIETY IN THE CUSTODY OF BOOKS

We not only render service to the Emperor in preparing volumes of new books, but also exercise an office of sacred piety when we treat books carefully, and again when we restore them to their proper places and commend them to inviolable custody; that they may rejoice in purity while we have them in our hands, and rest securely when they are restored to their repositories. And surely next to the vestments and engines dedicated to the Emperor's glory, arcane books deserve to be rightly treated by the battlemage, to which great injury is done so often as they are touched by unclean hands. Wherefore we deem it expedient to warn our students against various negligences, such as might be easily avoided and which do wonderful harm to books.

Being a partial index of arcane contrivances known to the scholars and alchemists of Battlespire, that these contrivances might more readily be known to all students, and neither abused, nor neglected, nor wasted in their employment.

Greaves of Kings: conceives the spell of Major Shield, and partakes of the excellence of MYSTICISM

Greaves of Unrequited Intent: conceives the spell of Spell Resistance, and is informed by the arts of DESTRUCTION

Greaves of the Stamp of the Toad:provides castings of the spell Monster Summoning, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of ALTERATION

Helmet of Despair: enchanted with the spell of Poison, and is informed by the arts of DESTRUCTION

Helmet of Precipitous Revelation: engenders Medium Delayed Damage, and is schooled with crafts of ALTERATION

Helmet of the Tongue of the Wyrn: engenders Medium Fire Damage, and partakes of the excellence of DESTRUCTION

Helmet of the Winding Road:provides castings of the spell Teleport, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of AXE

Javelin of Joy:provides castings of the spell Medium Cure Health, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of MYSTICISM

Javelin of Heaven's Teeth: causes Minor Shock Damage, and partakes of the excellence of ILLUSION

Javelin of Endless Woe: wreaks Rapid, Major Continuous Damage to Target, and is schooled with crafts of MYSTICISM

LongBow of Sweet Airs: casts the spell of Cure Poison, and is schooled with crafts of ALTERATION

LongBow of Scars: causes Rapid, Minor Continuous Damage to Target, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of ALTERATION

LongBow of the Unnatural Essence: engenders Medium Poison Damage, and is informed by the arts of DESTRUCTION

Longsword of Exposure: causes Minor Poison Damage, and partakes of the excellence of SWIMMING

Longsword of the Eye of the Worldt: enchanted with the spell of Detect Spell, and is informed by the arts of ILLUSION

**[5.8] Codex Arcana VIII**

## Codex Arcana, Volume VIII

STUDENTS AND SCHOLAR: Attend our Abjurations!  
SHOWING DUE PROPRIETY IN THE CUSTODY OF BOOKS

We not only render service to the Emperor in preparing volumes of new books, but also exercise an office of sacred piety when we treat books carefully, and again when we restore them to their proper places and commend them to inviolable custody; that they may rejoice in purity while we have them in our hands, and rest securely when they are restored to their repositories. And surely next to the vestments and engines dedicated to the Emperor's glory, arcane books deserve to be rightly treated by the battlemage, to which great injury is done so often as they are touched by unclean hands. Wherefore we deem it expedient to warn our students against various negligences, such as might be easily avoided and which do wonderful harm to books.

Being a partial index of arcane contrivances known to the scholars and alchemists of Battlespire, that these contrivances might more readily be known to all students, and neither abused, nor neglected, nor wasted in their employment.

Longsword of the Noble Flesh: provides castings of the spell Resistance to Poison, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of BLUNTWEAPON

Longsword of Winter's Winds: causes Minor Frost Damage, and is schooled with crafts of MYSTICISM

Mace of Odious Disorder: engenders Slow, Medium Continuous Damage to Target, and is schooled with crafts of RESTORATION

Mace of Dancing Fate: wreaks Major Shock Damage, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of RESTORATION

Mace of Vengeance: wreaks Major Magic Damage, and partakes of the excellence of THAUMATURGY

Pauldrons of Sacred Honor: casts the spell of Medium Shield, and is schooled with crafts of MISSILE

Pauldrons of the Mischievous Hand: casts the spell of Spell Reflection, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of MYSTICISM

Pauldrons of the Monkey's Apprehension: conceives the spell of Detect Enemy, and partakes of the excellence of ILLUSION

Pauldrons of Winter's Winds: causes Minor Frost Damage, and is informed by the arts of ILLUSION

Short Sword of Final Virtue: wreaks Major Fire Damage, and is informed by the arts of THAUMATURGY

Short Sword of the Sunken Gods' Awakening: provides castings of the spell Summon Horror, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of RESTORATION

Short Sword of the Inner Eye: conceives the spell of Resistance to Magic, and partakes of the excellence of AXE

Short Sword of Vengeance: wreaks Major Magic Damage, and is schooled with crafts of STEALTH

**[5.9] Codex Arcana IX**

## Codex Arcana, Volume IX

STUDENTS AND SCHOLAR: Attend our Abjurations!  
SHOWING DUE PROPRIETY IN THE CUSTODY OF BOOKS

We not only render service to the Emperor in preparing volumes of new books, but also exercise an office of sacred piety when we treat books carefully, and again when we restore them to their proper places and commend them to inviolable custody; that they may rejoice in purity while we have them in our hands, and rest securely when they are restored to their repositories. And surely next to the vestments and engines dedicated to the Emperor's glory, arcane books deserve to be rightly treated by the battlemage, to which great injury is done so often as they are touched by unclean hands. Wherefore we deem it expedient to warn our students against various negligences, such as might be easily avoided and which do wonderful harm to books.

Being a partial index of arcane contrivances known to the scholars and alchemists of Battlespire, that these contrivances might more readily be known to all students, and neither abused, nor neglected, nor wasted in their employment.

ShortBow of the Bile of the Earth: enchanted with the spell of Fire shield, and is informed by the arts of ILLUSION

ShortBow of Exposure: causes Minor Poison Damage, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of MYSTICISM

ShortBow of Saturnine Purpose: wreaks Slow, Major Continuous Damage to Target, and partakes of the excellence of ILLUSION

Sling of Delight: enchanted with the spell of Major Cure Health, and is informed by the arts of SHORTBLADE

Sling of Fickle Endowment: casts the spell of Confusion, and partakes of the excellence of DESTRUCTION

Sling of Riven Stars: engenders Medium Shock Damage, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of ALTERATION

Spear of Snares and Springes: causes Minor Delayed Damage, and is informed by the arts of ILLUSION

Spear of the Fox's Footfall: conceives the spell of Running, and partakes of the excellence of HANDTOHAND

Spear of the Rain of Fire: causes Minor Fire Damage, and is schooled with crafts of MYSTICISM

Staff of the Architect's Gaze: conceives the spell of Vampiric Drain, and gifts its owner with special insight into the disciplines of RESTORATION

Staff of Dancing Fate: wreaks Major Shock Damage, and is informed by the arts of THAUMATURGY

Staff of High Purpose: casts the spell of Jumping, and is schooled with crafts of LONGBLADE

WarAxe of the Shrew: engenders Medium Magic Damage, and is schooled with crafts of ALTERATION

WarAxe of Riven Stars: engenders Medium Shock Damage, and partakes of the excellence of DESTRUCTION

WarAxe of the Tears of the Shark: causes Slow, Minor Continuous Damage to Target, and is informed by the arts of DESTRUCTION

## [6] Curiosities Of The Second Age

### Curiosities Of The Second Age

None were so clever, or prodigal with their crafts, as the enchanters of the pre-Imperial Heartland. Many enchantments did they lavish upon even the least of their possessions, and from father to son of martial class might descend such heirlooms as to beggar a prince of the Modern Era. These artifacts may not be discerned by their age, for many objects of Elven craft also have stood the tests of time in great abundance. The only sure mark is in the provenance and documentation, for many powers may lie unguessed within the subtle wortcrafts of these Kings of Wizardry.

The BattleAxe of Rubicund Wisdom bears enchantments enhancing the skills of DESTRUCTION, and casts the spell of Teleport, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The BattleAxe of Furious Swiftblade bears enchantments enhancing the skills of SHORTBLADE, and casts the spell of Jumping, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The Broadsword of the Flea's Leaping grants benefits in the disciplines of JUMPING, casts the spell of Jumping, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The Broadsword of Percipient Wisdom grants benefits in the disciplines of THAUMATURGY, casts the spell of Medium Cure Health, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The Claymore of the Hare's Fleetness affords some abilities in the arts of RUNNING, and casts the spell of Running, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The Claymore of Transcendent Wisdom affords some abilities in the arts of MYSTICISM, and casts the spell of Major Cure Health, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The CrossBow of Grand Sureflight affords some abilities in the arts of MISSILE, and casts the spell of Medium Shield, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The Dagger of the Tiger's Stalking grants benefits in the disciplines of STEALTH, casts the spell of Minor Cure Health, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The Dagger of Emerald Wisdom grants benefits in the disciplines of RESTORATION, casts the spell of Minor Shield, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The Javelin of the Fervent Dolphin bears enchantments enhancing the skills of SWIMMING, and casts the spell of Medium Cure Health, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The LongBow of Furious Smiting grants benefits in the disciplines of BLUNTWEAPON, casts the spell of Medium Shield, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The Longsword of Iniquitous Surprise bears enchantments enhancing the skills of BACKSTABBING, and casts the spell of Major Cure Health, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The Longsword of Auricular Wisdom bears enchantments enhancing the skills of ALTERATION, and casts the spell of Minor Cure Health, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The Mace of the Furious Horny Fist affords some abilities in the arts of HANDTOHAND, and casts the spell of Teleport, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The Short Sword of the Fervent Swimmer affords some abilities in the arts of SWIMMING, and casts the spell of Medium Cure Health, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The Short Sword of Argent Wisdom affords some abilities in the arts of ILLUSION, and casts the spell of Medium Shield, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The ShortBow of Furious Deep Cleaving bears enchantments enhancing the skills of AXE, and casts the spell of Minor Shield, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

The WarAxe of Furious Hewing grants benefits in the disciplines of LONGBLADE, casts the spell of Running, and provides the preternatural Blessing of Athleticism when equipped.

**[7] Harvest's End, 3E 172\***

See vol. I: *Tal Marog Ker's Researches / Harvest's End, 3E 172.*

## **[8] Letters**

### **[8.1] {Letter from Clarentavious Valisious}**

For the eyes of the Exalted Grand Marshall of His August Imperial Highness' Legions, from his Peer of the Twilit Fastnesses, the Battlemage Clarentavious Valisious.

As you read this, I am dead. My life, however, has not been given in vain, for I have vouchsafed you one small hope in all this tide of despair. The Great Star Galley, wrought by my own hand, still stands ready for your service. It will transport you to the High Halls and Librarium of the College.

Feigning vile possession and fellowship with the Enemy, I have contrived to conceal it from them, by dismantling my ingenious Opening Mechanism, and hiding away the five cogs upon which its workings depend. I leave one cog here for you, the others I have cunningly secreted. Assemble the mechanism, and you shall gain entry to the Star Galley Crib.

Beware the one that is named Methats.

He alone, I fear, suspects my ruse and might discover the workings.

One more criterion must be fulfilled before the Star Galley can convey you to the Colleges. Despite my many exertions upon the issue, the Galley requires the full puissance of all five anchors to pierce the mana streams and win free of its moorings.

One such anchor is here in my quarters. If but one anchor is not conjoined, the Galley will lack the power to depart this space.

Now listen and pay heed. If you would achieve this undertaking and drive the dark ones from our Emperor's sovereign estate, seek out my remains. There you shall find the Typos Sophia, that shields any who possess it from the Taking into puppetry that is Possession. If you find me yet alive by some miracle, it shall be yours for your great purpose.

In Finis, when addressing the burial of those souls fallen here, I pray you remember their valour and their service in the name of Empire and forever hold high the name of Battlemage.

## **[9] Messages**

### **[9.1] {Message from Jagar Tharn}**

[a neatly penned message on a small piece of paper, many times folded, and signed in a bold, formal hand]

Read this and let it be judged fair, nor doubted.

The bearer wears the form of Lomegan Mariel, Imperial Secretary, but is indeed Sirran Angada. Sirran Angada enjoys my countenance, and speaks with my voice.

Jagar Tharn

**[9.2] {Unsigned Message}**

Upon the central island is Lord Dagon's Hunting Lodge. Those who pledged their immortal spirits in return for services are bound here for Dagon's sport. These miserable wraiths are mad and malevolent, but in life each was proud and powerful. Seek their treasures: the Longbow of Heaven's Hail, the Boots of Peace, the Gauntlets of the Poor, and the Helmet of the Light Within. The Longbow casts arrows and spells with deadly accuracy. The Boots, once worn by a famed mortal warrior who had renounced the use of weapons, confer great skill in unarmed combat and feats of physical daring. The Gauntlets render the wearer resistant to magic, while the Helmet draws power from an opposing spellcaster and lends that power to its wearer. Some of these items are carried by the wraiths who possessed them in life; other items are hidden where the diligent might find them.

A Dark Seducer, Lord Dagon's personal bodyguard and current paramour, carries the Sword of the Moon Reiver, a unique sword forged from Dagon's own substance. No other weapon has such power to do him harm. Seek her, vanquish her, and seize her sword, or your errand is hopeless.

Entry to the Lodge is blocked by three great Sigil Wards. The Amulets of Entry for these Sigils are carried by Dagon's greatest lieutenants. They are terrible in skill and power, and protected from many weapons and magics -- but you need these amulets to approach Dagon.

Do not hope for aid from us in this place. This message is all we can provide. All else is arrayed against you in this place. Trust no one.

Your friend is held in Lord Dagon's Hunting Lodge. Lord Dagon himself stands guard. Beware of a trap. Lord Dagon is well-served by many spies. And if you would have a chance against him, you must not fail of these things:

Gird yourself with the Armor of the Savior's Hide.  
Arm yourself with the Sword of the Moon Reiver.  
Trust in the power of secret names, and the aid of absent friends.  
Put your hope in the shock of surprise, and the swiftness of desperate action.

The obstacles you face seem insurmountable. Thus will Lord Dagon be wonderfully dismayed when you succeed.

Beyond all hope, weigh daring against the odds, and courage against despair.

**[10] Notes****[10.1] {Note}**

[beneath several large, important-looking charts and diagrams]

Behold the ritual of making for the Grand and Thaumaturgical and Most Puissant Trebuchet of Overarching Peril.

He that touches this parchment to the workings of the Trebuchet of Granvellusa and releases its spirits therein shall apprehend before him an full and ready Engine of Mighty Destruction for the subjugation of the Foes of all Direnni.

Forromeo has spoken. The world shall hear. Let all peoples tremble before the everlasting might and grandeur of Clan Direnni.

**[10.2] {Note}**

[These words are painstakingly scratched onto the parchment in watery uneven strokes]

The Armor of the Savior's Hide may safeguard you against the sting of the Spear of Bitter Mercy. It turns the blow of an oath-breaker and guarded me against Dagon's hand, but not against his venomous intellect.

Alas, my memory is clouded. So much time has passed since I took the pieces and hid them from my own sight. I fear I have done the task too well.

I never wished to see the armor again, much less suspected it might be needed by another.

Enough of regrets. These faint snatches are as much as I recollect through the years of madness. Make of them what you will.

One piece I recall in a place high over the water, a narrow margin, between two plumb drops, one below, one above, looking down on the lookout and the faint creaking of timbers.

Another is somewhere similar, within stagger of the first but in the center of a people-home. Where folk would gather, full of music and laughter and the slop of water of life, high above the water and ringed all about with stone.

The third I placed in a most wet and inaccessible locale, for I had no thought for decay and the crust of nature. All about was the sound of the great blue and slits of light fell through to the water below. My friends would cast nets and lines to catch food from here, but I cannot fetch out the name of it.

The fourth lies within the mountain, in the tall tower, in the darkness beyond the curtain of water.

The fifth waits in cold darkness down below.

The last sailed up into the sky, and there revolved at the call of the wind. I tacked it to the canvas, so I know not if it still hangs there.

**[10.3] {Note}**

[Written in red... ink?... on a torn piece of parchment in an elegant, precise hand. The note is unsigned.]

Lehmekweh

I expect an unexpected guest. See the unseen, and conduct this guest into my presence with the greatest hospitality.

**[10.4] {Note}**

[Scrawled on a scrap of paper in a forceful feminine hand is what appears to be a phonetic transcription of a code in Daedric: the three letters jeb, meht, & quam:]

djeh meh kweh

**[10.5] {Note}**

[scawled on a piece of foolscap torn from a book]

Roht = Rishaal = Peytifar

**[10.6] {Note}**

[scawled on a piece of linen torn from a drape]

Meht = Gatanas = Memasgiat

**[10.7] {Note}**

[scrawled on a piece of linen torn from a drape]

Zyr = Zenaide = Berkul

**[10.8] {Note}**

[handwritten scrawled on the floor with a piece of charcoal]

I am dead. Tell my tender Mother dear I loved her, and Tamriel and my Emperor. Akatosh curse the name of the traitor and all daedra. Mara bless and guard my soul.

You who find me - avenge me, take the traitor's blood in my name, and take in hand The Dagger of the Stolid Kin, borne by my father and forged by his father before him. Beware of magic while you carry this blade, but fear neither the sting of poison nor the sear of shock.

**[10.9] {Note}**

[These lines are scribbled hastily on crumpled vellum. From the stains and the changes in ink colour, you guess they were written over a long period of time.]

What new madness is this? Is it not enough that I am to be tormented here for all time with the pain of my friends? The island is crawling with horrors and my ears are filled with the shrieks of mortals, torn apart for sport!

I cannot leave, I am cursed to stay, but I shall not stand by and watch others be so used! There must be some way I can help them.

I have heard one of them speak of the great horned temple, the way to leave this place, and of the six keys to its great door. The temple must be the one in Granvellusa. The keys I fancy are hidden away in the other temples.

They babble about a ritual hunt, as if this torture were a holy office! And their own temple, the emerald abomination, seems the key to all, their arsenal and their demesne. I have seen them foray out from it with their spears and their hounds of ice and fire.

For now it seems I am safe here, but I long to return to my little croft-cottage on Hartmoor, where I can bar the door, and blot out the screams. Perhaps my old armor might guard against the terrible spears. Perhaps the next poor soul brought here might gather the keys and escape.

**[10.10] {Note from Balaherne to Herne}**

Brother Herne

I do not comprehend. By the rites of the Hunt, the hare must have some chance of escape, however small.

I understand that this is Egahirn's first Hunt, I see that he must succeed, but does it not impair the principles of the Hunt to have him bear one of the six keys? How is the hare to wrest it from him?

Egahirn should pass the rite as you did, as I did, as a proper hunter, in full obedience to the forms. Surely it is the only way for the rite to be firm and fast.

Balaherne

**[10.11] {Note from Chimere Graegyn}**

[in badly faded ink on parchment yellowed with age]

For any unfortunate pursued by the Hunt.

Know that you are not alone, that you have a friend in this desolate place. For the moment my croft-cottage is safe from the hunters. Find me there, in the middle of the moor away to the North. I can offer you shelter and respite, but come quickly, for every day I feel my strength fading.

C.

**[10.12] {Notes from Clarentavious Valisiou}****[10.12.1] {Note from Clarentavious Valisiou}**

[scribbled in an unsteady hand]

The daedra prince has forced entry. Battlespire is fallen.

Lomegan surrendered the Portal Keys, and he was struck down. I saw others Taken. Trust no one.

The gate home is closed by the invader's sigil; the only way out now is the old Star Galley. I tried to guard the anchors, but most were loosed. If you may avenge us, restore the anchors. If you despair, free the last anchors, and die with our enemies.

On the indispensable Anchors and the absolute need of their perpetual preservation.

For the edification and admonition of all that should pass through this hall.

Know that this is one of the five great Anchors that moor the Battlespire in its place and retain it in the life-flood of sustaining Mana, without which there is no light, no life, no Being.

In their o'er-reaching wisdom, the Powers have required me, against my every protest and complaint, to affix to it a dreadful device, which you see before you, whose purpose is to sunder and divide this anchor and imperil the Spire and all who inhabit it.

Never divide the Anchor. It is the rock on which all our lives are founded.

All Anchors must be conjoined to assure the safety and stability of the Spire.

Above all, never allow them all to be unloosed. Sure destruction shall follow, as the Battlespire departs the flux that keeps all sides of nature in unity.

Now avaunt, and quit this chamber, lest the imp of temptation, or some unhappy humour overcome you, and lead you onto the path of certain annihilation.

C.V.

**[10.12.2] {Note from Clarentavious Valisiou}**

[Scrawled in a cramped, almost illegible hand is a single word:]

boustrophedon

**[10.13] {Note from Deyanira to Jaciel}**

[Among a group of notes you find the following hand-written note:]

Jaciel –

Are you aware that some of the Seducers have been meeting in the Chapel of Reflections? I felt distinctly that I was not welcome. I have seen other secretive and furtive behavior from these recruits that makes me anxious.

I know you have accepted these Lordless Daedra as retainers. In fact, I strongly advocated their case to you. You are most generous in affording them protection, and shrewd in recruiting warriors of ancient craft and skill. But I begin to doubt the wisdom of retaining agents of such doubtful loyalty. Perhaps this is a risk we cannot afford.

Please speak with me about this at your earliest convenience.

Love,  
Deyanira

**[10.14] {Note from Herne}**

For all Feydra's vassals, our Hounds.

You shall not return to the Chapel until the hunt is resolved, and the quarry's corpse is borne in to rest upon the altar.

Remember, you are The Greater Hounds. You are to pursue and harry the quarry but must not kill it. That honor shall be Egahirn's only.

Keep your amulets about you, the quarry is wily.

Now go, and run well, for the Hunt is a thing of beauty.

Herne.

**[10.15] {Note from Imago Storm}**

Dagon's incantory neonymic is Djehkeleho-dehbe-effehezepeh.

The Daedric characters are Djeh Koh Leh Oh -- Deh Beh -- Feh Ee Zeh Peh, or, in Tamrielic, JKLO-DB-FEZIP.

Xivilai's neonymic is Wegerohseh-chehkohieu.

The Daedric characters are Weh Geh Roh Seh -- Cheh Koh Eiu, or, in Tamrielic, WGRS-CKU.

Faydra's Neonymic is Nepehkweh-kodo.

The Daedric characters are Neh Peh Kweh -- Koh Doh, or, in Tamrielic, NPK-KD

**[10.16] {Note to Mactana Greenway}**

For Mactana Greenway, Gatekeeper.

A few more names for the Annals and Assizes of Entry. I believe these will be the last for today.

Samar Starlover, Master of the Serpent Blade.

Grad Helthen, Grand Ipsissimus of the dissolving fires.

Clarentavious Valisious, Venerable Artificer, greybeard master of the Hammer and the harness

Paxti Bittor, Exalted Summoner, Lion-Lord Invoker Pursuivant

{...} {...}, novice.

**[10.17] {Notes to the Battlespire Hero}****[10.17.1] {Note to the Battlespire Hero}**

{...}

I sure hope you come through here, I could use the help.

We are in so much trouble! All hell's broken loose here, and the gate home's blocked with some sort of damn thing which hurts to touch. A lot.

Have a look around, see if you can find anyone alive to talk to. I'm going to try to get a disguise and get out in the confusion.

I'm trying to remember what the instructor always said - scout out the land, eliminate your threats and gather resources. Or search, slaughter and steal for short.

See if you can keep up.

We're getting a real big test, looks like!

{...}

**[10.17.2] {Note to the Battlespire Hero}**

We are heartened by your success in the Hunt.

Seek Lord Imago within his castle in the far north of Havok Wellhead. He knows of your coming. But he may place obstacles in your path to test your merit and sincerity.

The lands of Faydra's clan lie to the west. The lands of Xivilai's clan lie to the east. These places are not open to the Dremora, and are a mystery to us. However, it may be that a cunning raider like yourself will find something of use there.

To leave this realm you must enter the gate within Imago's castle. There are three keys to this gate. One I know is in the keeping of Lord Imago. The other two keys are, I presume, in the hands of Dagon's favorites, Faydra and Xivilai. This gate will bear you to the Hunting Lodge of Mehrunes Dagon, where your friend is held.

We wish we could do more to help you. The matter rests now with you, and with the Tides of Fate.

**[10.17.3] {Note to the Battlespire Hero}**

{...}

Glad you could make it.

bad news –

1. wizards & guards dead. No prisoners I could find.

2. Daedra everywhere. Little long-ears - weak, but sneaky pack fighters. Big eyeless things with long arms - stupid and very tough.
3. Paxti Bittor is the traitor. Daedra may have some codes and keywords, but there're plenty of rooms and passages I can't get into.
4. Teleports don't work. Maybe mana locks, keywords? Look around - wizards are sloppy with security.
5. Floating symbols are magic sigils, and deadly! Weir gate is sealed by a REAL nasty one. Daedra wear amulets marked with same symbols. Tried to pass symbols wearing right amulets, but some work, some don't - can't figure pattern.

Good news –

1. I'm sticking close to a boss daedra named Sumeer. Stole a cloak, hood, & amulet from a careless bodyguard. Sumeer has a mass teleportation artifact, I think. I wear the amulet, and go when he goes.
2. My Plan A: stay close to Sumeer and improvise.
3. My Plan B: Find an amulet with the same symbol as the one blocking the weir gate to get me back through the gate, or find something or someone else to get me through. Elseways we will never see Tamriel again.
4. My Plan C: Sneak until I'm discovered, then take as many with me as I can.
5. Don't think they know I'm here.
6. Command and security are sloppy. Politics?
7. Left you a pair of healing potions in this scroll. Toast my health when you quaff them.

Suggestions –

1. The door to the teleportal off the north corridor near the tiger rug has some sort of password protection on it. Get it working. It leads upsection to Battlespire libraries, barracks, armories, and such. DON'T COUNT ON ME to get this open. I'm riding the boss daedra's coattails.
2. Find out how daedra got here. Bittor, the traitor, was master of teleportation and voidgates; that's the likely route.
3. Search for codes and keys and clues and weapons. I don't think the daedra got them all by a long shot. I couldn't search the battlemages or guards without drawing attention to myself, but some of them may have had time to leave something for posterity. And this is the Battlespire, for gods sakes. Who knows what stuff they have around here?
4. Stay with me, pal. Even if something happens to me, look for what's left. I'll make sure I pass on anything I can.

Stay with me.

{...}

**[10.17.4] {Note to the Battlespire Hero}**

{...}

They're on to me. I'm on the run.

I'm low on juice, and not in the best of health. I just began to realize I might not make it.

No matter what happens, I'll go out with a lot of noise and fuss. If I have to make a sacrifice, just do me one last favor, and make sure the gesture isn't wasted. Sounds gloomy, but I need to say it.

I hope we can look back on this someday as our greatest adventure. And if not, then drink a flowing glass at each occasion in remembrance of me.

{ ... }

**[10.17.5] {Note to the Battlespire Hero}**

{ ... }

I've found another of those damn things like the ones which are blocking the Weir Gate - and a little Daedra went straight by it! I think he's got some sort of special charm or something that lets him through. I sure can't get past.

Oh, and here's another hint for you - there's a big gem thing just near here - heals you right up! Boy, was I glad to find it!

{ ... }

**[10.17.6] {Note to the Battlespire Hero}**

Thought this might come in handy.

{ ... }

**[10.17.7] {Note to the Battlespire Hero}**

{ ... }

So much for the disguise. One of the big ones caught me sneaking around, and ripped into me. I knocked him through his hat, but he mussed my garments in a most thorough fashion. I think they may be on the lookout now. Be careful.

I'm depending on silent feet and shadow spells now. You'll need two amulets to get past the warding sigils. I left an extra one here on the dock. I found the gate, many rooms on, past a graveyard, but don't know how the gate works. I'll hang around and slip through with the next courier. If I can leave the gate open, you're golden. If not, you're on your own. Maybe there's an inscription or manual hidden around somewhere.

Stay AWAY from the wraiths. I can't even scratch one. The big Daedra are tough, but dumb - either they don't know spells, or can't cast them worth a damn.

Next is a place called Shade Perilous. It's a Daedra stronghold, not one of the Dagon holds, but a Nocturnal domain. Makes no sense to me - Dagon and Nocturnal are supposed to hate each other - but we'll see soon enough.

Keep a'coming.

{...}

**[10.17.8] {Note to the Battlespire Hero}**

Overheard this password, but no idea what it means, or who needs it.

The Gerent of Dagon Rules Here

{...}

**[10.17.9] {Note to the Battlespire Hero}**

{...}

So far, so good.

I'm with a group of Daedra with cloaks and hoods. Still careless, don't seem to expect trouble, but this disguise thing is too risky. When I get a chance, I'll slip off and follow under spell concealments.

This place is crawling with spooks and bones. They call this place the Soul Cairn. The chief -- heard one call him "Lord Something-or-Other Moath" -- sent troops out to scout. The report is simple: DO NOT FOOL WITH THE WRAITHS! They cannot be killed or destroyed. Period. Sounds like a good policy. These daedra troops look pretty tough, but they aren't making a dent in the wraith things. So stay clear of them.

Our next stop is someplace called Shade Perilous. Not sure after that. A couple of my Daedra companions had little accidents; I snatched their plunder. When I get a chance, I'll sort it out. Anything extra or dangerous I'll dump along the way for you. I'm leaving you two Spell Restoratives here; I got plenty extra. Keep your eyes out, and watch yourself.

{...}

**[10.17.10] {Note to the Battlespire Hero}**

{...}

I've heard that one of the Battlemages is still alive - Clarentavious, I think. I haven't seen him, but then, I haven't had time to look for any secret doors or anything. They wanted him because of some machine or other that's broken.

Oh, and Methats seems to be the one who's being left in charge, if you're interested.  
Stay close, you might need me!  
{...}

**[11] The Kendhall Book Of Riddles**

The Kendhall Book Of Riddles  
by Kendhall

[Among the hundreds of riddles in this weighty tome, THE KENDHALL BOOK OF RIDDLES, four have been marked with scraps of paper:]

**Page 1**

Loadbearer, Warrior  
Spirited, Brave  
Fleet-foot, Ironshod  
Faithful One, Slave

Answer: Horse

**Page 2**

I rise above the roofs below  
Finger up-raised to heaven  
I speak in clear tones  
That aim for others  
To gather where I call.

Answer: Bell Tower

**Page 3**

Some live in me, some live on,  
And some shave me to stride upon.  
I rarely leave my native land.  
Until my death I always stand.  
High and low I may be found  
Both above and under ground.

Answer: Tree

**Page 4**

Armor bright  
Gleaming white  
A single rank  
Their faces blank  
Now hid by night  
Now bold by light

Bright red the land  
Where soldiers stand

Answer: Teeth

**[12] The Legendary Scourge\***

See vol. I.

## **[13] Malham's Annotated Compendium of Arcane Contrivances of the Second Age**

### **[13.4] Malham's Annotated Compendium of Arcane Contrivances of the Second Age IV**

Malham's Annotated Compendium of Arcane Contrivances of the Second Age, Volume IV  
by Malham

Just as it is necessary for the state to prepare arms and to provide abundant stores of victuals for the soldiers who are to fight for it, so it is fitting for Imperial Servants to fortify themselves against the assaults of pagans and heretics with a multitude of sound writings. So all know, and Malham speaks.

"White Finger of Lingerin Death"  
Produces the casting of Poison  
By envious fate's decrees  
Abide not long the lords of earth;  
Beneath the poisoned bite the flesh must fall.

"Shroud of Night"  
Casts the spell of Shadow  
Whence art thou come? Know by his mien  
That Shadow is power.

"Beacon of Warning"  
Renders the power of Detect Enemy  
Thine enemy be known.

"Glove of Service"  
Grants the gift of lesser Monster Summoning  
Though they be least, least answer thy call.

"Horn of the Hunt"  
Grants the gift of modest Summon Brute  
Pour out libations from the mingled cup; the soldiers answer; the captain's call.

"Badge of the Steward"  
Grants the gift of Summon Wise Monster  
From parched and arid wastes beyond the stars, the Wise harken to the clash of war.

"Guerdon of the Warden"  
Grants the gift of grand Summon Guard"  
From darkness he comes.

"Knower of Nightmares"  
Grants the gift of Summon Surpassing Horror  
When his horn sounds, the hosts shall part in fear and shame.

"Eyes of Arcane Sight"

Renders the power of Detect Spell

What works, bright or dark, are written between this world and the next? Those works you shall read as threads woven in fire.

"Curtain of the Unseen World"

Renders the power of Invisibility

Behind this curtain he moves unknown to friend and foe.

"Beckon of the Averted Eye"

Renders the power of Chameleon

The stalker is lost in the blend of light and shadow, color and texture.

"Arms of Feathered Grace"

Renders the power of Slow Fall

He falls, but with grace and keen eye, like the raptor upon his prey.

**[14] The Posting of the Hunt\***

See vol. I.

**[15] The Requisite Book of Daedra\***

See vol. I: *The Book of Daedra*.

## **[16] A Short History Of The Augmented Craftworks**

### A Short History Of The Augmented Craftworks

That others might know, and be warned and wifful, those devices called "augmented" are special, and deserving of special praise, for they bear multiple enchantments, the more econmically to aid the enchanter and warrior is his daily labors.

The BattleAxe of Augmented Red Wisdom bears enchantments enhancing the skills of DESTRUCTION, and does Major Frost Damage to the enemy.

The BattleAxe of Augmented Swiftblade bears enchantments enhancing the skills of SHORTBLADE, and does Minor Frost Damage to the enemy.

The Broadsword of Augmented Leaping grants benefits in the disciplines of JUMPING, and, when striking a target, causes Minor Frost Damage.

The Broadsword of Augmented Unseen Wisdom grants benefits in the disciplines of THAUMATURGY, and, when striking a target, causes Medium Fire Damage.

The Claymore of Augmented Fleetness affords some abilities in the arts of RUNNING, and causes Medium Frost Damage to a victim on contact.

The Claymore of Augmented Unknown Wisdom affords some abilities in the arts of MYSTICISM, and causes Major Fire Damage to a victim on contact.

The CrossBow of Augmented Sureflight affords some abilities in the arts of MISSILE, and causes Medium Magic Damage to a victim on contact.

The Dagger of Augmented Stalking grants benefits in the disciplines of STEALTH, and, when striking a target, causes Minor Fire Damage.

The Dagger of Augmented Green Wisdom grants benefits in the disciplines of RESTORATION, and, when striking a target, causes Minor Magic Damage.

The Javelin of the Augmented Dolphin bears enchantments enhancing the skills of SWIMMING, and does Medium Fire Damage to the enemy.

The LongBow of Augmented Smiting grants benefits in the disciplines of BLUNTWEAPON, and, when striking a target, causes Medium Magic Damage.

The Longsword of Augmented Surprise bears enchantments enhancing the skills of BACKSTABBING, and does Major Fire Damage to the enemy.

The Longsword of Augmented Golden Wisdom bears enchantments enhancing the skills of ALTERATION, and does Minor Fire Damageto the enemy.

The Mace of the Augmented Horny Fist affords some abilities in the arts of HANDTOHAND, and causes Major Frost Damage to a victim on contact.

The Short Sword of the Augmented Swimmer affords some abilities in the arts of SWIMMING, and causes Medium Fire Damage to a victim on contact.

The Short Sword of Augmented Silver Wisdom affords some abilities in the arts of ILLUSION, and causes Medium Magic Damage to a victim on contact.

The ShortBow of Augmented Deep Biting bears enchantments enhancing the skills of AXE, and does Minor Magic Damage to the enemy.

The WarAxe of Augmented Hewing grants benefits in the disciplines of LONGBLADE, and, when striking a target, causes Medium Frost Damage.

## **[17] Starkhorn's Compendium Of His Arts And Crafts In The Realms Of Lesser Enchantments**

Starkhorn's Compendium Of His Arts And Crafts In The Realms Of Lesser Enchantments  
by Starkhorn

TAKE CARE. The excellences of my works may not always be ready to the eye, and may lie deep within the warp and weft of the spirit weave.

The BattleAxe of Starkhorn's Swiftblade bears enchantments enhancing the skills of SHORTBLADE, and gives some Resistance to Shock when equipped by the owner.

The Boots of Starkhorn's Fleetness affords some abilities in the arts of RUNNING, and, when in use by the owner, provides a modest Resistance to Poison.

The Broadsword of Starkhorn's Unseen Wisdom grants benefits in the disciplines of THAUMATURGY, and, when equipped, confers a measure of Resistance to Magic for its owner.

The Claymore of Starkhorn's Unknown Wisdom affords some abilities in the arts of MYSTICISM, and, when in use by the owner, provides a modest Resistance to Poison.

The CrossBow of Starkhorn's Sureflight affords some abilities in the arts of MISSILE, and, when in use by the owner, provides a modest Resistance to Poison.

The Cuirass of Starkhorn's Swimmer affords some abilities in the arts of SWIMMING, and, when in use by the owner, provides a modest Resistance to Fire.

The Dagger of Starkhorn's Green Wisdom grants benefits in the disciplines of RESTORATION, and, when equipped, confers a measure of Resistance to All Elements for its owner.

The Gauntlets of Starkhorn's Red Wisdom bears enchantments enhancing the skills of DESTRUCTION, and gives some Resistance to Shock when equipped by the owner.

The Greaves of Starkhorn's Leaping grants benefits in the disciplines of JUMPING, and, when equipped, confers a measure of Resistance to Magic for its owner.

The Helmet of Starkhorn's Stalking grants benefits in the disciplines of STEALTH, and, when equipped, confers a measure of Resistance to All Elements for its owner.

The Javelin of Starkhorn's Dolphin bears enchantments enhancing the skills of SWIMMING, and gives some Resistance to All Elements when equipped by the owner.

The LongBow of Starkhorn's Smiting grants benefits in the disciplines of BLUNTWEAPON, and, when equipped, confers a measure of Resistance to Magic for its owner.

The Longsword of Starkhorn's Golden Wisdom bears enchantments enhancing the skills of ALTERATION, and gives some Resistance to Frost when equipped by the owner.

The Mace of Starkhorn's Horny Fist affords some abilities in the arts of HANDTOHAND, and, when in use by the owner, provides a modest Resistance to Fire.

The Pauldrons of Starkhorn's Surprise bears enchantments enhancing the skills of BACKSTABBING, and gives some Resistance to Frost when equipped by the owner.

The Short Sword of Starkhorn's Silver Wisdom affords some abilities in the arts of ILLUSION, and, when in use by the owner, provides a modest Resistance to Fire.

The ShortBow of Starkhorn's Deep Biting bears enchantments enhancing the skills of AXE, and gives some Resistance to Frost when equipped by the owner.

The WarAxe of Starkhorn's Hewing grants benefits in the disciplines of LONGBLADE, and, when equipped, confers a measure of Resistance to All Elements for its owner.

**[18] Starlover's Log\***

See vol. I.

**[19] The Vagaries of Magicka\***

See vol. I.

**[20] The Waters Of Oblivion\***

See vol. I.



#### ***4. The Elder Scrolls Adventures: Redguard***

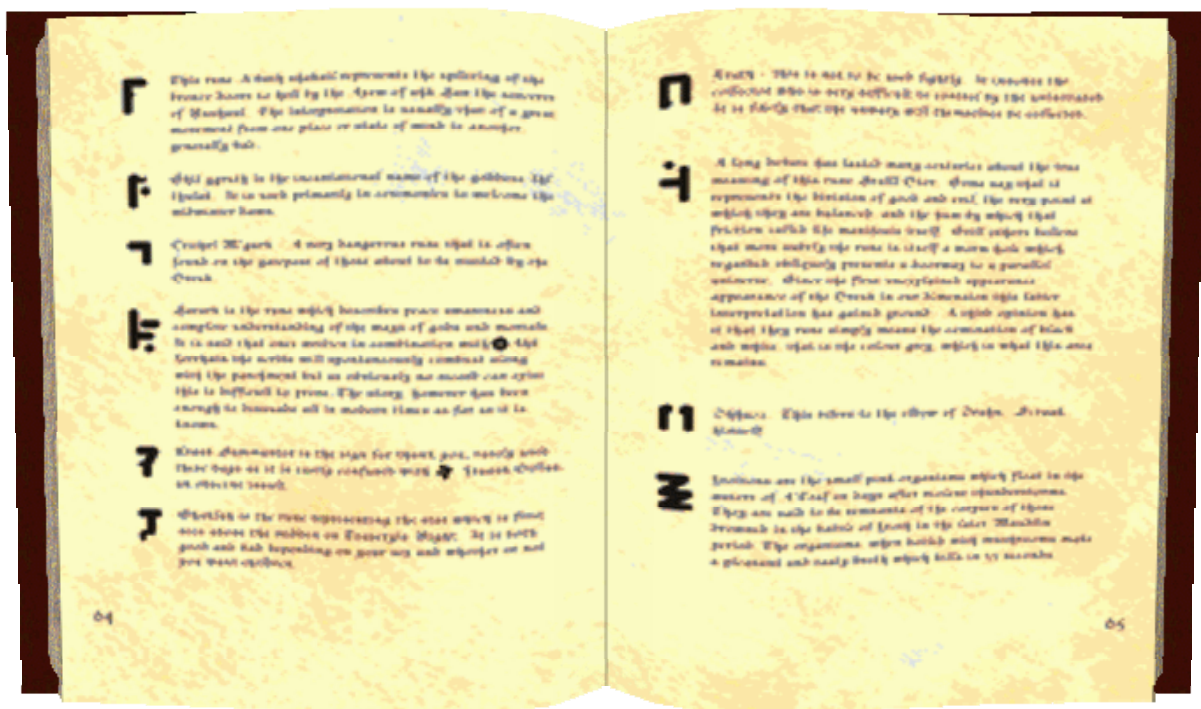


## [1] Book of Dwarven Lore

# Book of Dwarven Lore

## by Arrin Favoril

[This book on Dwarven lore reveals that the Dwarves were destroyed long ago by the Dark Elves. There is one interesting passage which translates the Dwarven language, which bears a slight resemblance to Elven.]



**[2] Brother Kithral's Journal**Brother Kithral's Journal<sup>1</sup>

[The journal of Brother Kithral, wherein he describes a search for Archmage Voa's ring in the caverns below Stros M'Kai. This last part reveals much.]

I can taste the poison in my mouth - a yellow fog in the chest that clogs the vital passages. The gash in my side weeps fast - which will kill me first - wound or toxin?

Damn her impatience! And damn my pride to think I might find the ring in this nefarious darkness on my own. But she missed the rendezvous & I fear we are running out of time. With the Archmage's ring we are one step closer to restoring the Crowns to power. I am sure his body is here. Some trick of the undercurrent in the wake of the battle. The spider's milk is deep. I - Iszara I pray nothing has happened to you. I hear the goblins behind the door. Ubula Ubula they come for me. I have failed you my love the ring is nowhere nearer

You must hurry

The League is closing in the Empire is closing in.

The Darkness is close[r...]<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> ESAR has two different readings of the journal: The one above, which is a transcription of the actual picture of the text, and its recitation by Brother Kithral himself with the following subtitles: "I can taste the poison in my mouth; a yellow fog in the chest that clogs the vital passages. The gash in my side weeps fast -- which will kill me first: wound or toxin? Damn her impatience! And damn my pride to think I might find the ring here in this nefarious darkness on my own. But she missed the rendezvous and I fear we are running out of time. With the Archmage's ring we are one step closer to restore the Crowns to power. I am sure his body is here, some trick of undercurrent in the wake of the batt--- the spider's milk is deep. Iszara! I pray nothing has happened to you! I hear the Goblins behind the door -- Ubula! Ubula! Ubula! -- They come for me! I have failed you, my love, and the ring is nowhere nearer! You must hurry! The League is closing in! The Empire is closing in! The Darkness is closi--"

<sup>2</sup> Reading unsure.

### [3] Elven Artifacts

#### [3.8] Elven Artifacts VIII

##### Elven Artifact

[This book on Elven Artifacts details the Flask of Lillandril, an ancient flask with the ability to absorb magic. The Flask was supposedly shipwrecked with its founders off the coast of Stros M'Kai sometime during the 1st Era.]

[...] of Lillandril, a magical flask discovered during the 1st Era of Tamriel (c. 1E470) by a group of Elves living in Lillandril, a port city on the Northern shore of Summerset Isle. Upon learning that the flask had the marvellous property of being able to absorb magic of any persusasion, the founders realized their importance in the world and spread word of their discovery.



They performed various favors for the Barons of Summerset Isle, keeping the magical powers of the Wood Elves of Valenwood in check.



Eventually the founders, worried that Wood Elf assassins may kill them and take the flask, left Summerset Isle for the City of Daggerfall, in High Rock, where they hoped to buy their safety from the Clan Direnni, to live in secret, protected by the Direnni.

While sailing from Summerset to High Rock they were ahipwrecked on the coral reef along the southern coast of what is now Stros M'Kai. The founders were killed and the Flask of Lillandril was lost.

Stories of the flask have appeared over the ages, but it is still believed by many that it is lost somewhere on the island of Stros M'Kai.



Reference linking the island to the flask occur in manuscript fragments on unknown but ancient origin held in the private library of Kuric Dexian at Sentinel. One piece, the Lagan Text, has symbols (reproduced above) which could be interpreted as map references. This has

led to the theory that the location of the flask was known at some time after the founders demise. In particular [...]

**[4] Ffoulkes Firmament\***

See vol. I: *The Firmament*

**[5] Flora of Hammerfell**

## Flora of Hammerfell

[It says here that Aloe, when combined with Pure Water, can have healing properties.]

**Aloe**

The ancients know well the afficiacy of the Aloe. It is a wondrous herb, useful in staunching the flow of blood and in promoting the healing of wounds. It has also been found to lessen the effect of the pox. An elixir may be simply made by combining the licqor from a crushed leaf with purest water.

**Angelica**

Angelica is known among those who dwell in Hammerfell as a delicacy when crystalised. It has been used to cure the flatulence.

**Basil**

This herb is beneficial for reducing swelling in the proboscis. It is applied as a poultice over the affected area as a precautionary measure, straws should be placed in the nostrils prior to application [...]

## [6] Iszara's Journal

### Iszara's Journal

First Seed 26. CE 864

This will be my last entry, as I'm taking leave of this maddening torpor: the time to act is at hand! Basil and the rest of his lazy wolves are content to mourn our Prince and hide in shadows, even while we have the very thing the Governor fears most!

For months my love has lain in amber while the Empire firms its hold. Hammerfell will be lost forever if Prince A'tor is not restored.

I am decided: if the League can't shake its slumber, then I will steal the soulgem as they sleep! By morning I'll be in Stros M'Kai where there are others who might give me the help I need.

Cyrus

The gypsy woman told me you would come to Stros M'Kai. I laughed in her face of course. but I leave this warning if only for respect of one's elders. If the blood-lock is opened then I know it is you, and ask you to please heed the next:

Leave me my dilemma and go back to whatever road you love best those days.

You've had ample practise.

**[7] Keep Out**

Keep Out

**KEEP OUT**

Until Further Notice & by Order of  
The Provisional Governor of Stros M'Kai  
Lord Admiral Richton

**NO ONE  
MAY ENTER  
THIS AREA**

**[8] N'Gasta's Necromancy Book**

N'Gasta's Necromancy Book<sup>1</sup>  
by N'Gasta

[This must be the spell N'Gasta used to reach Clavicus Vile.<sup>2</sup>]

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 𐌶𐌸𐌸  
 𐌹𐌸𐌰 𐌶𐌹𐌸𐌶𐌰 𐌹𐌸  
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The jacinth wakes the rising sun.  
and snow blankets the grass.  
But night o'ertakes the mid-day sky.  
and the gate is opened last.

𐌹𐌸𐌶𐌶𐌶𐌶𐌶𐌶𐌶𐌶

<sup>1</sup> Cf. vol. I: *N'Gasta! Kvata! Kvakis!*

<sup>2</sup> Transliteration:

THE TIME IS  
 NOW  
 THE CURSE IS  
 SPOKEN  
 ARISE DEMON  
 AND BA NAMED  
 VENGEANCE

[...]

BAWARE

**[9] No Trespassing**

No Trespassing

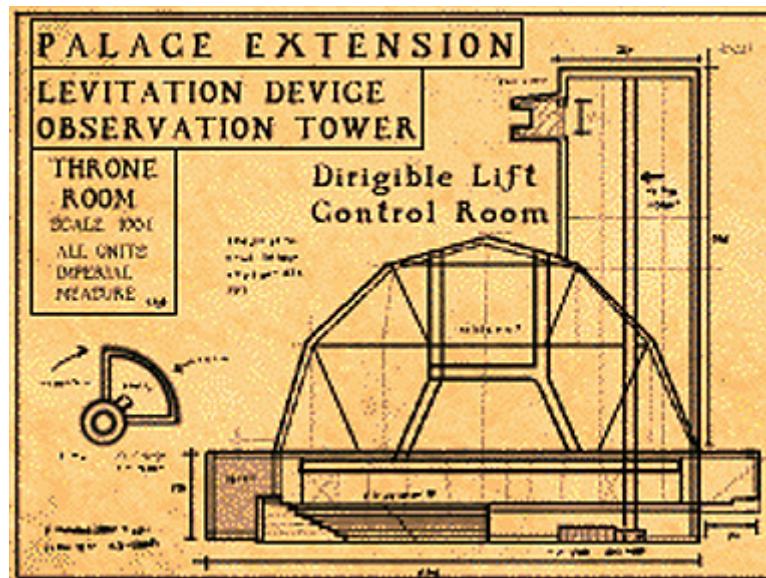


**[10] Redguards. Their Heroes & History\***

See vol. I: *Redguards, Their History and Their Heroes*.

**[11] Richton's Palace Expansion Schematic**

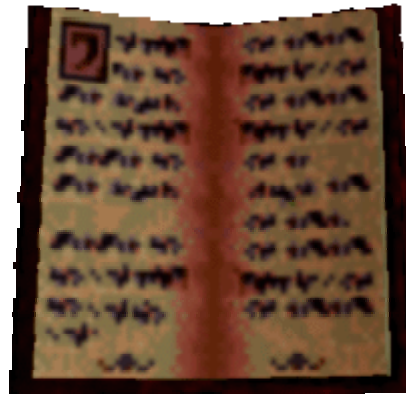
Richton's Palace Expansion Schematic



**[12] Text on Potions**

Text on Potions

[Says here that Orc's Blood mixed with Pig's Sac provides great strength.]



**[13] Tobias' Letter**

## Tobias' Letter

Cyrus -

I hope this letter finds your hand, friend.

My latest travels have brought me to Stros M'Kai and no one here has seen your sister for three months. I fear the worst. I feel obligated to stay for a few weeks. I will be at the Draggin Tale Inn, should you return.

Tobias

[14] Wanted

Wanted

**WANTED**



**FOR TREASON AND MURDER**

**'CYRUS'**

REDGUARD MALE 1.85 M. 80 K. 25-30 YRS.

A REWARD OF 100 GOLD PIECES WILL BE GIVEN  
FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE ARREST  
OF THIS CRIMINAL. BE IT KNOWN THAT,  
BY ORDER OF THE EMPORER, ANY PERSON  
HARBOURING A FUGITIVE WILL BE HANGED.



**I. Names, Places, Titles, etc.****A**

Abibon-Gora · 87  
 Abuhk, Uthilla · 278  
 Acolyte · 246-247  
 Adamantium · 141  
 Aduros Nau · 87  
 Aetherius · 177, 243, 265  
 Ahrtabazus · 32  
 Akatosh · 38-39, 43-44, 50, 56-58, 60, 62, 66, 96, 98, 104, 134, 155-163, 165-167, 370  
 Akatosh Chantry · 43, 57-58, 62  
 Akavari · 86, 311  
 Akavarian · 86  
 Akavir · 34, 311  
 Akaviri · 311, 329-330  
 Akorithi · 220, 224, 233, 326, 328  
 Alabaster · 35  
 Alcaire · 88  
 Alchemist · 47, 52, 57, 72, 339, 341, 343, 345, 347, 349, 351, 353, 355  
 Alembic · 47  
 Alessian · 85, 163  
 Alessian Reform · 85  
 Alessians · 85  
 Ali · 128, 136, 162  
 Alieria · 94, 99-103, 106-108, 110, 112, 114, 116, 123, 128-130, 136-143, 156-158, 160, 162, 164-166  
 All-Mother · 116  
 Amber · 294  
 Amulet · 46-47, 51, 165-166, 362, 376, 380-381  
 Ancestor Worship · 87  
 Archivius · 168  
 Ansei · 23, 79-80, 278  
 Anticlere · 33, 328  
 Anti-Magicka · 165  
 Antiphyllus · 7  
 Anvil · 24  
 Apprentice · 345  
 Archmage · 402  
 Archmagister · 96, 98-99, 101, 104-105, 113-116, 118-121, 123, 154, 156, 246  
 Arena · 264  
 Arenthia · 33  
 Argonian · 60, 90, 92, 116

Arkan · 35, 37  
 Arkay · 10  
 Army of Hammerfell · 278  
 Artaeum · 283  
 Arthago · 318  
 Artifact · 46, 233, 235, 257, 303, 312, 357, 380, 403  
 Asylum · 12-13, 49, 249  
 Atronach · 177, 285  
 Aubk-i · 225, 318, 326, 328  
 Auriel · 98, 146  
 Aurielian Gods · 156  
 Ayalea · 306  
 Azura · 89

**B**

Baan Dar · 35-37, 255  
 Baggledon, Gerander P. · 14-15  
 Bandit · 35, 99  
 Bandit God · 35  
 Bank of Daggerfall · 14-15  
 Bankorai Pass · 79-80  
 Bantha · 87  
 Banthan · 83, 87  
 Baranth Do · 87  
 Barenziah · 16, 27, 226-227, 267, 292  
 Barres, Vondham · 305-306  
 Basil · 406-407  
 Battle of Firewaves · 33  
 Battle of the Bluffs · 327  
 Battlemage · 176-178, 257, 284, 339, 341, 343, 345, 347, 349, 351, 353, 355, 360, 380, 382  
 Battlespire · 333, 339, 341, 343, 345, 347, 349, 351, 353, 355, 374, 379-382  
 Baumoval, Croll · 170  
 Baylor, Ryston · 18  
 Bergama · 7  
 Betony · 86, 92, 262, 325-328  
 Bjoulsae River · 329  
 Black Knight · 26, 152  
 Black Marsh · 13, 285  
 Blacklight · 113, 154  
 Blades · 177  
 Blight · 341  
 Blood Price · 100  
 Blood Sponge · 214

Bloodfather · 223  
 Bloodline · 222, 299  
 Blossom · 339  
 Boali · 318  
 Boethiah · 311  
*Book of Circles* · 24, 79, 81, 278  
*Book of Life* · 85  
 Borgas · 85  
 Braeloque · 34  
 Bretic · 18, 94, 121  
 Breton · 33, 85, 87-88, 92, 121, 145, 151, 153, 157, 277, 302, 325, 329  
 Bridwell · 92, 327  
*Brief History of the Empire* · 17  
 Brisienna · 228-232, 258  
 Broken Diamonds · 18  
 Brother of the Blade · 80, 278  
 Buljursoma · 90

## C

Caladan · 314-316  
 Calder · 30  
 Camaron · 325-328  
 Cameron · 318  
 Camlorn · 30  
 Camoran Usurper · 33-34, 86  
 Captain of the Guard · 301  
 Caron · 137, 141, 143  
 Carthan · 314  
 Castellian · 237-239, 242  
 Castle Daggerfall · 61, 68, 85, 92, 225, 232  
 Castle Sentinel · 240  
 Castle Wayrest · 226-227, 234, 239, 244, 330  
 Castle Wightmoor · 33  
 Cegila · 80  
 Champion · 100, 104-105, 264, 266, 302-303  
 Champion of Tamriel · 104-105  
 Chief Counselor · 327  
 Chieftain · 85  
 Chonus · 32  
 Clavicus Vile · 409  
 Cleansing · 343  
 Corcyr I · 94  
 Corwich · 29  
 Council Chamber · 302-303  
 Council of Three · 302  
 Council of Wizards · 303

Coven · 214  
 Craghold · 92, 327  
 Crowns · 402  
 Cruethys · 154, 163  
 Crunn · 38, 44, 50, 56, 60, 66, 71-73, 75  
 Cryngaine · 262, 326, 328  
 Cryngaine Field · 326, 328  
 Crystal Tower · 25, 32, 80, 98, 112, 118, 303-304  
 Cumberland · 329-330  
 Cyrodil · 262  
 Cyrus · 407, 414

## D

Daedra · 33, 38, 47, 52, 54, 66, 73, 77, 83, 126-129, 142-143, 145, 152, 156, 161-166, 265, 308, 311, 370, 374-375, 380-382, 390  
 Daedra Prince · 83  
 Daedra Seducer · 52  
 Daedra Worshipper · 83  
 Daedric · 145, 163, 265, 326, 338, 366, 377  
 Daggerfall · 5, 8, 14-15, 30, 33, 37-38, 58, 61, 66-69, 79-80, 85-87, 92, 94, 96, 101, 106, 112, 119-120, 224-225, 228-229, 232, 241, 245, 258, 300, 325-329, 403  
 Dai-katana · 128  
 Dar, Baan · 35-37, 211  
 Dark Brotherhood · 45, 249-251, 299  
 Dark Elf · 38-40, 42, 44, 50, 56, 60, 66, 92, 94-96, 100, 106, 109, 112-116, 119-120, 130, 132-133, 139, 142, 145-146, 151, 153-154, 166, 265, 267, 277, 281, 300, 401  
 Dark Seducer · 362  
 Day of the Dead · 87  
 Demon · 96, 126-128, 130, 265  
 Derik · 278  
 Dexian, Kuric · 403  
 Diagna · 79, 86, 329  
 Dibella · 83, 107, 305  
 Din · 340  
 Dioscori Song of Revelation · 7  
 Direnni · 85, 363, 403  
 Direnni, Medora · 262, 325  
 Direnni, Raven · 85  
 Divad The Singer · 23, 24, 278

Doldrums · 38, 66  
 Dowager Queen · 30  
 Draggin' Tale Inn · 414  
 Dragon · 94-99, 101, 104-105, 114, 116,  
 120-121, 123, 130-134, 155-159, 161-  
 163, 165-167, 294, 306, 311  
 Dragonling · 47, 54  
 Dremora · 379  
 Drigh R'Zimb · 87  
 Dwarf · 38, 44, 46, 50, 56, 60, 66, 72-76,  
 78, 94, 131-132, 165, 277, 401  
 Dwarven · 41, 46, 75, 123, 401  
 Dwarven Exclamation Act · 410  
 Dwarven Lore · 401  
 Dwarvish · 68, 70, 72, 75  
 Dwynnen · 30, 33, 88

## E

Eadwyre · 27, 233, 238, 267  
 Ebonarm, Reymon · 26, 79-81, 152-153,  
 279-280  
 Ebonheart · 97, 101, 113, 128, 131, 139,  
 154, 163  
 Ebony · 12, 26, 38, 41-47, 49-52, 54, 56,  
 58-60, 66-67, 69-70, 73-75, 78, 100,  
 109, 123, 128, 130, 132, 277  
 Ebony Blade · 109  
 Edward · 64, 78, 94-130, 134-146, 151,  
 153-159, 161, 163, 166-167, 264  
 Eight Traitors · 33  
 Einlea · 314-317  
 Elder Circle of Wayrest · 238  
 Elder Ones · 32  
 Elder Scrolls · 1, 5, 333, 399  
 Elsweyr · 11, 90, 285  
 Elvish · 94, 96, 121  
 Elysana · 234, 237, 267  
 Empress of Tamriel · 18  
 Empress Regent · 12  
 Emperor · 7, 12-13, 18, 21, 23, 33, 88, 177,  
 228-230, 245, 258, 264, 267, 339, 341,  
 343, 345, 347, 349, 351, 353, 355, 360,  
 370  
 Emperor of Tamriel · 12, 88, 177, 258  
 Engelsdottir, Ora · 137  
 Ephen · 154  
 Esthlainder · 303  
 Eternal Champion · 264, 266  
 Evening Star · 87

Evermore · 30

## F

Faerie · 32, 305  
 Faerie Chain · 32  
 Fairtree · 313, 317  
 Falcreath · 131  
 Falcrenth · 284  
 Fang Lair · 41, 131  
 Farrun · 30  
 Favoril, Arrin · 401  
 Fearstruck · 311-312  
 Feast of the Tiger · 87  
 Fey · 32, 376  
 Fiery Night · 87  
 Fighters Guild · 201  
 Fire Daedra · 52, 54, 265  
 First Era · 85-88, 169, 311, 329, 403  
 First Scholar · 277  
 First Seed · 87, 150, 407  
 Firsthold · 25, 27, 32, 97-98, 113-114, 125,  
 136, 219, 267  
 Flask of Lillandril · 403  
 Flora of Hammerfell · 406  
 Flower Day · 87  
 Flyte, Auberon · 328  
 Flyte, Doryanna · 328  
 Free, Jeh · 100  
 Frieda · 302, 304  
 Frincheps · 38, 44, 49-50, 56, 60, 66  
 Froedwig-aj-Murr · 279  
 Frost Fall · 18, 38, 60

## G

Gallwood, Odiva · 85  
 Gardner · 329-330  
 Gardner, Aphren · 330  
 Gardner, Farangel · 329  
 Gardtide · 87  
 Gargoyle · 64  
 Gatekeeper · 378  
 Geoffrey · 163-166  
 Geon, Bibenus · 25  
 Gerthland · 170-171  
 Gerthland Manor · 170-171  
 Gethessa · 284  
 Gheateus · 32  
 Ghost · 7, 33, 54, 141, 240, 277, 306

Ghraewaj · 83  
 Ghulari · 299  
 Giant · 28, 38, 44, 50, 54, 56, 60, 66, 76-77, 83, 107, 176, 277-278, 293  
 Gil, Vir · 102  
 Ginko · 295  
 Glenpoint · 18, 85, 285  
 Glenumbra Moors · 18-19, 88  
 Glenumbria Moors · 85  
 Goblin · 40-41, 94, 100, 119, 158, 277-278, 402  
 God of Animals · 90  
 God of Mercy · 84  
 God of War · 26  
 Gold · 45, 48  
 Golem · 177, 278, 285  
 Gortwog · 235-236, 245, 267  
 Goth, Aegrothius · 302  
 Gothryd · 233, 245, 267, 326-328  
 Graddock · 325, 328  
 Graegyn, Chimere · 373  
 Granitsta · 279  
 Great Library · 304  
 Greensly, Barbabyth · 174  
 Greklith · 318  
 Grellan · 148, 152  
 Grey Falcon · 28-29  
 Groevinger, Hoennig · 279  
 Grungdinger · 302  
 Guild of Playwrites, Actors, and Dramatists · 38, 66, 68  
 Guildmagister · 302  
 Guildmaster · 21, 201  
 Gurnsey · 38, 44, 50, 56, 60, 66, 71-72

## H

Hall of the Virtues of War · 23-24, 79-80, 278  
 Hallin · 278  
 Hammerfell · 33, 41, 79, 83, 87, 90, 94, 131, 155, 246-247, 277-278, 285, 303, 305, 318, 406-407  
 Harald of Ysgramoor · 151  
 Harald of Ysgramor · 151  
 Hare · 357  
 Harlyth · 92  
 Harpy · 64, 73, 83  
 Harrow · 342  
 Harryston · 92

Hasillid · 93  
 Hattu Mountain · 24  
 Heartfire · 83  
 Helena · 33  
 Hellion · 277  
 Helseth · 237-239, 242, 267  
 Helstrom · 7  
 Her Terrible Majesty · 18  
 Hergen · 170-171  
 Herne · 372, 376  
 High Desert · 24  
 High Elf · 94-95, 114, 116, 120, 130, 281, 325  
 High Elven · 68  
 High Priest · 39-40  
 High Rock · 29-30, 33-34, 38, 40, 70, 80, 85-88, 98, 100, 108, 136, 151-153, 157, 264, 285, 302, 329, 403  
 Hira · 23-24  
 His Terrible Majesty · 12-13  
 Horley · 329  
 Hunding · 23-24, 79-81, 278  
 Hunding, Frandar · 23, 79-81, 278

## I

Ice · 151, 153  
 Ice Daedra · 54  
 Ice Golem · 278  
 Ichor · 293-294  
 Iliac Bay · 8, 34, 83-87, 179, 224, 228, 299, 320, 322, 325, 327-329  
 Illthre, Palaux · 33  
 Illyadi · 32  
 Imperial Archaeological Society · 410  
 Imperial Battlemage · 177-178  
 Imperial City · 7, 12, 169, 277, 305  
 Imperial Majesty · 229  
 Imperial Province · 277, 285  
 Imperial University · 277, 306  
 Inn · 38, 44, 60, 66, 70-71, 75, 77, 170, 414  
 Isle of Craghold · 92  
 Iszara · 402, 407  
 Ius · 90-91

## J

Jarth, Waughin · 12  
 Jehanna · 30

Jephre the Singer · 65, 110, 152, 281  
 Jhone, Anido · 28  
 Jilathe · 33  
 Jode · 8  
 Joile · 80-81, 329  
 Jone · 8, 107, 125  
 Josea · 146-147, 149-153  
 Journeyman · 342  
 Julgen · 92  
 Julia · 80-81  
 Julianos · 38, 44, 50, 56-57, 60-62, 65-66,  
 163, 305

**K**

Kambria · 34  
 Kane, Melius · 277  
 Karessen, Varnard · 284  
 Karoodil · 27  
 Katana · 46, 51-52, 109, 128  
 Kati · 80  
 Kendhall · 384  
 Khajiit · 28-29, 41, 72, 93, 103, 106, 110,  
 130, 136  
 Khajiiti · 78, 93, 325  
 Khajiits · 115, 130  
 Kieran the Bard · 313-314, 316-317  
 King of the Worms · 243  
 King of Worms · 243, 271  
 Kithral · 402  
 Klaius · 262  
 Knahaten Flu · 28  
 Komon · 38-44, 50, 56-57, 60-63, 66  
 Koomu Alezer'i · 87  
 Kragenmoor · 154  
 Kreestrom, Casmyr · 278  
 Kronin · 154  
 Krowle · 279  
 Kurallian Mountains · 302, 304  
 Kynareth · 327

**L**

Lady Magnessen · 228-232  
 Lagan Text · 403  
 Lainlyn · 83, 300  
 Lake Vread · 35  
 Last Seed · 87  
 Lek, Makela · 79  
 Leprosy · 146

Lheban · 38-42, 44-46, 48, 50, 56, 60-66  
 Lhotun · 240-241, 318  
 Ligen, Erystera · 30  
 Lillandrill · 403  
 Lilmoth · 7  
 Lisandus (i.e. Lysandus) · 240  
 Lizard · 311  
 Longleat, Sathyr · 329  
 Loredas · 155  
 Loziard · 314-317  
 Lycanthropy · 179, 284-285  
 Lyrissius · 311  
 Lysandus · 30, 241, 245, 258, 262, 267,  
 325-328  
 Lyttumly, Porbert · 14

**M**

Mad Pelagius · 88  
 Madylina · 170-171  
 Mages Guild · 47, 68, 79, 204, 209-211,  
 246, 284, 288, 299, 302-303  
 Magicka · 32, 40, 46, 51, 68, 78, 80, 121,  
 163-166, 246, 298, 396  
 Maiden of the Spirit Sword · 79-81, 278  
 Malacath · 180  
 Maldor · 269  
 Malham · 387  
 Mana · 115, 127, 343, 360, 374, 380  
 Mannimarco · 243  
 Mantella · 177, 257  
 Mantiarco · 18  
 Mara · 9, 101-103, 128, 151-152, 269-270,  
 370  
 Marog · 359  
 Marukh · 88, 143, 169, 192  
 Master · 26, 36, 80, 160, 271, 278-280,  
 345, 378  
 Medora · 262, 325  
 Mehrunes Dagon · 362, 364, 377, 379, 382  
 Melarg, Destri · 23, 277-278  
 Memory Stone · 79  
 Mephala · 249, 251  
 Mid Year · 18, 80, 87-88, 147, 155  
 Millie · 38, 44, 50, 56, 60, 66  
 Milnes, Enric · 7  
 Mithril · 123, 131, 134, 157  
 Mogref · 327  
 Mojhad · 93  
 Montalion · 299, 322-323

Moon Festival · 88  
 Moonguard · 302, 304  
 Moraelyn · 95-103, 105-110, 112-121,  
 123-146, 153-160, 162, 166, 264  
 Morgiah · 27, 244, 267  
 Morkledder · 302-303  
 Morleth · 92  
 Morning Star · 87, 147, 318  
 Mornthaur · 297  
 Morrowind · 34, 40, 59, 85, 104, 123-124,  
 136, 146, 151-154, 158, 285  
 Mournhold · 7  
 Mouth · 71  
 Music · 23, 166, 364  
 Mymophonous · 9  
 Mynisera · 30, 245, 258

## N

Necromancer · 243, 252, 267  
 Necromancy · 409  
 Nephrine · 32  
 Nephron · 38, 44, 50, 56-60, 66, 70, 73  
 New Year · 18, 87  
 Newgate, Vulper · 327  
 Nightside Asylum · 249  
 Nocturnal · 83  
 Noctyr-a · 83  
 Nords · 34, 85, 92, 106, 112, 116, 130-133,  
 143-144, 146, 151, 153-154, 157, 163,  
 325  
 Northmoor · 30  
 Northpoint · 30  
 Notorgo · 99  
 Nulfaga · 30, 219, 225, 327  
 Numidium · 176-178, 257  
 Nymph · 58, 60, 299, 305-306

## O

Oblivion · 58, 67, 75, 251, 265, 286, 309,  
 397  
 Oelander · 279-280  
 Oghma Infinium · 3  
 Oitos · 305  
 Old Bretic · 18  
 Old Dwarvish · 68, 70  
 Old Ones · 325  
 Old Redguard · 7-8, 83, 87, 277, 280  
 Old Way · 282

*On the Immortality of Dust* · 7  
 Oracle · 246-247, 327  
 Orc · 46-47, 54, 73, 86, 196, 235-236, 245,  
 262, 267, 269-270, 305, 322, 329, 413  
 Orcish · 86, 235, 245  
 Order of Diagna · 79, 86, 329  
 Order of Riana · 103  
 Oresme · 328  
 Orsinium · 79-80, 86, 235, 327, 329  
 Ortho · 38, 44, 50, 56, 59-62, 65-67, 70-72  
 Othrok · 33-34  
 Othroktide · 33-34, 88

## P

Pasipha · 238-239  
 Patia · 80  
 Penwall Derry · 174  
 Phrygia · 34  
 Pixies · 32  
 Port Supply Office · 29  
 Priest of Akatosh · 38-39, 44, 50, 56, 60-  
 62, 66  
 Prince of Sentinel · 240-241, 318  
 Provisional Governor · 408  
 Prufrock, Greelina · 90

## Q

Queen Mother · 245  
 Queen Regent · 328

## R

Ra'athim, Katariah · 12  
 Raic · 38, 44-46, 48, 50, 56, 60-63, 65-66  
 Rain's Hand · 87  
 Raliph · 80-81  
 Ravennian Forest · 326, 328  
 Red Diamond · 18  
 Redguard · 7-8, 23, 32-33, 83, 86-87, 92,  
 94, 277-280, 296, 318, 325-326, 328,  
 399, 411  
 Reich Gradkeep · 33, 325-328  
 Reich Parthkeep · 108  
 Resolutions of Zenithar · 163  
 Richton · 408, 412  
 Riglametha · 83  
 Rihad · 277  
 Riverhold · 7, 11

Roane · 95, 97, 103  
 Rockcreek · 90-91  
 Rol, Witten · 26  
 Royal Archaeologist · 28

## S

Sage · 302, 304  
 Sai · 145-146, 149, 152-154  
 Samaruik · 240  
 Sanguine · 65  
 Satakalaam · 87  
 Scamp · 110  
 Scholar · 18, 32, 69-70, 72, 87, 277, 305-306, 312, 318, 339, 341, 343, 345, 347, 349, 351, 353, 355  
 School of Julianos · 57, 62, 65, 305  
 Scourg Barrow · 271  
 Screaming Fawn · 174  
 Scribe · 9, 24, 37, 325  
 Seaspit, Darik · 28-29  
 Second Era · 28, 86, 327  
 Second Seed · 88  
 Secunda · 88  
 Seht · 338  
 Sei, Jhim · 100  
 Selenu · 299  
 Sentinel · 7-8, 33, 79, 85-87, 92, 220, 224, 240-241, 263, 305, 318, 325-328, 403  
 Sepharve · 18  
 Septim Dynasty · 329  
 Septim Empire · 33, 94  
 Septim Family · 18, 329  
 Septim, Cephorus II · 33, 90  
 Septim, Kintyra II · 18-19  
 Septim, Pelagius III · 12-13, 33, 88, 90, 268  
 Septim, Tiber I · 88, 176-178, 224, 233, 235, 243, 257-258  
 Septim, Uriel III · 18  
 Septim, Uriel IV · 33  
 Septim, Uriel V · 34  
 Septim, Uriel VII · 90, 229, 245, 258  
 Serpent Priest · 87  
 Shade Perilous · 382  
 Shandar · 269-270  
 Shehai · 23-24, 79-81, 277  
 Shehai Shen She Ru · 23  
 Sheogorath · 41-42, 47, 75-76  
 Shinji, Gaiden · 329

Shornhelm · 30, 302-303  
 Shub · 38, 44, 47, 50-51, 53-56, 60, 65-66, 78  
 Siege of Betony · 325  
 Siege of Craghold · 327  
 Siege of Orsinium · 327  
 Silk · 107, 110, 115, 130, 136-137, 139, 141, 155, 159, 166  
 Silvanda · 279-280  
 Skaven · 277  
 Skeleton · 33  
 Skyhawk · 305  
 Skyrim · 34, 64, 85, 130, 146, 151-155, 158, 284-285, 329  
 Smuthworthy, Petuva · 14-15  
 Smythe, Bresne · 311  
 Snarlbane, Helnor · 28-29  
 Snow Wolf · 25  
 Solitude · 7, 64, 88  
 Soul Cairn · 382  
 Spear of Bitter Mercy · 364  
 Springseed · 152  
 Sprites · 32  
 Starkhorn · 393-394  
 Starlover, Samar · 378  
 Stendarr · 44, 51, 84, 318  
 Stete · 38, 44-48, 50, 56, 60-61, 63-66  
 Stronghold · 382  
 Stros M'Kai · 402-403, 407-408, 414  
 Subterranean Realms · 245  
 Somerset Isle · 219  
 Somerset Navy · 29  
 Summerset Isle · 403  
 Sumurset · 25, 27-28, 32, 49, 97, 281, 303  
 Sumurset Isle · 28, 32, 281, 303  
 Sunhous, Butha · 92  
 Sun's Dawn · 33, 87-88, 328  
 Sun's Dusk · 87-88  
 Sun's Height · 87  
 Sword-singer · 23-24, 79  
 Sygria · 32  
 Sylphim · 32  
 Sylvan gods · 281

## T

Tales and Tallows · 40  
 Tamarilyn Point · 87  
 Tamriel · 7-8, 12, 18, 32-33, 41-42, 51, 64, 77, 84, 87-88, 100, 104-105, 110, 136-

138, 146, 151-152, 161-162, 169-170, 177-178, 192, 223, 235, 243, 258, 264-266, 284-285, 289, 302-303, 306, 310-311, 318, 320, 322, 325, 329-330, 370, 380, 403  
 Tamrielian · 161  
 Tamrielic · 7, 23, 338, 377  
 Tamrielic Calendar · 23  
 Tear · 269-270, 345  
 Temple · 42, 44-45, 48, 51, 57, 61-62, 64, 78, 84, 97, 128, 162-163, 165, 199, 281, 284, 305, 319-320, 322, 371  
 Temple of Julianos · 61  
 Temple of Stendarr · 44, 84  
 Terron · 11  
 Thagore · 85  
 Tharn, Jagar · 21, 264-265, 361  
 The Bandit God · 35  
 The Faerie Chain · 32  
 The Sage · 302, 304  
 The Sentinel · 328  
 Theth-i · 87  
 Thieves Guild · 21, 253-256  
 Thieves Guildmaster · 21  
 Third Era · 38, 66, 86, 176, 277, 329  
 Thrassian Plague · 86, 327  
 Tivedetha · 88  
 Tidasus · 83  
 Tirdas · 103  
 Tobias · 414  
 Torval · 12-13  
 Torval Asylum · 13  
 Totem of Tiber Septim · 176-178, 224, 233, 235, 243, 258  
 Treaty of Gradkeep · 325  
 Triop, Szun · 32  
 Troll · 54, 114, 118-119, 265  
 Trowbridge · 314-315, 317

## U

Undead · 33, 265, 318  
 Underking · 177, 220, 257, 267, 318, 327  
 Unicorn · 94, 96-98, 104-105, 121, 265  
 Unterger, Irek · 264

## V

Valenwood · 12, 33, 90, 136, 281, 285, 403

Vampire · 33, 222-223, 299, 320-323, 339  
 Vampirism · 222-223, 299, 320, 322  
 Vanech · 327  
 Vanus, Galerion · 298  
 Vardengroet, Gyron · 302  
 Vardengroet, Horstle · 302  
 Vathysah · 92  
 Vegepythicus · 313  
 Viana the Pure · 83  
 Voa · 402  
 Vrage the Gifted · 151, 153  
 Vrasethi · 299  
 Vread · 35  
 Vune · 277

## W

Wabbajack · 324  
 Waking Day · 87  
 War Master · 26  
 War of Betony · 86, 92, 325-328  
 War of Righteousness · 86, 327  
 War of Succession · 85  
 Warlord · 235, 245  
 Way of the Spirit Sword · 23  
 Way of the Sword · 23, 79-80  
 Wayrest · 27, 30, 33, 61, 85-86, 88, 94, 224, 226-227, 233-234, 237-239, 242, 244, 258, 267, 300, 329-330  
 Wayrest Palace · 61  
 Weir Gate · 381  
 Weltan · 7-8  
 Werebear · 284-285  
 Wereboar · 285  
 Werekrocodile · 285  
 Werelion · 285  
 Wereshark · 285  
 Werevulture · 285  
 Werewolf · 73, 284-285, 295, 322  
 Whilloki · 32  
 Wifflington, Clyton J. · 14  
 Wild Elf · 287  
 Wild Hunt · 85  
 Willow · 106-107, 109, 115-116, 130, 136-139, 157-158, 161, 165  
 Windhollow · 29  
 Winterhold · 85  
 Wizard · 302-303

Wood Elf · 33, 93, 106, 115, 132, 136,  
151-153, 157, 163, 166, 281, 306, 325,  
403  
Woodborne · 234, 258, 267  
Wraith · 382  
Wren · 313  
Wrothgarian Mountains · 46-47, 51, 56,  
70, 80, 100, 155  
Wyrn · 311, 349, 351

**X**

Xivilai · 377, 379

**Y**

Yelithah · 92

Yeorth Burrowland · 87, 326, 328  
Ykalon · 34  
Yoriss · 154  
Ysgramor · 151

**Z**

Zalither · 92  
Zell · 80  
Zenithar · 63, 102, 138-139, 141-142, 152,  
163  
Zhen · 269  
Zombie · 33, 271

**II. Years***First Era*

1E 246 · 85  
1E 369 · 85  
1E 470 · 403  
1E 609 · 85  
1E 760 · 23  
1E 800 · 329  
1E 808 · 87  
1E 948 · 329  
1E 950 · 327  
1E 973 · 79  
1E 980 · 327, 329  
1E 1100 · 329  
1E 2702 · 330

*Second Era*

2E 12 · 83

2E 24 · 37  
2E 120 · 83  
2E 148 · 83  
2E 266 · 33  
2E 456 · 32  
2E 864 · 407, 410

*Third Era*

3E 12 · 18  
3E 20 · 277  
3E 123 · 18  
3E 253 · 33  
3E 267 · 33  
3E 400 · 318  
3E 401 · 85  
3E 404 · 328