

Lord Molyneaux

Collected Writings



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BOOKS



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Empire - Chapter I

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneaux

A sleek F-35 fighter aircraft glided silently through the summer air somewhere over the jungles of Africa. This technologically advanced aircraft, commonly known as the Bolt by its pilots, was the pride of the White Empire's Air Force. The Bolt was unmatched in speed, agility, armor, and firepower but then again everything within the White Empire was supreme.

The fighter had many revolutionary features that make it one of the many prides of the glorious White Empire and her scientists. Not only was the Bolt invisible to enemy radar, but was also able to blend into whatever environment it was in. At nights it became pitch black to match the midnight sky and on bright sunny days like today, it became an azure blue.

This camouflage technology not only hid the airplane but produced a psychological dread on the enemies of the White Empire. These enemies never knew when an attack by the mighty legions of the White Empire would commence due to the invisibility of the airplanes. The effects of this terror only compounded the sickness, decay, and general inferiority of the enemies of White Empire who are called muds.

Another technological marvel that the F-35 had in its arsenal is the dreaded Hyper Neutron Missile. This missile was devastatingly powerful but only to living beings. The Death's Head as it was affectionately called by fighter pilots, bombards humans and other animals with neutrons, killing them instantly. The Death's Head was preferred over hydrogen bombs as it didn't cause radiation, didn't destroy buildings, and didn't harm plant life whatsoever. That way, the magnificent White Empire could send adventurous colonists to settle the newly conquered territories.

John Granger gazed dreamily about the expanse of the African jungles as he easily maneuvered the F-35 through the skies. Most pilots used auto-pilot until they reached their destination but not John. John loved the power and control of flying a dynamic Bolt aircraft. John liked to compare himself with the great explorers like Magellan or Columbus. It didn't matter to him that the skies he flew in were previously seen by many men. Being of the Creativity faith, he was adventurous and inquisitive and that was what had drawn him to the Air Force.

John was, like most men of the day, lean, agile, and powerful. He had short cropped blond hair with sparkling blue eyes that matched perfectly with the skies in which he now flew. John's frame measured out at over 1.8 meters tall and he weighed around 77 kilograms. His size and structure were similar to that of a sprinter and, for good reason, as track and field was one of John's hobbies. This pilot had a strong jaw and powerful cheek bones to match his powerful frame. John loved the outdoors and being in shape and his tanned, muscular body showed that he was in excellent physical condition.

John glanced at the instrument panel and decided to use the manual controls instead of the voice activated ones. John had always felt odd talking to computers so he tended to prefer hitting the panels on video screen. After consulting the video screen, he realized he would soon be approaching the target sight. A wave of euphoria swept over John as he knew that he would soon be engaging the vile mud people. John was a fanatical warrior who loved his great White brothers and sisters and hated his deadly enemies whom he would soon destroy.

John felt the tingles of excitement as he was about to enter combat. Granted, he wasn't expecting enemy resistance and it seemed to be a routine mission but that didn't matter to John. John was like most soldiers of the ancient past in that he wished for fame and glory but he was not interested in merely being selfish. The soldiers of the White Empire fought and died to bring glory and greatness to the White Race and John held his people at the pinnacle of his priorities. This very characteristic that John displayed was what had catapulted the White Empire into the annals of history as the greatest civilization ever created.

Safety procedure called for the pilot to be firmly seated in his safety harness when entering battle so John swiftly locked himself into the restraints that would save his life if he were hit by enemy fire. The smoothness and ease of flying a Bolt fighter plane allowed the pilot to be free of the restraints when not in combat so most pilots only wore the harness when engaging the enemy or in enemy air space. John thought the harness was a hassle but realized it could very well save his life. This minor nuisance, however, didn't phase the rising excitement that was visible in John's mirthful visage.

John was unable to see the village through the cockpit window so he activated the telescopic camera in his visor in order to view the small African village. The camera was linked to a satellite that orbited in space so John could view any part of the earth that he wanted to. He punched in the coordinates and turned the auto-pilot on as he gazed about at the primitive people that lived in the village. John was able to move the camera about with a joystick located on his instrument panel.

John was of a curious mentality so he had to see these people who had long since been deported from his homeland. John had an intense hatred for these niggers who had once poisoned his land but it was good to observe them and see what their nature was like. He knew that in nature, only the strong survive and it was obvious to the world that the White Race was supreme.

He focused his attention at the center of the village where a gathering of the pitch black natives had gathered and were apparently holding some kind of ritual. The niggers were scantily clad, wearing what looked like grass skirts that clearly showed the backward nature of these people. The natives were violently gyrating and contorting their bodies in a grotesque fashion and John wondered if they actually considered what they were doing to be dancing.

John shuddered as he thought that people once advocated an idea that all people were equal. Observing these savages who lived in huts made quite literally of mud, John wondered how anyone could have believed such an outrageously obvious lie. He knew the creature that had propagated such a hoax to be the hideous Jew and he thanked those White pioneers who had revolted against such ideas and formed the White Empire.

John resumed observing these savages but was unprepared for the monstrosity that quite unexpectedly befell his eyes. He knew how primitive and barbaric these people were from the textbooks, but seeing them in the flesh disgusted him greatly. As he silently gazed from high above the Earth, he saw a group of boys line up near sticks in the ground that stood about a meter high. The boys undressed and stood by the thick sticks that protruded from the ground. One savage man approached one of the boys with a large silver knife that must have been imported to these niggers as it was obvious they had no such skill in metalwork.

This beast man raised his knife while grabbing the genitals of the young boy. John's eyes grew wide in total disgust and apprehension of these savages while he quickly averted his gaze. John swiftly switched off the camera as a great hatred grew within him like a smoking volcano that was ready to explode and wreak havoc among all those its death spray could reach.

John switched off the auto-pilot and regained control of the Bolt fighter plane. His anger and hatred for these primitive enemies of his own White Race continued to swell as he radioed in to the dispatch.

"RAHOWA! Airman Granger reporting," John roared into radio.

"RAHOWA! What is your status, airman?" replied the calm voice of the dispatch.

"I'm nearing the target site and ready to annihilate our most hated enemies."

"Excellent work. You seem quite excited airman. Is there something wrong?"

"I observed a ritual that the natives performed that utterly disgusted me and I'm looking forward to crushing these enemies of our people!" bellowed John as he vented his anger.

"I understand your hatred, airman. That's why it's our holy mission to make this a Whiter, Brighter World. Proceed as scheduled with the attack and update me when you successfully complete the mission. RAHOWA!"

"Yes, sir! RAHOWA!" John shouted as the swirl of excitement concerning the upcoming battle and his enmity of his enemy swam inside his mind.

John mentally prepared himself knowing full well that the attack would most likely go without error as there was no sign of any enemy aircraft nor did it appear as though the barbarous niggers were capable of designing a house let alone an airplane. Nevertheless, he armed his pulse cannons and the ultra

powerful Hyper Neutron missiles.

One might wonder why the Air Force was using airplanes to deliver their missiles instead of firing them safely from space, which the White Empire was fully capable of. The answer was simple once one thought about it. The savages had no hope of victory so utilizing planes to deliver the destruction provided training for the pilots. This way, the pilots would have some battle experience for when the battle of Asia took place. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that Asia would fall to the White Empire but it would be more difficult than conquering South America and Africa.

John's muscles tightened as he increased speed to the necessary speed in order to escape the danger of his own missiles. The safe speed was 15 Mach but John was a daredevil and increased the speed of his aerodynamic Bolt to 20 times the speed of sound.

A blinking red light appeared in John's visor which indicated the target, which was a small village. John targeted a Hyper Neutron missile upon the village and once locked, fired it at the unsuspecting village. Once the missile was fired, John again increased his speed to Mach 25 and screamed, "RAHOWA!" as he flew by.

The barbarians continued their ritual as a silent dagger crept at their backs that was the Hyper Neutron missile. Since the missile flew at many times the speed of sound, the natives never knew what hit them. The missile detonated above the villagers and a massive blue globe erupted onto the village, instantly eradicating all animal life. Beasts, both those that resemble humans and those that did not, were instantly disintegrated from the powerful bombardment of neutrons that afflicted them.

John knew that the villagers had been utterly destroyed but it was his duty to inspect the village to be sure. John was in a state of ecstasy after having crushed his enemies so he actually enjoyed returning to the target area to observe the weeding of the garden he had performed. He felt extremely blissful that he was a member of the greatest race on the face of the planet- the White Race. He thoroughly enjoyed doing his duty for the Empire in any way that he could. It was easy to see that his best attribute was that of flying so that was the area John chose to devote himself to.

John slowed his speed and turned the aircraft around to observe the village he had attacked. He could have used his telescopic camera but he wanted to observe the area with his naked eye. John had average eyesight so he could easily see the target area from a height of one kilometer which he subsequently descended the plane to.

As the supersonic fighter fleetingly floated through the skies like a jovial dolphin through the oceans, John eased back in his pilot's chair and relaxed his whole body. This relaxed state was in sharp contrast to the tenseness of a few minutes before. John's body completely conformed to the contours of the chair and he felt like he had just run sprints or had lifted weights for hours. The same happiness and joy after physical exertion greeted John like an old friend whom he hadn't seen in a long time.

As John approached the jungle dwelling, he wondered how long the battle of Africa would last. They hadn't encountered much resistance since the mideast was conquered years ago. The traditional strategy of the White Empire was to swiftly conquer an enemy area in a blitzkrieg fashion and then to solidify the location by bringing colonists in to settle the newly vacated colony.

Even though John was supremely relaxed, his senses were still as sharp as that of an eagle searching for its prey. Something was moving down below him though it was some distance from the village he had hit. John focused his sparkling blue eyes on the object in question and quickly ascertained that it was a swiftly moving enemy vehicle that was headed towards the village.

John instantly knew it was an enemy vehicle for several reasons. The first was that the White Legions weren't in the area and second that the vehicle was of prehistoric design, even using gasoline to power it. The smoke that poured out of the exhaust was foreign to him as gasoline powered cars had been banned in the Empire years ago. Nowadays, cars were powered by electricity and solar power. Not only were these energy forms more efficient but they also protected the environment from all the pollution that used to be so prevalent in the world.

The vehicle was a medium sized truck painted with camouflage. It was in ill repair with various rust spots and actual holes from poor maintenance were visible alongside the truck. It had an opening in the rear that was covered with what appeared to be a bed sheet. John could only assume it was transporting troops and he relished the idea of putting to rest more of his foes.

John was interested in sociology and toyed with the idea of allowing the soldiers(if one could actually call them that) to safely arrive at the village in order to view their behaviors at finding it empty with only a few scattered ashes laying about. The thought made him chuckle but he knew it would be

unprofessional to not crush them right away so John accelerated towards the vehicle with a gleam in his eye that betrayed his utter joy at doing his job and doing it well.

He targeted the vehicle and sent a volley of pulse rays from his pulse cannon that screeched toward their target and exploded upon impact. The explosion ripped through the truck and sent its inhabitants flying in all directions. The savages, who reminded John more of the monkey family rather than the human species, were strewn alongside the dirt road in a bloody carnage of death. John assumed they were all dead and when observing no motion from the area, realized it was so.

John thought to himself that this had been a wonderful day as he had put to rest many enemies of the Empire. He felt like those great warriors from Germany who had fought for their fatherland in World War II. John always felt great admiration from those soldiers and was inspired by their struggles but he knew that National Socialism was doomed to fail as it didn't include all the great people of White Race nor did it hold the White Race as the highest priority. That problem was solved in the White Empire as the official religion was the greatest religion ever made for the White Race-Creativity.

The technological masterpiece that was the Bolt fighter plane, briskly approached the mud huts and general mess of an area that the natives had once called home. John quickly surveyed the area for signs of life but didn't see the faintest sign of life or movement. Satisfied that the area had been cleansed of the poisonous filth that had once inhabited the area, he prepared to return to base and make his report as he switched on his radio.

"RAHOWA! Airman Granger reporting an extremely successful mission!" John happily chirped into his radio microphone. He knew the mission was extremely easy due to the overwhelming ability of his people but a victory over the enemy was cause for celebration no matter how pathetic the enemy may be.

"RAHOWA! That is great airman but we both knew the mission would be successful," the dispatch replied. The dispatch chuckled softly and continued, "Were there any difficulties whatsoever or did the mission go as smoothly as planned?"

"Everything went well but I did encounter an enemy truck that I subsequently vaporized. There were no problems at all and I thoroughly enjoyed the mission. No matter how many missions I fly, I always get a great rush from defeating our enemies. This one, like all the others, I intensely enjoyed and look forward to many, many more."

"Your excitement is contagious, comrade! I too loved flying but once I hit 70, it was time to stop flying missions so here I am at dispatch. Dispatch is the next best thing to flying though. How old are you airman?"

"I'm 24 years old, sir," retorted John with his usual tone of youthful confidence that exuded from his very being. John recalled his studies in the Air Force Academy that spoke of the Doom Age where civilization was in a decline and it was unheard of to live much longer than 70 years of age, let alone be a pilot at that age. It was pretty common in these times where most people didn't retire until 80 and the average life span was approximately 100. John was always amazed that that horrible age was but a mere 50 years in the past. He knew he was living in a great age and wondered how long it would be until the White Empire ruled all of the great Earth.

"Ah, then you didn't live through the dreaded Doom Age as I did. You didn't see those vermin walking our streets and ruining our precious White Race. It was such a horrid era that I'm not sure how I lived through it but I'm extremely happy that I did so I could be a part of our glorious White Empire. Anyway, return to base airman. RAHOWA!"

"Yes, sir! RAHOWA!" John activated his auto-pilot and set in the coordinates of the air base that he was to return to. He contemplated living in an age of niggers, Jews, and other assorted muds. An epoch of lies, decay, and misery that truly lived up to its title of the Doom Age. John wondered why his ancestors put up with all the grief for so long but was in their debt that they finally threw off the yoke of oppression and revolted.

Thoughts of his next mission swam through his mind as he rapidly approached his air base which was located in Northern Africa and called Rommel Air Force base after the legendary Erwin Rommel who had fought there in World War II. Although he looked forward to returning to base and seeing his comrades, he eagerly anticipated his next mission so that he could bring greater glory to the Empire.

White Empire - Chapter II

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneaux

It was an intensely hot summer night in a dense African jungle that was comparable to the torturous hell that was once believed in by superstitious European ancestors. The fierce heat attracted bugs of various shapes and sizes from seemingly around the globe to Wolfgang Gerhard. The sweltering heat didn't really bother Wolf as he knew he was here to do his duty to the Empire by serving in the elite force called the Holy Legions.

The dense foliage formed a sort of natural tent above Wolf as he ate his meal. Various sounds echoed throughout the night and the movement of tropical animals could be plainly heard. Wolf had been briefed about the area and its peculiarities so the noises didn't startle him nor did they even manage to interrupt his eager meal that he devoured like a ravenous lion tears apart a young antelope.

The standard issue ration consisted of dehydrated fruits and an assortment of nuts. This was a part of a fruitarian diet otherwise known by the name of Salubrious Living. This diet was practiced by most of the citizens of the White Empire and is mandatory in the military due to the healthy effects it produced. Although the research confirming the healthiness of this diet was over a hundred years old, it didn't really spread until the formation of the White Empire and only very slowly did it spread then. Once the world saw the millions of healthy people that benefited from this diet, however, it finally took hold of the White Empire and is now widely promoted and practiced.

Wolf had never known any other diet as he was raised eating raw fruits, vegetables, nuts, and grains. He had never succumbed to any of the diseases that he had read about, due to his diet. He had once seen an obese man eating meat when he was young and was totally shocked at the sickness that pervaded from the diseased man. The man coughed and hacked and looked very old and very sad. Scientists came to classify the disease-causing diet that was prevalent in the 20th century as the poison diet. Wolf thought this a fitting title for such a heinous lifestyle.

Wolf was a mountain of a man who eclipsed the two meter mark in height and weighed over 140 kilograms of pure, rigid muscle similar to the great Viking warriors of old. He shaved his head religiously so that the tan of his body matched that of his skull. He had fierce gray eyes that might be thought to have mystical powers over those his gaze fell upon but such talk was nonsense as it was easy to see that it was the will and determination behind those gray orbs that transfixed those who came in contact with him. His friends deemed him a gentle giant but his foes never spoke of him at all because they were swiftly vanquished.

Wolf's physical prowess was unmatched in his native land of Germany. He was a champion boxer and also wrestled so his acceptance into the Holy Legions was almost guaranteed from the start. One might think that such a large man would be slow and lumbering but this was not the case with Wolfgang. He was quick and agile which impressed some more so than his immense power. This lethal combination of power and grace assured his acceptance into the most feared force in the world.

The vigorous demands involved in the training of the Holy Legions permitted only ten percent to graduate and become a full-fledged member of the greatest special forces unit in the world. It would be safe to say that this elite force held the greatest and most powerful super-soldiers the world had ever known.

The rigorous exercises that broke many a man, included routine 100 kilometer marches, weight training, and hand to hand combat. The great multitude of trainees weren't able to march the 100 kilometers, let alone lift weights and develop fighting skills. A medical team was always on hand to tend to those who couldn't handle the intense workout. The fierce training was the sole reason that the Holy Legions were unmatched throughout the eons of time in fighting ability. Wolf had thoroughly enjoyed the training and knew that his wrestling and boxing skills had been enhanced greatly.

Of course weapons training played another vital part in the cultivating of the Holy Legions. Soldiers were taught the intricacies of a variety of weapons, vehicles, and tools. As such, it was required to be able to not only use the weapons of war but to also repair and clean them to suitable levels set by the commander of the Holy Legions. This training greatly enhanced Wolf's knowledge of warfare which enabled him to appreciate the greatness of the White Empire which he fought for.

Not only were the soldiers taught about plasma technology that reigned supreme in the world, but also about the ancient firearms used in the other nations of the world. These primordial tools of war were extremely inefficient using gunpowder and bullets instead of the superior plasma weapons which were easily recharged. Wolf loved his Hammerblow plasma assault rifle as it had a great range of 20 kilometers and had a capacity of 5000 shots in a single clip. It also had the option of firing single shot, 3

shot burst, or fully automatic.

A member of the Holy Legions knew how to operate all types of vehicles including cars, trucks, tanks, helicopters, and planes. This way, any possible mission that would be undertaken would have been studied and prepared for so as to guarantee a successful mission. Transportation would never be a problem as each soldier knew how to operate virtually any vehicle and was in good enough shape to do forced marches of at least 100 kilometers.

Wolf had been a great athlete before his interest was aroused in the Holy Legions through the inspiring advertisements they aired showing the great warriors in their ranks. After experiencing the training, however, it was easy to proclaim him as a Superman. The only regret Wolf had was that when he got back into the boxing ring the competition would be weak since he was in such terrific shape.

Wolf adjusted his black beret with the World Church of the Creator symbol of a majestic "W" that stood for the White Race, the glorious crown that symbolized the White Race's superior position in Nature, and the halo which signified the holiness of the White Race. This symbol was bathed in flames and holy light which completed the insignia of the Holy Legions. The beret went well with the camouflage pants, shirt, and black titanium combat boots that completed the uniform. The boots were as light as normal athletic wear but far stronger as to protect the soldier's feet and ankles.

Wolf glanced at his watch and realized that he still had time before the scheduled search and destroy mission that he was waiting for. These were routine missions that were necessary after the Air Force had wreaked their havoc with Hyper Neutron missiles. Any remaining enemy forces were sought out and destroyed. Since all the cities and villages would be hit, that meant that the only area where there could be any remaining forces left would be in the countryside and jungles.

Wolfgang hoped that he would encounter enemy resistance in order to crush the foes of his race but didn't expect any encounters with hostile forces. He was vastly disappointed in the inability of the nigger forces to put up any semblance of a fight that only proved their inferiority. He eagerly looked forward to the day when the war with Asia would begin as he knew that the gooks weren't as inferior as the spooks. There was no doubt that the White Empire would crush the slant eyed gooks but it would take longer and he would be able to mount a higher kill score.

Wolf continued to gorge himself on his meal while keeping an attentive watch on his surrounding in order to be secure. He kept alert despite having a helmet that put the knights of ages past to shame, which lay beside him, and extremely tough full body armor that he wore beneath his clothing. He was practically invulnerable to enemy fire. In fact, the only enemy firepower that he envisioned being a problem would have to be over 20mm in strength and he doubted greatly that the enemy had anything close to that.

Realizing that it was near midnight, Wolf gathered his belongings and put on his black helmet. He pulled the visor down and with a voice command changed the view to infrared so he could spot enemy heat signatures. Each member of the Holy Legions produced a heat signature that could easily identify them as friendly due to the heat generated by their helmets. He also hoisted on his 45 kilogram backpack that contained many tools and equipment that could come in handy for the mission.

Thoughts swept through Wolf's mind as he contemplated the cleanup mission he and his squad of nine others were to perform. Wolf was the squad leader and therefore had to coordinate his team which was spread out at intervals of a kilometer apart. Wolf was at the center of the formation and if resistance was found, then they would regroup and engage the enemy.

Wolf activated his radio and spoke to his comrades saying, "RAHOWA! All units prepare for battle! Begin scouting in five minutes. Remember, report any semblance of enemy movement. Everyone is to radio in on the hour in order to check in. It's a great day to be alive comrades! Now let's go do our duty and crush the foes of the Empire! RAHOWA!"

Confirmation came from all the soldiers in Wolf's squad as he attentively listened to his comrades. Wolf grinned widely as he thought of the coming adventure. That smile was hidden beneath his visor, however. The imposing figure that was Wolf surely spread terror to those that opposed him. Even bears would turn coward and run for the hills at the sight of squad leader, Wolfgang Gerhard.

Wolf clutched his Hammerblow assault rifle and slowly, methodically proceeded to venture into the unknown wilderness that he hoped held vile creatures which he could purge from existence. He increased his pace as he stealthily traveled in the dense underbrush of the African jungle actively searching for any sign that would lead to the enemy.

As Wolf crept into the jungle like a deadly assassin moving in for the death strike, he noticed a heat

signature amongst the treetops. He immediately brought his weapon to bare and fired several rounds as the form attempted to swing from one tree to another. The figure didn't succeed in his venture as he was dropped to the ground some 15 meters below with an audible thud.

Wolf whispered softly into his radio, "Be on alert comrades. I've shot something that appears to be a nigger. All stop until I investigate the remains."

Wolf carefully navigated around the brush and trees of the jungle until he could get a good view of his kill. Wolf laughed merrily as he gazed upon the form at his feet. It was a chimpanzee with two holes in his chest that had died before it hit the ground. He admired his handiwork at marksmanship but was disappointed at the letdown of killing this creature which many thought more intelligent than the niggers they fought against.

"False alarm, comrades. I shot a chimp and thought it was a nigger. They do look alike, eh?" Wolf chuckled again while he continued to talk, "Resume scouting soldiers."

Wolf resumed his search as he expertly scanned the lush green maze of plants. While he knew forest tactics due to his training with the Holy Legions, he had never been to Africa before. He appreciated the fragrant smell of the plentiful vegetation that loomed all around him.

The jungle slowly rolled past Wolf as he continued searching for his hated enemies when he noticed he was coming to the edge of a cliff. Upon nearing the cliff's edge, he carefully scanned the area below and noticed an unusual heat signature. He immediately recognized it as a fire and knew that where there was fire there was probably a camp. Knowing that the fire was some distance off with a cliff to maneuver down and untold perils in the jungle, Wolf realized he would have to rally his troops in order to investigate.

"I've found an area that needs investigating so all units are required at my location," Wolf ordered as he gave his exact coordinates. He listened as his soldiers responded and looked forward to assaulting what he hoped was an enemy encampment. He eagerly wanted to rip his enemies to shreds alongside his comrades in a glorious battle.

Wolf gazed in the direction of the fire and switched the view so he could see normally. However, as the fire was some kilometers off, he couldn't make out much whatsoever. He switched to a satellite view but there were too many trees in the way so his only choice left was to get closer to the fire and investigate from there.

A plan formulated in Wolf's mind in case it was enemy camp. The ridge he was on would be a good place to set a few soldiers to volley fire on the enemy. The powerful fire of the plasma rifles allowed a successful barrage of death to be rained upon the enemy even though they couldn't see the actual foes they were firing at. Therefore, he would allocate two soldiers here that would fire on his command to start the melee.

While awaiting the arrival of his troops, Wolf decided to eat a light snack of banana chips. A small crunch could be heard from his chewing of the chips as his taste buds enjoyed the succulent fruit. Wolf faintly heard a slithering sound and quickly whirled around in a crouched manner to see what lay behind him.

A long slimy snake that was brown with green blotches uniformly painted along the length of its body, advanced towards Wolf. The beast's forked tongue hissed its anger as Wolf regarded the hostile creature in a calm manner. He had never seen such a snake and wondered what it was. Regardless of its species, Wolf knew it was either him or it so he aimed his rifle and shot the snake in its skull. The snake had uttered its last hiss as its head completely disintegrated. Suddenly, the carcass was unpleasant to him so he tossed it off the cliff but never heard it land.

Wolf decided to report with headquarters to inform them of the fire he had seen. "RAHOWA! Commander Wolfgang Gerhard reporting," he chimed in on his radio.

"RAHOWA! What do you have to report?" replied headquarters.

"We have spotted a fire that could be an enemy camp. We are subsequently going to investigate the area. Oh, and I've got two kills so far tonight but neither were human." Wolf smiled as he continued, "Therefore no enemy resistance encountered so far."

"It's good to hear that you are practicing your shooting skills, Commander," replied the radioman happily. "Proceed and report your findings as soon as possible. RAHOWA!"

"Yes, sir! RAHOWA!" crackled Wolf in his usual fiery speech.

Impatience plagued Wolf as he awaited the arrival of the soldiers of the mighty Holy Legions. He knew it had been but a mere few minutes as his comrades slowly trickled in one by one from both flanks. As his fellow soldiers arrived, Wolf longed to run into battle like his ancestors had done with monstrous yells of joy but knew his unit was a stealth unit so he had to suppress such instincts.

Wolf barked orders as he placed the two soldiers that had traveled the farthest, upon the cliff's edge. They were thankful for the rest as they had both traveled at least four kilometers in a dead sprint. Of course, they would have continued if ordered to do so as all members of the Holy Legions were disciplined to a great extent.

The other soldiers and himself proceeded to rappel down the steep cliff that appeared to be around 30 meters in height. Despite the darkness and the steepness of the cliff, the soldiers quickly descended down the bluff with the utmost ease and gracefulness. Wolf had always enjoyed mountain climbing and it was never hard to find a mountain in his homeland of Germany.

As the troop landed it was greeted with a rushing sound that echoed off the crag they just descended. It was obviously a mighty river that flowed before them which would need crossing. Wolf thought it odd that he hadn't noticed the river from the precipice but realized, nonetheless, that it would need to be crossed as treacherous as that might be.

Wolf knew the water was fairly warm as he viewed it with his infrared setting on his visor. He estimated the river to be about 15 meters across and when he used the computation device within his helmet he realized that he had made a good guess as the precise width was fifteen and a half meters. The water was moving at a rapid pace which would make crossing it difficult.

Knowing that it was unlikely to find a bridge, Wolf nevertheless ordered his troops to scan the area for a bridge to make the crossing easier. If they couldn't find a bridge then they could find the shortest and calmest stretch of river that would make crossing less dangerous. Wolf felt the impulse to rush headlong into battle but knew that haste had a way of killing men, especially when they threw caution to the wind. Besides, he thought, they had the element of surprise on their side which was the greatest advantage that can be had.

As the soldiers searched for a suitable ford, Wolf thought of ways to reach the other side of the river. They could always wade through the river with ropes tied around them but he didn't want the men wet so he began to look for suitable trees to connect cables to in order to traverse above the roaring waters.

Wolf's thinking was cut short when the soldier Francois Montagne hastily approached him with what Wolf hoped to be good news.

"RAHOWA! Legionnaire Montagne reporting, sir," exclaimed the lean and agile Frenchmen.

"RAHOWA Comrade! What have you found?" replied Wolf in his usual commanding voice.

"About a kilometer downstream the river thins out into a minor creek that can easily be maneuvered across. I recommend that we cross there and avoid any difficulties in crossing here."

"Agreed. Excellent find, Francois."

Wolf activated his radio and spoke, "All soldiers on scout report immediately to me. We've found an excellent spot to cross so let's get a move on!" Wolf acknowledged all the incoming reports and decided to contact the two soldiers on top of the cliff.

"RAHOWA! How are things going up there, comrades?" Wolf questioned. Some might think it was risky to constantly use the radio on such a secretive mission but the technology of the White Empire permitted continual use of radio signals without any fear of enemy interception or translation.

Legionnaire Volotav chimed in merrily, "RAHOWA! We are doing great but we are getting anxious to fire, sir. When will we get to assist you in bombarding the enemy?" The Russian had a steely voice that could chill one to the bone and it was good that he was on the side of the Empire.

"Soon enough, soon enough. Just keep your eyes and ears open and await my command. RAHOWA!"

"Yes, sir. RAHOWA!"

Wolf casually stroked his reddish golden beard which was as neatly trimmed as was his shaved head.

He looked on as his soldiers swarmed to his position like niggers in the Doom Age were attracted to welfare lines. He admired these men as heroes, comrades, and glorious warriors whom he would die for and knew they would die for him if the need arose.

The squad of the Holy Legions rapidly assembled and Wolf ordered them to move out with Montagne in the lead as he knew the exact location of the shallow crossing. Although the soldiers wore helmets, the steel nerves and tense muscles were palpable but were overshadowed by the feeling Wolf had of intense excitement as he envisioned the glorious battle that lay before him. He, along with the others he was sure, would be vastly disappointed if no battle was fought on this night. Regardless, they were doing their duty and would continue to do so no matter the danger or possible boredom.

The footfalls of the Legionnaires were barely audible in the dim lit jungle that pervaded a sort of chill that the soldiers were impervious to. The men quickly made their way towards the crossing and were delighted at the ease that it took to cross the river that looked so intimidating before. They were able to forge across the river swiftly without getting too wet at all. Of course, their feet were kept dry by their waterproof boots.

Wolf ordered the men to spread out and advance rapidly towards the coordinates of the fire they had seen previously. According to the calculations, they were only about four kilometers away but the brush was thicker here and it would be slow going. Nonetheless, the men advanced with a fire burning in their hearts that continued to grow.

The men plowed through the foliage like a gigantic metal juggernaut that loomed large over the pathetic foes it faced as it rolled onward with such vigor and vitality that stopping it was a nonsensical pipe dream. Crashing through the jungle with an air of invincibility that radiated from every fiber of their being, the Legionnaires seemed to be enshrouded with a force that was beyond comprehension. What could possibly stop such a legion?

As the soldiers neared the target site, Wolf realized that they should be able to see the fire and its surrounding very soon. With this in mind, he deployed his troops to find the area they gleefully searched for. Wolf could almost taste the battle he longed for but didn't let his battle lust cloud his vision as he would still have to formulate an effective battle plan to wage war successfully.

It didn't take long to find that indeed it was an enemy camp that surrounded the large fire that had been spotted. The Italian, Leonardi Galileo, radioed in to report his finding and it was obvious to hear that this man was very thrilled about his terrific discovery.

"RAHOWA, sir! I've found the enemy camp! The camp is pretty large and it looks to hold several hundred soldiers." thundered the Legionnaire named Galileo who seemed as giddy as a child about to be tickled by his loving parents.

"RAHOWA, comrade! Excellent work! Stay alert as we position for battle." Wolf wanted to view the camp for himself so he accessed Galileo's camera that was located inside all the soldiers' helmets.

Wolf gazed upon the sprawling enemy camp that housed many soldiers inside a whole host of tents. It was obvious that this was not a nigger camp and when he saw the red flag of Communist China, he knew who the foe was. There were even some antiquated tanks located within the camp that would have to be taken out as swiftly as possible to protect his soldiers. He assumed that they were taking advantage of the war in Africa for their own gain or at least to slow down the onslaught of the mighty White Empire to prepare for inevitable war of Asia.

Wolf knew that his advantage lay in surprise and superior firepower so he was prepared to take full advantage of these tools. Since it was nighttime, he could also camouflage the true numbers of his squad. It might appear as though they were insane for attacking a foe that numbered in the hundreds but Wolfgang was quite sure of a swift victory despite Wolf commanding a squad of but ten Legionnaires.

An effective battle plan swam into Wolf's mind that would surely smash and disorient the enemy hordes that dared to defy his people. He would start the attack with the soldiers positioned upon the cliff by giving them the exact coordinates to fire at. He suspected the enemy would rush towards that area as his men would open fire from their rear and flank. He anticipated that this would cause the enemy to think they were surrounded which would greatly hinder any effective defense.

Wolf activated his radio and told the two soldiers of the coordinates of the tanks and also ordered the remaining troops to take up positions along the rear and flank of the enemy camp. All the soldiers were happy that they were going to put their great skills to the test by fighting for the beloved Empire. The soldiers were so happy, in fact, that it might seem as though they were celebrating a great victory

instead of preparing for a battle.

An anxious feeling settled over Wolfgang as he awaited his troops to report in after they found appropriate positions to fire from. He was virtually hidden among a few trees but was able to see the camp clearly and, more importantly, able to fire easily at the enemy. If everything went perfect, then the enemy wouldn't even fire a shot as the plasma rifles made a barely audible whoosh as they fired. It was not enough to wake a sleeping man but the explosions which were bound to occur would wake the entire camp.

Wolf eagerly listened as all his soldiers reported in that they had secured advantageous positions along the rear and flank of the enemy. After gazing at the camp once more, he gave the signal to attack.

The calmness of the enemy encampment was instantly transformed into a dazzling light show that could easily numb a bystander's mind with the sheer hypnotic pattern. Many gook soldiers, who were sleeping in their tents, would never awake as they entered the eternal rest of death. The ancient tanks that sat idly by, were devastated by plasma fire and would never again roll across the land.

Multiple fires broke out as the fusillade of death and destruction continued unabated. Wolf reveled in satisfaction as adrenaline flowed freely within his veins. He enjoyed this game of target practice and wondered if the gooks would ever emerge from their tents to fight back. It didn't matter one way or the other as long as they emerged victorious.

The only thing that troubled Wolf was that he would be unable to confirm his kills in this slaughter. Nonetheless, he continued to rain death upon his inferior foes. It was becoming harder and harder to locate the enemy as their were many fires raging within the camp. Therefore, it was imperative that they advance in order to crush all the enemies.

Wolf ordered the soldiers atop the cliff to cease fire so that they wouldn't hit their own troops. He then ordered his other troops to advance and wipe out what remained of their adversaries. As he issued the orders, he too advanced into the burning fossil that was once a camp but was now a fiery pit of death and mayhem that threatened one's very life.

As Wolf approached the center of the camp, he saw the pandemonium and confusion that held the gooks under its sway. They were running wildly about in all directions while shooting their guns and throwing grenades around like crazed chickens with their head cuts off. They had absolutely no clue where the attack was coming from and were actually killing each other in the frantic chaos that engulfed the camp.

Wolf crouched into a defensive position as he opened fire upon the wild gooks that ran about. He relentlessly mowed them down as grenades exploded all around him. The explosions were too far from him to really affect him but he wondered about his comrades whom he had lost sight of. He knew he had to push the assault even though he couldn't see his comrades through the sea of fire that he waded through.

More explosions rocked Wolf's muscular frame, almost knocking him down. Wolf ran ahead to find more gooks milling about. He brought his plasma rifle to bare and fired mercilessly into their ranks, scattering them about. He could sense the battle was nearing a close as all the enemy soldiers seemed to be fleeing.

He saw about 20 gook soldiers run into a clearing that made them extremely easy targets to hit. He took a deep breath and pumped the blue fire of his plasma rifle into their ranks until they no longer moved. He hoped that was the last of the resistance as he scanned the area for his comrades and his foes.

Wolf found a defensive position near some trees as he radioed for his comrades. To his dismay, he only got replies from the soldiers that were atop the crag. His mind worried that his comrades lay dead but he would have to know for sure so he decided to contact Headquarters.

"RAHOWA! Captain Wolfgang Gerhard reporting. I need a status report and a location for my comrades in the field of battle. Whatever you do, don't tell me they are dead," whispered Wolf cautiously.

"RAHOWA! I have good news for you. Your men are not dead but they are all unconscious. We saw each of them get knocked unconscious by the grenades the gooks were throwing wildly about. Their vital signs are good but we need you to gather them together in order to be picked up by air in the clearing northeast of you," replied the calm voice of the dispatch.

Wolf gazed at the clearing and knew what he had to do. "Yes, sir. I need their coordinates though," Wolf said as he felt a burning pang for his fallen comrades. He was relieved, however, that all enemy

resistance was crushed and his friends were not in any further danger.

Dispatch replied in the cool, confident voice that was reminiscent of order, "Here are the coordinates." Wolf listened as he mentally noted the position of each soldier. "Your pickup will arrive in a half hour so be ready. RAHOWA!"

"Yes, sir! RAHOWA!" Wolf was about to begin rescuing his troops when he realized that he had yet to order his functioning troops to the battle site. Annoyed that he had to put off his rescue mission for a few moments, he ordered the remaining troops to meet up with him as he gave the instructions that would allow quicker passage.

Realizing that it would be necessary to have transportation for his wounded Legionnaires, he quickly found a truck that was designed for the specific purpose of hauling troops. As he approached the truck, he heard a twig snap behind him and dove for cover just as a grenade fired from a grenade launcher whistled by him and exploded nearby.

Wolf silently cursed as he realized that, in his eagerness to help his friends, he had neglected to scan the area for any enemies lurking about. To compound the problem, his plasma rifle had been thrown from his body as he had eluded the grenade that had greedily wanted his life. Glancing swiftly about, he searched in vain for his rifle. He knew he couldn't stay in the same position for long so he decided to attack his opponent with the only weapon he had at the moment-his knife.

Wolf brandished his Crockett knife with its 30cm blade as he took cover behind the army truck he wished to use. Wishing to surprise his foe, he decided to climb atop the truck and strike from that height. Thought was transformed into action as Wolf's granite-like legs propelled him first onto the engine of the vehicle and then to the top of the truck with the agility and grace of a powerful lion.

Although Wolf crouched silently atop the truck, the gook had spotted the movement and aimed his grenade launcher at the truck. Wolf took aim with his Crockett knife, that was named for the legendary frontiersman Davy Crockett, and flung it skillfully at the gook who dared to defy him. As he was doing so, he jumped for safety as a grenade ripped through the truck causing an explosion that rattled Wolfgang's ears.

Knowing that the explosion would temporarily blind his hated enemy, Wolf quickly closed the gap between the two only to find the gook laying in a pool of blood. The dying gook gasped for breath as the Crockett knife had pierced his throat all the way to the hilt of the blade. Wolf reveled in delight at his victory as he withdrew his knife and finished his foe off with a swift knife thrust to the gook's heart. Wolf was pleased to see the shimmer of light fade from his adversary but was anxious to return to his fallen comrades.

He quickly wiped his knife clean and sheathed it as he snatched up the grenade launcher to replace his lost plasma rifle. He furtively examined the campsite for another truck and easily found one. There were quite a few actually as he knew they had slaughtered hundreds of slanty eyed animals and that it wasn't possible to transport them without some means.

Wolf was on alert as he approached another truck that wasn't too far from him. He wasn't going to be foolish again as he secured the area and was certain no foes were near. The truck he had chosen looked like it had been battered and bruised by a giant dragon that spewed rust instead of fire. Would this truck even function? He would soon discover the answer to this question.

Rust chips fell from the door of the truck like red snowflakes on a winter day as Wolf entered the ancient mode of transportation. The keys to the vehicle were lacking but Wolf suspected as much. This was not a problem as he expertly hot wired the truck in mere seconds. He was thankful for the lessons on ancient warfare that all Legionnaires were required to take. Initially, he had questioned such knowledge but now he saw exactly why it was required study.

Wolf's whole body shook with the vibrations the engine made. How uncomfortable compared to the hovercars the White Empire have, he thought. He revved the engine up and put the truck in gear as he hurried to the coordinates which had been given to him.

The truck emitted poisonous black smoke that Wolf knew were extremely harmful to the environment but he had to rescue his comrades. It was no wonder that these hazardous machines had been banned in the White Empire. The truck rumbled onward until Wolfgang saw two of comrades laying on the outskirts of the camp.

The truck screeched to a halt as Wolf put the truck in park. He hastily scurried to his friends and found them half conscious. He saw a mini-crater that lay two meters away that was undoubtedly caused by a

grenade. It would seem that the only way they survived at all was the extremely tough helmets they wore. All in all, his comrades didn't seem too badly hurt but he was sure they had rather large headaches.

"How are you doing, comrades?" Wolf asked sympathetically. He wondered if they could speak at all but soon found out the answer to his question.

"Not so great, Captain," replied one soldier groggily as the other was silent. "The damn gooks threw a whole slew of grenades at us and we weren't able to get out of the way fast enough. We're alive though. Did we win the battle?"

"We sure did! We crushed those yellow bastards!" exploded Wolf as victorious enthusiasm burst from his body in a celebratory display. "We are going to celebrate our victory as soon as we return to base and perhaps a glorious war poem or march will be written to commemorate this great day!"

The Legionnaire was delighted at the thought of being remembered as a hero and his happiness was easily heard as he responded, "That sounds great. Perhaps I could even write it," he laughed. "I need some help up, sir," he spoke as he struggled to his feet.

Wolf assisted his comrade to his feet and then into the back of the dilapidated truck. The other Legionnaire had his eyes open but wasn't comprehending much of the events transpiring around him. The man was unable to get up by his own free will so Wolf was forced to carry him into the truck like a mother carries a child. The man wasn't quite sure of what was going on but he was surely relieved that he was amongst his friends.

As Wolf was searching out his other troops, he listened as the two healthy soldiers had reached the campsite. He radioed his position and met up with them. Together they found the remaining forces and proceeded towards the pick up site and waited for their escort.

As the aircraft vertically lowered itself to the ground, Wolf hoped that he would be awarded the highest honor a soldier could receive—the Klassen Medal. This award was in honor of the founder of Creativity, Ben Klassen and was only given to a select few who displayed great courage in combat. Many thoughts swirled in Wolf's mind as he boarded the plane and headed for his base.

White Empire - Chapter III

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneux

Klassengrad, the capital of the White Empire, was thronged with jubilant spectators as a magnificent parade was underway. Parades, festivities, and celebrations were quite common in this thriving metropolis. The heart of the White Empire displayed the splendor and glory that was possible when the White racial religion of Creativity was practiced by millions of Whites.

This particular parade celebrated the many victories of the Empire in its conquest of Africa. The entrance of the Chinese into the war wouldn't slow down the might of the Empire whatsoever and it was predicted that all of Africa would be conquered within this month of July, 77AC(2050AD). It was absolutely incredible that after a short span of 77 years since Creativity had been invented, that so much had been accomplished. It was inevitable that the White Empire would soon embrace the entire world with its fantastic ideas.

The victory celebrations that were performed here in Klassengrad were in the tradition of those of the Roman Empire and the National Socialist Empire but were far grander and larger in scale. A special boulevard was constructed for the sole purpose of holding massive celebrations that honored the great founder of Creativity and was called Klassen Boulevard.

The boulevard was able to handle thousands of participants with millions able to view them as the boulevard stretched on for many kilometers. Today, along with the victorious soldiers, were a humongous band playing a victory march. The dominating feature of the melody were the awe inspiring bagpipes that seemed to cause all the onlookers to experience a ticklish feeling of goose bumps.

The one word that most fittingly summed up the feeling of those that witnessed this marvelous display was total and supreme euphoria. Bliss, happiness, and joy were words that didn't quite have the same powerful effect as euphoria. This euphoria pervaded throughout the entire White Empire but was now focused on this event, right now. It could not only be seen by the jubilant faces but could be felt like a soothing glass of water after a tremendous run and could also be heard by the roaring masses.

How could such happiness embrace a land? How could so many wonderful monuments be built that decorated the beautiful land of Klassengrad? How did so many technological breakthroughs happen so fast that it even rivals that of Ancient Greece? The explanation of the glory of the White Empire was so simple yet had eluded the White Race for thousands of years. That simple and tremendously productive idea was the ultimate creed- Creativity.

Throughout the billions of years in the universe, this ultimate creed is but an infant yet it has accomplished more than all the other White Civilizations before it. The simple idea of loyalty to one's race has propelled the White Empire into a level of existence that was previously only dreamed of in fairy tales but was now a brilliant reality.

Among those participating in the parade were Wolfgang Gerhard and his squad of Holy Legions. They were wearing the glorious victory garments that won the admiration of the masses. Not so much for the design as although it was excellent with matching black pants, shirt, boots, and beret with the Creativity emblem emblazoned across the beret, but for what it stood for. It stood for victory, courage, and honor in a society where these virtues were held in high regard.

As Wolf marched along in perfect unison with his fellow Legionnaires, he was in complete awe of the pervading atmosphere of euphoric pleasure. He easily realized why he, along with the rest of the armed forces, risked their very lives to protect this White paradise. The masses cheered, cried, and laughed while they watched as the finest fighting force in the entire history of the world advanced onward.

All of Wolf's five senses were satiated by the events that transpired around him. He was pleased at what he saw, what he heard, and the way he felt. The air smelled delightful as it was free of the pollution that had once ruled the land in its poisonous grasp. He thought that he could even taste happiness but perhaps that was just wishful thinking.

Wolf gazed at the massive coliseum that loomed impressively on his right. This structure, known as the Megabowl, was the site of the annual Creator Games where the finest athletes from all across the White Empire came to display their physical prowess. Wolf dreamed of boxing in the Creator Games and would pursue that venture after he left the Holy Legions.

The hippodrome was similar to that of the ancient coliseum in Rome only that the Megabowl was much larger and, of course, much more modern. It was the classic oval shape and was a gleaming white color that seemed to rival the sun in sheer intensity. It seemed to some that it reached unto the sun but, in reality, it was hundreds of meters high. The maximum capacity of the Megabowl was an astounding five hundred thousand spectators. When filled, it was quite loud and difficult for some to see so the athletes wore special suits that almost glowed in order for the spectators to cheer for their favorite competitors. The grandest thing of all about the Megabowl were the massive Creativity flags that flew proudly atop the stadium and which were easily the size of a small building each.

It might seem that the Megabowl was a marvelous structure and indeed it was but all of Klassengrad was filled with such masterpieces. Grand libraries, theaters, parks and much, much more dotted the landscape. Wolf thought of the ancient mythologies who believed in a fairy tale place called heaven where one was said to go after one died. Why would anyone dream of going to such a place when one could go to the capital of the White Empire, Klassengrad?

Indeed, Wolf felt as though he were in a dream. People living in the Doom Age dreamt of happiness but here it was commonplace. The majority of the citizens of the White Empire never knew of despair, sadness, or misfortune in their own lives. The only way they even knew the meaning of such words was by reading the history of such horrible times such as the Doom Age.

As the victory procession steadily moved on, Wolf tilted his head skyward to view the Victory Towers that had been erected after the conquest of South America. These twin towers rose and rose into the azure blue skies and it seemed as though he could actually see the top of the towers even though they were over two kilometers in height. The towers were of a golden tinge that sparkled and radiated warmth to all who observed them. The view from atop the towers was magnificent as one could gaze upon the entire White Empire- or so it seemed.

A squadron of uncamouflaged fighter planes flew overhead as part of the festivities. Wolf knew his good friend John Granger was flying one of the planes but he wasn't sure which one. He was looking forward to meeting with his friend as he hadn't seen him in quite a while. The planes flew in tight patterns as they did twists and loops through the cloudless skies like a graceful eagle patrolling his territory.

Wolf felt a new sensation course through his veins as he realized that this phase of the festivities was drawing to a close. Soon, the award ceremony would commence and he wondered whether he was to

be awarded any medals. A new twinge of excitement was greeted with enthusiasm by the muscular Wolfgang.

The thousands of spectators continued to scream and applaud with great joy throughout the parade. Most people had family or friends in the military and hoped that the ones they knew would be awarded honors in the upcoming bestowal of medals by the Emperor himself.

The White Empire prided itself on pomp and discipline and it showed on this occasion. Thousands of perfectly organized soldiers aligned themselves in massive columns in the Award Grounds. The Award Grounds was a large clearing designed specifically for the presentation of awards. It was meticulously taken care of as evidenced by the exquisite greenness of the freshly cut grass. At the center of the area rose an elevated platform where the actual awards were presented by the Emperor. The platform and the stairs that preceded were made of fine marble.

Wolf felt his heart pump faster and faster as his squad of Holy Legions filed into the Award Grounds, along with the thousands of other soldiers and spectators. All movement was precise and well organized, just like all the other things in the Empire. Wolf was very thankful for his parents who had not only brought him into such a wonderful place but had raised him to be a Creator. Only through Creativity were such grand things to be achieved.

Impulsively, Wolf wanted to look for his friends and family amidst the thousands of spectators but knew full well that he couldn't. Discipline must be maintained at all times while serving in the military especially for the leaders who were an example to many soldiers. Wolf was looking forward to this week of vacation he had that had been granted to him and his fellow Legionnaires for their splendid victory. Not only would he get to reminisce with his good pal John Granger but he would get to see his lovely wife and children.

Having been away for many months, Wolf realized just how much he had missed his family. His beautiful wife Isabelle with her long flowing blonde hair and graceful demure formed in his mind. Oh, how he loved his wife and appreciated having such a wonderful woman to live the rest of his life with. Despite the grandiose occurrences that happened around him, Wolf was lost in thought of his Isabelle. Her blue eyes mesmerized him as he imagined them together in a serene park enjoying a quaint picnic.

Wolf's daydream continued as he saw his children frolicking among the rolling green hills of his native Germany. Wolf saw his three little boys with their shaved heads wrestling around while his two blond haired girls sat in the grass, eating apples and talking. Wolf was delighted at such pleasant thoughts and knew that these thoughts would become a reality as soon as he and his family flew to Germany.

Wolf contemplated having more children as he was conceptualizing the children he had. It was common policy in the Empire for the most athletic and brightest citizens to have many children. This way, future generations would be greater and greater. The process itself, called eugenics, was initialized soon after the Empire was founded and it was plain for all to see how athletic, intelligent, and aesthetically pleasing the citizens of the White Empire were.

Back in the Doom Age, the law of the dumb bunnies prevailed, where the least desirable people bred at the fastest rate creating a land of morons. Wolf chuckled at the thought but realized how deadly serious the problem was. Everything about the White Empire was great and living in a world of inepts, would be truly undesirable.

Now it was upbreeding instead of downbreeding and the Empire gave assistance to those great citizens who had many children. The money itself was helpful but Wolf, like all citizens who contributed their skills to the White Empire, had no fear of going hungry. It was his duty to help bring further glory and greatness to the Empire in any way that he could. The military kept gently reminding him how great a soldier he was and how more Gerhards would help the fighting forces and carry on his family name among the Holy Legions.

Duty was extremely important to Wolf but he already had five children so he knew he had done his part in helping evolution. Wolf didn't know how obvious it was to the military but he knew full well that he wanted more children. The truth of the matter was that he loved his children and wanted another child, perhaps a few more. All that remained was to convince his gorgeous wife.

He knew his wife to be a reasonable woman and was also fully aware of her adoration of their children. He didn't think he would have much difficulty persuading her at all. Wolf had always wanted twins and wondered if this time he would realize that dream. His wife never had any problems giving birth so he didn't see any problems with her having twins. One could tell Wolf was having good thoughts by the jovial grin on his face.

Wolf wasn't the only person to be deeply emerged in thought. The looks on thousands of participants and spectators seemed to indicate that many people were in another world. Everyone had a gleam in their eyes and love in their thoughts. Not only love of their family and friends but love of Creativity and the White Empire filled the thoughts of those present.

Wolf suddenly realized that while he had been daydreaming, the Emperor had arrived and the Award Ceremony was about to begin. He was surprised at how deep in thought he had been but now was entirely focused on the matter at hand. Again, he wondered whether or not he would receive any awards and the unpredictability of the moment seized him as he waited.

A hush fell over the audience as Emperor Magnus approached the podium. Magnus was the epitome of a great leader and had reigned for fifteen glorious years. The Empire demanded the best in all things, including their ruler and had such a ruler in Magnus. He would surely go down in the history books but even he acknowledged that greater and greater men were being born every generation and they would far surpass him. Having the best interests of the White Race at heart, he welcomed the future accomplishments and didn't give in to selfishness.

Magnus had supreme confidence in himself and the Empire and it showed with his sure movements and sanguine disposition. He was a hero, role model, and friend to millions of people. He was extremely popular and used his popularity to encourage all to greatness. He emphasized to everyone he met, to give all that they had into whichever particular venture they chose. Only by doing the best job one can do, can one be proud of their accomplishments.

He wore the traditional garb of the Emperor of the White Empire with matching black beret, shirt, jacket, and pants. The Creativity emblem was emblazoned on his beret. His lean and agile figure was well suited to the uniform as was evidenced by the perceived conception of him as a Superman. His brown eyes burned with passion and his matching brown hair was barely discernible beneath his beret.

Emperor Magnus stared out at the hushed masses as he stood towering above them. He was pleased at what he saw and the masses adored him as well. It was well known that Magnus liked to keep his audience in suspense before he delivered a speech and this was no exception. A smile formed on his strong face as he figured he had waited long enough. His smile was contagious as thousands of onlookers changed their demeanor from anxious anticipation to gleeful smiling.

"RAHOWA Comrades!" uttered the magnificent Magnus as he started with his usual opening. Accompanying his words came the standard Creator salute that originated back in the days of Rome with the clenched right hand going from one's heart to extending the arm outward with the palm facing downward. Everyone heard his crisp, confident voice due to an elaborate speaker system that placed almost invisible speakers throughout the grounds. No bulky sound system was needed and all present were able to hear the Emperor speak. Of course, those unable to attend could watch the festivities on television as well.

"RAHOWA!" came the unanimous reply from the multitudes. The same Creator salute coincided perfectly with the utmost precision. One might think the entire crowd were hardened soldiers but this was not the case. Discipline ran rampant throughout the Empire and its virtuous effect helped many.

Wolf found himself mesmerized as he listened to the melodic voice of Emperor Magnus. He found himself in complete awe of the utterances of this figure. Wolf wasn't the only one transfixed by the great display of oratory ability as thousands of others were charmed by the speech. Wolf wasn't quite aware of what was being said but realized how great a man Magnus was and was sure it was an excellent speech he was giving in gratitude of the courageousness of the soldiers of the Empire.

It was common practice to not enlighten the soldiers on whom would be receiving the awards. That way, it would provide excitement and an element of surprise to the ceremony. Wolf had attended Award Ceremonies before but never felt he had a good chance of winning any medals as only the best of the best received medals. Had he been in a different army, he would surely have many medals but this was the White Empire where standards were far higher than any other civilization before it. Even the ancient region of Sparta, where being a warrior was the only position of honor, would marvel at the super soldiers that the Empire possessed.

It seemed as though the Emperor's speech only lasted a few moments but Wolf realized that it had been much longer. He recalled the old saying of how time flies when one is having fun and had to agree. Soon, he realized, the actual awarding of medals would begin. There were various different awards but Wolf was hoping that he would receive the Klassen Medal. Only one would be presented today but Wolf was hoping for that award.

Wolf intently listened to the magnanimous Magnus as he told the heroic tales of great soldiers. Such

exploits may have seemed like stories out of fairy tales but they were very real and very inspiring. There was no doubt in his mind that these marvelous feats would make for excellent stories but as true real life tales and not fictitious ones.

One soldier had saved two of his comrades from sure death and suffered a broken leg in the process but had somehow managed to defeat the enemy. Another soldier had gotten lost and ambushed with his radio being destroyed, but managed to stave off the enemy attack and find his fellow soldiers. Wolf was used to clean up missions and not the larger assault missions where thousands fought. The dense jungles aided the enemy in that it was harder to use air support but it was no matter as the Empire's juggernaut pushed ever onward.

Several more outstanding deeds were told with each one displaying more and more audacity than the last. Wolf was a great competitor but realized that he had to respect these valiant men. He greatly desired the Klassen Medal but would not be mad at anyone if he didn't receive it. In fact, not acquiring the award would propel him to greater heights as he would strive for this goal even more so than he had done so before. Regardless of the outcome, he thoroughly enjoyed the great events he had been a part of.

The audience would roar loudly after each recipient was presented with his award. Wolf imagined that the crowd cheered for him and bathed him in the sweet nectar of adoration. He thought of this like the young boy who dreamed to play sports professionally and save the day with a home run in the bottom of the ninth or scoring the winning touchdown as time ran out. Pleasant thoughts ran through his mind but would he be the one to receive the audience's praise?

Soon enough he would know. For now, he studied the soldiers who had been presented with awards. Those not in the Holy Legions would be recommended for that honor. They all were in great shape and Wolf wondered whether he would see them become Legionnaires. It was no wonder that the Holy Legions was the finest fighting force ever assembled as it was quick to recruit the best of the Empire.

The final medal before the coveted Klassen Medal was presented and Wolf was actually, though unconsciously so, salivating. He felt as though he could taste the medal as though it were a sweet, succulent orange with its delicious juices pouring down his parched throat. He had accomplished a lot in his life but Wolf always wanted more and to contribute more to the Empire. His children were the pride of his life and he was also proud of his great boxing skills but now he wanted this award. This award would satisfy him for now, but, he realized, he would always aspire for more. This was the typical attitude of the age as everyone strove to be better and better. After all, perfection was unattainable but must be striven for.

"It is now with great pleasure that we come to the presentation of the Klassen Medal. This is the highest honor a soldier can receive and therefore only the most courageous of soldiers are awarded this prestigious medal," exclaimed Magnus with an excited tone.

Wolf listened to the leader of the White Empire with fierce concentration like that of a schoolboy who is hearing an epic tale of adventure for the very first time. Despite the countless masses that formed a sea of humans, Wolf only saw Emperor Magnus. Time seemed to slow to a standstill as Wolf waited for the announcement that he hoped would grant him the medal he desired.

Magnus continued speaking as he told the audience of the winner's awesome feats of valor. He spoke of a Legionnaire who defeated numerous enemy soldiers and even killed a foe with a thrown knife after his plasma rifle had been lost. The brave soldier had then orchestrated the rescue of seven of his fallen comrades. The crowd pleasingly listened to the wondrous tale of gallantry while many secreted tears of joy in silent praise of the wonderful man who had committed such acts of chivalry.

Wolfgang was seized by a tumultuous swirl of emotions as he realized that it was he that Magnus spoke of. Pride filled his being and an increasing feeling of ecstasy overcame him. He found that it was quite difficult to contain his joy and it was all that he could do to keep from smiling. Discipline was to be maintained, however, but he thought it harder to keep his feelings inside than it was to go to battle.

Emperor Magnus announced the winner of the Klassen Medal to be Wolfgang Gerhard. The crowd erupted loudly, cheering their hero of the day. Wolf was initially frozen by the announcement but quickly regained control of his faculties and started his trail to the podium to receive his award.

His march to meet the Emperor was sheer bliss as Wolf devoured the wildly applauding congregation's support of his actions. He bathed in the love and camaraderie that was present in this great display of affection. He felt like a king as he marched past his military and citizen comrades. He wondered if events like this had ever existed in the history of man with such glory and love. A part of him wished that he could march on like this forever but he realized that this was not an isolated display of love that was

occurring but one that was prevalent in the White Empire. So while he enjoyed the cheers, he knew of the great kinship that existed in the Empire and that nothing would sever that bond.

Wolf held his head high as he ascended the steps to the podium where the Emperor held his Klassen Medal. Not only was he proud of himself but he was sure that his family and comrades were too. His wife and children were somewhere in the crowd but he realized that locating them would be next to impossible.

The excitement and energy of the crowd was palpable but it paled in comparison to the dynamism of Emperor Magnus. Instead of being intimidated by such a presence, Wolf was attracted to the power and elegance of such a tremendous character. To be presented with such a great medal as the Klassen Medal by such a great man was a supreme honor that Wolf would never forget as long as he lived.

Magnus gave a warm smile as he extended his hand to Wolf. Wolf returned the smile and shook the hand of the Emperor. They both gave the traditional salute and the Rahowa greeting. Emperor Magnus took the Klassen Medal, which gleamed mightily in the shimmering sun, and placed it around Wolf's thick, sculpted neck.

Wolf admired the precious medal as he turned and saluted the immense crowd. The jubilant audience returned his salute in great earnest. Wolf seized hold of the wonderful moment in front of a roaring crowd. He didn't want to release this fleeting moment from his grasp and would enjoy every second of it in the fullest possible way.

Wolf, having had his moment in the sun, proceeded to stand with his fellow comrades who had been presented with medals. He knew he was in great company amidst such valiant heroes and to be mentioned with them was, in itself, a great honor.

A state of bewilderment enveloped Wolf as the victory celebration wound to a close. Wolf had experienced so many emotions on that day that the proceedings seemed to have a mystical embodiment. Of course, there was nothing supernatural present, just intense and overwhelming love and affection that propelled Wolf to a level of exultation that far exceeded the normal, every day feelings. It was no wonder that the festivities in the White Empire were attended by so many. Such fervor produced an extremely satisfying inner state in each individual and those individuals carried that zeal in maintaining the Empire.

Wolf didn't think he could get much higher emotionally but then thought, like all things, that one can always be better at something or accomplish more. In this case, Wolf knew that he would be seeing his wife and children in addition to his best friend- John Granger. Just as the Empire stressed being faster, stronger, and smarter, he would go higher and higher on his emotion plane of utter satisfaction.

The end of revelry came about with the final display of the flag procession. Thousands upon thousands of Creativity flags streamed down the Award Grounds. It was a truly impressive display that was similar to a bodybuilder who flexed his chiselled muscles for the pleasure of the audience. The flags represented all that was great and mighty in the greatest civilization of all time-the White Empire.

White Empire - Chapter IV **by Rev. Kenneth Molyneux**

The sun had recently set over the grand city of Klassengrad with the night celebrations commencing in restaurants, meeting halls, and houses all across the capital. Whereas the victory parade was a concentrated mass of enthusiasts, the celebrations afterwards were smaller and on a more personal basis. Some were eating and enjoying large feasts while other were having a private, intimate dinner with a loved one.

Wolfgang Gerhard and John Granger were reminiscing about old times in a brightly lit meeting hall. This was one of many such halls that were reserved by the military for military personnel and their friends and family. There was much eating and much socializing among the comrades present which presented a light hearted mood in the hall.

The two friends had met several years ago as they had traveled to Klassengrad to volunteer for military services. Wolf had been attracted to and eventually joined the Holy Legions while John had been drawn to flying and so joined the Air Force.

Both men were active participants in sporting events and that's where they had met. A football game on

a sunny afternoon is where the two men had first locked horns and where their friendship had blossomed. In fact, they were talking of that particular game at the moment.

"Do you remember that play when I totally faked you out and left you in the mud with my great speed?" John said in an affectionate, joking manner. John laughed as he eyed Wolf's massive frame. John liked to poke fun at his immense friend even though some might call him insane for engaging in such behavior.

"Yes, I remember that time. I also remember how I got even with you too. You tried to tackle me but I ended up dragging you into the endzone and scoring the winning touchdown," Wolf replied as he laughed heartily. He liked having a friend that was not intimidated by his enormous girth and that would compete with him as well as exchange playful insults.

John joined Wolf in laughter as they both realized that each had his own skills and were better than the other in some area. John was faster and more agile while Wolf was stronger and more powerful. Combined, they made quite a team and perhaps that was why they were such great friends.

A soldier approached Wolf and spoke, "Sir, I'd like to congratulate you on your most heroic efforts and was wondering if I could shake your hand." The soldier was obviously young and no doubt that he had but recently joined the Armed Forces. He was quite nervous in the presence of the mighty Wolf but was happy that he was speaking to the winner of the Klassen Medal.

"Sure, comrade. I hope to see you winning some medals by performing great acts of heroism. RAHOWA!" Wolf stood up and loomed monstrosity over the young soldier and shook his hand. After the handshake, Wolf saluted the comrade and watched the soldier return the traditional salute.

The youthful soldier appeared inspired by Wolf's rousing words and no doubt by his actions that led to his presentation of the Klassen Medal. The young man's eyes burned with a fiery passion that would fuel his own heroism in battle. Wolf saw a part of himself in this comrade and wondered how long it would be until he proved himself in battle. The young man, satisfied with the meeting, left Wolf and his companions.

"Wow, that was impressive!" exclaimed John admiringly. "I bet that feels good. It even made me feel good and I didn't even win the prestigious Klassen Medal."

"It is really overwhelming. It was a great feeling to win the award but I didn't expect to receive as many congratulations as I've gotten. This day just keeps getting better and better. The victory parade was wonderful and then the Awards Ceremony was terrific and now I'm with my best friend. Soon, my family will arrive as well. Truly great, don't you think, comrade?" replied Wolf as he eased into his chair.

"Yes, indeed. It might seem like we would get used to these joyous celebrations but we don't. They are so popular with everyone and everyone has such a grand time. Granted, we are in the military and don't attend as many of the festivities as the others which might mean the ones we do see mean more but by observing the others, you can see they are as happy as we are," John said.

"Yes, they are. Of course, it's hard to find anyone that isn't happy in the Empire though. In order to stay happy, I need some food right now."

"You mean you need a lot of food!" John exclaimed as he laughed.

Both men let loose a jovial laugh as they proceeded towards the vast amount of food that was available in the hall. It was very similar to the enormous feasts that the knights of old held only the food here was far more healthy and nutritious.

There were several long tables of food that was totally natural as well as being extremely delicious. There were many varieties of fruits at one table. Multiple variances of apples, bananas, cantaloupes, oranges and many, many more types of fruit were neatly sliced and made the mind reel as one had a difficult choice but would be satisfied regardless of choice.

Another table was lined with salads and salad toppings to satiate anyone who enjoyed salads. Cabbage, lettuce, onions, tomatoes and anything else one might choose for a salad decorated the table while emitting a pleasant aroma.

Yet another table was filled with nuts of sizes and shapes. The larger nuts, like coconuts, were present along with the smaller nuts, like peanuts. All were freshly grown to ensure their quality and to encourage good health in the Empire.

It had taken many years with gentle urging from the Empire to get the citizens to eat healthy foods. Everyone knew what healthy foods were but they were addicted to the poisonous junk that tasted so good yet caused so much grief and sickness. The children born in the Empire were regularly put on the standard Salubrious Living diet of raw, uncooked fruits, vegetables, nuts, and grains and that's where the snowball effect had started as successive generations were raised healthy. Today, most of the population ate healthy and finding such harmful foods as meat, dairy products, or junk food was quite difficult. These foods weren't illegal but shunned by the Empire and the vendors of such foods were comparable to the drug dealers of years past.

Wolf really enjoyed fruits while John was more of a vegetable man as they both swooped down on the food like an eagle swooping down on a startled mouse. Therefore, Wolf proceeded to select some succulent fruit from the fruit table as John attacked the tasty vegetables.

Wolf took his time as he greedily eyed the delectable fruits. He seriously deliberated over which fruits he would eat as he scanned all the options he had available. Suddenly realizing how large he was, he decided to eat all of the fruits he desired. It took a few plates and a few trips back to his table but he had a wide variety of fruits including some apples, bananas, berries, cantaloupe, oranges, and watermelon. He wasn't sure what kind of berries they were but they looked so good that he decided to give them a try.

Across the hall, John piled some salad on his plate as well as some beans, broccoli, and spinach. He returned to the table and was shocked at all the food that Wolf had gotten. After his initial shock, he realized how big Wolf was and didn't give it a second thought.

When both men seated themselves, Wolf initiated the custom tradition of reciting the five fundamental beliefs of Creativity. "We believe that our Race is our Religion. We believe that the White Race is Nature's Finest. We believe that racial loyalty is the highest of all honors, and racial treason is the worst of all crimes. We believe that what is good for the White Race is the highest virtue, and what is bad for the White Race is the ultimate sin. We believe the one and only, true and revolutionary White Racial Religion--Creativity-- is the only salvation for the White Race. RAHOWA!"

Both comrades tore into their food like the vicious lions of Rome who ripped Christians and other fools to shreds. Their bodies reveled at the supreme fuel that was being provided while their taste buds were enticed by the pleasurable taste.

Wolf, who was especially ravenous, consumed fruit after fruit and enjoyed the sweet juices as they traveled down his throat like a raging waterfall. The cantaloupe, especially, was extremely tasty and very juicy. Wolf laughed pleasantly as some juice flowed down his chin. He appeared as an ancient Viking as he grunted and wiped his chin free of juice. Both men enjoyed the display and it matched the light hearted nature of the entire hall.

John rose to his feet and spoke, "It seems we have forgotten our drinks. Do you want anything while I am up?"

Wolf nodded his head in affirmation but waited until he was finished devouring another piece of cantaloupe before he spoke. "I'll have some orange juice, thanks comrade."

John quickly located the refreshment stand and picked up a couple of cups. There were many different freshly squeezed juice drinks and water. John poured a cup of orange juice for his friend and got some banana juice for himself. He recalled the days when beer and other alcoholic beverages were popular and it made sense to him that so many people drowned their sorrows in the vice of drinking with all the tragedies the White Race was going through. Of course, he wasn't around back then and now who would want to indulge in such a practice when life was so great?

John returned to his table with the great tasting beverages. Wolf thanked John again as he sipped his orange juice. John was surprised at how good the banana juice tasted as both men continued to eat their feast.

John interrupted his feast to speak in an inquisitive fashion, "Where is that lovely wife and kids of yours?"

Wolf stopped eating and responded, "That is an excellent question. Isabelle should be here anytime now. I can't wait to see her and my children."

Wolf thought longingly of his precious family. He enjoyed the love and laughter that they had shared and was sure that many, many momentous experiences awaited him to bring further joy to him and his family. A thought suddenly struck him.

"When will you be settling down and starting a family, John? I'm sure you've felt the instinctual pull of nature to have kids as well as realizing your duty to the White Race in improving our people. Hasn't the Air Force urged you to have kids as well since you are a good pilot and all around great guy?" Wolf spoke in a caring manner that deeply touched John.

John hastily replied, "I sure have felt the urge to have a family and a large one at that. There is a missing component though so far...a woman!" John laughed as he continued, "As soon as I find a good woman than I will do my part to populate the world with wonderful White babies. The Air Force has expressed its concerns as well but, again, I need to find a lady. Perhaps you have a suggestion, comrade?"

"As a matter of fact, I do," Wolf grinned as he hoped to help his friend. "Isabelle has several sisters that, while not as beautiful as she is, are quite attractive. I could pull some strings and arrange a family outing where you could attend and meet them. What do you say?"

"That is an interesting prospect. Being with the Air Force, I don't get many chances to meet women. When might I be able to meet these attractive ladies that you speak of?" By the glint in John's eye, it was visually apparent that he was quite responsive to Wolf's offer.

"As long as you are free, you could fly out with us tonight and stay at our house. We have the extra bedroom that you could lodge in. It would be really great to have you visit."

"I can stay for a few days. I have some friends and family that I have to visit back home this week but it would be an honor to stay with the great Wolfgang Gerhard!" A huge grin formed on John's face and was matched by Wolf's smile.

As if by some unseen and unfeeling instinct, Wolf suddenly stood up and peered around the hall. Laughing, eating, and drinking was observed throughout the hall but something was different. His eyes darted swiftly about as they spotted his prey. An extremely lovely woman and her five adorable children is what his eyes beheld.

John, being startled by Wolf's rapid movement and thinking something was amiss, stood ready for battle but relaxed as he saw what Wolf had spotted. It was no wonder that Wolf snapped to attention at the entrance of his family.

Wolf seemed to grow to mammoth proportions as he flailed his arms about wildly hoping to get the attention of his wife. It was hard to miss such a figure even among a bustling hall but Wolf was going to make sure his mate found him and shouted, "Over here Isabelle!" All the people within the hall heard him, as well as Isabelle.

Isabelle had been wandering around looking for Wolf but once she found him, her appearance visibly brightened. Her children as well became jubilant as they saw their father. Both mother and children rushed towards Wolf as Isabelle said, "Wolf!" and the children screaming, "Daddy! Daddy!"

As impressive a figure as Wolf was, his radiant wife attracted far more attention. She was the epitome of beauty with flowing blond hair that suited her aqua blue eyes. She wore a red skirt and matching blouse that well complemented her luscious tanned skin. One was reminded of ancient Greek statues that presented the beauty of the day. Isabelle could easily have been a model if she so desired.

Wolf and Isabelle made a wonderful couple and it was easy to see that they were the parents of their children. The three boys aged 8, 6, and 5 all had shaved heads and were already larger than their friends. The two girls aged 7 and 4 both had golden blonde hair like their mother and were already making the little boys swoon.

The entire hall watched the affectionate display between Wolf and his family. Wolf was simultaneously embraced by his wife and all five of his children. There was more than enough man to go around as Wolf squeezed his large family. The crowd was captivated by the scene and greatly applauded the family. The affection generated was contagious as all around the hall, families embraced and laughed.

John admired Wolf and his family as he watched them in awe. He deeply wanted to start his own family and thought it would be wonderful to hit it off with one of Isabelle's sisters. If everything worked out right then he would become Wolf's actual brother, if only through marriage. Of course, he already thought of Wolf as family and would do practically anything to help his most trusted comrade.

After Wolf and his family sat down, John spoke enthusiastically, "What an ideal family you two have. Is it always so great?"

Isabelle took the initiative and spoke with a smirk on her face, "Most of the time it is terrific. Every once in a while Wolf gets out of hand though and I have to put him in his place." After she spoke, Isabelle nudged Wolf in the ribs and laughed playfully.

The eldest boy, Bernhardt, giggled as he spoke, "Yes, mommy can beat daddy up, especially in boxing. But! I can beat them both!" Bernhardt shadow boxed with his mother and father amidst an uproarious laughter at his comments.

It seemed as though a permanent grin was stuck on Wolf's visage. He beamed proudly, "That's my boy! You have to always be confident and believe that you can accomplish anything even if others say it is impossible. Once you set a goal, strive to achieve it and never give up."

John was utterly amazed at such a tremendously happy family. He envied his comrade's abilities, not only as a great soldier and athlete but as a father. The fiery passion for raising a family of his own burned deeply within him. It was such an intense instinct that John felt it necessary to heed Wolf's advice about setting goals and realizing them. Therefore, he set his goal of finding a mate and raising a family as soon as possible. The sooner the better and hopefully the one for him was waiting for him in Wolf's homeland of Germany.

If Isabelle's sisters were anything like she was then he was in for a treat. He felt himself drift away as he envisioned a family of his own. He was well aware of the so called downfalls of children but having a family of his own would be well worth any sacrifices. He didn't think he would mind cleaning up after his kids or listening to perpetual screams.

How many children would he have as he provided another link in the long golden chain that was the White Race? He pictured a beautiful woman and several children playing at the beach. Would three be enough, he thought. No, more than that. More children popped up in his daydream due to his desires. After ten children became visible, he thought that was sufficient and relaxed.

He frolicked happily with these children, his children, in the ocean. Joined by the imaginary children was his imaginary wife who also was delighted as she played with the children. The golden globe that was the sun reflected off the precious blue water of the ocean making for a gorgeous light show that was quite relaxing. John was thoroughly enjoying himself when he felt a tug on his arm.

Wolf again shook John's arm. "John, wake up." Wolf was enjoying waking John from his daydream and could only imagine where John was in his thoughts. Perhaps, he was flying a ship on some distant planet or exploring the ocean depths. Wolf knew John to be the adventurous type but he was far off from John's actual thoughts.

John groggily came back to the real world and left his fantasy world behind. "Yes, what is it?"

Wolf laughed and spoke, "I was just making sure you were all right. Having pleasant dreams, I suspect?"

John smiled and responded, "Yes, very pleasant indeed. After seeing your family, it made me think of how great it would be to have a family of my own. I'm 25 years old and I think I'm way past due. Most have children much earlier than that and I realize what I am missing out on. Speaking of family, where is yours anyway?"

"They went to get some food, comrade. You must really have been in some deep thought to not have noticed. Isabelle and I even talked about your visit and she was delighted. She thinks that her youngest sister, Marie, would be perfect for you."

John let his mind form a mental picture of this "Marie". Only knowing that it was Isabelle's sister, he envisioned a younger version of her. What a fantastic vision it was as he noticed Isabelle approach.

John waited until Isabelle and the children were seated before he spoke to her, "What can you tell me about your sister, Marie?" John's interest was extremely intensified and he was really looking forward to his trip to Germany.

Isabelle flashed a pristine smile that could easily melt men's hearts and responded, "Well, she is my youngest sister. She is 22 years old and very single. She is very pretty, athletic, and involved intensely with the Church. She is still looking for her perfect mate and wants to start a family. Sounds great, don't you think?"

John was utterly flabbergasted. It seemed to good to be true and with his practical mind, he did indeed

question the validity of Isabelle's claim. She could just be hyping up her sister as, after all, they were family. He thought it was similar to a mother telling a child they were beautiful no matter what they actually looked like. He would remain skeptical until he met this princess and wouldn't get his hopes up but would hope for the best. Regardless, he knew he would have a splendid time visiting Wolf and his family.

John responded warmly, "Sounds wonderful actually. If she is half as great as you say then I'd love to get to know her."

"Don't worry, John. Marie doesn't need anyone to build herself up as she will be a great wife to any man on earth. In fact, that man is going to be extremely happy to have someone as wonderful as my dear sister. I really hope you two can spend some quality time together."

It was obvious that Isabelle liked John. They had always gotten along quite well together. The grin on her face reflected her hope of having John as a part of their illustrious family.

Wolf interjected, "I assure you that everything is as Isabelle says. She is very intelligent and you too can have some serious discussions that would be above my head. I have seen Marie and she is quite pretty with a great personality."

Wolf smiled broadly as he told of Marie's elegant looks. Isabelle subsequently swatted his head at the sight of such a smirk. This caused a low rumble of laughter from the big man that reverberated throughout the hall.

"Enough talk of these things though. Let us sing and rejoice in our great lives in the holy White Empire!" Wolf trumpeted loudly. He rose to his feet and began singing his favorite march, called Hail the White Race.

Wolf wasn't the greatest of singers, in fact one might say that he was terrible (but not to his face). He did have a commanding voice, however, that spurred the rest of the crowd to join him in singing the ever popular march. Soon, the whole hall was singing in unison providing a refreshing air of supreme splendor.

Klassen created our great creed.
There is no man with greater deeds.
We all must strive to make our mark.
Our bright light shall destroy the dark.

We pledge our lives to our White Race.
We will always increase our pace.
Our day of triumph is at hand.
Our great people shall rule this land.
RAHOWA! RAHOWA! RAHOWA! RAHOWA!

We must unite and act as one.
Or else our brethren will be done.
We must help our people to grow.
Selfish comrades will halt our flow.

We pledge our lives to our White Race.
We will always increase our pace.
Our day of triumph is at hand.
Our great people shall rule this land.
RAHOWA! RAHOWA! RAHOWA! RAHOWA!

Our people wield such great power.
We watch our foes run and cower.
We bring law and order to all.
Our strength ensures we shall not fall.

We pledge our lives to our White Race.
We will always increase our pace.

Our day of triumph is at hand.
Our great people shall rule this land.
RAHOWA! RAHOWA! RAHOWA! RAHOWA!

Honor shall always be our link.
Our warriors shall have no chinks.
When a warrior gets knocked down;
Our brave soldiers shall gather round.

We pledge our lives to our White Race.
We will always increase our pace.
Our day of triumph is at hand.
Our great people shall rule this land.
RAHOWA! RAHOWA! RAHOWA! RAHOWA!

Our foes shall tremble at our site.
We shall never give up the fight.
Our foes shall always run and hide.
Nothing on Earth will stop our tide.

We pledge our lives to our White Race.
We will always increase our pace.
Our day of triumph is at hand.
Our great people shall rule this land.
RAHOWA! RAHOWA! RAHOWA! RAHOWA!

The singing went on well into the night with everyone participating in the numerous songs that abounded in the Empire. Rousing songs had been written in great quantity and reflected the majestic feelings of the day. The most popular songs were those that all could sing along with and have a grand time doing so.

Singing itself was popular with the masses, and like sports and other endeavors, required proper teamwork to perform at peak efficiency. It was assured that only a small minority could sing well but when everyone worked together, the sounds emitted by the worst singers sounded noble.

The White Race thrived when it worked together and sacrificed for the best interests of the whole. Nature had imbued the White Race with numerous gifts that enabled the Empire to become possible and this self sacrificing nature was one of the most important.

Throughout history, the White Race was capable of supporting itself and being self sufficient unlike the other races. There was no work considered menial as everything needed to be done. Therefore, there was no class warfare between people but there was healthy competition that encouraged everyone to do the best possible job they could and promote the interests of the White Race in everything they did. It was only a matter of time before one found his niche in the Empire and understood the maxim, "Work sets you free."

The sacrifice and the willingness to work for a Whiter and Brighter World were vital components in the formation of the Empire but the racial religion of Creativity is what really sparked the roaring fire of greatness that was the White Empire. Without it, the world would be a writhing, starving mass of muds living in a wretched abyss of despair that would have been far more terrible than even the dreaded Doom Age.

Creativity had been the shining White knight that saved the White Race from destruction and mongrelization. After saving the White Race, it had been instrumental in ushering in a golden age of wonder and happiness that was unparalleled in the annals of history. Today, its influence continued to grow as did the splendor of the Empire and its ever evolving people.

Upon realizing the healthy, positive, and dynamic attributes exuded by Creativity and its base in logic and reason, one could easily see how the world was being transformed into a veritable paradise on Earth. By just being a part of the singing festivities in one corner of the Empire one could see and, indeed, feel the positive influence of Creativity. This inspiring prevalence bathed the entire Empire in its holy glow of grandeur. Such was the mighty power of Creativity.

White Empire - Chapter V

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneaux

A quaint brown house in the classical style of architecture was the home of Wolfgang Gerhard. It was a blend of the old with its spiraling white columns in the front of the house and the new with its solar panels located on the roof for generating power. Wolf liked to think he had the best of both worlds as he admired the structures of the past and the people it represented while utilizing the modern features of the day.

Adjoining the house was a solarium that allowed sunbathing year round. This was the reason that the Gerhard's had tans the whole year and benefited from the beneficial rays of the sun. It had been known that the sun had therapeutical value for thousands of years but not until the advent of the Empire did people go sunbathing for health reasons rather than the attraction of a tan.

A garage also adorned the house and housed the two hovercars that the Gerhard family owned. It had an opening on the roof as well as the front. Wolf enjoyed working on hovercars but they ran so well that he was forced to purchase old hovercars that he could fix up.

Wolf's property encompassed 10 acres that were used in a variety of ways. The area around the house itself was covered with lush green grass and a diverse amount of bushes and flowers. Trees decorated the driveway as they were lined alongside the path. The driveway was usually used by bikes, however, as the hovercars didn't need to use the path as it could fly. It gave a feel of security and protection to all those that entered. The yard was always maintained well as the whole family pitched in to ensure its beauty.

In the back of the house, crops were grown and an assortment of fruit trees, nut trees, and berry bushes grew. Everything from apples to spinach were grown which offered a wide selection of healthy foods. Of course, the crops were organically grown as no one wanted to eat the poisons contained in the pesticides and insecticides. Besides, these poisons were outlawed as they not only poisoned the crops but the people who ate the crops. This farming made the Gerhard house self sufficient as well as very healthy.

At the back edge of the property, was a small forest that served as a play area for the children as well as a picnic area. The trees shaded everyone when the day got too hot and several picnic tables were located within this shade. There was also ample space outside the forest for athletics of all kinds. Football, volleyball, and badminton were played pretty frequently but the favorites of the house were basketball and tennis so courts had been built to accommodate this desire. There was also a small pond that was used for swimming.

It was apparent how much the Gerhard family enjoyed athletics by the outdoor facilities but they also had a full weight room and boxing ring in the basement. No one within the family was ever out of shape or bored as there was so much to do right in their very own home.

Physical fitness was encouraged all across the Empire but not at the expense of learning. Wolf preferred reading from books even though any book one could ever wish to read was available through computer. Therefore, Wolf had a library with numerous books and a study area for not only the children but the parents as well. The Empire encouraged learning throughout one's life not just while in school.

Even though thousands of books could be read over the computer, two books were in every household of the White Empire. These, of course, were the holy books of Creativity written by Ben Klassen-Nature's Eternal Religion and the White Man's Bible. These two books had spawned the White Empire and all its greatness so they were studied and appreciated for their tremendous value.

Even before the children started school, the holy books of Creativity were read to and by the children. The positive, healthy, and dynamic aspects of this great creed were cemented into the brain of the youth in order to prolong the Empire and reach ever greater heights.

The Gerhard house also consisted of 6 bedrooms, a kitchen, a dining room, a recreation room, and a living room. It was a humble house but Wolf preferred to save most of his money. The family did like to travel but it wasn't too expensive especially as they mainly traveled within the boundaries of Europe.

Presently, the occupants of the house and John were enjoying the fresh air back in the picnic area. The children were playing in the field with a football as they absorbed the golden light of the sun. John, Wolf, and Isabelle sat at the picnic table conversing while they awaited the arrival of Isabelle's sister Marie.

John was looking forward to meeting Marie but was beginning to get anxious as it seemed like they had been waiting forever for her arrival. He started to wonder whether or not she even existed. Perhaps they were playing a practical joke on him, he thought. The woman Isabelle described did seem like a fairy tale princess to him.

John asked perplexingly, "Are you sure Marie exists and is coming here?"

Both Isabelle and Wolf laughed. Wolf answered John, "Don't worry old friend. She isn't supposed to be here for another half an hour. I'm sure you will like her and you two can even go for a hike in the woods or play tennis together to get to know each other. She will be here soon enough but, for now, lets play some football with the rugrats. I think my kids are better players than you are, comrade." Wolf smiled as he jokingly taunted his friend.

John returned the smile and waited for Wolf to turn his back and then agilely jumped onto Wolf's back with the prowess of a ferocious lion. The appearance of John on Wolf's back was similar to that of a cowboy riding an infuriated bull in a rodeo.

Wolf bucked wildly in a futile attempt to dislodge John from his back. John was easily able to maintain his balance as he vigorously rubbed Wolf's shaved head in an action sometimes referred to as a "noogie".

The children had stopped their playing and watched their father play. They were laughing elatedly as they imitated the display by wrestling around on the ground in a jovial presentation of unrestrained amusement. Isabelle joined her children as they frolicked and shared in their immense enjoyment.

It might seem surprising to those not accustomed to the White Empire but the person most enjoying himself was John. Adults within the Empire didn't lose their sense of humor and fun and become stern, serious drones with ever increasing stress levels like in the days of old. This isn't to say that responsibility was ignored or duty disdained. Quite the contrary, actually, as duty and responsibility were extremely valued and praised but everyone within the Empire knew how to have fun and not relinquish the child within them.

John was laughing so hard that tears of joy flowed freely down his face like a waterfall cascading down a steep plateau. Wolf took full advantage of this opportunity to flip John off his back. Wolf leaned forward while grasping John's arm and twisted which propelled John to the ground.

Now it was Wolf's turn for hilarious laughter as he pounced on his friend. Upon seeing the two wrestle around on the ground, the children and Isabelle joined in the melee. Numerous arms and legs were entangled in a writhing mass that resembled several octopuses engaged in a deadly battle where confusion and chaos reigned supreme.

This intertwined mass of humanity didn't have hostile intentions but, rather, had a benevolent nature. This sublime nature was observed by the continuous laughter and mammoth smiles that were visible. This great ball of limbs continued flailing about until everyone got exhausted and ceased wrestling and rested upon the ground enjoying the brilliant beams of the sun.

John thoroughly enjoyed spending time with Wolf and his family and wasn't surprised when he realized he wanted a family of his own even more. If it weren't a positive thing, he would have to say he was obsessed. He started to form contingency plans in his mind in case his meeting of Marie didn't go as planned. It was obvious that his military training was profoundly beneficial as he thought of various places to meet women including Church festivities, clubs, and libraries. All the plans that were being formulated in his mind were suddenly shattered and discarded to the scrap heap when he saw the woman of his dreams approaching the picnic area.

John gazed longingly at the beautiful woman that walked femininely towards him with the gracefulness of a ballerina dancer. He thought he was living in a romance novel where Marie would rush into his loving embrace and they would run in the fields of daisies and live happily ever after. Of course, that wasn't reality so he forced himself to focus on the here and now.

Anyone could tell that Marie and Isabelle were sisters just by their shared loveliness. Beyond that, both had brilliant golden locks that were complimented well with luminous blue eyes. The pair also had athletic figures with long sumptuous legs and well conditioned tanned skin.

Either one of these majestic beauties could captivate an audience but together it seemed as though they could rule a country by the sheer attractiveness of their exalted physical characteristics. It might be expected that only men would be transfixed by this display of charm but this wasn't the case at all as

even the children were awed.

Marie was casually dressed, like everyone else, but electrified John nonetheless. With the soft skin and gorgeous visage she possessed, John recognized that he would be held under her sway even if she was wearing a huge parka and living in the polar regions. Marie wore blue shorts with a matching blue blouse that accentuated her luscious blue globes that shined with a brilliance that rivaled the mighty sun.

The Gerhard family rose to their feet as Marie approached while John remained seated on the ground, awestruck. Marie and Isabelle embraced lovingly and children uttered, "Aunt Marie!" as they hugged Marie's legs. Wolf waited until Isabelle and Marie disengaged to clasp his sister in law with an affectionate hug.

Marie spoke with a crystal clear voice that reminded one of a chirping bird in the early morning, "It's a beautiful day, sis. I hope everyone is having an equally beautiful day!"

Isabelle replied candidly, "I, for one, am having a great time. Then again, when don't I have a good time when I'm with my tender family? There is someone I'd like you to meet and hopefully you can brighten his day."

Isabelle ushered Marie over to where John sat still admiring Marie. Isabelle smiled as she spoke, "Marie, this is John Granger and John this is Marie."

John extended his hand while Marie took it and laughed. John turned red with embarrassment as he comprehended the silliness of him sitting on the ground while she was standing. He presently stood up and brushed himself off but seemed incapable of speech in the presence of Marie.

Realizing that John wasn't going to speak, Marie took the initiative and spoke with her bird like voice, "Nice to meet you John. Isabelle and Wolf speak highly of you. It seems as though they think we would make a wonderful couple. From what I've heard it seems to make a lot of sense to me. What do you think of that prospect?"

John was visibly shaken but in a positive way as he became aware that this princess before him actually thought their coupling was a good idea. John possessed a good deal of confidence but this woman was able to break that confidence with beauty the kind of which primitives would worship as a goddess. Despite the reverence inspired by this staggering beauty, John's confidence grew but her kind words allowed him to regain his composure or so he hoped.

With newly brimming confidence and charm, John spoke assuredly, "I think it's a wonderful idea. You are far more exquisite than your sister gives you credit for. I am greatly impressed with your exquisite beauty and I'd love to get to know you better as soon as possible."

Marie was flattered, of course, but was astonished at the sudden transformation John had undergone. She noticed that her looks had intimidated John but this was no longer the case and she was immediately attracted to John because of it. She hadn't often seen the charisma which John exuded and it seemed to be the major factor in her attraction. No doubt that she was pleased with what she had heard from Isabelle but that was the man on paper and this was the man in actuality.

The Gerhard family had ceased any activity and watched Marie and John as though they were watching a tender, emotional love story. Isabelle and Wolf clung together as the children held hands, hanging on every word spoken and every slight movement of the couple. The Gerhard's hoped for the best as they would swiftly welcome the addition to their extended family.

Upon noticing that they were the center of attention and wishing for some privacy, Isabelle spoke to John, "Why don't we speak more privately over in the shade at the picnic area?"

John glanced about and realized that they were the main attraction and replied, "That sounds like a good idea but it pains me to deprive this family of its entertainment." John smiled at the Gerhard family and was met with the laughter of the family.

Wolf, of course, heard every word that was spoken and remarked to Isabelle, "I think we are going to have to find another sport to occupy our time as those love birds go off to mingle."

"Yes, indeed, comrade," spoke John as he put his arm around Marie and marched off to the picnic area.

Once the couple was out of earshot, Wolf spoke to Isabelle, "They appear to have hit it off. I hope all goes well for my great friend. What do you think, my dear?"

"I think they will make as great a couple as we do and have a wonderful family as well. We can, of course, help them along in this endeavor but, by the looks of things, we won't need to."

Wolf and Isabelle gazed at the young couple, wishing for the best and wondering what they were saying in what looked to be a successful courtship. Wolf was especially hopeful for the fledgling couple as he was really fond of John and wanted to see him with the best. Of course, Wolf felt that Isabelle was the most complete woman in the Empire with beautiful looks, a vastly intelligent mind, and a jovial personality. This opinion of Isabelle was part factual admiration and part biased adoration since she was his wife.

As far as Wolf was concerned, Marie was therefore the best of the women that remained available. That isn't to say that Wolf knew all the women in the Empire but from what he was aware of, Marie was quite a catch. Granted, there were many gorgeous women around but he didn't know if they possessed the intelligence and warm personality that Marie had.

The children resumed their playful demeanor as they laughed and rolled around on the ground. The football was thrown back and forth among them and was caught with great skill despite the fact that the ball was rather large for their small hands. Even the girls enjoyed horsing around and playing in games that used to be relegated to boys. This did not detract from their feminine qualities at all as it encouraged athleticism. The girls would surely grow up to be at least as pretty as their mother and it was hoped that all the children would be superior to their parents in every positive way.

Meanwhile, the day rolled on with birds chirping excitedly as they searched for food and chased each other across the skies. The blue sky resembled an ocean bereft of ships and stretching away as far as the eye could behold. The grass and trees seemed alive with splendor that coincided with the immaculate atmosphere of cleanliness.

Amidst the splendid display of Nature, Wolf lazily relaxed and stretched out on the ground with his wife. While he liked his service with the Holy Legions, he preferred his family and was going to thoroughly enjoy his week of vacation. This was the life, he thought assuredly, as he conversed with his lovely wife.

"Such a wonderful day it is. Is there anything you want to do this week, honey? Of course, I think we need some time to ourselves but we also need to do something with the kids. By the look of things, I may have to compete with Marie for John's attention." Wolf smiled warmly as he regarded Isabelle's enchanting features with veneration.

Isabelle replied softly as she burrowed herself deep within Wolf's bear like grasp, "The day is great and I feel great as well. I think we need to spend some quality time on the couch watching a romance movie while we express our mutual love for each other. Oh, and speaking of the children, I told the school board that you were coming home and they liked the idea of you speaking at the school. Of course, I mentioned the idea to them. Do you think you can? I know that Bernhardt especially would enjoy you speaking in front of his class."

Wolf felt honored at such an opportunity as he responded keenly, "Wow, I would love to! Of course, I will have to make some notes on what I will say. I hope I can inspire many children to do their part in building an even greater world for our people but if just one child appreciates what I say then it is well worth it. I can talk to the kids tomorrow but before that we can spend that quality time together you were talking about." Wolf ran his large hand through Isabelle's soft, flowing hair as he gazed longingly into her aqua eyes.

As Wolf held Isabelle in his surprisingly tender grasp considering his mammoth size, he contemplated what he would talk about to the future inheritors of the Empire. He realized that the boys would probably want to know of his exploits as a Legionnaire but he couldn't reveal that information although he could speak of the great honor it was being a member of the Holy Legions. Wolf thought that the most important thing he could speak of was to find one's niche in the Empire, wherever it may be, and to fulfill that role proudly and to the best ability that one possessed.

As the children played and Wolf and Isabelle cuddled while watching their children have fun, Marie and John descended down the road of courtship. It had started out a rocky, bumpy ride as each probed the other in a playful wrestling match. Each wished to see what the other possessed and if they were truly compatible.

The basic questions typical to a blossoming relationship surfaced and were answered. Favorite foods, hobbies, games and other favorites were discussed. Marie enjoyed strawberries, history, and tennis while John fancied vegetables in general, history, and track and field events. Since both enjoyed history, it was a topic they both knew they would enjoy discussing.

In fact, a conversation about the great Roman Empire had emerged to the delight of both parties. They both marveled at the civilization and its wonderful displays of architecture, law, and warfare. Both agreed, however, that their Empire was far greater than that ancient realm of Rome and they regarded it as a stepping stone or ancestor of their own White Empire. Just as the Empire strove for racial evolution, they also strove for evolution or betterment in all fields and so they paid their respects to Rome. Both also agreed that the Romans would be proud of the their own Empire like a father is proud of the accomplishments of his son.

History was a topic that Marie and John engaged in for quite some time and the hours flittered by unnoticed like a fighter plane swiftly flying by at many times the speed of sound. Both enjoyed the other's companionship immensely and that was the primary reason that time flew by so rapidly. It became clear that John, being in the Air Force, preferred the aspects of war throughout history whereas Marie was more interested in the rulers of nations and how they treated their subjects.

Many different civilizations were spoken of, from ancient Egypt to their own illustrious Empire. It was glaringly obvious that these two were extremely proud of the gift their parents gave them. The gift of being a member of Nature's Finest- the glorious, productive, intelligent, and honorable White Race. They were proud of both their own abilities as well as their ancestors who created the great civilizations of Egypt, Rome, and Greece.

"Which empire or civilization would you prefer to live in if you had a choice? Of course, I mean outside of our own." Marie spoke with a melodic manner that playfully caressed John's eager ears. She was impressed by his knowledge and enjoyed talking about her favorite subject.

John retorted after a moment of enjoyable thought, "We indeed have to exclude our own Empire for who, in their right mind, would choose any other if given the option. While I admire the intelligent and creative Greeks and respect the practical bringers of law, order, and grand architecture of Rome, I think I would choose to be a citizen of National Socialist Germany. Granted, I'm not full blooded German or anything but our own Empire sprang from some of the precepts of National Socialism. National Socialism had its flaws which we were able to correct through the wisdom of our great founder, Ben Klassen. I can think of no happier nation, next to ours, that ever existed. Especially after watching and reading some of the propaganda they put out, such as the movie, Triumph of the Will. It is truly tragic that the Jews were successful in instigating the fratricidal World War II where so many of our comrades died. While it was a devastating war to our people, the numerous battles, strategy, and tactics involved make for good reading. Which empire would you choose, lovely?" John smiled at Marie while thoroughly relishing their in depth conversation of history. He thought it a pleasant change to have such a confabulation with a woman rather than a man.

Even though Marie had posed the question, she was forced to contemplate the question. She digested what John had said and tossed it around like a juggler tosses balls or knives or flaming torches. What John said was true but she would have to choose ancient Greece as her choice.

"I would have to choose ancient Greece. She was wrought with strife and warfare wasn't her forte but Greece was an enlightened land. To be able to debate with Socrates or ponder philosophy and government with Plato would be quite a treat. The sheer number of great men that lived during the golden age of Greece is astounding. Men like Aristophanes, Aristotle, Euripides, Homer and many, many others provide for good reading so you know it would have been quite wonderful to be able to converse with them. The main drawback of Greece that I see is a lack of unity but I believe the vast multitude of geniuses present would more than make up for the internal strife...as long as I weren't a part of the warring." Marie laughed warmly and continued, "I imagine you would enjoy the warfare of the era, especially that of Sparta."

"Ah, yes Sparta. They practiced eugenics to the extreme. Any weaklings were ruthlessly culled out which made the warrior state a fierce fighting machine. Since they were so warlike though, they didn't have many scholars as warriors were what the men were bred for. They were great physical specimen but lacked the completeness of the Superman as they didn't emphasize intellectualism as well."

John continued, "Speaking of the Superman, that is another reason that I enjoy the National Socialist state under Hitler. They encouraged the coming of the Superman through the careful process of eugenics which, of course, we undertake today. Unfortunately, Germany had but 12 years to work with and half of that time was plagued with war. We have had 30 years so far with many years ahead of us. We have already arrived at magnificent splendor but it is ever increasing. It boggles the mind thinking of the dizzying heights that will undoubtedly be achieved by our noble people."

Nodding in agreement, Marie responded, "I agree wholeheartedly. Reading about the vile creatures that inhabited our land back in the Doom Age is enough to make one throw up. Now, we are in a golden age of prosperity and the four dimensions of a sound mind, sound body, sound society, and a sound

environment are spread across our great White Empire."

"How is it that you know so much about History anyway? Women don't usually venture into the past as often as men. It is a good change though, I must admit."

Marie laughed cordially, "I have to know a lot about History because I'm a History teacher. I wouldn't hold my job too long if I didn't study the past." Marie smiled as she watched the surprise form on John's face.

"I must admit that I am surprised but pleasantly so. It does make a lot of sense. How do you like teaching?"

"I enjoy it immensely. The children love learning so much and it makes me feel all warm inside knowing that I am bringing knowledge to them. I'm sure they will use that knowledge in the future as one must learn from the mistakes of the past to create a better future. I hear you are a pilot. How does it feel to soar through the air like a noble eagle?"

John listened attentively and was impressed by Marie's reasons for being a teacher. "Flying is a great feeling. Not only do I get to serve my people but I get to soar through the skies in a pleasurable ride that is like a raging roller coaster...only much faster and much more fun!"

Marie responded amiably, "It seems we both enjoy our jobs. I really enjoy spending time with you but," she glanced at the all but disappeared golden orb that was the sun, "I must soon be going. I have to finish grading some papers but I would certainly hope to see you again. Tomorrow, perhaps?" Marie was anxious not to let this gem escape her grasp.

John's countenance noticeably changed from pleasure to dismay as he responded pleadingly, "Must you go so soon? We could play some tennis before you go. We can turn the lights on so we can see. Besides," John regained his confidence, "we are having a terrific time and thus far we have only engaged in intellectual ventures so we need to compliment it with some physical activity." John spoke assuredly but silently he feared that she would leave and thought it best to display an air of confidence. He had never met a woman as amazing as Marie and was determined to have her.

Marie was prepared to go but the regained confidence that John exuded, convinced her to stay. She would not forsake her duty to her students by any means but she could spare another hour or so. Besides, she was sure that they would meet again tomorrow.

Marie spoke with a general air of congeniality, "Of course I will play tennis with you. How could I resist such an offer? A charming man and my favorite sport, what could be better? What do you think we should do tomorrow though?"

Marie tossed her luxurious golden hair from her shoulders into the air and John watched it fall back in place as mesmerized as a newborn who has just entered the world. It was apparent to anyone with courting perception to observe this as a flirtatious stratagem designed to enthrall John. Indeed, it did enrapture John as it would enchant nearly any man.

John felt as though he must be in love as he had never felt so passionately about a woman before in his life and the speed at which it occurred was amazing! He had loved women before but nothing like what he felt now. He wondered if this ecstatic emotion was what some called "true love".

John spoke with the attitude of one who was sure of victory, "I think tomorrow will be a fine day for a hike in the mountains and a scrumptious dinner afterwards. I must say that your hair is so delicate and fine that the minstrels of old would be deemed great by the world by singing songs just of your magnificent hair, not to mention your numerous other beauties."

"You are too kind and such a charmer. Good thing for me that you are even available although I am hard pressed to ascertain how you didn't marry long ago. A gentleman stands before me and I mustn't let him go!"

The couple embraced warmly and John gave Marie a gentleman's kiss on the cheek. "Shall we be off?" John asked. Marie nodded and they traipsed off to the tennis court where a stunned John got trampled in three straight sets, managing to win but one game in the score of 6-0, 6-1, 6-0.

White Empire - Chapter VI

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneux

John and Marie arrived at the extremely popular park known as Salubrious Park. This was an apt name for the park as it was once an area that was filled with debris and as a result was in decadent decay. Under the supervision and tender care of the Empire, however, it had regained its health and vigor and was now a wonderful display of nature that wooed man and woman alike. In fact, many a relationship had been cultivated in this very park and had resulted in plentiful fruit.

The park had an assortment of plants, bushes, and trees of numerous shapes and sizes that reflected the endless possibilities that nature could create. It was quite difficult for anyone to get bored gazing around at the many treats the park beheld simply due to the superabundance in the variety of plant life that existed in the park.

The flowers were splashed amidst the park showing off their splendid colors. Bright red, purple, and yellow flowers were the most brilliant of the colors that adorned the park but a medley greater than that of a painter's palette, could be found. This kaleidoscopic scene was coupled with the enticing fragrance that attracted flower lovers from afar.

The same diversity that was showcased within the park in the form of flowers, was also present in the other plant life. Trees and bushes were lavishly spread throughout the park in mammoth sizes as well as minuscule examples. Some bore fruit or nuts while others did not. This park was surely a botanist's paradise but it also attracted other nature lovers as well.

John and Marie had recently entered the park from the parking lot where Marie's hovercar had been parked. John was amazed at the sudden transformation from technology, in the form of all the hovercars, to the natural setting of the park. The entrance to the park was flanked with large oak trees that encircled the area and formed a protective barrier from the outside technology.

John had been in parks before but this was a true delight to his eyes. He couldn't get over the stark contrast between the two worlds. It was as if he had been transported through space and time by some powerful new invention of the Empire. One world with its splendid, majestic towers and monuments made by man, and the other world with its grand presentation of plant life that nature had created were, on the one hand, total opposites of the other but were both created by a similar force. The Empire appreciated both realms as different spheres and complimentary to one another so both had to be nurtured. This different but complimentary aspect was identical to the man and woman relationship. In other words, both were necessary ingredients to a great empire like that of the White Empire.

Marie was pleased to see the amazement that twinkled in John's eyes as the same sensation of awe swept through her every time she visited the park. She vividly recalled the first time she had visited the splendid enclosure that was known as Salubrious Park.

She was but a child then, with her family, when she first gazed upon the overwhelming majesty of nature. Her parents had known the time when the area had been poisoned with debris and was an unofficial waste dump for the dastardly chemical companies. At such a tender age, she was unable to envision such pollution nor did she care to. What she did know and appreciate, was that before her was a triumphant victory of the Empire to restore the land to its proper vitality.

Upon entering the natural domain of the park for the first time, Marie was amazed that such luscious beauty was possible without the aid of man. The excitement that she had upon enjoying the park as a youth had not diminished as she had matured into a lovely woman. While she wasn't awed quite as powerfully in subsequent sojourns as her first visit, she still had a warm place in her heart for this glorious site.

The park was solely responsible for his interest in botany. The park was and remains, a favorite among her family so she frequented it often. She had always liked the color purple so her favorite flower was the sedum. After that, she desired to know the names of all the various plant life that existed not only in the park but in the world. History had always been her favorite subject but botany interested her and, as a result, she possessed a fertile garden filled with a predominance of purple flowers such as the sedum and iris, among others.

After recovering from his initial shock at such a display of natural artwork, John confidently reached for Marie's hand and clasped it in his own. Marie was pleased at his warm and tender touch and enjoyment was easily discerned from her affectionate body language.

The couple leisurely started down the smooth, stone trail when John interrupted the silence, "This is an

impressive place! It appears to be a great place to relax in a tranquil setting. From what I've seen so far, this park could inspire greatness almost as much as you, yourself could." John accentuated his last statement with a broad grin and a wink.

Marie giggled softly as she responded, "This is one of my favorite places and has been ever since I was a little girl. I've been enthralled by the splendid grandeur ever since I first laid eyes on this precious gem. As for inspiration, I would have to agree with you there. I garnish my share of inspiration from this wondrous environment which I broadcast through my poetry."

John's interest was piqued at the mention of poetry. He spoke in an inquisitive manner, "I enjoy poetry immensely. I aspire to the greatness of a Byron or Coleridge but I feel I have a ways to go." John laughed pleasantly and continued, "As you might surmise, I tend to write about heroism, valor, and military might. What do you write about?"

Marie turned her head in such a manner as if to say, "Is that so?" Following the unspoken words, she responded casually with her sweet sounding speech that was more akin to the lovely chirp of a robin, "We have more in common than I could have dreamed for. My poetry reflects my interest in nature. All I need to do is gaze around this domain and the words flow like a glimmering waterfall cascading from the sky. I come here quite a bit to enjoy the tranquillity and enjoy myself while I grade papers, write poetry, or help keep the park clean."

John was impressed by Marie's civic duty to the park but realized that working together was an everyday occurrence within the Empire. John spoke, "It would be an honor to help maintain this magnificent haven of the natural world. Was it difficult to become a volunteer here?"

"Harder than I thought possible," came Marie's response. "The area around here is sparsely populated yet there were literally thousands of applicants. I finally managed to become a part of the maintenance crew but it took me over three years! Needless to say the competition is fierce."

John was impressed with her dedication and perseverance. John nodded in approval of her actions as they entered the heart of the park. The circular clearing spread before them and John questioned Marie, "Where to now, my beautiful companion?"

The park center branched off into many arteries that resembled a triumphant octopus that was posing for the camera. All the trails swerved off into the distance leaving it up to the imagination what treasures lay hidden in these separate galaxies. There were five possible choices that were presented before them and John felt as though he was adventuring through an unknown world with a fair maiden who he had to protect no matter the cost as his honor was at stake.

The mystery of where the trails led was smashed as Marie urged him to the video screen that stood in the center of clearing. John was reminded of a vigilant sentinel guarding his post with unflappable vigor but the video screen was more like a direction post, although with much more information. It now came to John's attention that there were a total of four video screens that formed a large square with each screen being approximately two meters high and displaying where each path led.

John hesitantly viewed the screen but glanced away swiftly. Marie noticed his odd behavior but was suddenly enlightened by his motivations. She concluded that he didn't want to know where he was going as that would ruin his surprise and adventure. She tugged on his arm and led him off to the trail directly across from where they entered and, upon sensing his willingness to their course, realized that she had instinctively surmised correctly.

Marie knew the ins and outs of the park as well as the average citizen was familiar with the Holy Books of Creativity. She was well aware that three of the paths were hiking trails of various lengths. She also knew that the other two trails led to a picnic area and a bike trail, respectively. The trail she had chosen was the longest and most infrequently traveled upon route to ensure their privacy as the park was patronized by a large volume of visitors.

The couple set out among the invigorating forest with its pleasant aromas and playful wildlife. John recognized the robins and squirrels that roamed about in search of food but was oblivious to the other species of animals that populated the area. Regardless, he was comforted by simply watching their simplistic way of life which consisted primarily of hunting for food and sleeping. Their sole motivating factor was instinct and John felt himself thankful that as a member of the White Race, he was bestowed with an intelligence that made such a grand place as the White Empire possible.

John and Marie continued their quest deeper into the forest and John was drawn farther into the clutches of the awe inspiring mystique of the woodland. He felt as though he and his lovely damsel were enveloped into a bubble completely cut off from the outside world. This was the feeling that the secluded

nature of their surroundings gave him although he realized that many creatures surrounded them. These were insignificant pieces of the background though compared to the two of them.

John perceived how one could easily become lost, or perhaps found was a better word in this domain of serenity. This domain rivaled Marie's beauty but the two went well together like an art gallery that has exquisite paintings of different eras. In other words, Marie and the park belonged together and it would seem that Marie realized this although perhaps not on a conscious level. Just as people are attracted to like minded individuals, beauty, it would seem, attracted beauty.

The entire universe seemed to revolve around Marie and John as they hiked onward through the twists and turns of the winding trail. Both man and woman felt the pervasive feeling that embodied them saying that they truly were the center of not only the known world, but of the unknown as well. Words seemed superfluous at this time and place and therefore the only sounds that were heard were from the rustling of the trees as a gentle wind blew and the harmonic sound of the birds communicating to one another.

John had love on his mind. Marie had love on her mind. Both wished the other thought the same but neither could be entirely sure no matter how well things seemed. Could such a lightning bolt of love last or was a lasting relationship more like an oak tree that needed years upon years to grow into its prime?

For some time now, John noticed that the trail which they were traversing was rising higher and higher towards the clouds in what reminded him of man's evolution into the Superman. All those that had yearned for the coming Superman were now elated at its fruition just as John felt a similar power as he ascended towards the heavens. He thought it fitting that the higher one went, the harder it was to reach even higher heights. He was reassured by the simple fact that virtually his entire life was before him and since the average life span was over 100 years, he would have ample time to fulfill his goals.

Just as John and Marie were at a considerable height physically, they both were also in a sphere of lofty thoughts. This soaring state of consciousness was obviously a product of two main factors. The lesser factor being the grand kingdom of nature that surrounded the pair and the more significant element being that intangible entity commonly known as love.

The path made a sharp right turn but as John turned he felt his arm tugged by Marie telling him she wanted to go straight into the woods. John halted and gazed into Marie's dreamy eyes as he realized that she beckoned him off into the copse. John was intrigued by her unspoken proposition and consented to her request but he knew that it would take a tremendous amount of willpower to deny Marie anything she wanted.

Marie led John through a maze of maple trees and John was impressed by the agility she displayed as she quickened her pace and deftly darted between the large wooden pillars that blocked their way. It was self-evident that Marie had traveled this way before and John wondered what might lay ahead, perhaps a pirate's treasure, he jokingly thought.

Marie was a good ways ahead of him and realizing it, had stopped and beckoned him to go faster. John complied but before he could catch Marie, she darted off further into the forest like a prancing deer fleeing from a hunter. John had been holding back his tremendous speed but now unleashed the full fury of his quickness in a powerful explosion like that of an ancient cannon that launched death and destruction at an enemy's castle walls.

The cannonball that was John, swiftly and gracefully closed in on its target. Marie knew the path but that didn't make up for the difference in speed between the two and John was about to catch his prey when the unexpected happened.

Marie had simply vanished as if she been swallowed by the ground or fallen off a hidden cliff. John suddenly wondered if she had ever existed at all. Was she just an illusion that he had created? It seemed as though she had been nearly perfect and he had so desired to find his mate in life that he thought it possible that his unconscious had invented her.

John came to a halt where he last saw Marie and would have been captivated by the stellar view that was presented before him had he not been so concerned with Marie's whereabouts. No further trees grew in his present location and there was a tremendous bluff that lay before him. Frantically and anxiously his eyes examined the area with his penetrating stare that was well trained due to his service in the Air Force. He saw no sight of his companion as he looked around and had to force himself to center his attention downwards in the dastardly unfortunate possibility that Marie had plummeted to her death.

Fearing the worst for his enchanting princess, John slowly, as if to somehow prevent Marie's death, dropped his gaze below. To his surprise and utter relief, he saw the immaculately supple skin on Marie's

face submerged in the golden rays of sun. She was smiling playfully with her hands on her hips as if she was wondering what had taken him so long. John smirked pleasantly as he thought of the many primitive savages who would surely bow down and worship at the feet of the divine figure of Marie.

The ledge where John stood fell sharply until it flattened out after a descent of approximately three meters. John ran down the steep path and embraced the waiting Marie warmly and extremely affectionately. The two presented quite a picture upon the top of the towering cliff where, John noticed hesitantly, there was a far larger and far deadlier descent than the place where John thought Marie had fallen. John estimated the drop to be many thousands of meters and was quite thankful that his cherished partner hadn't fallen into the abyss.

John was visibly delighted to be in the presence of Marie and spoke with an air of one who had found a long lost friend, "I'm so glad that you are all right! I thought that you had fallen off the cliff and died!"

Surprise swept over Marie as she hadn't meant to alarm John in such a manner. She had only meant to be playful and didn't even realize that one couldn't immediately see the ledge that jutted out from the side of the crag where they stood. Such an emotional outburst had shocked her but she was pleased at how much John cared in order to release such tenderness.

"I'm so sorry, John," Marie blurted out emphatically. "I didn't mean any harm at all. I just wanted to show you this lovely and secluded spot. This is where I come to write poetry and think. What do you think of it up here?"

John released Marie and stepped to the edge of the bluff and took a deep breath of fresh air as he eyed the valley that lay before him. A sense of great feeling enveloped John like a mother squeezing an infant close to her bosom. The glen was filled with kilometers upon kilometers of trees that seemed aligned in a military fashion with John presiding from above as their leader.

Impressed by his troops, John spoke, "It's a great view and I can completely relate as to why you come here to write poetry. I wouldn't mind writing down my thoughts as I gazed out into the vast ocean of the natural kingdom that spreads itself out before us. In the meantime, why don't we enjoy the view for a while?"

John offered his hand to Marie and she graciously accepted it. The duo sat down near the edge of the bluff and snuggled gently together. Their senses were well placated with the astounding view presented before them, the serene sound of a gentle breeze and the sounds of the animals that lurked about them, and, above all, the satisfying pleasure of embracing one another. Even the smells about the couple were comforting and indicated that a multitude of flowers stood as sentinels guarding this secluded area of hospitality.

The scene that the duet projected was very similar to the ending of a romance novel where true love is found and the couple is never separated in the times to come. John was suddenly dismayed as he thought that he only had one week away from the Air Force and he had yet to visit his family. John could hold Marie in his arms until the end of time but he knew he must fulfill his duty to the military.

As he was contemplating, John felt Marie relax in his embrace and he realized she had fallen asleep. She was the total embodiment of contentment with her slackened posture and slight grin that reflected her inner comfort. Not wanting to wake her and interrupt her delightful demeanor, he decided to wait until she awakened from her slumber.

It was quite some time before Marie regained her consciousness but time was irrelevant to John and didn't seem to have the same meaning while he was with the one whom he hoped would one day be his beloved. Marie appeared quite rejuvenated by her rest and, after stretching out, bounded to her feet.

"Ahh that was refreshing," Marie exclaimed jubilantly. "Are you ready to go bike riding now? They have some really nice Himmel bikes that we can ride on the bike trails. It was amazing how much money we were able to raise in order to purchase them. Since we bought them in bulk we even got a rather substantial discount."

John wondered if this day could get any better. John enjoyed cycling, although not as much as track and field events, and thought perhaps that he would compete in the sport someday.

"Yes, I'm ready to go enjoy some more sites in this wonderful park while riding bikes and being with you, my lovely companion. Shall we be off?"

Marie nodded amiably and the couple trekked off to finish the day with a scenic bike ride.

White Empire - Chapter VII

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneaux

As night fell on the charming hamlet of Heimburg like a much anticipated blanket on a freezing adventurer exploring the unknown Arctic regions, Wolf tucked in his first born son, Bernhardt. Wolf gently kissed his son's forehead to Bernhardt's satisfaction.

"Are you ready for school tomorrow, Ben? I'm going to be there with you for a while tomorrow." Wolf spoke softly so as not to disturb the other children who he had already wished a good night's sleep.

Ben was on the verge of entering the dream world when his attention was grasped when his father spoke in reference to his speech at the school. A groggy child was replaced by an eager one, "Yes, father. Even though I hear you talk all the time, I am looking forward to hearing you talk some more. Then I can tell everyone that you are my daddy."

Wolf grinned as he listened to his son talk. "You get a good night's rest so you will be ready for school tomorrow." Wolf lowered his voice and whispered, "RAHOWA!"

"RAHOWA!" came the replying whisper. Wolf attempted to leave the room when he felt a tug on his shirt. He glanced back at his son to hear him say, "Daddy, my teacher says we have to take a week off of school next week. How come? I like school."

"They have a week off four times a year so that you can take a rest from all the schoolwork. That doesn't mean you have to stop learning though as I can recommend some books for you to read. If you think having four weeks off a year is bad then you would have hated to go to school when your great grandpa went. They had to take off for virtually the whole summer. Go to sleep now and I will see you in the morning."

Wolf watched as his son closed his eyes and prepared to enter the realm of the unconscious. He was extremely proud of his first born son and already knew that Ben would become a fine scholar one day, not to mention a great athlete. Wolfgang realized that Ben would far surpass him in greatness and looked forward to all of his children's evolution into Supermen.

Quiet as a graceful cat was Wolf as he slipped out of the room and silently shut the door. He made his way into the kitchen where he made himself a snack of a cantaloupe and a glass of orange juice before venturing into the living room to join his lovely wife. He slipped onto the couch next to Isabelle as he prepared for a quiet night of watching a movie and nestling with his dear counterpart.

Wolf swiftly devoured his snack and kissed Isabelle with his lips that were sticky and sopping wet with cantaloupe juice. She responded by slugging him in the arm in playful retaliation. Isabelle wiped the juice from her lips and was forced to emit a slight laugh.

"That was a wet and juicy kiss, wouldn't you say my dear?" Wolf laughed and continued, "Have you found a good movie to watch? I haven't seen much besides training and combat videos and simulations so I hope there is a good adventure movie on."

Marie casually responded, "I found a movie that we both should like. It is an adventurous romance. It has the gallivanting spirit of the hero that you will no doubt enjoy combined with the emotional aspects of love that will satiate myself. It has received great reviews from the film critics with many calling it a tale of epic proportions but we will have to judge for ourselves whether it is good or not. Are you ready?"

Wolf settled into the plush blue interior of their couch and wrapped his muscular arms around the love of his life. He gazed into her eyes and gently kissed Isabelle. He silently nodded his approval to start the movie and listened to her succulent voice as she activated the home computer, which was named Eagle.

The computer was named Eagle because Wolf thought the eagle represented honor and loftiness. Wolf thought it a fitting name due to the exquisite design and sophistication of the mainframe. Their computer controlled many actions in the house and was voice activated. Among its functions were monitoring all the electrical devices, managing the power from the solar cells, and securing the house from any dangers such as fires or storms. It had so many functions that Wolf hadn't even explored all the possibilities yet even though he had upgraded to the Gamma3 model several years ago.

Isabelle dimmed the lights and activated the video screen that encompassed the entire wall but was

normally hidden by a sliding panel. She had Eagle begin the movie they were to watch as well as engaging the incredible music system they had which gave one the impression that one was living in the same world as the actors. She also had all the doors shut in the house and since the walls were sound proof, the children would sleep as if in the womb itself.

The majestic dove that was Isabelle eased into Wolf's gargantuan frame as the credits rolled across the video screen. The popular actor, Roland Magne, starred in the show with his counterpart, Antoinette de Somme, as his sophisticated love interest. The orchestral music that danced in the background increased in tempo and aggressiveness in a triumphant victory as the title splashed onto the screen. The name was Roland's Ascent and it seemed a quite fitting title seeing how the star was named Roland. Wolf wondered if the movie company was simply using his name to attract attention.

So far the movie looked rather impressive and interesting but Wolf's mind was elsewhere as he knew he wanted to converse with Isabelle about having another child. He unconsciously stroked his wife's golden hair as he gathered his thoughts.

Wolf gently nudged Isabelle and whispered to her, "I've been thinking about it a lot and I think we should have another child. Of course, the military would help with the costs but I really would enjoy having another child especially when I see how great the children we already have are. Our children gain the benefit of your intelligence and my athleticism so I think another kid is in order to further the superiority of our precious race."

Isabelle listened attentively to what her heroic husband was suggesting. She hadn't given birth to a wonderful White baby for a full four years and she did feel the instinctual pull of childbirth. She hadn't really thought about having more children but, once the thought was introduced, she did seem drawn to it like an ancient Viking that lusted for war. Not only would she cooperate with her inner being but she would also be doing the Empire a service by bringing new life into the world.

Isabelle responded to Wolf's question in a contemplative fashion, "I think we should really give it some thought but I am initially inclined to favor your proposal. My womanly instincts have raged up at the thought of creating new life. By looking at our eldest son, it is obvious that he is quite a specimen as he is already quite an athlete and simply devours information as if the world was going to end any day. How many more do you want, my White warrior?"

Wolf was slightly astonished by this question but his demeanor didn't reflect it as he was trained as a soldier and to show surprise was a sign of weakness and furthermore gave the enemy insight into his thoughts. Of course, Isabelle wasn't his enemy but his second nature of stoicism had to be consciously thrown off in order to reveal what lay behind his mask.

His family was quite important to Wolf but he hadn't given much thought to the actual number of offspring he desired in a long time. He had been quite content with five children for many years but now he wanted more. How many more was a difficult question at this time for him but he was sure of at least one more.

The movie they were watching trekked on as its star, Roland, went in search of himself by going on an exotic escapade to the steamy rain forests in South America. He had left his love interest behind as he felt he needed time to find himself. The problem was that he constantly thought of her but she was thousands of kilometers away.

Upon collecting his thoughts, Wolf spoke, "I can't really say how many more children we should have right now. I think we should just take it one step at a time and see how it goes. For now, we just need to concentrate on having one. Oh, and I would like to have another girl to give us an even three boys and three girls."

Isabelle half watched the movie as she dreamed of having another child. She fully realized that time was sparse to make a decision as Wolf had but a week before he had to resume his duty with the Holy Legions. She immensely enjoyed the children they had now so why not have more? Money wasn't a problem nor was time as she took care of the children full time. Taking care of the children was quite pleasurable as she marveled at how quickly they blossomed. It was truly one of the greatest feelings that existed in the world to take part in the cultivation of newborn babies to wonderful adults.

At times, she regretted that Wolf served in the military as he was denied precious time with their children but she realized that it was his duty and he was good at his profession. Wolf was extremely adapt at his trade as was evidenced by his winning of the Klassen Medal. It still hadn't sunk in all the way that her loving husband had been awarded the most prestigious award the military had to offer. Therefore, she knew he had to serve the greater good and fight for the Empire. It would be far too selfish to ask him to resign his position in a time of war. Besides, the White Empire was far superior to any other force on

Earth and the vast majority of soldiers came back alive.

The movie flowed onward as Roland left the hot, humid jungles of the rain forest that teemed with life and vegetation to the cold and barren lands of the Arctic. He was determined to find his place in the grand scheme of things by traveling to exotic regions. Nature thoroughly pleased Roland in all its extremes but he felt there was a missing link in his life.

Where and what was this missing ingredient that he sought after with great enthusiasm? Roland was determined to find it wherever it may be, even if he must travel around the world to find it. He was enjoying his trek thus far but truly missed his graceful girl friend, Bernadette. It was a sacrifice that he felt imperative, though, as he thought he must find his place by himself.

Unbeknownst to him, Bernadette was pursuing him with great vigor as she knew that Roland was her missing part. Normally, it would have been rather easy to track down someone who wanted to be found, but since Roland had ventured into the unknown wilds without any tracking or communication devices, this wasn't the case. It was a difficult journey for a tough adventurer like Roland so it would be incredibly dangerous for Bernadette as the journey was beset with dangers in the form of wild animals and deadly terrain.

As the luscious scenery and sweeping music enveloped Wolf and Isabelle in its hypnotic sway, the couple felt drawn further together, both physically and emotionally. Just as Bernadette's conscious yearned for Roland and Roland's unconscious ached for Bernadette, Wolf and Isabelle cuddled comfortably together knowing that they weren't missing any vital components in their life as they had each other and their family.

The film reminded Wolf of his own courtship with Isabelle. Back in his school days when Wolf played football (among other sports), he was attracted to a young, radiant cheerleader by the name of Isabelle Benini. The first gaze captivated Wolf to such an extent that he dreamt of the lovely young lady for days to come. He later found out that she hadn't even spotted him the time when he became mesmerized by her brilliance.

It had taken Wolf several days to gather up the bravado necessary to ask Isabelle out and was delighted when she accepted. He literally swept her off her feet and escorted her to a movie that went so well that both knew they were meant for each other after their first date. Time proved them right as they have enjoyed 10 glorious years together so far. The statistics indicate that they will live out their life in cheerful bliss as divorces are extremely rare and are usually considered an obscure oddity.

Ever since that fateful day of their first date, motion pictures have played a large role in the couple's marriage as it renews their love for each other and has become a sort of tradition or ritual. They had long since agreed that the two would watch movies that they were mutually interested in or to take turns choosing the films.

Bickering and fighting between married couples was quite infrequent as the Empire promoted good marriages through education. This education pointed out the obvious facts that men and women are different and have different needs so cooperation between the two parties was essential with the individual with the most talent in an area working in that area. Usually, women were more able in raising the children and men were more suited to providing for the family and, as such, that was the norm in the White Empire.

The film's musical score became foreboding as Roland persevered through a raging snow storm. This was an obvious indicator of dreadful occurrences to come but when misfortune would grab Roland by the collar was still a mystery.

Meanwhile, the words of the hero resonated throughout the area despite the fierce winds that roared attackingly like a ferocious lion that was enjoying tearing a zebra asunder. These words reflected the swirl of emotions that surged mightily inside Roland like the winds that wrapped him in its chilling cloak.

Clashing emotions resided within Roland's interior. On the one hand he was thrilled to be on this adventure but, on the other hand, he was no closer to his goal than when he started. Where might his goal be located and what indeed was it that he was searching for? What he did know was that he sorely missed his sweetheart and hoped that he would soon find the gem of knowledge that he was pursuing so earnestly.

Even though Roland was engaged in a bitter struggle with the harsh glacial conditions that surrounded him, his mind was envisioning his next destination somewhere in the confines of the African jungles. His mind was wandering ahead of him to unknown wilds where lions roam freely when his senses were alerted to a slight movement from his right flank.

Roland wheeled quickly around while unsheathing his plasma pistol but he was too slow as a white blur that could only be a polar bear catapulted towards him. The force of the bear's lunge would have been devastating had there not been so much snow on the ground. As it was, Roland was pinned underneath the salivating beast while the creature eyed him greedily as a tasty morsel, no doubt.

Fear paralyzed Roland's body as his eyes were fixated by the fangs that protruded from the brute's gaping maw. Death's black specter would soon consume Roland if he didn't regain his senses. The hulking mass of white fur and monstrous flesh raised its massive paw in a looping arc with the intention of beheading the hardened adventurer. Assisted by gravity, the claws speedily rushed towards the delicate skull of the brave hero.

Wolf was intensely absorbed with the titanic struggle between life and death that raged on before his eyes. He was so enraptured by the great film he was observing, that he barely felt his wife tighten her grip around his thick frame. The commander of a squad of Holy Legions knew full well what danger tasted like and could easily relate to the plight of the champion in the flick.

The death stroke of the fierce animal came down with alarming velocity but the agile reactions and will to live of Roland managed to dodge the blow as the bear collapsed on top of him. The massive hunk of protoplasm that lay atop Roland was still and unmoving and was obviously dead as its body gushed blood like a roaring waterfall.

The camera angled towards the plasma pistol which hadn't fallen from the tough grasp of our explorer and had saved his life. It took a mighty effort but Roland was able to squirm out from under the gargantuan organism that tried to destroy the wanderer with its final living action. After checking his body for injuries and being satisfied that the blood that caked his coat was that of his dead companion, Roland decided he had enough of the cold extremes of the north and set out for the continent of Africa.

As Isabelle watched the movie transport its scenery from the Arctic conditions of the north to the scorching expanse of Africa, she thought of the successful war that was ongoing in southern Africa. Once the area was cleansed she thought it would make a good vacation for the family. She wondered how long until the war there would come to an end. She argued that it wouldn't be much longer if the wars of the past were any indicator.

"How much longer do you think the war in Africa will endure? I was thinking that we should take a family trip there once the area is safe. What is it like down there anyway," Isabelle asked interestedly.

Wolf was delighted that his sweetheart was asking him of military affairs and responded to her query with hardly concealed enthusiasm, "We are smashing those muds quite easily so I predict victory in Africa very shortly. We might even secure the continent before I return to service. I may even be fighting in Asia shortly as Chinese forces have been encountered in South Africa. Our military normally conquers land every so many years and then solidify the conquered area before moving on but with the Chinese ready for war, I believe we will take the fight to them shortly after the final victory in Africa."

Wolf paused as he gathered his thoughts before resuming, "I think Africa would make for a good vacation spot as it is exotic and quite different from our surroundings here. The plant and animal life is far different. I even saw a monkey while I was there. I'm sure the children would enjoy the area and it would also be a learning experience for them as they would encounter a whole different world."

An unspoken agreement was sealed between the two that ensured a future vacation spot. Wolf surmised it would be a few years in the future before the area would be ready for vacationers. Much would have to be built and colonists would have to take up residence in the region but there was always a sizable contingent of adventurers who sought a new frontier to appease their wanderlust.

The attention of the couple refocused on the cinematic production that continued its epic tale of Roland's journeys. While climbing after a wild monkey in the dense jungles, Roland viewed the scenery that was allowed him atop an immense tree whose name was unknown to him. Such a breathtaking glimpse of the thicket overshadowed his fruitless attempt to seize a monkey that was quite obviously better suited to this environment.

Roland's thoughts once again surfaced to reveal his inner emotions. He had traveled thousands of kilometers but felt no closer to his goal that somehow managed to evade his grasp no matter how fast he ran. He felt as though he was chasing his shadow which he could never overtake. His excursions were undoubtedly exciting but, at the end of the day, he always yearned for that intangible, unknowing component that would complete his being. The biggest problem for him was that what he searched for was a nebulous factor of unknown properties and unrevealed origins which made his search nearly impossible. His instincts had propelled him to venture out on a quest for this unclaimed gem and he had

willingly complied.

As Roland brooded his situation, he heard a faint feminine voice amid the gargled sounds of the animals that sounded oddly familiar. The enterprising wanderer was about to dismiss the sound as merely an indigenous bird that was making its presence known when he again heard the voice louder and clearer than before.

Where had he heard that voice before? The pristine tone could have easily been mistaken for the lyrical piping of one of the native birds but not to his ears. The sound was known to him and, as he heard it yet again, he knew precisely what it was. Illuminated by intense delight, Roland scrambled hastily down the tree where he had roosted, in a frantic manner that would have startled even the most stalwart of men.

By the time Roland had descended the wooden pillar that rose to dizzying heights, he was scraped and bruised rather punishingly but was completely oblivious of these afflictions as he searched for the symphonic sound he heard previously. At last, his goal was within reach and he wasn't about to let it slip from his grasp but where had his prize ventured off to?

Roland heard his name being called quite clearly and he swiveled around to focus on its source. His much sought after goal was finally about to come to fruition as he gazed upon his lovely Bernadette and the golden aura that surrounded her, indicating to his mind that she was his missing ingredient. She had always been so close to him that it was amazing that he didn't realize that the gorgeous Bernadette made his life complete.

Wolf and Isabelle watched the magnificent display of cinematic magic in an awed state of bliss. The couple felt a sense of anguish as the movie wound to a close with Roland and Bernadette marrying and producing an educational television show that took them to exotic regions around the world. Indeed, Roland had ascended to wonderful heights and found his place in life.

Wolf didn't watch too many movies but this one had truly impressed him. It was definitely one he could watch a second time, especially with his stunning wife. For now, though, he was tired and by Isabelle's lax posture, she was fatigued as well.

"That was a great movie darling, but I'm ready for bed. How about you?" Wolf's tone seemed to emphasize his urgency for sleep.

Isabelle retorted eagerly, "It was a terrific movie! I could use some sleep as well though. Perhaps I will dream about the splendid movie we just watched." She smiled dreamily as she gazed into Wolf's glimmering gray eyes.

As the two got up and were about to march off to bed, Isabelle seemed struck with a sudden thought.

"It appears as though John and Marie are having a good time as they are out rather late. I wonder where they are and what they are doing. It looks like we are good matchmakers." Isabelle grinned as she escorted Wolf to their bedroom.

As man and wife entered their bedroom, Isabelle seemed more awake than before and she eyed Wolf seductively. Words were unnecessary as it was clear that the question of having another child was no longer in debate.

White Empire - Chapter VIII

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneaux

It was well after midnight when the blossoming young couple of John and Marie strolled down a well lit boulevard in search of a cozy restaurant to satisfy their growling stomachs and quench the pleading thirst that encompassed the two after an exhausting albeit pleasing, bike ride. The exceedingly clean avenue contained a variety of shops that were still open.

A club that obviously played heavy metal music attracted John's attention but he wasn't quite in the mood for a night moshing to the hard hitting sounds of that genre of music. Besides, he didn't think it was the right atmosphere at the moment with Marie. Nevertheless, he peered into the lounge and saluted some skinheads inside who returned the greeting.

A looming blue tinted structure grew from the ground to the clouds above like an imposing giant with a bloody battle-axe gazing down at an inconsequential ant. The construction seemed to be a cross

between a medieval castle and a skyscraper. The edifice dwarfed the other establishments and it alone ruled the area by its sheer size and magnificence.

Marie sensed John's interest and spoke with an informing tone that she used while she taught her class, "That is our Historical Genius Research Facility. As you can see, it is quite impressive but inside it is even more amazing. My class takes a field trip there every year. They don't spare any expense to ensure that our best minds are comfortable in order to ensure progress. I attended the facility for a year but decided I wanted to enlighten our youth instead of concentrating on uncovering the past and writing about it. After my teaching days are over I may go back though."

It wasn't surprising that Marie had attended a Genius Research Facility but it was, nonetheless, impressive. John felt his respect of his dazzling companion increase more and more. He flashed her a charming smile to represent his admiration for her great abilities.

John had never been inside one of the facilities but he knew precisely what they were. A Genius Research Facility attracted the best minds available across the land. The Empire went to great lengths to entice the available geniuses to live there and concentrate on a particular subject. Housing and wages were generously provided for by the government. By combining and uniting the brilliant minds, progress was realized far faster than ever before in the history of man.

The vital facilities of warfare, political science, and the like were located together at the capital of the Empire in Klassengrad. The subjects that weren't vital to the White Empire's defense were flung across the Empire. Never again would great creative ability be lost as it was in the past when intelligence wasn't valued like it was in this age.

Areas that had degenerated in the past, like art, music, and writing, flourished in the Empire. There were no longer any "starving artists" who struggled to survive. If one had talent then there was a nice cozy place to work and exhibit one's gift. Due to this help, the arts were inspiring, uplifting, and triumphant. This reflected the atmosphere of the entire White Empire.

It is not to be implied that the arts were a group activity by great artists. Artists, musicians, and writers only worked together if they so desired and usually it was an individual effort. The benefit of having a concentration of artists in one place was to set a good creative environment that spurred on everyone's talent. This also led to fierce competition which led to many prolific artisans who, had they not been pushed, wouldn't have produced anywhere near the amount of works had they been outside the community.

Marie quickened her pace as she saw the cafe which she thought was perfect for the situation. She beckoned John onward towards the cafe that seemed aptly named, "Cafe Amore". Upon seeing the establishment and its name, John's eyes lit up and he threw his heart melting smile at Marie.

The couple anxiously approached the cafe but not before giving a silent greeting to the volunteer policeman that patrolled the area. The volunteer graciously reciprocated the sentiment as he continued his vigilant watch over the area.

Volunteer policeman far outnumbered paid policeman as there were many upstanding citizens who took it upon themselves to dedicate some of their time to ensure the safety of the Empire. Volunteering was a kind of second job to these honorable citizens and they considered it a pleasure to be able to take an active part in maintaining law and order.

The combination of altruist forces and a paid police force resulted in a wider area of security for the Empire. As a result of the general nature of the population and this police force, crime was extremely scarce. The two branches of security forces worked in harmony which produced warm camaraderie and fierce athletic competition that was entertaining to all spectators.

As the affectionate couple entered the cafe, John was intrigued by the change in atmosphere that took place. The feeling of upbeat intensity that was felt outside the establishment was left behind. This new environment was one of a slower, more contemplative state of being as the room was darker and had the soothing sounds of an ambient orchestra that lulled one's mind into the deeper recesses of intellectual thought.

John noticed that all the booths in the club were secluded and formed islands that sprawled clandestinely in a sea of esoteric intellectualism. He quickly noted that this haven wasn't just a lounge of love between man and woman but a love of intelligence. Although he couldn't hear the individual conversations, he surmised that the topic of most of the discussions were about the past. The whispers of the parties formed an iron clad rule that the serenity of the blissful music would not be shattered by uttering speech above a normal talking tone.

Marie was comforted by John's obvious wonder at the intriguing world which they had entered. She realized that their date was the best she had ever known and, by the enamored expression on John's visage, she thought John felt the same way. Where this thunderclap of emotional pleasure might lead, she knew not. It was a joyous adventure that she planned to enjoy to the fullest.

John was led to the salad bar where he eagerly seized a large amount of scrumptious food and filled his plate to the brim. There was also a fruit and nut bar that attracted his attention but that would have to wait. Marie filled her tray with various fruits and nuts and they set out in search of a free table.

After leaving the food area, John noticed that the food area was brightly lit while the other areas were quite dim. It was still possible to read under the pale reddish glow that surrounded the club but not many were engaged in this activity. The vast majority of the occupants appeared to be involved in discussions and debates that, by the expressions transmitted, seemed to be rather heated although the exact content of the disputes was inconceivable as all had the will power to contain any outbursts that would disrupt the tranquil atmosphere.

The couple found a booth and settled comfortably into the relaxing chairs that seemed to mold themselves to the contours of any person that sat down. As John set his plate down, he noticed that there was a computer and video screen contained within the table and but needed a push of a button to bring it to the surface. It was a great feature but it was of no desire to John at the moment as his stomach growled anxiously in preparation for the food that lay before him.

John enjoyed talking with Marie immensely but both knew that it was time to recharge their bodies. Both of them were exhausted from the enduring bike ride that they had gone on and they replenished their bodies quickly as they devoured the salubrious food that they consumed.

Words went unspoken and were unnecessary to convey the mutual attraction and affection that the couple felt for one another. The atmosphere, coupled with the endorphins present after the physical exertion of cycling, had a calming, relaxing effect on the duo. John felt as though he had known Marie for his entire life despite just meeting her yesterday and by the glint in her eyes, he suspected she felt the same way. John silently mused how much of a factor the captivating atmosphere was in the kinship he felt with Marie.

John and Marie made several trips back to the food area before satisfying their ravenous hungers. During the entire time, words weren't spoken but that didn't mean that the two weren't having a great time. Indeed, the blissful demeanor of the couple reflected their inner being which was at a delightful state of contentment. It was quite obvious that those who talked of body language saying more than actual words were quite right in this instance.

"That was a very satisfying meal after such a good bike ride." John spoke in a slightly sedated fashion and flashed Marie a pleasant smile as he continued, "I hear that you are involved extensively with the Church. What can you tell me about that?"

Most of the citizens of the Empire were very religious with Church being an inspiring, uplifting force in many people's lives. John had become good friends with the Minister assigned to his unit and was vastly interested in all aspects of Creativity. Of course John enjoyed the history of the World Church of the Creator the most as his love of events of the past enthralled him. The trials and tribulations that the Church had undergone were very encouraging to him and showed the power of an idea whose time had come. The history of Creativity, from the glorious ideas that Klassen instituted in forming the tremendously powerful creed, to the near collapse after the grand founder died, to the rebirth under the guidance of the charismatic Rev. Hale, to the present day Empire under Emperor Magnus, was all entertaining to John.

Marie answered in a tone which belied her comfort, "I pretty much help out wherever I'm needed. I've helped the kids with tutoring or baby-sitting and I play tennis in the Church league. Helping out and being involved in the community gives me a great feeling inside. I can honestly take pride in the community and the Empire knowing that I am helping our people ascend to greater and greater heights."

John's admiration for Marie grew stronger and stronger the better he came to know her. She was one who led by example and didn't need fancy speeches in order to inspire or rouse one into action. John felt compelled to contribute more to society despite the fact that he was already fighting for the honor and glory of the White Empire as it was.

It was sensed by Marie that John held her in great esteem and by the way he gazed dreamily into her eyes, she knew that she was correct in her assumption. This electrified her as she was enthralled by his character and dashing good looks. Some might say their relationship was based on chemistry or destiny

but the simple truth was that the couple was in love.

The attractive pair simultaneously reached for each other's hands and clasped them together affectionately. It was as if their minds were unified and each sensed the other's thoughts in a wonderful, symbiotic affair. Such power and love were conveyed without words but with the caressing of the hands and sublime gaze of the eyes. Only the power of love was capable of such immense magnificence that was displayed by the duo as they seemed to exist in their own plane of existence that was far removed from the standard understanding of time and space.

Marie's face soured somewhat as she realized how late it was and spoke reluctantly, "It is getting late and I need sleep for tomorrow but I wish I could remain here with you forever. I've really enjoyed the past couple days and I've come to know a truly great man whose presence I've come to adore. I just have to see more of you. Are you free tomorrow?"

Such an emotional outburst deeply touched the inner part of John's being. The type of love that Marie exuded was quite foreign to him. It was similar to the love he felt for his mother and father but had its own unique characteristics that were hard to form into mere words. It was a primordial feeling that seemed to transcend literary expression even though many have tried, but ultimately failed, to put love in its proper position and do it the justice it deserves.

John struggled to withhold the tears of joy that were forming in his eyes and was triumphant in this endeavor as he replied to Marie, "Yes, I am free tomorrow. These last two days have had a great impact on my life and I would have to say, in all honesty, that the time spent with you is one of the most memorable times in my life. Soon I will have to be visiting my family and then returning to the Air Force but I'm sure we will keep in touch until my next visit."

With the present technology available, it would be very easy for the couple to remain in contact even while John remained in the military. This wasn't the same as being in the same room with a loved one but duty called and John was an honorable man who would never dream of betraying his beloved Empire. Besides, the war was going extremely well and victory in Africa was imminent.

Of course, Marie was disheartened by the lack of time that was available to their blossoming relationship but she was determined to make the most of the time that they had and to cherish it eternally. The religious creed of Creativity taught that one must be persistent and persevering in trying to achieve one's goal and her goal was John. She would utilize her indomitable will and would wait until the end of time, if need be, to secure her glorious John Granger.

Marie, unlike John, did not struggle against her tears and let them flow mightily like a raging river that had smashed through a restraining dam and unleashed its powerful fury on any who dared cross its surging path. Such a discharge of passion was unknown to her fertile mind but she reveled in the delight that it brought.

Regaining her faculties, Marie spoke softly, "After my classes tomorrow, I will be cleaning up the picnic area at Salubrious Park and keeping it neat. Would you care to assist me?"

"Of course I will, darling," came John's instant reply and with it, his handsome smile.

The couple continued holding hands and gazing into the very essence of each other's being for well over an hour in complete blissful silence. The time rushed by with the force of a powerful lightning bolt before jolting the two into the realization that it was quite late and it was time to depart. Their magnificent date was over but never would it be forgotten.

White Empire - Chapter IX

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneaux

Wolf's hovercar glided swiftly and silently through the air as he masterfully piloted the craft. He, along with his wife and best friend, were headed to his children's school so that he could give a speech to the developing minds of youth. He had given much thought to this special opportunity that lay before him and sculpted his words so as to appeal to the juvenile minds that were to be his audience rather than to hardened soldiers that he was used to speaking to.

"I never before realized how well you could fly," remarked John. "How come you never joined the Air Force?"

This was quite a compliment coming from such a seasoned pilot that John represented and Wolf was taken aback by the statement and he responded graciously, "Thanks, John. I never really thought about the Air Force though. I enjoy the flying but I prefer to fight on land."

Isabelle grew tired of hearing about warfare as she had other ideas that danced around in her mind. She knew it was inevitable that the topic of war would come up between two soldiers but she yearned to know of the suspected love affair that was brewing between John and Marie. This curiosity grew stronger and stronger with each passing moment until she could no longer accommodate its powerful force.

Smiling, Isabelle faced John and asked, "How did your date go with Marie? You two lovebirds were out quite late.." Isabelle let her sentence fall off with the hope that John would fill in the blanks to satiate her intense inquisitive nature.

As Isabelle awaited a response to her inquiry, an intense glow seemed to swarm over John. This aura engulfed John's entire being and he radiated with an energy that rivaled that of the flaming ball of fire that is known as the sun. A beaming smile was all that could be seen of John in the presence of such unparalleled magnificence.

Both Isabelle and Wolf were awed in the presence of the rays of light that shone forth from John and they instantly understood that John's date had gone extremely well. They knew this well in advance to his confirming it through spoken words.

"I had an absolutely fabulous time with the marvelous Marie," uttered John happily. "I couldn't have created a more perfect mate if I had the power to do so. She is the most intelligent, beautiful, and honorable woman I have ever met and I think we make a great couple. We have another date today and I have a surprise for her."

John maintained his charismatic disposition but was not forthcoming as to what the surprise might be. The joyous nature of John's behavior was contagious as Wolf and Isabelle became infected with the wonder and awe that John exuded. It was quite clear that John intended to present Marie with a substantial surprise but what exactly it might be, remained shrouded in the confines of John's mind.

As it was clear that John wasn't going to reveal the mystery, Isabelle combed her brain for ideas. It wasn't hard to place herself in her sister's shoes as to what she might enjoy, but she found it difficult to imagine what John had in mind as they were quite different. Perhaps it was something as simple as some flowers and a quick getaway to a resort spot, she thought. She was far from grasping the actual event John had in mind but she decided to wait and see what transpired.

A thought suddenly entered John's mind and he spoke it aloud, "As great a time as I have had with Marie, I don't recall asking her what school she teaches at. Might it be the school where we are going now," John asked in eager anticipation.

Isabelle responded with a disappointing air, "Sorry, John. You are going to have to wait until later to see Marie. We are headed to the Da Vinci school whereas Marie teaches over at the Plutarch school."

The luminescence that surrounded John seemed to momentarily flicker as he heard Isabelle's words but it quickly regained its vigor. A slight sprinkle of water would not douse the raging inferno that encompassed his entire being.

The hovercar rapidly descended downward towards their destination. The parking lot was filled with hovercars well in excess of the teachers and administration of the school. Word that the winner of the illustrious Klassen Medal, Wolfgang Gerhard, was giving a speech had obviously been spread among the people. Isabelle had never seen the lot so full in all the time she had brought her children to learn at the Da Vinci school.

Since hovercars are able to take off vertically, the vehicles were packed tightly together. Wolf landed their metallic silver craft next to a blue and a green hovercar. The trio exited the car and made their way to the school building which loomed invitingly several hundred meters away.

Isabelle noticed a slight change in Wolf's appearance and she wondered if he felt somewhat apprehensive. He was used to speaking to a small core of hardened veterans and not to an auditorium full of children and spectators. She was confident of his abilities but, to show her support, she interlocked arms with Wolf. He appreciated the gesture and responded by exchanging a loving glance with his wife.

The trio confidently strolled toward the school amid greetings of admiration and reverence at the site of

the colossal figure of Wolf. The tingling surge of excitement that emanated from the three spread throughout those comrades whom they happened upon like a refreshing wave of sunlight that illuminates the land every morning to the gleeful delight of the chirping birds.

The troop quickly made its way into the school auditorium despite the fact that Wolf's speech wouldn't commence for nearly an hour. The auditorium was thronged with spectators and more were rushing in to fill the quickly depleting empty seats. Of course, the seats in the front of the grandiose hall were reserved for the children and for Wolf's own entourage.

The crowd already present became energized as word of Wolf's arrival spread throughout the assembly room. Not just those who actually caught a glimpse of Wolf were awed but even those that heard the whispers of his presence were impressed with his courage and tenacity that was contained within him and had led to his winning of the great Klassen Medal. It didn't matter to those that hadn't actually gazed upon Wolf because they could feel the power that his presence radiated.

Wolf wondered if this was what Emperor Magnus went through whenever he was in public. Wolf found that he was developing far more respect than ever before for the leader of the White Empire. To be the center of attention and the focus of such great respect could be overwhelming so only the greatest leaders should attempt it. Great power must be handled with great responsibility and old leaders must make way for the new.

These and other musings ran through Wolf's mind. He needed time to collect his thoughts and to go over his speech so he led the party into the school lounge for some peace and quiet. The lounge was a serene place where Wolf set upon studying his speech while John and Isabelle chatted pleasantly with the faculty.

The eldest son of Wolfgang Gerhard, Bernhardt, sat among his peers in History class. He enjoyed hearing of the fabulous victories that his Empire had won but right now his mind was occupied with his father's speech. It had been the talk of the school and young Ben was proud of his father and couldn't wait until he followed his dad in those large steps.

It was clearly obvious that Ben was the son of Wolf. The same shaved head and piercing gray eyes that his father had, were bequeathed unto his son. The large frame was clearly evident on Ben, who preferred wrestling over boxing which had led to a well sculpted physique despite the fact that Bernhardt was merely 8 years old. It was a testament to the Empire as it encouraged both physical and mental greatness in the form of athletics and learning. The Creator Supermen that existed were a product of this holy encouragement.

Thoughts of his father kept drifting into Ben's mind like a gentle breeze that tickles one's feet. Such enticement was pleasing but now was the time for his history lesson. It was his powerful will which must triumph over his being in order to learn about the History of the White Empire. It exercised its iron grip just in time as his history teacher, Mr. Himmler, called upon him to answer a question.

"What event changed the world so dramatically that is set the stage for the White Empire? Ben?" asked Mr. Himmler as he pointed towards the son of Wolfgang Gerhard.

Ben grinned and spoke confidently, "That would be the Creator revolution in the United States of America in the year 47AC. Our comrades valiantly defied our hated enemies, the Jews, and liberated the land. It marked the first time that America was cleansed of its muddy poison and, as a result, ushered in a new age of prosperity through the great teachings of Creativity and the World Church of the Creator."

Mr. Himmler had ceased being amazed at the quick mind that Ben possessed. Ben easily grasped events and remembered them brilliantly. He effortlessly completed his exams despite the fact that the standards in the Empire were extremely high and classes were becoming harder and harder as the White Race was becoming more intelligent.

It truly astounded this history teacher on how fast the citizens of the Empire were evolving. Himmler had seen the degradation of the world as a result of Jewish brain pollution so he had first hand knowledge of the effects of upbreeding and downbreeding. He had seen the cesspool of filth that characterized the Doom Age and was immensely glad to have survived that gloomy time to now live in the brilliant age of the White Empire.

At the ripe age of 80, Himmler was well suited to the profession of teaching as he had lived through many important events in the Empire. He had even made educational videos recounting the major events of the era. The wise old man persona represented Himmler well despite the fact that he didn't look old as he had the features and energy of a vibrant athlete.

"Excellent answer Ben," remarked Himmler admiringly. "The Creator Revolution sparked the flame that soon spread to other White countries. Many nations saw the great productivity and happiness within the newly named Creator States of America and duplicated the success by adopting Creativity and racial socialism. Canada and England were the first two nations to follow suit but the rest of Europe soon followed."

"Many intellectuals stressed unity between the different White nations to forge a new age in the world and to stop the warfare between our White brothers and sisters. It was stressed repeatedly that it was our common bond with the White Race that make us great and not ethnicity itself. It was stated that it didn't matter whether you were French or German but, rather, your membership among the White Race was what was important. Finally, this great idea was accepted and the White Empire was created which united all the White nations of the world.

"What year did this take place and what holiday do we celebrate to honor this momentous event?" asked Mr. Himmler inquisitively as he gazed around the room at the upstretched hands.

Mr. Himmler promptly called on a fair, brown haired girl named Hannah who responded with the answer of 57AC. The answer was correct and Himmler nodded approvingly before continuing his lecture.

"After the consolidation of the White Empire, a glorious age of enlightenment, happiness, and productivity ensued. The Empire excelled in all productive areas and was the predominant force on the planet that displayed such grand splendor that had never before been seen in the history of man. The Empire didn't concentrate its talent in one area like the Romans in the form of practical knowledge or the Greeks in speculative knowledge, but instead emphasized all learning and that is one of the reasons we are a greater civilization than either of them," remarked the figure of Himmler who loved emerging himself in the wonders of the White Race.

"The Empire was cleansed of the poison that had plagued it for centuries. This cancer was, of course, the muds and foremost among them was the hideous Jew. The Jews' paralyzing grip on the White nations of the world was finally destroyed and our comrades quickly regained their vitality at the removal of this thorn. Of course, the Jews went down kicking as they tried to start another war between our Brothers but they were unsuccessful as Creativity's enlightening ideology warned of such Jewish ploys."

Mr. Himmler took a breath while glancing around the room in case of any questions but, seeing none, continued, "After 10 years of peace and prosperity, the Empire decided to regain control of the world that had slipped from its grasp. In 67AC, Mexico and all of South America were conquered swiftly and almost effortlessly. The land was cleansed of our enemies and then colonization began. The same process occurred in 72AC in the Mideast and North Africa. We are presently engaged in the conquest of Africa and official word of total victory should be announced before the end of this 77th year of Creativity."

After glancing at the time, Himmler resumed speaking, "Are there any questions before we go to the auditorium to hear Captain Gerhard speak?"

Ben raised his hand and, after acknowledging Himmler's nod, spoke inquiringly, "When do you think we will conquer Asia and complete our world conquest?"

Himmler seemed prepared for this question and replied immediately, "I've been thinking about that a lot. Normally, we would cease our conquests while we solidified our hold on the newly conquered territory but, with the discovery of Chinese forces in South Africa, I believe we will soon be conquering Asia. It will probably take longer to conquer Asia as the gooks aren't as stupid as the niggers and there are literally billions of them. I would estimate that it would take 2 years to secure the area and complete our dominion of Earth. That day will surely be cause for a huge celebration, I am sure."

The sureness of victory that Mr. Himmler projected was common within the Empire, especially when one realized that thinking positive was encouraged as a virtue by the doctrines of Creativity. This healthy attitude had made the previous conquests and achievements of the Empire possible as failure was not an option.

Being satisfied that there were no further questions, Himmler organized the children into neat, disciplined rows as they marched off to the auditorium. The smiles that illuminated the children's faces reflected their excitement at the upcoming event although talking about it was improper at the moment as it would be impolite. Discipline was stressed at an early age with the schools playing their part to ensure an orderly society.

As Ben traipsed alongside his peers into the hall, he was warmly surprised by the vast multitude of

people that were present to hear his father speak. It was a great feeling to the young lad as he was filled with pride at his father's talent and a pride in his Race as a whole. As many schoolboys do, Ben envisioned himself in his father's place but realized that there wouldn't be any enemies left on the planet by the time he would be old enough to join the military. Nevertheless, he still dreamed of heroic victories over the vile alien hordes that existed in the world.

Himmler directed the children to their predesignated seats which were situated near the center, three rows back. The children calmly and silently filed in, showing more poise at their tender age than the muds of the world ever exhibited in their lifetime. The children's well kept appearance of black dress pants and white dress shirts for the boys and black skirts with white blouses for the girls, represented the well oiled machine that was the White Empire. The shirts the boys wore and the blouses the girls wore both had the Creativity emblem emblazoned over the heart to symbolize that Creativity was the essence of their being.

The moment of truth was approaching and Ben was eager with anticipation. His brain seemed to salivate as he awaited his father's words like a starving wolf who sights a wholesome snack in the form of a tasty rabbit. Unlike the wolf, Ben knew he must be patient in order to secure his prize and nestled comfortably into his chair as he waited.

Patience was a trait that proved difficult for Ben but, no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't accelerate time. He spotted his mother and John during his wait and flashed them a smile which they returned in kind. As he noticed the principal of the school, Mr. Thordin, about to make an announcement, he realized his wait was nearly over.

In a sea of well dressed patrons, Mr. Thordin stood out amongst them as his distinct Nordic features were clearly discernible. His tall, slim frame was accentuated by his fair skin, blonde hair and blue eyes. His matching dark blue suit, tie, and dress pants made his fair complexion more profound and marked. His appearance and demeanor made one wonder if he was a member of a long line of kings or some other ruling body.

Those who knew Thordin, knew that he was an excellent orator. He didn't want to emphasize this prowess in speaking though as he didn't want to upstage the main attraction-Wolfgang Gerhard. So those who were unfamiliar with him, didn't realize that his speech was refrained and subdued compared to his normal firebrand style which captivated audiences.

Thordin nobly ascended to the podium and addressed the eager crowd with an amiable tone, "RAHOWA, ladies and gentleman. It is with great pleasure and honor that our school is host to the Klassen Medal winner. This fine July day witnesses the presence of a great and heroic man who routinely risks his life for our precious Empire. I now present to you, the one and only, Wolfgang Gerhard!"

Thunderous explosions of applause resonated throughout the hall as Wolf shook hands with Thordin and then replaced him near the podium. Although there were far less people in attendance here than the victory parade he had recently attended, it sounded far louder as they were located in a grandiose auditorium that echoed sound.

The cheers lasted longer than Wolf had anticipated and rolled on and on like the never ending crash of the waves of the ocean upon a battered beach. The extended ovation gave Wolf a chance to notice that several thousand spectators were easily accommodated in the facility. He was also impressed at the vaulted ceiling which seemed to soar upwards endlessly into the distant space outside of Earth's atmosphere.

The sheer immensity of the crowd that focused their attention solely on Wolf was daunting. Of course, the penetrating stares were of admiration and respect but they attacked Wolf's confidence nonetheless. He was accustomed to talking to his squad of Legionnaires which was comprised of only ten men so the contrast he was presented with was extremely large in numerical relation. Although doubts existed in his mind, he was able to defeat them and smash them to pieces before he began his speech.

Wolf held his head up high and extended his body to its full height before speaking, "RAHOWA my White Racial Comrades! I greatly appreciate this wonderful opportunity to affect our youth in a positive fashion. My thanks go out to the school board and especially to Mr. Thordin as it was his idea to allow me the honor of speaking before you today."

After stating his simple introduction, Wolf gained momentum and his confidence grew to greater heights as he realized how simple speaking was. It didn't compare to waging war with his foes in terms of danger but, to his surprise and delight, it opened the dam that held in his adrenaline. This elation made him consider doing more of public speaking but he must finish his present talk before thinking of the

future.

After a momentary pause, Wolf continued his speech, "I'd like to talk about finding one's place within the Empire. I believe it is vital to one's own inner drive to find their desired niche in the world and then to focus on that spot. The only way the Empire will evolve is by those that excel in a certain area to concentrate their talent in that area and working with other experts in their particular field."

As Wolf was taught in speech class, he spoke with enthusiasm and gesticulated with hands quite often. He also darted his gaze about the entire hall so that he made everyone present believe that he was talking to them personally despite the fact that there were thousands present. As a result of these proven techniques, the crowd was enchanted by Wolf's speech. Wolf noted that, more often than not, the way one said something was more important than the actual words that the person spoke so he emphasized an energetic and confident disposition.

Examples ranging from politics to maintenance were presented by Wolf. He insisted that all the jobs within the Empire were vital to its growth and that one should take pride in whatever one's duties were. It was also important to do the best job possible to ensure the healthiness of the White Empire. Even though class warfare was virtually non-existent, Wolf made a point of stressing that all citizens had a place somewhere in the world and to not cause strife as it would be a selfish act against the whole. He furthermore stated that this wasn't to say that all jobs were equal as the Emperor held the highest position in the land but to respect those men who were performing higher duties rather than cause inner turmoil.

After relating these points to the crowd, he communicated his own personal experience, "I have found my own place within our great land as a member of the Holy Legions. I believe that this profession is the one in which I am best suited and I enjoy fighting the enemies of our people. It is a great honor for me to secure the survival of our grand people and to be a part of the historic battles which our beloved Empire fights in."

Wolf paused momentarily as he let his words sink into the masses spread out in front of him before resuming, "Of course, with the spiritual advantage we have in the form of Creativity, heroism, and bravery combined with our technological might, there won't be much need for a powerful military force as I expect the entire world will be ours quite soon. I think a military force will be retained after our world victory but its main purpose will probably be to keep our soldiers in shape. Therefore, my personal function in life will have to change and I will have to evolve. Everyone should be prepared for such a time when our services will no longer be required or we grow too old to perform our duties adequately. I believe I will resume my boxing career after the wars are over but the main point is to think ahead and plan your future wisely."

Wolf was thoroughly enjoying speaking before his audience and enjoyed their undivided attention and nodding heads at the points he brought up but the individual most enjoying the lecture was his son, Ben. Ben was enthralled by the way his father forcibly spoke and gestured about while making valid arguments. He had seen great speakers before but this was his father, his flesh and blood. This simple fact transformed the occasion into a most memorable moment that was shared by father and son.

To further pound in his central theme of finding one's place in life, Wolf noted that one should try out as many interests as one could to determine if there is an unknown ability lurking within. He also praised the Empire for its policy of promoting great men so that geniuses such as Mozart and Beethoven would never go unappreciated in their time.

Wolf gave examples of success stories within the present time of those that had achieved glory and greatness by finding their calling in life. He mentioned the great engineer, Weissklug, who designed extraordinary military aircraft that were used to destroy the enemies of their realm. Also noted was the brilliant writer, Dostler, whose adventure stories inspired many to undertake great projects that they wouldn't have dreamed possible before reading the novels of Dostler. The final example Wolf gave was of the noble leader of the Empire, Magnus, who had ruled benevolently for years.

As Wolf prepared to finish his speech, he was pleased to notice that the crowd remained inviting which meant his oration hadn't dulled them into boredom. Because of this, Wolf regarded his speech as a success. Savoring the crowd's concentration, he proceeded to conclude his talk with the same amount of vibrance with which he had begun.

Like a mythological dragon whose breath was scorching fire, Wolf spewed forth words that enraptured his listeners, "In conclusion, I would again like to thank the school for presenting me with this honor. I hope that each and every one of you in attendance today can find their proper position in life and to live up to the great potential that lies within you as members of the astounding White Race. Take care my comrades and have a great day! RAHOWA!"

The crowd responded with a uproarious response greeting in the traditional "RAHOWA!" fashion that easily overpowered the commanding voice of Wolfgang Gerhard. This was followed by an even mightier applause that pounded relentlessly against the eardrums of the participants but which was welcomed as the morale of the spectators was improved by the outburst. This titanic clamor might have startled those unaware of its source as if a beast causing pandemonium had run amok but the reality of the source was one pleasing to the throng and to Wolf himself.

Having thoroughly enjoyed his speech, Wolf exited the area surrounding the podium to be graciously greeted by the crowd and his family. School was officially over so his family, consisting of his wife and their five children, ambushed him. Due to Wolf's immense size, every member of his family was able to embrace him at the same time which created an odd, but loving picture for those observing the spectacle.

Everyone around Wolf wished to congratulate him at the same time so it made for a convoluted utterance of words but the message was clear. The words that Wolf could make out most clearly were, "Great speech!" It was a truly invigorating feeling that was being exuded by the crowd and Wolf felt like he had just won a football game in the last seconds of the game but highly doubted whether he would be carried off on anyone's shoulders.

The entourage consisting of Wolf, Isabelle, their children, and John slowly made its way out of the auditorium. The crowd around them drained out of the building just as slowly as they desired to be in the presence of Wolf for as long as possible. Of course, Wolf was flattered at this and proceeded to shake anyone's hand who wished a handshake. Wolf had never known such fame and he enjoyed it immensely as it filled him with joy knowing that he was spreading happiness by his very presence.

The procession finally exited the Da Vinci school to the relative serenity of the parking lot. The fresh air seemed fresher and the birds that flew by seemed to chirp louder and in a more fanciful tune. It was an exulted time that finally made coherent communication possible as the troop was no longer in the hectic environment of the auditorium.

A jubilant Ben was the first to speak, "When will I give speeches like that father?"

Wolf smiled at the comment and responded pleasantly, "As soon as you make it happen, my young son. If that is your goal, then work hard to achieve it and accomplish your mission as I know you will."

John expressed his admiration at Wolf's speech, "That was a wonderful speech. I never knew you possessed such oratory ability. Have you ever thought about going into politics?"

Wolf was caught off guard by this statement and responded thoughtfully, "Thanks for the compliment, comrade. I think the energy that the crowd had affected me so that I could speak well. As for politics...I've never thought about that in my entire life. It is something to contemplate since we are surely to conquer the world shortly. Time will tell."

Wolf and his retinue filed into their hovercar on their voyage back home. Wolf was extremely happy with his performance and the appreciation he had received. He looked forward to speaking again in the future and mused about what topic he would choose. All in all, it had been a wonderful afternoon so far but his thoughts shifted to his comrade, John, who hadn't revealed the surprise he was to spring on Marie. What might it be, he thought.

White Empire - Chapter X

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneaux

It was a partly sunny day where clouds slowly wafted by over the well populated picnic area in Salubrious Park. It was a hot day but the clouds overhead blocked much of the intense heat that was discharged by the raging fireball known as the sun. This relief was welcomed by some but for those who wished to avoid the glaring rays of the sun completely, there was ample shade provided by an assortment of trees that ranged in size from minuscule to mammoth.

The picnic area encompassed not only picnic tables for eating and conversing but also included space for a variety of sporting events. There were fields for football and soccer which were both being utilized to the joy of the players involved. There were also volleyball courts, tennis courts, baseball fields, and several basketball courts. The attraction that drew the most people, however, was the large swimming pool that seduced both young and old alike. With all the activities available, one was hard pressed to get

bored especially considering the fact there was also an indoor recreational center where even more events were undertaken by the populace.

Generally speaking, most athletes prefer competing outdoors in the fresh air while basking in the healthy beams of Sol. Obviously, it isn't always sunny out so the brilliant engineers of the Empire devised a mechanical system to enclose the entire picnic area in a dome so that play can continue even when it is precipitating out. At the first sign of precipitation, warning alarms will sound to notify the athletes, and then metal walls will emerge from beneath the surface to encase the entire area in a protective shell. Of course, there are security features to ensure the safety of the competitors involved.

The dome provided light, heat, or cooling as was required and ensured that sport was always alive on the grounds. Doors were spaced at intervals that would allow entry without disrupting the games inside. The dome itself was a marvelous feat to behold as it was a technological wonder amid the primitiveness of nature. The actual process of the formation of the dome was truly amazing as it seemed to appear from nowhere and take on a life of its own as it grew to its proper height.

Despite the clouds that rolled on overhead at the ceiling of the sky, it was obvious that the dome wouldn't come into play today as the clouds were scattered and unimposing. This boded well for the denizens of the park, including John Granger and Marie Benini who were helping to keep the park well maintained. The occupants of the parkland were accustomed to a high degree of excellence and John felt honored to partake in the maintenance of the park in any way that was needed.

Since the vast majority of the inhabitants of the Empire respected nature, it was extremely rare to find litter scattered about. Even if this did happen, chances are that anyone seeing the trash would immediately dispose of it properly. As a result of this, the main task required was gardening and keeping the trails free of debris when Mother Nature lashed out at the world in the form of storms.

As it was, John and Marie were presently engaged in transplanting carnation flowers amid the numerous other flowers. The white, pink, and red leaves were aesthetically pleasing to the eye while the pleasant smell was reminiscent of clove. Gardening wasn't John's favorite activity but he was honor bound to help Marie and he was delighted at the enjoyment which Marie took from beautifying the land.

Seeing the enjoyment in Marie's face made the gardening seem tolerable and almost enchanting. Granted, John didn't think he would ever take up the hobby by himself but he would gladly assist Marie in the endeavor just to see the contentment it brought her. He wondered if she would do the same for him.

As John immersed himself in the process of enriching the quality of the land, his attention was captured by a young mother who was sitting at a nearby picnic table with her children. She was reading the children a fairy tale and was quite animated in the process which led the children to spurts of giggles and outright laughter. John was reminded of his own mother whom he planned on seeing soon and looked forward continuing the long golden chain of the White Race by raising children of his own.

The story the mother told was instantly recognizable as a Brothers Grimm story called the Jew Among Thorns. It was a classic tale of a honest, hard working man who triumphed over a pernicious Jew who deceived the law but met justice in the end. It was an parable that used tons of humor to keep its audience entertained while it exposed a deceptive Jew and dealt with him accordingly.

The sight of a loving mother with her charming children made John think more of the increasingly dominant topic in his mind of rearing children. He was surrounded and barraged by the laughter of children no matter where he went and the pull to have children of his own became more prevalent as each day passed. Was Marie the one for him? He hoped this was the case but love could be such a fickle issue.

Marie noticed the aloofness that John exuded and asked, "What are you thinking about John? You seem to be living among the clouds today."

Snapped out of his daydream, John was slow to reply, "I've been thinking of the future and how I want to have children. I keep seeing all these children and yearn for my own. I see Wolf and Isabelle with their wonderful children, all the children at the school I was at earlier, and even here at the park and it makes me wonder when I will have my own."

Marie nodded in approval before resuming her work. She wondered frantically when John might reveal what his surprise was that she had learned of by talking with her sister, Isabelle. She thought John would show his affection more in a sentimental, spiritual type manner rather than a materialistic fashion which meant perhaps he might have written some poetry for her or something in a similar vein. Her mind contemplated furiously on the topic until the couple decided to take a break.

Wiping a slight trickle of sweat from her brow, Marie urged, "Let's take a break, John. I could use a bite to eat and we can interrupt the tranquil serenity of our surrounding by having a nice conversation."

John silently agreed while he carried their picnic basket over to a picnic table to take their rest. Both occupants were comforted by the rest and proceeded to sit leisurely at the table. The contents of the basket were emptied, revealing a tasty assortment of fruits and nuts that Marie had assembled. Also included was a thermos full of ice cold orange juice that was extremely attractive to both of the volunteers.

After gulping down several swigs, Marie could no longer hold in her curiosity of what John was planning in the form of a surprise and blurted out, "What is the big surprise you are planning for me??"

John was taken aback by her outburst but didn't reveal his stupefaction outwardly. His mind quickly assessed how Marie found out about the treat he had prepared for her. Either Wolf or Isabelle had told her, and he was betting on Isabelle as the two were sisters. After this deduction, John chuckled softly while gazing at the attractive figure that Marie presented.

Smirking graciously, John questioned Marie, "Where did you hear such a thing?" He paused while waiting for a response but Marie simply eyed him curiously while waiting for him to continue. "Ok, ok. I do have a present for you and I need to have a serious discussion with you."

The element of surprise was gone from John's presentation so he decided to use suspense as his tool. He hadn't anticipated the leaking of his surprise to Marie but, like any good tactician, he could adapt to the problems that arose and form new plans. With surprise, a person was stunned or shocked by a revelation and, if positive in nature, was a heart warming experience. Suspense was an altogether different creature as one was aware that something was coming but what it might be remained a mystery until it was revealed. Therefore, the process was different but the end positive result was possible in both.

In order to build the suspense, John started eating his meal despite the penetrating stare that Marie threw at him. She obviously expected him to continue their discussion and her glare burned into his skull like the searing inferno exuded from a deadly flame-thrower. Despite the roaring blaze that consumed him from the intense heat of the day and from Marie's biting gawk, John calmly peeled and ate a brilliant yellow banana.

Marie appeared as though she were a hot, bubbling cauldron that would erupt at any moment and John took this as a sign to end the drama he had been evoking. He had no desire to make Marie mad. His aim was to tickle her curiosity to make his presentation to her that much more wonderful. He had hoped to delay the climax longer but he felt compelled to unravel what he hoped was a wonderful package that Marie would enjoy for a long time to come.

John exuded charisma as he took Marie's hands into his own and spoke to her elegantly, "I have really enjoyed spending time with such an all around beautiful woman. I have had girl friends in the past but none have compared to you in terms of intelligence, beauty, and integrity. I know that we met only a few scant days ago but it feels like I've known you all my life. In short, I adore you and, indeed, I love you. I would like to make our relationship a lasting, permanent one."

Marie was beset by a whirlwind of emotions as she listened to John's words. Her initial frustration on not knowing the unknown was being swept away in elation and anxiousness. She wondered if he could possibly be thinking of what she thought. No, it couldn't be...They had only known each other for a few days.

Marie watched intently as John reached inside his pocket and pulled out a glimmering diamond ring. It would seem her question was about to be answered. Her apprehensiveness increased as she waited for John to speak.

John presented the ring to the glamorous Marie and asked confidently, "Will you marry me?"

It was true! He was asking her, Marie, to marry him. A feeling like she had never experienced before, overwhelmed her. She assumed it was love but it was far more powerful than what she normally attributed love to. It was a powerful exhilaration that easily rivaled a supernova in the grand scheme of things in the universe.

While he awaited her response, John marveled at the intense emotion that was brightly shining forth from Marie's essence. He knew she would respond in the affirmative and wished he could contain the tremendous quantity of love that spewed forth from her like a luxurious fountain. After the realization that

Marie would concur with the marriage, John mirrored the exaltation that Marie experienced. Such energy existed between the two that a passerby might well believe that the couple could create entire galaxies at their simplest behest.

Extending her fingers toward John, Marie wordlessly accepted his marriage proposal. John slid the shimmering ring onto her supple fingers but Marie took little notice of the ring as John was the focus of her adoration. The ring itself was simply a symbol of love and it didn't matter to Marie if it held a piece of aluminum or a massive diamond. As it was, the ring boasted of an ornately designed diamond that would awe any diamond lover.

Marie glanced briefly at the ring on her finger and then focused her attention on John's entrancing cerulean eyes before finally verbally answering John's marriage proposal, "Of course I'll marry you John Granger!"

The newly engaged couple made their way around the picnic table to embrace each other in a tender embrace to the enthusiastic applause of a surrounding crowd that had watched the whole dramatic event. The couple had been so totally immersed in each other, that they had been totally oblivious to the onlookers that had been attracted by the momentous event. John kissed Marie passionately despite the throng that gathered around them and this signaled the crowd to disperse, which they presently did.

As the pair returned to their meal, thoughts of the wedding raced through Marie's mind. There were so many preparations to make that it was difficult to formulate all the possibilities. They had to send invitations, secure a hall for the wedding, find a Minister and many other details that varied from large details like gathering food for the wedding, to minuscule items such as what kind of shoes she would wear. She was sure to garnish a lot of support from the Creator Temple that she volunteered at and would probably have the wedding there with her good friend, Reverend Werner, marrying the two.

John ate his food swiftly but his concentration was on the pristine beauty of Marie and the love that he felt for her. It was extremely rewarding knowing that she reciprocated the passion which he felt for her. He felt as though he were living a fairy tale and anything he desired would become his if only he willed it so. His physical body mechanically devoured whatever food lay in front of him but his thoughts were soaring in the heavens above with his soon to be wife, Marie.

A sudden thought surfaced in Marie's mind and she made it known in an inquisitive fashion, "There are so many things to be planned but when exactly do you propose we should marry? Have you thought of any specific date?"

If a superior officer were present, then he would surely scold John for his lack of planning in the area of the precise date of the wedding. John hadn't thought about a date whatsoever as he was under the impression that once Marie agreed to marry, then that was the end of it. They would marry and live happily ever after, like all the other children's stories. The realization that he was living in the real world hit him like a woodsman whose axe sliced through wood with little effort. Love had truly effected John Granger.

John took his time before responding to Marie's missive but finally verbalized his thoughts, "Love has consumed me in such a fashion that I haven't even given the date a single thought before now. Since I will be returning to the Air Force within the week, perhaps we could marry Friday or Saturday. What do you think?"

The swiftness of their courtship was amazing and it seemed perfectly suitable to marry so soon but the reality of it all was settling in on Marie and making her think that perhaps they should plan the wedding a few months down the road to see how things went. Traditionally, this was how a wedding was scheduled but their dating had been like the blitzkrieg warfare of World War II. A battle raged on within Marie as she struggled with marrying sooner or later.

The response that Marie emitted came hesitantly, "I think we should really put some thought into the date. In the meantime, why don't we just enjoy the moment and go watch some football?"

Comfortingly, John retorted in an understanding fashion, "I understand your position. I enjoy doing anything with you, my dear. So, I'd love to watch football with you."

As the couple started off towards the football field, a thought suddenly occurred to John which caused him to ask, "Do you think you could take the rest of the week off and accompany me to my parent's house? Since we are getting married, I think your school would understand and I just know my folks will like you. It would be quite a pleasant surprise for them."

It was obvious by the look on Marie's face that she approved the suggestion and responded accordingly,

"That's a fabulous idea! I think the school will understand but I want you to meet my parents first. I am tired of talking now. Let's go enjoy this monumental moment in silence as we appreciate how important this event is in our lives."

Moved by Marie's words, John extended his hand which was immediately accepted by Marie as she clasped it enthusiastically in her own. The couple trekked off while a brilliant glowing aura encased the duo in its protective shell.

The shining luminescence danced playfully to the park dwellers that they passed on their way to view the football players. The loving power that pervaded the atmosphere around John and Marie leapt to a strikingly dressed young man carrying a briefcase, a woman walking her dog, and a couple that looked married. For some reason, this force didn't affect a fellow who must have been extremely hot as he was wearing a heavy black trench coat and who hadn't returned John's greeting like the other comrades had. In no mood to douse the glorious fire that burned within him, John dismissed the man as someone who just didn't care for social interaction.

An urge came over John as they entered the area surrounding the football field to join the athletes but this feeling was quickly suppressed when he glanced at his tremendous prize of Marie. They chose to sit in the grass near the endzone instead of sitting in the bleachers that were placed near midfield. That way, they would be close to the action but also have a little privacy to enjoy their own company.

The football players weren't a part of any organized league and their simple uniforms of wearing blue and red shirts respectively, emphasized this point. The competitors were simply friends who enjoyed athletic events and took pleasure in their own company. Happily and enthusiastically the athletes played, to the sheer delight of the sprinkling of spectators that viewed the event.

Despite Marie's suggestion to come watch the football game, the couple was only vaguely aware of the football happenings. The couple could feel the excitement discharged by the sportsmen and it reinforced their own comfort even though it didn't compare in sheer intensity to the immense tenderness and love that John and Marie felt. John wondered if any force in the universe could disrupt the cozy world which Marie and he shared.

Despite being in his own sheltered galaxy at the moment, John did notice the man he saw earlier who was wearing the black trench coat. The haggard individual sat down next to John which afforded John the opportunity to study the man and his out of place demeanor. In another era, this type of person would have been a rather common sight and would have been called a vagabond or a bum but the downtrodden man was completely out of place within the Empire.

With unkempt brown hair and a beard that looked as though it could easily be infested with vermin, the man stood out like a scribbling of stick figures in the Louvre. The odor that the man emanated reeked of some foul substance that John thought might have been alcohol. Upon noticing the wanderer's eyes, it was painstakingly clear that the man was intoxicated by some drug. Of course this was illegal within the Empire and John felt compelled to turn the vagrant over to the authorities.

After whispering his intent to Marie, John stood up and spoke to the man, "Sir, please come with me."

Groggy and disoriented, the hollow eyed beggar slowly rose to his feet in blind acquiescence. Despite the lackadaisical manner with which the rascal presented, John was alert and ready to respond to any attack that the desperate man might try. John focused his attention on the vulgar man while he activated the phone capability on his watch and contacted the police.

Despite the military training, cat like reflexes, and agility that John possessed, he was unable to prevent what happened next. The bum, whose unhealthiness was totally alien to the Empire, undertook an action that wasn't threatening nor was it an act of fleeing. This was why John was unable to avert the series of events that would forever change his life.

Unsuspectingly, the trench coat clad villain had purposely fallen to the ground while flinging his coat wide open. What lay beneath the jacket was a tangled maze of wires that surrounded the archaic explosive named dynamite. Insanely, the man laughed and laughed as he saw the look of shock and horror that was painted on Marie's face.

Finally recovering from the unexpected movement, John dove towards the man's hand that held the switch that was connected to the dynamite. "Death to the Empire!" screamed the demented villain as he pressed the switch that triggered the explosion of the dynamite just as John's body crushed into the beggar.

The sincere honor of the citizens, the effectiveness of the police force, and the overall greatness of the

White Empire couldn't thwart the catastrophic devastation that engulfed the park that day in the form of a deadly explosion that killed three people while injuring many others. Just as no person was perfect and could always evolve, no Empire was without flaws and improvement was always possible.

White Empire - Chapter XI

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneux

The tragic death of John and Marie by an estranged terrorist had smashed the tranquil serenity of the Gerhard house. The news had struck the family like a colossal hammer that was wielded by a blacksmith who was busy in his craft of making swords. Differing emotions swept through the house but all were intense.

The children, not being familiar with death, were in a general state of disillusionment at the loss of their Aunt and family friend. They were unsure of the exact ramifications of death as they had never lost a loved one before. This led to the kids seeking and receiving the guidance and love of their parents.

Losing her baby sister tore at Isabelle's heart and caused her much grief and anguish. Isabelle and Marie had been very close sisters and had shared their inner secrets with one another. The announcement that Marie and John were getting married made the terrible loss even worse. Isabelle could tell how much the couple enjoyed each other and it looked to be the beginning of a wonderful life. Due to the maniacal actions of one demented degenerate, the dream of a family was ended for John Granger and Marie Benini.

The loss of a sister in law and best friend had infuriated Wolf. He felt like ripping the limbs from the dastardly villain who had taken the lives of his friends away but the remains of this enemy were in tiny pieces already. Wolf's muscles flexed and tensed as he felt the primordial rage that was present, but usually dormant, in all men. It was an anger and hatred that had been harnessed effectively in the past by warriors, like the Berzerkers, and that was used today to fight the enemies of the Empire. Wolf knew that his comrade's death would be a motivating factor but he wondered whether this was an isolated event or was part of a larger conspiracy.

The news had affected other citizens in the Empire as well even though they didn't know the victims. It showed the concern and caring nature that exuded from the Empire. This form of socialism or working together for the improvement of an empire, was vital to the development of the White Empire as selfish interests would only divide and fragment the Empire and lead to its disintegration.

The Empire announced that they were investigating the heinous act but, as of yet, there was no indication of a conspiracy. Despite this, rumors abounded throughout the land that it was an enemy terrorist. Rumors that the man had been poisoned by Jewish pollution ran rampant. Due to these rumors, the war fever increased as more and more citizens urged the destruction of the enemies of the White Empire and the creation of a Whiter, Brighter World.

The inhabitants of some countries would have been terrified and timid after such a destructive disaster. This was not the case within the Empire. The populace was aggravated and angry which led to a stronger unity than had existed before. If, indeed, the militant act was a part of a greater plot that was trying to stir up rebellion, then it was a total failure with the opposite effect occurring.

Since the calamity that had befallen John and Marie two days ago, the families of both victims had received a tremendous amount of love and support from people they never knew. The sheer size of the crowd that attended the funeral amazed the Granger and Benini families. While both John and Marie served the Empire faithfully and to the best of their abilities, the immensity of the funeral seemed to indicate a national figure had passed away rather than an Air Force pilot and a history teacher.

In addition to the family of the victims and the concerned citizens, Emperor Magnus himself was attending the funeral to convey his condolences. The mere fact that the Emperor of the White Empire was present indicated how rare such unfortunate events were. Also present at the funeral was a band, caterers, and Church officials.

Some cultures and traditions held that a funeral was to be a time of mourning and misery but not in the Empire. Since Creativity was the official religion of the White Empire, its healthy, optimistic creed encased all aspects of life, including death. A Creator funeral celebrated the achievements of the deceased and the greatness of the White Race as a whole. This type of funeral stressed that death was inevitable and to enjoy the time one had in the world while being a productive, responsible, and honorable member of the Empire.

Being fruitful and multiplying was a basic premise in the religion of Creativity and immortality was possible, in a metaphoric way, by having a family and continuing the long golden chain of the White Race. Having children was a major and lasting contribution to the White Race and this joy was denied to John and Marie. For the masses, this bestowal was the greatest donation and joy to the White Race but other accomplishments would have to be presented in the case of the John and Marie.

The funeral was taking place inside the majestic Creator Temple that was the center of town. The temple was unlike the shrines of past religions as it contained a host of facilities above and beyond those for preaching the faith. These included a large library, a gargantuan gymnasium, a recreation center, a salubrious center for fasting and caring for the sick, and other smaller rooms for socializing. As a result of the variety of activities available within the shrine, it was the focus of life within any city. The smaller towns like Heimburg only had one Creator Temple but the larger cities had many such buildings.

Like all architecture within the Empire, the Creator Temple was innately designed with a confident immensity that reflected the attitude of the land. Towers arose from the four corners and the center of the structure with the Holy Flag of Creativity atop each tip. The tower in the center was the highest one and soared hundreds of meters into the air as it seemed symbolic of the principle within the Empire of reaching for the stars. The view from this tower was amazing and it was a favorite spot for photographers as well as artists who drew inspiration from the magnificent view.

The grandiosity of the temple was awe inspiring but it was not a dull vastness as the walls of the construction were adorned with intricately crafted figures of glory and greatness. Paintings of heroic fighters, tireless workers, and loving mothers gave the temple a life of its own and countless writers had thought of superb stories after viewing the art painted on the walls by artisans of great skill. Statues of gallant warriors that each represented a knightly figure of the past, encircled the area and stood guard over the premises.

The general shape of the shrine was circular like the Coliseum of Rome, only the size was far larger. The temple was encased in a dome whose golden hue attracted the eye of many pilots. This golden dome represented the crown which the White Race wore as Nature's Finest. This was complimented by the black walls and colorful friezes that created a pleasing delight for the eye to behold.

Such was the place where the funeral festivities took place. The clergy had finalized the preparations when the masses, dressed in their finest clothes, came to pay their respects by filing slowly into the hall of the temple. Following them and showing the expansive nature of the hall, were a division of Air Force pilots. Entering lastly was the great Emperor Magnus and his elite guard known as the Sacred Paladins.

The people, besides the soldiers and the presiding Minister, seated themselves comfortably. The general feeling of the hall was that of joy although an occasional angered expression revealed the bitterness that the tragic attack caused. Wolf had come to grips with the reality of the deaths although he wished to investigate the catastrophe further. That would have to wait, however, as Reverend Werner approached the pulpit to start the festivities.

Rev. Werner was a short man of wide, solid features that clearly indicated that he kept in shape but the dark blue suit he wore hid his physique. He had short brown hair that was kept meticulously combed and intense brown eyes that exuded seriousness. Those who attended the reverend's sermons were well aware of his playful nature, though, and knew that he was simply a little kid trapped inside the body of a 55 year old man. This quiet man was a master of his emotions and strived continually to maintain a healthy, positive disposition and today, when it was more important than usual, he succeeded admirably in this endeavor.

The minister beamed brilliantly before speaking to the silent crowd, "Greetings my most respected comrades. Despite the tragic death of John Granger and Marie Benini, this is a time of joy and celebration. Even in the darkest and dirtiest places, there is always hope and we Creators find that gorgeous grandiosity of greatness wherever we look. Therefore, we must celebrate the honorable accomplishments that these two comrades have bestowed on our people and look towards the future."

The orchestra located at the front of the hall started playing the famous symphony, Wanderlust, by the ultra popular composer, Erwin Grieger. Although one could draw their own stories from music, it was a commonly held notion that the musical composition told the tale of a youthful adventurer who traveled around the world in search of glory. Although repeatedly asked about the tale the symphony told, Grieger wasn't forthcoming as he believed that to reveal his thoughts would limit the imagination of those who listened to the rousing opus. The music was well suited to the occasion with its gallivanting swirl of joyful sounds that animated the crowd. This animation was shown through the gentle swaying of the crowd that reminded one of a graceful waltz.

The melody visibly affected Rev. Werner as he appeared more electrified as he continued his eulogy, "Having known Marie Benini for years, I can accurately state the tremendous impact that she has had on our community. She tirelessly devoted herself to the Church and was willing to help out in any way that she could. The park that she adored was well taken care of and she played a large role in that maintenance. I believe that her greatest contribution, though, was her dedication to teaching and molding our children into exemplary students by teaching history. Her patience with our youth was quite amazing and I never heard of one student who didn't adore her."

As was the custom of the day, Werner took a step back from the podium and started clapping vigorously. This prompted the audience to follow suit, which they did enthusiastically. The crowd's appreciation for Marie Benini was registered by the intense fervor that accentuated the applause. Even the orchestra played its part as the music reached its highest peak precisely when the acclaim began.

Reverend Werner returned to the podium and silenced the crowd before resuming the eulogy, "Even though this is not John Granger's hometown, his family thought it appropriate for the services to be held here as he recently became engaged in our very own Salubrious Park. So even though I didn't know him personally, I have heard of his great expertise in flying and his great dedication to the Air Force. He bravely flew many missions in the service of our wonderful Empire. The Air Force will surely miss his great skills but his death will most assuredly encourage other pilots to attain greater and greater heights."

Again, the crowd bellowed uproariously in delight. This time it was in gratitude of John's contributions to the Empire. The crowd was louder this time due to the sheer happiness and pleasure they were having as they listened to the deeds of fallen comrades who had pledged their lives to the Empire and Creativity.

As radiant as ever, Rev. Werner proceeded to conclude his eulogy by encouraging everyone to look towards the future and playing their part in making the Empire greater. He always felt it was great inspiration to hear the tales of the great people and he hoped that the contributions of the fallen Creators would help someone on the path to greatness.

Family members of both victims addressed the audience by telling tales of great experiences of the past. Many anecdotes were told of Marie when she was a playful child and John when he was a adventuring teenager. All of the stories were greeted pleasantly by the amiable audience. Each progressive story raised the level of excitement within the hall like a cascading avalanche that continued to gather power with each passing second.

The time came when Wolfgang took his turn at speaking on behalf of John Granger. Despite losing his best friend, Wolf was, like virtually everyone in the temple, in good spirits. Quickly and energetically, he approached the platform where he was to speak. The crowd ushered him in jovially and it was clearly apparent that the audience loved to cheer.

Wolf spoke emotionally about his fallen brother, "John Granger was my best friend and was the greatest comrade a man could have. Even though we didn't spend much time together, we were very close. Being fellow soldiers, I know that his demise will provide me with a more intense fire than ever before. Woe to the enemies of the Empire! In tribute to a great soldier and even better friend, I am dedicating the Klassen Medal that I recently won to the Granger family."

Such an intense and powerful display of gratitude was not lost on the masses that thronged the hall. The audience again erupted in jubilation at the grand gesture Wolf had bestowed on John. The loyalty Wolf had for his deceased compatriot was amazing and showed the honorable character of Wolfgang Gerhard. It was obvious that honor was a magnificent virtue that was held in high esteem by all as the crowd roared its approval.

Wolf held the Klassen Medal aloft and the origins of the design were plainly evident as it was in the shape of a white shield with a red crown in the center. The shield represented battle while its white color signified the White Race. The red in the crown represented blood while the crown itself reflected greatness in heroism and bravery. Of course the crowd was well aware of the significance of the medal and cheered louder than before when Wolf placed it upon the memorial stand of John Granger that was situated behind the podium.

After presenting the medal and saluting the crowd, Wolf returned to his seat amid great outpourings of love and tenderness. A feeling of awe swept over Wolfgang bringing thousands of goosebumps with it to amplify the emotional explosion. He contemplated the extraordinary power of Creativity as it was able to turn a tragic occasion into a glorious and positive event full of celebration.

The grand Emperor Magnus approached the speaking platform and Wolf found himself transformed

from the center of attention to a part of the ecstatic crowd almost instantly. The transference of roles didn't dampen Wolf's spirits whatsoever. Quite the contrary actually, as it served to catapult him into great remembrances of days past and to give the events that surrounded him a mythical quality. For obvious reasons, his mind focused on his first meeting with John Granger and the fun they had while playing football.

As Wolf was recalling the past, Emperor Magnus had taken the pulpit to the by then common roaring celebration of the crowd. As a conductor leading an orchestra, Magnus repeatedly saluted the crowd with a big "RAHOWA!" with the crowd responding each time with a tremendous roar. The scene was like a forming wall of water when Magnus spoke to the crash of a crushing wave when the audience responded.

After working the populace into a feverish pitch of excitement, Magnus finally decided to speak in his usual charismatic fashion, "Greetings my White Racial Comrades! It is a wonderful day to honor and pay our respects to two fallen comrades who were loyal members of the White Race. I regret that these two Creators have passed away but this joyous spectacle would surely have pleased them. Rest assured, brothers and sisters, we are investigating the affairs surrounding the death of John Granger and Marie Benini."

Magnus was a tremendous orator as he gestured hypnotically and changed the pitch in his voice whenever he wanted to emphasize a point or downplay an event. Like all politicians of the day, he was trained to preach as all politicians were required to be ministers within the Church. This effectively combined the state and the Church so that only the best interests of the White Race were discussed. This combination led to a unity and loyalty to the White Empire that was unparalleled in the history of the White Race and made the Empire an unstoppable juggernaut that would easily smash any resistance with the greatest of ease.

Surveying the crowd intently like an artist admiring a sculpture, Magnus continued his praise of the fallen heroes, "It has come to my attention that John Granger was an excellent aviator. This man soared through the skies while destroying our enemies like a gallant eagle plucking helpless mice from the ground and devouring them mightily. He daringly flew over one hundred missions from South America to the Middle East to Africa. This man did his duty to the Empire faithfully without ever asking for any special treatment but I believe that he deserves a glorious honor today to repay his loyal servitude to the Air Force."

As the expert showman that he was, the regal Emperor abruptly cut off his speech to allow his words to sink into the minds of the audience. He paced slowly back and forth like a man who was conducting a laboratory experiment and was tremendously interested in the outcome.

After prolonging the suspense until a sizable portion of the crowd had literally moved to the edge of their seats, Emperor Magnus thundered mightily, "In remembrance of the honorable warrior John Granger, I officially announce the formation of the Granger Award. This honor, awarded annually, will be bestowed upon the best pilot in the Air Force. The great contribution this man presented to the Empire will be remembered forever!"

The crowd was visibly impressed by the creation of the award but Magnus didn't allow them to let the event sink in as he wanted to combine the accolades of both victims rather than distinctly separate them. Due to this, he continued rapidly, "Marie Benini gave herself to the Empire but in a far different way. She enlightened our children about the powerful knowledge of days gone by. Through history, she bestowed upon our youth pride and confidence as they learned of the glory and greatness that our wonderful race has taken part in. Even though teaching is a great commitment, Marie somehow found time to volunteer her services to the Church and the local park. This hard work and dedication must not be forgotten."

Magnus deliberately repeated the great deeds bestowed upon the Empire by the pair as he realized that repetition was a good teaching tool. In this way, the actions wouldn't be forgotten but, instead, ingrained in the memories of all that were present and all that viewed the event via television. He was sure that Marie Benini would have approved of the pedagogical tool that he was employing.

The tempo of Magnus's words quickened as he neared the climax of his oration, "Even though the annual awards that are given to the best teachers within the Empire aren't usually announced until the end of the year, I declare that, under the circumstances, Marie Benini as the winner of the Herodotus award for best history teacher. To give everyone an idea of how great a teacher Marie was, this is the third year in a row that she has won the distinguished honor!

"I officially declare that a monument to honor these comrades, and all loyal, productive citizens who experience untimely deaths, to be built in remembrance of those who have enriched the greatness of

the Empire. This monument will display the gratitude of the Empire and will, most fittingly, be built at Salubrious Park by our strong construction work force."

Magnus was at the apex of his speech and boomed triumphantly, "These two illustrious comrades lived their life for the Empire and now that we have shown our gratitude, we must eat, drink, and be merry like they would have wanted! Let us give one final round of applause for our fallen comrades and the Empire they served! Aut vincere aut mori!"

Although it might not have seemed possible, the concourse detonated its approval louder than ever before causing an explosion of excitement that ripped through the temple into the stratosphere above. This enchanting ecstasy then sprinkled down upon the city like a soothing rain after a blistering summer day. A supreme power was at work within the Empire to cause such brilliant outbursts of joy and jubilation. That power was Creativity.

The crowd was so caught up in celebrating that it didn't notice the passage of time at all. At least twenty minutes passed before the crowd ceased its roaring and the music stopped playing its frantic deluge of symphonic barrages that complimented the audience like a surfer atop the growing platform of an unstoppable tsunami. Finally, the last hurrah was extinguished and the people took a momentary rest before proceeding to take the advice of the Emperor and enjoy the company of their compatriots by eating and socializing.

The Creators slowly exited the meeting hall of the temple and filed into the other areas of center. Some went to the mess hall in order to fulfill their hungers while others went to the numerous activity centers filled with games and sports to keep one occupied. The air was tinged with an electric feeling of excitement so that no matter where a person went, he was assured of having a good time.

Most of the soldiers that were present went to the vast recreation center where they played sports ranging from basketball to wrestling. It was a typical scene of the physical camaraderie that soldiers take part in. The competition was especially fierce as the warriors wished to claim victory for their comrade who was no longer with them. Being the knights that they were, they reveled in such activities and the grunts and groans of physical exertion that were heard were an indicator of the effort put forth that brought the sweet reward of a natural high.

The families of John Granger and Marie Benini met for the first time as they ate in the mess hall. Each shared stories of their lost clan member to the enjoyment of all. Just as John and Marie had hoped, the two families got along great even though it was without them. Wolf especially enjoyed the socializing as he learned more about his best friend.

Despite the funeral festivities starting in the morning, the celebrations continued on well into the night. The Creator Temple was overflowing with life which showed that, despite what devastations may abound, Creativity's brilliant light would always shine. This clearly indicated to the world that no force in the universe could douse the sublime flame of Creativity that spread euphoria around the globe with its powerful message.

White Empire - Chapter XII

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneaux

It had been an eventful week away from the military for Wolfgang Gerhard but duty called and he had returned to the Holy Legions. Time with his family was always enjoyable but the deaths of his comrades weighed heavily upon him like the crushing force felt by a submarine thousands of feet underwater. Wolf, like the submarine, had a thick shell that was hard to damage despite any powerful force that might relentlessly hammer away at his protective armor.

The casual observer would never notice the fiery rage inside Wolf that flared up at the thought of his best friend, John Granger. The burning desire for revenge enveloped him and he knew that, no matter what the future held, it would provide encouragement for him to crush the adversaries of the Empire. The vengeful whirlwind that swirled within him had led him to the office of General Valberg so that he could request permission to transfer to the clandestine intelligence gathering division known as the Shadow Corps.

Being a captain and a winner of the highly regarded Klassen Medal, Wolf didn't have a problem getting an audience with the leader of the Holy Legions. Legionnaires kept extremely busy with training but General Valberg seemed never to sleep and it was playfully rumored that he was a robot who never ceased to be working on something. Despite his busy schedule, he always managed to keep his

appointments right on time. The only reason Wolf was waiting was due to the fact that he had arrived at the reception area fifteen minutes early.

The reception area had a tranquil feel as military marches softly hummed through the speakers. Wolf was the only person present but there was room for many others as there were ornately designed chairs that were of the finest design. In typical military fashion, the walls were adorned with paintings of great battle scenes. Each painting had a description of the battle and a wide scope of history was presented as ancient battles such as Thermopylae and Issus were depicted as well as the modern victories the Empire were triumphant in. The paintings and the marches that reverberated throughout the room gave the room a mystical feeling of glory and honor that warfare rightfully deserved.

In the center of the room was the automated reception desk that allowed one to check on the availability of the ruling elite of the Holy Legions. Wolf had already checked in and awaited the message from the general that he was ready to receive him. Several people could access the desk at once which made it much more efficient than a human doing the task. Since productivity and efficacy were so paramount within the Empire, this automation granted extra time to the soldiers who could get in better shape and learn more.

Wolf was nestled comfortably in his chair as he was reading the daily news off of a computer pad. Several of these hand held devices were located within the table that was situated next to him. They provided a wealth of information from mammoth encyclopedias to the vastness of the internet. Games were also available on the pad with war and strategy games being the most popular for obvious reasons.

The big news that was running rampant in the Empire was the official announcement of war against the Asian forces. The consolidation of Africa was complete and the only hostile forces were now in Asia. The Asians were aligned in the Asian Alliance as they had banded together years ago when they rightfully realized the growing might of the White Empire. Victory was certain for the Empire despite the overwhelming billions that populated Asia. The gooks were far behind in technological means which presented a massive advantage for the Whites.

The Empire already contained far more territory than any other civilization had before. The conquest of Asia would undoubtedly be time consuming but the world would finally be dominated by the greatest force ever known, Creativity. Many men had dreamed of world mastery but the White Empire was the only power that actually had the ability and the strength to accomplish the monumental task.

Thoughts of the worldwide grandeur that Creativity would bring enveloped Wolf's essence as he contemplated the possible strategies that the Empire would utilize. There were so many possible theaters of attack that it was mind boggling. The attack could come through the state of Russia or the Middle East or even by attacking southern Asia. The mobility of the Empire was such that attacks could take place in all three of the aforementioned areas, not to mention the islands in the Pacific Ocean.

A tactic the Empire was sure to use was to try and divide the Asian Alliance so that each of the individual nations would fight each other. This tactic was sure to bear fruit as intelligence reports indicated that tension was rampant within the alliance as each nation struggled for supremacy. The old stratagem of divide and conquer that had worked for millennia, was still as useful as ever.

As Wolf mused the intricacies of war, the video screen at the reception center lit up with the commanding visage of General Valberg. The general's red hair and golden red beard seemed to radiate a scorching fire which instructed the wise to obey his commands lest one be burned by the sweltering holocaust of his disastrous disdain that was far more real than the gaseous breath of any dragon. So when the general beckoned him to his office, Wolf immediately complied.

Wolf walked by many rooms that were active with silent contemplation as strategists were busy studying the many facets of war. Wolf could only guess what was going through their minds and didn't think long on the subject as he realized that his place was on the battlefield. Strategy was interesting to him but he preferred the live battle and that is where he excelled.

An invisible sensor was triggered as Wolf approached the office of General Valberg and noiselessly scanned him. The near instantaneous scan confirmed that the figure was Captain Gerhard and the door slid open with a soft "whoosh". The door shut just as effortlessly after Wolf passed through the archway of the door.

The Wolf's Lair, as Valberg's office was known as, was a military lover's paradise. The walls were adorned with paintings of brilliant generals ranging from Alexander the Great to General Valberg himself. Book shelves filled with strictly military books, lined the back wall and Wolf thought that there must have been thousands of informational books just waiting to unleash the power within them.

It was apparent that Valberg preferred paper to the video screen by viewing his library and the presence of many papers on his mammoth desk. Wolf was sure that a computer was located within the desk, however, but it wasn't being utilized at the moment. In addition to the general's writing desk, there was a conference table as well as numerous chairs around the table as well as in front of the writing desk.

General Valberg greeted Wolf pleasantly as he shook his hand and saluted, "RAHOWA Captain Gerhard! Please have a seat."

Wolf responded in kind and took the seat at the behest of the general. A slight sense of awe came over Wolfgang as he realized he was in the presence of the leader of the most formidable fighting force that had ever existed. The exploits of the general's life would surely be worthwhile reading to anyone vaguely interested in warfare.

Upon realizing the discomfort in Wolf's disposition, Valberg relaxed his solid frame and spoke in a humorous fashion, "How is it that Wolf doesn't feel right at home in the Wolf's Lair? Oh, may I call you Wolf? What is on your mind anyway, comrade?"

The amusement that Valberg projected put Wolf at ease as he slightly smirked at the general's remark. "This is a military haven actually and I do enjoy it. And of course you can call me Wolf. As I'm sure you are aware, my good friend, John Granger, died recently. Because of this, I visit you today to request a transfer to the paramilitary division called the Shadow Corps," remarked Wolf gently.

Valberg was aware of the loss to the Empire and Wolfgang of John Granger and he had assumed that was the reason for Captain Gerhard's visit. It still came as somewhat of a jolt since a highly decorated Legionnaire normally didn't ask to be transferred from the world renown Holy Legions. The general ran his right hand along his neatly trimmed beard as he gazed intently at Wolf with his penetrating emerald eyes. It was a tough decision to make and Valberg wasn't about to make a hasty judgment so he spent long moments in silent contemplation as he pondered the pros and cons of Wolf's request.

Somewhat talking to himself, Valberg spoke slowly, "War with Asia has recently been declared and the winner of the Klassen Medal wishes to transfer out of the highly regarded Holy Legions...I realize that you wish to avenge your comrade's death but do you really think there is a conspiracy? And even if there was, don't you feel your proper place is within the Legions?"

Wolf thought that it might be difficult to transfer but he was determined to do all that he could to help resolve the deaths of his loved ones. If there was, in fact, no conspiracy and the explosion was simply a random act of violence by a deranged individual, then he would promptly return to the Holy Legions as swiftly as possible. One way or the other, the nagging emotions in his mind had to be put to rest.

A determined Wolfgang leaned forward in his chair and spoke assuredly, "Of course I will respect any decision that you make but I feel I must find out whether the deaths of John Granger and Marie Benini were a part of a larger plot. There might be a scheme contrived by some unseen disillusioned entity within the Empire or there might not be but I want to be a part of the process of finding out. I simply must know to satisfy my craving curiosity.

"As for the Holy Legions, I love the camaraderie, the intense training, and the glorious missions we are sent on. It is my calling in life and my second home. If I am granted permission to transfer, then I would surely return to the Legions after I find out the whole truth of the recent tragedy," Wolf said sentimentally, showing his love and affection for the Holy Legions.

Impressed with Wolf's resolve, the general was becoming more receptive to the idea of a transfer but had a few more questions that he voiced inquisitively, "Do you know that the Shadow Corps is a highly secretive organization and any involvement with them must be held in the highest confidentiality? Even being the head of the Holy Legions, I know nothing of the inner workings of the order nor am I aware of their activities. What attracts you to the Shadow Corps instead of the normal police force?"

"Granted, I know very little about the Shadow Corps," Wolf admitted. "But I have a feeling that the recent tragedy is a part of something bigger than the police force would handle. Therefore, I believe that the Shadow Corps is the suitable place regardless of any sacrifices that I may have to make. I have no problem whatsoever with keeping secrets so I don't see any difficulty with their policies."

General Valberg leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands together as he meditated on the situation. A sculpture of the general in his present position would visibly identify his demeanor as one of deep thought. The dedication that Wolf held for justice was truly admirable and this weighed heavily on Valberg's decision. It was a tough judgment for the general to make but, based on Wolf's testimony, he decided the matter rather swiftly.

"All that I can do," Valberg started calmly, "is to recommend you to the Shadow Corps and set up an interview. There is no guarantee that you will be accepted and I have no idea how exactly they approve applicants. I don't even know who heads the organization. The only person I can think of who might know that is the Emperor himself."

A smile of satisfaction swept over Wolf's face as he heard the good news. He believed that getting the general's permission to transfer would be the hard part and that it would be a nice gentle ride to the bottom from here on out. He was surely to be accepted into the Shadow Corps, he thought. Why would any group turn down a captain in the Holy Legions who had recently been highly decorated for his military service?

Avidly anticipating entering the Shadow Corps, he questioned the general anxiously, "When can you set up the interview? I'd appreciate meeting with a representative as soon as possible."

Expecting such zealous behavior, Valberg was prepared for a quick retort, "Give me a few minutes, comrade. I will set up the interview now and will try to get it as soon as I can. I highly doubt though, that you will actually meet a delegate from the Shadow Corps in person."

Wolf nodded his head in agreement as Valberg extracted the sophisticated computer located within his desk. As the general silently worked on the computer, Wolf envisioned himself heroically avenging the deaths of John Granger and Marie Benini. The mystery that veiled the Shadow Corps in billowing mists of vapor only served to heighten the valiant episodes that flashed brilliantly in his mind.

Wolf was engaged in a particularly vivid daydream where he had found the monster responsible for the recent misfortune and was administering sublime justice to the horrid fiend. The vision was so alluring and had such a profound impact on Wolf that it took the general several attempts to gain control of Wolfgang's attention.

"Wolf," Valberg repeated. "Hello Wolf, how are you feeling," questioned the general as he was visibly amused by Wolf's inattention.

Snapped out of his dream, Wolf responded lethargically, "Yes, general? Pardon me but I was just dreaming of justice."

Smiling broadly, Valberg remarked agreeably, "I understand your plight and your dream of vengeance. A comrade of mine was killed in action and avenging his death was truly gratifying. The sweet nectar of justice was amazingly fulfilling."

Handing Wolf a document that was recently printed out, the general continued, "I have gotten in touch with the Shadow Corps and they want to meet with you immediately. The directions to their facility is located on that paper. This discussion and any with the Shadow Corps are highly confidential so you aren't permitted to discuss it with anyone. Good luck, comrade. RAHOWA!"

Wolf firmly shook the general's hand and vibrantly reciprocated the Creator salute. The glimmer of desire radiated from the focused gray eyes of Wolfgang Gerhard and overtly reflected the inner delight at taking the first step on the path of justice. Those same eyes quickly devoured the directions before him like a ravenous shark crushing the bones of its meager prey. The meal complete, Wolf exited the general's office.

Being in the military, Wolf was extremely adept at memorizing directions and, despite the brief glance at the document containing the location of the interview destination, had pinpointed the exact position where he was headed. He realized it was tucked away in a quiet section of the military facility where he had never ventured.

Almost running, Wolf hastily navigated the corridors within the building as every passing second brought him closer to the mysterious force known as the Shadow Corps. He disdained the shuttlepod that could quickly take him to any destination within the compound as he preferred his own two powerful tree trunks that served as legs. Wolf held the belief that only the injured should utilize the shuttlepod as it was far more healthy to walk but he also knew that there were exceptions in a time of crisis.

So ingrained in his mind was the route to his goal that Wolf's mind was able to contemplate the mystery of his upcoming interview without deterring whatsoever from his path. A revered sense of mysticism shrouded the whole ordeal that Wolf was enveloped in to the point where his mind wafled to the secrets that would hopefully be revealed to him. However, the clandestine entity that was the Shadow Corps was only the means to most effectively accomplish his goal of justice and without that motivation, the secrets of the organization could stay hidden for all he cared.

As Wolf began to think about the various practices of the Shadow Corps, the lighting around him seemed to fade slightly as he realized that he stood in front of the door that would hopefully allow him to avenge his comrades' deaths. The door was a simple black one but a veil of mist seemed to decorate it although Wolf knew this was pure fantasy and his rampant imagination was running a little too freely.

Unseen, unfelt, and unnoticed, an identifying scan acknowledged the fact that the figure in front of a nondescript black door was Wolfgang Gerhard. At this cognizance, the plain sable door quietly slid open and beckoned Wolf to enter. The light from the hall barely penetrated the Cimmerian gloom that pervaded the room which lay chillingly in front of Wolf.

Even the mighty and impressive figure of Wolfgang Gerhard hesitated slightly in the presence of such a foreboding presence before entering the unknown void. Upon entering, the door slid shut just as quietly as it had opened and Wolf was flung into a world of absolute darkness. As was his custom, Wolf held his head high as he awaited his fate.

The ebony ocean of darkness that surrounded Wolf disabled his keen eyesight and left the perception of his environment to his other senses. The other senses were also limited though as there was no sound or smell within the mysterious chamber. The enigmatic atmosphere appealed to Wolf's sense of adventure and he thought it a suitable origin for his experience with the Shadow Corps.

Even though he was expecting it, a sudden flash of brilliant light caused Wolf's pupils to shrink and his eyes to squint. The glaring luminescence illuminated a small section of the room, revealing a simple wooden chair. Despite no verbal command, Wolf knew full well what was expected of him and obediently nestled into the seat.

Upon seating himself, Wolf heard an ominous booming voice that echoed violently about the room as if the sound had originated from a mighty, bellowing dinosaur. "Greetings Captain Wolfgang Gerhard. Why do you want to join us?"

The exploding utterance ceased and the walls stopped vibrating but the powerful impact on Wolf's psyche lingered. It was truly a test of the will to withstand the powerful onslaught although no visible signs of duress were visible on Wolf's countenance. The indomitable will that Wolfgang possessed would not be denied, however, even in the face of such coldness that abounded about the puzzling chamber.

While the aggressive factor, which stated that whoever was more daring would generally triumph in any situation, was initially on the side of the unknown voice, Wolf regained his composure and grinned happily at the powerful force that he was arrayed against. Enjoying what seemed to be a competition, he howled mercilessly, "I wish to avenge my comrades' deaths! The Shadow Corps is the place to achieve this goal!"

An uneasy silence followed the vigorous roar that Wolf spewed into the room that might have resembled a tomb if one thought solely of morbidity. Wolf, however, was no such person and his body said it all as he had his chin in the air, reflecting his inner belief of victory and certain acceptance in the Shadow Corps.

The light that illuminated the chair in which Wolf sat, was abruptly doused and again, Wolf's eyes were forced to adjust. The harsh voice returned as soon as the light was extinguished, "How do we know we can trust you?" The question smashed its blade into the room like an potent claymore that ripped through a foe's armor, killing him instantly. Such an inquiry enraged the Herculean figure of Wolf. To think that someone questioned his very honor caused a seldom seen loss of control from one who had an adamant will and great self mastery. Wolf's muscles tightened and his eyes burned with a rage and intensity that would easily pummel the bravest enemy into submission.

Rising from the chair with his fists clenched, Wolf clamored vehemently in such a frenzied fashion that the unseen walls that surrounded him must surely have been devastated beyond repair. "How dare you question my honor!? I am a Creator!!"

Although the terrific outburst was frighteningly powerful, the voice that ruled supreme did not respond nor did it seem to even notice Wolf's words. How could any entity not be shaken or affected by the sheer force of words that he uttered? The silence that coiled itself around the room felt like an immense anaconda that wished to squeeze the very life out of Wolf.

As untold stretches of time moved on, the blackened atmosphere that accompanied the silence actually benefited Wolf as he utilized the long moments to regain control over his faculties. Coming to regret his eruption of fiery lava at the question of his honor, he argued that it was a question that had to be asked

as vital secrets were protected within the Shadow Corps and only the most trustworthy comrades would be allowed into the organization. However, it was only the fashion in which he explosively retorted that he would change if he could as the content of his words were true to his heart. Wolf believed that the question itself should be changed unless the Shadow Corps wished to elicit such forceful detonations.

As a good Creator does, Wolf proceeded to make the best of the situation and await his fate by settling back into the chair and setting goals that he hoped to achieve. The goal immediately in front of him was, of course, to resolve his comrades' deaths and he hoped to fulfill this end within one month.

So involved was Wolf in thought that he knew not how much time elapsed before the unknown jury had deliberated on his fate. The jury apparently was ushering him to the next phase as a door to his right slid open, revealing a dimly lit room with a bed in the center. Obviously, he was meant to enter and he did indeed with a confident, relaxed stroll.

The room Wolf entered was faintly illuminated in a purplish haze that made him feel as though he were in a dream and in some far off land. The quiet sliding shut of the door behind him propelled him further into this purple domain. Despite the unknown, the environment soothed Wolf tremendously and the simple wooden cot looked extremely inviting.

In addition to the relaxing surroundings, there was another unspoken command that ordered him to lay down on the small bed. As he did so, he made himself comfortable with the soft pillow and surprisingly soft surface that made him think of sleep.

Slowly, but methodically, a stream of light, varying from red to green, pulsed about the room. The hypnotic pattern further projected Wolf into a semi-conscious state. The deluge of colorful hues was soothing to the eye and Wolf drifted off into the unknown with welcome arms and a cheerful mirth about him.

White Empire - Chapter XIII

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneux

That dreamy day, many days past, remained foggy in Wolf's mind but he could recall answering many questions while under the spell of the colorful lights that sweetly caressed him. It was obvious to him now that the interview process consisted of two phases designed to keep out all but the most honorable and trustworthy comrades.

The first stage was an intimidating one that tried to inspire fear in order to weed out anyone that wasn't extremely bold and courageous. The fear of the unknown with the room cloaked in darkness, combined with the harsh, commanding voice that held sway over the chamber, broke down most men and ended the interview. However, those few that didn't tremble and crumble in the face of such adversity, were allowed to the next phase.

The next step was a stark contrast to the initial process as it was a warm and inviting room where a gentle voice interrogated the applicant. The playful light show created a tranquilizing effect on the viewer by acting on parts of the brain that Wolf knew nothing of but he did understand the effects. Without any harmful drugs, the questioning elicited truthful answers that provided the basis of acceptance into the Shadow Corps.

Of course, these ponderings were simply to appease Wolf's natural curiosity as he knew he wouldn't be able to tell anyone about the proceedings he went through nor anything whatsoever that went on within the Shadow Corps. His inquisitive nature pushed him to ask about many details in the organization, including the interview, but knowledge was issued on a need to know basis.

Since Wolf only wished to find out the truth of his friends' deaths and wasn't interested in serving a long term service, he was limited to his small living quarters and one adjoining training room. His room was a simple one with a small but comfortable cot. A compartment beneath his bed housed his spare uniforms so that he could change on a regular basis. The walls were a midnight black which seemed perfectly fitted for the "shadow" image of the group. Completing his room, was a small bathroom that housed a toilet and a shower.

He was required to wear a jet black military uniform that included a helmet and a mask that would conceal his identity. The mask included a voice synthesizer that would alter Wolf's speech into a mechanical grating noise that would prevent anyone from recognizing his speech. The blackness about the uniform projected the sense of the unknown to anyone who might have seen it and most animals in

nature, including man, fear the unknown. Wolf highly doubted, though, that anyone actually ever saw the Shadow Corps although rumors might abound.

The only other room that Wolf had seen thus far was the training room where he had undergone the most unusual and torturous ordeals that he had been through in his brief life. It was, like his quarters, decked in black with a large table and chairs adorning the center of the room. It was here that he had met a member in the Corps whose code name was "Viper".

Viper was a lean man-or woman for all he knew, that conducted his training sessions in an eerie, raspy voice like that of an automaton. Viper wore the same garb as Wolf did so he was oblivious of any identifying features about him. Viper was an excellent teacher although, with the harsh training he was undergoing, the term slave master seemed more appropriate.

Since he volunteered to do anything that was required of him to help solve the case of his friends' deaths, he had been assigned to infiltrate an underground bar that was frequented by race traitors and muds of all sorts. As a result, the great hero that Wolf was, had to undergo extreme conditioning to withstand the vile, decadent, and disgusting world of venomous traitors and their cohorts.

This conditioning was radically different than the vigorous and exhausting exercise of the Holy Legions. Wolf hoped that no one had to endure the mental anguish that Wolf was bombarded with although he knew virtually nothing, outside the two rooms that he had been in, of what went on with the Shadow Corps, despite being a member. He fully understood that to blend in with the enemy and obtain information, he had to act like the foe and be able to blend in expertly.

The first day of his training consisted solely of music. Not expecting such profane, degrading, and decadent noise, Wolf was initially outraged at being forced to listen to such vile trash. Once explained to him, it made sense to him but the harsh sounds were not easier to listen to. In fact, the putrid filth that echoed from the stereo could easily drive a healthy man insane if he were forced to listen to it nonstop. After elaborating on the reasoning behind the torture, Viper exited the room and left Wolf to his misery.

Before leaving, Viper had left information on the names of the songs and the artists in a genre known as "gangster rap". Wolf was not only forced to listen to the pounding racket which had no rhythm nor melody but was also required to memorize this information. If not for the unbreakable spirit and indestructible will that Wolf possessed, he would surely have smashed the stereo mercilessly into a thousand pieces and rid the world of such a heinous influence.

All day long Wolf was relentlessly assailed by lyrics demeaning women, glorifying drugs, and promoting random acts of senseless violence. From the information he had available, the most popular singer went by the name of "Ice Dog". This revolting character sang of homosexual love and infecting White people with the AIDS virus. His statements and cocky laugh made Wolf's muscles feel as though they would burst and he longed for the opportunity to cleave the mud's head from his pathetic body. Indeed, knowing what he fought for gave Wolf great strength in which to withstand the deplorable clatter.

After a seemingly infinite amount of time where Wolf was locked in an agonizing chamber of torture and despair that was akin to the ancient suffering caused by the diabolical Christians of the Dark Ages, the time finally came to end his conditioning for the day. When the bestial sounds were extracted from his mind and the sweet sound of Beethoven beautifully filled the air, the nausea had left his body and had been replaced by the serene comfort that only a symphony composed by a genius could produce. The sweet melody of Beethoven's ninth symphony accompanied Wolf to the dream world as Wolf wondered if anything could be worse than what he had gone through on that day.

Despite the not so pleasant day he had, Wolf slept well in his alien environment. It was a testament to his powerful resolve and triumphant will that would stop at nothing in order to accomplish his goal. As a result, his sleep was invigorating and he woke with a fierce determination for success.

The second day of conditioning was similar to the first in that what he was "taught" was repulsive to him but, this time, Viper stayed much longer as they went over the decadent ideals and perverse beliefs that he was likely to encounter in his infiltration of the enemy. Viper patiently informed Wolf about ideas that Wolf thought were long since dead but obviously weren't and wouldn't be completely eradicated until the Empire was the only power on Earth.

A particularly offensive and hideous belief that ran rampant among the muds and race traitors was the notion that the White Race was evil and responsible for all the disastrous events throughout history. Nevermind the factuality that the White Race brought civilization and technology to the backward mud races of the world for centuries before realizing their own folly and pursuing their own interests instead of providing for the parasites of the world.

Wolf had no problem whatsoever with the muds thinking that way but it was totally suicidal for Whites to think that their own people were evil. He wished to save such disillusioned comrades but the chances of that after being poisoned by the Jew were slim indeed. Due to this, he had to treat such traitors as the treasonous scum that they are.

Other such farcical ideas were that great White men of ages past were actually black or Asian. Mozart, according to these degenerates, was actually Japanese and Edison was Chinese. Beethoven, once thought by this rabble to be black, was now revealed as Korean due to "new" historical evidence that was reminiscent of the proceedings in the book 1984 by George Orwell. These dreamers and perverters of history also preached that notable leaders such as Alexander the Great, Augustus Caesar, Napoleon, and even Adolf Hitler were actually Asian leaders who ruled White nations without any actual evidence at all. It showed the gullibility and ignorance of any fool to believe such nonsense.

In addition to this corruption of history, the values of this degenerate underworld society were absolutely deplorable. Intense promotion of drug use, random sexual acts with a wide variety of creatures that included beasts, and an overwhelming lust for money and gain were widespread. It was obvious to Wolf as to why this filth hid its head beneath the ground like a disease infected rat that scours about in the sewers of the world.

Wolf learned of the abundance of poisonous drugs that would be available in his infiltration destination from his informative mentor, Viper. Drugs ranging from marijuana to cocaine were prevalent but a strange drug was currently the fashion although the drug was extremely potent with death a likely result regardless of the dosage one took. The drug, called simply ZDA, was highly lethal but those who actually survived its effect were granted respect due to its well known potency.

The origin of ZDA, whose full name was Zionist Death Agent, went back to the early days of the Empire as the Jews realized their time was up. ZDA was originally a chemical warfare weapon that was horribly flawed and tended to harm the handler far more than any intended victims. It showed the depravity of the Jewish race to convert a failed weapon of mass destruction into a deadly drug in order to turn a profit.

Of all the lewd information that Wolf had learned, he was most appalled at the abnormal sexual behavior practiced by the riffraff trash that still remained in the world. All kinds of unnatural copulation were discussed and all revolted and repulsed Wolf as it went against all the healthy and natural instincts that he held. Bisexuality, homosexuality, bestiality, necrophilia, and miscegenation were all practiced in a wicked orgy of corrupted delight. At the thought of such a nefarious scene, Wolf was overcome by a raging disdain that could have easily sent small moons to their untimely demise.

Of all the unholy acts of intercourse that he became aware of, race mixing was the most hideous. Wolf was certainly disgusted by the other forms of perversion but miscegenation was the most terrible crime and most atrocious act against the White Race that was conceivable. Creativity made this abundantly clear and since Creativity was the core of the Empire, it was held in the highest esteem. Race traitors had paid for their crimes many years ago with their lives and Wolf looked forward to punishing some himself, if provided with the opportunity.

Viper continued his tutoring as he instructed Wolf on the unsavory selfish desires of the enemy. Honor and nobility were unheard of as back stabbing was common practice. Lies, deceit, and deception were commonplace which, of course, led to no trust nor any true meaning to the words which these pariahs spoke as one's word meant nothing. Every beast looked out only for himself except for the minuscule population of Jews which, as always, banded together and were, without a doubt, organizing the underground domains of excretion that reminded Wolf of the malignant disease of cancer that had sent so many to the grave in ages long since gone.

This materialistic obsession was virtually unheard of within the Empire as it was righteously ingrained upon the people that to work for the betterment of the whole was far more healthy and productive than strictly indulging in the luxuries of life while ignoring one's family and people. Of course this wasn't to say that no one had any fun or any hobbies as indeed they did, but it was rightfully regarded that society as a whole was far more important than one single individual. Any land where selfishness prevailed among the majority of the populace would cause disunity and this lack of cohesiveness would open the gates of the realm to enemy invaders who would easily conquer it.

Despite the dreaded Doom Age being over, Wolf realized that the very same ideas that had plunged the world into that demonic nightmare were still alive. Granted the ideas that sucked the world into the abyss were a tiny minority, but they remained in existence like slimy cockroaches who have survived for millions of years. Wolf greatly looked forward to the day when the holy sword of Creativity vanquished all of its foes and its sacred banner flew majestically all around the world.

Quickly absorbing the information that Viper had presented, Wolf noticed that he was becoming conditioned to the perversity he was learning of. It was still filthily revolting but he could understand how the profane ideas could take hold with the constant bombardment through the media outlets that the Jews used to dominate. To people accustomed to seeing such cursed and vile refuse, it was only natural to behave as such especially since the healthy and dynamic religion of Creativity was smeared and slandered at every chance by the perfidious Jew. Living in a golden land of virtue and prosperity, he instantly rejected these Jewish ideals but understood more clearly how the Doom Age had come about.

The hours of instruction rolled by and were only interrupted by meals of healthy, scrumptious food. The day warped by quickly as even though Wolf repudiated what he learned, it was still interesting to become more aware of the destructive ideals that the Empire had emerged from. The contrasting worlds of the Doom Age and the present glorious Empire occupied Wolf's thoughts as his lessons were concluded for the day and he drifted off into a peaceful slumber.

As Wolf awoke from his energizing rest, he wondered how much different his stay in the Shadow Corps was as a temporary member in comparison to a permanent element. The everyday happenings were bound to be different than his own experiences but in what way they differed was left to his wild imagination. Possibly, he thought, there could be millions of secret agents roaming the world or, on the other hand, perhaps there were but a handful. He doubted whether he would ever know for sure but concluded that some things were best kept hidden.

After two days of learning of the decadence the world was capable of, Wolf was warmly greeted with the news that today's lesson would consist of his infiltration tactics and undercover disguise. He was much more receptive to this training over the acquisition of the perverse ideals that still existed in the world like a vile sickness that plagued those too weak to resist.

The Shadow Corps had decided he was to play the part of an aspiring wrestler due to his physical girth. Of course his appearance would have to be changed as Wolfgang Gerhard would be widely recognized due to his recent fame. This procedure would take place the following day.

Wolf thought that the idea of him being a wrestler was brilliant as he enjoyed wrestling although boxing was his favorite sport. Knowing the names of many grappling techniques and how to execute them, gave him a definite edge as a spy playing the role of a warrior. Starting to conceive of his role in the upcoming mission was halted prematurely when Viper presented information that made Wolf chuckle.

Although Wolf was to play the role of a wrestler, he was going to be an overweight athlete with low self esteem. At this news, his visions of stealth and secrecy became one of an amusing comedy rather than intrigue. A grand smile that was hidden beneath his mask preceded his hearty laugh that echoed throughout the room and infected Viper. It was an ironic twist of fate that the gallant figure of Captain Wolfgang Gerhard would assume the guise of a plump wrestler seeking fame but not grasping it whatsoever. Wolf highly doubted that Viper knew of the great contrast between who he really was and who he would play but Viper was enjoying himself regardless as Wolf's joviality was contagious despite being distorted by the voice synthesizer. In fact, the synthesizer changed Wolf's normally deep voice into the high pitch laughter of a chipmunk or other small furry creature, making the scene that much more absurd as the sound surely didn't match the gargantuan build of Wolf.

Viper explained the necessity of him being an overgrown loser as that was the norm for the people he would encounter. Obviously, Wolf shouldn't stand out as a confident super athletic figure as that would attract a large amount of attention and the whole point of infiltration was to blend in while obtaining as much information as possible. It was advised for him to be as submissive as possible as most of the ragamuffins that he would encounter were weak and pathetic although there was a small segment that would be domineering. This dominant portion of the crowd mainly wore masks of confidence but it was just a facade.

After learning of the nature of his infiltration environment, Wolf saw the brilliance of his advisers. He was still slightly amused by the whole affair and he imagined himself as Dodo the clown going into a clandestine lounge where everyone laughed at him. Dodo's colorful appearance made him look like a fool but, secretly, his gray eyes burned with intelligence and he knew who the real fools were as he devised cunning plans to bring down the nefarious forces arrayed against him.

Wolf learned that his name was to be Hank Russell with his nickname being "Huge". The joke seemed to continue with this information but Wolf knew it fell right in place with the low self worth that he would encounter on his assignment. He was also provided with various wrestling tournaments that "Huge" Hank Russell had competed in but never won. Due to this fictitious character's obesity, it was evident, without being informed, that he would be in the super heavyweight division.

It was decided by the minds of the Shadow Corps that Wolf would be saved from being polluted with the

profane and vulgar slang that was spoken within the underground bars that he was to penetrate. The excuse he would use to explain this was simple: he had been around the "accursed" White man too long and he had picked up on their language. Wolf was relieved as he learned of this knowledge as he had absolutely no desire to speak like the rats he wished to exterminate.

Next on the day's agenda was learning how to deal with the prevalent use of drugs that he would encounter. Obviously, Wolf had no desire to poison his healthful, vigorous body but he would probably be expected to engage in such hazardous activities. In order to avoid the vigorous man's bane, he listened attentively to the words of wisdom uttered by his mentor Viper.

Viper instructed him how to act like he was using a drug without actually befouling his energetic system. With artificial props, Wolf was shown how to smoke without actually inhaling the poisons. This involved keeping the drug down so that no one would notice that the cherry didn't ignite. In the case of alcohol, he was familiarized with the technique of holding the liquid in his mouth before spitting it out somewhere, preferably in a restroom. It was counseled, however, to carry an empty container of alcohol around and sip from it if alcohol was being drunk by the majority.

After learning of several other vital drug consuming deceptions, Wolf was enlightened on how certain drugs affected the body. This was very important, Viper relayed, as it was fruitless to fake the act of consuming a drug if one didn't show signs of its affects. Therefore, it was imperative that the effect of the mind and body altering drugs be exposed.

This display was comical from the outset and both comrades thoroughly enjoyed the clownish antics an intoxicated person takes part in. The most enjoyable, by far, was the demonstration of the stupefying effects of alcohol. Viper would prance around the room clumsily, knocking into the walls and the table and in general, acting like a childish dunce who deserved detention. This was amusing in itself but Wolf attempting to imitate the whole affair made the scene lose any sense of seriousness that it may once have had.

The debilitating properties of other drugs, including marijuana, were thrown into the mix as Viper acted as though he were on a whole host of drugs. Although it wasn't visible due to his mask, Viper informed Wolf that a person "high" on drugs tended to have glazed eyes or looked rather sleepy. Wolf could recall seeing tired kinsmen but never before had he seen such an obnoxious and uncoordinated dolt that Viper portrayed. Indeed, such behavior was suitable for the reprobates and Wolf was glad to not have encountered them before.

Drugs transformed some into raving lunatics who demanded the center of attention in any situation but others were sedated and withdrew into their own little world of spinning nausea. This quieter, gentler type was Wolf's cover as people were more apt to speak freely around an inebriated invalid than a roaring moron who spouted nonsense.

Wolf was realizing how similar acting and spying were but he hadn't ever considered doing either before the tragedy in Salubrious Park. He wondered if he wouldn't try his hand at acting if everything went well. Even better, he thought, would be an acting role playing a spy. It would be a fitting role in his mind although no one else would know his secret of having served with the Shadow Corps.

After hours of intense acting and refining his abilities, Wolf felt confident that he would have no problem of blending in like a slick chameleon who could change his colors to camouflage his appearance. Despite this conviction, a contingency escape plan had been formulated as it was always wise to be prepared for victory or defeat. So prepared were they that two separate withdrawal procedures were formulated, depending on the seriousness of the situation.

If there was no danger involved, then he would simply leave the premises as swiftly as possible to an awaiting hovercar that would transport him to safety. There was a forest nearby that would allow Wolf to shake off any pursuers before meeting at the rendezvous point. The map that Wolf was shown illustrated the simple but effective route that he was to take in case of a minor emergency.

In the event of a serious altercation, a full scale assault of the bar would bring it to its knees in whimpering submission. As his infiltration would be monitored, a strike team would be able to move in swifter than a nigger stealing a watermelon. Wolf would have to fend for himself using his great physical prowess until reinforcements arrived. His only available weapon would be a small plasma pistol that would be hidden in his shoe to avoid detection. This tiny weapon was powerful beyond its size and when combined with the great physical prowess that Wolf possessed, gave him a distinct advantage over a garbage collection of stoned half-wits.

When the training session ended, Wolf retired to his quarters to contemplate what he had learned in the previous days. The days were floating by effortlessly despite the repulsive conditioning that he was

forced to endure. He was quickly adapting to his environment and was eagerly anticipating his mission. The knowledge of the enemy's behavior was being effectively devoured like that of a stalking tiger who pounced on its prey and ripped the flesh from any pathetic beast that the tiger chose. With these thoughts swirling fancifully in his eager mind, he drifted off into an energy restoring slumber.

The next day, or what he supposed was a day, brought more time for instruction for the willing Wolf. However, this day was different from the others he had spent with the Shadow Corps. The previous days Viper had tutored him but today he encountered a new comrade whose code name was Chameleon. Since the uniforms within the organization are identical and prevent identification, the only way Wolf knew this was indeed a different person was due to the name.

Chameleon was a cosmetic expert who specialized in disguises. Since secrecy and privacy were of paramount importance, Viper wasn't involved with them as only Chameleon would view the actual visage of Captain Wolfgang Gerhard. Wolf ascertained that this character must have been with the group for quite some time to be trusted in this fashion.

Although it was barely discernible, Wolf noticed the shock reflected in Chameleon's demeanor when he unmasked. Chameleon, however, said nothing while Wolf took off his uniform and sat down in only his shorts. The physique Wolf possessed was indeed impressive and was the epitome of healthful vigor. A sculptor portraying the image of Hercules could not have presented a better muscular figure than the one Wolf owned.

Ever so slowly, the adamant construction that was Wolf was transformed into the character he would soon portray. Synthetic fat was added to his legs, body, and arms. This added weight turned his energetic looking mass into sluggish weariness. Wolf was glad that this retrogression had a purpose and was only a facade as he abhorred the slimy globs of fat that had been slapped on to his stalwart frame.

Despite Wolf's disdain at the additional tonnage, he found his appearance to be quite comical when he viewed himself in a mirror. The round figure that looked back at Wolf reminded him of the children's story of a tender, caring man who lived in the North Pole and gave gifts to children every year. Wolf found himself fitting for the role in his new look and gave a merry laugh that was perfectly suited for the one known as Santa Claus. Chameleon was also amused by Wolf's outburst and they both remained festive until returning to the work at hand. In comparison to Wolf, Chameleon appeared to be one of the elves in the story of the jolly old man.

Wolf's disguise was largely done but the most difficult phase was yet to be completed. This area was the facial features of Wolf. Long brown hair was grafted onto his shaven head while additional pudginess was added to his face to match his bulging body. An unkempt and disheveled reddish beard was also added to his changing appearance. Gradually, his overweight face was created and he underwent another transformation into a drunken hippie of a bygone era.

The next step in Wolf's transmogrification was for surveillance purposes that would allow the Shadow Corps to monitor his actions and be able to respond to any threats to his safety. Nanotechnology had made minuscule cameras and other monitoring devices possible that were exceedingly difficult to detect.

One such camera was delicately placed on Wolf's eye that could not only see but hear all that Wolf could. It was virtually invisible so it was nearly impossible to notice and wouldn't affect his vision whatsoever. After the installation was complete, Wolf could see perfectly fine and he was barely aware that the device was even present. Chameleon informed him that it would quickly become second nature and he would become accustomed to it as if it was a part of him.

A tiny communication device was also attached in his ear so as to speak with the Shadow Corps and receive any orders they might issue. This way, a whole crew of spies were hearing and seeing what Wolf perceived and the odds of retrieving vital information were increased.

The final component of his guise was his clothing. The clothes consisted of a pair of black slacks, gray tennis shoes, a T-shirt entitled, "Black is beautiful", and a dark, checkered sweater. Beside the shirt, Wolf found the attire to be out of place but he was quickly informed that the White race traitors that would be present in the bar had to maintain a look of decency or they would be noticed outside of the bar. He was also instructed that the shirt only be revealed within his infiltration point. The sweater would serve a purpose as it would most likely make him sweat and stink like the rest of the rotten filth he would be associating with.

Upon looking in a mirror, Wolf was determined to never let himself wither away like the character that reflected back at him. Content with his work, Chameleon set off and only told Wolf that soon his mission would commence although he gave no certain time or even a certain day.

Wolf was left to his own thoughts after Chameleon's departure and he marveled at the craftsmanship of the costume he wore. However disgusting his guise was, it was certainly skillfully rendered. He thought it similar to the creation of hideous monsters who were appalling to behold but the design of which was masterfully forged and could be appreciated.

As he was forced to wait for the order to begin his mission, wait is what he did. Wolf contemplated his goal that presided over the affairs of his life. His goal was stapled clearly in his mind and nothing could prevent him from achieving his objective of the truth. Soon, the next stage of his journey would commence.

White Empire - Chapter XIV

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneux

After waiting what seemed to be eons, Wolf's mission had finally commenced, much to his delight and satisfaction. He was always prepared for action and the few scant hours he was forced to wait seemed frivolous but he well understood the chain of command. The Shadow Corps undoubtedly knew what they were doing and he willingly followed their wise orders.

Since he wore his disguise, it wasn't a problem that other masked members saw him. Wolf had undergone such a dramatic alteration that his own wife and kids wouldn't recognize him. Surely, the two comrades who transported him to his drop off point must have been amused at his awkward stature but this didn't affect the mission.

The trek to the rendezvous point went swiftly although Wolf had no clue whatsoever where he was nor did he even know if he was still within the boundaries of the Empire. The area was densely populated with trees and the dark cloak of night seemed to indicate this was an ideal location for a secretive gathering. Wolf noted the landscape but concentrated on making sure his equipment worked and getting a final briefing.

After rehashing the escape procedures, the one known as Predator spoke in the metallic voice that all members of the Shadow Corps uttered when wearing their masks, "You have been assigned the code name of Behemoth." After a slight pause to repress his laughter, Predator continued, "We will be monitoring your actions but should you perceive a threat that we are unaware of, simply utter 'SOS' and we will come to your rescue. Here is your ID card to get into the barn and the password is 'Enter'. Do you have any questions?"

Wolf was amused by the name assigned to him and took the identification card while noting the simplistic password. Searching quickly through his mind for questions, he happily realized that he was ready for the mission.

Preparing for his role as an overweight traitor, he responded to the query of Predator in a soft voice clouded with low self worth, "I don't have any questions, sir. Shall I go now?"

Predator noticed the change in Behemoth's demeanor instantly and swiftly responded, "Yes, Behemoth. Good luck, comrade. I hope that we obtain the information we seek."

After exchanging the customary greeting, Behemoth set out into the forest towards the barn he knew was located ahead even though he couldn't see it in the dim light of a full moon. In the few hours that he had worn his excess baggage of fat, he had quickly adapted to maneuvering around. He estimated the additional weight to be around 35 kilograms or so and since he had carried around full grown men before with little strain, the excess he carried now wasn't much of a problem.

Wolf swiftly navigated through the dark forest. He enjoyed the outdoors, especially wooded areas and he considered the night soothing whereas others might be intimidated by the haunting forms that an imagination might bestow on the stationary trees that surrounded him. He doubted whether any of the timid characters he would soon interact with would even dare to enter the peaceful woodland that he now traversed in.

As he saw the dilapidated barn in the distance, he slowed his graceful pace and started walking like the obese individual that he portrayed. Almost like a duck, Behemoth waddled slowly towards his destination while he surveyed the area for life. He didn't notice any and the building that he approached looked vacant and seemed not to have been used in quite some time. The very fact that it appeared abandoned made it an ideal dwelling for clandestine purposes but neither this nor its remote location

had been enough to hide it from the all seeing eyes of the Shadow Corps.

Suddenly, Behemoth's eyes got a glimpse of movement at the side of the dull gray structure that he was gradually making his way too. It was a man who had quickly entered the building and, due to the swiftness of his movements, Behemoth couldn't discern much concerning his appearance. However, he made for the place he last saw the man as he assumed it was the entrance that he sought.

As he approached the door, Behemoth became more aware of the rundown nature of the poorly built structure that loomed approximately ten meters in height above him. He came to the conclusion that either this place was a forgotten relic of a bygone era or he was in enemy territory.

His thoughts were shattered into pieces when a small opening appeared in the center of the door in front of him. A pair of dark eyes peeped out the aperture and demanded his identification card. Behemoth quickly complied as he tried his best to act submissive by averting his gaze. After glaring at the card and back at Behemoth, the manly voice that went with the eyes spoke forcefully, "Password?"

Behemoth brought his gaze to the eyes but swiftly retreated as he stared bashfully at the ground before replying softly, "Enter".

A cruel laughter was audible through the door before Behemoth was returned his ID card. The sound of multiple locks being unlatched thundered violently against the tranquil country setting that surrounded the area. It was clear to Behemoth that the man was confident that he was safe in this remote location. If he knew the Shadow Corps was lurking in the forest then he would surely have bolted instantly, pleading for his life.

The door swung open and Behemoth squeezed in to the amusement of the dark man. The man was of unknown origins by his appearance but Behemoth assumed he was of mixed White, black, and Asian ancestry. The man was overweight himself but obviously felt good at seeing the bulk of Behemoth.

As soon as Behemoth entered, he was violently instructed to turn around and face the wall as the unidentified man frisked Behemoth. The annoying laughter, like that of a hyena, echoed throughout the enclosure as the man padded down the excessive girth that Behemoth carried. Satisfied that no weapons were present, the multiracial man motioned towards the stairs off to the right before returning to his duty of guarding the door.

Inside the barn it was dark; the only light gleaming from beside the multiracial man was an antique lantern that was properly suited for the environment. By its dim light, an old rickety stable was visible with dust, cobwebs, and hay scattered chaotically about. Although no animals were seen nor heard, the smell of manure was overpowering and stifling, almost to the point of sickness.

As hurriedly as Behemoth thought his character ought to move, he scampered towards the stairs. He descended the flight of stairs that were made of metal and were in unmistakable contrast to the wood that surrounded most of the structure. The dull gray metal that formed the steps and railing, were barely illuminated by several lanterns that were scattered about. Behemoth was surprised at the depth of the more modern underground facility as he traveled down, down, into the abyss.

Continually down he went and Behemoth wondered when his descent would cease as the seeds of caution began to blossom, warning him of danger. Just as fast as these seeds blossomed, they began to wither as ever so faintly, he heard the vile, bestial music that he recognized immediately as Ice Dog. Pleased with his remembrance of this information despite the barely character of the racket, Behemoth pressed on.

The clanking, clanging, and clattering increased in volume as Behemoth plummeted downwards, finally observing the source of the wretched filth. The entrance he saw before him greeted him with a stench worse than the manure he had suffered through. The hideous shrieking of untold beasts met his ears, accompanied by the howling grunts of some savage gorilla that could not have been human.

Finally Behemoth entered the open doors at the bottom of the stairs and viewed the despicable waste bin that stretched out, in the form of a wide hall full of chairs, couches, and tables, in front of him. A thick haze of smoke cloaked the area in its poisonous clutches, irritating Behemoth's eyes. The room was feebly lighted but where the light originated was impossible to tell as the smoke from various drugs was so darkening that the ceiling was invisible.

Despite the aforementioned nuisances, the most excruciating torture was the tumultuous uproar that pounded Behemoth's very skull, threatening to explode the intelligence that his brain retained. Sight was inadequate in the quagmire of rankness so where the audio signals spewed forth from, he knew not. It mattered little because as much as Behemoth wished to smash all around him, including the hidden

stereo, he had a mission to accomplish.

As Behemoth entered the room, he was confronted with a whole host of faces that were completely alien to what he was accustomed to. Various hues of black and brown skinned aliens were visible as he observed his surroundings. Most of those he espied were a dark brown shade whose origins were so bleared that only a detective might solve the riddle of their family trees.

Scattered throughout the sea of ooze that dominated the area were criminals far more vile than the simple muds who wasted the planet's air which they breathed. The scum that sickened Behemoth's very essence were Whites who betrayed their people and adopted anti-White policies. These self-hating traitors consciously made an effort to destroy the very race to which they belonged and were punished accordingly in the Empire. Behemoth looked forward to the justice that would be served when these people were punished for their crimes against the White Race.

Noticing that he was sweating profusely, Behemoth removed his sweater, revealing his "Black is beautiful" T-shirt. Immediately after he placed his sweater on a nearby couch, a robust negress saw his shirt and tramped over beside him.

The beast stood out for her unusually dark skin, signifying this was a full blooded nigger. She was as dark as a sky devoid of stars but, unfortunately, her hideous and grotesque features were plain for the eye to behold. A revulsion at her appearance seized Behemoth and he was forced to fight to control himself in the face of such disfigurement.

The distorted woman uttered words barely understandable, "Hey der sexy. I like yo shirt. What's yo name?"

Eyes down, Behemoth responded quietly, "My name is Hank Russell and I want to be a wrestler. How about you? What can you tell me about yourself?"

The negress happily snorted as she proceeded to ramble on about her life, like one whom no one ever listened to had finally been allowed to speak. The words which she verbalized were mostly foreign to Behemoth as he half listened to her while spreading his audio net, hoping to ensnare anyone talking of the incident he was investigating. As he feigned interest, the creature continued to utter incomprehensible grunts as they both seated themselves on a worn-out couch.

Although he hadn't noticed it, the extra pairs of eyes that were the Shadow Corps did. A barely audible crackle was heard in his ear piece informing him of the hook nosed parasite that had just entered a room off to his right that was almost hidden. Assuming that the Jew observed was in charge of the whole underground bar, a quick scheme was hatched to gain entry and gather information.

Excusing himself from his unpleasant companion, Behemoth strolled over to the door as if he was drunk and urgently needed to relieve himself. By banging repeatedly on the door while exclaiming his imperative desire to use the restroom, he hoped to gain access to what lay beyond the steel door that loomed before him.

After several minutes of continual banging that sounded far better than the gorilla music which beat on Behemoth's head, a rat faced, vampiric figure emerged from the room that was protected by the sturdy door. The creature was obviously annoyed at the disturbance but his demeanor changed when he saw the laughable figure that Behemoth portrayed.

The room which the Jew occupied was vastly different from the haphazard mess where the bulk of the people were located. The kike's office was populated with books, a desk, and a computer. While Behemoth scanned the room, the Shadow Corps was scrutinizing it with the utmost care. Of course the whole mission was being recorded for further study to ensure that every little detail was properly analyzed.

Speaking squeamishly, Behemoth spoke, "Where is the toilet? I have to go, bad."

The vermin behind the door again became agitated and yelled, "Get out, you stupid piece of White filth! Why don't you go join those two pieces of White trash that died in that park the other day!"

Time slowed dramatically as Behemoth heard these words followed by a cruel, harsh laughter that transformed his body into a raging ball of fire that pulsed with intense anger. He did not care if this particular scum was responsible for the death of his loved ones or not but this beast would pay for the action as Behemoth concentrated his fury onto the Jew.

Visibly, the alteration Behemoth underwent was staggering to behold as he shed his image of a pathetic

being with low self esteem into the mighty warrior that he was. His eyes shined with the cold hatred he had for all the enemies of his people. The excess bulk he carried seemed to fall away as his demeanor reflected an aura of brutal, savage, and primordial battle lust that would cause any who saw such a being, tremble in fear.

At the sight of such a powerful being, the Jew muttered incoherently as he clumsily fumbled with the door that separated the two in the hope of being saved from the righteous wrath of Behemoth. The terrified parasite was far too slow, however, as Behemoth swiftly blocked the door with his massive girth while smiling fiendishly at the miserable wretch before him.

Nimble extracting the small plasma pistol from his shoe with his right hand, he literally lifted the slimy Jew off his feet by clutching the Jew's shirt and displaying some of his mammoth strength. The beast recovered his speech and issued forth a scream that somehow pierced louder than the profane vulgarity which emanated about the hall. However, this scream was abruptly cut short as a silent beam of plasma burned a deadly path through the skull of Behemoth's foe.

The noise the now deceased vermin had made had unfortunately attracted the attention of the crowd behind the mighty gladiator that was Behemoth. Pandemonium conquered the atmosphere as shrill shrieks and screams erupted, piercing the eardrums of any who were unfortunate enough to be too close. The chaotic noises that blasted their way about the area were vividly heard and their omnipresence was a favorable action that extinguished the jungle music.

Like roaches that scrambled about when a light is shined upon them, the scum frantically ran about, violently colliding with each other and adding to the swirling melee. This kind of tumultuous situation was what Behemoth preferred and where he thrived. His battle instincts sharpened, he sprang into the war zone with a tremendous roar, ready to spread the holy fire of his plasma pistol to all the infidels who defied the might of the White Empire.

Amid the shattering screeches, Behemoth faintly heard the Shadow Corps inform him that help was on its way. This increased his enthusiasm as he filled the room with the deadly fire of plasma beams. With so many targets, it was easy to decimate a vast multitude of enemies as left and right foes were destroyed effortlessly but an end in sight wasn't visible as the masses scurrying about seemed endless.

Continuing his deadly rain of fire, a sudden explosive sound caused Behemoth to take cover behind an overturned table as he searched for the source of the sound. The sound itself revealed it to be an antique firearm that he believed was a shotgun but where it came from was difficult to discern as the enclosure was still blanketed in dim light and an opaque haze.

Risking to peek his head above the table and fire more blasts, he couldn't locate the person wielding the weapon but was able to extrapolate the direction of the gun toting villain as he observed three mounds collapse suddenly as the violent boom echoed again. As he vaulted away to try and flank his adversary, another discharge erupted but again two foes were devastated instead of the unseen enemy's target.

A clear path was presented as a result of the last crushing roar and before the large gorilla was able to reload his shotgun, Behemoth took aim and fired repeatedly. The hail of plasma easily shredded through the monster as the concentrated beams tore through the creature's throat, chest, and torso. So intense was the volley of plasma that before the beast fell, his head was ripped from his body and his upper body was completely separated from his lower half. The power and efficiency of plasma technology was thus demonstrated as the disfigured corpse slumped to the floor in a bloody mess.

An abrupt series of movements near the stairs caught Behemoth's attention as he hurdled behind a ragged couch. His actions were unnecessary, however, as his comrades from the Shadow Corps filed in while laying down a blistering wall of cover fire that allowed Behemoth to join them. He was glad to see the troops as they rapidly spread throughout the building, annihilating those who opposed them.

Like expert firefighters who were extremely adept at extinguishing burning blazes, the Shadow Corps was proficient at snuffing out the lives of its enemies. This they did quickly and efficiently by scouring the complex for all signs of life and eliminating the enemy host. Behemoth was impressed by the great speed in which the Corps mercilessly worked.

Since his stay was only a temporary one, Behemoth hadn't had the chance to undergo the physical rigors required of an agent of the Shadow Corps. Due to this, he was unable to compare the training methods between the organization he was currently in and the Holy Legions. It appeared as though the tactics employed were quite good but he highly doubted that the agents he worked with now had endured the same strenuous tests of mind and body that a Legionnaire went through.

As Behemoth watched his comrades seize control of the region, he started to contemplate his mission

as a whole when a brilliant golden aura followed by a violent thunderclap catapulted him back to his senses. Sensing trouble, he rushed towards the scene of the devastation like a raging rhinoceros bent on the destruction of his natural enemy.

The scene that bloodily greeted him was unpleasant as he saw a terrible gash in the metallic wall in front of him that could only have been caused by a powerful force. The blast had thrown four of his comrades to what appeared to be their doom as they laid absolutely still. No sign of life was evident from the mangled bodies that were scattered about the floor but a sound was audible from the direction where he presumed the origin of destruction had been.

Behemoth was the only agent in the immediate area as the others had fanned out in all directions so, heedless of the danger that loomed unknowingly before him, he crept towards the soft sound that he heard. The figure that met Behemoth's eyes was a Jew who wore camouflage fatigues and was armed with an ancient, but powerful bazooka. At the sight of Behemoth, the traitor laughed maniacally and shouted, "Die White scum!"

At the sight of such a large weapon, Behemoth had rushed back behind the undamaged section of the wall and dove for safety just as the traitor had risen his weapon and fired. The high explosive rocket shredded more of the wall to pieces but Behemoth had managed to avoid the center of the blast. Shards of metal had pierced his clothing but these potentially deadly daggers wedged themselves in the additional fat he carried and he was thus unharmed. His weapon, however, was nowhere to be seen.

Remembering his training, he recalled that his foe would have to reload his implement of war and now was his chance for victory. Behemoth would have to rely on his mighty physique to be his weapon as he surged triumphantly towards his adversary.

Like a mighty juggernaut, Behemoth crashed into the man as he was reloading his weapon. Adrenaline mingled with rage at the remembrance of his fallen comrades gave Behemoth a strength that minstrels could sing glorious tales about. This fury unleashed a veritable maelstrom of blows that sent the traitor to the ground in a bloody heap.

The vermin had collapsed but the struggle was not over as Behemoth descended atop the man and continued his barrage of tremendous punches and elbows that disfigured the creature's face. Like a sledgehammer crushing a watermelon, Behemoth smashed repeatedly into his opponent's face until he was satisfied that his foe was incapacitated. To guarantee his opponent's death, he rolled the lifeless rag over and choked any remaining life out of the creature that was as motionless as a decayed skeleton.

Rising in victorious glee, Behemoth went into the hall just as his fellow Shadow Corps comrades were arriving on the scene. They briefly spoke about what had happened before examining the bodies for life. Advanced medical instruments were produced that would register even the most faint signs of life. Even if the blast had killed some of the men, it was still possible to revive them as it hadn't been but a mere few minutes since the explosive incident that had injured the fallen warriors.

Transmissions from various units reported that the facility was secure so all eyes focused on the four agents whose continued existence was very questionable. The medical team worked frantically, trying to revive the unconscious. After several elongated moments, the medical crew was getting increasingly desperate as evidenced by their ever quickening pace. In the slow moments that followed it became more and more obvious that the men were dead and nothing anyone could do, could change the situation. Finally, when all chances at resuscitation were impossible, the medical company ceased their useless work and transported the fallen heroes out of the area.

An unordered moment of silence followed as Behemoth contemplated his actions during the mission. He sincerely doubted whether spying was the correct profession for him as he had let his emotions conquer him and it had led to a disastrous situation. His actions hadn't directly led to the deaths of four comrades but indirectly... Such unproductive thoughts were quickly banished by his granite will as he longed to return to the Holy Legions and avenge his fellow White brothers by defeating the enemies of the Empire.

The Shadow Corps meticulously combed the area for clues with such speed and efficiency that they seemed like a blur moving to and fro. Rummaging through drawers, scanning the area with sophisticated devices, and collecting many seemingly useless articles were undertaken all throughout the building. Behemoth watched, amazed at the proficiency with which the agents worked.

Behemoth's superior officer, Predator, approached him and spoke, "Our part of the mission is complete. We can leave now."

Silently assenting, Behemoth followed the man as he went up the stairs and exited the barn. All the

while, he thought of the mission and how it hadn't gone according to plan. Of course, he knew that most battle plans went awry and one had to adapt to the conditions. Despite losing the men that they had, the mission was productive in that a great number of criminals were disposed of and vital information could have been recovered.

As the men entered the dark forest, the sweet harmony of singing crickets could be softly heard. A sense of tranquility overcame Behemoth as he acknowledged that his first mission was complete. The relaxing atmosphere made him wonder where the trail might lead next in his trek for justice. The environment was so calming and nurturing that he was at ease despite the malicious melee that had just taken place a few moments previously.

Disrupting the crickets' song of joy, Predator spoke softly in the high pitch voice that the voice synthesizer produced, "That was some display of heroics and battle awareness. Despite the added bulk that you were forced to endure, you move with amazing agility and speed. How do you feel about the mission?"

Calmly responding, Behemoth spoke, "My emotions took control of me when that kike said those terrible words. Without thinking of the consequences, I snapped and crushed him. I regret the loss of four good comrades but this is quite a learning experience. I am determined to avenge their deaths tenfold. The enemies of the Empire WILL be crushed."

Nodding in approval, Predator responded with mild enthusiasm as he didn't wish to break the serene setting they were in, "Yes, indeed. Victory is inevitable. We must realize, though, that casualties are a part of war and it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to avenge all the deaths of our people by ourselves. As a whole, the Empire does extremely well as we lose one soldier to thousands of the enemy's. Of course it is tragic whenever our White brothers or sisters perish wrongfully but the Empire always avenges them."

The enlightening words Predator spoke affected Behemoth immensely as he realized that he was letting every casualty that he encountered affect him tremendously. He would always strive to protect his fellow soldiers and fight to the best of his ability but trying to avenge everyone could rip him apart. However, his goal to find the truth in his close friends' tragedy remained intact and he was determined to resolve the issue no matter the cost.

The scum and vermin that Behemoth had waded through seemed light years away as he and Predator came to their waiting hovercar. Calmly the pair joined the driver in the vehicle. The trio was silent as Predator simply nodded and off the vehicle sprang into the air with its powerful engine whizzing softly.

The view above the trees was quaint as the barn that had once been full of decay, came into view. An unexpected flash of brilliance erased the decadent building as a high explosive charge ripped through the structure. The infection that had infested the beautiful landscape had been destroyed and peace returned to the area.

White Empire - Chapter XV

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneux

As Behemoth sat in his quarters in the Shadow Corps compound, he scrutinized his mission the day previous with the utmost care and precision. Like a grand general, he analyzed the situation from every conceivable angle in order to not only learn and grow from the experience but to determine whether serving with the Shadow Corps was the best way to utilize his gargantuan talents. Granted, he had long ago decided his stay would be temporary within this secret division, but just how long his service would last remained unknown.

As it was made clear from the outset that he was only interested in serving a short stint within the Corps, Behemoth wondered whether he faced any kind of disciplinary action for his explosive outburst. He could only speculate on the difference of knowledge that he received compared to a full fledged, lasting agent. He noted how well hidden the operations were from not only the public but even fellow members. With this information, he resigned himself not to worry about such things.

His mind shifted somewhat in his musings to what, if any, information had been useful from the bloody and chaotic assignment that he had perilously ventured on. Perhaps the computer they had captured would reveal a link to the underground bar and the slaughter of his honorable compatriots. Would the Jews be so foolish as to have such data in that cesspool? Behemoth thought it unlikely unless they felt extremely safe in the false knowledge that no one outside their circle knew about their little

establishment that was now no more.

A sudden jolt, like a nuclear blast, rocked Behemoth's mind as a simple but profound idea presented itself to him. Like an avid collector of memorabilia, the Shadow Corps zealously collected and hoarded mounds of knowledge so it would logically follow that Behemoth's assignment wasn't the only lead that existed. It would be good investigating procedure to cover a wide area of potential clues in order to ensure a higher rate of success.

Along the same line of reasoning, it became clear to Behemoth that it wouldn't be wise to assign a rookie to the most vital mission. It would make the most sense to grant the newly joined member the task least likely to bear fruit. These revelations couldn't be confirmed as there was no possible way that he could get any enlightenment shed upon the subject but it was pristinely clear to his mind's eye that he was correct.

He hadn't had any contact with any members of the Shadow Corps yet that day and an interest in the war with the Asian forces roared loudly in his mind. As a result, he lounged comfortably upon his bed, spreading his colossal frame out until his satisfaction was complete. Relaxed, he spoke a few words and the video screen surged to life with visions of battlefields and reports of the swift and crushing victories that the Empire was having in the vast stretches of the Asian continent.

Never before, in the long history of Earth, had there been a larger battle front than the current war with the Allied Asian forces. The entire perimeter of Asia, from northern Asia that bordered Russia, to the many islands located in the Pacific, was under attack by the mighty legions of the White Empire. Reports came in with blinding speed that noted advance after advance as the military might of the Empire crashed through all resistance like a mythological Titan who demolished all the tiny humans that crossed its path.

The sweeping strategy and effective tactics the Empire were employing were allowing them to progress far faster than Behemoth anticipated. Despite the billions of foes that presently defied the White Empire, a rapid advance was seen despite the infancy of the war.

The territory known as Mongolia, where the nefarious Genghis and Batu Khan hailed from, had already been cleansed of all impurities. Granted it was a sparsely populated region, but it was a rather large strip of land. Behemoth ached for warfare and wondered where he might be assigned upon his return to the Holy Legions.

Behemoth watched with little interest as a report of a full scale nuclear missile attack had been launched at various sites within the Empire. He was well aware that the elaborate missile defense system known as Gargantuan, protected against the threat of nuclear weapons. All across the land, missiles were spotted and neutralized. There was even a report of an attempt to smuggle a nuclear warhead into the White Empire but, it too, was negated.

Being in the military, Behemoth was familiar with Gargantuan and rested comfortably at night as he knew its effectiveness. The brilliant scientists that designed Gargantuan had pioneered a nuclear detection and neutralization device that constantly emitted a Dragion Aura Wave that, while harmless to organic life and energy systems within the Empire, proved disabling to any form of nuclear power. These devices were installed in underground bunkers across the realm and the wave they emitted traveled two hundred kilometers in every direction. For safety's sake, the devices were set up closer than that to provide overlapping coverage.

As if this wasn't enough, plasma anti aircraft batteries were also installed throughout the land to shoot down any hostile invaders and any missiles that the Air Force might miss. The tremendous amount of surveillance that was available enabled the Air Force to destroy any attackers long before these aggressors came in range of the plasma batteries. Therefore, these defenses had never seen action but it was always good strategy to be prepared for any contingency possible.

A news flash that interrupted the other reports told of a large clash of forces near the northern Chinese city of Hailar. A large alien force had engaged a smaller White armored division with the Whites being vastly outnumbered. Exact numbers weren't available but it was estimated that the Asian host was comprised of several million soldiers and thousands of tanks while the White force had but a few hundred of the ultra powerful hover tanks.

As if by sheer power of his indefatigable will, Behemoth was transported to a high mountain overlooking the battlefield. The view was one of majestic beauty as he viewed the instruments of war that spread out like little toys before him. The millions of enemy soldiers that scrambled about like bugs searching for food, interested him.

Like a king deliberating over the affairs of his subjects, Behemoth pondered how such a vast multitude of foes had managed to avoid the eagles of the Empire that ruled the sky and devastated any foes they saw with the mighty Death's Head weapon of mass destruction. The only conclusion he could deduce was that an underground network had been built in order to move the soldiers without detection.

Regardless of the seemingly hopeless odds that the Empire faced, victory was assured and no loss of life would result for any White warriors. The reason for this, beside the vast superiority of the White Race, was that it was a general tactic to control any vehicle through remote control means. The pilots in the planes and hovertanks would be controlled by a crew hundreds or even thousands of kilometers away.

In addition to this, the actual fighting soldiers of the Empire were essentially a clean up crew that wouldn't normally see any action other than to mop up any hidden forces. The main power of the military lay in the planes and hovertanks that devastated the dastardly fiends that resisted the might of the Empire. Essentially, these forces unfurled an inviting red carpet that the infantry strolled upon in all their splendor.

Although virtually invisible, the fighter planes of the Empire cruised quietly above the encroaching melee. Their supremely destructive weapon, known as the Death's Head missile, wouldn't be as useful in such a clustered situation as the hovertanks would be made inoperative. Since the hovertanks were piloted from afar, there would be no loss of life but the electromagnetic field generated by the Death's Head missile would disable the vehicles and thus neutralize the fighting ability of the Empire's forces.

As a result of this handicap, the planes were forced to use the more conventional means of attack in high explosives and plasma weapons. Even before the two armies clashed in the barren wasteland outside of Hailar, gruesome death rained down on the Asian forces like a hail storm of burning destruction. The swarming infantry were especially hard hit as it was nearly impossible not to kill hundreds or even thousands with a single attack run as the beasts were packed so densely.

Meanwhile, the sleek black hovertanks whizzed softly across the battlefield, hovering several meters above the ground. Each war vehicle sported multiple weapons which were capable of dealing with virtually any situation. Two large plasma cannons were mounted atop the tank for the larger targets while several smaller plasma guns were located on the sides. The juggernaut was even equipped with a multiple rocket platform that could eradicate large masses of enemy foot soldiers. Each weapon had an almost unlimited area of attack so it mattered not which direction this master of war faced.

These hulking brutes of immense power were known as Colossals. They were designed for great firepower, immense defense, and lightning speed. The armor was a full meter thick and was made from the super strong but light metal called Klassenium. Since the craft was not meant for a crew, this allowed space for multiple power cells and a larger engine that allowed the vessel to reach speeds up to five hundred kilometers an hour. In field tests, it had taken hundreds of blasts from the ancient Soviet tanks that the Asians employed to merely damage a Colossal so it was safe to assume that these veritable floating fortresses would dominate the battlefield.

The opposing Asian forces mainly deployed vastly outdated T-80 tanks that had become obsolete years ago. Even in the masses that were produced, they were no match for the Colossals. The gooks might have taken comfort in the fact that their host supremely outnumbered their opponents' force but this sense of security would be tested as the day wore on.

The Asians hoped that the wasteland would allow their extensive army to overwhelm and surround the Empire but, as always, their tactics were flawed as the Empire's forces gleefully welcomed the terrain as the hovertanks had a far greater range and could fire at the T-80's without return fire from a distance of several kilometers. Obstacles between the armies would have prevented this but the Asians, ignorant of such knowledge, hastened forward to their doom.

The Asian tanks rumbled onward across the vast clearing, churning up chaotic dust storms that would veil their vehicles from the average eye but would be no hindrance to the highly evolved sensors that the Colossal tanks employed. The cold, desolate wasteland that surrounded the two armies was, like all areas outside the Empire, devoid of healthy life. Not even grass was present as the area seemed contaminated with some unknown poison that befouled the land.

The most common sight besides diseased earth that was seen in the no man's land void was profane rubbish. Scattered about haphazardly was refuse of every imaginable sort. The appearance of the area wasn't conducive to a landfill or other waste disposal domain as there weren't great mounds of trash but, instead, small piles littered about. Logically, it would seem to indicate that the filth had merely been enticed into the region by the alluring wind.

The unheard command given, the Colossals opened fire with their penetrating bluish plasma beams. A bystander would have been in awe at the magnificent light show that erupted with life and devastated the hostile forces of the Asian enemy. The entrancing display of pulsating color had the ability of numbing one's ability to fight and this distraction caused more than one enemy tank to halt their advance and be shot like the easy target it presented.

As the plasma fusillade continued its barrage of mutilation, an unheard, but not undetected, enemy threat flew rapidly towards the battlefield. This flying squadron had been launched from a previously unknown airfield located in the side of a hill near the city of Hailar. Like locusts bent on the death of vital and healthy plants, the old Mig fighters scrambled hastily ahead to resist the military might of the White Empire.

Thousands of these planes hurtled towards the invaders of their homeland while the Asian tanks were being ravaged and torn apart by the precision strikes of the plasma blasts. Upon observing the Migs, the F-35 Bolt fighters of the Empire abandoned their bombing runs to neutralize the new threat and to ensure their mastery of the skies.

The old fashioned relics known as Migs were no match for the supreme Bolt planes and a slaughter soon commenced. The Bolt fighters were invisible to the primitive radar capabilities of the Asians and blended in so well with the overcast sky that detection by eyesight was impossible. What the terrified gooks did see were many bursts of plasma that sent the Migs plummeting to their destruction. Again and again the unrelenting stream of fire assaulted the insignificant but annoying beasts that roamed the skies. While the missiles the Migs were equipped with could damage the Bolt planes, it would require the pilot to detect the plane, which it was unable to do. The Asian air force could detect the Colossal tanks as well as damage them so it was imperative to destroy the planes before they did.

While the massacre continued in the gray skies above, a similar display of carnage was also occurring on the ground as the T-80's were being destroyed at a monumental rate. Despite this, they pressed onward even though they were still not in range and couldn't successfully hit any hovertanks. Burned out tanks lay devastated across the battlefield but not a single Colossal was dented nor even fired upon.

The heavy losses sustained by the Asian forces were staggering but still their forces heavily outnumbered the Empire's. Living under Communist rule, it was easy to ascertain why they continually pressed forward to their sure deaths. Death was far more inviting a prospect than returning to their miserable lives where torture and deprivation were commonplace. This sick existence would explain the malicious madness that spurred them onwards to their ultimate doom. Soon, oh so soon, the vast mass of antiquated Soviet tanks would try in vain to harm the Colossals.

The threat in the skies was a serious one and though the Migs were being shot down at an astounding rate, many were still functional and posing to attack the ground forces of the Empire. The outbursts of blue plasma that assaulted the Asian planes not only destroyed them but caused some gook pilots to go insane as they thought some supernatural force was at work. These disturbed pilots plummeted to their death and some even purposely crashed into their own infantry as they thought they were bestial devils summoned from some imaginary hell. Struggling fiercely and firing with amazing accuracy, the valiant pilots of the Empire shot down hundreds, and then thousands of enemy planes but it was not enough to stop the Migs from reaching the Colossal tanks.

The Colossal tanks had no intention of sitting still and allowing the Migs to have easy target practice so the hovertanks elevated themselves high above the battlefield just as the first volley of high explosive anti-tank shells were directed towards them by the T-80 tanks. The hovertanks orchestrated a fighting withdrawal as they swerved about to avoid the missiles launched at them while firing a barrage of plasma at their pursuers.

Trapped between the Bolt planes and the hovertanks, the Asian Migs were relentlessly assaulted. In the ensuing melee, several hovertanks were unfortunately destroyed by the lucky shots of some gook pilots. These pilots soon met death, however, as they were quickly destroyed. The Migs had missiles that could home onto the heat signature of an enemy but this was neutralized by the great cooling systems in the instruments of war that the Empire fielded and limited the effectiveness of such missiles.

The air battle was drawn one hundred kilometers away from the original area before the Asian planes made the decision to withdraw. At this time they had but a mere skeleton of the huge force they had started with. This remainder was soon liquidated by the Bolt craft as it pursued and demolished the force that had managed to destroy several Colossals.

The massacre that had just commenced in the gloomy skies was unknown to the ground forces of the Asians. In their ignorance, the infantry and tank crews were celebrating wildly as they believed they had just defeated the armed forces of the mightiest Empire that had ever existed. As they had been unable

to pursue the hover tanks, they had ceased their movement and relegated themselves to abandoning any discipline they might have had to festively cheer on their apparent triumph.

The commanders of the alien host tried desperately to organize and rally the troops to press the attack but it was an absolutely futile gesture. Nothing could have tasted sweeter to these ragged troops than the sublime ambrosia of success against what they knew to be a superior entity. As much as their leaders had tried to boost their confidence by telling the soldiers how elite they were, the infantry didn't bite on such propaganda as news of the White Empire's exploits would reach their ears despite the viselike grip the government had on the media.

The revelry continued unabated even right beside the dead and dying comrades of the Asian forces. The gooks were mainly a hedonistic lot which didn't even tend to take care of their wounded despite their bloodied bodies laying close nearby. Instead of being saved, these dying bodies were actually trampled to death by the gleeful celebrants.

Gunfire erupted skyward as the soldiers were unable to contain their excitement but the jubilation soon turned violent as arguments over trivial matters like who had the honor of shooting the most and firing first exploded upon the scene. Several fights broke out and shots followed, killing an unknown amount of soldiers as the area was densely populated. The escapade would have avalanched into a full blown riot but the bizarre and animalistic nature of the Asians was temporarily quelled as a report of an unidentified force was seen approaching their location.

Word of the successful defense engineered by the military traveled quickly to the nearby city of Hailar and it was the surviving citizens of an earlier assault on the city by the White Empire that came in droves to congratulate the Asian military. Although the vehicles these people occupied were far outdated compared to the Empire's vast technology, the leaders of the Asians had received no word that they were friendly so they ordered the attack on the cheering civilians that slowly advanced.

The internal squabbling ceased immediately as the gook soldiers charged into battle with reckless abandon. Whether they were oblivious to the fact of their assault on their own kind or whether they didn't care is open to speculation. A violent slaughter commenced as the cheering citizens rapidly became bloody corpses of immense wretchedness. Bullets noisily filled the air and booming explosions rocked the earth in this deafening symphony of carnage.

The fervor and madness was bewildering to behold as the soldiers cut down their own subjects in a brutal display of perverted fanaticism. Driven beyond their normal capacities by their perceived victory over the Empire, the gook soldiers overwhelmed the unarmed citizens with frightful speed and intensity. Blood flowed freely as the frightened citizens scrambled away like a flock of geese who scamper about wildly when they perceive danger.

Flying unnoticed in the heavens, above the orgy of insanity, was a squadron of Bolt fighters preparing for their bombing assault. Only one plane was required to launch the devastating Death's Head missile but the others functioned as an escort just in case anything went awry. The escort proved unnecessary, however, as the planes weren't hindered along their route and flew over the target site without any problems whatsoever.

The decision had been made and the Hyper Neutron missile was launched towards the filthy mass below as the planes accelerated to their maximum speed and veered violently away to avoid the monstrous blast. The beasts that slew one another were unaware of both the planes and the deadly missile that sealed their impending doom. The butchering below was cut short by the explosion that ended the gooks' suffering.

The bombardment of neutrons upon the field of battle unleashed an obliteration of all the filth below. The powerful energy released was a marvel to behold as the blast produced a wide variety of color in flashing patterns that dazzled the eye. Reds, blues, and greens were the most remarkable as the neutrons sprinkled down upon the land after the initial explosion. This cleansing rain sanctified the area as it ridded the land of the foul poison that had infested it.

The destruction of vermin was quick and painless as the radiation enveloped the bodies and consumed them completely. Flesh and bone were incinerated instantly and no trace of life remained, not even ash. The signs of life in the form of vehicles, guns, and even the clothes the beasts wore, survived the blast. These were unaffected by the radiation the neutrons emanated. This radiation dissipated swiftly as its half life was only one hour, which meant that within a day the area would again be safe for life to flourish and thrive.

The battle was ended in another glorious triumph of the White Empire. The newscaster came back onto the video screen and reported other events of the war but Behemoth stood up from his bunk and

cheered happily. No matter the obstacles, the White juggernaut was unstoppable and its extreme velocity fascinated him.

Behemoth switched off the video screen and resigned himself to his thoughts. Seeing the vivid scenes of battle made him yearn more than ever to return to the field of war. His heart longed for open engagement of battle rather than the clandestine spying that he was presently engaged in. Not having heard from the agents of the Shadow Corps, he drifted off into the realm of dreams as he thought of the future.

White Empire - Chapter XVI

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneaux

Behemoth awoke at the sound of the disguise specialist in the Shadow Corps, Chameleon, entering the room. The night's rest was indeed refreshing and his thoughts the previous day had manifested into a dream about his future. In his dream, he had saved his good friends John and Marie from a horde of hideous monsters. The dream made him smile as he contemplated what his unconscious might want him to do. He was confident of resolving his comrades' deaths but in exactly what fashion still remained a mystery.

Chameleon calmly seated himself and silently assented to Behemoth getting ready before they conversed. Behemoth hastily prepared himself as he wondered what treasures the day would bring. He made short work of his morning meal of fruit and juice before washing up and being ready to expel his outer shell like a snake shedding its skin.

Rapidly, Chameleon extracted the tools of his trade from his bag and started working diligently to restore Behemoth to his former appearance. Behemoth tore off the surviving clothes that he had worn for the mission so that the bogus fat could be removed from his muscular body. Then the dense heft flew off Behemoth's body as if he was on a healthy fast. The weight was coming off much faster than it had gone on and when it was all gone, Behemoth felt as though he had become a new man.

Next to be removed were the listening devices installed in his eye and ear. These amazing devices had become so ingrained in his system that Behemoth had completely forgotten about them and had questioned Chameleon's actions until he became aware of the tiny surveillance equipment. With the removal of the devices, Behemoth had once again become his former physical self.

Only mere minutes had passed but the job was complete. Chameleon gathered his gear and slowly trotted out of the room, carrying the remains of Behemoth's disguise that would surely either be reused or recycled. Before leaving, he informed Behemoth that Viper would shortly be arriving and to put on his Shadow Corps uniform.

Although Behemoth wasn't slowed down that much with the disguise he had worn, he felt a million times quicker and more agile than before. As he gazed into the mirror in his room, he noticed how much better he looked as well. While admiring his physique, he was reminded of the grand statues of heroic champions that adorned the Museum of Heroes. He had visited that museum many times as he honored the warriors of the White Race—both the fictitious heroes and the factual ones. After all, the legends and myths of great knights had surely inspired historical gladiators.

Behemoth quickly moved across the room and jumped up and down as he relished in his returned capabilities. Quickly he put on his midnight black uniform as he pumped himself up like the ancient combatants did thousands of years ago. Although there was no physical battle ready to receive him at the moment, every day could be called a symbolic battle and this is what he readied himself for as he seated himself at his table.

Behemoth noticed the quiet sliding door open and Viper entered the room with an air of stealth about him that was now common to his eyes. The mystery surrounding Viper, as an agent of the Shadow Corps, seemed heightened on this day. Whether it was the demeanor of Viper or his own thoughts about his future, Behemoth sensed something different from the shadowy figure of his mentor.

His tutor confidently strolled to the table and seated himself comfortably. It was impossible to accumulate any information based solely on looks due to the cloaking uniforms which all agents wore. Neither of the obvious indicators of feeling were visible as both the eyes and mouth were veiled. Viper's body language didn't seem to convey much to the observant eyes of Behemoth so it was apparent that only speech would reveal if something was, indeed, out of the ordinary.

After exchanging greetings, Viper placated the unspoken request by speaking in the high pitched voice common to all in the Shadow Corps, "I hope you are doing well and have fully recuperated after such an intense mission. After sorting through the evidence gathered, we have collected vital information that will surely assist us in our search for justice. Not only that but I have recommended you for the Shadow Award, which is awarded to great agents who exude excellence. After seeing your heroic display, I believe you will win easily. We have your next mission assigned as well."

As Viper produced a folder and placed it in front of him, Behemoth realized his senses had proved right and something was different- something great. Many thoughts blitzed his mind and overwhelmed him. Events were transpiring so quickly that time was needed to sort everything out. He was already undecided about his future and this news added fuel to the swarming fire.

Noticing that Behemoth didn't look at the report, Viper asked inquisitively, "Is something wrong comrade?"

Behemoth's response came rapidly and matched the flurry of thoughts that were enveloping him, "May I be excused for a few moments to think of this news?"

Viper granted the request with a silent, consenting nod while informing Behemoth to contact him via the communications device located in his uniform when he was ready to continue their meeting. After his instructor left the room, Behemoth got up from his chair and started strolling about his quarters with his hands clasped behind him and his eyed aimed skywards as he contemplated the words of his mentor.

While the new information hadn't concretely proved a conspiracy in his friends' deaths, it did make the idea much more plausible. Behemoth doubted whether the agency would reveal much in regards to the essential data they had recovered but since his mission was already assigned, he concluded it was very important and was linked to some insurgent group that would have the means to execute an attack on the populace of the White Empire. It was all merely speculation though and it seemed only time would reveal the facts to him.

The announcement that he was recommended for an award was shocking to Behemoth's mind. Granted he had liquidated a good number of foul beasts but four comrades had paid with their very lives. Obviously, the intelligence gathering field could be very dangerous especially when one had to go behind enemy lines and into the enemy's lair. He wondered how many agents were normally lost in missions like the one he was a part of. That knowledge wasn't his and probably never would be.

So enveloped in thought was he, that Behemoth hadn't even felt proud about the award recommendation nor had he even thanked Viper for the honor. That would be resolved shortly and a sense of content accomplishment consumed him as he noted that if he hadn't eliminated the threat of the rocket welding maniac, then other agents could have been killed. Remembering the spectacle vividly, Behemoth relished in the satisfaction of squeezing the life out of the malicious monster that had harmed his brethren.

Continuing to pace about the room, Behemoth noted that the minutes flew slowly by like a graceful eagle that glided majestically through the azure skies. Excitement tingled throughout his body as he enjoyed being alive. The great news that had been presented to him was finally sinking in. The time was ripe for his decision of the future and his mind was made up.

Stopping his gait, he confidently radioed for Viper to return to his quarters. His mind was at ease as the battlefield that was his mind, had quieted with the guns silent and the smoke having cleared. Behemoth seated himself comfortably in his chair as he awaited the arrival of his mentor and looked forward to the days ahead.

Only a few minutes passed before Viper appeared and, after seating himself, spoke as reassuring as possible given the fact that he spoke with a voice synthesizer, "I hope everything is well, comrade. How are you feeling?"

Although it wasn't visible, Behemoth was grinning broadly and this clearly indicated his mood. Since it wasn't observable though, he had to speak to convey his feelings. "I'm doing extremely well, sir. I just had to think some things through."

Retrieving the mission file, Viper again placed it in front of Behemoth. This was countered by Behemoth's words, "Sir, may I have a few words with you?"

After acknowledging the affirming nod, Behemoth spoke agreeably, "The news you have furnished me with is very exciting. I am glad that useful information was found at our target site and I hope it proves very useful. I am very appreciative of the honor you have bestowed upon me by recommending me for

the Shadow Award. The present mission could very well lead to the justice I am seeking. That said, I do not think I am the one who should undertake that mission. I do not feel that this is my proper role in life and, as such, I request to be discharged."

Viper didn't immediately react to the words and betray his feelings to the request for discharge. His disposition remained the same but it was obvious that he was pondering the whole situation. Silence ruled the room as Behemoth awaited a response to his request.

After several minutes of contemplation, Viper uttered, "You haven't been with us that long and you wish to leave already? Although you are under no obligation to explain, I would appreciate it if you could present me with your reason for your request."

Although he couldn't mention the Holy Legions as secrecy within the Shadow Corps was paramount, Behemoth did partially reveal his judgement. "The occupation I left to join this fine organization was one which I have enjoyed for many years and I wish to return to it. My time that I have spent here has been educational but I do not feel as though I can best utilize my abilities in these surroundings. Therefore, I request a discharge so that I can resume my former work."

Nodding his head in acquiescence, Viper replied, "I will talk to my superiors and get back to you. Of course, I can't tell you for sure whether your request will be granted or not. In the meantime, study this report so that you will be prepared either way. I will return later today to inform you of the situation."

The comrades exchanged customary farewells before Viper exited the room. Behemoth picked up the report that had been left for him and quickly glanced at the contents. There were many pages of reports, pictures, diagrams, and general information. The report itself was quite voluminous and detailed but Behemoth found it very interesting and wasn't bored by it whatsoever. Even though he was accustomed to greatness within the Empire, the superiority of his folk never ceased to amaze him.

The mission that lay before him was different from his other mission in that the objective was to penetrate a strictly Jewish compound. It was far more likely that Jews would be behind any conspiracy rather than the other half-witted muds. The Jews have a religion that has bound them for centuries and only the might of Creativity was able to destroy the tentacles that had been sucking the blood out of the world. With that common knowledge, it was logical to assume that the Jews were behind any nefarious schemes that existed in the world.

The compound was located in a newly conquered area in what was known as China. The Shadow Corps had jurisdiction in infiltrating the underground facility as it was important to their case and obtaining information was vital. Military units would easily be able to destroy the building but it was hoped to gain valuable insight into the ongoing investigation. Speed in executing the mission was of supreme importance as to have a higher probability of success in capturing any enemies that would reveal what they knew. Behemoth believed that these vermin would be happy to help after proper persuasion was introduced.

This mission wasn't the same type of infiltration as before. This assignment was a full scale raid of the complex. This type of operation appealed greatly to Behemoth as it was very similar to his work in the Holy Legions. A brief moment of regret flashed across his mind before retreating in light of his acknowledged home with the Holy Legions.

The hours flew by as Behemoth devoured the intriguing report. So much detail had been provided by the advanced sensors of the Empire that he believed that he knew more of the compound than the Jews who resided in it did. If Behemoth hadn't observed the blueprint that was obtained through satellite means, he wouldn't have thought it possible to detect structures beneath the ground. The evidence of this technology, however, was right in front of him.

As Behemoth studied the plans of the mission before him, he pleasantly realized that he was in a win-win situation. His home was with the military and that is where he wished to go but the prospect of the raid was attractive to him as well. Therefore, he realized, there was no way for him to be unhappy, regardless of the Shadow Corps' decision.

Just as this enlightening thought was tickling his brain, Behemoth observed the return of his mentor, Viper. Behemoth stood up and saluted his superior who replied similarly before they both seated themselves at Viper's unspoken insistence. Eagerly, Behemoth waited for the news of whether he would keep his code name or would resume his birth name of Wolfgang.

Instead of immediately making the decision known, Viper asked, "What do you think of the new mission?"

A metallic laugh softly echoed about the room as Behemoth replied, "I like the mission as it is more my style than the previous one. I wasn't expecting you to ask about that, though."

Viper nodded and produced an unseen smile before speaking, "After examining the new mission, do you still wish to exit the Shadow Corps?"

Behemoth answered immediately, "Yes, I do. Of course, I will abide by the decision of the Shadow Corps. In fact, I will be happy either way but I would still like to depart and pursue my previous occupation."

"Very well, comrade. Your request has been granted," replied Viper. "In thirty minutes you will be escorted out of the complex. Take care."

Viper collected the mission folder while Behemoth responded, "Thank you, sir. RAHOWA!"

Viper responded likewise before exiting the room and leaving Behemoth to his thoughts. Excitedly, Behemoth looked forward to the Holy Legions and to being called by his real name, Wolfgang. He recalled the glory of battle and the refreshing duty of serving the Empire in warfare like the ancient warriors of bygone eras. The winning of the world was rapidly approaching and he highly anticipated serving his part in the honorable victory of the White Empire.

White Empire - Chapter XVII

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneaux

The explosive celestial entity known as the sun, brought warmth and happiness down upon the citizens enjoying the natural wonders in Salubrious Park. The sky was dotted with several clouds but these didn't seem to threaten or extinguish the pleasant rays of the life bearing star that sustained the bluish planet Earth. The soft calls of various birds mingled with the abundance of life, created a serene atmosphere of content and relaxation.

This area had charmed Marie Benini for many years and inspired her greatly. Although John Granger had only visited the park but once, he had also been enamored of its beauty and it could easily have been a natural shrine like the ones the Pagan ancestors of the White Race had utilized for their religious purposes. It was therefore quite fitting that the monument of these martyrs was being erected in the very place that the two adored.

Construction of the memorial grave had been started shortly after the deaths of the outstanding citizens. Time wasn't wasted within the Empire and this was evidenced by the great amount of work that had already been completed. Although less than a week had passed, the monument was nearly finished and was already quite pleasing to the eye.

Work from both the erection of the site and the computer systems were rapidly progressing as workers took pride in their work and pushed one another to go faster and achieve better results. Such a work mentality allowed for tremendous results in little time.

The creation site was swarmed with numerous laborers who were far busier than bees working on their honeycomb. Back and forth, up and down, they toiled unceasingly in the pleasant aura that enveloped them. The construction tools they used hummed softly but were not so loud as to profane the tranquility that surrounded them.

In seeming respect of the sacrosanct quality of the structure they were building, the normal boisterous songs of these expert craftsmen were quieted, but still sung cheerfully. The songs kept morale high and gave the workers a sense of unity. When one comrade might be unable to sing due to exertion, the others would still sing so the merry atmosphere was always sustained.

The songs of the gleeful laborers varied in length and scope. Some of the lyrics glorified the magnificent Empire and what an honor it was to serve as a craftsman in such a wondrous place. Others recounted the majestic buildings that construction workers had produced and how proud they felt to be involved in such endeavors. All the songs emphasized pride in one's work and achieving and maintaining a superior work ethic that would be remembered for eons.

The cheerfulness of the workers fit in rather well with the spacious surroundings of Salubrious Park. The park goers themselves were pleased at the structure being built which led the laborers to attain a greater speed to please the small crowd that watched the construction. The park had always been

popular but it was even more so after the tragic event that had recently taken place.

The tranquil surroundings were abruptly invaded by an unseen, unanticipated crack of explosive thunder. Where the accompanying lightning bolt struck was unknown nor was the point of origin visible. The sky above was a Prussian blue mixed with whitish clouds that showed no sign of a storm. Another detonating blast of riotous thunder shook the area and revealed that, although the darkening clouds were not yet visible, the previous concussion was no freak of nature and a powerful storm was approaching.

A chill wind blew softly at first but increased gradually as commanding orders bellowed forth from the captain of the work force. The scaffolding that surrounded the incomplete monument was quickly transformed into a watertight tent that would allow the crew to continue working despite the adverse weather conditions. The new song that the men excitedly chanted reflected their hurried pace and spoke of speed and dexterity in building.

Within minutes the sky had darkened and most everyone in the park had found shelter with the laborers entering the construction tent as the park goers retreated to the park facilities. The work crew had erected their refuge with plenty of time to spare before the cold, wet drops of rain started to pelt the enclosure. The air was chilled but the change in temperature and atmospheric conditions didn't slow the rapid advance the construction workers were experiencing.

The full fury of the storm, that had been blocked from sight by the numerous trees in the area, was suddenly unleashed upon the park land. The blackening effect of the storm caused the auxiliary lights to shine forth. The torrent of heavy raindrops that bombarded the worker's haven, caused a rhythmic pitter-patter that soothed the occupant's minds with its lulling effect. This beating noise fit right in with the lyrical words sung by the crew and soon became a vital component of the music that would have been missed had it been absent.

A worker here and then a worker there stopped singing until all song had stopped and only the steady raindrops of the mighty thunderstorm that held them in its embrace, could be heard. Something dark and mysterious had been spotted heading for their haven and the curiosity of the men had been inflamed. The captain of the company ordered a break so as to ascertain what it was that had been spotted in the ferocious tempest that raged violently about like a mythical dragon in its death throes.

Viewed from inside the shelter, several barely visible forms were discerned by those with the keenest eyesight. The darkness that pervaded the park made it difficult to make out the identity of the individuals that appeared to be cloaked in black and slowly advancing in a cautious fashion. Whether this meant the figures were merely having a difficult time navigating the pounding storm or slinking about with hostile intentions, was unclear.

The leader of the workers ordered several men to brave the relentless storm to determine what the clandestine figures were up to in such a forceful act of nature. The men that exited the dry haven were immediately assaulted by the stinging rain and sweeping, hurricane-like winds. The bite of the storm was indeed shocking as the men felt as though they were being attacked by an angry swarm of hostile hornets. The men quickly adjusted to their new environment and became accustomed to the thrashing pricks while going about their orders.

The men ventured out and yelled loudly in the direction of the mysterious beings but all was for naught. The greetings they broadcasted were no match for the scathing winds that howled mightily and overpowered the seemingly insignificant call of the workers. Try as they might, their voices just could not pierce the shield of wind that separated the workers from the lost souls that loomed before them.

The simple communication devices the crew wore in their ears crackled a garbled message as the storm greatly interfered with the transmission. The orders from the captain were made out but only with great difficulty. They were to attempt to use hand signals in order to attempt to communicate with the unknown beings. If this didn't work, they were to proceed with caution and advance.

The lead crewman, Gregor Slavonav, gesticulated in the form of sign language in the hopes of contacting those deep in the storm. He exaggerated the motions in the hope of making the gestures more visible but all to no avail. Either the cloaked figures couldn't see them or didn't understand them. A third possibility existed though. Maybe the crew was simply being ignored.

Meanwhile, the concealed spirits continued their slow, labored pace towards the construction site. Five of the figures beckoned forth as if attracted by the light in the darkness. Like a ship lost at sea, they gided towards the lighthouse that would provide safety. Oddly, though, their pace was slow and one would think that they would rush forward to the sanctuary of dryness yet the storm didn't seem to bother them whatsoever.

As the five forms navigated the forest, a powerful gust of wind accompanied by a searing sword of lightning, ravaged an immense tree and caused it to come toppling down. The tree was well over twenty meters tall and its branches stretched out even further than this. As the tree crashed to the earth in a deafening blow, one of the extended branches landed atop one of the figures and pinned him to the ground. Amid the debris, it was unclear whether the man had survived the devastating impact or not.

The loss of their comrade didn't affect the strange men at all. In fact, they didn't even seem to notice that a monstrous tree had just fallen in their midst and crushed one of their own. It was as if they were mindless zombies who were oblivious of the events that surrounded them. Long ago, drones of this nature had a name—Christians.

These Christians of an ancient era, for the most part abandoned the higher intellectual faculties that separate humans from the other animals of nature. Logic, reasoning, and common sense had been pounded out of these beings by unnatural religious infection. The suicidal, contradictory, and farcical beliefs these Christians preached so muddled the minds of the people that they would believe anything the priests said. Fear of a ghoulish hell kept them in line and under the sway of the church leaders.

The crew of workers, led by Slavonav, noted the bizarre behavior of the bizarre men amid several cracklings of thunder. Each of the men instinctively pulled out their plasma pistols in order to protect themselves and their comrades. As Slavonav was reporting what had just transpired to his superior, he was forced to cut the transmission by what happened next.

As if by an unseen force that controlled the four strange men, they discarded their cloaks and revealed the antique shotguns they were equipped with. The more sinister observance was made by the shedding of this outer skin as it became apparent that these drones were suicide soldiers. Strapped about their legs, arms, and torso were many sticks of the outdated explosive of dynamite.

The sluggish disposition of the suicide runners also changed dramatically as a surge of life was injected into their veins as they charged the holy workers of the Empire. At the same instant, a rush of previously unseen kamikazes burst onto the scene in a hasty, but silent, advance. All of this occurred just as multiple flashes of destructive lightning danced about the area followed by ravaging blasts of thunder, indicating that the storm was right on top of the park. The intensified furor of the storm matched that of the tumultuous events below and created a fierce battle not only with the storm, but between the forces of light and darkness.

Although the work crew weren't officially in the military, like many citizens of the Empire, they had voluntarily served due to their intense love of the White Race. Denizens of all professions were attracted to the military training offered by the Empire and it was quite easy to set aside the two months required for basic training, as employers understood the desire to be prepared in case of war. As a result of this training, the laborers were far better prepared for battle than their foes.

The comrades dropped to the sopping wet ground, landing in several puddles of muddied water. Firing rapidly with their pistols, they resisted the assault. Slavonav barked forcefully into his communication device, "We need reinforcements, NOW!"

Like an erupting volcano, spewing forth chunks of earth and lava thousands of meters into the sky, the construction workers poured out from the work site onto the battlefield. With a primordial howl at the glee of warfare, the workers became warriors and swiftly came to the aid of their brethren to help even the odds of the fray.

The chaotic swirl of battle captured the land as both sides exchanged a murderous hail of fire. The superiority of the plasma pistols was quickly evident as the short range of the shotguns which the zombies wielded severely handicapped them. The loud blasts of the shotguns were more forceful than the impact because the suicide drones were slashed down with merciless accuracy before they could close in on the workers of the Empire and inflict damage.

An unknown quantity of suicide bombers emerged from the forest and continued their futile attack. The mounting losses of these invaders didn't affect their morale whatsoever and they cascaded onward. It became obvious that the cloaked figures that had been visible earlier were merely a diversion to mask the true size of the assault force.

The lead company of the Empire that was lead by Slavonav, was able to hold off the attack for several minutes but the weight of the invaders finally drove them back. Several of the suicide bombers had detonated themselves in earth rumbling eruptions but the blasts were too far away to seriously harm the comrades. Slavonav, himself, had been seared by the intense heat generated by the blast but this didn't prevent him from falling back and linking up with the other laborers.

The carnage continued unabated as the storm itself took part in the cleansing of the slimy fecal matter that desecrated the park. The thunderstorm hurtled energized javelins down into the ranks of the foul invaders. The uprightness of the invaders made them easy targets compared to the defenders who were positioned close to the ground, on their stomachs. As a result, one bolt from the heavens extended its electric greeting to an attacker, causing him to twitch, burn, and fall to the ground in a smoking descent of misery. Another gift from the sky above toppled an ancient tree which crushed several suicide runners.

Here and there a pellet or two whizzed by the defenders as they fired volley after volley of plasma waves into the hordes that threatened them. It was impossible to tell exactly how many casualties that the plasma beams had inflicted amid the torrential downpour and chaotic events of battle. It seemed safe to estimate that at least fifty dark soldiers had been annihilated while the number could be as high as one hundred. The small band of workers, on the other hand, which consisted of no more than twenty workmen, remained intact with only minor injuries being reported.

As if a horn of retreat sounded that only the invaders could hear, the shotgun wielding insects flung their weapons to the marshy ground and fled hastily away. Immediately upon seeing this, the victorious warriors of the Empire pursued their prey relentlessly into the forest with pistols blazing away. Like rhinos charging forward, the comrades mauled through the pitiful ranks of the enemy in their triumphant glee at the sign of victory. Glorious moments of battle lust was satiated as the enemy threat was extinguished.

The battlefield was littered with the corpses that had recently violated the park. The searing holes that the plasma pulses inflicted were visible upon most of the attackers and served as a reward for their insolence. Little evidence of those that had detonated the explosives strapped to their bodies was available but those comrades with burns remembered them well and they would not be forgotten. Completing the picture of dead on the battlefield were those crushed by the wrath of the malicious storm that had helped the laborers defend the park.

As per standard military procedure, the area was cleansed thoroughly by the workers to ensure the safety of the land. This was accomplished by giving the gift of plasma to all the fallen invaders, no matter how mangled and corpse-like they appeared. Swiftly and efficiently, the workers roamed the area, purifying the land that the intruders had defiled. The punishment of death was issued to all those that had defied the White Race and the Empire. In order to prevent any explosions, the activation devices were disabled as well.

As the fighting had simmered and cooled, so had the storm. The double edged sword of the storm had been revealed in that the storm brought life sustaining water but could also bring destruction through its scathing rain, wind, and lightning. The thunder and lightning had moved on and a steady rainfall was spread about the park. Destructive elements couldn't always be considered negative, though, as the storm had proved beneficial to the defense of the Empire and destruction could pave the way for future beauty.

Slavonav and the others who were injured in the melee had nursed their wounds as the other laborers were completing the cleansing process of the park. Slavonav's communication device had been destroyed in the blast that had scalded his skin, so he was oblivious to the orders that had been issued. Glancing around, he was unable to locate the captain who undoubtedly had orchestrated the marvelous victory. He continued this endeavor when a streaking figure caught his eye.

Running hastily towards the construction site was an invader that somehow had slipped through the mighty grasp of the Empire. The drone ran quickly through the steady blanket of rain and Slavonav could only yell in vain as he realized that it was too late for him to stop the zombie. The other injured comrades watched intently as they reached for their pistols in impotent resistance.

Devoid of emotion, the zombie ceased his running and slowed to a casual gait as he approached the entrance to the enclosed construction site. Agonizing moments of despair gripped the onlooking spectators as the dark figure reached for what must have been the switch that would activate the dynamite that adorned his body. It seemed as though the puppeteer that controlled this beast became greedy and wanted total devastation of the forming monument which was only possible from within the enclosure. As a result, the creature removed his hand from the detonation switch and opened the door of the enclosure only to be flung backwards in a hail of charring plasma.

Out into the rain stepped Captain Brendel, plasma pistol in hand as he glared down at his defeated enemy. A smile of ecstasy was evident on his face as he reveled in his victory when he had been so close to defeat. If the invader hadn't decided to enter the site, Brendel wouldn't have been able to destroy his enemy without the whole area being engulfed in destructive flames. The closeness of

death's grip undoubtedly increased his satisfaction but his work wasn't finished. The captain bent over the blistered and boiled corpse and quickly neutralized the bomb threat with exquisite care and craftsmanship.

At the sight of the heroic captain emerging from the unknown and saving the construction site from the evil clutches of darkness, the small group of wounded laborers erupted in celebration. Although the captain surely would have loved to participate in the slaughter of the enemy, he wisely remained behind in order to supervise the whole affair. Not only was the battle itself fortunate for his guidance, but the site was saved as well due to the will of this man who obviously garnished much from his ten year tenure in the military.

The steady downfall continued as the disarming of the explosives in the park came to end and all the comrades congregated at a clearing in the park to enjoy their victory. Morale was exceedingly high despite the fact that everyone was thoroughly drenched. The manly thrill of battle and especially victory, seized the comrades and held them in its glorious grasp.

Heightening the rousing revelry that brought goosebumps of excitement, Captain Brendel spoke loudly, "The Empire is proud of each and every one of you! While our duty is that of constructing great buildings and we do this very well, we also must fight for our people when the time comes. The monument we are building is a symbolic one that represents the sacrifice of our people and to defend it like you have done is extremely honorable. We might be physically more comfortable in our warm, dry homes right now but our privilege of working for the Empire is far more suitable to our honorable nature. The greatness of the White Empire will never be destroyed and we can proudly say that we fought and killed for it! RAHOWA comrades!"

The already enthusiastic ensemble became even louder at the fiery words of their leader. Slowly but gaining pace came the strong chant of the battle cry of the Empire. The echoes of which could be heard far distant into the surrounding woods.

As this feast of glory was taking place, an enigmatic squadron of darkened soldiers marched into the park. The uniform, discipline, and air of secretive health, revealed that this was no enemy of the Empire. The mysterious troop that entered Salubrious Park was none other than the Shadow Corps.

White Empire - Chapter XVIII

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneaux

News of the heroic defense against devious terrorists, spread rapidly across the land. The attack had served to further strengthen the tremendous bond that existed between the citizens of the Empire. It seemed that every White man and woman wished to take part in the defense of the White Race. As a result, an increase in volunteers was recorded in all aspects of defense, ranging from police work to serving in the military.

In addition to the aftereffects of the recent attack, the ranks of armed forces was swelling rapidly due to the overwhelming successes of the Empire in their war efforts. More and more comrades wanted to take part in what could very well be the last war ever. Stories of the final war in human history would surely make for great entertainment to children of all ages. Of course, not everyone could be a soldier as war supplies were needed and factory workers were required for this end. These laborers were just as important, if not more so, as there would be no fighting without weapons, so these workers could revel in the knowledge of helping the war effort.

These two topics dominated the airwaves and presently the defense of Salubrious Park flashed on the video screen that Wolfgang Gerhard was watching. The barracks he resided in was full of Legionnaires who gathered round to hear the tale the news reporter wove. The military quarters were located in recently conquered territory in central China which had been hastily, but effectively, constructed by the brilliant engineers that accompanied the Holy Legions.

The comrades present listened intently to the gripping depiction of the events that had recently transpired. Reporters, like the storytellers of the past who handed down ancient myths, presented a passionate and enthusiastic account of the occurrences in the Empire, and this particular craftsman was especially charged with zeal. He told of the biting chill of the rain, the mysterious nature of the unknown beings, and the victorious outcome of the battle with intense feeling and emotion that pulled the viewer into the story. Only minor injuries had been sustained by the Empire while the invading force had been completely decimated. This information was greeted soundly by shouts of roaring approval by the comrades but Wolf silenced them as the reporter continued.

The most dramatic piece of the story was left for the end as it was revealed that the heroic captain, Brendel, had liquidated the last foe who threatened the monument that he and his workers were constructing. At the last moment, Brendel had stopped the aggressor from detonating his explosives when he was right in front of the construction site. When asked about the whole ordeal, Brendel had this to say: "I am proud to serve the Empire in anyway that I can. The construction of the monument is progressing ahead of schedule and will soon be complete." The commentator noted that the attack had actually increased the speed of the monument that was being dedicated to John Granger and Marie Benini.

The conclusion of the broadcast revealed that great strides were occurring in the investigation of the events and it was obvious to all that the recent attack was linked to the earlier terrorist blow that had claimed several lives. The spokesman anticipated that whoever was responsible for the heinous bombings would meet justice within the week. The program ended with no mention of the Shadow Corps.

The small group of soldiers were exalted at the broadcast and cheered wildly at the courage of their fellow comrades. Wolf was the most vocal and his roars of rapture echoed mightily within the compound. Battle cries were heard and excitement filled the air but Wolf needed time to think and retreated to his office. The revelry was excellent for morale so he allowed it to continue with a simple order to carry on.

Wolf shut the door to his office and took a seat at his desk. It was a totally different atmosphere within the room as there was a quiet, contemplative aura about the room. This was a great environment for thought that was made even more conducive to reflecting on life by the addition of the sweet piano concertos by the legendary Mozart. Relaxing to the harmonious melody, Wolf fired up the well oiled machine that was his brain and quickly sped down the highway of thought.

Thoughts of the mission he passed up in the Shadow Corps and the recent attack at Salubrious Park, swam quickly through his mind. Wolf could only speculate on these matters but he felt assured that justice would soon be served in his comrades' deaths. This notion brought a new wave of bubbling excitement as he yearned to be the executioner of those responsible for their heinous crimes. Little did he know of the full magnitude of the events and the tremendous role the Shadow Corps had played.

The mission the Shadow Corps executed that Wolf was initially scheduled to take place in, had been performed brilliantly. With precise accuracy and efficacy, the underground facility was stormed by a troop of skilled agents. Surprise was a great tool in the conquest of the infested rat hole and was at least partially responsible for the fact that no casualties were sustained on the side of the Empire. This surprise factor also prevented the Jews from destroying evidence. The exterminators had completely cleansed the area of all poisonous elements, thus purifying the land.

A thorough examination of the facility had revealed extremely interesting data concerning the Salubrious Park case. By meticulously scrutinizing every scrap of evidence and analyzing the great volume of facts located on the captured computers, it was overwhelmingly clear that a vast Jewish conspiracy was taking place. It was no coincidence that the attacks that took place, occurred so near in time to the hostilities between the Empire and China. The parasitical Jews that drank the blood of China realized that they must stifle the advance of the White Empire or else they would have nowhere left to run. Without a host, the Jews would surely perish, so they were using all their available resources to hinder the Empire.

The perfidious Jews were systematically infiltrating the outskirts of the Empire and capturing Whites that they were training for their nefarious schemes. This training could more aptly be termed as torture because the prisoner was subjected to severe beatings of intense pain that only a Jew or the Jew influenced Christians, could conceive of. In addition to the poundings these poor souls endured, was the prescription of the deadly Zionist Death Agent drug that killed many and zombified the others. Such cruelty and savageness was rampant in Communist China but the White corpses found in the facility sickened the stomachs of the agents that found them.

As if the combination of torture and drugs wasn't enough, the Jews also implanted a communication device directly into the victim's ear. Transmissions could be sent that would be received as a violent command by the host. Either the host obeyed instantly or the device would inflict intense pain and suffering via a powerful electric current. The testing of these devices reduced the White prisoners to mere shadows of what they once were. Like the dogs of Pavlov, these destroyed comrades obeyed blindly and without question.

After the will had been broken completely and the Jews had gained complete control over the host, an intense training regiment was imposed. Handling weapons and endurance were the main focus but the advanced steroids that were administered were detrimental to the health of the prisoner so the training

wasn't as effective as it might have been. Granted, the steroids enhanced power considerably but the ill health it imposed was ravaging as was clearly evident by the gaunt appearance of the host. This coupled with the fact that the weapons the drones were equipped with were out of date, presented a less than ideal soldier but one that could infiltrate the White Empire strapped with numerous and damaging sticks of dynamite.

In order to ensure the obedience of the drones in hostile situations, the Jews sent them on missions to crush any dissidence in the Chinese population. Since the country was secretly controlled by the Jews, the government not only condoned the missions, but cooperated by providing lists of people who were regarded as security threats. These security threats were suspected of crimes like "thinking anti-communist thoughts" and "dressing in a fashion detrimental to communism."

The only clothing available in China that would receive little attention in the Empire were trench coats (the clothing in the Empire was of superior craftsmanship and fabric but there was a small population of older men that still wore trench coats due to the nostalgic effect of the old clothing) and that was what the drones were clothed in on their missions. The deadly missions usually took place at night to hide the identity of the assailant. The bloodshed and carnage on these escapades was tremendous and effectively proved the reliance of the drones to their Jewish slave drivers.

Although the poor White comrades were forced into servitude by the hideous creatures known as Jews, the drones were ironically employed in rooting out the Chinese enemies of the White Empire. Many missions were ruthlessly performed until the Jews were unable to train their captives any longer due to the rising hostilities between China and the White Empire. First, a single drone was sent to test the waters and then more followed.

The data recovered from the Jewish compound's memory banks revealed their intention of again attacking Salubrious Park. The successful first attack was promising to the Jewish advisors and so they believed a larger assault force would be more damaging. It was recognized that the site itself was of no military importance but the symbolic nature of destroying a place that was regarded as clean and healthy, was hoped to cause confusion and hatred of the Empire for not stopping the attack. The parasites were well aware of their military inferiority on the battlefield and were hoping that small guerrilla attacks would subvert the Empire and cause dissension.

When the attack would commence wasn't revealed in any of the evidence uncovered but the Shadow Corps took action to be prepared for the attack. Using their great influence within the government, the construction workers at the park were replaced by laborers who had all served in the military. The distinguished Captain Brendel, who had led a productive military career, was placed in charge of the site. These former soldiers had protected the park well and had thwarted the plans of the Jewish enemies of the Empire.

The investigation had slowed dramatically until the attack on Salubrious Park because no other substantial leads had been found after the conquest of the Jewish facility. The compound itself didn't appear to be the headquarters of the conspiracy that was fittingly known as Armageddon. No link between any other complexes was discovered so the park itself became the next logical step in the investigation after the assault there.

Amid the powerful rainstorm that engulfed the park, the agents quickly removed the remains of the drones that had died doing the bidding of their Jewish overlords. The whole affair was tragic as it was necessary to kill the attackers even though they were White. Their minds were completely enthralled by the treacherous vampires of the world and only the swift sword of death could end their constant suffering. The mangled remains of eighty five bodies were removed and taken away to be examined.

Autopsies performed on the corpses were very revealing. The amount of drugs pumped into the victims' bodies was staggering. Poisonous elements ranging from pain killers to stimulants were detected and it was a minor miracle that most of the dead hadn't died much earlier than they actually did. The examiners speculated that the drones wouldn't have felt any physical pain and would have been far stronger than normal. It was agreed that a numbing sensation would have encased the wretched creatures due to the high level of toxic elements in their bloodstream.

It was unveiled that the communication implant in the ear of the victims had caused extensive damage to many of the deceased. The device, although primitive in design, was extremely potent as a shock of ten thousand volts could flow through the victim for an extended amount of time which could incapacitate the host. Extreme burns and nerve damage was reported as a result of this vile shock treatment. There could be no doubt that the maniacal Jew had delighted in tormenting these White racial comrades.

The most important clue to the case wasn't even found among the corpses or in the park but detected

by the surveillance equipment of the Shadow Corps. The precious information discovered was the radio transmissions that were being sent to control the mindless automatons that had attacked the park. These broadcasts had been traced to their origin in China and undoubtedly led to the headquarters of the Armageddon group. The root of the problem had been detected and all that remained was to annihilate the threat.

A sudden knock at the door interrupted the dancing tone of the artistic Mozart whose music enchanted the air, and pulled Wolf out of the bliss of contemplation. Emerging from his meditative state, Wolf felt relaxed and refreshed as he softly invited the man to enter. The man turned out to be a courier who after saluting, placed a thick file on Wolf's desk. The captain returned the salute and excused the dispatcher who closed the door after he left.

Eagerly anticipating his first mission since his return to the Holy Legions, Wolf greedily grabbed the larger than normal file. He couldn't ever recall a mission so large in all the years he had been a captain. Before rushing headlong into the report, like the mighty White ancestors who charged into battle without fear of death, he realized that every war was different and perhaps the current hostilities with the Asians required more in-depth analysis. After all, the Asians posed a greater military threat than any of the other races.

Regardless of why the file was so large, Wolf hastily dove into the report without further delay. A mighty flow of adrenaline pumped through his blood as he read the detailed report. His heart rate increased as he scanned the pages upon pages of meaningful words. The report sucked the mighty Wolf into its grasp and refused to release him but he was a willing participant in the affair as he drank freely from the cascading rain of knowledge. No greater mission than this one could possibly be had by Wolf.

The minute detail and exactness of the report told Wolf that the Shadow Corps was involved although no word was mentioned of the organization at all. It was apparent that the Corps hadn't forgot him and had worked with the Holy Legions to organize this mission. He was to lead his soldiers on the assault of the Jewish headquarters of the group known as Armageddon. Wolf was honored to be the one who would achieve justice for not only his friends, but also the White comrades whom the Jews enslaved.

With enthusiasm igniting his being, Wolf devised his strategy against the enemy base. The base was located within a small knoll and could have been destroyed by the Air Force but it was hoped that some White comrades could be saved from the mendacious clutches of the Jew. As a result of the extraordinary conditions, Wolf was being allocated fifty Legionnaires instead of his usual ten. This factor came into play as he accessed his options but a plan was quickly devised for the assault.

Rising rapidly from his chair and exiting his office, Wolf made his way to his soldiers. Calling them over to him, he spoke with a large beaming smile and a loud voice, "Comrades! I have just received excellent news that I am sure you will all appreciate! We have the golden opportunity to avenge the deaths at Salubrious Park! Tomorrow we serve White Justice!"

The barracks erupted in a frenzied outburst of excitement at Wolf's words. The cheers that the men bellowed, shook the barracks and charged the soldiers with a battle lust for war. Soon they would be satisfied as the gleaming sword of justice would rip apart the vile rats that defied the White Empire.

White Empire - Chapter XIX

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneaux

In an isolated region in central China, several planes of the Empire circled about like hungry vultures waiting for their enemies to die in order to rip the flesh from their bones. The planes were undetectable as they towered above their target in the darkened skies. The aircraft were emitting a Dragion Aura Wave to ensure that no nuclear weapons would be detonated in the area. This safety net protected the comrades below who were preparing to storm the base.

The base itself was hidden from view as it appeared as only a grassy mound surrounded by trees. Wolf knew better though as his force was massed near the base, ready to pounce like an agile tiger who ached with hunger. The area was darker than normal as the moon was absent this night. With the Empire's thermal imaging system, this darkness proved to be a valuable advantage over their enemies.

The sentries that were posted around the hill were quickly and quietly disposed of. These guards had never even seen the Legionnaires before they were sent to their deaths via plasma blasts. The Jews apparently hadn't trusted their White slaves to secure the perimeter of the base as the distinct Jewish features were discernible with the night vision function on their helmets. The elimination of the

watchmen was thus rewarding but it signified that the attack would have to commence soon before the base became suspicious.

Wolf was well aware of this and anxiously spoke to his comrades as he eagerly anticipated the attack, "Tis a great day comrades! We have the honor to be avenging spirits for all those that have died serving the Empire. Might is right so let's show these rats who is mightier!"

Every Legionnaire was charged with tingling electricity as each of them prepared for battle. With the strong creed of Creativity in their hearts and knowledge of the might of the Empire, all knew victory was inevitable. Such thoughts of power and vitality made the Holy Legions an unstoppable battering ram that delighted in ramming down all of the enemy's fortresses. It was their destiny to serve justice this day and the comrades were well aware of that fact.

With a short order to the aircraft above, Wolf and his men hugged the ground. Although it wasn't detectable by the human or computer sensors of the compound, a single plane swooped down towards the hill and fired a missile that erupted as it hit the hill with an electromagnetic pulse. After its mission was complete, it soared away as silently and undetected as it had came.

The electromagnetic pulse shut down all the power systems within the base. This pulse was similar to the kind that was emitted during a nuclear blast only the Empire had been able to modify it so that it didn't affect the systems of the scanning or weapon systems of the ground soldiers. The Empire's planes could be affected, however, and had to remain a safe distance away. Therefore, the power systems were neutralized in the compound but weapons were unaffected.

After this initial assault, the side of the hill was bombarded by heavy plasma fire from the heavens. This hail of fiery rain pelted the earth with ravaging destruction that reverberated loudly across the land. This cataclysmic outburst was short-lived yet the magnificent power of the attack was obvious as the whole side of the hill had been mauled and the inside of the base was recognizable. The innards of the complex had also been heavily damaged by the crushing blow.

At Wolf's behest the Legionnaires rushed into the facility with cyclonic speed and rage. Through the side of the hill and into the complex the comrades brought glorious plasma fire to the defenders of the base. Most of the enemy soldiers had been killed or injured by the plasma fire from the sky so securing the top level of the base was accomplished in short order. All the enemy soldiers that could be found were dealt a swift blow despite how crushed their bodies were.

Broken and collapsed beams littered the open level at the top of the base. The standard door to the base was nowhere to be seen as it must have been shredded apart by the volley of plasma. The ceiling rose about ten meters from the concrete floor and both the ceiling and floor were in ruinous disarray. In the center of the area were the steps that led to downwards, into the heart of the facility.

The room was circular in design and connected to a vast garage which housed a variety of military vehicles. The infrared detection scanners of the Legionnaires hadn't picked up any signs of life in the garage so it was left alone as Wolf knew that the enemy was down below. Besides, the vehicles weren't able to function due to the electromagnetic pulse that had been fired at the base.

The lights of the base had been neutralized, leaving the area basked in a nocturnal darkness. The Legionnaires took comfort in each other's company and weren't adversely affected by the frightening chill that can accompany such blackness. Wolf believed that the surviving parasites that still resided in base must be terrified by the mysterious and unseen attack by the White Empire. It was well known that the Jews were cowards and couldn't survive without a host to feed on and to protect them, so it appeared as though the vampire's days were numbered.

Wolf quickly organized his comrades into multiple fighting groups in order to simultaneously attack the ten lower levels of the compound. This meant that five Legionnaires would assault and capture each level. This plan had all been devised earlier so each comrade knew the layout of the floor he was assigned to. Wolf knew the layout of the building from the detailed report he was given and relegated the bottom level for himself. This was where the core of the complex was believed to be and he found it only fitting that the field leader should be the one to sink the blade into the enemy's heart.

The path down into the abyss was a spiraling staircase that allowed a plummeting view all the way to the bottom. Doors were positioned at each level to grant access to that particular floor. Upon close examination, it was revealed that several enemies were alive below them. It was unclear whether they were waiting in ambush or simply paralyzed with terror at the attack and lack of light.

Wolf ordered several plasma grenades to be dropped in order to neutralize this threat. His comrades complied immediately and the falling weapons soon erupted in a dazzling blue light that temporarily

lighted the area like a brilliant fireworks display. When the light had faded, the living heat signature had vanished from down below, indicating the demise of the enemy soldiers.

The excitement and enthusiastic battle readiness was palpable in the air and noticeable by the bounce in the attackers' step as they waited for the signal to attack. Wolf was aware of the eagerness of his soldiers and issued a slight smile at their lust for battle. He wanted to minimize casualties and not hastily rush off into the enemy's grasp so he was taking a cautious route of advance.

Certain that the staircase was safe, Wolf barked out the order to begin their descent. The well disciplined troops fell in line as they rushed downwards to secure the building. Although the faces of the Legionnaires were covered, it was certain that blissful rage was painted on their visages that would inspire dread among any who opposed them. This passionate vehemence obviously fueled the men in their goal to cleanse the land of the Empire's adversaries.

The comrades assigned to the tenth level burst through the entranceway and quickly scurried through the corridors of their level in search of the enemy. The area was quiet and still with no sign of the enemy immediately available. There were multiple cubicles scattered throughout but the thermal imaging was able to pierce these possible obstacles. After a few moments of searching, several forms were detected lying beneath their desks, shivering violently. These forms were promptly terminated by plasma fire that penetrated several cubicle walls before silencing the target forever. After fanning out and scanning the entire tenth floor, it was clear that no other enemies were present and the area was secure. The leader of the squad radioed in their progress and awaited further orders.

The assault on the ninth floor encountered enemies immediately upon entering but resistance by this force was minimal as plasma bursts ravaged those guarding the door. It was obvious that the debilitating darkness, coupled with the surprise assault, blinded the defenders. This impairment had prevented the Jews defending the door, from firing a single shot.

The cleansing of this level went rapidly as all resistance was met, and destroyed, at the entrance. A thorough scouting of the area revealed that all hostile threats had been liquidated. The Legionnaires were ready for more action but were forced to guard their conquered floor until they heard otherwise.

Levels five through eight were similarly secured with minimal resistance and blood letting. Small forces, some armed and some which were not, were encountered and crushed with powerful might. No mercy was given or even thought of as standard tactical warfare mandated smashing the enemy whenever the chance was available. This way, the enemy would be destroyed with no hope of ever challenging the Empire again.

The ease with which the Legionnaires were trampling their foes was cut short by the tough resistance that was experienced on the fourth level. Immediately upon blasting the door to bits, a hail of shotgun fire greeted the invaders with ferocious fury. The deafening blasts threw several Legionnaires to the ground but only stunned them as the thick armor they wore wasn't penetrated.

Like angry hornets whose nest had been tampered with, the Legionnaires relentlessly attacked after being greeted so rudely. Before the resisters could rearm their weapons, the comrades were wielding fiery swords of plasma that slashed the Jews to pieces. Beam after beam of burning plasma rendered the defenders harmless in a staggering display of firepower. The intensity of the fusillade was so devastating that entire limbs had been sundered from the filthy Jewish bodies.

The comrades poured down the hall of the floor only to be ambushed in a four way intersection by a roar of shotgun blasts. The thick walls of the complex had prevented the Legionnaires from detecting the heat signatures of the vile beasts who had sprung the trap. It was clear that the defenders hadn't seen the attackers but, rather, relied on hearing to spring their trap.

Three comrades fell but the remaining two sizzled the Jewish meat that had launched the surprise attack. The smell of roasted flesh coated the room in its refreshing aroma. The fallen comrades were bruised and battered from the blow they had sustained but were able to carry on through the mighty force of their dominant wills.

Slowly and methodically the squad swept through the fourth level, searching for more trash to dispose of. After being ambushed twice, the comrades were extremely cautious in their advance. A meticulous scan of the floor revealed no further enemy resistance to the dismay of the comrades who wished to further repay the Jews for their insolent welcome.

The reports Wolf received from the squad leaders thus far was extremely encouraging but he itched to begin his attack at the bottom of the complex. It had been planned, however, that the last level would be conquered last. It was thought to be the most heavily defended and reinforcements from the upper

levels could be used to help the assault on the core of the compound. Regardless of his almost overwhelming desire to rush the level which he stood outside of, his discipline was upheld and the plan was proceeding as scheduled.

Word from his attacking kinsman would have to satisfy his battle lust until his own attack commenced.

Just as Wolf was contemplating about the attack, the third level attack, led by Wolf's comrade Volotav, began by splitting the door of the level from its hinges in an awesome outburst of plasma. This assault didn't stop once the door was shredded apart but continued to fling darts of death down the hall. The Legionnaires were learning from the other squads and didn't wish to be ambushed like their comrades before them had been.

After a substantial barrage, Volotav ordered a cease fire as the troops peered down the hall. The fading thermal heat images that were detected, divulged that five enemy soldiers had been slaughtered by the attack. Further signs of life weren't detected but the soldiers slowly crept down the long, dank hall. Stepping over the lifeless corpses, the squad was ordered to stop before traveling further down the hall which only led to the left and screamed of an excellent position for the defenders to ensnare an invading host.

A proclamation from Volotav sent a comrade creeping down the hall to peer around the corner. Just as the soldier neared the turn, his eagerness seized him and he rushed around the bend with a roaring yell while rapidly firing his weapon. The radiant daggers of plasma were answered by the crude rasping sound of heavy machine gun fire that violently pounded the Legionnaire. While outdated, the machine gun was still quite potent and the hammering blow that struck the valiant soldier of the Empire left him a crumpled mess.

Quickly snatching the motionless soldier, the comrades were ordered to prepare for the attack before tending to the wounded. Volotav instinctively felt that the barrage the fallen soldier had launched must have done some damage and it was wise to immediately follow up on his ill fated assault.

Hastily estimating where the gun was located, Volotav informed his troops and commanded them to assume a position where two comrades would lay flat on the ground while the two others assumed kneeling positions. On his signal, the attack was initiated and the corridor became a chaotic storm of doom as each side exchanged fire. One Legionnaire was hit before the Jewish resistance fell amid the turbulent and skilled attack of the soldiers in the Holy Legions.

The opposition silenced in the area, the squad tended to the wounded. Of the two who suffered wounds, one was already dead while the other clung heroically to life. Every Legionnaire was trained in first aid so the injured warrior's damaged body was healed as much as could be expected. Rest and time would be his prescription when the mission was over.

Volotav thought it prudent to ask for reinforcements before the comrades further explored the floor and promptly did so. His request was granted by a swift word from Wolf. The help came from the Legionnaires manning the tenth floor. With this assistance, the third level was quickly explored and secured with little fanfare as no enemies were sighted in their trek.

The blood coursing through Wolf's body sped up as he realized that very soon the compound would be disinfected. The Legionnaires in his squad shared his excitement at the coming victory. After the second floor was secured, their turn would be at hand to destroy the enemies of the Empire. Wolf's finger absentmindedly played with the trigger on his Hammerblow rifle as he ordered the attack to begin on the second floor.

At Wolf's bidding, the leader of the second floor squad, Montagne, initiated the attack by bombarding the door with plasma. As the tactic had worked before, the comrades continued their fire after the entrance had been blown away. The blazing assault was halted and the gaze of Montagne fell on the passage, but exposed no indication of their antagonists.

Leading his soldiers down the straight hall, Montagne questioned why this level was so quiet. It was possible, he thought, that this level might not be important but it seemed more likely that an ambush was prepared somewhere. As a result, the procession moved carefully along and came to halt when they encountered a four way intersection. This intersection would have to be tactfully navigated.

Two comrades were instructed to peer around the passageways on the left and right. This was accomplished by only pointing their guns down the hall and exposing as little of their bodies as possible. The video cameras located on the rifles would show whether any ambushes were set. Gingerly, the assigned troops did as they were commanded but no hostile forces were detected down either hall.

The squad then marched down first the left hall and then the right, examining the various doors which lined the hallway. No opponents were found and each corridor lead to a dead-end which resulted in them returning to the four way intersection. The only path that remained bore straight ahead of them and this was where they traveled.

As the gladiators swept down the corridor, faint voices that echoed against the metallic walls were heard. The sound was garbled and even the advanced audio capability of the Empire couldn't make out what, if anything, was being said. The pitch did increase in volume as the Legionnaires approached a wide room at the end of the hall they traversed. The group halted and the increased volume couldn't indicate what was being said but the sensors of the Holy Legions clearly revealed that the voices heard were White.

The warriors anxiously wanted to rush to their brethren in order to rescue them but the instinct of Montagne told him this was a great opportunity for an enemy trap. As the squad was contemplating tactics, two enemy machine gun teams hastily moved into view and begun their attack before the Legionnaires could respond. The murderous axe of the foe chopped down the comrades as some fell from bullets while others fell to avoid the attack.

The repetitive blasts from the machine guns roared down the hall but were answered by plasma eruptions from those Empire soldiers who hadn't been harmed. The surprise of the enemy attack was extinguished and the light the plasma blasts created wasn't enough for the Jews to maintain a successful attack. As a result, the fury of the White Empire overwhelmed their adversaries, eradicating the Jewish filth who had sprung the trap.

The hostilities ceased with the demise of the vermin who had spread machine gun fire but the damage had been done. Of the five squad members, four had been hit but some wounds were more damaging than other. Montagne himself was hit although not hurt seriously. Two Legionnaires had taken far more damage than their armor could withstand and were already dead. With four out of five comrades out of action, Wolf swiftly ordered replacements in order to secure the level.

Ten soldiers bolstered the forces on the second level but they weren't needed. The area was free of Jews and the cell which housed the White drones was discovered after a quick search. The power outage had freed the comrades from Jewish control and some of what must have been the newer arrivals, had called out for help, signaling their location.

The containment vault was protected by a thick steel door that was easily obliterated by the might of the Legionnaires. The repulsive scent of human waste filled the room as no trace of a toilet was seen. Some of the freed comrades were jubilant as tears rolled down their faces when they realized that their countrymen had rescued them. Those that had been there the longest, however, simply sat motionless on the filthy floor, oblivious to the events that were taking place.

The casualties taken thus far were extremely light and the news of rescuing their kin granted Wolf a gleeful feeling of delight. The assault was nearly complete and all the waiting he was forced to endure would soon end. Just as excited were the five comrades that would accompany Wolf on the assault of the lowest, deepest level of the abyss. Captain Gerhard prepared his announcement to bring in reinforcements when a thunderous clamor interrupted his transmission.

A titanic explosion tore through the door and the area surrounding it with a colossal smash that was akin to a monstrous mountain tumbling over. The sheer force of the blast was monumental as it shredded the door to pieces and catapulted all the Legionnaires in the area to the ground. At first sight, the region resembled a cemetery cloaked in death but, after a few moments, movement was detected.

With a tremendous throbbing pain that tingled throughout his left leg, Wolf wearily rose to his feet. Looking through a cracked, but still functioning helmet, he gazed upon his fallen comrades in sorrowful remorse. This emotion was soon overwhelmed by the most vehement force of pure raging power for revenge that he had ever felt. This was so because his White Brothers had been torn to bits right before his very eyes. Only through superhuman strength and determination was Wolfgang alive but he was not content with this. Death must be delivered to his foes and he would be its messenger.

The warlike sounds of magnificent bagpipes and pounding drums were heard in Wolf's mind and propelled him towards his foes. Grabbing a plasma rifle in each hand, Wolfgang advanced forward. He was aware of the tingling in his leg but blocked out the pain that would have crippled a lesser man. The pain he felt was the result of a large shard of gray metal that protruded from his leg. It would need removed but there was no time for that now. Stepping over the debris that cluttered the entrance, the origin of the mighty blast came into view.

The weapon that had devastated the area was an extremely large train gun mounted on a concrete

platform. These large guns had been used in the World Wars but had proven too cumbersome for modern warfare. The gun could pivot 360 degrees and Wolf estimated its caliber to be around 400mm. As the area was dark as could be, the shot was merely a stab in the dark that had been very lucky for the Jews. In order to ensure safety, the gun would have to be neutralized.

The blow the Jews had struck had raised their spirits dramatically as sounds of whiny voices celebrating a victory abounded about the wide open area that was visible as soon as one entered the floor. After not hearing anymore signs of the Empire, cheering was detected by the mammoth gun itself and several machine gun crews celebrated wildly. One Jew was sitting behind a large control panel and appeared to be the leader of the base but he wasn't celebrating for some reason. The enemy obviously didn't notice Wolf's presence and he realized this was an excellent opportunity for him to attack.

With a berserker howl and raging destructive power consuming him, Wolfgang charged into battle with both plasma rifles blazing paths of obliteration. The stunned Jews were frozen with terror and Death's cold embrace seized them hungrily. Multiple bursts of penetrating plasma sliced through the monstrous gun that was his greatest threat. The fury of Wolf's attack left the tank gun harmless and ineffective as well as killing the men who manned the gun.

After tearing apart the large gun, Wolf focused his attention on the machine gun crews that had recovered their senses. He ceased firing for a bit and vaulted away from his last position to confuse his enemies. He heard jumbled voices questioning where he was and chose that moment to attack. Unleashing a sizzling salvo of sensational annihilation, he gleefully watched as all six men who manned the three machine guns fell under his assault.

The only active enemy that now remained in the base was the weasel behind the control panel. Casually and oblivious of pain, Wolf calmly strolled over to the creature. So silently did Wolf move that the Jew leader didn't notice the movement but Wolf was so close that he could hear the heavy breathing of the fowl beast which indicated its trepidation.

In his powerful booming voice, Wolf asked the Jew, "Do you have anything to say before you die?"

The startled animal fell from his chair in a crumpled mess. Petrified the Jew pleaded, "P-please don't kill me. I'll give you riches beyond your wildest dreams!"

Just at that moment, a slow hum was heard and the lights of the facility came back on in a blinding rush. As terrified as he was, the Jew scrambled back into his seat as Wolf dropped his rifles and removed his helmet. Towering over the vermin in all his physical vigor, Wolf smiled as he glared down at his foe.

Trying to sound intimidating but failing miserably as every fiber of his being screamed for mercy, the Jew spoke, "Leave now or I will detonate a thirty megaton nuclear bomb. You have my word that I won't detonate if you exit the premises."

Knowing full well that the Dragion Aura Wave guaranteed that all nuclear threats were nullified, Wolf erupted in a hearty laughter that bounced off the surrounding walls in a joyful dance. The word of a Jew was worthless and his threat was non-existent. The captain unsheathed his mighty Crockett knife that glimmered brilliantly in the artificial light. This terrifying image caused the Jew to tremble violently.

Toying with his prey, Wolf placed his left hand on the Jew's head while the beast frantically punched buttons on the control panel. After entering the input codes for the detonation, the Jew realized nothing had happened and promptly fainted. Wanting his prey alive when he met death, Wolfgang slapped the man violently to awaken him. Once awake, he replaced his hand atop the beast's head and lifted him from his chair simply by grasping the Jew's hair. Staring into the animal's eyes, he raised his knife and slashed swiftly, severing the head and serving justice with the blow. The body of his foe fell lifeless and bloody to the floor below.

Wolf held his trophy high in the air as blood flowed freely from the neck of his prize. A sound behind him made him pivot quickly as he noticed his comrades in the Holy Legions storming to his side. At the sight of the carnage, they jubilantly cheered for their triumph and for their hero. Stepping in front of the Legionnaires, Wolf held the enemy's head for all to see as he gallantly roared, "Victory is ours!"

White Empire - Chapter XX

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneaux

News of the glorious triumph of the Holy Legions spread across the realm and was contagious like laughter. Joy and happiness reached incredible peaks at the realization that the internal threat to the Empire had been eradicated. Like a refreshing and healing fast, the citizens of the White Empire felt soothed and relaxed at knowing that the land had been purified of toxins. For days and days talk of the assault dominated life and was on everyone's mind.

The whole nefarious Jewish scheme had been uncovered and revealed to the populace via the major forms of media. Books and movies were already in the planning to remember the valiant actions of the Holy Legions and the captain who had led the assault, Wolfgang Gerhard. The heroic and inspiring tales that were created by talented authors of the Empire contributed greatly to the land but the current adventure was one of fact and thus more potent.

The assault had gone so well that General Valberg of the Holy Legions had given the weekend off to the chivalrous warriors who had taken place in the raid. There were, of course, some casualties but this was to be expected in the bloody sport of war. Besides, the Empire only saw a few of its sons enter the realm of death while many Jews were crushed by the gaping maw of doom.

In an announcement that couldn't be coincidence, Emperor Magnus decreed that the same weekend the soldiers were given leave, the official unveiling of what was being called the Salubrious Monument. The Emperor himself would be there as well as the Legionnaires who had assaulted the Armageddon base. Magnus realized that although the war was going great, the internal cancer that had recently been dissolved was more impacting on the people than victories in faraway lands. Therefore, the emphasis on this victory would be more rewarding than one over the Asian military.

The victory celebration after the return of the Legionnaires, had been a frenzied delight. The elimination of the insidious Jewish group, Armageddon, had been extremely sweet and the rescue of their White comrades was satisfying to all. Homage was paid for their fallen Brothers in the festive tradition of their holy religion of Creativity. Life was good for Wolf as he had avenged his loved ones' loss by doing what he loved best-war. He wondered if life could be better but then heard of the time off given and realized that life could always be better no matter how great one felt.

As Sunday was the day of the festivities, Saturday would be Wolf's day to spend with his family. He was well received on his return by his lovely wife and healthy children. All were pleased at his arrival and a group hug of the Gerhard family immediately commenced as soon as Wolf was in range. He returned the love his family gave in his bear-like embrace but withheld most of his strength as he had no wish to crush his loved ones.

The injury Wolf sustained at the battle was evident by the limp he exhibited whenever he walked. Concern was shown on the faces of his family members as he walked to the house but Wolf assured them that it was only a minor injury and would heal properly. He chuckled to himself when he realized they slowed their pace to match his so that he would lead the way into the house.

Although Wolf hadn't been away from home for very long, his wife and five children had many tales to weave. He listened to them all with sincere adoration as he loved hearing the stories of his growing children and beautiful wife. All of them set out to make him proud as they held him in high regard by not only admiring his deeds, but knowing him as a husband and father.

He was reminded of his youth when he heard Bernhardt relate his wrestling exploits. Wolf learned that his eldest boy was excelling in the sport and his studies were progressing rapidly as well. There was one boy that his son was unable to beat but Wolf knew the time would come. Wolf would always be proud of his son and would help him become the best at whatever he chose to be.

His younger boys had taken an interest in the legendary city and court of Camelot and spoke of it frequently. Parading around as knights wielding Excalibur, they acted as a man should-with honor and chivalry. The boys weren't deceived by thinking the fabled realm was real nor did they believe in the silliness of magic. They knew it was fantasy and had a wonderful time while being inspired with deeds of heroism. There were a whole host of stories regarding the enchanted land of Camelot and the boys looked forward to them all.

Anna and Chloe had been busy with their extravagant butterfly collections. Each girl tried to outdo the other and impress Wolf with their colorful catches. A whirlpool of color flooded Wolf's eyes as he examined the acquisitions. Vibrant golds, deep blues, and a variety of other colors made up the uniforms of the small creatures. Anna's collection was given Wolf's nod of approval and Chloe, unlike many children of the past, was determined to capture better prey. The father was pleased with both of his children's actions.

Saving his precious wife for last, Wolf inquired about how she had been but her response indicated that

she was more concerned about hearing about the raid he had undertaken. It seemed the children felt the same way as their eyes clung to him like an anaconda squeezing its victim to death. It was clear that his family wished to hear the story that was all the rage across the land, from the very leader who played the major role.

Normally, the adventures of the Holy Legions weren't spoken of but the recent attack was an exception. Wolf had already given a few short interviews but the look on his family's face told him that they wanted more. All of them had known and loved John Granger and Marie Benini so they wanted to hear the whole story of justice.

In his bellowing tongue, he told of the events that had transpired. His towering figure added to his story telling ability that had developed with experience by reading to his children. With an actor's grace, he emphasized the dramatic points of his story and riveted his children as well as his wife. The exhilaration he felt pulsed from his being like a rapidly spinning pulsar that emitted radio signals. Gradually building his tale in momentum and excitement, he ended with a powerful reenactment of the defeat of the Jewish leader at the base.

His audience had been mesmerized by the enchanting words Wolf had uttered. Every high and low that he related was felt by his family as well. The living room they were in had become the dark labyrinth where Wolf, like the ancient hero Theseus, had killed the Minotaur. After the climax of his story had been attained, the audience cheered enthusiastically before hugging their powerful hero.

All of his boys wished to hear the story again but also wished to hear how their mighty father had been injured. Wolf had forgotten all about his minor injury and didn't even deem it worthy of mentioning in his tale. He quickly related to his sons about the metal shard that had been flung into his thigh after the explosion at the base. At their curious behest, he removed his bandage and showed them the wound why the females present looked away. Bernhardt commented how it would surely leave a scar of battle to remember the fateful day and Wolf agreed while rubbing his boy's shaven head.

The accounts given had quickly passed the time away and night had fallen across the Empire. Tomorrow was an eventful day that would start early so a good night's rest was required. The children wished for more stories with their father but, as good children, they obeyed their parent's wishes and went off to bed.

As the couple snuggled warmly against each other in their comfortable bed, Wolf inquired further of his wife on how she had fared since his departure. A sleepish reply of good tidings and how tomorrow would provide more time for talk greeted Wolf's question. It was clear in Wolf's mind that she was tired and weary. Gently stroking her blonde hair, he drifted off to sleep with the woman of his dreams.

The Gerhard family got plenty of rest before waking up to the song of the birds. As if mentally linked, the whole family woke up almost simultaneously. The sun was shining brightly in the morning day as the clan ate and readied themselves for the upcoming festivities. Time was not squandered and before noon, the Gerhards were at Salubrious Park.

The sparkling globe of fire bathed the throng in its delicious delight. The noteworthy occasion was accentuated by a beautiful day with a pleasant temperature. It wasn't so hot as to fry the gathered masses and no one would comment on it being too cold. The surrounding forest itself seemed to be a spectator in the celebration to honor the martyrs.

A raised platform had been erected near the monument to serve as a speaker's podium and to seat those responsible for the brave acts of serving justice. The platform was made of Klassenium metal and could easily be taken down and transported elsewhere. Stairs on either side of the landing provided access while the masses stood in front, down below. Flags adorned the stage as the symbol of Creativity flapped softly in the gentle breeze.

Next to the stage, a folk band played a sweet melody that enticed the body to dance. The upbeat tune was accomplished by the sounds of drums, bagpipes, and violin. Off a ways, many couples were dancing and enjoying themselves before the main celebration commenced. The ringing sound of laughter was heard from the dancer's circle.

In anticipation of the crowd, the Empire maintained a massive table of free food and drinks. The park normally had several small shops for food but the crowd that was present far exceeded the average population. Of course, only healthy foods were offered for a healthy people. Wolf's family had already eaten before they came but a little snack was devoured when they arrived in order to satisfy them further.

The center of attraction, the Salubrious Monument, drew everyone's attention even though it was

securely veiled by heavy tarps. Imagination ran wild with those who viewed it as mysteries tended to tickle the brain of an inquisitive people like the White Race. Many merely stood gazing up at its approximate ten meter height and roundish frame, eagerly looking forward to beholding its certain beauty.

While his family joined the populace, Wolf ascended the stage to join his comrades of the Holy Legions. He seated himself and exchanged pleasantries with his countrymen before noting the announcement that the Emperor was arriving. At the mention of Magnus, all the soldiers stood.

Everyone who came for the commemoration now flocked to the stage to hear the beloved leader of the White Empire. The band played the tune that Magnus himself had written to usher in the entrance of the ruler of the greatest Empire ever. The crowd was silent as it eagerly waited.

Seeming to appear out of nowhere, the majestic Emperor Magnus walked towards the stage, surrounded by his Sacred Paladins. All eyes were attracted by his graceful demeanor and it was clear that they saw a noble who deserved to rule the great Empire. Magnus could have worn shredded rags and still maintained an air of authority. As it was, his elegant black outfit further exhibited his grand nature.

In standard charismatic fashion, Magnus strolled to the podium and unleashed a "RAHOWA!" salute that echoed across the park as the masses returned the greeting with rousing enthusiasm. Flashing his dazzling smile, the Emperor reveled in the increased applause until he motioned for silence.

When a tranquil hush fell over the populace, Magnus dove into his speech with excitement, "Greetings my fellow citizens of the great White Empire. It is with great pleasure that I am here today in this beautiful park. It is easy to see how such natural grandeur could attract so many visitors. Although this land is extremely attractive, it is not the reason for my visit or yours, I presume.

"We are brought here today to honor those outstanding citizens who paid the highest price one can pay. John Granger and Marie Benini were savagely killed by a crazed murderer and the monument that stands beside us is to commemorate their service to the Empire. This monument pays homage to them and to future citizens who meet with untimely demises.

"We in the Empire realize that while this monument is grand, it is not enough for our great people. Diligently and systematically, the search for the truth concerning this whole affair was undertaken with dedication and hard work. At first, it wasn't clear whether this tragic occurrence was isolated or part of a larger conspiracy. The White Race is known for its inquisitive nature and this instinct led us to determine that there was, indeed, a larger conspiracy taking place in our own lands.

"Leads were pursued by our comrades who thoroughly investigated every scrap of evidence. Painstakingly, a route was linked to a final destination. This destination was the headquarters of a vile Jewish group known as Armageddon. This group had been kidnapping our White Racial Comrades and using them for their insidious purposes. As the name Armageddon suggests, the final battle of the world very well may be taking place and it is our forces of light that will surely be victorious!"

Just as Magnus had forecasted, the crowd went wild with celebration as he uttered these last words. He was well aware that many believed that Creativity's greatest goal of an all White world was at hand. Indeed, Magnus thought, it seemed inevitable and the winning of the world would be the most remembered day ever. Any mention of the coming victory could easily excite a crowd as was well illustrated by the spectators in the park.

Strolling about the platform, the Emperor waited until the final cheer of the crowd was silenced before continuing. "Our formidable fighting force that knows no equal, the Holy Legions, absolutely devastated the base that housed the wretched group known as Armageddon. With dazzling heroism, these comrades exacted justice and destroyed many enemies of the Empire. Not only were many Jews removed, but numerous comrades were rescued and are currently being treated for the wounds they suffered at the hands of our adversaries."

Another eruption of shattering ovation was heard and felt. Amid the cheering, Magnus motioned for the Legionnaires who had taken part in the assault to rise. Each one's name was called and basked in the acclaim of the population before joining their loved ones. The last member of the Holy Legions to be called was the slightly injured Captain Gerhard. The Emperor recounted Wolf's heroics and Wolf was rewarded with the highest honor offered by the people. Isabelle warmly greeted her husband after the riotous accolades had been bestowed upon him and embraced him lovingly.

The Emperor continued his elegant speech in fervent fashion, "As in all great struggles, sacrifices must be made. Not everyone survived the glorious assault that recently took place. Those that did not will be

remembered by being honored at Salubrious Monument. The Empire sends its sympathies to those families who lost a loved one and we hail those brave comrades who fell in battle, fighting for the White Race."

The names of the fallen warriors were read to the crowd who honored them by applauding. Although no one wished to see a friend or family member die, it was generally regarded as a process of life. The masses realized that dying for one's people was the most romantic way to end a life so they cheered with enthusiasm for those that had died in the recent battle.

Glancing at the concealed memorial, Magnus knew the people yearned to remove the tarp that covered it. At his mere glance, the multitude roared in delight and confirmed the Emperor's thoughts. "Comrades! The time has come to reveal the majestic monument that has been dedicated to John Granger and Marie Benini. I give to you, Salubrious Monument!"

Just as the Emperor spoke, he raised his hands to present the monument. Unseen hands removed the green tarp to the great delight of the anticipating crowd that had been virtually salivating as they waited. The dazzling brilliance that was unmasked left the crowd stunned and enthralled. As the view was being absorbed, silence permeated the park as every gaze was fixated on the memorial.

The magnificent structure was over ten meters in height and covered in a goldish hue that was shining almost blindingly as the rays of the sun gleamed upon it. The glowing building had a circular base that rose to a peak that was adorned by the mighty flag of Creativity. The attention of the audience seemed more held by the shimmering nature of the display rather than the exquisite architecture.

Most impressive were the two large statues that welcomed visitors. These bronze statues stood on small platforms and rose over five meters in height. The sculptures were of John Granger and Marie Benini who were clasping hands in a loving fashion. They were placed on either side of walkway so anyone entering the monument walked under the outstretched hands of the two lovers. The detail was impressive as anyone knowing the couple would recognize the statues instantly. The expression on the faces clearly indicated a powerful love between the two as each appeared to gaze longingly into the other's eyes.

Long moments passed before any words were uttered among those in the crowd. The loving embrace they beheld caused many to embrace the one's they cherished and tears of joy flowed freely at the sight of the monument. Finally, the elated masses converted their silent awe at the sight of such beauty, into an ecstatic thunder of jubilant revelry.

It was impossible for everyone in the crowd to enter the monument at the same time so small groups were to be allowed in, one at a time. The honor of being the first group belonged to the Emperor as well as close friends and family members of the two slain comrades-John Granger and Marie Benini. The Granger and Benini families were promptly organized at the entrance of the monument. Wolf and his family greeted the others warmly as they awaited word from the Emperor to enter.

The cheering of the crowd continued unabated as Magnus gave the signal and the small entourage entered the memorial. Wolf felt the warmth of the throng at his back and the love of his two friends as his passed underneath the sculptures. The wondrous display around him showed the appreciation the Empire had for its citizens.

The inside of monument was decorated with high and low tech adornments. Several paintings of the fallen citizens were displayed as well as multiple computers and video screens. These computers offered a whole variety of information on the couple that was available from a simple command or touch of a button.

The group spread out among the many information centers and learned of the likes and dislikes of the citizens who would be remembered for a long time to come. The many papers written by Marie Benini were available while the kills John Granger achieved in the Air Force were recorded. So much knowledge was stored that one could easily become acquainted with the deceased even if they never knew them when alive.

Pulling Wolf aside, Isabelle whispered into Wolf's ear, "Isn't this a wonderful day? I am having a splendid time."

Smiling at his beautiful wife, Wolf whispered back, "Indeed it is. Our comrades are gone but they will always be remembered."

A puzzled look overcame Wolf as his wife seemed to have something else to say. Before he could question her, she leaned over and gave him a soft kiss before softly uttering, "I'm pregnant. With twins."

A boy and a girl."

A rush of further happiness flooded about Wolf as he greeted the news by lifting Isabelle off her feet and swinging her about. As the couple embraced, Wolf thought about the never-ending cycle of life and death. People continually die but new life continually replaces it. Immortality is achieved by the constant replenishment of life so that one's name continues on. John and Marie had been deprived of presenting new life but Wolf, always the friend, had his chance to help even after the demise of his comrades.

Claiming the attention of those inside the monument, Wolf announced proudly, "My wife is pregnant with twins!" All inside responded with clapping and well wishes that matched the uproar that was still going on outside. The already gleeful nature had risen to another level after the announcement. Amid the festive display, Wolf had the perfect names for his unborn children.

KLASSEN

For the first Creator.

by Rev. Kenneth Molyneux

Chapter I

Chop! Chop! A mighty axe sliced down again upon a helpless log. The axe, raised towards the azure heavens above, came to a stop as the blade glinted cheerily in the bright sunlight. Then a slight whistling sound ensued as the blade hurtled through the air and into the defenseless log. The large brown log split in two and would provide great warmth when fire consumed it.

Although it was a brisk, chilly day in the beginning of spring, sweat from the day's efforts massed upon Klassen's forehead. This pool was thrust away by the powerful hand of Klassen. This woodchopper was an effervescent, salubrious man of twenty seasons who wore a crown of sandy blonde hair and whose life pulsed with vigor in dark blue orbs of sight. He had a hard, solid frame and it was evident that the hard work he practiced sculpted a muscular physique. He wore a simple but sturdy brown tunic with matching pants, befitting the woodsman that he was.

Taking a brief repose by placing a black-booted foot upon his woodcutting stump of oak, Klassen scratched his short, golden beard as he gazed about the surrounding wilderness. The joyous blossoming of life was overtaking the pleasant expanse and the buds on the trees ordained a ripeness of fertility that was sure to follow. Some trees were still bare and skeletal but they too would have the breath of flowering life imparted upon them.

A robust breeze swirled about and brought the refreshing smells of nature to Klassen's nostrils. Breathing vigorously of this sweet, delectable treat, he was greeted by the charming sounds of the squirrels gnawing away at nuts, birds greeting one another, and a far-off cry of what sounded like a prowling wolf. The soothing sounds of nature were a symphony of solace to him that calmed his aching, passionate urges to destroy that which threatened the livelihood of his people.

The era in which Klassen lived was a dank, dark time where the icy blasts of dishonor and mental pollution had spread across the land. Plagues of corruption had poisoned the citizens; they allowed wave after wave of vile beasts to inhabit the civilized lands, horribly tainting the world of Teramon. The exact source of this malignancy, Klassen could not determine, but it certainly manifested itself in myriad ways.

There were many diseases to be cured in the enervated land, but Klassen's homeland of Urtgart was mainly crumbling under the weight of despicable creatures that were passed off as "equals." At first this silly notion was rejected wholesale by the upstanding Nobilis race, which Klassen was a member of, but the myth became more and more solidified until many took it as an adamant, absolute truth. Klassen, however, was not deluded.

Although Klassen and his clan lived a ways from the town, the mere presence of the creatures was irritating. The mass immigration of these unwanted beings began when he was but a mere lad and at first it wasn't so bad. He would occasionally play with several ogres that, while hideously ugly and immensely fatuous, were certainly fit. As the numbers of foreigners swelled, though, the differences between the Nobilis people and ogres became more distinct and violence on the part of ogres was common.

Violence and criminality escalated exponentially as more ogres swarmed to the once beautiful hamlet of Urtgart. Filth and squalor accompanied not only the ogres, but also the other foreigners as well—the perfidious orcs, the thieving hobgoblins, and the wide-faced imps—to name the most prominent. So many of these undesirables had entered the town that now it was difficult to safely perambulate through the streets—lest foul immigrant hoodlums assault and perhaps even slaughter anyone who dared frequent the hamlet without protection.

Upon seeing such a disastrous policy of migration, it would seem logical to reverse the tide of woe that had befallen Urtgart. This was not to be, however, as the prevailing force throughout the four corners of Teramon—the Universal Church—would not allow it as they promoted accepting everyone, no matter how sickly, vile, or corrupt. This policy of buffoonery tolerated the lowly elements instead of systematically eradicating the contaminating weeds that had overrun the once-

prosperous garden. As a result, the proud and superior Nobilismen were being drowned in a raging flood of inferiority.

The Universal Church had powerful sway across the realm and Klassen loathed its dishonorable, weak, and suicidal doctrine. Klassen valued honor and strength as prime virtues and was also disgusted by the superstitions propagated by the church. Glancing around it was clear to him that none of nature's eternal laws had ever been broken. The myths of spirits, ghosts, gods, and devils simply cluttered the brains of his valued kinsmen.

This Universal Church had so many poisonous ideals that it was like a colossal trash heap in Klassen's mind that continually proliferated itself. One dogmatic belief that came to his mind was how these scrofulous villains promoted loving every creature, but then proceeded to torture, burn, and decapitate those who disagreed with anything the priests might utter. To top it all off, this cult of dishonor scared its adherents stupid by creating a demonic vision of a diabolical torture chamber of blazing fire that was purported to be the destination of any who didn't toe the line of the church's ideology. It mattered little that no such place had ever been reported to exist.

As a blue jay streaked across the sky creating a colorful blur, Klassen was reminded of the blue cloak his tutor had worn. Aristotle was his name and brilliantly perspicacious was he. He formed Klassen into the man he was and was sorely missed. It had been some years ago before this great man had disappeared. What exactly had become of him, Klassen knew not but he hoped he was simply on a journey somewhere. Death was a very likely possibility for Aristotle but Klassen hoped for the best and wished to resume his friendship with his mentor.

The disappearance of this splendid friend was quite an emotional experience for Klassen, especially since the values Aristotle held were the same as his own. Although Klassen's father had been there to raise him, it was Aristotle who taught him to be virtuous and honorable. So the blustery winter some two years ago had been especially brutal, as Aristotle had gone off on his usual hike—even though it was snowing—and had never come back. Day after day had gone by in bleak melancholy, yet Aristotle didn't return. The man was old, but tough, and it was hoped that someday, any day, he would return. The lugubrious winter dragged on but no sign of the scholar had presented itself. It was a difficult time for Klassen but it had hardened him and he devoted himself to living a supremely virtuous life in memory of his dear friend. This wicked time had been the chasm of Klassen's life, his nadir, but he felt confident that due to this extreme low, a magnificent zenith would follow.

This rising wave of optimism attracted to Klassen a pleasant squirrel who eagerly darting amid the grass, looking for a tasty nut to satiate its hunger. Remembrances of the good times that Klassen had with his mentor flooded his mind in a relaxing wave of nebulous nostalgia. The squirrel, the birds, the trees—nature itself—was a favorite subject of Aristotle, which he passed on to his student.

Although the Universal Church frowned upon the art of literacy to all but the priests, Klassen was taught to read at a tender age. His family knew how as well, but it wasn't until Aristotle came about that Klassen really learned. The precocious child quickly absorbed the sciences. The trips to the forest to observe nature in all her splendid beauty were unforgettable and brought a swift smile to the visage of Klassen.

Glancing down at his worn and fragile book, Klassen knew his preferred field lay in heroism and warfare. It mattered not at all whether the writing was fact or fiction so long as the virtues of honor, chivalry, and heroism were depicted in magnificent grandeur. The book that was grasped by the woodsman was his favorite collection of stories—"Adventures in Heroism." He must have read the tales a hundred times, but they always retained their magnetic pull over Klassen and once again he began to read from the pages that seemed as though they might disintegrate in a soft breeze.

Hurled mightily, Klassen once again entered his own realm as he read the inscribed words of dauntless valor. He assumed the lead role in the stories, of course, and felt the tingling vitality of power whenever a battle broke out or a doughty deed of honor was performed. The current narrative that he was engaged in was coming to a climax as the fiery maelstrom of justice—a

knight—was prepared to deal holy death unto a foul reprobate when Klassen was violently seized from his sublime revelry.

The shrieking scream of what sounded like a banshee reverberated throughout the forest in its high-pitched annoyance. The second screech was discernible and uttered, “Supper!” This dread voice was very familiar to Klassen; it was his mother. Putting his book in his pocket, he turned away from his natural paradise to see his family’s cabin that seemed to ooze with refuse despite being in immaculate condition.

Grabbing the chopped firewood and placing his sturdy axe atop the woodpile in his arms, Klassen set out towards his home. The walk itself was quite a ways, as he liked to commune with nature and be far away from his family who unfortunately had been polluted by the vitiated policies that dominated the land. As such, Klassen felt that every step he took away from his natural haven brought an icy chill. However, this freezing touch of corruption was unable to phase the titanic armor that Klassen had forged through years of tough tribulation. While the world of darkness wasn’t wanted, it had tempered Klassen into the virtuous blade that he was.

Traveling down the trail he himself had created, Klassen caught a glance of his older brother, Grausen, engaged in his favorite pastime—torture. This sibling was taller and leaner than Klassen but there was no doubt the two were brothers. The differences between the two were far greater, though, as Grausen had especially been plunged into the nether region of deleterious destitution.

Laughing hysterically, Grausen was bashing the skull of a long-since-dead dog with a solid wooden club. The brains and vital organs of the creature were strewn about in a pool of gore. Whack! Whack! went the club as blow after blow assaulted the corpse. At one thump, an eye of the canine shot away from the beast and a titting eruption burst forth from Grausen. Nimbly leaping over the remains, he squashed the eyeball in an explosion of carnage as he said, “Suffer! Suffer! Hehehe.” These words oozed revoltingly from his maniacal lips.

Grausen glanced in Klassen’s direction and with a glint of madness twinkling in his eyes, inquired, “Wanna bash the mutt, brother?” Although the cauldron of rage was stirred by his brother’s meaningless violence, Klassen contained himself as he proceeded along the trail in disgust. His brother, on the other hand, resumed his assault.

Initially Klassen had attacked his brother for such actions but this was soon halted as Grausen had the favor of their father. Since he lived in his father’s domain, he ceased pummeling his only sibling after the first few beatings. The idea of killing game wasn’t repulsive to Klassen as he enjoyed the sport of hunting, but he did not see the point in mauling an already devastated beast; it seemed cruel and wasteful to him.

As Klassen neared his home, the family cabin seemed to gleam in majesty as pride swelled up within him at the sheer sight of it. It was far larger than the normal house of the age and had been constructed under the wise guidance of Aristotle. He had helped to design and build it, which stirred him to productive happiness whenever he thought of it. The family that lived in it was far from ideal, but the work of art that it was stood tall for all to gaze upon.

The solid oaken structure loomed impressively above the ground a full two stories, culminating in a pyramid summit. The current home was far better than the old one, which had been destroyed for the wood. The old cabin had encompassed only one room while the almost castle-like present one had two living rooms on the first floor and three bedrooms upstairs. At the time of its construction, Klassen had shared his room with Aristotle but now he alone occupied the room.

Just as Klassen was about to reach the cabin, the eerie guffawing of his brother swiftly wafted along as his brother scudded by, into the cabin. The door crashed shut and Grausen’s chortling abruptly ceased as briskly as it had begun. Klassen, used to such behavior, paid little mind to it as he placed his small mountain of wood against the side of the cabin. Grabbing his trusty axe, he pushed the door open and entered his spacious abode.

Stepping into the area where the family dined, Klassen was confronted by the irritating sea of smoke that his father emanated from his favorite pipe. As usual, Klassen squinted under the

barrage of this attack before placing his axe by the door so that it wouldn't get wet from rain. Although it took slightly longer than normal, his father uttered the typical exhortation.

"What takes you so long boy? Grausen always gets here in time but you never do. Seat yourself for supper, now!" Klassen's father, Ubelig, exclaimed his words with force and a sternness that could make a horde of hideous ogres tremble.

Despite being extremely confident in his abilities to crush his father, Klassen acquiesced and seated himself. He disagreed with his father on many topics but felt his father ruled supreme in the home, as wickedly as he might reign. Thus, he usually obeyed his father though he almost never agreed with him.

The chairs and table which the family sat at was designed and constructed by Klassen although little thanks did he get. It was a sturdy design that he had learned from Aristotle. Thanks to this learning Klassen he had even added an artistic flavor by decorating the legs with playful swirls. Never did the furniture need repairs in their history despite the brutal pounding Ubelig and Grausen exerted upon the table in fits of drunken stupor.

Klassen joined Ubelig and Grausen at the table, while his mother Schlimma was preparing dinner by the fire. The resemblance between the men situated at the table was striking with the main difference between the father and his sons being age: Ubelig had slight wrinkles while his sons did not. All the men wore similar tunics of brown, which seemed to further voice their family relationship. The cerulean eyes that the trio possessed all burned with fierce intensity, although the primary driving force in each was quite different.

The pleasant aroma of cooked meat dancifully wafted throughout the room and Klassen's mother, Schlimma, carried a large plate of deer to the table. Schlimma was a fairly lean woman with brunette hair and large brown eyes. It was evident in her children that the slightly darker shade of hair and eyes the sons of Ubelig had, were from her darker complexion. She wore a black dress that stood out among the brown tunic-wearing family members.

When Schlimma seated herself, Ubelig commenced the recital of the prayer condoned by the Universal Church. Klassen was the only person in the family that was not a member of this church and disdained the prayer, which offered thanks to an unknown, unseen god. As such, he was able to completely block the moronic ramblings which his father vocalized. The perfidious prayer had entered his brain when he was younger but he had since erected a monumental fortress to protect himself from the mendacious forces of venality.

The supplication to the heinous god of the Universal Church over, the family eagerly plunged into the food like starving hyenas. Of course Ubelig, being ruler of the domain, got first dibs on the tastiest portions of the meal while Klassen was relegated to last, due to his rejection of odious ideals of dishonor. Klassen never went hungry, though, as he was able to supplement his diet with fruits or nuts that he found while exploring the forest. He also noticed that this addition to his food regimen was more receptively received by his body as evidenced by his infrequent indigestion problems. On the other hand, the rest of the family frequently complained bitterly of this woe of the stomach.

With a hacking cough Grausen exclaimed without his usual wicked laugh, "Mother, this is horrible! It's burnt to the extreme!" This proclamation was answered by a quick backhanded slap by the cook, Schlimma. She catapulted a gaze of doom at him; and Grausen, after glancing at his father who held a similar but more imposing glare, uttered meekly, "Sorry."

At this harsh display of discipline, Ubelig rumbled heartily as he laughed at his son's insolence and swift punishment. After his laughter flittered away, he grew stern and announced to his wife, "My boy is right though. This meat *is* horrible and it *is* burnt. It isn't his place to say it though; it's mine. So I want some different food. Now! Go to it!"

With a simple "Ok dear," Schlimma scurried off into the other room to scavenge for some food. Klassen, unbeknownst to his father, had found quite a few tasty nuts while he had been in the forest that day. They lay nestled snugly in his pocket but Klassen, of course, made no

announcement of his find. He doubted whether his family even knew that he discovered such delightful treasures during his treks among Mother Nature's wooden soldiers.

Ubelig made another attempt at eating the good-smelling but foul-tasting meat before spitting it out in disgust. He barked at Klassen, "Make sure you get some good food at the market tomorrow. This meat has been destroyed!"

The market. The mere word was like a heavy club bashing Klassen on his temple. He abhorred the marketplace with all his might, as it was a horrendous stench-pot of filth. This filth, of course, was the lowly vermin that had been flung amidst the proud Nobilis people. It was so overrun that Klassen's kinsman were a rare site indeed. As a direct result, the market had degraded from a wholesome area for children and families, to a fetid festival of criminality.

Klassen nodded to his father as he recalled his latest hunting escapade into the forest. The game he slaughtered was the main source of trade for the market and the latest catch was a good one. He had followed a group of deer to a watering hole where he had waited for a good shot with his bow and arrow. Once he had the largest of his prey lined up, he fired off a shot that sliced through the helpless creature's heart, killing it instantly.

The herd of deer surprisingly bolted as Klassen had hastily notched another arrow, when, to his surprise, a massive deer had charged straight at him. Swiftly and adroitly, he dropped his projectile weapon while arming himself with his mighty axe. All in one motion of pure beauty, he sidestepped the attacker while slashing the throat of the beast in an artistic arch. The blood had spurted and the deer had collapsed, dead.

A rush of glee from battle overcame Klassen as he recalled this fresh remembrance but his father's icy tone interrupted him. "Hurry up woman!" he aggressively ordered. His wife Schlimma hastily returned to the dining table with an old-looking hunk of bread, which she placed on his plate.

After tearing into the bread and eating a small portion, Ubelig vituperated, "This is better, but not by much. Anyway, I have some good news, so listen up!"

Oh no, Klassen thought. Whenever his father had good news, it wasn't usually so good, at least in Klassen's eyes. He hoped to be wrong this time, but he didn't think he would be.

Ubelig spoke proudly, "As you all know, I have been inquiring into fields of advancement for our family. We all believe in the lofty principles of the Universal Church," Ubelig darted a glance at Klassen before continuing, "and we need to best serve the people of Teramon by enriching ourselves." At this statement Klassen's father emitted a light chuckle that was echoed by Schlimma and Grausen.

The maelstrom of indignant fury began to fiercely rage in Klassen's mind as the hypocritical views just presented were spoken with a straight face. He hoped his father would simply cease talking before Klassen was inflamed more, but this was not to be.

"We all know that it is important to act like we really want to help the people, but we know it is ourselves that we should help," Ubelig said. He continued with a smile, "Our best interest is the most important thing in the world. Since this is so, I have been speaking with some gentleman who have entrusted me with a very lucrative endeavor. I hope that my family can profit as well."

At this symbol of nepotism, the smiles of Schlimma and Grausen were wide indeed as they pledged their support while yearning to know the exact nature of the enterprise. Klassen remained silent and outwardly stolid except for his roaring eyes, which made the swirling tempest raging inside him plainly evident.

Ubelig noticed the enraged disposition of Klassen but continued nonetheless, "Before I describe the act itself, I would like to assure my boy Klassen," at this he turned his surly gaze upon Klassen, "that we will be taking full advantage of the so-called 'beasts'...in addition to our own so-called 'honorable' Nobilis people."

This affronting attack upon Klassen's ideals was well received by all but Klassen, and thunderous laughter exploded about him. The cruel, acidulous grins added to the insult and

infuriated him even more. The thumping of his heart intensified while the fiery fervor of righteous resentment seized him. A normal being would have fell victim to the paralyzing power of his eyes but his family merely continued to laugh as they had become accustomed to his boiling anger. It had been a long time indeed that he had actually succumbed to his brutal passion so the family merely mocked him further.

“The scam we shall undertake is known as a pyramid scam. Essentially this is a profitable venture where the money comes from the bottom and flows to us! If we complete this successfully, more doors will open for us and thus more gold!” After this outburst, the family, save for Klassen, cheered in delight at their future fortune.

Ubelig enjoyed the vitiated celebration but a thought dawned on him and he spoke, “Oh, we must of course concentrate our efforts on our Nobilis race as we tend to be better off than the other races.”

Schlimma and Grausen saw nods of the head at this astute observation. Klassen, however, leapt to his feet and opened the floodgates of passionate hatred by vociferating loudly, “NO! That is not honorable! What is life without honor!?”

The rest of the family was quite taken aback by this powerful outburst of remonstrance and a resultant pause of silence filled the room in the wake of Klassen’s truculent eruption. Like a pack of cowering hyenas in the face of a snarling lion, the family remained silent and shocked. This feeling of inferiority didn’t last long in Ubelig, though, who became enraged by what he saw as his son’s insolence.

The father bellowed mightily himself and it was clear where the source of passion came from in Klassen. “How dare you raise your voice at me!? Be gone from my sight you foul wretch! Do not forget to go to the market tomorrow and get back quickly! You have many chores to do!”

Like a fierce tyrannosaurus Rex, Klassen snarled in utter contempt for his father. Hastily grabbing the burnt deer, he flung the meat and plate against the wall in disgust. Glaring at his father with a vision of jubilant destruction, Klassen marched out of the room and out of the cabin. With a smashing slam, the door closed behind him.

Chapter II

A cool, refreshing breeze of tranquility swept over Klassen as he rushed onward in his trek. The clouds above partially barricaded the splendid sun from shining its warmth, but the day was fairly warm and pleasant. The scenery flew by him with speed and grace as he freely imbibed of the animated motion of nature's painting.

The powerful brown steed that transported Klassen on his journey was a fine beast that he had affectionately named "Braun." The family had had the horse for many years but it was still strong and healthy. As a result, it could easily handle its rider and the two large deer that were tautly tied onto the stallion, near its rump.

As the dancing air tickled his face, Klassen recalled the first time his horse Braun had been outfitted with game and the chaos it had caused. The steed had bucked the meat off and ran wild in delirious fear. It had looked like a circus act as Klassen had chased the animal around and around their cabin. This spectacle brought a smirk to his face as he remembered it had taken a few more tries before Braun had accustomed himself to the feel and smell.

Klassen always felt a rush of joy when he galloped away from his home, but this jubilation never lasted long as he inevitably would encounter a far more sordid atmosphere at the destination he would arrive at. Such was the case today as well. The countryside he was traversing seemed to become degenerated as he traveled further along and a rising stench of revolting refuse was received with disdain by Klassen's healthy nostrils. As he reached the summit of a small grassy knoll, he saw it.

Descending the hillock, Klassen gazed at the marketplace that stood before him. From a distance it didn't look very spoiled or abhorrent as a small outcropping of buildings and people streaming about were seen. In fact, the region looked the same from afar as when he was a child and only Nobilismen lived in the area. Upon entering the outskirts of the town, however, one became instantly aware of the degrading degeneration that had swarmed the area.

The homes were crumbling and falling apart while being occupied by a plethora of ghastly beasts. Trash was flung about carelessly while the cobblestone street, which Klassen labored down, was in a miserable state of disrepair. The most powerful calamity that struck one, though, was the nauseating stench that assaulted the olfactory sense and relegated those not conditioned to it to an unpleasant case of eruptive vomiting. Klassen was conditioned, and thus avoided this situation.

As Klassen cantered along, a riotous thunder of disharmonious uproar apprehended his attention. The origin of the disruption came from a particularly deteriorated shack that, by the look of it, housed a whole host of obnoxious ogres. His attention thus alerted, Klassen investigated the matter, but at a safe distance.

The grisly appearance of ogres never ceased to appall Klassen; their large, dark frames of leathery skin and brutish mien were a grotesque contrast to the fair-skinned Nobilismen. Just as they looked like brutes, they thought as such as well. They were slow, dull-witted, and impulsive—which, when combined, led to a prolificacy of criminality. This crime was difficult to stop at times due to the ogre's immense size, thick skull (which made them more resistant to clubbing), and aggressive behavior. As it was, their protruding jaw, receded forehead, and thick eyebrows came to be recognized as the face of violent crime.

This propensity for lawlessness manifested itself right before Klassen's field of vision. Two of the offensive creatures were arguing boisterously over what appeared to be a female of their species. A couple unique traits of these creatures were immediately documented: the first was that despite being only a short distance away and the ogres' themselves shouting clamorously, the speech was garbled and unintelligible; and the second was that the beasts exuded a particularly sickening stench. Klassen himself wondered if they even understood themselves and contemplated the source of such a smell that no other creature on earth emanated.

Despite this nature of the ogre, Klassen was sincerely amused when the scene between the two males erupted in violence and fisticuffs broke out. Even though he wasn't involved in the miniature battle, Klassen felt the surge of wondrous warfare rush through his veins as he watched the theatrical performance begin.

It had begun when a female ogre had been thrown to the ground by one male; the other male had attacked. The two combatants were locked together as they wrestled about for position. Although it wasn't perfectly clear, it appeared to Klassen as though savage teeth had bitten one ogre as it emitted a loud howl of pain before flinging its adversary away from him. Sure enough, blood dripped from its arm and in a rage of fury, the ogre dove at the other and both tumbled to the ground in a confused entanglement of limbs.

Most organisms, be they Nobilismen or ogre, are psychologically attracted to a fight; this one was no exception. A crowd of ogres had surrounded the two combatants and when they descended to the ground, the rowdy, cheering crowd had flung them back to their feet. The two snorted their anger at each other as they circled around each other, flailing wildly in the hopes of a lucky knockout blow.

As each ogre articulated its anger in outbursts that resembled belches, the crowd around them was growing larger and larger as Klassen realized he was in a strictly ogre district of town. These ogres came a little too close to Klassen atop his magnificent mount and he blasted a loathing gaze down upon them. The swell of the miserable throng was making it difficult to see the brawl adequately, but he persevered as the sport interested him.

Cheered on by the discordant chants of the rabble, the darker of the two ogres who had been bitten, lunged fiercely at the other with a slew of heavy blows. The sudden swiftness arrested the lighter skinned ogre with paralysis and it fell in a crashing pile upon the grass. Seizing this propitious situation, the aggressor pounced on the downed ogre and proceeded to pummel it with a furious deluge of powerful punches. Like a trickling stream the blood began to flow and threatened to spawn into a raging river when a shrill shriek ceased the assault.

Although it wasn't absolutely clear from Klassen's vantage point, it seemed to him as though the very female—if that was indeed what it was—the ogres were clashing over was being molested by what appeared to be one of the ogre's own heavily intoxicated brothers. Joining together to combat this mutual enemy, the two ogres who had been crushing each other joined forces and screamed their denunciation at the theft of their female. Coming to their feet, they lunged into the innards of the mob, which had by now grown to around forty ogres.

Klassen knew not the specifics of the struggle but soon after the recently befriended ogres had sprung into the crowd, a net of chaos had descended upon the area. Once the spark had been produced, a raging inferno had broken out and a swirling, disorganized series of fights had engulfed the primitive ogres. A confused, garbled mass of limbs pounded anyone nearby, with several clobbered ogres receiving a barrage of stomps from their peers.

Klassen's steed neighed in agitation at the raucous display of violence but Klassen enjoyed watching his enemies bloodily pulverize each other. He felt safe where he was and rubbed his hands in pure satisfaction. So completely absorbed in the poetic beauty of illustrious rioting before him was he, that he almost didn't hear the footfalls behind him.

Expediently wheeling about, Klassen got sight—and smell—of a besotted ogre about to chomp down upon Klassen's deer. With tremendous fervor, Klassen clenched his fist and whirled a backhand blow that solidly connected with the criminal ogre's jaw. The smashing blow sent two of the buck-toothed ogre's teeth flying while the ogre was barely able to stop from plummeting to the ground.

Combined inebriation, stupidity, and shock, swept over the ogre as it struggled to maintain its balance. It watched in mesmerization as the horse before it danced to and then fro. A stupefying smile came to its face at the strange spectacle and it uttered a small chuckle when the steed stood on its forelegs. Uncomprehendingly, it stared on in delight as the horse's hind legs rushed skyward

and then battered into its chest with explosive force. The mighty blow crushed the life out of the ogre as it fell lifeless to the ground.

Bringing about his steed to marvel at his spectacular handiwork, Klassen enjoyed his bulging smile while reveling in the warmth of his first ogre slaughter. The motionless ogre had a severe indentation in his chest cavity and Klassen spun his stallion about in circles at this sheer sight of joy. Stopping his artful exposition of skill, he stroked his companion amicably in thanks. Klassen snapped out of his delightful revelry, however, when a rushing roar greeted his ears.

Glancing out at the tumultuous mob that was now rapidly approaching him, he felt the boiling grandiosity of war snatch his soul as he saw the bitter enmity of his own eyes mirrored back at him in the hostile crowd. Klassen assumed they saw him crushing their comrade and now wanted his own blood. Oh how he yearned to sever the life from the bodies of his enemies! Prudence, however, overcame Klassen's violent impulse as he realized the folly of warring in the face of such odds. He would have his fun though.

Just as the mob threatened to consume him, Klassen reigned in on his horse, sending the forelegs of his companion sailing into the air. These powerful legs greeted the first ogre with a terrible whack across his skull that made the other ghastly ogres hesitant to attack. The rising laughter that Klassen emitted infuriated the ignominious aberrations; but before they could close in and swarm him, Klassen galloped a short distance away before stopping and turning back to his pursuers, taunting them. This he did several more times before finally venturing away, into the center of the town.

Amid his jocular explosions of joviality, Klassen silently thanked his mentor Aristotle for the superb riding lessons he had given. Braun was a great and nimble steed who had made possible Klassen's joyous mood. In response to this it seemed that Braun laughed as well, as the horse whinnied in a jocund fashion. This rumbling train of merriment carried onwards towards the market in great glee.

Meanwhile, the foul, mephitic ogre mob had been unable to keep pace with Klassen and huddled together for some time, catching their breaths. Agitation at losing their prey inflamed the already omnipresent feeling of animosity within the ragtag rabble. Consequently, one blow became two and then a full scale donnybrook engulfed the area. The uproar escalated quickly until most, if not all, of the inhabitants of the particular district were up in arms. In addition to the fighting, pillaging and mass destruction broke out as the wooden cabins—built by the Universal Church—were assaulted and looted. Fires burst out and general chaos descended down upon the land but Klassen saw none of it as he sped onward.

As Klassen loped along atop his mighty mount, his elevated mood gradually descended as he rode past an increasing amount of his hated adversaries. The first gathering of beasts he sped past was a small community of mischievous, grayish-skinned hobgoblins. They were known for laziness, thievery, and drunkenness. True to form, small bands of them were drinking wildly while making a racket.

Next came a band of yellow-skinned, wide-faces creatures known as imps. These numerous beasts weren't anywhere near as bad as ogres or hobgoblins, but the treacherous imps did their fair amount of destruction upon the once splendid town of Urtgart. This imp community was the last obstacle to the center of town and his destination—the marketplace.

The marketplace itself rushed forward its cold greeting of bustling activity. Mainly beasts, but some Nobilismen, swarmed about the plethora of traders looking to sell or trade their wares. Most of the merchants had small, open-air stands that contained their goods, but a few had actual shops. The large path that separated the two rows of merchants was flooded with a jumbled assortment of excited traders. The sordid filth and raucous chattering annoyed Klassen but he persevered towards his favorite merchant among the squalor.

Klassen, being the only one mounted on a horse, parted the river of beasts that got in his way and eyed them fiercely with his hatred. When he had the opportunity to see one of his Nobilismen, he greeted them amicably with a gentle nod of his head. The shouting, haggling, and

general air of filth all about him heightened his sense of awareness as he checked for the large dagger sheathed at his side. It wasn't the best weapon to have he knew, but he liked the feel and power of it.

After several minutes of trotting down "Merchant's Trail" as it was called, the garbled mass of beasts thinned out as Klassen headed for a merchant's shop. He promptly arrived at the plain looking wooden shop and tied his horse to the post outside of it. Descending from his steed, he was greeted by a large brown dog that wagged its tail hastily at Klassen's arrival. After petting the dog, he unwrapped the two deer he had killed and, with his backpack, entered the shop that read "Bragon's" on the heavy oaken door.

With a heavy deer carcass slung over each of his shoulders, Klassen slowly rumbled through the door and nodded to the two brawny, Nobilis bodyguards that served as sentinels. Inside was a well-kept room that was in stark contrast to the degeneration outside. Large tables of various food, clothing, and general items of interests, were neatly arranged along the outer wall of the room. Several Nobilismen were sifting through the goods while the shopkeeper himself was haggling with a customer at the back of the hall.

As Klassen perambulated across the store and waited for the shopkeeper to tend to him, he recalled the first few horrific visits that he had made to the market by himself. He was but a teenager back then and had been robbed and cheated on numerous occasions. Of course it was the beasts that engaged in these wicked affairs and this was undoubtedly a learning experience that molded Klassen into the man he was today. His father didn't blame the beasts, though, as he reprimanded Klassen for "being a sucker," as he put it.

Again and again Klassen fell for the unjust, chicanery of the merchants, who were almost always green-faced orcs. He finally learnt his lesson with these tricky con artists after being hoodwinked while trading several raccoons for a deed of land that he later learned existed on a different planet. Klassen had been extremely embarrassed by this faux pas, and avoided the orcs and their gold-grabbing hooked noses that reminded him of a witch's.

It had taken a bit of searching to find Bragon's, but he was abundantly proud that he had. A Nobilis shop amid the unholy decadence was a grand oasis that cleansed and satiated Klassen's soul with refreshing nourishment. There was no doubt that his time among his folk was the acme of his trip to the market. The man who owned the store, Bragon, had indeed become his best friend and it was to him that Klassen now dealt with exclusively in trading affairs.

Seemingly in tune with his thoughts, Bragon wrapped up his transaction and greeted Klassen warmly, "Ah, Klassen! Hello, hello. Whoa, what are these two brutes you carry on your shoulders?"

Klassen smiled at the routine salutation of his friend as Bragon helped him place the deer on the empty table that separated the two men. Bragon was a good-sized fellow with long brown hair and solid, masculine facial features with a pronounced jaw, and cheekbones of iron. He generally assumed a friendly air and this time was no exception.

In response to Bragon's inquiry, Klassen retorted, "These two make a good story in themselves and I trust you will give me a good price for them, but I have far more exciting news."

Bragon's blue eyes lit up in curiosity but he stopped Klassen from telling his tale, "I am interested in your news, but do you want these two for store credit?"

Klassen nodded in assent before he went on to tell Bragon his recent encounter with the ghostly ogres they mutually despised. With the passion that fueled the blazing inferno inside him, Klassen recounted the brawl that had broken out in the ogre district. With such exuberance did he tell the tale that he felt as though he and Bragon were watching the scene as if they were actually there. Klassen gesticulated how he had crushed the ogre's skull and used his horse to deliver the fatal blow.

"To top it all off," Klassen enthusiastically stated, "I taunted the blasted beasts with my laugh as I dared them to run after me. When they did, I ran off a little ways and taunted them some more. After I had my fun, I rode away in great bliss!"

A great clapping of hands and general merriment erupted in the store as Klassen finished his story. So enraptured was he in relating his glorious joy that he hadn't noticed that a small gathering of Nobilismen were eagerly listening to his vivacious narrative. Affectionate pats on the back did Klassen feel and pleasant handshakes did he receive from all in the store. It was an illustrious feeling of monumental pride for Klassen to know that others in Teramon felt the same as he.

Although Klassen had come to the market to pick up goods, his mind wasn't really on that topic as the beaming smile of Bragon spoke, "What a story comrade! I have something to show you."

With intrigue Klassen watched as Bragon ruffled through a pouch on the ground. After several moments of eager anticipation, Klassen watched intently as Bragon withdrew a strange sort of parchment. Bragon exclaimed, "Here, look at this. It is for Nobilismen only. I *know* you will love it."

Before he even read the odd piece of parchment, Klassen was struck by the thinness and neatness of it. Although it was unknown to him at the time, it was a mechanically reproduced flier. It was called "paper" and it wasn't hand-written but produced by other, mysterious means. After receiving the paper, Klassen searchingly examined Bragon's visage before scrutinizing the paper.

The first thing that snatched Klassen's attention was the beautiful image at the top of the page. It held a detailed sword that was encased by the fiery flames of the sun in the background. Beneath it were the words "Honor Brigade." Glancing at Bragon in awe, Klassen resumed his reading at the silent request of his friend to continue.

Below the symbol and name were the words "The Ten Laws of Honor Brigade." Glancing swiftly at the paper without reading it, Klassen felt his heartbeat increase and a general air of excitement overwhelm him. In such a state of excitement, his hand began to throb and this prevented him from reading further. His other hand, his left, steadied his reading material before he plunged into the laws.

1. *Illuminate Teramon with the bright light of honor.*

This first law propelled Klassen into the heights of joy as he envisioned himself crusading across the realm spreading light, warmth, truth, love and all the other pleasant ingredients of honor. The world was indeed bleak as Klassen well knew, but he also felt overwhelmingly sure that honor could very well save the world. Oh what a wondrous privilege it would be to take part in a grand struggle to enlighten the world!

2. *Be strong; slaughter the weak.*

Klassen involuntarily flexed his rigid physique in expectancy of pummeling the weak; although he knew many physically frail beasts that needed killed, he believed that many more morally and intellectually weak needed to feel the bite of cold, hard steel. There was no doubt in Klassen's mind that he would enjoy culling out the weak and ushering in a new dawn of Nobilismen that would far exceed the level of the day. Indeed Klassen agreed with the ancient saying of might is right.

3. *Courageously fight for a better world.*

Klassen tightened his grip on the page as he read these words. He despised and loathed the craven poltroons that lacked the firm backbone to be true to their convictions. Such dastardly cowards needed rooted out with brave warriors replacing them. He thought it only wise that courage was a prerequisite to carving out a splendiferous new world.

4. *Live at war.*

Visions of titanic wars of slaughter rang out mightily with the sharp clinks of clashing swords. Although it appeared chaotic, Klassen thought war was surely a sublime music of awe that swirled and raged in delicate harmony. He saw the swords, axes, shields and many other instruments of war glint in the sunshine as the blood exploded from his vile enemies, ending their pitiful existence. Imagining the wondrous carnage was ecstasy to Klassen, as he understood that life was a war and should be treated as such.

5. *Life to Nobilismen; death to the beasts.*

A value system so akin to his heart was this that he felt as though he himself could have written such a mellifluous symphony. He felt at home around his kin while feeling writhing hatred for the beasts that swarmed like maggots across the land. Simply being in a store with only Nobilismen was a treat, so a world without the vile beasts would surely be fantastic. This, he knew, was a goal worth struggling for.

6. *Nobilismen are the supreme beings.*

This was so simple and so much a part of common sense, but something scoffed at and rejected by the overwhelming majority. Klassen saw with his own illuminating eyes how obvious this statement was but it had a profound effect on him due to its sheer, lucid truth. Klassen knew the comrades he saw around him were far superior to the criminal elements outside. This obvious observation sent a swell of bursting pride throughout his being that warmed him deeply.

7. *Superstition must be destroyed and replaced by the laws of nature.*

Nature! It was what he had been taught and what made sense to him despite the constant prattling of others about spiritual beings floating around whom no one had ever seen. Those who had claimed to see them would be subsequently imprisoned, Klassen laughingly thought. It was clear to him that nature was true and superstition, including the worship of supernatural gods, was a delusion created for the weak. Consequently, Klassen looked forward to eliminating the evil poison of superstition and thus restoring his kinsmen to vibrant health.

8. *Promote the best interests of our Nobilis brethren.*

This was a sturdy law that Klassen knew would encourage prosperity among his people. It was quite evident that his people had been bending over backward to cater to the needs of the criminal beasts. This altruism had been rewarded with robbery, beatings, and slaughter, to name but a few of the “thanks” thus given. By caring for only Nobilismen, Klassen knew greatness would follow and what a marvelous greatness it would be!

9. *Utilize your specific talent to further Nobilis ends.*

This sage-like law made Klassen contemplate what special skills he possessed. What could he do better than others? This deliberation would have to take place later though as he needed more time to cogitate the issue, but just thinking of using his skill to help his kith was magnificent to think of. Simply being involved in a small way sent goose bumps of thrilling excitement across his fair skin.

10. *Victory is inevitable.*

This final law was so pregnant with confidence that Klassen felt as though he could conquer the world. Such sureness of victory was a unique brand of optimism in a world being devoured by a demonic chasm of death and decay. He was absolutely positive that success was ensured after reading the mighty words of the Honor Brigade. How could they possibly lose when even their words made the world quake in fear?

So natural did the laws of the Honor Brigade feel that Klassen felt as though he were already a member of what was obviously a prestigious group. The page he held in front of him was like an extension of his being, like an arm or a leg. The riveting emotion that naturally swirled so mightily within him had been pounded out in a tremendously powerful creed of iron. He looked at the mighty symbol that adorned the flier and he realized it was a sacrosanct symbol of the highest order. It assuredly represented holiness with the refulgent rays of fire, and war with the brilliant blade of steel.

As Klassen stared entranced by the words of the Honor Brigade, he noticed he had missed the final statement made on the pamphlet. Upon reading it he realized it summed up the creed of the Honor Brigade quite tersely. The words beat with a life of their own and this life matched Klassen's so extraordinarily that the two appeared as though they were twins. The motto summarized the entire creed so elegantly and majestically that Klassen was flung unto the heights of empyreal bliss. All it took was three words.

Honor is Life.

Chapter III

A chilling hand of ice grabbed Ubelig and roused him from his slumber. The blanket that covered him and his wife wasn't effectively keeping him warm and in his groggy mind he wondered why. His gaze wandered about the room as he contemplated the annoying coldness that seized him.

His bedroom was a spacious one that, he knew, was difficult to heat, but this normally wasn't a problem. Ubelig gazed at the only furnishing besides the bed that occupied the room—his exquisite desk. This large desk is where he formulated his schemes and where he learned how to best employ them. As it was, the desk was cluttered with papers and books that Ubelig knew he needed to read.

Although he knew that getting out of bed would be like leaping into the cold hands of a wintry grasp, Ubelig realized he had to extricate himself sometime or other to solve the problem. As expected he shivered as he threw off the covers and grabbed at his clothing to the side of the bed. His agitation increased as his temperature dropped while he hastily threw on his pants and tunic. After fully bedecking himself to investigate the origin of his irritation, the simple explanation presented itself as he stood up: there was no fire in the fireplace.

Shaking his head in disgust, Ubelig swiftly crossed the room and went through the door. What in the world was Klassen thinking? Ubelig thought. It was Klassen's duty to make sure the fire didn't go out, regardless of what time it was. A good admonishing was in order and Ubelig, although he was agitated at the affair, always enjoyed crushing the passionate will that Klassen possessed. As fierce as Klassen might be, he still obeyed his father; this thought brought a nefarious grin to Ubelig's face.

Although Ubelig doubted whether Klassen was in bed like the rest of the family as it was late morning, he decided to check his room nonetheless. Rushing down the hallway, he passed by his other son's room with the clop, clopping of his boots reverberating throughout the cabin. Upon reaching Klassen's room it was as he had expected: no Klassen.

He knew the odds of Klassen being sleeping were close to nil but this realization failed to stem the tide of the rising anger simmering inside of Ubelig. With a swiftness that belied his age, he marched out of the room and out of the house while scratching his disheveled hair in disdain. The cold breeze that confronted him as he left the cabin was more potent than the younger brother he had been greeted by before, and Ubelig wished he had grabbed his cloak before he had left.

Folding his arms to retain warmth, Ubelig wrathfully scanned the area as he thought of how he might punish his delinquent son. Not seeing Klassen, Ubelig focused his truculent cruelty in an acrimonious vociferation: "KLASSEN!" The mighty roar echoed throughout the forest and birds flew away in haste. Glancing around as he waited for a response, he saw no sign of the son whom he thought needed brutalized for neglect.

Presuming Klassen had rode away, Ubelig dashed off to the small hut that served as a stable for their two horses. Just as he accelerated, however, a small rock grabbed Ubelig's foot and he went down in a tumble. Cursing foully, he snatched his boots that had been flung off in the ordeal and threw his anger at his missing son with a few crass remarks. His entire day was being ruined and someone would have to pay.

Marching off to the makeshift stable, Ubelig appeared as a pure demonic force of evil. He clenched and unclenched his fists as he awaited his chance to avenge his agitated suffering and misery. When he reached the door to the hut, he mightily flung it open and scrutinized the contents inside. The scene inside further inflamed his foul mood and Ubelig barbarically thundered out in explosive anger. Over and over he yelled until he ran out of breath.

Both horses were present.

Despite it being spring and Klassen wearing a heavy cloak, the northern wind spewed its frigid breath, chilling Klassen as his steed yet again veered off course. The path he traversed was seemingly straight but the horse he rode always seemed to prefer wandering off towards the forest that flanked the trail on both sides. Yanking with his powerful muscles, he managed to steer his furry transportation back on track; he hoped it would finally learn its lesson.

Klassen had been in a rush and Bragon had warned him of the wild nature of the creature, and he still wondered whether it was prudent of him to buy the horse. Was it really worth it? Just as he thought thus, the creature decided to simply take a rest in the middle of the trail. It took a few kicks from Klassen's boot to get the steed moving again.

After a moment's contemplation, he knew it was worth it. The Honor Brigade was meant for him, and he for it. Neither the irksome stallion nor the odd weather nor even Klassen's ignorance of the land outside his hometown could prevent him from fulfilling what he proclaimed as his destiny. All of these minor grievances were easily crushed when Klassen thought of a purpose in life, a reason for being.

Although he impulsively wished to strangle his mount, Klassen persevered, as he knew walking would take far longer to reach his yet unknown comrades in the Honor Brigade. The map that was located on the back of the flier, that had inspired him so, was sufficient to guide him on his journey. According to his good friend Bragon, the adventure shouldn't take more than a couple days on horseback. This was warming news but he wondered if his friend had taken into account the obstinate black stallion Klassen had bought.

The black stallion that he rode was but one of goods that Klassen had acquired. For his trip he had also obtained the sturdy, dark brown cloak that he now wore and was glad he had purchased it. Also he had packed a large amount of food for his journey, just to be on the safe side. Bragon had insisted on preparing a survival kit for him and wouldn't accept any payment for it, so he took it appreciatively. However, Klassen hadn't even investigated its contents so he was quite oblivious to what was in it. Other than all this, Klassen was equipped with his dagger, axe, and bow with arrows. The few gold coins he carried represented the total of his savings. He felt quite prepared.

The day before seemed like a dream to Klassen as it had rushed by in a dizzying blur. The exact details of the day were overshadowed by his jubilant discovery of honor. He did recall some, though, but things like what he had taken home for his family eluded him. After purchasing the goods for his trip, he had returned home to finish up his chores and get everything set for his departure.

Although the thought of leaving his family had entered Klassen's mind many times, he knew not where to go or what to do. All his life he had simply obeyed his austere father but this harshness divided the father and son. He knew quite well that the issue was a difference of values. Now, however, it was time to be around those who valued honor like he did; he hoped someday to enlighten his father on the virtue of honor though.

Klassen knew full well that his father would be extremely irate at the absence of his son. Klassen was responsible for the vast majority of the work that needed done in the household: firewood, hunting, trading, building, repair, and more. He had no qualms about work per se; he enjoyed most of it. His father spent his time learning, which Klassen appreciated, but he used this knowledge for evil ends. His mother and brother idly whittled away the time in unproductive endeavors. As it was, the family, he knew, was in for quite a change.

Klassen speculated whether his father had yet realized he was gone. Despite thinking perhaps to leave without warning, he felt it right to leave a note for his family. The note in itself was short as writing materials were generally expensive and reserved for his father. Klassen imagined the look on his father's face when he read the note: "Farewell family, honor awaits me."

Klassen's stomach grumbled in hunger. Notwithstanding the fact that he had only been traveling for a few hours, his body unmistakably yearned for food. Perhaps it was his zesty eagerness draining his body or the resistance of his horse to canter like a normal horse did—in a straight line. Regardless of why, he realized that he had to stop and recharge his athletic frame. Finding a suitable area off from the trail, he—with some difficulty—maneuvered the horse over to the forested spot.

The wild nature of his raven-haired steed was by now well known to him, so he securely fastened it to a small tree that was adorned with green, blossoming appendages. Unbeknownst to him before that moment was that the entire forest was brimming with the emerald leaves that had yet to manifest themselves in Urtgart. What type of tree that lived in the forest he knew not, but the bulking up of the inhabitants was a pleasure to behold as it stood in vivid contrast to the still emaciated ones of his homeland.

Klassen untied his own backpack and the survival kit—which was larger than he thought—from his horse. After finding a quaint spot not far off, he set his belongings down. As he sat down to nourish his body and examine his goods, Klassen felt a warming touch rain down upon him. Gazing skyward he beheld the charming smile of the sun radiating its brilliance down towards him; this he drank freely of and was glad that the shutter-like clouds had cleared a path for the magnificent sun.

Consequently absorbing the warmth from above, Klassen greedily attacked his bag of food. He scrounged through it while contemplating what to eat. Knowing the fruits he carried would spoil the fastest, he dove into them like a ferocious predator. The juices of the oranges and apples that tantalizingly tickled his throat made the water jug he carried superfluous at the moment. Knowing the fruits wouldn't be too filling, he found a bag of nuts that he believed would satiate his hunger for the time being.

As he enjoyed his meal, the idyllic tranquility of nature, and the steady breathing of his stallion, Klassen inspected the large bag so graciously compiled by his friend Bragon. The vast majority of the space was taken up by a sleeping bag that would surely come in handy on his journey. Food was also stuffed inside; food that wouldn't spoil for quite some time like nuts, honey, and oats. Materials were also included on fire-starting, navigational instructions, a large rope with a sharp knife, and a few items of clothing. All in all, he thought they were advantageous to his trip.

Of all the objects thus packed, it was the navigational instructions that most interested him; he took them out. In a few thick-paged pieces of parchment, the elementary basics were transcribed. During the day, as he well knew, the sun rose in the east and set in the west; while the instructions also made it clear how to navigate by the position of the stars at night. This was information was previously unknown to him and, as such, was quite enlightening.

The knowledge was swiftly grafted onto his mind although he doubted whether he would need to utilize it since he had a map of the area. Rarely, he thought, did everything turn out perfectly so he was pleased to have the knowledge. He believed the map would be sufficient for his quest and he promptly extricated it.

Although Klassen had never before been as far away from his hometown as he was now, he felt quite comfortable, as the map he gazed at was very lucid. His destination was almost due west from his home of Urtgart. The trail that he had been traversing would continue west, past the town of Lealean. It would proceed north to circumnavigate a marsh, which would take it past a town called Mythembreux. Turning south again after that would, the map proclaimed, bring you to the headquarters of the Honor Brigade. According to the directions, it couldn't be missed.

Although he was well educated, especially considering the general bias against learning, Klassen was oblivious of the geography that the map so well detailed. He had never known anyone skilled in the area although he believed his father might know the science as Ubelig often took extended trips away from home. However, he had never trained Klassen in this skill, if indeed he was cognizant of it.

As it was, he recognized not the towns on the map at all (although he thought it would be interesting to visit them sometime) and questioned whether these lands were also contaminated with the filthy beasts. His basic knowledge in this field could be summed up in a few tidbits: The Northlands consisted of mountains and was a cold area; the Southlands held deserts and were hot; the Eastlands consisted of forests; while the Westlands—where he was traveling—were supposed to have a grand stretch of water like no other on Teramon, that was called an ocean; however, he realized that the ocean was much further to the west than his destination. So, the map he possessed would be far more useful than what knowledge he had acquired in geography.

As Klassen's body beamed in satisfaction of his meal, Klassen's chewing began to slow as he realized he was becoming quite full. A delectable pecan crunched softly in his mouth and he decided it would be his last. Reaching for his water to defeat the parched condition of his throat, he drank plentifully before hearing a loud succession of neighings; then a loud snapping sound rang out forcefully.

Flinging his water container aside, Klassen sprang to his feet with amazing alacrity. In his agile demonstration of athleticism he unsheathed the large dagger from his belt as he readied for an attack. As swiftly as he had brandished his weapon, he restored it to its neutral state. Running forward, he chased after his horse that had displayed its physical prowess by ripping off the upper portion of the tree it was attached to; thus freeing itself.

The horse, now free from its bonds, bounded about in what appeared to Klassen like jolly glee. The sounds it uttered sounded extremely similar to jovial laughs. The steed was running around and jumping into the air as if it had never before been able to perform these deeds. Its playground seemed like the whole forest as it galloped through the trees, across the trail, and then into the forest on the opposite side of the trail. All the while, the top portion of the tree the horse had been tied to, was tagging along, not restricting the horse in the least.

While Klassen was a very muscular man, his large frame didn't slow him down and he was therefore quite swift. So he quickly advanced and caught up with the horse, in the blossoming forest. The horse was faster overall, that was clear, but weaving in between the trees slowed it down and gave Klassen the edge. The upper portion of the tree trunk, with its many outstretched hands, was now within reach; Klassen firmly grabbed one of these branches.

His hope of reeling in the horse with this grasp wasn't kindly received by the horse as its forelegs vaulted upward in protestation. When the steed planted itself again, it charged forward with full speed. Digging his heels into the soft forest mat was quite fruitless as the woodsman was carried along towards the trail. No obstructions barred the horse's route from the opening of the path, so it took a heroic effort by Klassen to keep hold of the branch. Nearing the clearing, Klassen saw a problem.

Almost but not quite being dragged along with the large tree fragment, Klassen saw an obstacle that loomed ominously before him. His grip on the branch was very tight but the speed of the horse was stretching his arm out more and more as he struggled to keep pace. The tree piece was quite long—about twice as long as Klassen's considerable height—and was being towed along horizontally. Directly ahead were two towering trees with only a small space between them. The horse was headed straight for them.

The horse dashed through the wooden pillars effortlessly; its baggage didn't fare so well. With a mighty smash, the branch was snapped in two and Klassen tumbled roughly to the ground. The horse itself seemed not to notice or even care about getting rid of its encumbrance, and hurdled away down the westerly path.

Klassen survived the devastation with only a few scratches but the annoyance he had been experiencing in chasing the animal had turned into a seething animosity. As he rose to his feet, he glared at the horse with a fierce scowl that shot daggers of force; the horse, however, couldn't even see Klassen but, for some reason, did come to a halt.

Seizing the opportunity, Klassen flew after his prey with blinding speed. It was a testament to his vigorous endurance that he was able maintain his stride as he closed in upon the horse.

Grinning in satisfaction, he caught up to the horse but when he was alongside it, the horse whinnied and bolted away.

It galloped quickly, but not very far before stopping again. Although Klassen's impulse was to slaughter the irritating creature and be done with the affair, he knew that he would reach his goal much faster if he rode on horseback. The mere thought of an arrow piercing its throat warmed him with gaiety but a different route of capture was necessary if he wished the horse to be of any use.

Quite aware that the jet-black steed would bolt if he attempted to go near it, Klassen was greeted with an idea that told him to head back to his gear. This he did as he went back in an easterly direction. By cleverly glancing behind him, Klassen saw the horse follow him. He slowed his gait to a virtual crawl and when he saw the horse approach him, Klassen whirled about with the agility of an acrobat while springing towards the horse. His finger grasped the reins but before he could grasp the reins fully, the horse bolted off, going east.

A violent and turbulent twister of emotion swelled within Klassen as he failed in his attempt to retrieve his horse. To think a mere horse with none of the higher faculties that he possessed could outwit him was outrageous. Rising to an explosive nature the passionate emotion came to a fore but not in the way that might of have been thought. Klassen quickly used his higher faculties. As a direct result, a detonation of uproarious laughter erupted from his lips, accompanied by a tremendous grin.

In the seemingly facetious display, Klassen realized that he might as well benefit from the silly escapade of chasing a horse, so he converted his anger to joy. His laughter was so infectious that the animals in the forest answered it as they chirped in response. Although the horse was a fair way off, it too muttered a faint nicker that sounded to Klassen much like laughing.

In his mirthful mood, Klassen made his way back to his gear while his steed kept a good distance ahead of him. When he reached his goods and swiftly packed them together, his horse gave him a queer look that appeared to say, "Come on, let's go." Klassen acknowledged the gaze but disregarded it and, after securing his backpack and carrying a bag in his right hand, set off due west, away from the stallion.

Without even a glance behind him, Klassen rapidly continued his journey. At first his steed simply stared in awe, but then promptly galloped west. It cautiously cantered behind the adventurer and then directly beside him. Getting no response, the horse finally nudged its large nose against him; Klassen stopped and after petting the short black hair of his friend, accepted the submission that the brown eyes of the horse spoke to him.

In a flash, the woodsman was making good speed atop his now cooperating mount. With his gear tied down and the path straight and easy, he let his mind wander. The contemplation that grabbed him was what skill would he employ with the Honor Brigade. He wondered whether they were in need of good carpenters as he could fulfill that need quite well. Before he could proceed with his ponderings, an obscure sound rang out and snapped him from his thoughts.

Spurring his horse onward, he galloped speedily in pursuit of the noise. He was pleased of the cooperation of his steed, as it was important to him to locate the potential distress call as soon as possible. The trees whizzed by in a blur as he scanned the landscape for anything out of the ordinary. He was about to pass right by the origin of the sound when in repeated in blaring accuracy; Klassen yanked on the reins and wheeled about to face the source of the sound.

The spectacle was to his right, a little way from the trail. The full green bushes in the area had prevented him from seeing it, but now the full hideousness of the sight before him was revealed. It was a horrible, deplorable scene that brought the full sway of his intense loathing to bear. This loathing manifested itself in a bellowing roar of "Honor!" as his steed, heeding Klassen's mental command, charged into glorious battle. The attack commenced.

Chapter IV

The sun illuminated the repulsive spectacle as the wind darted by and Klassen rode forward. Two vile miscreants—ogres—stood before him oozing beads of foul-smelling sweat. Below the beasts, lying on ground, was the source of the shrill screaming that had alerted him. Although he couldn't make out much of her appearance, it was clear that she was a fair maiden of Nobilis blood.

It was abundantly clear to Klassen what was transpiring as the two ogres were apparently arguing amongst one another. The grunting conversation between the two became physical when one pushed the other, but they both wheeled around when they heard the mighty roar that Klassen emanated. He thus joined the fray by charging right at the creatures who just barely managed to get out of the way.

Pulling ferociously on the reins, the horse stopped abruptly and Klassen leapt off to tend to the lady, axe in hand. He helped her to her feet and she incessantly muttered her gracious thanks. In a forceful tone, Klassen ordered, "Go wait by my horse." She obeyed instantly just as the startled criminals snapped out of their shock and advanced menacingly towards him.

With astounding aplomb, Klassen welcomed the battle with the forces of evil as his two enemies laughed at his jaunty demeanor. The infuriating rage that enveloped him intensified his fighting ability as he gradually entered a berserker-like frenzy. His breathing accelerated as brilliant flames of hatred shot from his eyes and doused the merry looks on the ogre's faces. They frowned and brought their large wooden clubs to bear. With a primitive, brutal howl, Klassen attacked.

With both hands on his axe, gripping it fiercely, he swung the axe at the ogre to his left. The ogre's natural reflex of raising its left arm in defense saved its life but the wicked arc the axe cut slammed home into the ogre's arm. The blade bit deeply and crimson blood leaked rapidly from the beast as it let out a painful yelp.

The loss of blood caused the creature to collapse, dropping its weapon upon the ground. Klassen, hanging onto his axe, kneeled down trying to extract his weapon from the thick, bulky arm. The attempt was futile, however, as he sensed the other ogre recovering from the surprise of Klassen's attack and coming towards him. Giving up on the axe and lunging for the downed ogre's club, he grasped it just before being on the receiving end of a violent blow. This blow, an ogre's kick, sent him rolling away in scathing pain as he lost his grip on the club.

The ogre pressed its advantage by raising its heavy club and with crushing force sent it downward. Klassen nimbly scrambled away but when the club pounded on the ground, he felt the whoosh, generated by the mighty arc, distinctly on his cheek. As the beast recovered from this solid swing, Klassen sprang to his feet and whipped out his dagger. The sun glinted brightly off of his blade as he glared in utter contempt at the beast that had dared assault him.

The ogre rumbled towards the woodsman with its club raised skyward but the hideous visage scared him not as he deftly sidestepped the charge. Repositioning the dagger in his hand, he waited until the beast turned to face him before acting. With inspiring dexterity Klassen launched his dagger, which twirled fancifully in the air before sinking to the hilt into the chest of the wild-eyed ogre. This beast's arms lowered and it sank to its knees but before he could enjoy his victory, a blow slammed into his back causing him to stumble forward.

Using the momentum of the unexpected attack to propel him away from the unseen ambush, Klassen turned quickly about. The attacker was none other than the ogre whose blood was still flowing freely from the axe lodged in its arm. Lurching forward in lethargy it came after him and swung weakly and wildly. Klassen easily ducked under the club and then vaulted nimbly behind the aggressor.

From behind he wrapped his right arm around the beast's throat and with his left grabbed the frizzy black hair atop its head. With titanic force he pulled violently backwards and sent the ogre

crashing to the ground, its club bouncing harmlessly away. The dazed creature was now essentially sitting on the ground with Klassen clinging to its throat, on one knee. The obvious size difference was glaring, as the beast was at least one and a half times larger than the solid frame of Klassen; this didn't stop an air-blocking chokehold from being applied. In but a few moments, the beast sank into the dark oblivion of unconsciousness.

With a satisfying feel of power, Klassen rose to his feet before retrieving the fallen club of his foe. He swaggered confidently over to the barely conscious ogre that was still on its knees, dagger in its chest. The beast was on the precipice overlooking death as it feebly stared at him, yearning for pity. In response, he smiled broadly at the beast.

The fifth law of Honor Brigade sweetly swam into his mind as he recited it for the ogre's benefit: "Life to Nobilismen; death to the beasts." The beast's eyes flickered at this death sentence; Klassen uttered a lighthearted chuckle in retort. Squeezing the mammoth club in both hands, he raised it in the air. Then he swung with all his might.

The club rushed through the air and collided with the ogre's grotesque skull with devastating force. Upon impact, the head exploded sending a plethora of gory fragments raining down all around. Blood, strips of skin, and crushed bone, sprayed Klassen as the ogre collapsed, its life force smashed into the void of death. He spat upon the body of the now-deceased ogre before securely planting his boot on the corpse's chest and heaving with a hearty pull, disengaging his dagger.

At this wonderful spectacle of justice, the tingling thrill of exhilaration raced through his body in a splendid swirl of excitement. As he made his way over to the unconscious ogre, Klassen was a little disappointed as he realized the deathblow he would deliver wouldn't be received by the understanding eyes of his enemy. Consequently, the joy wasn't as great as he ripped the ogre's throat out with a precise slice of his blade. Although the beast might have already been dead, the flow of life that promptly drained away rang the bell of death quite loudly.

Klassen grabbed his axe and yanked it free from the grizzly cadaver. When he stood up, he saw a ruddy, rushing blur coming towards him and he promptly dropped his weapons as he embraced the maiden whose honor he had so chivalrously defended. The two kissed passionately.

Although the joy of war was delightful, the kiss from the lady whom he embraced was explosively euphoric. The feel of her sweet, wet lips and illustrious tongue dancing with his own transported him to a wondrous realm of ecstasy. Pressing her curvaceous frame closely against his own body, Klassen felt the warmth and tenderness that only a woman could provide. Running his hand through her long flowing locks, he wondered if the sensation would last forever. It didn't.

She, vastly premature in his mind, broke away from his grasp and exclaimed, "We must hurry along, sweetie. There are probably more ogres lurking about." She tugged on his arm but he didn't move at all.

The words were barely comprehensible to Klassen as he stood in awe at the magnificent beauty before him. Her svelte, voluptuous figure was dazzling to behold and seemed to glow with a radiant aura. The beaming rays of the sun illuminated the tenderness of our face and made her emerald eyes glitter brightly. The long hair that flowed down past her shoulders resembled refulgent rubies that dazzled the eye. The simple dark red dress she wore didn't detract from her striking appearance at all; in fact it seemed to show how simple yet extravagant her figure was.

She kept muttering over and over a single word, which was not sinking in as he admired her loveliness. Klassen became more amused when she almost frantically yelled, "Ogres!" Finally, the word was comprehended and his brain quickly processed the information as he looked around for more of the enemy.

Hurriedly grabbing his weapons in his right hand and her in his left, he pronounced, "Let's go." Quickly the pair ran off towards the horse and were packed, ready, and riding, in only a few moments.

Although he hadn't spotted any of the depraved beasts wandering about, Klassen didn't have a desire to wait for any considering the fact that they seemed to attack in packs. Despite their

gargantuan size, they were a rather timid lot. Not wanting to assault a whole host of them, the duo sped away rapidly as they traveled farther and further from the site of the skirmish.

After galloping swiftly until he thought they were safely removed from danger, Klassen slowed his horse to a canter. The tight grasp the lady had around his waist made him realize he had never known such a glorious damsel. Here and there he had known attractive ladies but they all seemed polluted with the sick, vitiated ideals that were prevalent across the land. Was she the same?

Before he could inquire, she sweetly chirped, "Hi sweetie, my name is Alianna. Thanks for saving me! What is your name?"

"Klassen," he replied. "It is my pleasure to save such a wonderful Nobilis maiden. That sure was a grand battle!"

"Yes it was, honey!" came the retort. "I am sure glad you killed that ogre scum. I can't stand them!"

The words which she spoke were harmonious music to his ears. Intrigued immensely by his companion, Klassen inquired, "You don't like the beasts then?"

Although he wasn't cognizant of it, Alianna's face contorted in ugly disdain at this question. "Of course I don't like them; I hate them. Unfortunately my town is filled with them. Who knows why, but people put up with them even though they are ruining the town. Do you know what I mean, hon?"

Such a haphazard find! thought Klassen. "Yes! I know *exactly* what you mean! Where is this town of yours? I can take you there, of course."

Alianna grasped his waist tighter at the pleasure his answer gave her as she responded, "The town is known as Lealean. It is along the path here, not far. Yes, I would like it if you could take me home, thanks. The town itself used to be beautiful when I was child. But now it is getting worse and worse as the beasts come in. It is disgusting because most don't even care, or at least they don't show it if they do. Oh, the town isn't very far away and you can see the filth yourself, hon."

Klassen could well imagine what the town looked like if it was anything like his own hometown. He wondered whether all the towns in Teramon were experiencing similar catastrophes. It would seem that they were since he knew that the Universal Church was extremely powerful and behind the carcinogenic pollution in his town. The logic that his mentor Aristotle taught him told him that it was quite probable that the ghastly beast plague was contaminating all of Teramon, based on the evidence available.

Alianna ran one of her slender hands through his hair and she spoke enchantingly to him, "So will you be visiting me and enjoying the town with me, honey?" She giggled before continuing, "It would be an honor to have you stay with me as the champion that you are."

The sweet offer proffered by the lady was extremely enticing but Klassen had a larger goal in mind. "I would love to accept your invitation," he said but was interrupted by her exclamatory jubilation and hug. "But," he continued, "I must decline."

Before he could continue, he felt her grip around him weaken as she spoke, "It's because I don't like the beasts, isn't it? Well, I don't care what everyone thinks! I hate them and I only like Nobilismen. If you have a problem with that, just drop me off now."

Klassen laughed and affectionately rubbed her hand with his. "I will take you home, of course. I agree with you so much that I am on a quest to join the Honor Brigade!"

The words were spoken as though they held some awesome, mysterious power; but Alianna had never heard them spoken before. Still, she sensed the power was quite immense from the way he spoke. "What is this Honor Brigade?"

A swelling feeling of enraptured bliss flooded Klassen as he thought perhaps he might recruit someone into the ranks before he had even joined. She certainly seemed to have her natural instincts in place, he thought to himself.

“I will show you,” he proudly trumpeted in response to her question. In a blazing rush, Klassen stopped the horse and nimbly leaped off. He trotted around to his bag where he extricated the fantastic flier that inspired him so incalculably. He handed it to her and felt as though he could bathe in her pleasant glow forever, but he knew he had to get moving and promptly remounted and shoved off.

Almost immediately after starting to travel once more, Klassen asked eagerly, “What do you think?”

“I don’t know, honey. It is hard to read on this horse.”

In his zealous eagerness, he hadn’t thought of such a simple obstacle. Therefore he took it upon himself to recite the laws, which he had already memorized:

1. *Illuminate Teramon with the bright light of honor.*
2. *Be strong; slaughter the weak.*
3. *Courageously fight for a better world.*
4. *Live at war.*
5. *Life to Nobilismen; death to the beasts.*
6. *Nobilismen are the supreme beings.*
7. *Superstition must be destroyed and replaced by the laws of nature.*
8. *Promote the best interests of our Nobilis brethren.*
9. *Utilize your specific talent to further Nobilis ends.*
10. *Victory is inevitable.*

At every law, Klassen felt Alianna’s hands tighten around him, her squeezes indicating her approval. He knew that the Honor Brigade would undoubtedly appeal more towards men as it had a warlike approach, but Alianna was responding extremely well. Of course, her endorsement was a silent one but a verbal agreement was sure to follow, the woodsman thought.

“Wow,” she exclaimed, “That is so great, honey! We need strong men like that in our town. Where is this place?”

Klassen was warm with satisfaction as he responded, “It is out west. I have a map with my gear, could you hand it to me?” She promptly did and he glanced at it before putting it away in his pocket. “Wouldn’t you like to accompany me on this trip of honor? I am sure they can use all the help they can get considering the situation the world is in.”

He yearned with all his might that she might say yes and make his journey that much greater. The thought of not only finding his rightful place in life combined with a beautiful gal, was staggering to his imagination, especially within such a short period of time. The muted verbal communication that pervaded the two brought the singing of the birds and galloping hooves of the horse to their ears. He waited patiently for an answer.

As a large black crow flew across their path, Alianna finally responded, “As much as I like you, you can’t expect me to leave with you so soon. I have obligations to fulfill, as you are surely aware of. I just can’t leave my family like that.” Her words with tinged with a bit of melancholy but she cheered up as she continued, “You, honey, can stay with me for a while. It won’t halt your journey too long, after all.” She giggled sweetly at the pleasant invitation.

He, of course, knew that he was being overly eager to expect her to come with him, but he knew the two were so alike! Like two glittering diamonds in a sea of murk they were. It was like Klassen to act—swiftly and assuredly—but he could understand others not keeping his furious pace. Her invitation was extremely kind and he realized the two would have an exquisite time; as such, he considered her offer.

However, he swiftly declined: "I must again decline my beautiful maiden. I wish to begin my service in the Honor Brigade as soon as I can."

She was dejected and understandably so. Tugging his arm and pointing off to the right, she declared, "There is the path to my town."

Klassen guided the horse onto the perpendicular path and could faintly see a small outcropping of buildings in the distance. Before traveling far, Alianna tugged at his arm and pointed to a dilapidated building. "See that building?" she asked.

He pulled up to the building and realized it was an ancient Universal Church building that was devastated beyond repair. The four towers that at one time climbed deliriously into the sky, were now laying upon the ground in ruin. Large gaping holes made the building look as though it had been bombarded by the devastating fusillade of a thousand catapults. Completing the desolation was a filthy ring of trash that decorated the ground surrounding the area.

Alianna chimed in, "Disgusting, isn't it, dear?" He nodded. "Although I don't agree with the nonsense the Universal Church preaches, I do admire their architecture. In my childhood, this building was wonderful and impressive. Then it was converted into a shelter for the beasts that swiftly destroyed it. Now, as you can see, it is in ruins while the beasts that lived here were built a new shelter to destroy. I think some imps occasionally hide out here but the area is a little too far away from the rest of the town for the others."

Klassen was amazed at how similar the two were as he concurred about the architecture. As they cantered down the trail, he thought of the similarities between their two respective towns as well. At first it seemed amazing but the more he thought about it, the more it became simple common sense.

Filth and foulness greeted the travelers as they rode into town. The decaying houses and accompanying beasts became thicker and thicker as they went further. Like an oppressive wave of venomous poison, the squalid cloud of turpitude surrounded them and Klassen yearned for the clean air they had so recently left.

The chaotic swarm of trade loomed before them, but thankfully for Klassen, she pointed him down a less traveled path. Going down the trail he instantly noticed the difference in cleanliness. There was no doubt that this section of town was Nobilis as he saw several Nobilis clans walk down the trail; he politely nodded in greeting. Here and there an imp or hobgoblin scurried about as if they knew they weren't in the right part of town.

The path turned to the right and ended abruptly at a tavern called *The Lion's Den*. He turned back at Alianna questioningly; she nodded and spoke, "Yes, I am going to the tavern. You are welcome to come in, of course." After shaking his head, declining, Klassen leaped down as he graciously escorted her off of the large, black horse.

By a mutual consent, the couple grasped each other lovingly and exchanged a repeat performance of their previous kiss. Klassen felt like an eternity of bliss passed before they stopped; he didn't think it lasted long enough though. As if absorbing her beauty, he gazed in awe at her radiant visage, long red hair of passionate fire, and green eyes of serenity.

"If you change your mind about the Honor Brigade, please come. Honor is Life." He handed her the flier after retrieving it from his pocket.

She took the flier before retorting, "Thanks for the pamphlet; thanks for the ride; and thanks for saving me. I know we will see each other again, honey." Stretching on the tip of her toes, she planted a goodbye kiss and hurried off with a tear slowly draining downwards, caressing her cheek.

Vaulting upon his horse and watching her withdraw, Klassen was struck by the certainty with which she spoke. As she safely made it into the pub, he started off to resume his journey. His thoughts whirled around inside his mind as he realized he had dealt death many times recently and was cleansing Teramon in his own small way. Saving the beautiful Alianna was fabulously rewarding and although she was lovely, he had the bigger picture in mind. There were thousands, maybe millions of Aliannas in the world (not quite as beautiful he knew well enough) that needed saving, not to mention the men who needed enlightenment. Much work had to be done, he knew.

Behind him and therefore unseen by Klassen, Alianna entered the merry bar where she was obviously a frequent customer. This was evidenced by many of the half-drunken patrons welcoming her; she responded in kind. Almost exclusively the customers were Nobilis and as a direct result, the place was clean and in good shape. There were a few hollers but no skirmishes; this seemed due to the potent ale that was freely imbibed.

Lithely, Alianna worked her way through the tables and stools before climbing the sturdy wooden stairs. She hardly made a sound as she distanced herself from the noisy revelry below. The landing that she came to was barely lit by a stream of candles, as the illuminating rays of the sun were nowhere to be found. She walked down the straight hall that was adorned with heavy wooden doors on either side. After coming to the fourth and last door on the right, she halted. Knocking twice, then thrice, and finally once, she waited.

After a brief pause, a murmur only slightly above a whisper spoke one word: "Come." Alianna promptly but quietly did so, shutting the door softly behind her.

The room, like the hallway, was faintly lit. The solitary candle in the room was located on a desk located opposite of the door. It cast a slew of shadows dancing mysteriously about the room as it wavered gently. Although the room also contained a bed and a few other items, it was the man seated behind the desk that attracted one's attention.

The ghostlike figure illuminated by the candle was diligently working, as his face was indiscernible in the light; it did, however, affect Alianna with a visible chill that caused her to shiver involuntarily. One could tell it was a man by the way he carried himself, but the dark robe and lack of illumination made it nigh impossible to learn much more. After finishing off a few quick strokes upon a piece of parchment, he looked up.

Alianna advanced ashamedly, with her head peering downwards. "I don't have any money for you today. I just couldn't..." Her words were cut short by the man rising swiftly from his chair with surprising alacrity after his seemingly tranquil posture.

Walking over to Alianna with his long brown robe flowing down to his feet, he lifted her chin up gently with his finger and looked into her eyes. Caressing her smooth, milky cheeks he spoke mildly, "I don't want to hear your excuses, dear. We must please those that have money."

He gazed at her beautiful figure and without warning launched a furious punch into her stomach that caused her to bend over in agony. Several more blows followed to her midsection and she almost fell, but he stopped her descent.

Just as quietly as before, he whispered, "Ah, you are so beautiful. Now go to work."

Chapter V

The sky's fiery torch was slowly being doused by the encroaching blackness of night. The forest was enveloped in a reddish-orange hue from this fading light. The declining activity of the forest dwellers signaled that they were preparing for their nocturnal rest. A chirp here or a squawk there was the only noise to be heard. The westward trail was obviously infrequently traversed as Klassen had only seen but one other occupant; it was a degenerate hobgoblin that he had scowled at in disdain before passing the beast.

The escapades that he had endured had undoubtedly put him behind schedule and, as such, he was pressing his horse at a blazing gallop. The rushing wind was a pleasant greeting as he imbibed freely of its natural freshness; its soothing nature was a treat when compared to the horrible pollution of the towns. Pushing his horse even faster, horse and rider flew down the path with great swiftness.

The difficulty in maintaining such speed soon manifested itself. First came the horse's labored breathing and slowing gait, even though it was clear to Klassen that the horse wished to maintain the rapid pace. Next was the lack of brilliance that was descending upon the area, making spotting objects in the distance quite difficult. Lastly, was the roaring voice of his dragon-like hunger that was continually bellowing louder.

Wishing to go on just a little longer, he didn't take note of the thinning forest on his left. The trees became more and more sparse until they disappeared completely. Squinting his eyes, he barely saw the sharp turn in the path, heading northwards. Forcefully, Klassen pulled the reins and diverted the horse from continuing westward, into what appeared to be a mysterious mist. The horse protested violently against this sudden change in direction with a loud irritating neigh, but obeyed. The curve was so tight that for a moment it appeared as though horse and rider might crash to the ground, but the horsemanship of the rider showed his skill by preventing a catastrophe.

Klassen knew it was time to stop; he halted his horse. Looking for a suitable place to camp, he looked at the haunting mist to his left and the dark forest on his right. Although the mist intrigued him, he knew the forest would prove to be a much more prudent site for the night. Therefore he steered the horse off the trail, a little ways into the forest; the blanket of nightfall was almost complete.

The adventurer dismounted and brought his gear with him as he scrambled to find good firewood before all light was extinguished. This was actually done quite easily as good, dry wood seemed to materialize from nowhere, on the ground. Amid the heavy, but lessening, breathing of his horse, Klassen promptly proceeded to light a fire with the kit he possessed.

The fire blazed forth its warming touch and illuminating flames. The warmth felt good to his body as he soaked greedily in it; the chilling effect of the night and rushing winds from riding had finally caught up with him. The brightness that shot forth from the fire revealed an ordinary forest about him but the caliginous area across the path was not to be penetrated. Even without the map he had given away, he knew the obscure zone was the marsh that was to be circumnavigated.

The mysterious marsh was strangely attractive but the pull of hunger snatched Klassen's attention; he promptly dug through his bags in search of food. Not having the proper cooking utensils, he dangled from a rope a piece of meat above the fire while snacking on some nuts. The cooking method he was employing—although unorthodox—would work just fine. The standing, hovering over the fire soon grew tiresome so he fetched a log to sit on while cooking his meal.

As he sat down he felt the soreness from riding more than ever. Klassen was a skilled horseman but wasn't accustomed to spending an entire day on a mount. Also making itself known was the blow he had sustained to his rib, now bruised over, although Klassen wasn't aware of its purplish face. All in all however, he enjoyed the relaxation and breathed deeply.

The flames crackled gently and the soft glow of the fire soothed his mind. Glancing casually about, Klassen noticed his cloak still contained traces of his earlier melee; this brought a smile to his face. Brushing off the chunks of skeletal fragments and crusted blood, he realized that a good deal of blood would forever reside within the cloak. The dark, stained blood spots, however, were barely discernible against the brown background of the cloak.

Then it hit him. The rushing wave of red-haired beauty filled his mind with thoughts of Alianna. He had successfully put her out of his mind until now but the sweet smell of her womanhood—a smell he hadn't even been aware of at first—now brought a feeling of joy to his weary being. A deep connection between the two existed; at least he hoped she shared his romantic sentiment. What was it that had affected him so much? Klassen was enamored by her gorgeosity, there was no doubt; but the connection upon the higher, nobler plane of honor is what made her special. He noted it might have been merely a facade of agreement to placate him, but he sincerely had faith in her being veracious and wonderful.

In his romantic revelry he noticed his meal was done and after testing it for its doneness, he ate hungrily after being contented it was fully cooked. The meat, dear he thought, wasn't exactly scrumptious but thinking of his Alianna was tasty indeed. Her gleaming green eyes came to his mind and seemed to mesmerize him. Of course his contemplation made him consider returning to the town; what town was it? Ah, Lealean he recalled after a short burst of brainpower. The thought to return to her was delicious and delightful but the image of the holy sword of honor immersed in scorching fire dominated his mind-vision. That was that.

Klassen's stomach grew full as he devoured and finally finished his meal. His attention was again drawn over to the marsh by what had seemed like a short burst of movement. Upon looking at the formless mass of the marsh, it seemed alive with a slow, swirling movement but nothing distinguishable could be seen by his sharp eye.

His imagination was stirred by trying to comprehend what might lie beyond the hazy shell that protected the innards of the bog. What might be lurking inside? What did it look like from the inside? More importantly, was the given name of the marsh an accurate description? The mystification of it all burned in his soul as a feeling of strange awe silently fell upon him. The puzzling nature was drummed home as the name repeated itself over and over again in his mind.

Doom, doom, doom. The Marsh of Doom.

The horse neighed in protestation but entered the dark and hazy marsh. The brightness of the morning was swallowed instantly upon the pair entering the marsh as the horse reluctantly obeyed its rider's orders. It was still clearly frightened but it seemed Klassen's mighty presence allayed its fears. Entering the watery bog with a swish, swish of hooves, horse and rider both scanned the area.

First to greet the eye was dungeon-like darkness that was cast like a tangling net over the damp floor. Scattered about were dark gray trees that were bent and appeared dying, but alive somehow they were. The ground was simply damp in some places but others had puddles of water whose depth seemed indeterminate in the poor lighting. The sun's brilliance was almost entirely squashed, as Klassen couldn't see far at all in the lighting that managed to break through the barrier of bleakness. Another odd feature of the light was that its color was deprived of its golden hue and came through as gray.

The moisture and humidity in the air immediately made itself known as Klassen felt the beads of sweat form on his forehead even though he wasn't tired in the least. The horse as well seemed affected, but it appeared more to be the dank atmosphere in general that plagued it. Nonetheless, Klassen saw no real obstacles to impede them and started onwards.

Splashing through the puddles of liquid, the adventurer justified his trek through the Marsh of Doom by the distance, and thus time, he would save. The northerly route along the path just

seemed to be a waste and he wondered why no path had been forged through the fen. Sure, he knew, it would have required some effort to do but it seemed worth it.

A crashing snap blasted through the air behind Klassen, making the horse mewl in misery. Twisting quickly around, the adventurer looked for the source of the disruption. Was it a beast? He saw nothing but the same scene that reminded him of death, a graveyard to be exact. After telling himself it was nothing more than perhaps a fallen branch, the rider directed the startled horse forward.

The stallion, after the disturbing distraction, was very reluctant to walk further but with great difficulty, the skilled rider calmed its nerves by stroking it gently. Still the horse was affected by the jitters of terror from the miasmatic environment. The fear was palpable and seemed to ooze out of the air, intriguing Klassen. Maybe there really was some kind of doom in the marsh. While being cognizant of, but not dismayed by, the amorphous clouds of melancholy, he did remain in a cautious state of alert.

The contorted trees that populated the area stretched oddly about, even bending over to drink of the liquid nourishment. This sight was so vastly different to Klassen's eye that he wondered whether or not this area was simply an aberration of nature. He had heard of a marsh before, but never having been to one, he could only speculate as to whether they were as haunting and mysterious as the one he traversed.

Without warning, an obsidian creature flew by with a piercing shriek that shattered the silence. Just as swiftly as it had darted by, the flying figure returned to circle about the pair as it mockingly spewed out the awful, grating call it muttered. Its flight pattern was peculiar as it never flapped its wings but instead glided up and down, riding invisible waves. Its eerie presence sent prickling tingles throughout Klassen's frame as he watched it in amazement. After leaving its mark indelibly impressed upon him, it floated away as effortlessly as it had come.

The uncanny experience had a positive consequence on Klassen but the reverse was true for his mount. In cowering trepidation it descended to the ground in stark terror. Whining softly, it hugged the ground. Stepping off the horse with a splash, Klassen grabbed the oats from his gear and hand-fed the horse. It ate a little at a time and this seemed to lift its spirits somewhat; the eyes, however, belied its unmistakable anxiety.

After feeding his transportation until it desired no more, Klassen wondered whether he might not continue forward on foot. He could travel just as fast through the soaked bog but would be at a severe disadvantage in the open. According to the map he saw in his mind, the Marsh of Doom didn't appear very wide, though, and he believed traversing it wouldn't take long. Besides, the gold he had spent on the creature would be wasted if he left it behind.

With his mind made up, Klassen coaxed his animal companion to its feet through sheer, mighty volition. Leaping upon its back, he urged it forward and wasn't going to let it disobey him in the least, despite its vexation. Guiding it forward, he kept an eye out for any more strange, but alluring, fascinations.

With the dominant hands of Klassen controlling the reins the horse could either succumb to its nebulous fears or obey the omnipresent force of its determined rider; it moved on quicker than it had before. The duo actually started making good time as the horse seemed bolstered by its rider's supreme confidence. The water from the puddles they trotted through splattered upwards and Klassen felt the spray of water, revealing their speed; he smiled.

The increased velocity made the humid fen less intimidating to the horse that soon gained the confidence that almost equaled that of its consummate rider. The trees that rushed by seemed to lose their air of malicious misery when one only caught but a transitory glimpse of them. The ease with which the two fled by made Klassen wonder how far they had to traverse.

Just as this thought seeped into his mind, he became aware of a strange, nagging sense of being followed. Klassen didn't think that he saw or heard anything, but seemed to *feel* a prowling presence behind him. Without alerting the horse that seemed oblivious to the feelings he held,

Klassen gazed behind him. Carefully scanning the landscape, he saw no movement out of the ordinary but his sixth sense was screaming wildly.

Returning to face forward, Klassen finally saw the predatory phantasm that had been stalking the pair. It was a chilling void of ethereal darkness that hauntingly hovered over them. One could only see its black, waving form by its contrast to the gray mist that dominated the area. None of the normal features of a creature were beheld in the specter, as it appeared an awful hole in reality. No arms. No legs. No eyes. It was a waving cloak of impenetrable blackness.

The horse that had regained so much confidence now had it all suddenly sucked away with horrific speed. Bewilderment at the apparition brutalized the stallion as it wriggled violently about in frantic frenzy. Its befuddled contortions culminated in a fierce surge skyward that heaved its rider into the air. As skilled as Klassen was, he was unable to prevent this skyward ride and landed heavily with a large plash that drenched him with muddy water.

With distorted paroxysms of terrible terror, the frightened horse lurched to and fro before bolting off into the unknown. With the instinct of slaughter, the phantasm rushed after its prey. With a gaping maw of icy death, it swept through the horse's hind legs. The stallion erupted in pain as it plummeted to the ground. The legs had completely disappeared as if they had been flung through a portal and ended up in a different dimension. In the throes of malicious misery, the downed creature's blood pulsed out of its bloody stumps with every beat of its heart.

Such a wicked display seemed to defy explanation but the suffering in the marsh was certainly real enough. Despite the startling scene, the enraging power born of injustice enveloped Klassen in its loathing sweetness. Ignoring the water that weighed him down, he sprang upwards, dagger in hand, to his feet and hustled after the destroyer of his property.

The alien specter's attack on the near-extinguished animal was affected before Klassen could reach the area. The cold grasp of death wrapped its coils around the horse's forelegs and started dragging it away from the adventurer. Slowly at first but rapidly gaining speed, it transported its catch away from the dagger-wielding pursuer, leaving behind a crimson stream of gore.

Running with all his ability, Klassen struggled to overtake his contemptible enemy. The horse was by now bouncing up and down on its rump as it was towed along without mercy. Faster and faster it was pulled until the adventurer watched in disbelief as his mount was slowly lofted into the air, flying. When the predator and its prey achieved mutual flight, acceleration well beyond Klassen's means was achieved; he could only look on helplessly.

Slightly panting, he stopped, as he realized nothing more could be done. Searching through the maze of tangled trees, drab mist, and watery ground seemed a fruitless endeavor in irrelevancy. Therefore, Klassen sheathed his blade and looked for the proper route to continue on. Although it was impossible to tell from the atmosphere which way west was, he recalled well enough. Redirecting his boiling irritation at the uncanny death of his mount, he set off with a rapid gait.

His pace was severely hampered by the moist, boggy ground and increasing brush that impeded his way. Klassen had to crush through the tangled, grisly vegetation while feeling the moist chill from being drenched. His hunger was flaring up as well to compound the adversity facing him, but he would have to do without food as well as his warm cloak, both of these had been lost with his gear. Fortunately for him, the burning desire and determination to reach his goal drove him forward.

The brush became so dense that the adventurer was forced to hunt for an alternative route, around this impervious obstacle. The imposing wall stretched out as far as the eye could behold, but Klassen hiked, what he hoped was north, to look for a chink in the armor. After searching in vain in that direction and encountering a scathing wall of brambles that halted his northerly progress, he did an about face. On and on he went, searching for an opening. Just as he was about to backtrack his steps in hopes of finding a different way around, he stopped. Then he smiled.

A small section of the brush had been cleared away, although it looked as though the dwarves of myth had carved it due to its nearness to the ground. Bending down and peering through it,

Klassen noted that it did look as though it had been tunneled. Without further ado, he ventured forth on his hands and knees, adding to his wetness.

The minuscule path led him right, left, right and more until he had absolutely no idea whether he was heading true to course or not. The woodsman feared not getting lost, however, due to the path not branching off whatsoever. Therefore, he felt comfortable—even though he was thoroughly wet—having faith in the trail. It wound and wound with an occasional branch smacking his face, but nothing amounting to any type of major injury.

Ever so slowly the blanketing thicket, that served like cave walls, began to dissipate in density. He was gaining more freedom of motion as he crawled through the winding path and knew exactly what that meant. Sure enough, he was soon able to stand up as a clearing presented itself; as a result, he promptly stretched out his cramped limbs. This brought a joyous feeling of delight, regardless of the simplicity of it. This feeling of joy didn't last long as the next obstacle immediately presented itself.

A humongous river that moved onward with agonizing slowness hailed Klassen. The river, like the area in general, was adorned with a gray dreariness; the billowing mist, however, was more marked and profound over the water. The slow current seemed to wail in misery as it drudged along. Even the effervescent vivacity that Klassen constantly exuded was masked by the river's mistaken reflection of him; Klassen's brio was replaced by a look of doom.

Although he was already drenched, he had no desire to make his wetness absolute. Thus, he surveyed the river and surrounding area for an alternative course. What he spotted seemed too good to be true. A massive tree, whose bark was dark red, was stretched along the entire width of the aqueous impediment. It was a wooden bridge that arched from one bank of the river to the other. Upon glancing around some more, Klassen realized this natural bridge was the best path, as suspicious as it appeared.

Making his way over to it, he carefully tested its strength by crawling upon the wood. Despite his rather large frame, the bridge held firm. Recognizing the slipperiness that prevented walking upright, Klassen skillfully clambered along the wet, wooden branch. Despite the width of the river and not-so-perfect path, he made good time. The splinter here and there that attacked his skin didn't slow him in the least.

At the apex of the arching limb, a small blurt of motion seized Klassen's eye. Down below, in the dark current, a tiny eruption here and then there, popped up from the water's surface. Tiny rings extended outward from this disruption while the adventurer wondered what manner of life could exist in such a desolate marsh. Wiping his brow of the accumulation of sweat, he took a brief rest while staring below. Without warning, a crashing snap boomed harshly.

As if levitating magically, Klassen hovered in the air before the eternal hand of nature yanked him downward. Falling down with a whooshing descent he greeted the river with a large splash. The water was cold, very cold; it sucked him beneath the surface, into its bleak, aquatic domain. Sight served no purpose in this muddy realm, as it was a useless sense. However, it was clear which way was up and using his toned muscles, Klassen hastened to the surface.

Once above the subaqueous kingdom, the gulp of air that he inhaled was refreshing despite the vapid vapors that cloaked the area. Being no stranger to the art of swimming and not wanting to encounter the fish life on such a personal level, Klassen swiftly began to stroke his way to the bank of his destination.

As chilling as the icy waters were, the adventurer was actually pleased by the difficulty of his trek; it made the fulfillment of his journey that much greater. The soggy bog was certainly difficult terrain and this presented a delightful challenge to Klassen. Consequently, the seafaring swim he was engaged in brought a smirk to his face until this was replaced by a serious visage when something slimy slithered against his stomach.

Fully realizing the difficulties he faced in river combat, the adventurer quickened his already swift pace. The far bank neared but not before a serpentine creature burst into the air with an explosive splash before crashing downward, returning to its natural abode. Accompanying this

strange snakelike fish was a fearsome, low-pitched howling that although barely audible, added dread to the cold, haunting marsh. Within moments, Klassen either directly saw, felt, or heard a plethora of the cold-blooded fish all about him. The onslaught charged his being with a superhuman strength, which he used to navigate to land with unbelievable velocity. Klassen vaulted onto the sanctuary of the shore and looked behind him.

While greedily devouring the oxygen that sustained his energy, the sight before him was one of riotous anarchy. The river that had once been so placid, so moribund, was now alive with black, leaping fish that clamped their maws open and shut in anger. The wailing the denizens of the deep emitted was a chorus of seething animosity. Klassen, now safe from the serpents, watched the spectacle in awe as they now began to fight amongst themselves. Clamping down upon each other with ferocious teeth, the whole host of serpents slashed one another with malicious fervor.

Amid the bloody slaughter, the adventurer, seeking rest from his draining quest, pressed westward (at least what he hoped was westward). The landscape before him was much more open with only a few misshapen trees scattered about here and there. The mist that so heavily clogged his journey up until then seemed less dense. Finding a spot near a tree of an unknown species, Klassen seated himself on what was actually dry ground.

Drying himself as best as he could didn't assuage the involuntary shivering that encompassed Klassen's body. Nonetheless the repose was quite welcome considering the fatiguing voyage he had hitherto been engaging in. The breathing of the adventurer slowly regained its normalcy after the rapid rate it had been accelerated to during his swim. His muscles thanked him for the relaxation but Klassen knew the exercise would serve him well. Altogether, it was a relieving break from the seemingly incessant toils he was crashing through and, despite the bleakness, the adventurer felt comfortable. This comfort didn't last long.

Something was behind him. What sense registered its presence mattered little, but it was there. Turning around, he realized *it* was back. The void-like phantasm had returned and even though it had no eyes, it was clearly watching him as it hovered like a black blanket in the air. It made no hostile move but Klassen knew it meant death and promptly launched himself to his feet, dagger drawn.

At this quick motion, the foreboding phantom made no move except the wavering ripple of blackness that seemed intrinsic to it. Taking advantage of this inability to react, the adventurer plunged his dagger into the void with swift alacrity. With a slight hissing sound, the dagger was enveloped and eaten away; it disappeared all the way to the hilt. Even without a face, it was clear that the phantom smiled at this display of its enemy's impotence.

Realizing the ineffectiveness of his attack, the adventurer bolted away from the phantom and the river, in a direction that he hoped would lead him out of the Marsh of Doom. Blazing with celerity he galloped into puddles, over logs, and through the miasmatic mist. Not taking the opportunity to look behind him lest he lose speed, Klassen surged ahead with all the swiftness his sore muscles could handle.

As the adventurer rushed onward, the landscape around him became more and more open. The trees were almost entirely gone while the ground became firm and dry. So fast did he go that the rushing gale created by his swiftness pricked him like tiny needles, but slowed him not. After what seemed like hours of dashing towards his goal, Klassen was about to collapse in fatigue when he saw, with joy, that the darkness was dissipating.

Could it be true? There was no doubt that it was getting brighter but could the exit of the marsh actually be so close? Striving forward with renewed vigor, Klassen thought it so. The increased energy thus provided catapulted him like a bolt of lightning that sizzled through the air. It was only but a moment until he realized that he had successfully navigated the marsh. In a glaring burst he rushed into brightness and bathed in the warm rays of the sun.

The grass was a lush green; the trees were spruce and alive with healthful vigor; and the sky was an azure blue adorned with the brilliant sun, beaming its happiness down upon the land. Klassen engulfed the fresh air in glee as he felt the exhilaration of achievement. The bright world

he was in now was a massive change from the dank one he had emerged from; he turned around to bid farewell to the mysterious, haunting chamber of wetness.

Upon turning around he saw the black phantasm hovering directly in front of him, menacingly. Before he could react, it darted at him with astonishing swiftness. The same hissing sound that accompanied the disintegration of his dagger came with the attack as Klassen felt the burning void consume him. It devoured his skin in agonizing pain. With but a short holler of indignation, the adventurer was totally swallowed by the malicious monstrosity.

The Marsh of Doom had claimed another victim.

Chapter VI

Snapping awake with a violent start, Klassen peered about with groggy eyes. The forest was bright with the dawning of a new morn as the natural habitat made itself known with the rustic chords of life. With the slightly distorted perception associated with the morning rise, the adventurer wondered where exactly he was and why he was in a forest. His fire had long since burned out, leaving him chilled but otherwise comfortable as the warm blanket of his sleeping bag was nestled tightly against his body. The breathing of the black stallion drew his attention away as he rose to his feet while gathering his gear together.

The thought of what had exactly happened to him raced through the adventurer's mind. It seemed very unlikely that the fantastic journey through the marsh had even taken place. He was, after all, back where he had camped the night before without a single drop of water upon his person. Therefore it must simply have been a dream, he realized. Oh what a dream though!

Despite a dream that most would have admitted as a horrific nightmare, Klassen found it a most enjoyable experience. It reminded him of the grand epics which he read and, as such, brought him excitement simply recalling it. Granted the ending wasn't what he would have scripted himself, but the adventurous crusade through the Marsh of Doom was breathtakingly wondrous, real or imaginary.

Gathering together his gear and mounting his steed, the adventurer looked at the simple northern path and the unknown marsh off to the west. What mysteries did the marsh actually hold? Were they anything like the monsters that seemed so supernatural? Klassen believed not in the supernatural, as he thought it a silly notion of ignorance, but could a creature like the one that had plagued him in his dream exist in the world of reality? Considering both paths for a moment, the adventurer was easily decided on his course.

The rider smirked as the same hesitancy his horse faced in his dream was now manifesting itself in reality. The same darkness and pervading mist that clouded his unconscious trek was also spread like a heavy gray tarp across the Marsh of Doom. With dexterity and skill the rider forced the horse into the moist domain of the marsh.

It was as if he were continuing in his nocturnal escapade when Klassen entered the humid bog. It seemed a flash of eternal recurrence where he would continually, *over* and *over* again, repeat his tiring but magnificent journey into the depths of darkness. Although this incessant experience was an intriguing thought, the adventurer eagerly wanted to serve with the Honor Brigade and not be trapped in some strange quirk of distorted time.

The contemplation of such scientific theories reminded him of his discussions with his old friend Aristotle. His mentor spoke of such conceptions of space and time with their interrelations, but it was merely conjecture. Interesting it was, nonetheless, although Klassen thought very few beings discussed such esoteric topics. Realizing he was simply letting his imagination drift off with lofty ideas, he focused on his course ahead.

Feeling a faint sprinkle of wetness upon his head, Klassen became aware of something alien to his dream: rain. With a chill wind blowing, it seemed more like a spraying from the puddles that dotted the area than it did all out rain, but moist it was regardless. This unwelcome, damp guest further solidified his conclusion that he was now engaged in actual reality. As such, he was on the alert for what actual beings resided in the marsh.

It didn't require the adventurer's precise vigilance to hear the snapping crash that shattered the silence. This all-too-familiar sound originated behind him and although Klassen swiftly scanned behind him, he did so not expecting to see anything; he was right. The steed, however, was not full of the aplomb that the adventurer exuded and neighed in frightening fear at the unnerving explosion. This the rider anticipated and before it could get out of hand, he had calmed his furry friend.

Just as the adventurer began to cogitate the striking resemblance of circumstances, a caw, cawing, attracted his attention. A dark bird flew directly in front of the horse and rider with large, flapping wings. This strange sight, so like his previous encounter but not quite the same, instantly propelled Klassen to squeeze the reins extra tight, but it was too late. Flung from the saddle was he as he splashed to the moist floor in an eruption of water. As he saw his dark horse come back down on all fours, he caught a glimpse of the bird that was fleeing the area. It was simply a raven.

After contorting about in wild throes, the horse bolted off without a goal in mind, into the inner reaches of the moist marsh. Klassen was unable to react in time to prevent his mount from escaping as he pulled himself up off of the ground, squeezing what water he could from his clothing. The fall itself hadn't been so terrible as, forecasting it as he did, he had managed to do a small backward somersault and end up resting on his knees. Even this swift and adroit motion didn't allow him enough time to prevent his stallion from running off; by now it had disappeared into the haze.

The events that had so rapidly taken place were unfortunate for the adventurer, but they weren't able to dampen his magnificent spirits. The wetness that chilled him, the miserable dreariness oozed by the marsh, and the loss of his horse and gear didn't phase his armor of optimism. Simply shaking his head with a pleasant smile, Klassen pressed on.

More from involuntary instinct than any conscious decision, the adventurer continually kept vigilant of what might be behind him. As much as he might convince himself of his experience before being a dream, he reflexively reacted to what the dream had ordained. There had been differences already, but the power of an unconscious meditation seemed to have some strange advantage over reason.

After milling through the bog for quite some time, the adventurer gazed upon an inviting large rock. So attractive was the area with its trees looking almost lush in contrast to the destitute dark-wood that screamed its awful anguish, that Klassen felt obliged to rest in such an oasis. Even the water here, a small pond, was a bright blue that was quite alluring. He neither felt tired with his indefatigable endurance nor thirsty, but sat himself and drink he did.

The overwhelming feature of the oasis was the extremely sweet fragrance that was sprinkled throughout the territory. Its luscious aroma stood out in vast contrast to the dull, insipid odor that he had hitherto been subjected to. Inhaling deeply of this wonderful air, Klassen looked in vain for the origin of this exciting feature of the realm. He saw no flowers that might emit such a lovely delight and didn't know what else could possibly produce it. Consequently, he resigned himself to enjoying the fertile abode while resting.

The olfactory sense was certainly tickled joyfully but this wasn't the only effect experienced by Klassen. A soothing sensation of great relaxation pleasingly swept through his body. Accordingly, the adventurer took the liberty of fully utilizing his resting spot in order to lie down. A tickling feeling pulsed down his limbs. Such a strange occurrence propelled the adventurer to mirthfully chuckle, but he hadn't commanded such a response. Before being able to analyze the situation, he joyfully laughed again. A flood of laughter was now let loose, none of it being prompted by his conscious mind.

Amid this joyous revelry, the adventurer was soon beset by images that at first shocked him but after a few moments of viewing them, inflamed his hilarious jocularity. The dark mist that embraced the area, which Klassen stared up at, was contorting then spinning then pulsating or a combination thereof. Even the drab blackness became a swirling prismatic spectacle of bright color as he watched in astonishment at the éclat. The now-colored mist swam upwards and darted downward like a playful child being swung around by its parent.

After a while the fanciful display produced less and less jovial eruptions of jollity as a different, more profound feeling overcame the adventurer. Wonder. The images before him were exploding with a variety of colors and then sprinkling to the ground. This, combined with his other strange sensations, generated a sweeping air of awe of the world that transformed even a common object

like a tree into an interesting query of riveting contemplation. With mouth agape, Klassen goggled at the surroundings joyfully.

The hours rolled along but the adventurer felt as though only minutes went by. Klassen, as ecstatic as he felt, did realize that something, whatever it might be, was affecting him mightily. He knew that he couldn't waste time in the altered realm of revelry because he had a mission to accomplish. His body was against this endeavor, however, as it felt warm and joyous reposing where it was. The adventurer was equipped with an indomitable will and when his mind truly wanted something, the body would follow. Verily, it complied as he rose to his feet.

It was a wobbly ascension as the hours of recumbency had relaxed his body. His equilibrium was off as he tottered, but didn't fall. The mottled splotches of artistic paint that pranced playfully about altered his depth perception, but not enough to prevent him perambulating forward. As he was about to exit the oasis, Klassen caught a glimpse of the sparkling blue water of the pond and dove to its base in a sudden desire for refreshment. The water tasted sublime to his thirsty being and, oddly enough, food wasn't craved for. After satiating his thirst, the adventurer trekked westward.

The grim reality of the marsh confronted Klassen immediately upon reentering its dark domain, but what might have dismayed most, intrigued the adventurer immensely. As he felt the chilling, but pleasing, breeze while walking, he examined the trees, the branches, and even the very bark with inquisitive delight. The sensations he was experiencing felt so surreal that he wondered about reality. Was he dreaming?

Klassen cogitated this question analytically. Something certainly was amiss as a fire-burst of red fire splashed before him before fading away. Things like that didn't happen in reality and he had long since realized they were hallucinations. There was no doubt his senses were distorted, like in a dream. Upon thinking further back, he recalled that everything had been normal up until his find of the oasis. The oasis. Of course, he thought. Before he could upbraid himself for not realizing the obvious, a queer noise interrupted him.

The noise, though rather soft, reverberated all around the adventurer. Therefore it was impossible to ascertain where it had originated; Klassen searched anyway but saw not its source. As this happened, a foreign guest welled up inside him. It pained him with scathing barbs that slashed from within, in his stomach. Staring in shock at this awful, inward misery, the harsh realization of it all struck him. It was fear.

Even if an unseen foe was somewhere along his westward route, that was the direction he was going. The alien pain was disconcerting but it wasn't about to stop him from going west. Indeed, this direction he traipsed albeit with a throbbing body and unsure step. The bloody war being waged between Klassen's will and the unnerving fear, further exacerbated his difficult trek. Even this turmoil was inflamed by a bizarre occurrence that halted his progress.

Klassen's entire range of vision had gone completely black before returning to the brilliant spectacle of cascading colors, set against a backdrop of grim bleakness. His sight had essentially been robbed from him although it had only lasted a brief moment. Also hailing him was weakness and fatigue but this wasn't all. A swirling gyration also seemed to spin him about in a dizzy whirl that made the adventurer concentrate to maintain his balance.

Despite all these restrictions, the adventurer forged ahead. Immediately, he was beset with a vista of black nothingness and crushed balance; Klassen plunged downward like a besotted buffoon. The muddy water was felt on his legs, on his arms, and face; and it was so very wet. His vision returned but only for a moment as he struggled to crawl onwards while the claw of unconsciousness tugged mightily at his mind. His progress became less and less as he crawled slowly through the wet puddles.

Without sight and feeling weak, he stopped, took a deep breath and collapsed into unconscious darkness.

With a slight hammering in his temple, Klassen wearily opened his eyes. Sight was his but it was only a view of a muddy bog, a puddle to be exact. The coldness of the water he was drenched with sent vibrations of chill streaming along his nerve endings. Upon rising to his knees, the adventurer acknowledged the soreness of his muscles and the properness of his eyesight. His former feelings of euphoric awe and, later, frightening fear, were replaced by his typical sanguineness despite the grim fangs of death that drained the area of life.

When the adventurer looked in front of him a pleasant sight welcomed him, but he instantly questioned its validity. The beautiful delusions he had been privy too could easily construct such an enticing manifestation. The one loophole with this theory, however, was that his hallucinations hadn't been solidified into definite objects, only flashes of abstraction. The two items in front of him were certainly definite objects. It was his gear.

Springing to his feet, Klassen examined the backpacks. A cursory glance gave evidence that all seemed in order, including his faithful axe. The smell of sustenance was sweet indeed and this pleasant aroma sparked the flame of his appetite, which soon became a blazing holocaust. Hastily he foraged for food and upon retrieving it, turned around and sat down. Before he could consume the appetizing nuts that he held, an astonishing sight clutched his attention.

Directly behind the large puddle that the adventurer had toppled into, was a red pond of blood. Like a living entity, it trailed away from his sleeping puddle although some had slipped into this puddle. Reflexively glancing at his person, he found blood streaks that seemed quite fresh on his cloak. This, of course, prompted him to search for wounds but he found none and, despite the thundering upon his skull, was not injured in the least. What had happened? This simple question had many possibilities. Feeling his skull for lumpy bruises revealed nothing and this seemed to rule out the adventurer being attacked. Something, to be sure, had been slaughtered but what exactly had been killed was impossible to ascertain with the clues present. This was especially so since, in all probability, he had never before encountered such a creature. All the slimy gore seemed to tell him was that something had died while something else had carried its carcass off.

The banging upon Klassen's head, like a blacksmith pounding out the abnormalities of a sword, was increasing in magnitude. This unwelcome ailment directed his contemplations to solving this enigma. Yes! he knew, and how simple it was. The intoxicating effects of the unknown agent in the oasis had, like ale, left him with the pain. The adventurer briefly recalled his one and only encounter with the benumbing intoxicant ale and, after feeling its stupefying and irksome aftereffects, had vowed not to consume much of the liquid, if any, ever again. He had been forced to drink it by his father but now that constraint was removed.

Using his deductive reasoning, the adventurer wondered whether the oasis itself was simply a snare for wayward travelers. It would have been an elaborate setup indeed and one that required intelligence, so Klassen thought it more plausible that some being was simply taking advantage of the mind-altering oasis. This seemed especially probable as it seemed the honeyed aroma ultimately gave way to unconsciousness.

Content with his findings, the adventurer resumed his nutritional endeavor. The hunger he had been subjected to soon fell away as tasty morsels were agreeably deposited into his empty stomach. This consumption prompted a thirst that Klassen knew had to be satisfied. Not believing he could have forgotten such a vital necessity, he dug in his bags, as he had no desire to drink of the muddy and even bloody, water from the puddles. After a thorough search, he did locate his water, much to his relief. He drank but a little, however, so as to preserve his provisions.

After finishing his meal, his mental attention focused on his gear. How had it mysteriously been retrieved and by whom? This was a pressing question, which he had no answer for, nor, with his throbbing headache, did he wish to pursue. Consequently, the adventurer gathered his belongings and resumed his journey into the unknown.

As he hiked through the mystifying misty marsh, the ache he endured and the two large packs upon his back made his journey not quite ideal, but slow him these encumbrances did not. In fact,

he was making better progress now than when he had left the oasis. The icy chill that hugged him from sleeping in a wet realm didn't even slow him and the idea of creating a fire to warm himself seemed a waste of precious time. Already he thought he had wasted too much time in his unwanted nap.

After perambulating without incident for quite some time, Klassen was faced with a decision. His westbound route split into two different paths. The first and one directly in front of him, dipped downward into what might have been a valley. It was difficult, of course, to really see what was ahead with the thick fog that obscured his vision. The alternative was a course that trailed upwards steeply but looked as though it might level off. The adventurer saw no reason to vary his course by ascending the hill to his right, so he continued forward.

Unexpectedly, a whistling hiss scorched through the stale air. Recognizing the sound immediately, Klassen dove sideways for cover just in time to see the deadly arrow flash by him. Situated behind a deformed, aged tree, he scanned the hazy bog for his foe. Before being able to locate the archer, he spied another deadly shaft blaze by him with magnificent velocity. Curiously enough, the murderous missile was extremely inaccurate, as it had sped down the path he was formerly on instead of being aimed at the tree he was positioned behind. After this second shot had been loosed, a moaning groan diverted his attention behind him.

Feeling safe enough to chance a glance, the adventurer peered to his rear. The sight he beheld was a malefic monstrosity. It was a two-headed creature that seemed to ooze with evil as it salivated a grotesque substance to the ground. It most resembled a mammoth dog; only this monster had glowing yellow eyes and a furry flesh of the deepest ebony. Its fangs were easily as long as the adventurer's fingers and would have no difficulty in chomping a limb clean off. Two foreign objects protruded from its muscular flesh. They were arrows.

Despite the deeply piercing projectiles that caused a gush of reddish-green blood, the fiend advanced towards Klassen with both sets of eyes regarding him with primitive disdain. Instantly realizing that his dagger would be ineffectual, the adventurer hastily flung his gear to the ground and grabbed his axe. Before he could engage the demon, though, a third bolt thundered into the wounded creature, causing it to collapse with a thud.

As the demonic fiend lay spitting up his life force with short coughing bursts, the adventurer raised his axe skywards as he advanced. A cry of protestation rang out from the hill above, halting Klassen's forward motion. Although what actually had been spoken was indiscernible, there was no doubt it was a shout of warning from the ally he earlier thought was a foe. Gazing at the creature he quickly learned why the caution had been uttered: The flowing blood of the monster came in contact with a tree branch and, with an acidic bite, disintegrated it instantly. The archer had now saved the adventurer's life twice and it was his honorable duty to thank him.

Stepping quite clear of the dying demon, Klassen squinted as he searched for his ally on the hill. It was an arduous toil to see what was directly in front of him and thus scanning the hill off in the distance, was far more difficult. Nevertheless, the archer was found. This figure seemed like an ethereal apparition as it was camouflaged with a gray cloak that seemed like a very part of the mist that stifled the area. What exactly the archer looked like was impossible to ascertain due to its protective coloration; only the silhouette of what might be a woodsman could be seen. The only reason this friend was even visible was due to the silent beckoning it made of the adventurer to follow him. Klassen obeyed.

Quickly he gathered his gear together and set off up the hill. The steepness of the incline made the going slow, despite the immense legs that powered the adventurer. Using the drooping arms of the trees to assist him, he scaled upward. The erosion underfoot might have been a problem were it not for the absence of liquid soil. With a final burst of strength, Klassen vaulted to the top of the hill, which was indeed a sort of plateau.

This apex of the marsh was similar than the rest of the area except that the dirt was dry and the view was certainly superior, due to the height. This view, though shrouded in haze, made it possible to behold the decline, or valley, below. The downtrodden wooden inhabitants showed more

solidarity here as they were closely compacted, hugging one another. One thing was missing, however.

The adventurer's climbing ascension had marred his vision of his ally and now that Klassen was where the archer had perched, he could not find him at all. How could one search for such a disguised figure? Setting off along the level plateau, he kept his eyes on alacritous alert. Traveling on and on, however, produced no sight of the slippery apparition.

The course the adventurer was now traversing was far superior with its firm ground and he made good speed. Unfortunately for him, this trail was abruptly blockaded by a powerful barrier. A massive pile of branches, limbs, and trunks of wood towered crudely into the air, several times higher than Klassen's head. It looked as though a gigantic beaver had pillaged a forest and constructed a fortress for its young. Verily it did, in essence, form a barricade as to the adventurer's right lay an almost impenetrably dense copse while to the left was a sharp drop. This descent became even more extreme after the fort ended; it was a sheer drop that would prove nigh impossible to ascend.

This obstacle consumed the entire trail so the adventurer was presented with two viable options: descend down into the valley or clamor over the hurdle of wood. The lower path certainly seemed more accessible but the higher route was far better for hiking. While contemplating the matter, he swiftly came to a conclusion after what transpired next.

As if dropping from the majestic heavens above, a near-translucent figure descended down onto the extreme summit of the wooden castle. Nimble and with great agility the archer—for who else could it be—balanced himself easily upon the acme while he appeared no more than a hazy form. This form was easily one of good build but its demeanor exuded child playfulness. Indeed, this was further seen as the figure beckoned him over the pile, as if daring Klassen to chase him. With sprightliness, the archer bounded away, out of sight.

Without hesitation, the adventurer flung himself upon the wooden beams. He clamored up swiftly although here and there a snapping branch would slow his ascent. Over and over an attack would confront Klassen in the form of a bludgeoning branch or the scathing prick of some undetectable thorn; none of these slowed him though. With much effort he finally reached the apex and saw, in the distance, a wavering form running fleetly to the west.

The descent down the barrier was far easier and faster. After Klassen had reached the ground, he exploded after his unknown ally. Striding along he bellowed out, "Stop!" The figure, which the adventurer could barely make out, complied; this caused Klassen to halt as well as the archer silently pointed down into the valley. As if by a strict military command a roar from the pit was loosed; the adventurer peered downward.

After plummeting into the depths of the abyss, the cliff leveled off to form the valley. Upon this valley floor bellowed the same hideous creatures that Klassen had almost been devoured by. Savagely they screamed and pounded the ground in fury as they espied Klassen. The black fiends seemed countless in number so densely packed were they. Despite any warrior's bravery, intrepidity, and battle prowess, a mere minute in the lair of such malignant beasts would have ended in a swift dismemberment.

After breaking his gaze from such a fearsome display, the adventurer barely caught a glimpse of the friend he wished to thank, bolt off again. Amid the ground-rumbling din created by the malicious monsters, the adventurer pursued. Now and again would he catch sight of movement ahead of him, spurring him on more swiftly.

As the adventurer ran like a speeding thunderbolt, the landscape about him slowly transformed itself. The dense network to his right weren't altered but the emptiness to his left changed dramatically. Trees—that weren't quite as misshapen as before—sprang up, tightly packed together, matching the right side. The course Klassen traversed was thus escorted by this procession of servants; the course itself was gradually declining. Also, the heavy mist that had been such an oppressive swarm was now dissipating, spraying the area with a slight light.

While the mist was swept aside, a towering behemoth of wood was plainly evident some distance off, in the center of the path. The darting figure Klassen chased seemed certainly to have hid behind the colossal pillar, as if playing the child's game of hide-and-seek. Assisted by the downward-sloping gradient, the adventurer reached the tree, smiling.

Relishing with glee, he hardly noticed that he had emerged from the marsh and into the refulgent radiance of the magnificent candle of the sky. However, the adjustment his blue orbs were forced to make caused him to take note of the vast change of brightness. The oaken giant with its manifold arms of thickness awed Klassen by its immensity, as he was now able to see it properly illuminated. He had more important matters at hand, though, and promptly proceeded to rush around the tree, going behind it.

The sight that he beheld produced a hearty paroxysm of uproarious laughter. Such laughter bounded like a triumphant cheer throughout the now-brilliant domain. Despite the weary trek he had undertaken, Klassen was pleased to have waded through the ominous Marsh of Doom. It was, he thought, well worth it.

With a jocular roar he yelled, "Thanks!" Turning to face the west, he set out dutifully. He had seen nothing behind the tree.

Chapter VII

The bright new world of sunshine that Klassen was now in was a vast difference from the gloomy abode he had waded through. The fiery flambeau of the heavens emitted a warmth that was invigorating as it dried his clothes and body. The adventurer quaffed the robust air of vigor eagerly as he found breathing itself a joy. The oppressive mist now removed, visibility was extended greatly and a small plain lay before him.

The plain was decorated with a lush expanse of grass that pulsed with life as a gentle breeze swept through the area. Amidst this green rug bouncing rabbits could be seen, sometimes they stopped and looked around with their ears at attention. Directly opposite of the stifling marsh, some distance off, was the winding path that snaked down from the north before turning westward. A large forest flanked this path. Dominating the area, however, was a colossal mountain that was thrust upwards like a tremendous sword of stone. Klassen set out towards it.

Although the Marsh of Doom was an intriguing domain, the adventurer now found his movement faster, less restricted. The mysteries of the boggy fen behind him had sparked his imagination and he wondered if they would ever be solved. If he didn't have more pressing matters to attend to, the exploration of the marsh could prove very rewarding. As it was, he had already reached the path he had set out for.

The firmament above him, although virtually cloudless, was now difficult to behold due to the ceiling of leaves. Consequently, the luminance was dampened in the forest although a soft, pleasant aura surrounded the realm; the towering mountain also became invisible. The trees here were quite advanced in their development of verdure, unlike most Klassen had witnessed in his springtime voyage. The tch, tch sound of squirrel conversation diverted Klassen's attention upward, off to his right.

Two of the furry little creatures were perched atop a branch, arguing over what appeared to be an acorn. One had the brown nut securely in its grasp while the other was lamenting, yearning for the nutrition. The quarrel quickly resorted to blows, with the food plummeting to the forest floor. Both scrambled after the fallen morsel in haste before another minuscule battle broke out. In a lull of the action, the squirrel that originally had the nut clamped down upon it and darted off. The adventurer smiled at the fight for food and carried on.

In the serene and relaxing atmosphere, Klassen made good speed as he enjoyed the pleasant tranquility. The natural sounds were soon disrupted, however. It was a mammoth roar that came from behind him. Although there wasn't a storm in sight, the rolling thunder pounded throughout the air with powerful intensity. The earth rumbled as if a gigantic titan were bludgeoning the ground, creating chasms with its gargantuan blows. The few animals that weren't already hidden hastily sprinted off in the face of such mighty rumblings. The adventurer knew what he had to do.

Flying off into the cover of the tall statues of the woodland he went. A little way had he gone when he tossed his heavy gear to the ground and extricated his axe. Making sure his dagger was in place at his side, he tensed for a potential battle. The adventurer's heart thumped fiercely against his chest as he waited with agog anticipation.

As the crackling tremors continued, Klassen's imagination blossomed mightily as he wondered what could possibly make such a deafening clamor. Could it be a dragon? This was reminiscent of the epic stories he read, but as far as he knew they were only mythological creatures. Furthermore, he had never seen one nor knew of anyone that had. Nonetheless, he relented that it *could* be true. What would it look like? The adventurer envisioned a mammoth behemoth that dwarfed the tall heights of the grove. It had claws longer than his entire body that could rip a person apart with ease. The scaly skin it had formed an armor of silver that glistened in the gleaming light of the sun. Its eyes were of a deep, penetrating red that matched the flaming coughs it spewed out. As the

adventurer thought thus, he wondered whether he would attack such a powerful creature or marvel at its beauty.

The deafening din had, as impossible as it might have seemed, grown louder. As this happened Klassen became cognizant of a definite pattern in the noise that had once seemed chaotic. It was a beat with what seemed like a drumming rhythm; only somehow it seemed more familiar than that. Looking east with intense concentration, a few of the falling beams of gold from the celestial realm, illuminating whatever it was that approached. The advancing figure in the distance shined with a resplendent gleam, which, of course, reminded the adventurer of a dragon; he resumed his reverie upon that subject.

Such was the concentration of the adventurer's contemplations mingled with the blaring sound, that he noticed not the lean figure behind him. The form had crept up stealthily with a natural catlike grace, even though a bear roaring with all its might wouldn't have snapped the chain that linked Klassen to his thoughts. The being, in all calmness, stood a little to the rear and to the right, of the adventurer.

The origin of the source was now visible as it boomed in a steady beat that the adventurer knew all too well. Dispelled were his dragon fancies; these were replaced with the reality of the moment. The gleaming glint of the reality was now more prodigious despite the faint sprinkling of brilliant rays. Such a radiance and such a pattern of beating clearly indicated what Klassen marveled at: a host of knights.

What a most splendid and glorious company they were! Never before had the adventurer had the grandiose pleasure of viewing such a magnificent sight. He had never before even read of such a charismatic force that surely would crush the abject scamps of dishonor. The adventurer marveled in awe at such a noble and lordly sight that, despite the galloping gusto the knights rode with, all seemed slowed to the point where the spectacle became a painting of militant might. If such a sublime sight could be captured on an easel he would have worked a lifetime to obtain it.

The lordly knights rode with fierce rapidity, five abreast, filling the path almost completely; woe to anyone who might be caught in their path! They were clad head-to-toe in what appeared as invulnerable armor. Over the silverish hue of the armor, along the chest, the horseman wore military tunics of blood red; these were tied at the waist with a leather belt. They were adorned with a shield in their left arm although Klassen couldn't make out the design upon it; and a lengthy lance of such might that the adventurer thought it could serve as a battering ram. The helmets they wore—visors down—had a wide slit for maximum range of sight with small holes at the mouth for breathing; on the sides of the helmet grew two large, curved horns of power with a golden plume running down the center.

The Nobilis riders themselves were giants upon gigantic black stallions that were also armored. The pair was a colossal combination that could easily have stampeded over an army of thieving hobgoblins or treacherous orcs. Klassen, indeed, was quite large but the impressive and mighty knights that rode so elegantly along made him feel like an ant that easily could have been crushed. This didn't deter his respect for the host at all; it heightened it.

Row upon row of the glorious knights rumbled through the forest, causing the very trees to waver in terror. The procession that would terrify the enemies of the horseman held Klassen mesmerized. The speed of the company was so swift that it only took a few moments before they rushed past the adventurer. The accompanying gale and swirling dust assaulted him but stop him from watching the host speed off in the distance, it did not.

Such was the entrenchment that Klassen was locked in that he didn't hear the man beside him speak. The figure calmly repeated itself; the adventurer acknowledged the noise but not the meaning. Wheeling about quickly, the adventurer raised his axe threateningly before speaking, "Who are you!?"

The figure was Nobilis and regarded the menacing gesture with a calm disposition. "My name is Kompos. That was a majestic sight, was it not?"

“Yes! it was,” Klassen agreed. “I am Klassen.” Putting his axe down after realizing there was no threat, he extended his hand in friendship; it was warmly received. “Do you know what that wondrous spectacle was?”

Kompnos nodded while the adventurer took a good look at him. Kompnos was a lean, tall man, taller than the adventurer but not as well built. He wore a long flowing balandrana that was a dark gray; it wrapped around his entire body, surely covering some garments beneath it. Slightly muddy leather boots of black covered his feet while a cap of brown with a solitary ruby feather protruding from it. This cap wasn't able to cover his hair—medium-brown and wavy—that flowed out from the sides. The visage of this acquaintance was slightly aged though pulsed with life as evidenced by the hearty brown eyes. A good, healthy reddish-brown beard adorned this face while an indication of a wrinkle could be spotted here or there. All told, Klassen surmised the man might have seen between thirty or forty summers.

“Yes, I know what that was. So do you.” Kompnos spoke softly and with great reserve although passion could be faintly detected in his manner. The way he spoke reminded the adventurer of a teacher or mentor who was used to being listened to. He liked the man already. As for the words he spoke, Klassen *did* know what he had seen. It was plainly evident to him as soon as he had caught sight of the knights. Could there even be any question?

With vigor and enthusiasm, Klassen beamed, “It was the Honor Brigade!” Kompnos silently agreed with a smile. “What do you know of them?”

Reaching into a fold in his traveling cloak, Kompnos pulled out a piece of parchment and held it up; it was the same Klassen had seen. “This is what I know about the Honor Brigade.” Pointing west he continued, “And that is where I'm going. It would be interesting to have a traveling companion; care to join me?”

Klassen smiled broadly. He had found a good comrade! “Of course, I will! Do you know how far away we are?”

Putting a thin finger to his lips while scratching his beard with his thumb, Kompnos calculated silently. After a moment, he spoke, “According to my figures, we are only a couple of leagues away. Since it is only a little past noon, we should reach our destination before nightfall.”

Gathering his gear together and slinging it upon his back, Klassen eagerly trumpeted, “Let's go then. The sooner we leave the sooner we get there.”

Before the adventurer started off, Kompnos spoke, “Hang on a moment.” The new acquaintance rummaged through a bag that was on the ground beside him, previously unseen by the adventurer. Curious gadgets were procured with which he made measurements. All the while, he softly murmured, “interesting, interesting.” One measuring device simply looked like a string with numbers on it; Kompnos wrapped this around various black walnut trees. He also used an object that looked like a half-circle, although Klassen knew not what he was doing. After jotting down the results, the man packed together his gear; and the two headed westward, down the path.

The adventurer waited for his new friend to explain the strange proceedings he had just seen but Kompnos didn't utter a peep. The inquisitive nature of Klassen wasn't able to contain his curiosity for long, so he inquired excitedly, “What were you doing back there?”

Kompnos punctually related the mathematical calculations he took and how he adored numbers. Calmly he spoke while explaining that he liked to measure most everything: which reminded him to measure the width of the path; this he did quickly and efficiently. He spoke of having mastered the science of mathematics and told of types of this science which Klassen had never heard of.

“Numbers are the language of the universe,” Kompnos said. “They are vastly intriguing and the science of mathematics is never wrong. It is similar to honor: either right or wrong.”

Impressed was the adventurer who readily agreed with an intense nod. It was really hitting Klassen how grand it was to find such a noble traveler along his path. A million questions swam eagerly in his mind, which he wished answered from this kindred spirit of honor. The question of where Kompnos would use his skills was obvious so this inquiry wasn't needed; so he asked the one that seemed the most pertinent.

“What attracted you to the Honor Brigade, comrade?” Klassen asked.

As the adventurer peered at his friend scratching his beard, Kompnos answered, “That’s an interesting question. For most of my life I have held honor in high regard. I, like you I expect, have seen the degradation of Teramon and the perverse ‘ideals’ being promoted. Thus, I agree with the message of the Honor Brigade. I have no doubt, however, that I would not have come on this voyage some years ago. That was before the tragedy.”

Kompnos spoke stoically but his eyes belied his emotion. Klassen looked on with interest as he listened to his ally’s story. His friend recounted the happiness of his youth when the plague of the beasts hadn’t contaminated his hometown of Attican. The proud and noble Nobilis town, although poisoned with the Universal Church’s insane doctrine, was a beautiful place to live. While still pristine, he had married a darling of a lady and proceeded to have three children: two boys and a girl. Then the beasts starting immigrating in foul droves. After telling his story up to this point without hesitation, Kompnos abruptly ceased talking and stared off into the forest as the two continued to walk at a brisk gait.

Putting his arm on his friend’s shoulder, Klassen spoke compassionately, “You needn’t continue. I can tell you my story if you wish.”

A wayward beam of light illuminated a moist eye that was quickly blinked away. Turning to face the adventurer, Kompnos waved him off and continued speaking. As the beasts had swarmed in revolting waves to pollute Attican, crime and desolation, increased. Kompnos instantly saw that it was prudent to either stop the flow or move. The Universal Church being in complete power, the latter option was far more plausible. Accordingly, his family had prepared to move.

The preparations had been completed quickly and Kompnos had resigned from employment in the Universal Church, where he ironically had worked but had to withhold his honorable views lest he lose his job and means of supporting his family. He had been shocked when he returned home.

“It was a ghastly scene,” Kompnos related with a slightly perceptible change in his voice. “A vile gang of ogres, hobgoblins, and imps had broken into my home and slaughtered my family.” At this sentence Klassen’s fist clenched and unclenched in violent rage as he listened intently to his kinsman. “I, in a frenzy, ravaged the drunken band, killing all six of them. Then I was betrayed.

“The very scamps I was forced to work for turned on me with fury. They proclaimed me an enemy of the people for avenging my family’s death. I was barely able to escape with my life as I was run out of town.”

Able to contain his fiery emotion no longer, Klassen roared out, “I hate the beasts and dishonorable wretches! There is no doubt that we shall triumph for victory *is* inevitable.”

Kompnos was touched by the awesome vivacity Klassen exuded but struggled not to show his own emotions; he mostly succeeded. “I wondered about for quite some time until I happened upon one of the Honor Brigade fliers. As soon as I saw it, I knew where my home was.”

His companion’s calm disposition gradually mollified Klassen’s anger as the adventure realized how linked the two were. Although living drastically different lives, they had both risen above the filthy midden of perverse ideas while being towers of virtue. The bond that linked them was, of course, honor.

After thanking his friend for recounting such a tragic tale, the adventurer told his own tale. Klassen did so with brilliant brio as he enthusiastically spoke briefly of his childhood, and at length about the fabulous day where he had found the honor beacon of spectacular splendor. Aggressively acting out his exploits—especially the battles—he became extremely animated. As time quickly skipped along, the adventurer retold all the appropriate events leading up to his meeting with Kompnos. Throughout the speech, Kompnos would softly speak, as if to himself, “interesting, interesting.”

Both proud Nobilismen were on the same wavelength of thought that they both instinctively shook each other’s hand. They were brothers now, in honor. As if mentally linked, they both spoke the same words at the same time: “Honor is Life.”

All the while that the comrades were telling of their lives, they were making good speed through the forest path. Now, however, they gained speed as though the tales told intensified both of their already strong wills. For their entire trek together the forest had provided a great, domed ceiling that had mostly blocked the light. This dome was now slowly being penetrated more and more by lances of light that came raining down upon the two. Not very far down the path the entire illumination of the fiery sun was thrust upon the ground as the forest abruptly ended.

The two compatriots presently walked into the opening and were immediately flooded with brilliant warmth. The clearing wasn't very large as the trees regained their dominance only a little ways off. There was the foot of the mountain, which sloped upwards at a good rate, with the path climbing along as well.

Kompnos immediately threw his gaze upwards as Klassen watched him in wonder. Kompnos waved his hands about while clearly contemplating something of importance. Faintly heard were numbers being thrown around, added and subtracted. The mathematician took off his cap while rubbing his brown, wavy hair for inspiration. He put it back on and then scratched his beard. After several moments of this and other mind-spurring actions, he stopped and looked at the adventurer.

"It is quite interesting," the mathematician related. "The peak of the mountain is approximately four thousand komps, or four kilokomps if you prefer, from sea level." Seeing a look of faint puzzlement on Klassen's face, Kompnos continued, "Ah, you don't know what a komp is. How would you? After all, I made it up and am the only one to use the measurement. I found the present system of measurement quite inadequate and ridiculous. To not waste time, let's just say the prevalent systems of measurement are not mathematically harmonious. So I created a system whereby a sequence of tens are used from one step to another. The komp is the basic unit whereas a dekaomp is ten komps; a hectokomp is one hundred komps; a kilokomp is a thousand komps etc.

"Before you inquire what a komp itself is, give me a moment to best show you." Kompnos extracted a string with numbers written on it and measured Klassen with it. The adventurer was almost precisely twice the length of the string. "You, my friend, are approximately two komps tall. So one komp is approximately one half of your height."

The adventurer was now thoroughly convinced of his comrade's intelligence and respected him greatly for his abilities. He merely muttered an exclamatory "wow" while reveling in the wisdom of his grand Nobilis kinsmen. The sixth law of Honor Brigade, "Nobilismen are the supreme beings," echoed in his mind as he had no doubt that it was true. After his amazement had worn off a bit and allowed him to reclaim his senses, he wondered how the mountaintop looked. He gazed up at it.

The sight the adventurer was greeted by was one of massive power and magnificence. The mountain jutted out from the ground with rocky rapidity into a towering beacon of power. Into the very clouds it soared as if destined to leave the very planet by breaking through the upper atmosphere. What possibly could have stopped it? A plethora of trees climbed upward most of the way along the steps of the mountain, but the very acme of the mountain is what attracted the attention. It was oh so far away, but Klassen knew exactly what it was.

The adventurer lifted his mighty shoulders towards the sky and was a figure of a proud and aristocratic Nobilis warrior as he marveled at what he beheld. Klassen felt the swirling euphoria that resulted from the knowledge that such wonders that he saw were possible. They were not only possible, he knew, but probable once a united force set out to accomplish them. Unity, he knew, was vital.

Perched atop the mountain was a mighty eagle's aerie that easily ruled over the area below with a scrutinizing eye. It was an awesome aureole that radiated with an ultra-divine light. The light, the force, this lighthouse pulsed with was the vibrant quality of honor. The adventurer thought that any wicked beast being subjected to its cleansing rays would surely disintegrate instantly. All life itself seemed intertwined with the structure and would not the forest crumble and wither away if it were removed? Perhaps not in reality, but the force it exuded could surely make one feel as though it would.

There was no doubt what the construction was. It was the headquarters of the Honor Brigade:
Imperium Castle.

Chapter VIII

After recovering from his awe, the adventurer exclaimed with his usual vigor, “What a mighty castle! Don’t you think so Kompos?”

“Without a doubt,” Kompos agreed with exact equanimity. “Are you ready to visit Imperium Castle?”

Klassen believed his friend was juicing him to see how much enthusiasm he could bequeath but thought it all in good humor. The hunger from their journey rumbled its discontent but the adventurer couldn’t stop now, could he? Being so close to such stunning splendor was incentive to dauntlessly brave far more than mere cravings of sustenance. He expected Kompos to feel the same and after saying, “But of course,” the pair resumed their journey after their brief abeyance.

As they strolled across the clearing that severed the trees of the plains from those of the mountain, it was abundantly clear which way the knights they had seen before had gone. A myriad of hoof prints dotted the dark brown ground and led—in perfect precision—towards the mountain path. This clear evidence of horses had been mainly shaded before, but Kompos took full advantage of the propitious situation to measure the indentations in the ground; he did so quickly and it only took but a moment.

The two comrades’ view of the sublime castle was marred once they started upon the mountain path; it was similar in scope to their previous surroundings as it was quite shaded by manifold wooden draperies. However, there were a couple differences. The physical difference was obviously the upward incline that hampered the travelers but little. More importantly was the supreme sense that the area was protected by a cloak of puissant vigor. An air of righteous invincibility floated powerfully through the air.

The path started off very straight but soon it turned right to circumnavigate a steep cliff that sprang up almost exactly vertically. Their course thus turned sharply right, and then came back to the left ever so slightly. It continued to do this and it was entirely clear that they would slowly circle the mountain during their ascent. A tangle of trees off to their right and an almost impassable mountain face—essentially a wall—to their left, made their present course, along the beaten path, the most expedient one.

The rising wall to their left, although of fertile soil evidenced by the verdant grass, was curiously devoid of trees. The steep incline might have been reason enough to prevent this growth, but islands of tree remains—stumps—dotted the landscape. These skeletal remains were obviously not all simple coincidence. The question was really more of a “why” than a “how.”

As the pair hiked along, Klassen inquired of his ally, “Do you see those tree stumps?” After his friend nodded, he continued, “Why do you think that has been done?”

Kompos, true to his nature, scuttled off to measure the width of a few tree stumps. After running back to the path, the two started off again but the adventurer had to wait for an answer to his questions. The mathematician had his left finger on his lip while his thumb caressed his beard; which could mean only one thing. Klassen had hoped for a quick retort but after several moments of silence from his companion, he returned to examining the sylvan scenery.

Although the sky held but a few floating pillows that lazily drifted about, the sun itself was prevented from warming the travelers directly as the mountain blocked the burning ball. This lack of heat waves combined with the rising elevation, made for a chilly hike. To top it off, a swirling wind pranced about to and fro like a playful child; this child had a glacial touch. Consequently, the two trekkers pulled tight their cloaks to fend off the wayward touch of frigidity.

After rounding another small bend in the path, an uncanny sight presented itself. It was in the center of their course and something neither of them had ever had the fortune of seeing before. Klassen’s response to it was one of jubilation as he gesticulated emotionally for his comrade.

Kompnos, on the other hand, observed the scene with reserve and silent sangfroid. Both advanced to investigate further.

When they closed in upon the spectacle, Klassen grinned widely while his friend took measurements of the scene. Before them was the gray corpse of a hideous hobgoblin. It was lying in a pool of blood that was rather stale, but not extremely aged; this was ascertained by it still retaining most of its liquid form. In many respects the beast seemed like a typical hobgoblin, but it differed in one main aspect. The beast was almost precisely flat.

The poignant stench of the hobgoblin wafted to the travelers' noses; it was typical, but of course, unwelcome. Through this odor, the two inspected the area surrounding the cadaver: It was indented, forming a tiny coffin for the beast. The bones of this beast appeared crushed beyond compare with its guts and small brain so pounded into the ground that it seemed as though this joining was entirely natural. The hobgoblin was decorated with what appeared like chain mail and the remains of a wooden shield that had been shattered into tiny tooth-size bits. A short sword had escaped the destruction as it lay unharmed a short distance away. This weapon gave some indication as to how large the beast was; being crushed as it was made it appear far smaller than it obviously was. In effect, Klassen thought perhaps it would have been as tall as his chest.

While Klassen retrieved the short sword that seemed more like a large dagger to him, Kompnos searched around for a spell before finding what he searched for: more craters. While the adventurer tied his discovery to his gear, the mathematician found one crater before and one after the corpse. After measuring the width and length of the canyons themselves, he measured the distance between each of the indentations. Hastily he scribbled down the figures upon his notes; as if on their own volition these utensils seemed to appear and disappear rapidly whenever needed.

The two didn't let the spectacle slow them down much, as intriguing as it was to the both of them. Thus, they continued hiking. Klassen could have easily poured forth with flowing speech but he waited for Kompnos to speak; the mathematician promptly did so.

"That was an interesting sight, no doubt. As we both know, it was some type of a large object—perhaps a boulder—that crushed our little *friend* back there." Klassen laughed at this joke but his ally remained as stoic as ever. Kompnos continued, "It certainly sheds light on the question of the stumps over there. It is a simple and effective way to not only see an advancing army, but to deter its movement as well."

The adventurer was easily able to see the same as his confre, and presumed that the size of the boulder (as Klassen believed it was), its speed, and perhaps other information he couldn't think of, could be foretold by his companion's calculations. Also he might have heard a concurring opinion that it looked as though the beast had flung his weapon aside and braced for the powerful collision by holding his shield up. However, this information was irrelevant at the moment. The more pressing matter is the one he gave speech to: "How long ago did the beast die?"

Scratching his beard, Kompnos answered, "The blood is rather fresh. I would estimate no more than a few hours. This, however, is not an exact science so I can't narrow it down any more than that."

Upon hearing these words, the adventurer hastened his pace until he was essentially jogging. His compatriot matched this pace with what might have been surprising ease given the Kompnos' older appearance. Moving along at this fairly brisk pace, the pair pounded through the winds that, while thoroughly fresh and necessary for life, were chilling to the travelers, especially the exposed visages of them both. These raging winds also brought a distinct and instantly recognizable smell upon its wings: that of the dead and dying.

As if in answer to this silent call of death a swarm of circling vultures greedily greeted the pair. Of course these birds are not warriors, they are scavengers of the dead: in effect, grave robbers. They flew past the travelers, down the path, and quickly descended upon the mashed beast. This flock of carrion-devourers warred amongst themselves, as the meal was quite skimpy considering the circumstances. Pecking and ripping apart the flesh that did remain, the vultures that did eat did

so merrily; the others protested in violent calls of agitation. Before long the flying denizens had completely picked apart all the available meat before flying off in pursuit of more.

The building excitement that was palpable between the two travelers didn't have long to wait to be further inflamed. Before hiking too far past their recent grisly discovery, they found more evidence of gore. Hurrying to behold what exactly was before them, the adrenaline pulsed through their veins and heightened their intensity.

Strewn along the path and outside of it as well, were more corpses. All were vile beasts although none seemed to die in exactly the same way. A massive ogre bedecked in leather armor was laying to their left; its hideously deformed head was planted some distance off. Off to the right was the cadaver of a stretch-faced imp whose normally yellow skin was now becoming white. The source of its destruction was clear: a large lance was shooting upward from its chest and into the heavens above; it looked as though it pinned the beast to the very ground. Directly in front of them, along the path, lay what looked like a hobgoblin; it was lying upon its stomach and not much more than its gray cape could be seen. They advanced upon it.

With a hard, swift quick, Klassen tested the beast to see if it was alive. Making only the move of a carcass as it did, he bent down and turned over the beast. There was no doubt that it was a gray hobgoblin with grotesque boils upon its body; however it was surely alive. With a dagger in hand, it lunged at the adventurer hoping to catch him off guard. Klassen leaped back to avoid the attack, dodging the beast's attack.

As the adventurer withdrew the handy blade at his belt, his friend Kompnos withdrew a quarterstaff that was somehow hidden beneath the folds of his billowing balandrana. With agility that belied his age, the wooden staff—with metal balls fastened to each end—was unleashed as the hobgoblin as it was still on its knees. With expert skill, the weapon whooshed through the air and collided with a smash with the back of the foe's cranium. Before it could fall to the ground, another powerful blow struck it flush in the face, causing the hideous creature to whirl about and land on the ground, face-up. Although it was clearly unconscious, the strike of death came as Kompnos lifted his quarterstaff into the air and crushed the enemy's nasal area.

Amid the gore that erupted from this blow, Klassen eagerly proclaimed, "Thank you comrade! You are quite skilled with the quarterstaff, and also in concealing it! The battle must be raging somewhere and I know I want to be a part of it. Life to Nobilismen; death to the beasts!" With this enthused utterance, the pair put away their weapons: Klassen put his dagger in its sheath while Kompnos hid his weapon beneath his cloak although it simply seemed to disappear to anyone watching. They set off after this, even quicker than before.

As they rushed higher and higher upon the mountain, they beheld various corpses scattered about, although not one was of the famed Honor Brigade. The deaths appeared mainly from cold steel though a few dents in the earth housed some casualties in what looked like the footsteps of a giant. Following the pair was the host of vultures who had their feast greatly enlarged after the skimpy side dish they had at first encountered.

At first faintly but soon more audible were the sounds of battle that they had seen so many signs of. The pathetic cries of the dying mingled with roaring yells of warrior-souls. It was a raucous cacophony to the pacifist but jubilant sweetness to the lover of war. Accompanying these sounds was the music composed to spur deeds of heroism on. The quick drumming Klassen easily recognized while his heart beat quickened with its beat; but the piercing sound that was a bagpipe was unknown to him but nonetheless inspired him. This sweet sound flew like a dominating eagle upon the winds, rousing the adventurer to a frenzied fury. Without hesitation, both honorable Nobilismen bolted forward as fast as they could.

The slow curvature of the path that wound around the mountain now made itself fully known. With the speed of the runners and this aforementioned curvature, the glaring beams of the sun that had been hidden for so long now were unleashed. These rays of light instantaneously met the two but in no way hindered their progress. In fact, it hastened it. For in the distance, they saw what they sought.

Gleaming with a beaming brilliance were soldiers of what could only have been noble members of the Honor Brigade. Both on foot and horseback did these warriors fight, and with what ferocity did they fight! It was obviously apparent, among the din of warfare, that the battle was a rout with the beast force being caught between two forces of honor. Therefore this trespassing force was attempting to flee into the forest, away from the path. They were not accomplishing this well as the carnage the two comrades beheld was staggering, yet satisfying. Brandishing their weapons, the two set off to join the slaughter.

The beasts that still were able to fight were an absolutely deplorable lot, especially when compared to the resplendent warriors of virtue. These beasts were mainly outfitted with leather armor, a sword, and shield that, while respectable enough in itself, seemed like peasant's wear to the glorious coats of mail and plate that the Honor Brigade was equipped with. Furthermore, the beast soldiers, if they could be called such, were running in such terror that many had flung their weapons away in despair. In contrast, the warriors of honor held absolute discipline while they pursued their foes, looking like bloody devils of war with the fanciful red cloaks and horned helmets they wore.

Such was the discipline and battle effectiveness of the host the travelers endeavored to join, that virtually all of the remaining foes fell in one harsh attack. First came a volley of deadly arrows and bolts, which seemed to be loosed from nowhere and into the very hearts of their targets. This deadly attack, in itself, caused much havoc as the missiles tore through the leather armor with extreme ease, butchering many. However, this was immediately followed up by a swift, exact charge of the cavalry. This wall of steel death wiped out uncounted villains. After these, the infantry stormed after the few remaining invaders to complete the marvelous massacre. Verily, all was done in precise formation.

Before the two advancing travelers could join in the carnage, a small detachment of knights galloped towards them. There were three in all; Klassen got a better look at them than he had before. All of them were equipped with large shining swords; their lances undoubtedly deeply embedded in a degenerate enemy. The red tunics the knights wore were fancifully emblazoned with intricate designs while the center held the symbol of the Honor Brigade: a sword in the midst of flames; the flames were golden with a background of ruby. This same sacrosanct symbol also adorned their long, potent shields. One difference between the knights that approached was that the center one was adorned with a purple plume instead of a golden one; the double horns were the same. This lead knight was the one that hailed the travelers.

"State your allegiance!" bellowed the main horseman with a slight metallic rasp as he talked through a helmet, visor down. The powerful voice commanded respect as Klassen and Kompos immediately stopped their forward progress.

Klassen felt jubilant among his honorable kinsman. This same mood was reflected in his speech: "We come seeking the Honor Brigade! Can't we join the slaughter of the vile beasts?"

The knights sheathed their weapons after a nod from the leader; the commander lifted his visor to examine those before him. His face was rather tanned and was decorated with severe scars: one along his forehead; another from the tip of his right eye down along his cheek; and yet a third that had slashed along the tip of chin. He was clean-shaven with bright blue eyes that shined with a powerful vitality. After a stern, penetrating gaze, he hopped off the horse with surprising agility for someone bedecked in full armor.

"Attention," he barked and the two travelers quickly complied. "Put your weapons away comrades. The battle is taken care of." After investigating the features of the two before him, the knight slammed his right gauntleted fist against his chest, causing a raspy crash. His hand thus placed firmly against his heart, he rang out with force, "Honor is Life." A simultaneous retort was immediately heard by not only the two knights but Klassen and Kompos as well. The salute in itself seemed to hold a majestic air of power that was easily palpable to all present.

The man who led the knights now eased up while smiling. He slipped off his gauntlet and extended his hand first to Klassen, then Kompos. "My name is Ziplit, comrades. I hope you had a pleasant trip." After exchanging names and pleasantries, Ziplit continued, "Would you like

a ride back to Imperium Castle?" This inquiry was eagerly answered in the affirmative by Klassen, and a simple nod from Kompos.

Ziplin called one of the knights over for Kompos to ride with while Klassen rode with the lead knight himself. This was swiftly accomplished and the group was ready to set off. With a "go, go" pronounced by Ziplin, they set off at a good gallop.

They rode in silence past the battle that was now waning and almost over. A straggler here and there was mercilessly hunted down and disposed of with a quick, slicing termination of solid steel. A unit of infantry was prowling over the wounded; helping his fellow brother-in-arms. All in all it was a rather quiet scene now but the slew of corpses that dotted the landscape gave testament to the fact that a battle like that of a dragon in full fury had recently taken place.

Off in the distance, barely seen in the forest, some action was taking place. Ziplin spoke, "There is the instigator of this foolhardy assault upon our land." Just as he spoke, a band of knights launched after the tiny figure. The leader continued, "That pathetic fool our Honor Knights are about to slaughter is none other than a slimy orc. Those little twerps are our greatest enemies, even though they are usually the least intimidating with their potbellies and timid natures. They are the evil puppet-masters; both of you know that, right?"

Klassen piped out, "I can't say I know much about them other than they have ripped me off! I learned to stay away from their scams though." Kompos related a similar stance, just as briefly.

Ziplin spoke, as if to himself, "You will learn, you will learn." Just as he spoke the knights in the distance caught the green orc and delivered justice with a swift stroke of steel.

After riding past the main site of the battle, a strange sight grabbed Klassen's attention. He instantly inquired of the meaning of it, "What is *that*, Ziplin?" The entire group looked over to where Klassen pointed as the question was spoken.

A group of prisoners had been taken and rounded up a short distance from the battle. This was peculiar simply because of the wholesale slaughter that had occurred; it simply didn't fit right with Klassen that prisoners were being taken. After all, the Honor Brigade preached a warlike attitude and destruction of one's enemies. There was something different from the prisoners from the other invaders though. In fact, all shared this one similarity. They were all Nobilis.

Ziplin spoke about the sight, "While we, of course, deplore those who are against us, we know that many do so out of ignorance and pollution of the mind. So we capture those that defy us by attacking. We send them through an intense process of enlightenment to weed out the revolting pollution they've been subjected to. Most we can reach successfully. Those we can't get through to are punished for their crimes by death."

"Can't they simply fake it?" rejoined Kompos.

Ziplin responded quickly as if he anticipated the question, "It is possible, of course. However, it is unlikely. I can't reveal any more to you now though, especially since you aren't yet members of the Honor Brigade."

The party pressed onward away from the battlefield and the intense score of belligerent music faded slowly away. They sped along unmolested by any obstacles of merit. It seemed all the inhabitants of the mountain had been present at the battle but this wasn't altogether true as the occasional bird was seen flying along with ease.

The horses, of course, traveled much faster than the adventurers walking and so the curving around the mountain went very swiftly. Here and there conversation sprung up like a flower but about nothing too interesting. Small talk it was. As for Klassen, his thinking wasn't what it normally was as he was extremely excited to be so near his destination. When asked a question, he would speedily reply. Not much contemplation went into these utterings but there was no doubt that what he did say was from deep within the well of his heart. Further making conversation difficult, although soothing to Klassen, was the forceful winds that told of their velocity.

After riding some minutes rising ever upward, the trail finally straightened itself out. They had reached the summit of the mountain, which was in all actuality a towering plateau. To both sides

rose mammoth trees of noble fir that transformed the path into a divine hall, fit for the kings of the world. A clatter of hooves upon a stone road alerted one to the presence of this far more productive path. The sun was glimmering gracefully and in the distance was their goal.

Upon seeing this objective so long desired, Klassen ardently asserted, "There it is! Can't we ride any faster?"

Ziplin glanced at his two fellow knights with smile, which was returned. He spoke, "Both of you plan on joining the Honor Brigade, right?"

One voice was ardent while the other calm, but both replied in the same way: "Of course." They sped off like a streak of lightning.

Chapter IX

It was massive, colossal, humongous. It was, of course, Imperium Castle. It soared so mightily into the azure firmament that one standing at the base had to strain one's neck to view the awesome peaks that seemed to touch the sun. The height was not the only impressive feature. The sheer thickness and magnitude of the structure seemed impossible to even imagine, yet here it stood looking as if an entire mountain of stone had been used in its construction. Who but a fool would attempt to lay siege to such an impregnable fortress?

Of all the castles that Klassen had envisioned, he saw a moat. There wasn't one here, nor did it appear to need it. Enormously thick walls cascaded downwards before sloping at an angle to the ground, protecting the front; the sides and most likely the back (the back couldn't be seen), were protected not only by walls but by a steep cliff that was surely impossible to climb in any numbers. Thus attack only seemed plausible from the front but one thing severely hampered this: Klassen saw no gate of entrance.

As the adventurer searched for an entryway, he marveled at the circular towers at the corners and one in the center. They were no doubt adorned for war with archer's windows lined upon them and a summit which Klassen felt sure held some mighty weapon of destruction. Also decorating the fortress were monstrous flags from the peaks and large banners that hung down from the parapets; both displayed the divine sword of honor. These red and gold spectacles stood out well against the white-colored walls.

Try as he might, Klassen was at a loss to figure out a way into the massive tower of power that he stood in front of. He didn't have to wait long though. Ziplin noticed the adventurer's curiosity and when a glance at Kompos was only greeted by "interesting, interesting," the lead knight pulled out a bugle. He piped out three short notes followed by a long final note. This sequence was repeated by a tiny dot upon the center tower, surely in answer. However, nothing immediately happened to allow them entrance.

Ziplin put away his instrument and jumped off of his sable mount, motioning the rest to do the same; they did. He proceeded to begin a conversation as if all was going as planned. "So how do you gentlemen like our impressive Imperium Castle?"

Although Klassen yearned to talk of a different topic, he responded, "It is gigantic!" Gazing at it, he continued, "It must have taken many workers many years to create such a structure."

"It didn't take as long as you might think. That, in itself, is impressive too." All the while Ziplin spoke he had a smile on his face; it looked like it had been there forever yet only a few hours back it had been a visage of assiduous austerity. "What do you think Kompos?"

Kompos answered serenely, "Surely it is interesting. According to my calculations, Imperium Castle is five hundred komps—units of measure of my own design—wide and easily several kilokomps long; the walls are approximately two hundred komps high (the towers being two hundred and fifty komps) and thirty komps thick. Impregnable. How do we enter though?"

With a nonchalant wave upward, Ziplin responded to the question that Klassen was silently screaming: "It is being taken care of. As for your mathematical skills, they seem quite impressive. I hope you can put them to use." Barely discernible to the naked eye was a curious contraption that had seemingly been wheeled beside the central tower. Its top hung over the wall and a small glimpse of descending movement could just barely be made out.

Ziplin continued speaking with an air that nothing out of the ordinary were happening, "We shall be inside in a few minutes or so. Will the two of you be wanting to eat first, or take a tour of the premises?"

The travelers exchanged a swift glance; Kompos nodded his assent to Klassen's unspoken words of agreement. Klassen spoke as he beamed, "We would like to take a tour as soon as

possible. I sure am hungry and I believe Kompnos is as well, but we can change that right now.” Hastily the adventurer extricated his bag of food and shared with all whom wanted a snack of nuts or barely ripe fruit. As it turned out, the knights declined the offer while the traveling pair consumed the sustenance greedily.

As they ate, the object from above descended quickly. After only about a minute or so the object presented itself with a better view. It was a platform that looked quite like a large shack as it had a covering like that structure. Lowering it on its path were four large black chains that were securely connected to the corners of the object. Before long it descended fully to the ground with a slight whooshing noise upon impact.

The platform was now fully in view and was surrounded, about chest-high, by gray metal railings. Ziplit unfastened the front railing and led the troop, horses and all, onto the spacious gray platform. Clunks of hoof upon metal were heard, as the platform itself was made of the same gray metal as the railings, only thicker. The ceiling and supports were likewise made of this metal. When everyone was securely into the lift, Ziplit closed the gate and blasted away upon his bugle. They began to rise.

The ascent was swift and smooth. As they rose up in the skies, Klassen felt like a king looking down upon the world. He absent-mindedly finished up his snack and put it away as he gawked at the mammoth noble firs. They had risen above these enormous trees and as they became smaller, they resembled a host of citizens waiting to hear the eloquent words of a mighty ruler. The platform lift was a steady ride and was so sturdily built that it didn’t even waver beneath the weight it held. Within a few minutes the group was dangling just outside of the top of the city walls.

The pair of newcomers both watched with interest as they were pulled over the walls, onto solid stone fortifications. The contraption itself that had transported them was a strange maze of levers, gears, and metal. It was wheeled and after the company exited the platform, was pushed off to join a whole host of such devices. Kompnos was eager to investigate the device as was evident by his intense concentration upon the vehicle, but withheld his curiosity for the time being.

Soldiers roamed about who were obviously manning the walls. They were equipped with long bows that were as large as their entire bodies and strapped to their backs; they wore red leather jerkins. When Ziplit was seen by these fellow warriors, fists were smashed against hearts and “Honor is Life” reverberated across the spacious area. With a whisper, the lead knight told them that this greeting was known as the Honor Salute.

Ziplit enjoined his two knights, “Take these two gentleman’s gear and place it in the barracks. Go, go, go.” They speedily followed these orders. “I will be back quite promptly but feel free to look around. The view of the town is quite stunning. You can see it from over there.” Ziplit pointed and then left the pair to themselves.

Although there were numerous unknown devices hidden by black tarps that spurred the imagination, the allure of the town drew their attention. They hurried over to see the sights. They were not disappointed by the majestic view.

The first sight to catch Klassen’s attention were the two long, sloping stone pathways that wound down into the town; both were on opposite ends with one being for upwards travel while the other went down. Several horses and carts were frequenting these paths. Also near these were more contraptions that had lifted them up; they were in use. Looking closer at these roads, he saw statues lining the sides. Although what exactly they were couldn’t be made out, Klassen was sure they were magnificent.

The first structure at the bottom of the valley below was the actual castle the area was named after. A humongous courtyard adorned the center while large peaks of the castle jutted out along the sides. Although it was difficult to see from the angle the adventurer was at, it appeared as though the sides of the castle itself was connected by arching over the top of the courtyard. This not only formed a walkway over the courtyard but also had peaks of its own, containing something other than a mere crossing. What it held he knew not but it did seem fantastic as it seemed to float over the land below with no beams of support.

Klassen's enjoyment of the spectacular view was cut short when Ziplin promptly returned; however, the splendid feeling of honorable camaraderie remained in full blossom. Before the company started on the tour, the adventurer took a final gaze from his lofty height; the town was warm and friendly with multiple buildings flanking a stone road that sailed down the center, dividing the town in two.

"Thank you for waiting so graciously for me gentleman," Ziplin congenially said. He had taken off his armor, although his red military tunic and sword remained. "I assume we are ready, right?" After seeing the eager nod and smile of Klassen along with the aloof nod of Kompos, the leader knew the answer to his inquiry. "Shall we walk down or take the lift?"

Before consulting one another, Klassen ardently inquired, "Which is faster?" As Ziplin pointed to the lift, the adventurer had his mind made up. When attention was focused on Kompos to see what he thought, he silently agreed. Within but a few moments, they were headed downwards in the lift.

As they went down and enjoyed the view, Klassen noticed something about the leader's tunic that he hadn't noticed before. Along the top, above the flaming sword, were several rows of arcane-looking symbols. Simply put the symbols resembled lightning bolts but were so decorated as to give off a feeling of even more than the fury of a storm.

Ziplin saw the attention being paid to this ornamentation on his uniform and spoke before Klassen could inquire of them. Pointing to them, he spoke with pride, "These are Honor Bolts. For every slaughter of a foul beast, you get one. I currently have fifty four, but I have to add four more for today's great skirmish."

Klassen was visibly impressed while Kompos hid his interest. Before the adventurer could think more of the honorable bolts, the group landed in the courtyard. This wide area was far cleaner than any other he had previously seen; the stone the courtyard was made of was immaculately well kept. Dotted about were statues of magnificent warriors who surely had fought valiantly for the Honor Brigade. Benches held several citizens who were shaded from the sun by luxurious green-leaved trees.

"This, of course, is the courtyard," Ziplin started with ease, as if he had given the tour many times before. "The castle is to our sides and above us. We don't have time to examine the castle thoroughly, but know that the leaders of the Honor Brigade are stationed there. Also, the barracks are situated in the castle; you two will be staying there for the time being."

Ziplin pointed to the statues and grand architecture as he continued, "As you can see, the artisans that we have are quite skilled. Thus, the Honor Brigade is not strictly a war community. We have learned men of all fields, including art and architecture. You won't see our grand style of architecture anywhere else in the world as it was created right here. Of course we know that someday our views of honor will encompass all of Teramon."

The comrades were given a moment to absorb the soaring heights, flying buttresses, and detailed arches. The structure was meant and succeeded at being, a piece of art rather than merely a place to live in or work. Artist depictions of battles adorned the walls and the lifelike nature of them was astounding to behold. These paintings seemed to breath with life and had the power to awe. It would take hours to gaze upon all the works of art displayed merely on the outside of the castle, and since the sun was falling, they cut the admiration of this area short. They moved on.

As they moved from the wide courtyard to the smaller road that ran forward, buildings came into view on either side. Each building had a life of its own with more splendid artwork, although these structures were smaller than those before. Also interesting was the fact that though each building had its own style, all on their right were connected as well as all those on the left. It seemed that they had blossomed as the need had arisen.

"These are the schooling facilities," Ziplin pronounced. He pointed to the first building on their left. "This one is where I teach the art of war. Since so many despise our beloved honor, this was the first schooling building that was built. In essence it is a small fort and could serve that purpose if need be. However, the towers it provides are usually used for simply getting some fresh

air.” Going from more of a lecture to one of pride, he continued, “Our walls, of course, have never been breached before. Also, the two statues that you see before the entrance are none other than my father and grandfather whose tradition I have carried on.”

Klassen’s appreciation of this leader’s deeds was growing as time went on. Ziplin would be a good mentor, he thought. The adventurer was enthralled by the many sights around him and walked along lost in thought as the tour continued. The faces he saw were all cheery and happy which showed the awesome power of honor. In every field he knew that honor pervaded while spurring on the other virtues, like intelligence and wisdom. The place was a paradise and Klassen contemplated the entire vision to be a fantastic dream, but it was certainly real he knew.

Poking their heads into some of the buildings, they saw learning and enlightenment; all were vividly enamored, teachers and students alike. Anticipating the question as to why Ziplin wasn’t teaching before it was asked, he jokingly noted how the battlefield had been their test for the week. As Klassen enjoyed this joke and started thinking of such glorious battles, the voice of Kompos snapped him out of his rapturous reverie.

“What is the proper term to call you, Ziplin?” Kompos asked this, as he appeared to be measuring all he saw, in his head.

Ziplin obviously liked the question as it came from the comrade whom rarely spoke. “In addition to teaching at the school, I am the commander of the military here in the Honor Brigade. You can call me professor, commander, or Ziplin. Whatever you prefer.”

“Thank you Professor Ziplin,” retorted Kompos.

“This place is magnificent Commander Ziplin,” said Klassen.

A smile and small laugh came across the scarred, brutal face of Ziplin. Leading them onward they came upon a landscape full of fanciful fountains. Water sprouted upwards and outwards from a variegated assortment of creatures. There were warriors with powerful weapons, creatures with horns and odd armor, beautiful women with lovely children, and many other beautifications. All of the fountains with these adornments were composed in a ring and although splendid in themselves, were minuscule in comparison to the central delight.

The commander commented on the area with glee, “This is the central area of Imperium Castle. These fountains provide enjoyment and relaxation to many.” He pointed to many couples and inhabitants who were having a good time. Greetings here and there were exchanged as the group advanced into the center of the circle.

The monstrous fountain in the center was a massive and ferocious dragon that spewed a thick stream of water straight into the air. This pillar of wetness then somehow broke apart and sprinkled downward all around the dragon. The behemoth itself had large wings that were gloriously spread apart and fierce fangs, not to mention deadly claws. It was standing upon its hind legs, wings and claws spread outward while its mouth was aimed towards the heavens above. It had the power to terrify as well as awe a bystander; Klassen was mightily impressed.

“Do such creatures of grandeur actually exist?” inquired the adventurer.

Putting his finger to his face and rubbing the long scar that slashed across his cheek, the commander answered, “I don’t know. Our intellectuals have debated the issue at length. Some believe they are mere myth while others believe they do exist somewhere in the world. As for myself, I would have to say that it is possible. Maybe not as have been portrayed in stories though. Nonetheless, they are immense creatures that embody power.”

“I hope they exist,” said Klassen as he gazed at the wonderful piece of art. “What do you think Kompos?”

“From the research I have done, I believe they exist,” Kompos replied. An explanation did not follow, however, and no one presented an inquiry on the subject.

The professor drank out of the fountain while encouraging the others to follow suit; they did. “The water here is fresh and invigorating. I know it may seem amazing to have all this water here, but we do. It is one of our well-kept secrets though. The dragon that resides here is affectionately

known as Sauromoth. We have a few more things to see if you two are willing.” They both nodded in assent and the company exited the fountain area.

The company walked onward to be confronted with large open fields to the left and right. The fields were deserted save for the few structures that housed weapons and armor. Various odd-looking devices were also scattered about. Before the bubbling questions Klassen held could burst, Ziplin spoke.

“This is our battle training area. Our troops are trained to ride a horse skillfully, use a variety of weapons, and siege weapons and their defenses. Since we’ve had a full-scale battle today, our training ground is empty. We train on a regular basis and I assure you that, although not the largest force in the world, we are without a doubt the best trained.” Ziplin spoke matter-of-factly and Klassen agreed wholeheartedly; just seeing the troops was a spectacle that exuded excellence.

“Are all members of the Honor Brigade required to train?” Kompos asked with his hand scratching his brown beard.

“No, but we do encourage everyone to know at least the basics like how to wield a weapon. We realize that each person is different and will have different abilities. We encourage our citizens to utilize their specific talent,” Ziplin said.

“Utilize your specific talent to further Nobilis ends.” Klassen recited this ninth law of the Honor Brigade with a broad smile.

“Exactly,” returned the commander.

“Next comes the last leg of our tour, at least for now anyway.” Ziplin spoke easily as they walked down the stone path. After a bit of walking, homes came into view that were well constructed. Klassen was skilled in this field and inquired what wood they were made of, as the wood seemed quite foreign to the adventurer. The answer was noble fir, like those that lined the entrance to Imperium Castle. As expected, more people streamed about in this section of town. Men and women alike were busy tending to their affairs, and like before, all were jubilant.

The professor continued his lecture, “Here we have the homes of our good people. Generally the inhabitants here have families while most of the single men tend to be in the barracks and in our army. As can be expected, we attract more males than females but we do have some available women for you two.” He laughed at this statement and continued, “We promote having large families and most of our ladies have been born here. After all, we’ve existed for many, many years.”

As the troop marched on, Klassen reveled as he beheld the wonderful families that he saw. Laughing and happy they were. Children roamed about in cheerful mirth while playing their favorite games. Two attractive ladies giggled as he walked by. This whole realm of honor was clean, healthy, and vibrant.

Before they came to the end of the homes, Ziplin halted the company. He pointed down further along the road and spoke, “There are the fields for the crops. They have but recently been planted and aren’t much to see. So we come to the end of our tour. Are there any questions?”

Immediately Klassen answered, “How do we join?”

“That will be taken care of tomorrow. For now the both of you need to think about how you wish to serve the Honor Brigade, if you haven’t already. Now, it is time to return to the castle; it is getting late. Go, go, go!” The company headed back as indeed it was starting to get dark. The return trip went quickly with Ziplin answering any questions posed to him.

Just as the group was about to enter the castle, an enormous rumble shook the ground so violently that it seemed the very walls that protected the town would be reduced to a large pile of rubble. The noise created by the unknown source was staggering and continuous. Ziplin continued to walk on as if the sound were merely the natural chirping of birds, and had to stop as the pair of newcomers looked around for the source of the disturbance. It was impossible to be heard over the racket and thus the commander attempted no explanation.

Instead, the explanation presented itself. The very walls, which guarded Imperium Castle from a frontal assault, were moving. It was a shocking sight to the adventurer but yes, the walls were indeed moving. They grinded outwards rather quickly until, after a few moments, they stopped at about a forty-five degree angle (so Kompnos quickly estimated). This left a wide opening to the outside. How in the world such motion was affected with such mammothly gargantuan walls was beyond Klassen's comprehension. Nonetheless, it had happened and what a feat it was!

Once opened, a stream of warriors entered the courtyard in strict formation, bringing the various tools of war with them. The knights, infantry, and archers glistened with confidence and joy as they returned from their easy victory. This jubilation was accentuated by the military songs they broadcasted forth with the vitality only a warrior could display. It was a splendid spectacle of morale while the opening of the very walls was a marvel of engineering.

Klassen wondered if the fabulous sights he saw would ever end or if one could possibly grow accustomed to such miracles.

Once back to the castle, they were directed to the mess hall where they ate with great haste and eagerness. The food was soothing to the stomach while the drink was pleasant to the tongue. After feeling the close camaraderie and energizing their bodies, the travelers retired to the barracks to rest their tired bodies.

The barracks were full of small beds in which Klassen and Kompnos were situated next to one another. The adventurer inquired of his friend, "What do you think comrade?"

"This place is extremely interesting. I look forward to learning and hopefully helping our people here. I want to get a fresh start though. Goodnight." Kompnos spoke and after hearing Klassen tell him to have a good rest, the mathematician climbed under the blankets and went to sleep.

The adventurer likewise lay upon the bed, which was quite comfortable, although he didn't enter the world of dreams quite yet. Because the sound in the barracks was very low with only a few comrades chatting, it was a rather ideal atmosphere to reflect. Klassen desired to meet more honorable brethren but he knew he would have time for that in the future. Thus, he relaxed and contemplated.

The first thought that he grazed upon was whether his adventure to Imperium Castle was worth it; he knew it was. The adventurer knew that he would have done much more to get to his paradise and the petty obstacles that had blocked his way, were nothing, mere trivialities. The grand dragon of the fountain, Sauromoth, could not have stopped him from achieving his goal, he thought with ultimate confidence. Could anything have stopped him? Klassen knew of nothing that could.

Remembering the filthy ordure of the towns he had seen brought a visible sign of revulsion to the adventurer's youthful visage. He thought about the proud Nobilismen being subjected to the degenerate beasts and the horrendous beliefs of dishonorable scampery that were contaminating the world over. Some, he knew, had been swallowed whole by this black chasm of putrescence, but not all. There were some that still had the signs of radiance that could change the world into a splendid world of beauty.

Beauty. The look of disgust that had grasped him before was transformed into smile upon thinking of the beautiful bliss around him. The stunning paradise that surrounded Klassen was clear and unequivocal proof that hope for the world was not merely a dream, but a reality as solid as the mammoth walls that protected the town. Thinking more about Imperium Castle, he realized the day had been overwhelming in splendor and sublimity. He was residing in a haven of honor but it was difficult to grasp the sheer vastness of it all. All the wonders and all the attractions individually were stunning but collectively they overloaded his system; he knew it would take a while to become accustomed to it all. Where else could one see such sights? The answer, he knew, was nowhere.

Pulling the blankets atop the adventurer who yearned for rest, Klassen had an indelible smile etched across his face. He knew *exactly* what he wanted to do in the Honor Brigade.

Chapter X

The two travelers had been warmly greeted by the citizens in the ceremony to become members of the Honor Brigade: Klassen had visibly showed with passionate fervor that the day was the most momentous in his life; Kompnos had only exuded his mirth from his eyes. The festivities included the entire town and, other than one other gentleman joining, had been the focal points of attention. Feasting and gaming had been the main events to commemorate the growth of honor; these had been done with a rousing spirit of love and brotherhood. The two comrades had met a plethora of wonderful brethren but, as can be expected, they couldn't remember every name afterwards.

The king of Imperium Castle, Louis, had even presided over the affair, although Klassen later learned this was a common practice. The ruler had been clad in a magnificent purple robe, luxurious crown, and scepter of honor. He had given a rousing speech on how honor was gaining power and personally greeted the new recruits. This king had been descended from many kings all bearing the same name of Louis, although anyone of great ability could claim the throne. Louis reigned with complete and utter power, as had all rulers of Imperium Castle; the people loved him as he held the laws of Honor Brigade sacred.

The privilege of meeting the ultimate ruler of the golden paradise they resided in had been a sublime experience for Klassen. The meeting had signified the relationship between those of high rank and those of lower; there was no enmity between the differing levels as that could be disastrous for the unity of the Honor Brigade. He realized that those of differing skills might not become the closest of associates but there was no need for hostility. Once becoming aware of this policy, the adventurer knew it wise.

Upon joining, Kompnos, as expected, had become a scholar specializing in mathematics. His system of measurement had been widely acclaimed and the Honor Brigade had adopted it. The relationship between the two entities had been symbiotic, though, as Kompnos learned much from the many tomes of wisdom contained in the library. Studying with the intellectuals he had become honored and revered for his talent. Indeed, the vast majority of his time had been devoted to his studies.

Klassen on the other hand had figured out what he wanted to do in the Honor Brigade although he knew not the name. Simply put he wanted to spread the word of honor to the befuddled comrades of the land. Surely he knew such a position was vital to growth and of course such a position was available. Ziplin had told him of the paladin, a holy knight that went out into the world of darkness in order to eradicate the filth and spread holiness. Without a doubt, the adventurer knew this was the role for him.

The months had swiftly glided by as Klassen learned his trade. The training had essentially consisted of two parts: being indoctrinated even more in the role of honor and improving fighting ability. He had of course also enjoyed his comrade's company, as well as the many new friends he had met. What most would call "work" he had thought to be extremely fun and had enjoyed it immensely. Surely the atmosphere of honor had also played a role in this.

Although Klassen was more of a physical person, the mental stimulation provided in the classroom studies had been remarkably rewarding. Books that had been written by members of the Honor Brigade were read and discussed. These books talked of what to do in certain situations and, not surprisingly, the adventurer agreed; honor was in his nature. He had been taught that Nobilismen were inherently honorable but that the perverse doctrine of the Universal Church had wrecked this instinct. It was his duty to cure this malicious malady.

One of the most enlightening things that Klassen had learned was the source of the horrible affliction that poisoned Teramon: the slimy green orcs. The adventurer had seen first-hand the destruction wrought by the other beasts but didn't really conceive of one enemy being any worse

than another. While the topic of hobgoblins, imps, and ogres was briefly talked about, the nature and history of the orc had been related in far greater exactitude.

This nature was one of avarice, deception, and betrayal—in a single word they were dishonorable. The green creatures were the antithesis of the Nobilis. Throughout these adventures history they had brought misery and desolation to their host populations; indeed they were vicious vampires who sucked the blood of those they lived among. City upon city was documented where this foul influence had turned a thriving area into a decrepit pool of muck.

Klassen's instincts had immediately made him question what he was learning as he couldn't see how the small population of orcs could achieve such success. This answer soon was forthcoming as he learned of the orc involvement in the Universal Church. Not only did they run the show from behind the scenes, but also they had even created the filthy church and religion (Universality).

This shocking information had rattled the adventurer to the core. He grudgingly had to admit to himself that the orcs were not the fatuous dolts that the other beasts were. The religion of dishonor was controlling the masses while the despicable orcs were horrifically raping the Nobilis. There were two positive things that the adventurer learned of: one was that the orc population was quite tiny and that if exposed properly, the hideous master of puppets could be deposed. Klassen now knew the best target to choose from.

The typical cases of honor like rescuing kinsman from beasts, helping a friend in need, destroying beasts whenever feasible etc., had also been discussed. What feasible meant when slaughtering beasts was explained to mean that, since the Honor Brigade was above all other law, if one could go unscathed when ridding the world of scum to do so. However, it had been pounded home that Nobilis lives were extremely valuable and thus to be cautious about engaging in warfare. This had reminded the adventurer of his kills already and when he became a paladin he would surely mark his uniform with these trophies. No confirmation would be needed since lying was dishonorable.

The punishable offenses of lying, stealing, cheating, betrayal were of course dealt with swiftly, usually with death. Obviously the circumstances could change things but rarely could someone commit crimes against fellow honorable citizens without facing brutal consequences. The topic was clarified concerning the beasts as it was of course sanctioned to liberate the goods of these wicked creatures. The overriding principle, he knew, was to promote the best interests of Nobilism as a whole.

In addition to reading about the philosophy of honor, novels were read that promoted the ideals as well. This had been a welcome surprise to Klassen as he already enjoyed such pieces of art. As can be expected, he not only had read the assigned novels, but also had read all that he could find in the library. The library had been quite impressive to him, as never before had he seen so many books in one place. The atmosphere of learning was refreshing as it greatly contrasted the ugly ignorance that suffocated many in the world.

The learning of honor was mandatory, especially for being a paladin, but other areas of study were accessible. So Klassen had also spent his time learning more about carpentry and design. This was something he surely would perform for the Honor Brigade if he weren't so moved to be a glorious paladin. The burning fire that fueled his being desired to be a paladin and that was what he *would* become, he knew.

Before he could fulfill this duty, however, he had been busy contributing by utilizing his carpentry skills. He had designed and built, by himself, new bookshelves. He had carved them ever so intricately and thus took great pride in them. To further adorn the shelves an artist had painted gorgeous landscapes upon them. Klassen had appreciated his help and marveled at how everyone loved their work and loved contributing to the Honor Brigade. He knew this was how it should be; it was simply natural.

The adventurer's first date with a voluptuous blonde haired lady came about by odd circumstances. Klassen's strange way of attracting the attention of the fairer sex was actually

successful. It had happened one day as he was resting at the fountain of the great Sauromoth. He enjoyed the power that the creature exuded and the environment it created was rather ideal for reading his beloved novels. So on the aforementioned day, the adventurer was absorbed in his novel when a beauty had entered the area.

He rose from the bench where he sat and went to take a drink from the luscious water, as it was a hot, humid day. His attention was attached to the lady as if by some irresistible force, however, and this ended with Klassen getting more water than he had hoped for. He had fallen in. The girl giggled at this display and helped him out, wet and soaking as he was. The two hence struck a friendship, although it was not of the romantic caliber. Her nickname that the adventurer liked to call her by was Goldie.

While the adventurer had enjoyed his studies, the camaraderie, and his carpentry, the learning of the ways of war had been his favorite way to pass the time. It was here where he felt like he belonged and where his piece of the cosmic puzzle fit in perfectly.

While training he did what he had done before to release the warlike nature within him: hunt. The mountain they were on (which he came to learn was called Honor Mountain) was full of wildlife of all shapes. The Honor Brigade promoted the sport by leading hunts but the adventurer would also hunt by himself, or on occasion with his good friend Kompos.

One particular hunting expedition came to the adventurer's mind for it was quite peculiar. He had gone off into the forest by his lonesome to contemplate although he had brought the longbow he had been provided with by the Honor Brigade. Klassen had climbed into a tree in order to commune with nature and enjoy its lofty beauty. While among the perches of fowl, he had caught a glimpse of a strange creature, which had never before greeted his vision.

It had looked like a mixture of a goat and an antelope. It had horns and only later would he learn its name: chamois. It had been a brown animal that wondered about as carefree as if it owned the entire mountain. The adventurer had waited for it to be cleared of the blockading branches before taking aim. Adroitly and without a sound he had positioned himself so that his prey noticed not the archer. Arrow released, it had whizzed with immense velocity like a flying sword of death. The chamois never even had a chance to see its destroyer as the barb had blazed entirely through the creature's throat, nearly decapitating it.

The kill itself had been easy but it had opened up an archery skill that he hadn't practiced before. Among the trees firing bolts of destruction was certainly more difficult and could undoubtedly prove effective as an assassin's tool. Inquiring about this type of tactic had brought an approving nod from Ziplin and thereafter it was practiced among the archers.

The training that the adventurer had received for archery improved his ability little as he already excelled in this area. In fact, Klassen's skill was so great that he had only one competitor of note in the archery contests. This comrade and he had taken first and second place consistently; it was a fierce, though gentlemanly, rivalry that saw Klassen winning approximately half of the time.

Other weapons had, of course, been featured; the Honor Brigade wanted its warriors to be able to fight regardless of the weapon and circumstances. Having owned a dagger previously, this weapon wasn't too hard to master. Hand-to-hand warfare as well as throwing daggers had been taught and both went well for the adventurer. The same was partially true with an axe although battle-axes were quite different, as he had well learned.

The weapon where the adventurer had been completely ignorant was the standard weapon of the time: the sword. Out of all the arms of war, this is the one that seemed most suitable for a noble paladin. As such Klassen had been very willing to learn although he didn't get off to a very auspicious start.

Cognizant of his inexperience with the sword, the adventurer had been paired with a young lad of about fifteen to practice with. As customary, they had used wooden swords. To all watching it should have been a slaughter as Klassen was far larger than the boy as well as being more agile. Indeed it even started out that way as the adventurer overpowered his opponent with brute strength. Soon, however, the momentum had changed and the adventurer had felt more and more outwitted

through pure skill. It culminated with the boy somehow (according to Klassen) getting behind him, while he had been wildly teetering from a wild thrust. Down he had tumbled when the lad gave him a swift boot to the rear.

This experience had certainly been one that was a necessary stagger upon the path to mastery, but it was extremely difficult to end the incessant teasing that it had brought. Indeed, it had been merely playful jest that even Klassen himself laughed at, but he preferred laughing at himself when he had become an expert with the honorable sword. Consequently, the more skill he had gradually obtained the more heartily was his enjoyment at being defeated (and muddy to boot).

Without a doubt this was the area where his most assiduous attention had been focused. The young comrade who had initially bested him was soon defeated but many more defeats had marred his ascent to the summit of excellence. This had driven him mightily to the point where he would challenge anyone in the hopes of improving. His endurance was so great that he had tired out his competitors even if he hadn't got the best of them in a duel. This great vitality had led him to have many matches during the day and, when candidates to challenge ran dry, he had practiced thrusting, slashing, and parrying by himself.

While other implements of glorious warfare had been introduced to the adventurer—pike, polearm, mace etc.—it had been the sword, specifically the type designed especially for the Honor Brigade, that had become his specialty. This sword, known as an ultima, was so designed that it could slash and thrust; despite the blade being a full komp in length, it was lightweight and able to be deftly swung about. This weapon was the standard issue hand-to-hand weapon of the Honor Brigade and Klassen easily saw why.

Another weapon that had intrigued the adventurer was a powerful crossbow. It was no ordinary crossbow. Normally, one of these bolt-firing weapons was great for close-range combat as its stopping power was terrific; the missile could pierce armor quite easily. This particular weapon, while retaining the explosive power, was five times as useful. Instead of one bolt being armed at a time, this one could hold five bolts at once. It was smaller than a normal crossbow, allowing it to be fired with only one hand. Also, it had a metal loop attached to the front so that the wielder could put his foot in it and arm the weapon with greater leverage. However, instead of pulling back one piece of cord, five were pulled; they were fastened together so all five were pulled at once. To make things even quicker, the five bolts were loaded onto the crossbow by way of a wooden “clip,” as it was called. Thus, one could be ready to fire five shots within moments.

The longbow still maintained its advantage of being able to fire further, but for close-range this crossbow was quite deadly. Klassen had practiced with it and had become quite adept at firing it. He soon realized that the archer had to adjust for the differing heights of each bolt but a large adaptation wasn't needed, especially since it was a tool for close combat.

The practice range for the crossbow consisted of five targets positioned in a field. Then there was an obstacle course where one had to go under, over, or through. So the participant would run through the obstacle course, fire at a target and repeat until all five shots were dispelled. Time was recorded, as well as accuracy. As can be imagined, Klassen had excelled at this contest.

Although many weapons had greeted the adventurer, these aforementioned ones were his favorites although one other also inflamed his curiosity. That is to say that he *believed* it to be a weapon although he couldn't be absolutely assured of this.

While training one fine day, Klassen and his squad had been interrupted by a powerful noise that sounded similar to an explosive volcano in a frenzied fit of anger. Where the disturbance had originated from was extremely obscure, as it seemed to resonant from all around. The vibrations of the blast had also rumbled the very ground around them, everywhere. It had boomed three times in no particular pattern, before ceasing.

What had it been? This question had run rampant throughout the slew of warriors as well as Imperium Castle. No answer had readily been given beyond it being an experiment. What kind of experiment had racked Klassen's mind. With the power that it had exuded it seemed only prudent

to use the force as a monstrous implement of grandiose war. The destructive force was unknown to the adventurer but surely it was great.

The prevailing idea had indeed been that it was an instrument of war, but there was no consensus on this opinion. Some held that it had been a captured dragon struggling to break free; this assertion aroused Klassen's imagination but didn't seem to be the correct choice. Others had claimed that perhaps it was simply an earthquake. While the adventurer thought this was very possible, the fact that it had occurred three times made him question that possibility. As no absolute answer had been forthcoming, the matter slowly drifted into the dusty annals of history, but none really forgot about it.

Hours and hours of training—both mental and physical—had molded the adventurer into what he hoped was a great hero. The long days training with weapons, with armor, without weapons or armor (Klassen greatly excelled at wrestling and boxing), with books etc., had left the adventurer tremendously sore and had drained him extensively. This soreness had begun to abate as the days had disappeared, so Klassen pushed himself ever harder to compensate.

This continual process of pressing ever higher had tempered the adventurer like a blacksmith creating a beautiful blade of honor. By his many studies, Klassen had improved his mind in the hopes that he would be able to persuade his comrades to join the holy movement known as the Honor Brigade. He had been consistently reading of two subjects that would help him in his quest: heroic novels and the art of reasoning. He had been inspired to greater heights than the clouds themselves while reading of heroes; reasoning, he knew, would assist him in convincing others of the sublimity of honor.

Physically speaking, Klassen had been a great athlete before joining the Honor Brigade but his stay had amplified his athletic prowess immensely. From all the strenuous activities he had partaken in, he had gained power and stamina. His fighting ability had been improved dramatically and his already great confidence had become swollen to mountainous dimensions.

A philosopher that Klassen had read had stated that what didn't kill an individual made him stronger; this he knew to be true.

Although the time had gone swiftly by, the adventurer had ever questioned his instructor Ziplin as to when he would become a paladin. This had been asked numerous times with the same answer being voiced every time: "When you are skilled enough." Klassen had realized the wisdom in this policy but yearned to speak the glorious gospel of honor to his clouded kinsmen. In spite of this, the student and teacher had gotten along well. Due to this, the adventurer had thought nothing of being asked to remain after class but the conversation contained therein would have a profound effect on him.

The commander beckoned the adventurer into his private study that was connected to the classroom where military tactics were taught. Resorting to his stern voice of austerity, Ziplin commanded Klassen, "Come in and have a seat. I have something important to talk to you about." The adventurer complied instantly.

The lack of the normal jocularity that the professor exuded when not involved with military affairs immediately aroused the adventurer's interest. He was well aware of the fluctuating emotions Ziplin displayed and was waiting for a burst of joviality when, instead, the commander sat down at his desk with a look of cold harshness. The professor stared intently at his pupil for quite a while without speaking as he rested his nose upon his folded hands.

The room the two were in was adorned with a good-sized mahogany desk with a chair that simply spoke of comfort as it had the ability to lean back and had wheels. The desk was adorned with tiny warriors of all sorts that were intricately designed. Across from the desk were two wooden chairs. The walls were decorated with two items of note: bookshelves full of military books (Klassen had read some of these himself) and military paintings, each representing a battle that Ziplin or his family had been engaged in.

A strange silence pervaded the room, which was quite unfamiliar to Klassen as his conversations with his mentor were usually quite loquacious. In order to burst the rather oppressive

bubble of muteness, the adventurer cheerily chimed out, “When will I become a paladin?” This inquiry was accompanied by a broad smile as the adventurer expected an answer that didn’t come.

Ziplin stared at the adventurer as if lost in deep, meditative thought. The lack of an answer discomfited Klassen and it seemed to be extremely clear that something, whatever it might be, was amiss. The plaguing silence had returned and was only briefly broken as the adventurer adjusted his chair. This wooden sound had reverberated crisply throughout the room until it had died away, leaving the smothering silence. The bright blue eyes bored through Klassen’s body with increased intensity as time wore on. At length, the commander finally spoke in a somber, serious tone.

“What would you do if I told you that you have failed?”

Chapter XI

Failure? While Klassen knew the meaning of the word, it was not included in his personal lexicon. He knew that he had excelled within the Honor Brigade but had he not lived up to the standards in some area he was oblivious to? Thinking harder and harder he searched through the labyrinth of his mind for a clue to solve this enigma. Winding through the various passages of his memory revealed nothing that would lead to failure, so what could it be?

Ziplin's demeanor remained unchanged as he vigilantly studied his student's reaction. There was no doubt that Klassen visibly showed his surprise at his teacher's question. No answers presented themselves in the commander's countenance and since the adventurer could not ascertain how failure was possible, he decided to simply accept its possibility and face reality.

What route would Klassen travel upon if his goal of being a paladin was frustrated? The obvious solution that came to his mind was to be a carpenter. He was skilled in this area and had already contributed in this way. The adventurer felt that he could further contribute and a thousand ideas for new designs danced in his mind. It was a task that he knew would surely be met with his utter determination and tenacity. Was this the right path for him though?

No! his inner being screamed at him fiercely. Klassen knew he had the ability to be a great carpenter but that was something he felt he should do in his spare time or when he was older. He felt his youth was designed for something more physical, more adventurous. Being a warrior in the army briefly crossed his mind but he rejected that idea as well. He knew what he would do; his troth to himself would reign supreme.

He had trained; he had studied; and he had crushed all obstacles on the path to his destiny: becoming a paladin. Was he going to let anything stop him? Of course not. If the Honor Brigade wanted to withhold its support, then he would accept this, as the leaders he had come in contact with were wise and intelligent; they would have good reasons for whatever they did. Nonetheless, he would set out on his journey to enlighten, with or without the assent of the Honor Brigade. Even if it meant he was excommunicated, he would venture out.

The commander watched Klassen as if he was reading his mind; in reality the adventurer's face displayed his thoughts quite readily. From surprise to contemplation to determination had been visibly etched on Klassen's visage. Still Ziplin sat with the same harshness, waiting for an answer to his query. Instead of speaking, the pupil's face resumed an air of cogitation.

Question upon question bombarded the adventurer's intellect. When would he leave? Where would he go? Would he be able to take anything with him from the Honor Brigade? How would he travel? All these questions and more he was sure would confront him, but before he could properly come to any conclusions, his imagination—fueled by his reading of so many heroic novels—thrust him away from his body and into a grand adventure.

Bedecked in refulgent armor and equipped with a mighty sword, Klassen galloped through the passageways of his mind in great honor. Enemies of the Nobilis fell with ease beneath the stunning power of the adventurer's magnificent weapon. The beleaguered masses, whose well of probity had been so wickedly drained, would be refilled to overflowing via the hand of Klassen. A land of honorable denizens would supplant the inhabitants of despicable dishonor and filth; the adventurer, nay the *paladin*, would play a vital part in all these proceedings.

With a mirthful smile planted upon his face, Klassen composed himself and focused on the commander. Happily he finally answered the question posed to him: "If I were to fail to become a paladin, then I would leave Imperium Castle and spread the word of honor anyway."

For a minute the adamant wall of severity remained solid surrounding the commander, but within a matter of moments the walls came crumbling down in an explosive fit of joyous laughter. Within the time span of a simple snap of the fingers, the whole atmosphere was changed from

oppressiveness to happiness. The adventurer joined in the celebration as he waited for the professor to speak.

“That’s my boy!” roared Ziplit. “Your skill is great enough to be a paladin and I am pleased to report that you passed the final test.” Getting up from his chair, the commander approached Klassen who stood to receive him. Ziplit shook the hand of the newest paladin of the Honor Brigade vigorously before saying, “Congratulations Klassen. You are now a paladin!”

The realization that the whole affair had been an exam didn’t dampen his lofty spirits in the least. The paladin thanked his mentor as they embraced in a hug. All the hard work he had put in was now coming to a fore and Klassen reveled in his tremendous accomplishment. The world was one huge adventure just waiting to be undertaken and the paladin was sure to fill it with honor.

Ziplit spoke earnestly, “It is a great privilege to become a paladin. I doubt you are aware of its full significance. Do you know how many paladins we have ordained since your arrival?”

After a brief period of thought, Klassen responded, “I am not aware of any but how would I know?”

“Trust me, you *would* have known,” the commander replied. “We hold a grand celebration commemorating the event. Paladins are rare gems that we greatly appreciate. They are few and far between as the vileness in this world scares many away.”

Klassen had been totally oblivious of this fact and, as a result, it came as quite a shock. “So what happens now?” he inquired.

“First, I will tell treat you to the tales of my scars and my own exploits. Then you will be outfitted for your journey and next week we shall hold a celebration in your honor. Then you will be on your own!”

The paladin listened eagerly to his mentor, as his scars were a source of inquiry for many, although Ziplit wasn’t forthcoming. Klassen was alive with wonderful expectations of the future but before his grand trek into the unknown, he would enjoy his remaining stay in Imperium Castle.

Ziplit began his story, “When I was about your age I too had the noble vision you have. I had been raised in Imperium Castle so I wasn’t really aware of how horrible things were outside of our walls. What I heard, of course, wasn’t good. I thought, as I expect you do, that if life was so great here and so bad there, then why not enlighten our comrades about Imperium Castle? So I became a paladin.” Klassen smiled at this last statement.

“My father didn’t want me to do this,” the commander continued, “because it is a solitary, dangerous occupation. He wanted to keep an eye on me within the army. Nonetheless I was driven to fulfill my dreams and set off. I had many adventures and have a few words of advice for you before I tell you of my scars.

“Keep at attention at all times. The dress of a paladin is generally glaring and stands out a lot so you will be noticed. It is usually a good idea to not stay in any one place too long. Try to recruit, kill some beasts, and be off. As much as we trust one another here, most aren’t trustworthy so be cautious. Above all, act honorably and bravely do your duty!”

Klassen listened as if Ziplit were the only sentient being in the universe, so enthralled was he. The commander continued his narrative as he pointed to his scars: “Now, I will grant you the knowledge of my scars, which only paladins are permitted to hear. Obviously this means that you must take an oath to not reveal this information to anyone except paladins—past or present—of the Honor Brigade. Do you agree?” The paladin of course agreed and the two exchanged the Honor Salute to bind the agreement.

Satisfied, Ziplit continued, “This scar along my forehead was inflicted by an annoying band of five hobgoblins. They were seeking to avenge their fellow compatriots whom I had slaughtered with joy. I didn’t know it at the time but the ones I killed had been part of a gang of the beasts. The five remaining members had ambushed me as I was leaving a town out west. Individually they would have been easy kills but they used their numbers to their advantage. The scar itself occurred when an arrow had been fired from my right flank; I had caught sight of the archer and jumped

back, the arrow grazed my forehead and cleaved my skin off, leaving this nice decoration. That had enraged me and after I had killed the archer, the rest were easily dispatched.”

Klassen was carried along in awe at every word spoken; Ziplin took a breath and resumed, “The long, curving scar along my cheek here was delivered when I was adventuring in the southern regions. It is a hot land full of the overgrown dolts we call ogres. Indeed, it was a group of ogres that I had to defeat to save a member of our great Nobilis people. Three of the dark creatures had blocked my path but soon it was two and then one. This last beast, contrary to the typical ogre, didn’t flee in cowardice. It was even quite skilled with its spiked club but it was my slipping on the wet ground that had granted him a free swing into my cheek. I recovered, of course, and my blow dealt with him permanently.

“This scar along my chin happened in an inn a little ways to the north of here. I was unaware of it, but a slimy orc had owned the inn and it had come to its knowledge that I had killed its brother. The orc had entered the room I slept in by way of a secret door and had lunged for my throat with a deadly dagger. I must admit that this could have been my end for my surprise was great indeed, but the orc’s aim was off and the blade had caught my chin instead of my throat. In fact, the unexpected resistance of hitting bone had caused the blade to fall to the ground. I was bloody but once to my feet, victory over the piece of filth was easy: I threw it out of the window to its death.”

These stories brought a sweet tingle of excitement to the paladin’s skin as he anticipated his own victories. In haste, he enthusiastically spoke, “Those were magnificent stories! Isn’t there anyway I can leave earlier?”

The professor laughed and responded warmly, “You will have your chance, don’t worry. It is important to remember that spreading the word of honor is your main objective; killing beasts, although great, is a secondary goal. Of course, remember that the best to kill are orcs!”

Ziplin, upon noticing the time by the dying of the sun, immediately resorted back to his serious tone. “We have had enough idle chatter. Go to the armory and pick out your gear. Make sure you get your weapon personalized! Go, go, go!”

The paladin literally ran out of the building and off towards the castle. The whole time his mind was engaged in active thought about the wonderful journey he was about to embark upon. The winding passageways of the castle were adorned with lovely pieces of art but Klassen’s mind was elsewhere as he swiftly flew down the halls. In but a week he would become akin to the very characters he read about! His confidence made him think of how stories would be written about him in the future; maybe, he thought, he would even write them himself. Before the adventurer could think further upon the subject, he arrived at his destination.

A veritable ocean of finely crafted weapons and armor radiated in resplendent wonder before Klassen’s enthused eyes. The armory was full of instruments of war from the simple dagger to the more complex poleax. Pieces of armor, helmets, and shields came in different sizes and styles. Varying colors adorned the equipment like brilliant blues, ravishing reds, proud purples and more, with combinations of color also splashed about. The collection was staggering and the paladin believed that any warrior would be in a divine state of bliss just gazing at them; he sure was.

The armorer was a short, stout comrade whom the paladin had met before, although he didn’t know him very well. He had straight black hair with a black mustache and was named Zerpan. His pale skin seemed to indicate that he didn’t spend much time outdoors; Klassen believed he spent most of his time forging weapons. From what the paladin had surmised, it seemed that most of the armorer’s fifty years or so had been spent in his craft. After exchanging Honor Salutes, the two began conversing.

“I have come by orders of Ziplin to choose my gear for my trek,” spoke Klassen eagerly.

“What trek, son?” asked Zerpan.

In his haste the paladin hadn’t even informed the armorer of the news. “I have become a paladin and will be leaving to spread the word of honor soon!”

Visibly fascinated, the armorer responded amiably, “Congratulations sir! I wish you luck. Take a look around and just tell me what you want. If you have any ideas for adornments of the weapons, let me know; I can do it.”

Thanking the armorer for the kind words, Klassen spurred his mind into a storm of flying ideas. Glancing around at the weapons and building them up in his mind, the paladin was able to envision them distinctly in his mind. A vague idea of what he wanted was forming but it took firm root once his eyes struck upon a massive blade of enormous size.

At first it appeared like the standard sword of the Honor Brigade, the ultima sword, but it was far larger than the ones he had seen heretofore. The normal size blade was about a full komp but this blade was surely one and a half. Picking it up the paladin saw that from tip to pommel the sword was almost as tall as he! This was the sword for him, he knew.

The mammoth sword quickly became decorated in his mind. Down only the center of blade ran a caring cerulean to represent love for his comrades while the opposite side of the blade was a fiery crimson showing his hatred for his foes. In a similar vein, the crosspiece held splendid sapphires for love on one side while displaying rubies of war on the other side. In the middle of these stones his initial “K” was etched in decorative, purple writing (both sides). The hilt held the skulls of future victims. Finally, Klassen saw the red-side of the blade free to hold the kills the sword would obtain while the blue-side held the mighty name of the sword engraved downwards: *Ehredegen*.

A helmet the paladin picked up was constructed in his mind as well. The distinctive wide slots for the eyes and holes for breathing were seen but he knew something was missing. Around the summit of the helmet grew many curved horns of power which saluted the horn upon the pinnacle of the helmet; this horn was larger and straight. Upon the center of the forehead grew his purple initial.

He chose a large shield that started wide until it ran down to a point (emblazoned with the symbol of the Honor Brigade) and only added his initial; he realized he wanted to initialize everything (including the clothes he wore). The paladin picked out chain mail armor, a magnificent, multi-firing crossbow, some throwing axes, a few daggers, and other assorted materials he would need for his journey, including provisions and a mount.

Once he had all this assessed, he described it in detail to the armorer. “Can you do all this?” Klassen queried.

“It sounds magnificent and yes of course I can do it, sir!” came the resounding response. “It will all be ready for you at the ceremony. You can count on me!”

Thanking the comrade, Klassen left the armory in a sheer state of bliss.

The week had flown by with amazing speed as the paladin eagerly awaited his journey of honor. Word had quickly spread among the citizens and Klassen had instantly become a major celebrity. Congratulations had come from virtually everyone, from little lads to seniors who had seen many a moon. Throughout this ordeal, the paladin became more and more aware of the importance of his position, and its danger. The danger spurred him on even more as he relished in the well wishes of his comrades.

The Honor Brigade loved to celebrate and keep the citizens in extreme happiness by holding celebrations commemorating many events; but due to the rarity of a paladin being named, the atmosphere on the mountain was filled with an even greater fervor than normal. Many preparations were made and it was a primary topic of discussion. Klassen learned that it had been almost a year since the last paladin had been ordained.

The paladin and the mathematician Kompos had held a long conversation discussing their different roles in the Honor Brigade. These contrasting positions had kept the friends apart most of the time so each enjoyed telling and hearing of one another’s escapades. The pair exchanged

congratulations; Klassen had become a paladin while Kompos, among other advances, had had his system of measurement adopted.

Since the paladin was very cognizant of the fact that he would be gone for an unknown amount of time, he listened extremely intently to his ally. The mathematician related his discoveries in mathematics and engineering and Klassen asked questions here and there so as to fully grasp what his friend meant. Klassen waited to hear about news of the strange rumblings that had caused such a commotion but this knowledge never came to the fore; the paladin decided either he didn't know or couldn't tell. After their talk both wished each other success in their endeavors and parted ways.

Although it was more difficult to keep his normal schedule of training due to everyone wishing to speak to him, the paladin managed to do so for the most part. The excitement that pulsed throughout the town had caught Klassen in its net, but he did his best to persevere and accomplish his goals for the week.

As dusk approached on the day of the paladin celebration, the town was crackling with fervent energy that seemed to fuel the many torches that threw a mysterious light upon the surroundings. The spacious courtyard had been transformed into a festive area of eager expectation. The entire town was partaking in the commemoration of a paladin and the courtyard, which normally was rather open, was now swelling with citizens. Little children played joyfully; warriors felt the pride of knowing the paladin; women virtually swooned in anticipation of their champion.

A raised platform had rapidly been constructed for the event and the leaders of the Honor Brigade now inhabited it. This group included Ziplin as well as King Louis. This small crowd stood at rigid attention as they waited. This wait was extremely short-lived for as the sun was swallowed by the sky, the king stepped forward. Raising his elegant scepter to the heavens above, King Louis brought it down to commence the activities.

A triumphant symphony of music was unleashed. First, only the sounds of the bagpipes were audible but soon a bugle joined the fray along with the steady beating of an army of drums. Leading away from the leaders of the Honor Brigade and off into the distance was a lavishly ornate purple carpet which was adorned with etchings of beauty, and intricate designs. Flanking this pathway of opulence were the soldiers of the Honor Brigade, standing at attention with steel discipline. Behind the warriors stood the masses that eagerly scanned the area for the main attraction.

Appearing like an apparition who simply seemed to materialize from nowhere, Klassen was seen at the beginning of the carpeted pathway. Flanking and accompanying him as he began to walk towards the king were two soldiers carrying torches. The light flickered and danced while casting strange shadows about, increasing the awe surrounding the paladin.

Klassen was bedecked in a red military tunic with its golden fire of honor burning brightly around the holy sword that completed the symbol of the Honor Brigade. The chain mail that protected him from attack glinted in a thousand places, making him look as though he were a divine being of magnificence. The puissant power of the frightening helmet, whose visor was down, would have terrified many in the crowd had they not known this was their hero. The shield the paladin held in his left arm was adorned like his tunic, while his right arm was free; the huge scabbard at his waist carrying the mighty sword *Ehredegen*.

As the splendid figure and his retinue of torchbearers walked through the aisle of soldiers, the warriors would unsheathe their swords in unison right before he encountered them. These swords would fly into the air and form a semi-arch, which the paladin marched under. All of this was performed with mechanical efficiency and its effect on the crowd was to inflame their state of dazzlement.

Being engaged in such a wondrous display of sensational sights and marvelous music imparted happiness to the very depths of Klassen's being. His world swirled around in tremendous jubilation as he could feel every heart that beat around him reaching out to him to offer their love and warmth. The entire event was surely a terrific incentive to become a paladin but he hadn't even known of it, nor would it have affected his decision to fulfill his goal. Knowing that he would have

ventured out to save the world even if he were the only carrier of the burning virtue of honor in all of Teramon, made the fantastic fanfare around him even more powerful.

The crowd silently watched the paladin as he made his way through the pillars of swords and ascended the platform to greet the king. After the paladin raised his visor, Louis greeted Klassen affectionately with a firm handshake. Calling an end to the music with a simple wave of the hand, the king addressed the audience.

“This is a magnificent day for the Honor Brigade. As we all know, we have a wonderful paradise here where honor and happiness reigns supreme. We have grown mightily since our inception and while we will continue to grow by simply having large families, it is imperative that we have crusaders to go out in the world of filth and spread the word of honor. To this end, we ordain paladins. I am very pleased to give to you the newest paladin of the Honor Brigade, Klassen!”

After virtually every sentence the king uttered there was applause but the last statement brought the crowd into a furious frenzy of titillation. Amid the cheering a servant materialized and presented the king with a purple cape. King Louis took this royal cape and placed it around the paladin’s shoulders while fastening the clasp that was etched with Klassen’s initial.

Enraptured by the scene of wild gaiety, the paladin gazed at the cheering masses in amazement. His position above the crowd allowed him a vision of enthralling happiness as he looked at the smiling faces that were dimly lit by torch-fire. It was a memorable experience the likes of which he had never before encountered and would surely never forget. He stepped forward and the crowd instantly hushed as they anticipated his words.

Like the king to his side, the paladin felt the immense power the crowd bestowed upon him and reveled in its sweet nectar. His blood pumped like the ferocious current of a maelstrom, flooding Klassen with a surge of euphoria. With a swift, easy motion he withdrew his colossal sword *Ehredegen* and pointed it towards the tiny sparkling stars above. This sword itself was an awesome sight as it was bigger than some grown men. However, the words that followed the unsheathing of such a devastating weapon was what brought the crowd to its peak of loving adoration and explosive glee.

A mighty roar was heard all around the mountain as Klassen bellowed, “Honor is Life.”

Chapter XII

The paladin remembered the night before with pristine clarity as he traveled eastward along the same path he had come. After the ceremony a great feast had commenced with large quantities of various dishes. Klassen thought that everyone in the Honor Brigade had shaken his hand and he was probably correct. The festivities had lasted long into the night with merriment for all ages available. Available for the citizens had been competitions, events, and social intercourse, most had taken part in all three.

So many people wished to converse with the paladin and offer their extolment that his dinner had lasted much longer than normal. Klassen enjoyed the social interaction immensely especially considering he didn't know when he would return. He knew he could return whenever he wished but his duty would keep him outside of Imperium Castle for most of the year. Of course, those that he talked the most with were his friends Kompnos, Ziplin, and the lady he called Goldie.

After the celebration wound down, Ziplin requested that the paladin return to his office, which Klassen promptly did. There the commander unraveled an exquisitely detailed map. The paladin had taken enough geography courses to learn of the various areas in Teramon, but the map that was displayed in front of him was one of minute detail. It told of paths, populations, dangers to be aware of and many more useful tidbits of information. The item had been bestowed upon the adventurer for the commander knew he would need it.

Ziplin had inquired where the paladin might venture off to. Klassen had studied the map for a few moments but once he had seen the city he was looking for, he had pointed to it. The town was one familiar to him and in the morning he had set off towards it with all his gear. It was known as Lealean.

Along the bucolic path with vibrant trees, the memory of Alianna filled his mind with pleasure. Although there had been many beauties that adored honor within the Honor Brigade, there existed a bond between Klassen and Alianna that the paladin was hard pressed to understand. He realized her wondrous looks were inspiring but there were such ladies back at Imperium Castle, like his friend Goldie.

The only reason the paladin could come up with is how he had saved the very life of his red-haired maiden. There was no doubt he enjoyed rescuing her but why this would link the two he wasn't altogether certain. Nonetheless it had bonded Klassen to the lady, but he knew not if she felt the same attraction. Either way he would win, he knew, because the town held the pub where he felt certain his message would be warmly received. So when the vast ocean of towns was spread before him on the map he saw, his choice was altogether simple.

The paladin rode through the forest where he first had the privilege of beholding knights of his sacred order. He now looked similar in garb to the formidable horseman he had seen. However, the helmet and shield weren't equipped at the moment as Klassen saw no need and riding was less hindered without them. Of course, the monstrous sword he carried was snugly tucked away in its scabbard, ready to strike death at its master's behest.

The selection of the mount he rode was quite simplistic: when he went to the royal stables, the horse he rode had chosen him by coming up to the paladin. A large sable stallion had answered his silent behest for a mount and after examining it and testing it out, the paladin knew he had the right horse. The great size of the creature allowed it to carry much weight and travel swiftly with its massive legs. Thus, Klassen had navigated down the mountain with great velocity and was now nearing the northward turning point of the path.

The paladin halted his horse as he looked into the gloomy darkness that was the Marsh of Doom. The murky depths he saw beckoned him to enter; this pull was nearly irresistible. In addition to the natural allure of the marsh for a warrior like him, were the enigmatic mysteries that

still lay enshrouded by the deep, opaque mist. There were difficulties involved in the path of despondent shadows as he well knew, but it was nonetheless attractive.

The simple northern path, on the other hand, appeared extremely easy to traverse with no signs of danger whatsoever. It seemed unimpeded by great barriers and the paladin felt as though traversing this path would be as easy for him as wielding his mighty sword was. He smiled at his superiority as he realized that most warriors wouldn't even be able to swing his sword properly, but virtually anyone could travel the northerly path, provided they had any means of transportation.

The dictates of duty sprang into the paladin's mind, as he had to decide his direction quickly for Klassen heeded the grand advice of doing things rapidly as one could achieve more in the short span of one's life. Consequently, he recognized that while the path through the bog would surely be more adventurous, in what way could he spread honor or destroy the foul enemies of the Nobilis? He saw none and therefore galloped away on the more practical course to the north.

The day was quite warm with the blistering rays of the luminary orb of flame shooting forth its intense heat. This was countered, however, by the gales of refreshing delight that cooled the rider as his steed rode with swiftness. Therefore Klassen enjoyed the ride as he viewed the panoramic scene that nature painted for him on his left. A mixture of forests, plains, and hills dotted this scene and were spread out in haphazard fashion.

The forests were quite small and might have been better termed copses; they were vibrant and full of green life with the fullness that summer brings. The plains swam around these islands of shade with a furry creature of some sort or other occasionally darting for the island havens. Climbing to the skies above and looking like titans had punched upwards from a nether world, were lush hills that were blanketed with the yellow hue of dandelions. Klassen thought the vivacious vista from atop the hills would be splendid indeed but he resigned himself to carrying on and to not waste time.

Catching the paladin's eye as it soared high in the atmosphere was a bald eagle that seemed drawn to the majestic power that Klassen emanated. After gliding around the horse and rider, it descended gracefully and easily before circling at a lower attitude. Smiling at this powerful bird's display, the paladin extended his left arm so as to allow this flying friend to perch. Indeed, the eagle descended, easily matched the speed of the horse, and landed, sinking its sharp talons into his chain mail armor.

The meeting of the master warrior of the sky with its counterpart on land seemed extremely right and natural. The eagle was aware of its dominant position and exuded a proud, noble demeanor fit for a prince. The paladin marveled at the creature as he saw so many similarities between the two. The eagle's beak was easily capable of ripping flesh apart, which reminded him of his towering sword. The supple gracefulness the bird flew with was akin to the agility Klassen exuded. The parallels were numerous but the paladin flung his friend into the air as he recognized another similarity: being one's own master.

Just as the noble eagle flew away and squawked out its farewell, another sound tugged on the reins of Klassen's hearing. This noise was a low groaning that came from his right, from the dismal marsh. It was easily seen that the marsh ran parallel alongside the path for quite a way but where exactly the noise had originated he could not discern. As the howl voiced itself again and again, it seemed to follow him however far he traveled; he heard the grim noise very plainly.

The horrific creatures that Klassen had seen before leaped into his mind as he viewed the astronomical contrast the drab marsh presented compared to the bright scene of vitality to his left. He thought that the monsters he encountered previously could easily be the originators of the sound and he felt it would be a service to the world to dispose of these vicious creatures, but his decision concerning this matter had already been decided. However, the mist itself wafted away from the marsh, extending its skeletal hand as if to draw him in. The mist increased in this attempt, as if alive, while the paladin watched in interest.

The paladin thought the fierce illumination and power of the sun would destroy the darkening effect that the mist brought with it, but it didn't. In fact, the area was becoming increasingly dark as

the vague vapors overcame the path. It was therefore difficult to see very far ahead and Klassen had to slow as a result. As the marsh cast its moist net upon the land, the sky, that was so clear mere moments ago, was quickly covered over by ebony clouds that predestined a thunderous storm. It seemed the Marsh of Doom wasn't confined to any boundaries.

A crash of thunder bellowed out its anger as the paladin trekked northward as fast as he thought prudent. The sky had been completely swarmed by the threatening clouds as rippling booms of thunder detonated more and more. Following these explosions were brilliant javelins of lightning that were tossed to and fro by the warring clouds. As portentous as this was, rain hadn't yet started to fall.

The sky was so overcast that it was nearly as dark as the black of night although the streaks of lightning provided plenty of light on occasion. It was, however, difficult to determine the exact time but Klassen thought it was perhaps afternoon. Amid the crackling from above, howling from his right, and general sense of doom, the path remained true and the paladin rode on for several hours without consequence until the path—as he knew it would—suddenly veered to the right, east.

Klassen had judiciously studied the map he had received and knew not only the general layout of the known world, but also the exact course he was to take on his trip. Therefore he knew that a small town named Mythembreux resided just a bit north of the path when it turned to the east. Consequently, he didn't stay on the path but cantered off towards the town; an especially catastrophic crash of the tempest voiced its disdain at this choice as the paladin moved away from the marsh.

Despite the ominous storm that had cooled the area off, it was still quite warm and therefore the sprinkling of water that finally greeted the paladin's face was quite welcome. It seemed rain would at last commence but Klassen saw a faint light in the distance that could only be the town and realized he wouldn't be caught in a downpour. He set off towards the light.

The paladin soon arrived at the specific light he saw and recognized the establishment as a bar and inn, which suited his needs well. He jumped off of his horse and tied it to a small wooden railing; the small overhead roof for his horse sheltered his goods although even without it his goods would have been perfectly fine. The fantastic material that housed his gear was waterproof and the horse was trained to ward off any potential thieves.

The bar itself was the first building that made up the town and was a full two stories of wooden craftsmanship. Penetrating the inner depths of Mythembreux was difficult but Klassen was able to make out a semblance of a town. A main path wound through the town with buildings of one or two stories running alongside it. No activity was seen nor were any other lights on in the town. He wondered how many and what type of people lived in such a gloomy area. As he entered the tavern, the storm finally released its rain, which pounded down in tremendous torrents.

As soon as Klassen entered the small amount of drunken laughter ceased and all eyes were glued to the majestic paladin. There were only three sets of eyes, two old patrons who were obviously inebriated and the middle-aged bartender. All were Nobilis; this brought a tranquil smile from the paladin. The lounge was simple but clean with several round wooden tables with accompanying chairs, a counter with stools, and surprisingly enough, no windows. Klassen crossed over to a barstool and sat down, his cape of nobility becoming ruffled in the process before correcting itself.

The bartender was leery of this new presence, but came over and softly asked, "What'll it be sir?"

The bartender wore a spacious brown tunic and looked aged beyond his years; wrinkles lined the man's face while the brown eyes seemed barely capable of life. It seemed the dismal breath of the marsh affected him as well as the rest of the town.

Klassen powerfully spoke with happiness despite the oppressive atmosphere, "Hello, my name is Klassen. I'll just have some water and something simple to eat. Do you have a spare room?"

The owner of the tavern was quite taken aback by the question but managed to answer, "Yes, I do and my name is Bieren. You want to stay *here*, though, sir?"

The paladin nodded as he gulped down the water that was hastily provided for him in a wooden mug. “Is there any reason why I shouldn’t want to stay here amid this thunderstorm?”

The barkeep glanced warily at the two patrons who were eagerly listening to the conversation. A bowl of slop was placed before the paladin while the question seemed to linger uncomfortably in the air. The barkeep’s eyes were kept low and before he could answer, one of the ancient drunks blurted out from across the room, “This town is haunted sir!”

The words rang out hollowly throughout the establishment. The look on all three of the citizens’ faces was one of dread that Klassen eyed carefully. Before long, the paladin erupted in laughter to the total astonishment of the others. Picking up his mug and bowl, he seated himself at the table with the two drunkards while asking the barkeep, “Won’t you join us Bieren?” He did, and the three looked curiously at the stranger.

“So who can tell me why you gentleman believe this town to be haunted?” asked the paladin.

The trio glanced at each other and the barkeep was chosen by a silent vote. Bieren spoke as if a creepy shadow from the nether world would extinguish his life if he uttered something offensive. “Well, sir, it all started many years ago when a powerful wizard came into the area. Although I don’t think anyone has ever seen him—”

The storyteller was interrupted by one of the drunks who proclaimed, “I’ve seen him! He is a terrible figure!” The accompanying drunk elbowed the interrupter harshly in the stomach while admonishing him for being a drunken fool; silence followed until the barkeeper continued.

“As I was saying, sir, no one to my knowledge has ever seen him, but we have felt his immense power. He haunts the area at night as well as during the day by this infernal fog. It is said that his spirit floats along with the fog!”

“So he lives in the marsh then?” inquired Klassen.

“Oh no, he lives up north a way, in the forest, sir. He lives in a cursed castle that no one has ever returned alive from! From there he uses his evil black magic to control the marsh. It is from the marsh that he created the horrible marsh monsters!”

The paladin, of course, didn’t believe much of anything that he heard but realized there might be some truth to what was being spoken. A logical explanation seemed easy for him to come to, but the others were deeply absorbed in Bieren’s narrative; they were grasped with a feeling of anguish. The mention of the marsh monsters cultivated Klassen’s interest and he inquired about them.

“What do these monsters from the marsh look like?”

One of the aged drinkers chimed in at this question, “They are as big as a house and have five heads! They can eat men like we eat carrots!” Another elbow ripped into this patron’s side while the other drunk spoke, “Don’t mind him, he doesn’t know what he is talking about. The monsters are as big as *two* houses and have *ten* heads!”

The paladin immediately discounted their exaggerations and listened to the barkeep give his account. “I’ve never seen one myself, sir, but I have heard accounts of them. They are reported to be black as midnight with eerie glowing eyes. It is said they look like big dogs, but I’ve never seen a dog like that. They are also supposed to have two heads.”

“So do they hunt around here then or stay in the marsh?” queried the paladin.

Murmurs were exchanged just as a clap of thunder rocked the building. The bartender responded, “Yes, sir, they hunt around here. I’ve personally seen a victim. It was a mutilated mess and one of the reasons why so few people live here anymore. The corpse was torn apart but it didn’t bother me much as it was only a beast.”

As can be expected, this caught the interest of the paladin. He delved further, “So you’ve only seen one victim and it was merely a beast? An imp or hobgoblin or what?”

“It was a hobgoblin I think, sir, but who really cares about those filthy creatures?”

“There aren’t many beasts here then?”

The trio laughed at this and it was the first time since Klassen had been there that they had shattered their doomed expressions. After their refreshing laughter had died down, Bieren spoke, "There aren't any beasts here any more, sir. There aren't many Nobilismen though either. The beasts aren't welcome here in the town, nor in my bar! They are disgusting and bring filth and crime."

Klassen's smile enlarged as he asked, "They have been here then?"

"Oh yes sir, they were here some years ago. Of course they destroyed the town, but we rebuilt as best we could. See, the beasts are even more superstitious than we are and were scared witless with the events that occur around here. Once that infernal Universal Church left, we weren't forced to accept the beasts any more so that was the end of that. The haunting by that ole wizard though, has kept the town from really becoming anything."

Although this "wizard" was intriguing, Klassen felt it was an opportune time to enlighten his comrades about the wonder of the Honor Brigade and Imperium Castle. With the eloquence he had sharpened with his learning, the paladin painted the virtues of honor and wonderful paradise of honor that he had come from. The gloomy atmosphere that pervaded the bar seemed to be ripped away as the paladin spoke. The men were entranced by the tale and happiness was plain in their features; it looked like it had been quite some time since such a feeling had visited these comrades.

One of the drunks in obvious awe spoke softly, "There is actually a place like that? I thought you could only find places like that in books."

Klassen nodded in assent as he produced an Honor Brigade flier with its laws. After they examined it, he asked, "What do you gentleman think?"

The three were unanimous in their agreement that the Honor Brigade was fantastic; there seemed little doubt that the impressive figure the paladin presented influenced this decision. Klassen noted the map on the back of the flier and was pleased that the message of honor was so well received. However, he didn't push the issue as he had learned that if these compatriots were genuinely interested they would do something about it. As such, he changed the subject.

"How do I meet this 'wizard'?"

As fast as the air of joviality had greeted the bar, it slithered away into dreadful shock. The three comrades sitting across from Klassen looked on with touching concern; the paladin appreciated their unspoken compassion but said nothing as he waited.

Breaking the silence was a drunkard who exclaimed with a voice of warning, "You can't meet him! He would destroy you like he has the others!"

The paladin calmly smiled and though he felt repulsed by the supernatural remark that a child might utter, looked at the barkeep. Finally, Bieren spoke in answer, "Sir you can simply keep following the northern path that runs throughout the town and into the woods; it will take you to that cursed place, but like the old man says, you can't! Such a noble knight like yourself can't be wasted! Maybe you'd like to live here and protect us, but go up there...?"

"Thank you for the offer comrade!" proclaimed Klassen. "However, I am on a mission to spread honor and can't stay at this time. You would of course be very safe at Imperium Castle, but that is your choice. How much did you say that room was Bieren?"

"For you, it's free sir."

"Are you sure? I have gold and can pay."

"Don't worry about it sir. You are an honored guest!"

The townsmen showed much promise and the paladin was pleased with his success so far. Thanking the gracious host, Klassen hurriedly finished his meal before rising to his feet. As soon as he ascended, the room became like a funeral of mourning. Despite the opposing and impressive figure that the armed warrior radiated, overpowering and mendacious superstition claimed the patrons and owner. The drunkards moaned and lamented with tears of anguish coursing down their cheeks. The bartender was more composed but the sense of doom was similarly reflected in his face that became even more wrinkled.

The pathetic scene was repugnant to Klassen's mind of valorous heroism and life in reality. He was hard pressed to not visibly show his hatred but he managed as he knew that it was the Universal Church's—or more accurately the perfidious orcs'—fault even though they weren't even living in the town. The paladin hoped that it wasn't too late to cure the malicious malady that had infected these older kinsmen; it would take time but surely he felt it was possible.

With extreme deftness Klassen pulled his gargantuan sword from its scabbard in one smooth motion and thrust it overhead. It seemed as though the sword was so mighty that it collided with the clouds as a crackling rip of thunder boomed in response to his action.

With a powerful roar, the paladin shouted, “What puny wizard could possibly defeat me!?”

Chapter XIII

The rain pounded down, wave upon wave, with no end to the drenching in sight. Columns of the liquid splashed downward, adding to the gloom that permeated the town of Mythembreux. The cabins and buildings that made up the town looked deserted although they persevered through the thunderous assault. The soil around and about was becoming more and more swollen with the droppings, making travel slower through the burgeoning rivers.

Amid the inclement demonstration of nature's power, Klassen rode through the town listening to the pitter-patter of raindrops that sounded of metallic origin. This was for good reason as he had donned his helmet to keep his face dry. This adornment added a vicious element of truculence to his appearance. Any bystander viewing the adventurer trotting through the town would undoubtedly be more terrified of he than any "wizard" or any other such supernatural creature. What person, what tough warrior even, would not cower in terror at the mere vision of the horned knight?

The town was quite tiny and despite the rough weather and soggy obstacles, horse and rider quickly escaped its confines. The horse pushed through without trouble nor did Klassen experience any difficulties despite being quite wet; it was still rather warm so this discomfort didn't bother the paladin whatsoever.

The path narrowed and the mist that dominated the town began to slowly dissipate. Moving away from the town and its sole source of light, however, limited Klassen's range of vision; when a burst of electrical lightning flashed, the area shined with an eerie look that made it look like a demented day; this was a fleeting illumination and one hard to be guided by. Nonetheless, the horse was sure-footed and had little difficulty cantering onward even when the forest was encountered and the path became a trail suitable for no more than a couple of travelers.

Klassen's view was slightly improved when he lifted his visor upon entering the woods, and he saw how powerfully the forest was related to the gloomy town. The thunderstorm's full force wasn't felt under this roof of leaves but the verdant customary of nature was blackened by the bleak sky of torment. It was easy to see why the town had been virtually deserted on this account alone; even the path slithered about like some poisonous snake seeking a victim.

With the lessening of rain provided by the natural covering above, Klassen contemplated what he had heard at the town. He had learned that most myths and legends had some basis of truth in them, but normally they were exaggerated into ridiculousness. Surely he believed the "wizard" could exist but he had a tough time envisioning this figure being the cause of the woes of the town. Creating monsters and haunting the town was simply ludicrous although he could see how such stories could take root in such a place, especially with the philosophy of superstition that traveled the realm. Thus, he endeavored to dig up the flowers of truth from the dunghill of falsehood.

The path he was following was actually on the map given to Klassen, although what exactly it led to wasn't mentioned. So it seemed to the paladin that something would most likely be at the end of the winding path and someone very well could live there. Who it might be he wasn't sure but he hoped to know soon enough. The detour didn't seem a large one, and he felt confident that he would be well on his way to visiting Alianna by the next day. Besides, he thought, solving the mystery of the "wizard" could very well prompt those he had met to join the Honor Brigade so he thought his actions well justified.

Whatever power this "wizard" might be capable of, the paladin saw no reason to believe he was spawning monsters. The deadly creatures of the Marsh of Doom were, however, very real to Klassen since he had encountered them personally. It didn't seem like they were really plaguing the town, though, as the bartender had only mentioned one attack and that was towards a beast. So he didn't see much danger arising from the dark depths of the marsh, outside the natural, dank gloom that emanated from its confines.

As if Mother Nature dared to prove the paladin wrong, a soft snap of unknown origin was barely heard above the pelting of rain. Klassen looked around but in vain: the darkness was so encompassing that he had no hope of seeing any creature that wished to remain hidden. In fact, gazing forward into the ebony curtain of air, he wondered how the animal he rode was making its way along the path at all. The horse seemed guided by some unseen hand that placed hoof after hoof in the proper sequence along the trail. Readying himself for an engagement despite his poor vision, he trusted his horse to guide him.

The sound didn't return, which Klassen deciphered to mean that either it was nothing or something keeping silent more adroitly. Although only occasionally did a brief splash of lightning make the forest look like a den of haunting many-limbed specters, the paladin became aware of the slow climb the slippery trail took. It was still winding this way and that but he was rising and after a few moments of ascent, he caught a glimpse of something to break the monotony of despondency: a faint glimmer up ahead.

This light, which was barely visible in the harsh conditions, didn't appear to be very far away and glowed with an odd greenish hue. The illumination didn't look like a typical fire but the paladin thought that his impaired vision might be held accountable for this. This strange sight wasn't far, but it seemed odd to Klassen that it provided him the luxury of better eyesight. As such, he increased his pace as he advanced towards it, splashing through the mud as he went.

Promptly he reached the outskirts of what he thought was surely his destination. The rain assaulted him more fiercely here for he was now bereft of the cover of trees; he swung his visor down. The clearing he had entered glowed with a strange phosphorescent life that seemed threatened to be swallowed by the tormenting maw of the depressing forest; oddly enough he felt this place actually thrived in the midst of such a threat. Greeting the entrance to this realm was a muddy route accompanied by a row of poles on either side that breathed brightness.

As Klassen approached this eerie welcoming party, he was impressed by his horse's demeanor, which remained unaffected by the despairing spectacles of forlorn misery they had seen. He was further impressed as he got a good look at the poles he came across. They climbed almost to the top of his head and were made of a strange whitish material that he recognized as neither metal nor wood. What was it? The tops of the poles were even more fascinating though. Firstly, they emitted a green light without a fire and simply seemed to glow. How this was possible, he knew not. Most alarming about the sight, however, was that the heads of the poles were exactly that: skulls of the dead.

This realization put Klassen more on alert than the sound that he had heard before. The paladin could easily see how this "wizard" might get a fearsome reputation and how some could die of shock from such a sight. He put his hand on his sword just in case the shocking sight was a portent of things to come. Despite his disbelief in superstition, he found it easy to create terrific demons in his mind that defied the immutable laws of nature; nonetheless he disregarded the validity of such creatures instantly.

As the horse and rider rode onward, both were tensed for battle. The scenes of death increased as the bone of a leg or an arm were scattered about in disarray. It looked as though an army of cannibals had resided in the area and had thrown the bones away after eating the meat from them. The way the bones were so disconnected made the paladin think that surely the victims had either been eaten or ritualistically dismembered. This chilling thought was one where he believed vengeance would be in order although the specifics would need to be known in order to cast judgment. From the look of things, that might be impossible though as the skeletal remains looked quite old as many were half buried.

The building that would presumably be the home of the potential cannibals saluted Klassen as he made his way towards it. Upon seeing it he realized it had been visible for quite some time but he hadn't noticed it in his concentration of his own security. Before he knew it the paladin was situated right at its base; it seemed to him strange how swiftly it had approached him. He halted his horse and looked around.

The structure rose threateningly into the black chasm of the storm. Towers adorned with the fangs of monstrous creatures jutted upwards in many places while pictures of demons and horrendous slaughter were flung about on the walls. Here and there perched horrific-looking gargoyles that looked like they could, at any moment, break free of the confines that held them imprisoned to the building. Again, the material was a strange white substance, but now the entire construction was bathed in the strange green glow. This obscurity that surrounded the structure that looked like it might devour him, made determining the exact dimensions nigh impossible. The paladin's curiosity drove him forward to examine things more closely.

Getting a closer view only further mystified Klassen as to what the substance was and how it might glow like it did. Here and there he saw bulges in the walls, some small and some larger. A few small ones simply looked like rocks but when he looked at a larger one, everything seemed to fall into place in this demonic mire of despair. The large bulge was no mere rock; it was a skull.

The awareness of what this discovery meant sent a tingle of eerie fascination along Klassen's body. As horrific as this discovery might be, the realization that the poles and even an entire building were somehow made of bone, related a sense of awesome power. All evidence that he had gathered led to a dastardly evil power, but nonetheless it was an immense power.

The paladin was thoroughly soaked by the storm that gave no indication of an end in sight, but Klassen moved not at all as a strange enthrallment enveloped him. His brief period of thralldom was broken by a further mystery he wished to solve. He stretched his arm out to touch the wall and perhaps learn from this action how it glowed but he was rudely interrupted.

A tremendous noise that resembled a combination of thunder and a mighty growl echoed powerfully, halting Klassen's inspection. The sound was so loud that it even bested a crash of thunder in volume. Where it had come from was extremely difficult for the paladin to figure out, as it seemed to emanate from the structure before him, the sky above him, and the forest that surrounded him.

In one swift metallic motion, the paladin ripped his sword from its case and scanned about for what he thought the howl to be: a monster of the marsh. His horse responded admirably and wasn't cowered in the least by the harrowing noise that would have probably scared the skeletons that dotted the landscape, had they been alive.

Rushing around looking for a duel to the death was the magnificent warrior that was Klassen. He sprinted off in one direction only to find nothing but cascading rain and dreariness. Other directions he pursued but they beget the same disappointment. All the way around the towering peaks of his cloistered destination did he ride but after completing the circle, he was still at a loss to explain the noise.

As he glared intently around, the booming rumble of a growl again reverberated throughout the clearing. Klassen's first instinct was to race around again but reason caught up with him and he looked ahead at the emerald structure in scrutiny. The noise died away; did it come from the tower?

As if in answer to this unspoken question, the growl was heard over and over again, proving to Klassen where it came from. The noise was irritating and omnipresent. The paladin withstood the storm of caustic racket with composure and, with some work, his horse did as well. The surrounding tempest was fierce but it was petty compared to the writhing, churning hurricane that raged inside the dark blue waters of Klassen's eyes. Anger enveloped the paladin as he realized how he had been toyed with upon his arrival, but now he wished to even the score and find out who had annoyed him so, but he saw no entrance.

After the sound finally died away and the sound of rain tapping away returned, Klassen raised his sword and screamed fiercely, "Let me in 'wizard'!"

No response was forthcoming and the paladin wondered whether the "wizard" heard him or cared to heed his proclamation if he did. Klassen had navigated completely around the glowing building and had seen absolutely no sign of how one might enter, but he looked again as he was determined to complete his goal now that he was so close to its fruition. Before he had a chance to do more inspection, however, a retort was made to his demand that wasn't verbal.

Slamming to the ground with a thud was an opening that was undoubtedly a drawbridge. The chains that supported it could be plainly seen while the glowing platform of bone was just as evident. Klassen hopped off of his mount, sword in hand, and led his horse through the opening. As he entered, he saw the eyes and nose of some horrendous fiend painted above the opening, while the drawbridge itself would have comprised the maw.

The hall that he entered was very black and only partially illumined by the glow outside. From what Klassen could make it, it was quite spacious, as fitting for a castle. What occupied the space in front of him, Klassen found it impossible to ascertain. So where he might go wasn't clear but before he could contemplate this matter fully, a sound of metal grating against metal was heard culminating in a loud thud that doused the room's faint brightness.

The paladin, as alert as he was, was unable to prevent what had happened behind him: the drawbridge had been retracted with a swiftness he thought incredible. This action increased his execration at being toyed with as he intently wished to smash the sorry scamp that lorded over the demonic manor. The closing of the egress left the hall blanketed in silence as the sounds of the storm were completely blocked out.

The silence didn't last long, however, as it was interrupted by a metallic echoing that seemed to emanate from the very walls. "Come...Forward...Leave...Horse..."

Instinctively the paladin looked around to find the mysterious speaker but it was a fruitless gesture due to the pervasive cloak of darkness. Who was this mysterious speaker and on what authority could he order him, Klassen? The paladin endeavored to find out. Scrambling about with his gear, Klassen exchanged the helmet he wore for his mighty crossbow that he latched to his belt. Making sure his dagger was also at his belt, he started forward, still wielding the mighty blade *Ehredegen*.

Klassen used his lengthy sword to poke forward to see what lay ahead. Before going but a few koms, something grazed his right thigh. Immediately he wheeled to his right and brutally kicked in that direction. Something sturdy burst into bits and tumbled onto the floor; he realized it was a stone floor by the sound the object made upon crashing. Whatever he had crushed was surely smashed but it hadn't been a threat to him anyway; he resumed his course.

The paladin heard the heavy breathing of his steed slowly fade away and beyond the occasional dripping of rain from his body onto the floor, silence reigned supreme. Even when an unexpected action occurred directly in front of Klassen, it was without sound. A soft rush of stale air flew at the paladin, making him duck in expectation of an attack. None came, however, and while swinging his sword forward, heard a knock to the right and the left as the blade hit two hard objects. He quickly assessed that it was a doorway and that indicated where the wind had come from. He entered.

Again he felt a rush of wind, only this time it was from behind and Klassen realized this meaning as well. The metallic voice returned with the simple command of, "Right." The paladin saw no other choice, so he grudgingly complied.

The inexplicable events that were transpiring around him would most likely have greatly intrigued him, as there were many mysteries to be explained, had it not been for the "wizard." Being ordered around like a mangy mutt made the paladin's skin emanate the very anger that he felt. When he discovered what felt like a wooden chair in his path, he vented this animosity by flinging the object across the room, where it sounded like it exploded upon hitting a wall.

Just like the door before, Klassen felt a rush of wind; entered the door; and the door closed. The all-too-familiar voice returned and spoke, "Left."

Being led around like a mouse in a maze infuriated the paladin to such an extent that he was forced to pause for a moment. He felt like rushing forward but thought the better of this rash decision for a trap could be placed anywhere within the bleak labyrinth he was imprisoned in. The voice repeated its command as if goading Klassen into a further state of agitation. Beyond his desire to smash the skull of his unseen adversary, the one thought predominating his mind was this: what power did this "wizard" possess to allow him to control things like he did? However, this

inquiry spawned others. How could he see? How could he project his voice so far? How did he open and shut the doors?

Realizing he wasn't going to find the answer to his queries without venturing on, he turned left and walked forward. Although he felt impelled to run with dashing speed, the paladin restrained himself and moved cautiously along. As it turned out, there was no need for this and Klassen passed through another door in the same manner as before.

Before another command could be issued to the paladin, he felt behind him for the door that had closed, seemingly on its own accord. It was a wooden door. Grunting out his frustration and looking to flex his muscles for the benefit of his unseen foe, Klassen wheeled around and delivered a devastating blow with his foot that knocked the door off of its hinges and into a total state of disrepair.

Delighted at this display, the paladin roared out, "Where are you 'wizard'?"

The metallic voice replied instantly, "Here." Arming his crossbow with his left hand and holding his sword in the right, Klassen scanned the chamber or darkness. All around did he look until he finally spotted a light; it came from above.

Klassen's heart was thumping rapidly as he prepared—finally—for a duel. His muscles were loose and ready to be flung into action with a moment's notice. The weapons he was equipped with were devastatingly powerful and he was therefore able to deal death quite easily. All he needed was a foe and that he now had; the paladin smiled in belligerent glee.

Accompanying the faint glow from above were billowing clouds of smoke that soon encased the floor of the room. As this happened a creaking sound was heard as the figure above was slowly lowered into the room. As it came into view, Klassen saw that the figure stood upon a glowing platform of bone, which he presumed was supported by chains, although they were invisible to his eye. Before long, the "wizard" had descended all the way down to Klassen's level upon the floor where the paladin scrutinized him in wrathful fury.

The being that stood before the paladin was bedecked in a capacious red robe that was adorned with arcane symbols that glowed of jade. It was therefore hard to ascertain the exact size of the being, but Klassen thought him to be of average size and perhaps lean of build. The figure was weaponless although he did wield a staff of bone that held a glimmering skull upon its top. Most striking, however, was the contorted mask he wore of some mythical demon, possessing glowing fangs and eyes.

His adversary made no hostile action, as it seemed the horrid display of his figure was hostile enough, but Klassen hesitated in destroying the creature. "Who are you?" shouted the paladin, tensed for battle. The only response he received was the mask twisting to the side slightly as if the figure didn't understand.

Pointing his crossbow at the enemy while holding his sword aloft, Klassen voiced his building rage, "Speak or die!"

Any movement that in anyway appeared hostile would have prompted a deadly bolt to be fired, but none came. The mysterious figure calmly walked over to a table that the paladin hadn't even previously noticed. The "wizard" sat down and uttered words that completely disarmed the paladin and forced his anger back down into the depths of his soul.

The words were jubilant and they sounded very young: "Ha ha ha."

Chapter XIV

Upon removing his mask, the figure's features were recognized as obviously Nobilis but this wasn't as surprising as the age of the man. His voice had sounded so young and playful but his body was obviously aged as he had long, white hair and a wrinkle here and there sprinkled across his visage. He was clean-shaven with gray eyes that exuded the youthfulness in his heart. The figure was not imposing whatsoever and Klassen was reminded of his mentor of old, Aristotle.

"Come, sit down. My name is Mecolier," spoke the man just as the room was flooded with light, the normal light of many torches. With a suspicious glance, Klassen accepted the invitation as all the destructive impulses that he had held only but a few moments before had been completely doused. The kindness exuded by Mecolier made the paladin think that the whole charade he had experienced was simply for show. Klassen also thought perhaps it was simply a trick and kept on guard despite returning his weapons to their positions of rest.

Now that the room was properly illuminated with the smoke fading slowly away, the paladin saw an enormous library with many, many bookshelves. Books adorned these shelves from the base of the floor to the heights above. It was therefore impossible to simply grab a tome from the top shelf but a large ladder leaned against the shelf, solved this problem. Other than this, the long table Klassen now sat at was the only other item of note. The table itself had many chairs and could easily seat twenty comrades; the woodwork was admirable.

Before Klassen could utter any words, Mecolier became very animated and spoke rapidly, "Ah-ha! Impressive, isn't it? What is your name? Why have you come here? How did you get here? Who told you about me? How long shall you stay?"

Under the deluge of questions, Klassen felt as though a child living in an old man's body was questioning him. The curiosity was refreshing, however, especially when the paladin knew so many who cared not about the sacred virtue of knowledge. He promptly answered Mecolier's questions and was actually enjoying his presence even though he had wanted so badly to decapitate him only moments ago.

Before the paladin could turn the conversation, Mecolier leaped into a dialogue of his own, "I suppose you are wondering why I was toying with you, eh? Well, I get so few visitors here and most that come anywhere near my fine inhabitation are worthless dolts who need to be slaughtered. As such, I deplore them and scare them away! That is, those that even made it to my door, ha ha ha. Anyway, where was I? Oh yes. I had you going for a while but you surely aren't like the others, impressive! I had to test you and you surely aren't one of those scamps that so numerously proliferate around the globe!"

Klassen was about to thank the man and show his understanding, when the robed figure took a deep breath and continued, "Oh? Yes, of course you want to know all about my 'magic,' eh? Well you already know that that is nonsense and it is really called 'science'. I have many nifty gadgets that sure scare some of the more superstitious folk! Ha ha ha. I will tell you some of my secrets but not all, no, not all. However, you must give me your word of honor to not reveal what I tell you! Do you agree?"

The paladin was overwhelmed by the speed with which his adversary-become-friend was speaking. It seemed as though Mecolier would be quite comfortable and able, to speak with five different kinsmen at once. His talk of honor was, of course, most welcome to the noble ears of Klassen and the paladin thus nodded at his question and replied with the Honor Salute: "Honor is Life."

With eager ears, the paladin listened to his friend continue talking, "Ah-ha! I like that. 'Honor is Life.' Yes, that is impressive. Philosophy is such a grand subject and honor, well honor is as you say: life. It reminds me of the words of a philosopher; which one you ask? Oh, one of them

that I like whatever his name is. Anyway, it goes something like this: 'to live alone one must be an animal, god, or philosopher.' I live alone so which am I? Perhaps all three, perhaps.

"So what were we speaking of? Was it the laws of buoyancy? Oh, no, no. Ah-ha! It was secrets, yes, yes. In order to undertake that journey we should start from the beginning. Well, not exactly the beginning, that was oh-so-many years ago. We shall start from my journey to this grandiose place, as I'm sure you'd like to hear about that first; it leads up to my secrets anyway. You'd like that, eh? Of course."

The paladin nodded but he knew his new friend would have continued on with or without his approval. Klassen was enthralled listening to this comrade, this scholar really. The storm of ideas that must have raged in Mecolier's mind was staggering to think of, so the paladin relaxed and serenely listened to the narrative, enjoying it mightily.

Continuing in his youthful, slightly high-pitched voice, Mecolier said, "It was many, many years ago and I was very disgusted with all those horrible beasts. You know the ones: imps, hobgoblins, ogres, and orcs. They really annoyed me! Yes, yes I can tell you hate them too; you have that look. Then of course there was that disgusting Universal Church. They are all backwards, they are! I can see that you disagree with that repulsive creed as well, just by the look of you. Trying to talk sense into those moronic imbeciles was nearly impossible, nearly so I know; sure it is possible but I had better things to do with my time! Living in Mythembreux I heard the tales of this 'haunted' castle; I had to check it out. Perhaps did I think, there would be some reasonable people to be found.

"It was a cold winter day, or was it a cold summer day? Hmm, maybe it was a warm winter day; whatever it was, it was a day. When I discovered all these skeletons I was frozen to almost death; yes I know it may be hard to believe, but yes I was! I managed though and came to the drawbridge, which, for me, was down so I entered.

"The place was only inhabited by the skeletons that had died many, many years ago. Oh, and yes, yes, yes! The walls *are* made of bone! Now, of course you want to know how they did this and why. Well, from the many tomes that surround us I learned much. They tell me the *how* but unless you are a mason, it will be nonsense to you. You don't look like a mason though, eh? No, you aren't."

Klassen seized the chance to join the conversation when his friend paused to take a gulp of air. "I'm not a mason, but I am skilled in carpentry."

Although the paladin was intently interested in the scholar's tale of discovery, Mecolier was led off in a different path by Klassen's words. "Ah-ha carpentry! Impressive," the robed figure said. "You can then appreciate the mechanics of this place, oh, no, no. What was it we were talking about? Oh! The fine craftsmanship of this table and many other pieces of furniture you can admire. That includes the chair and door you broke! Ha ha ha."

"What about your discovery of this castle?" questioned Klassen.

"Oh, yes that is a fine story indeed. As I was saying, it was a day, yes a day, many years ago. The bones were scattered about pretty much as you see them today. We now come to the who, what, when, and why, eh? This is interesting indeed! I have to go though, be back in a bit!"

With this statement the scholar sprang out of his seat and dashed to the back of the room and exited through a door. Klassen was stunned by this disappearance at the height of his friend's story. Where had he gone and why? The paladin wasn't sure but decided to take a look around the massive library.

There were so many tomes of knowledge neatly organized upon the shelves that Klassen's desire to learn of the mystery of the castle was increased even further. He anxiously awaited the return of the figure who would enlighten him upon this matter, but come back swiftly he did not. As such, he browsed through the books that ranged from astronomy to zoology and many, if not all, subjects in between.

So much time passed that the paladin started to grow wary of Mecolier as he recalled the hatred that had only recently been extinguished. The warm and gentle old man surfaced in his mind,

though, and absolved any thoughts of treachery. However, Klassen would remain on alert to any suspicious activity.

Every book the paladin came across reminded him of the tremendous conundrum that shrouded everything about him, including the air he breathed. Nonetheless, when he came across a novel of heroism and adventure, he was intrigued and sat down with his discovery. Figuring he had no better way to spend his time, the paladin dove into his wonderful find.

If anything could have taken the paladin's mind away from the exciting enigmas around him, it was a heroic epic. The clash of sword and promotion of honor always attracted him and this was no exception. However, before he had reached any fervent fits of war, the eccentric hermit reappeared. Dashing forward did he while carrying a plate filled with food and drink; he placed it on the table and seated himself.

"Here is some nourishment for us both," said he. "Ah-ha! I see you have a book of honorable heroism; it befits you indeed. When I saw all the beautiful books here I was astounded and overwhelmed. I was a mere lad at that time, you see. I could barely read but surrounded by so many books (and bones!) one does learn. As you surely know, I've read many hundreds, (or is it thousands?) of books. My favorite type of book you ask? Well, that is tough. I like science but is that my favorite? No, no not indeed. I, well, let's just say I like all genres!

"Philosophy is a quaint little subject. 'The uninformed person is a dark world unto himself,' so saith the graceful philosopher. Also, of course, 'Perfection requires polish,' by the same enlightened soul. The laws of mechanics, gravity, and natural selection are interesting as well. Excuse me for a moment."

Mecolier used this pause to completely devour the food and drink he had provided. Klassen, conversely, stopped eating as he contemplated what he had heard. Some of things, which the hermit spoke of, he had never before heard of and wondered whether they were even known back at Imperium Castle. What, for instance, was gravity? The paladin was intrigued by this foreign word but thought better of asking of it, as he was more interested in a topic of a different nature.

"So what shall we discuss?" questioned Mecolier, as he eyes darted about as swiftly as his speech. They clamped on a matter of fascination and he began talking, in answer to his own question. "Ah-ha! That is impressive and a good topic to discuss. May I see that fine crossbow?"

"Oh, sure comrade," replied the paladin as he handed the hermit the weapon. "Be careful with this great weapon though."

With a child-like enchantment Mecolier turned the weapon about as he admired its construction. By the look on his face, the multiple bolts that were armed were of special interest. He swung the weapon around which made Klassen duck instinctively although it was obvious that the hermit had no hostile intention; he was simply in his own world of concentration. Taking aim, a bolt was fired into a chair at the end of the table; it punched through the back of the chair and buried itself into the wall of bone.

Handing the weapon back to the paladin, the hermit pronounced, "Impressive and effective weapon! How was it constructed? Who built it? How effective is it in battle?"

The paladin was slightly amused as his friend was actually refraining from any action other than mere waiting. "I can't say how exactly it was constructed but it was built by the Honor Brigade. From my training experience this crossbow is quite effective!"

"Oh? The Honor Brigade? Where oh where have I heard that before? Or have I? It reminds me of this castle in a way, but that can wait until later, yes, yes. Does this Honor Brigade have more weapons of destruction? I hope so as they can crush the infidel dogs!"

The garbled speech of the scholar was a bit confusing to Klassen and he wondered whether Mecolier was even sure of what he spoke. Nevertheless, the old man seemed quite warlike and good-natured, good things thought the paladin.

Withdrawing his gigantic sword, Klassen held this mighty blade aloft as he answered his friend's inquiry, "Yes, we have magnificent weapons! Here, try out my blade *Ehredegen*."

The paladin extended the sword with his right hand, across the table, and into the outstretched hands of the hermit; Mecolier grasped it with both hands. As soon as Klassen's great strength was withdrawn from the colossal sword, it smashed downwards onto the table with a violent thud. Mustering up all his reservoirs of power, Mecolier barely managed to lift the sword from the table but it wavered unsteadily and collapsed back upon the table. The mighty instrument of devastation was promptly returned to its owner.

"Indeed, that is an impressive weapon! Quite heavy too! Ha ha ha. Do all the warriors from the Honor Brigade look like you? What is its goal? Where is this place? How do I get there? How do I join? Ah-ha this is an impressive day!" said Mecolier with much enthusiasm.

With mellifluous speech Klassen related to the hermit the plenary details about the Honor Brigade. The eyes of Mecolier had a natural tendency to dart about in deep thought but they were firmly rooted to the paladin as he talked. A flier materialized in the scholar's hands at the conclusion of the lesson; Mecolier examined it meticulously. It was devoured instantly and before long the confabulation continued.

"Ha ha ha. Impressive this Honor Brigade and Imperium Castle is!" exclaimed Mecolier passionately. "Ironically enough, yes, yes, ironically indeed, it reminds me of the Order of Darkness. That is jumping ahead and we don't want to do that, oh no. It sounds like oh-so-sweet sonorous sound, does this establishment of honor. Protect and promote the virtuous ideals! Oh! Did you see any of those annoying marsh creatures about? The ones with two heads I mean."

With ardor, the paladin exclaimed, "I have seen them! They are hideous and foul but I haven't seen any since I left the marsh. Why?"

"Ah-ha! You are as brave as you look to have entered that marsh, the Marsh of Doom," replied the hermit. "Yes, why do I ask? It is because of acid, or rather alkaline. Anyway, I have conveniently placed some tasty little traps, or perhaps morsels would be a better word for them. As much as most people sicken me, as they are pathetic rascals, I feel a kinship with the town of Mythembreux. Yes, I know 'tis odd. But what am I? Ha ha ha. As you may know, no you probably wouldn't know, but who is to say? Those foul beasts of the night were plaguing the town, not my glowing abode, mind you, as they can't stand the light. How light is it outside? Not too bright is it? Where was I?"

The paladin smiled at this display as he was beholding a mind that was led astray by the simplest things but was obviously brilliant. "The monsters of the marsh," Klassen guided.

"Ah, yes of course, how silly of me," the hermit said. "Well, I saw them lurking about some time ago, in my own forest, can you believe it!? I came to realize that they would also be contaminating the town as well. Methought perhaps they'd make a good pet but their caustic nature was a bit offensive: such bad breath! So one day, it was day, of course, since they hate the day; I took a nice little hike down to the marsh and spread some of my treats along the outskirts of that oh-so-dreary bog. How can anyone live in such a place? I live in a paradise compare to that. Now, where was I? Yes! how did I know they'd like it, you ask? Well I had tested the bait already and they liked it so much they died of delight! Ha ha ha. I haven't seen those creatures in ages although I do spread more treats for them every so often.

"How can anyone live in that marsh? It is so tenebrous and unlike my paradise here. But oh! might you know how much the citizens of Mythembreux appreciate my efforts at keeping them from harm?"

The paladin was pleasantly surprised to learn of the goodwill towards the townsfolk but unfortunately they didn't reciprocate the feeling. Mecolier raised his eyebrow in inquiry as he saw the hesitancy from the paladin. Nonetheless, Klassen spoke, "I commend you on your service to the good Nobilis people in Mythembreux. However, they believe that you are the source of the monsters and cause of ill-will in the town."

“Ha ha ha, surely you must jest. They can’t be that dull, can they? Oh it is true; I see it in your visage; you can’t lie, after all! Such ungrateful, miserable blackguards! ’Tis to be expected though, yes, yes. They’ve been poisoned and must think of me as some malefic ‘wizard’ as you called me. They are like little toddlers, they are. Hopefully this creed of honor of yours can help them see through the benighted misery! ‘Such is life.’”

Mecolier looked intently at the paladin as if reading a book, “I see what you think my friend. Oh yes! I do. You think I’d make a good addition to the Honor Brigade and methinks I would too. Perhaps I shall go, at least for a visit; it sure sounds nice. For now, though, I see that you have a world to preach to. I could talk all day, especially about my engineering gadgets like my lift here or the drawbridge improvements I made or the doors you came through or how I saw you; this is my specialty. You are an adventurer, though, and now I must, yes must, tell you the history of this place. Your desire for it burns deeply, very deeply I see. First let me take a little break. Ha ha ha. Just a joke!”

The trenchant comments by the hermit were so true of Klassen that the paladin wondered for just a second whether the man sitting across from him did possess some super-power. He realized, though, was simply swift, keen acumen that he was experiencing first-hand.

“Now,” exclaimed the scholar, “we come to the juicy part of our conversation. The history of this place is contained within some of the books located around us; yes I read a lot. It improves the mind it does, but what else should I do? Many topics are covered in this library’s innards but oh! the history of the Order of Darkness is perhaps the most fascinating. Yes, I said the Order of Darkness and yes the Honor Brigade is similar to that ancient, defunct order.

“Their tale starts hundreds of years ago and they, like the Honor Brigade, were disgusted with the prevailing attitudes of dishonor. As a response the group was formed, yes just a group, only five members. Their ways were considered ‘evil’ and ‘dark’ by the despicable masses and they decided to live up to that attitude. They *would* be evil to the masses! Holding righteous values that we would oh yes! call ‘holy,’ they accepted the label of ‘evil’. Thus, the Order of Darkness was formed.

“They were persecuted, oh my what persecution! They were thrown from the society like dogs, or was it like vermin? How did the author put it? Nevertheless, the group tended to attract outcasts but they only accepted the elite; thus they were a small group, never more than one hundred souls. They came here to this castle, the Castle of Darkness.

“Did the miserable masses leave them alone? Oh no, no! Many miniature battles were fought, yes many. The bones you see scattered about were from those skirmishes! It took many moons, many indeed, but they finally erected this castle from the bones of their dishonorable foes. As you can imagine many were slaughtered! Ha ha ha. Would have been nice to see, eh?”

“Once the place was erected in all its frightening appearances, no more did the foe come. Did you see that green glow? Of course you did, what I am talking about. Wait a moment, what *am* I talking about? Hmm, the anatomy of a bat with their peculiar method of ‘sight,’ perhaps? No, no I can see it in your face; it was the glow. That was a strange substance they made from glowing rocks, yes they glowed! It is a liquid and some was left behind. I used it for my stunning robe, as you can plainly see.”

Klassen was enthralled by the odd tale he was hearing and was savoring every word that his friend spoke, even those that were completely irrelevant to the matter at hand. To think that such an order had existed so long ago and had been so different in appearance, yet so alike in content to the Honor Brigade, fascinated the excited paladin. The pause, which Mecolier was forced to take due to necessity of breathing, increased Klassen’s enthusiast anticipation to the climax of the tale he was hearing.

After digesting the vital element of air, Mecolier continued his rapid narrative, “So now you ask what became of the Order of Darkness. That, my friend, is an excellent question! I have read tome after tome but where oh where did these paragons fly to? Did they die? It doesn’t appear that they were conquered here for the place was in spectacular condition when I found it, yes spectacular.

Did they simply leave? Possible, but why? It is like a paradox! Oh wait, what is a paradox? Maybe a conundrum, perhaps. Hmm, well, I am sorry to disappoint you, but I know not what became of them: it is a mystery.”

The paladin was visibly disappointed but hope gleamed in his eye as he probingly questioned, “Are you sure you don’t know? Are you just joking?”

Surprisingly, Mecolier didn’t verbally respond but simply shook his head to reply in the negative. This startled Klassen but he knew what it signified. He could contemplate the plethora of possibilities surrounding the Castle of Darkness later; the entire idea burned passionately in his being like an internecine firestorm torching a village, but he knew it was time.

Standing up and coming to his full height, Klassen asked one final question: “What shall I say of you to the folks in Mythembreux?”

Jumping to his feet with a spring, the hermit put his demonic mask on while raising his skull scepter into the air. “Tell them how it is: I am Mecolier the Magnificent, guardian of Mythembreux!”

Chapter XV

The good but superstitious citizens that attended the bar of Mythembreux had been extraordinarily shocked to see Klassen return for the night and to hear that the being they thought was haunting them was actually helping them. The superstitious bartender Bieren and his patrons of course thought that the paladin had been bewitched by the evil "sorcerer" but after a while Klassen convinced them this was not the case. At least he hoped he had convinced them and they weren't simply giving in due to his impressive aura of power. Regardless, he had slept well and started out to continue his adventurous escapade in the morning.

The trek eastward had gone rather swiftly for the downpour of furious showers had subsided, leaving behind a partly cloudy sky that occasionally allowed the sun to make an appearance. The path showed clear signs of the fury of the storm as swollen streams occasionally flooded the route Klassen took, slowing him down. Altogether, though, his progress went well and he arrived at his destination by mid-afternoon.

As the path had wound first east and then south, the paladin had seen only a few wayward travelers and was therefore left alone to his thoughts. More than any other contemplation, his visit with Mecolier and learning of the Order of Darkness had been the most intriguing. He had thought long and hard upon the topic, going through the history he had learned in the Honor Brigade and using his rational mind to make an attempt at an explanation.

Over and over in his mind did the paladin come to the conclusion that perhaps there was some connection between the Order of Darkness and the Honor Brigade. As the hermit had related, the two were different in appearance but similar in ideology. Couldn't there be some connection? The answer to his question, he knew, would have to wait for as he turned east again upon the trail, the town of Lealean had promptly come into view.

The town was heavily populated by beasts, which of course meant that it was a filthy, run-down town for the most part. The disgust, which he hadn't felt in quite some time, returned to Klassen's being with a vengeance. The living quarters were repulsively decadent and the fusty smell that pervaded the area was full of refuse of all kinds, including urine and feces, which emanated a disgusting, poignant odor.

Swarming the streets like nauseating vermin, the beasts naturally added to the already swollen mountain of trash that they had created in the first place. In an obstreperous display of degeneracy, they continued to tear down a town that, like many others, was once one of beauty and happiness. Now, however, the Nobilis population was quite small, as the paladin saw not any of his brethren as he cantered through the town. By the look of things, the population of his kinsmen was rapidly declining and this, of course, he knew would lead to the complete transformation of the town into a horrible cesspool. Klassen firmly believed that only the Honor Brigade could save the town from destruction and he knew he was its noble messenger.

As the puissant figure of the paladin strode through the streets of the town, the groups of various beasts hastily made way for him. Even in their groups they cowered at the sight of Klassen, who had donned his shocking helmet for this very purpose. A sect of ogres quickly scattered at his sight while the same effect occurred to a throng of imps and hobgoblins. This of course pleased the powerful paladin but what attracted him was a different group that he saw in the distance; he rode off towards it.

From afar, it appeared as though a group of Nobilismen were conversing apart from the other beasts. However, when the paladin approached to hail these comrades, he was appalled to find that he wasn't viewing his kinsman at all but some strange new beast, which he had never before seen. What were these new beasts? Klassen wasn't sure but rode off wondering what sort of new aberration nature had bestowed upon the world.

Retracing the path he had traveled in the past, Klassen was casually cantering along when he heard a racket above the rest. It wasn't clear at first what was being said but it was readily apparent where the sound was coming from: an alley to his right. Turning down the alley, the paladin was greeted by not beasts but a plethora of trash that, although still disgusting, he was becoming conditioned to.

The clamor he had heard but a moment ago repeated itself and this time he could discern what it said: "Thief! Thief!"

Directly after Klassen heard this, a Nobilis boy of perhaps twelve came running down the alley with great and agile swiftness. Weaving about to avoid the piles of refuse and even jumping over the smaller heaps did he dash. It seemed obvious that the little lad was the thief. The paladin lifted up his visor and waited for the boy in the near-deserted alleyway.

The lad was quite engaged in hurrying along and only saw the paladin right when he was almost directly in front of Klassen. The child was momentarily stunned at the majestic sight before him, but started off anyway as if to pass the paladin; however, Klassen didn't allow this to happen as he easily bent down and lifted the lad into the air with his left arm.

The shout of "thief!" was repeated but no figure yet materialized so the paladin turned his attention to his catch. The lad squirmed with all his might but it was to no avail in the powerful grasp of the paladin. The boy had shining blonde hair that was nearly white, with sparkling blue eyes that anxiously rushed about in vain, looking for an avenue of escape. His garments were brown, torn, and dirty, although he didn't appear to Klassen to be of the scoundrel class. In fact, the vitality the boy emanated reminded him a lot of his own vibrant childhood.

With the questioning air of a parent, Klassen asked, "Are you a thief boy?"

Dangling in midair, the boy smiled widely at this question and answered with ardor, "Yes, I am and I am proud of it and I am good at it and I have never gotten caught at it! Now, let me go and I can go home and give my parents the gold I stole and we can eat!"

The dark azure eyes that Klassen possessed looked penetratingly at the lad and was content that the boy wasn't lying and that he was actually proud to be a thief. There was an intriguing tale to be heard but before the paladin could hear it from the young one, the pursuer of the thief appeared at the end of the alley. Klassen watched as this figure drew close in obvious hope of starting a conversation.

The burning flames of execration flared up within Klassen as the pursuer—a fat, grotesque-looking green orc—approached and the paladin was hard pressed to control himself; but he wanted the full tale and thus withheld his might. This orc was dressed quite well in a luxurious brown robe that was bedecked with jewels. Jewelry also adorned the wicked orc's neck and fingers with wealth Klassen knew had come by way of treachery.

Out of breath, the repulsive orc spoke in a tone that seemed to invite a warrior to silence it as it sounded like an irksome pig. "Thank you sir for stopping that little thief. I will reward you, of course, as you are obviously a warrior of merit. Now, if you'd kindly hand him over to me, I can resolve this business."

His impulse was to exterminate the filthy creature before him but Klassen persevered through his raging emotions. Vociferating harshly at the foul orc, he said, "You will sit and wait while I talk to the lad!" As he said this he lifted his right boot into the air and pummeled the orc atop the head, causing the iniquitous creature to crumble to the ground; the paladin flashed an immense smile as the orc laid among the refuse that he thought suited the beast so well.

Turning his jovial visage to the boy who giggled jubilantly at the paladin's display, Klassen asked, "Why did you steal from this foul creature?"

Immediately the boy chimed in, "Because he is an orc! They are evil and filthy and corrupt and they steal from us and they lie to us and they should die!"

As the orc lay cowering in extreme consternation, the paladin queried the precocious little lad, "Who told you all this wisdom my friend?"

“My daddy did! He has been ripped off by the orcs and my mother has and the old farmer has and my cousin has too! Can I kill him mister, can I, can I?”

Klassen was warmly pleased by these words and answered accordingly, “Sure you can. You can even take those fancy jewels too. The orcs are our enemies and it is not only honorable to crush them, but it is our duty! What is your name lad? I’m Klassen.”

As can be expected, the orc was greatly dismayed at the talk of its own demise but was quite paralyzed from the terrible shock. As such, the boy responded, “Thank you mister! I’m Aigean and I’m happy and it is great to meet you and when can we kill the orc? I’m hungry and late and have to get home.”

Setting the boy down and hopping off of his mount, Klassen answered this question by his actions. The miserable orc, now sensing its impending doom, attempted to scramble away but a swift kick to its hindquarters brought it tumbling facedown onto the ground. A violent stomp to the beast’s head followed this as the mighty paladin effectively knocked out his foe.

Dragging his thumb along his throat in demonstration, Klassen handed Aigean his dagger and watched in much satisfaction as the boy slit the orc’s throat. Before the paladin could even help his young ally, the lad had completely pilfered the body of the corpse, removing all the valuables, including the robe, in a matter of seconds. It was clear the boy was quite adroit at his profession.

As the boy handed the knife back, the paladin spoke like a father figure giving a didactic lesson: “Remember to only steal from our enemies: the beasts and traitors among our own people! Promote the best interests of our Nobilis brethren.” Thus saying the eighth law of the Honor Brigade, Klassen gave the lad a flier to show his parents.

With a mammoth smile, Aigean accepted the words of wisdom graciously but before the paladin could offer the boy a ride home, the lad was gone. As he deftly navigated the alley, he said in closing, “Thanks and thanks and bye!”

Alone in the alley, the paladin felt charged by the act of justice he had heralded as he jumped back on his horse. Retracing the path he had been taking, he resumed his journey with the thought of enlightening the youth entertaining his mind. Before long, Klassen entered the Nobilis district that he had visited before.

What was before filled with almost exclusively his kinsmen, had deteriorated in the short months since his visit. Indeed, there were still a good number of Nobilismen but the area had been infected by the beasts that swarmed so oppressively about the bustling town. Nonetheless, the habitations were, for the most part, in much better shape and the paladin felt much more at home around some of his brethren.

Slowing to a canter to take in the sights of his comrades, the paladin reflected on how the entire area was doomed to destruction if things continued on their present course. The faces that he saw portended this annihilation and the only force on the planet he thought that could avert this disaster was the Honor Brigade. An opportunity soon presented itself that allowed Klassen to spur on the toppling of degeneracy.

Since this section of the town was mainly Nobilis and was more on the outskirts near the country, it was lightly traveled. Whenever a beast was seen against the backdrop of his kin, it stood out like a despondent calamity of great catastrophe. This was even more emphasized by the sight that smacked the paladin forcefully in the face.

Off in the distance was a group of three that was traveling cabin to cabin collecting what only could be considered a dastardly tax upon the Nobilis, as the paladin observed the trio actually bypassing a few habitations that housed a group of hobgoblins. That the beast dwellings were there was an affront towards his loyal being, but the persecution of his comrades enraged Klassen. The paladin hurried off to help and arrived at the scene with great swiftness.

Now that the scene lay before him, the paladin was able to make out more clearly what was transpiring. The trio consisted of two hideous ogres who actually gleamed with the armor of a soldier. This was surprising in itself to the paladin but the full extent of it was even more stunning. The two beasts were each decked out in plate mail, a helmet, a shield, and a large spiked mace.

Although Klassen thought the discipline of such beasts to be quite questionable, there was no doubt they could intimidate a layman.

The third figure, which was obviously in charge, was actually a Nobilisman who wore white robes, signifying that he was a clergyman in the despicable Universal Church. This man was middle-aged with a look of contempt that seemed permanently etched upon his visage; he was haranguing a poor resident of a Nobilis dwelling for not paying what Klassen heard as the “Nobilis Tax.” The young resident, dressed in nothing more than rags, was on his knees pleading with the arrogant tax collector while what could only have been his wife and child lay huddled behind him, terrified.

“Please sir,” the resident begged, “I have no more money to give you. I can’t even feed my family. Why are you coming so often? This is the third time this week and we simply can’t afford it.”

The response from the clergymen was full of loathing, “How dare you defy the Church! We allow you to live in the town and you can’t even compensate us for your debauchery! I will give you a choice. Either you take a beating or we take your wife.”

During the proceedings, Klassen had remained a short distance away, unobserved. His fury was increasingly raging violently, like a whirling tornado of ferocity, as he listened. At the last statement of the detestable tax collector, the paladin shut his visor and made himself known, mighty sword in his right hand while his crossbow was equipped in the other. The sight of such a warrior, who guided his horse with merely his legs, daunted the disgusting trio but would have intimidated most anyone. Ever.

At the sight of a potential rescuer, the beleaguered resident pleadingly shouted, “Please help me!”

Klassen boomed out in anger to the clergyman, “I suggest that you desist from your oppressive actions and give back the tax you have stolen from these Nobilismen! Otherwise, there will be trouble, bloody trouble.”

The tax collector was visibly dismayed but ordered the ogres to guard him from attack; these beasts complied, though hesitantly. In a shaken voice trying to appear confident, the tax collector spoke out feebly, “This matter doesn’t concern you. If you wish to cause a problem, my ogre warriors will deal with you.”

With a yell of “Die vermin!” Klassen began his attack. Spurring his horse forward, he faced two enemies, one to the left and one to the right. He fired a devastating bolt from his crossbow at the one on his left; this powerful projectile hissed in anger as it met with and punched through the upraised shield of the ogre. After ripping through the shield, it blasted into the ogre’s armor and embedded itself in the beast’s left shoulder, injuring it but not dealing the blow of death.

This attack disabled a foe for a moment and the paladin concentrated on the foe to his right as he charged forward. The ogre, shockingly enough, stood firm despite the obvious fright it displayed upon its countenance. Raising its shield to brace itself for the attack left the paladin with a shiny square target. With immense strength, Klassen raised *Ehredegen* towards the cloudy firmament above and swung his blade in a vicious arc of demolition. With a stentorian clash like a bolt of lightning from the heavens, the sword greeted the shield; the shield was sundered apart into two useless sections. This blow was so shattering that the ogre’s arm, that held the now obsolete shield, was also torn to pieces.

Klassen galloped onward, past the two adversaries and scattered the noncombatants; this included the clergyman who was pathetically frightened. Wheeling his horse about to attack again, the paladin skillfully controlled the horse with only his limbs and the steed’s sense of war. The wet ground beneath its hooves, however, didn’t cooperate causing the horse to slip and fall; the paladin was thrown heavily to the ground.

The ghastly ogres took advantage of this misfortune and rushed towards the paladin with a series of indecipherable grunts. Klassen got up off the ground gripping only his trusty blade as his crossbow had been flung from his grasp. Both hands of the paladin tightly coiled about the hilt of

his gigantic sword as he waited for the ogres, both of whom were now only equipped with large maces; one of their shields had been shattered while the other was inoperable to its injured holder.

The fierce attack came as both maces, which could bash skulls to mush, swept towards the paladin. Klassen sidestepped to his left with the nimbleness of an acrobat. This action dodged one mace while the other was confronted by *Ehredegen* as the paladin swung in an arc that collided with the mace in a loud, metallic chink. Neither sword nor mace was slowed by this clash as the paladin's sword sliced the head of the mace clean off, sending it sailing into the distance.

This ogre was now equipped with an ineffective metal pole in one hand while its other was a bloody mess; it was stupefied at its predicament. The paladin took full advantage of this by raising his blade high into the air and, with a fierce roar of war, brought the weapon scathingly downward upon the beast's helmeted head. The helmet was easily torn asunder with the hard steel ripping through the skull and face of the beast until the sword's momentum was stopped when it hit the collarbone of the ogre.

As the foul beast collapsed, the paladin yanked his sword free in a shower of blood. One foe lay destroyed at his feet, but the other Klassen couldn't see and wasn't where it should have been. Had it given in to its instinctive cowardice now that its fellow beast had been slaughtered? A quick, sweeping glance around the area dotted with dwellings told him this was not the case at all.

The whinnying of his steed had caught Klassen's attention and this is where he looked. The ogre, bolt still lodged in its shoulder, had wandered off towards the horse, which by this time had managed to become upright. As soon as the paladin saw the desired item of his awful antagonist, he broke into a dashing gallop. Lying innocently in the mud was a weapon that would be difficult to defend against: his crossbow.

Pushing his bulging muscles to the limit, the paladin ran with astonishing velocity. The crossbow was right in front of his enemy and the beast was going to acquire it despite the harassment of his steed, unless Klassen stopped the ogre. Floating along like a specter unhindered by mere laws of nature, he rushed with the ferocity of a churning volcano. The beast bent down to retrieve the crossbow and the paladin leaped.

Klassen roared, then soared, into the air with the graceful elegance of a noble eagle, his metallic beak dauntingly impressive. His flight was a beautiful and magnificent trip demonstrating the deadly ways of a paladin. In midair the paladin switched the grasp on his weapon from an underhand to an overhand grip, with both hands. Just as he did this, the clouds above ripped back their curtain allowing the divine rays overhead to gleam down upon the flying figure. Glimmering with a sacrosanct glow was Klassen as if to validate the holy instrument of honor that he was. As the jewels encased in his blade twinkled blue and red, the bloody *Ehredegen* was thrust downward as the paladin landed.

So swift and unexpected was the attack that the ogre had neither time to move nor to react at all. The blade of the paladin therefore tore into the beast's back. The armor it wore, while strong, was no match for the gargantuan blade of honor that Klassen wielded. Consequently, the sword punctured the armor and pierced the very heart of the beast. Such an incredible amount of force had been exerted with the blade that it hadn't stopped there though; it continued out the front of the ogre's armor and lodged itself into the muddy ground.

In such a tremendous zone of resplendent battle-lust was the paladin that he was oblivious of his surroundings, so he deftly grabbed his crossbow as the ogre slowly crumbled to the ground, its weight pulling it downward about the sword that impaled it. Klassen looked around. Being on the outskirts of the town, the area wasn't very heavily populated but many faces could be seen eagerly watching the events that had transpired. The paladin could sense their fear and initially saw not a single being outside of their home. As such, he deemed it safe and withdrew his sword from the corpse before him with a slight grunt.

As Klassen wiped the crimson blood off of his sword that had been spilled in the virtuous cause of justice, the grateful resident came rushing towards him in tears. "Thank you, thank you, thank you kind sir! How can I repay my debt to you?"

The paladin smiled as he was in a euphoric state of bliss from the slaughter of the enemy. Finished cleaning his blade and sheathing it, he said, "Well, where is that vile priest?"

"Over here," came the resident's reply. The two comrades walked over to the front of the inhabitant's house where the clergyman lay in a billowing white mountain of cloth. "He started to run away when the battle started so I knocked him out," explained the comrade.

The paladin chuckled as he was in a fascinated half-daze. Klassen reached down and grabbed two large pouches of gold from the tax collector's belt and handed them to his kinsman. "I want you to distribute this among our Nobilis comrades, only Nobilis. How many of our brethren hate the situation this town is in and despicable policies like this 'Nobilis Tax'?"

The comrade answered quickly, "Thank you sir; I will do as you say. Many hate what is happening. We are scared though and don't know what to do. It is becoming worse and worse!"

Although the predicament the town was in was horrible, the paladin realized that this helped his cause. Handing the resident a flier, Klassen commanded, "I want you to study this and spread it around to our people. Illuminate Teramon with the bright light of honor."

As the paladin turned to leave, the comrade queried anxiously, "What are we to do with the priest?"

Klassen wretched the unconscious figure up by his white hair and asked with raging emotion, "What do you think should be the punishment for dastardly traitors to our Nobilis people? Traitors who collaborate with the disgusting beasts deserve to be slaughtered, each and every one of them. What possible crime is more heinous than betraying our people!? I ask you, comrade, what shall be his punishment!?"

Instead of one voice clamoring in an answer, the paladin heard three: husband, wife, and son. All three were unanimous and harmonious in their answer: "Death!"

Chapter XVI

The melee that Klassen had been involved in had sparked a delightful feeling of awe that remained with him as he resumed his path in the town of Mythembreux. So powerful was the violent maelstrom he had been engaged in that it brought a jubilant joy that placed him apart from his normal mood and character. The area he was just in told him that the area was ripe for enlightenment, but, in his daze, he hadn't even asked the name of the comrades that he had helped.

Plowing deeper into the Nobilis heart of the town, however, gave him an opportunity to do more. His destination lay before him and the mammoth confidence he possessed preordained his success. Weaving his way between his Nobilis comrades and the few beasts, Klassen tethered his horse to a pole, which supported the bar known as *The Lion's Den*.

Despite his exhilarated feelings and swollen self-assurance, the paladin recognized that he hadn't truly prepared for war in his last brutal encounter. Consequently, he armed himself as if he were going to attack a massive army rather than simply encountering a bar. He armed his crossbow to its maximum cartridge of five bolts; he attached three throwing axes to his belt; and strapped his shield onto his left forearm with several belt-like cords that were designed exactly for this purpose. Carrying his helmet with his left hand, Klassen entered *The Lion's Den*.

The inside of the dwelling was rife with commotion as swarms of patrons drank and spoke loudly and cheerily. Although it was light outside, torches were scattered about, giving the large, spacious room a sort of soft radiant glow; this impaired the vision somewhat and the hazy smoke that wafted lazily about further hampered one's vision. Many round tables, generally seating four, were spread out among the room and most were full. The vast majority of the bar-dwellers were Nobilis but a few beasts were in the tavern, towards the back.

As soon as the crowd caught sight of the noble paladin, pointing, gesturing, and questioning amongst friends commenced. The noisy din wasn't affected in terms of volume, but it was changed in content. Virtually the entire world would have been struck by Klassen's appearance but here especially he gleamed like a precious diamond. The crowd showed visible signs of opprobrious oppression as many were dressed in half-shredded garments. On the other hand, the paladin was adorned with protective mail, a ruby tunic of battle, and a magnificent cape of royal purple, not to mention his fierce instruments of slaughter.

The paladin walked over to a stool and rested his helmet on the counter while reveling in the fact that his comrades were still able to enjoy themselves. They were in tatters, he saw, but their will had not yet been crushed. As he was thinking thus, the young bartender who had red hair and a pale, freckled complexion, approached the paladin with respect.

"What'll it be partner?" the bartender asked politely but with a tinge of fear.

Smiling warmly and putting the kinsman at ease, Klassen responded, "I'd like to know if you know a beautiful lady by the name of Alianna? I met her some months ago while escorting her here."

The bartender raised an eyebrow in interest before retorting friendly, "Aye, I know her. She frequents here quite a bit but she's out working at the moment. I can tell her you were here though. Who are ya partner?"

"Thank you," Klassen said. "My name is Klassen; she will know who I am. Might you know when she will be around?"

"Hard to say partner. By the way, what's with all the armor partner? We don't need any trouble here."

Laughing softly, the paladin comforted his comrade, "I just like being prepared."

Returning the laugh as if it were a handshake, the man said, "Oh ok, it just looks like you are a one man army! Ho ho. The name is Caion."

Feeding off of the laughter, the paladin questioned his new friend, "How come you let beasts in here comrade? Like I said before, I was here a while back and this district seemed totally Nobilis. Now I see they've even gotten into your excellent bar."

Caion's smile vanished and was quickly replaced by a look of scorn as he peered off towards the beasts congregated in the back. "I hate that blasted scum! Aye, it was cleaner here before they started moving in. First it was just a few in the town and then they went and became the majority. Now, they have even come into our small part of town and into my bar! I kept them out for a while, but then these heavily armored ogres came in one day and caused trouble. They smashed some windows and broke some tables. I was told to let the beasts in or face the consequences. It's that blasted Universal Church!"

The paladin could feel the anger his friend exuded and this in turn exacerbated his own inner flame of passion. Klassen joined Caion on a ride of loathing for the evils of the universe. A powerful bond connected the two as the rest of the crowd was distant as it hollered and yelled over gambling, ale, gossip or whatever else might entice their drunken imaginations. Amid the commotion, waitresses delivered refreshment that was quickly guzzled; cards and dice were flung about in intense concentration; and a festive air dominated the hazy hall.

"Do you believe most in this fine establishment also deplore the beasts and hate the Universal Church?" asked the mighty paladin.

"Aye, I do," came the reply. "Most are scared but I think most do. There are, however, some exceptions. Some are sympathetic to the cause of the beasts while some are even against our own people! Blasted traitors!"

The paladin devoured every word the bartender spoke with glee as he realized he had come to the right place to enlighten the masses. He had been prompted to visit by the gorgeous maiden, Alianna, and was now thankful to her even though she was not around to greet him.

"If so many are fed up with these awful beasts, then why hasn't anyone put a stop to the Universal Church?" asked the paladin with fervor.

With a heavy sigh, the bartender responded, "To tell ya the truth, we are scared. Aye, it is true. The Universal Church uses the beasts to scare us into submission. Perhaps someday a hero will come to save us."

This plea for help in the form of a champion sang ever so sweetly with euphonious chords of charm. It was a rousing blast calling for assistance that echoed mightily in the paladin's ears as he knew full well that he possessed the ability to help. He knew that he had to. Rising to his feet and exuding his lordly manner that was befitting a prince, Klassen said in perfect rectitude, "I am your hero."

The bartender stood in awe at this upright proclamation and was unable to utter a response before the paladin grabbed his helmet and left his presence. Walking away Klassen looked as though he was a being possessed of some aspiration greater than the petty dealings of ordinary, everyday life. When he reached the approximate center of the room, he found an empty table. Setting his helmet down, he leaped up upon the wooden table with the ease of an agile leopard.

The movement had caught the attention of most in the room, but the paladin made sure his mighty presence was known to all. Vociferating with the fury of a smashing, spiraling, and swirling hurricane, Klassen said, "Attention comrades! The day of your enslavement is nearing an end!"

The puissant presence that the paladin commanded gripped the spectators without mercy, like that of a lion's grasp upon its prey. The intense clamor that had enveloped the bar ceased. Klassen was now the sole center of attention. In the faint lighting and misty environment, the paladin resembled a being so incredibly stupendous that it seemed suitable for the patrons to swear fealty to this king. This was even more fitting as Klassen seemed to hover far above the crowd, above the fiery light and filmy fog; he appeared to ascend to the very heavens above. His reign was supreme as well as this king was a belligerent one and no one present would dare defy such a warrior-king.

With all eyes upon him, the paladin began his cogent oratory with enthusiasm and powerful gesticulation. "This town, like so many in Teramon, has been infected. A disease so foul that it

threatens the very existence of our Nobilis people has befallen us. It has stripped us of our dignity, our beautiful homes, and, unfortunately, some of us have succumbed to this plague. Look around comrades! What do you see? The Nobilis people being oppressed! Many barely survive and live in ruined tatters!”

As Klassen spoke, the crowd nodded their heads in agreement to his words. He continued with ardor, “Now, the question becomes: who is to blame for this disgusting curse? As we all look around and think to ourselves, we all know the answer. It is a source that the powers-to-be do not want us to speak of. But we will! The source of suffering is in this very bar!” This brought a wave of conversation from the patrons and they argued who might be to blame. With a wave of his hand, the paladin calmed them and pointed towards the back of the bar with fervor. After a short, dramatic pause, Klassen increased his volume dramatically as he shouted, “It is the vile beasts!!”

An explosive cheering burst forth as the crowd heard these words and knew them to be true. The paladin smiled at the applause. The few beasts in the back—a few yellow imps and gray hobgoblins—became extremely nervous among the fray as many violent countenances gazed at them. Without further ado, they quickly scattered but not before a few large men forced them to pay their due for the food and drink they ordered.

As the paladin basked in the jubilant celebration, he heard shouts from all corners of the bar. “Kill them all!” “We shall be free!” More shouts filled the atmosphere but most were drowned out in the frothing wave of noise. The scene was invigorating and reminded Klassen of being engaged in a war; this was a war of words and they were quite potent. The bar was also like a battlefield in that festive roars of animosity dominated. As the clamor began to die down, the paladin doused the flame of passion completely with a gesture of his hand.

The fabulous thrill of his actions continued as he now spoke softly with the crowd leaning forward to hear Klassen’s every word. “There is one beast in particular that is our most deadly foe. This adversary is neither a mere brute like an ogre nor a simple thief like a hobgoblin. This creature is far more intelligent and far more heinously dishonorable. Some of you may know this being who orchestrates the entire plan to ruin our proud Nobilis culture.”

The paladin abruptly stopped talking and looked around the bar to survey their feelings. These feelings were entirely visible upon the absorbed visages of the comrades present. Such interest did some hold that they nearly fell to the ground as they leaned forward to hear what Klassen might say next. The atmosphere was reminiscent of the eye of a hurricane that was calm and serene but might spew forth violence at any moment.

The tranquility that the paladin exuded himself was broken when Klassen became violently animated. “It is the revolting orc that is poisoning us! The perverse orc is behind the Universal Church promoting the beasts to invade our towns! This same orc promotes dishonor, perversity, and treachery! What punishment do these scumbags deserve?”

“Death!” was shouted over and over again in as much unison as a group of drunken men could hope to attain. This eruption was like a powerful volcano spraying fiery chunks of rock that had the power to splatter dishonor into oblivion. Amid the roar, one shout from the crowd was heard over the shouts of vengeance: “What can we do?”

Klassen quickly answered as he had hoped for such a question. “Yes, what can we do? There is one group that can stop the spread of black dishonor and replace it with divine honor. There is one order that is situated atop a mountain in a golden paradise known as Imperium Castle. This place has no beasts and contains pure honorable bliss! This mighty order is known as the Honor Brigade!”

Conversations between the patrons ensued as they were obviously intrigued by the words they heard. The paladin took advantage of the situation by spreading out fliers among the audience who quickly devoured the magnificent creed set forth on them. The words of wisdom contained therein were passed from hand to hand and spread like a beautiful blossoming of brilliant flowers upon a once desolate area of putrescence.

The paladin felt wonderfully magnificent at the warm reception the virtuous Honor Brigade was receiving. There appeared to be no doubt that the tyranny imposed upon his brethren would soon be broken. If every town responded so effervescently, than a new order of honor would soon be ushered in amid glorious fanfare.

At first scattered but soon becoming more pronounced was a singular question that the crowd repeated. It came to the paladin's ears with impressed interest. The simple question was, "Who are you?"

"I am a messenger for the Honor Brigade," the paladin boomed. Holding himself even more nobly than before, Klassen stated powerfully, "I am Klassen, Paladin of Honor!"

A rousing burst of applause reverberated throughout the drinking establishment. Smiles were seen all about, especially beaming was the bartender Caion whose pride at having personally talked to the champion seemed evident upon his elevated stature. Amidst this scene of outstanding ovation, the doors to the bar suddenly opened and in streamed a horde of armored beasts. Responding to this threat, the crowd stood but fell silent.

So concentrated was the paladin upon delivering the message of honor to the crowd that it took him a moment to ascertain the cause of the disturbance. Once he did, however, his Prussian blue eyes surged with a look of sanguinary glee. In a military voice of command, Klassen announced, "The time for redemption is at hand comrades! Prepare for battle!"

The audience roared but they were not soldiers and a tense standoff ensued. The paladin reached down and put his horned helmet on. "Live!" he boomed. Arming himself with his crossbow in his left hand was followed by the shout, "At!" With a Herculean thrust, his blade that gurgled by the blood of the vile was released and this act was followed by a vociferating detonation of, "War!"

With this proclamation the paladin leaped from his wooden throne while firing a bolt at the densely packed troop of beasts. The group of beasts—mainly hobgoblins and imps—was equipped with leather armor and most held clubs or swords; they resembled a large pack of maggots that lived amongst the trash of the world. There was one less living, however, as Klassen's bolt sliced into the chest of an imp.

The Nobilis comrades, spurred on by the paladin's actions, joined the fray and chaos erupted. Shouts rang out in fervor; blow followed blow in the terrific melee; and blood was spilled.

Klassen was soon in the thick of the brawl after firing two more bolts into the serried mass of disgusting depravity. He hadn't even watched their trajectory as he knew there was no doubt they had found their mark. An imp approached him and looked so minuscule to the paladin's mammoth frame; it was stunned by the presence before it and Klassen took full advantage of this by swinging *Ehredegen* with such force that the top of the imp's skull was cleaved right off.

In the front lines of the battle, the other Nobilismen weren't faring so well. It was obviously that they weren't prepared to fight. Most were ill equipped with a chair being their main weapon. As such, the blood was flowing and the ranks of spirited comrades were falling back and beginning to lose the confidence that the ale and Klassen's fiery speech had imbued them with. They were impressed with the paladin's battle prowess but were unable to equal his courage and skill.

The paladin was engaged in battling three hobgoblins and had not the energy to also rally the troops. These three enemies warily advanced upon Klassen but the paladin waited not to attack; a bolt hissed through the air and the hobgoblin to the right had its throat shredded to pieces as the projectile sailed straight through its throat, lodging in the wall. This foe collapsed immediately with only a faint gurgling noise being its last words. The two remaining enemies were dismayed at this loss. Klassen tried to take advantage of this dismay by marching forward but both hobgoblins responded by swinging swords at him; he blocked both with his shield, resulting in a loud clink. Following this parry and with a flowing motion that had taken many hours to perfect, came a sweeping swipe of Klassen's blade that gutted the foe in the center. As the enemy on the left raised its weapon, *Ehredegen*, as if attacking under its own volition, was thrust forward with frightening

speed. The blade found its mark in the beast's chest. With a grunt, the paladin retrieved his sword as the beast tumbled to the floor.

The three that had challenged the brutal warrior of honor now lay dead before him. Klassen was so absorbed in the battling that he had entered his own personal dimension where he knew that he was invincible. His appearance and mien exuded this aura of colossal power and the beasts consequently backed away from him in trembling fear. The paladin was in the center of the Nobilis ranks and the enemy attacked his flanks where the resistance was far less powerful.

Off to the paladin's left, one of his kinsmen was knocked to the ground from a blow by a club, and he was finished off with a quick thrust of a sword from another foe. Yet another comrade was bludgeoned to death by a flurry of blows from the enemy. On the right, the same scene was taking place: the beasts marched ahead as Nobilismen continued to fall. The morale of the supporters of honor quickly plummeted and the battle became a full rout as the patrons of the bar fled to the rear.

Realizing his comrades were retreating, the paladin, as much as it was against his aggressive nature, turned around to pursue them. Valiantly, he shouted to them, "To battle comrades!" As impressive a figure as Klassen presented, the sight of blood and the moans of the dead and dying were too much for the bar patrons. To reward him for his attempt at rallying his kinsman, the paladin was the target of some blunt weapon that smashed into his back causing him to stumble forward as pain ripped through him.

Although unseen to the enemy due to his helmet, a vicious snarl formed upon the paladin's face. His hostility grew. Gripping his sword with such a grip that it was nearly grafted to his skin, the paladin swung his blade as he whirled around to face the enemy. The backhand stroke whistled angrily through the air before coming in contact with flesh, beast flesh. The villain who had attacked Klassen was surprised by the quickness of the paladin, but only for a second. After this second, cold, hard steel sliced through its neck and decapitated it in a burst of blood. Almost at the same time, the beast and its helmeted head crashed to the ground in a rising pool of blood.

Due to the retreat on the flanks, the beasts quickly swarmed around the paladin that had dispatched so many beasts with ease. Klassen spun slowly around trying to keep them all at bay but knew that something had to change if he hoped to survive. The disreputable miscreants were in no hurry to attack him, however, and seemed content to keep him trapped.

The commotion of battle died down and it became rather quiet. An enemy emerged from the beast ranks that was Nobilis and presumably in command as he spoke to Klassen sternly, "You are surrounded, warrior; throw down your arms!"

The paladin looked around him but already knew it to be true. Standing calmly with weapons lowered, he glared at the treacherous wretch that stood amidst the ranks of the beasts. With a quick flick of his wrist and raising of his arm, Klassen adroitly fired a bolt at the traitor. Rushing with a vengeance born of seething hatred, the soaring missile flew true and slashed into the betrayer's eye. The impact ripped the side of the target's face off in a spray of blood intermingled betwixt skull fragments.

As soon as this attack had commenced, a shout from somewhere had rung out forcefully: "Fire!" Instinctively understanding this command, the paladin descended into a crouch with his shield coming up to cover his body. Klassen thus became a small target to hit when the flurry of barbed arrows came hurtling towards him. Most of the flying shafts collided against his shield and were harmlessly deflected away. Two, however, sunk into warm flesh. One caught an imp behind him in the stomach while the other painfully embedded itself into Klassen's left shin, piercing into the bone.

Letting out a groan that was transformed into a roar of indignation, the paladin swung his sword around in a complete scathing revolution just as the beasts surrounding him came in for the kill. This action encountered no tender flesh but did send all opponents leaping backwards. Klassen used this time to ascertain the best possible route of escape. Once found, he acted.

The paladin turned to his left and charged, oblivious of his injuries in his personal universe of war. A foe squared solidly to stop him raised its sword to attack, but Klassen raised his shield and

plowed into the hobgoblin with pounding force. The adversary went sprawling heavily upon the floor as the paladin whizzed past him. He ran forward unmolested but to his right the enemy loomed like a pack of rats, perplexed as to what to do. A shout of "kill him!" made them recover their senses and they scrambled after the paladin.

Klassen possessed great speed but it appeared assured that the beasts would apprehend or kill the paladin as he ran to the side of the bar, not the back. Klassen, however, had different plans. He leaped upon one of the few tables that hadn't been overturned in the bar, but didn't stop there. Instead, he flew into the air and crashed through the large window that adorned the bar. Time for the paladin slowed as his flight was spearheaded by his shield. The glass shattered with a mighty smash and his flight up until then had been majestic, regal even; his landing was not. The window was nearly two koms from the ground and the paladin thus landed upon the ground outside like a sack of potatoes being heaved about.

Glass scraped his hands and the blow from the ground sucked the wind from his lungs, but Klassen retained his steel grip upon his weapons. A crowd had gathered around the bar and shrill shrieks from the women rang out when they saw the soaring figure emerge from the window. As much as the paladin's body wished to relax and sleep after all the exertions it had been put through, he knew it couldn't. The beasts were soon to the window and the bloodied, battered body of Klassen ascended from the ground swiftly and ran towards the front of the bar.

Klassen's body ached and burned. A trail of blood formed behind him as he ran, spilling in drops here or there. Nevertheless, his will was as hard as the steel he wielded and it would drive him even if his body didn't want to cooperate.

Amid the imbrogllo, the masses outside and inside the bar were stunned; the paladin managed to elude his pursuers and reach the front of the bar. The sun had recently been swallowed whole so light was only sprinkled about in the form of torches. Klassen believed this would help him but his imposing figure presented no doubt as to whom the beasts were after. Indeed, this became the case as several beasts spotted him and raised the alarm as he ran to the front of the *Lion's Den*.

The paladin, with terrific dexterity, sheathed his sword and hooked his crossbow and helmet to his belt as he ran. Coming up from behind his horse, he leaped atop of it by placing his hands on its rump for leverage. With a little squirming, he managed to get himself into the saddle properly. With a short, rough jerk, the reins were freed and Klassen galloped off.

The garbled mass of beasts swarmed in confusion as their prey rode off. The ineptitude of the beasts was evident but their inability to react was also compounded by the crowd that curiously looked on. Regardless, two gray hobgoblins obtained horses and rode off in pursuit.

The whirring wind rushed against the paladin, refreshing and cooling him. Beads of perspiration had accumulated upon his forehead from the heat of battle and his hot, stuffy helmet. Thus, his vision and temperature were both improved now that he had taken off the helmet. This was a small comfort, however, as each stride of the horse inflamed his wounds, especially the blow he had sustained to his back. The ride itself was going quite well as the streets were virtually empty and Klassen thought he would make it out without event until he heard the shouts behind him.

In a near daze from exhaustion and wounds, the paladin had unknowingly allowed his pursuers to nearly overtake him. Silently lambasting himself for such a potential death sentence, Klassen skillfully unhitched his crossbow. His targets were just behind him, to the left and to the right. Handling the crossbow with his right hand, the paladin pointed back at the hobgoblin to the right and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened.

The beast, however, was oblivious to of the fact that the crossbow wasn't armed. As such, he veered away to avoid the bolt he perceived as ineluctable. Keeping his gaze trained on the paladin, it raised its sword into the air and hollered in anger as it spurred its horse on faster. Unfortunately for it, a wooden cart lay directly in its path. Horse, rider, and cart collided in a smashing crash that ended the hobgoblin's life. Only one pursuer remained.

Putting his empty crossbow away, Klassen quickly veered to the right, down an alley. He hoped to lose the beast in the maze of deserted, filthy streets. The beast followed behind intently

even after the paladin turned again, this time to the left. It seemed clear to the paladin that a different, more effective, measure would have to be adopted.

By now Klassen had come to a beast section of town and the particular avenue he traversed was, during the day, heavily traveled. Now, though, only a beast here and there scampered about. It was poorly lit with subsequent shadows making navigation more difficult during the speedy chase Klassen was involved in. More and more the wear and tear of his body was weighing heavily upon him and the paladin knew he needed rest soon. He accelerated.

Klassen's horse pulled away from the pursuer, but not for long. The beast soon was again right behind the paladin. Veering sharply to the right and pulling in on the reins, the paladin slammed to a stop as the beast dashed by. He nimbly pulled a throwing axe from his belt as he watched the beast slow, turn, and then come after him. As soon as this occurred, Klassen spurred his horse forward. He rapidly approached the beast, which was to his right, and when he came within range, the paladin flung his axe.

The beast charged forward with sword in hand ready to deal death to the paladin but the quick motion from Klassen surprised it. It looked on in stupid amazement as the axe twirled over and over through the air with mesmerizing grace. The sharpened blade pulsated like a heartbeat as it glinted faintly every time torchlight fell upon it. The razor-like blade embedded itself in the repugnant hobgoblin's forehead, halting the axe's heartbeat as well as the beast's.

Chapter XVII

The blackness of the night was only imposed upon by the scintillating stars and the faintly glowing moon. These orbs of illumination upon the ocean of darkness bespoke of unknown worlds across the universe. They were vast distances away but also seemed within grasp. The fiery power they exuded was mighty indeed to travel such a colossal distance.

Klassen soared among the stars and planets that existed beyond the pale of ordinary beings. The exploration of all the celestial bodies would require eons, if it were even possible, but the paladin flashed by stars with a speed unmatched in all the annals of scientific thought. The rakish figure of the paladin navigated around burning yellow stars with the ease of a veteran explorer.

Slowing down to enjoy the trip, he observed a violet netting of space that cloaked a cluster of red fireballs that were far smaller than the typical orb of fire. Klassen thought the web powerful indeed to capture such magnificent luminaries but feared not the trap as he entered it. The paladin changed color with his beautiful surroundings as he enjoyed the exhilarating ride. The magnificent garden he observed exuded a sweet smell of orchids and roses that playfully tickled the paladin's nose.

As much as he enjoyed his trek of discovery, Klassen knew he had a purpose to fulfill, away from the fetters of the masses. Leaving the sweeping panorama of brilliant color, he navigated away from the flowers of resplendence. Finding a secluded, dark spot where only chunks of rock floated about lazily, the paladin landed upon the platform of a space boulder. He comfortably sat down.

Breathing slowly and enjoying the refreshing air, Klassen concentrated on his wounds. His bruised back swirled with a bluish glow as the paladin focused his body's energy on healing himself. His body did as it was told and harnessed its restorative powers upon the wound. Slowly the pain withered away and Klassen recognized that his full range of motion was returning. This process was repeated upon his shin and finally upon his whole body as he felt his normally spry being breathed back into him.

Suddenly, the paladin's enrapturing escapade was broken when he heard a noise. His eyes flashed open and he gazed around. Quickly, he drew his blade and sprang to his feet as he searched about looking for the cause of the disruption. He didn't have to look long, however, as the being that had made the noise wasn't trying to clandestinely hide in the shadows. As quickly as the paladin had drawn his sword, he put it away.

Stepping into the dim moonlight that faintly brightened the forest, came the young boy Aigean. Distraught, he walked as if some calamity had befallen him. His pale blue eyes lacked the vibrant life that Klassen had seen before. Moping morbidly towards the paladin, he spoke softly, "What were you doing mister?"

The paladin replied sanguinely, hoping to raise his little ally's spirits: "I was meditating. I was using the body's natural power to focus upon my wounds to help heal them. It is a very effective technique, especially after being wounded by those diabolical beasts. What ails you boy?"

Casting off his dour demeanor, the lad replied vehemently, "I hate them and hate them and hate them! The beasts have taken my mommy and daddy and arrested them and trashed our home and I want to kill them!"

Klassen's relaxed state of bliss was quickly transformed into a swirling carnage of vengeance. He consoled the boy, who was near tears, while extricating as much information as he could. The details of the draconian measure were simple: the Universal Church had sent their goons to arrest the family for suspected crimes; Aigean escaped, but his parents were seized. The boy liked to play in the forest and thus had entered it as he knew not where else to go.

Despite his still fresh wounds, Klassen got his gear together in preparation to depart. "I will look for your parents Aigean. Where do you think they are?"

“I can show you,” came the response, “and help you and guide you and we can kill them!”

The paladin admired the youth’s vitality but was hesitant to bring along a child. “Just tell me where. I am trained for war, you are not.”

Whimpering, Aigean retorted, “I can show you and I don’t want to stay here by myself and please and please and please let me go with you.”

“Ok,” the paladin said, relenting. “Do you need any food or water before we go?”

The lad noiselessly shook his head and the two were quickly ready to start off. The paladin circumspectly realized that even though it was nightfall, he would be recognized instantly due to his flashy panache. Consequently, he put on a large black cloak that covered his magnificent clothing completely. It even possessed a hood that could further hide his identity.

The pair quickly mounted the paladin’s steed with the lad playing the role of navigator. Through the labyrinth of wood that made up the forest, they traveled.

Klassen had rearmed his crossbow and was fully prepared for any outbreak of hostilities, although he wished to undertake the operation as covertly and quietly as possible. He had learned that he was unable to face an entire battalion by himself, but could easily dispatch a few beasts here or there. Discontent was flourishing in Lealean and he hoped this boded well for him and the Honor Brigade.

First on his agenda was, of course, finding the boy’s parents. A nagging presence inside the paladin’s mind told him that the parents had been arrested because of the slaughter of the orc that the boy had killed, under his supervision. Whether or not this was the case, he didn’t know for sure. It didn’t really matter one way or the other, as the paladin felt bound by honor to help his young kinsman.

Before long, the pair had navigated through the forest and crept into the town swiftly, yet quietly. Even though the main thoroughways were almost entirely deserted, the paladin instructed his young friend—who knew the town well—to take the back-ways. The town was dark, only lighted by a faint system of lights from above, and a few torches scattered haphazardly about. The alleys were therefore even darker and took more skill and more time to wade through.

With soft commands of “left,” “right,” and “straight,” the duo wound through the maze of passageways that made up the town of Lealean. All went well with very few beings encountered on their course; a bum here living among the debris and a drunkard there stumbling home made up the bulk of those they did see; all were beasts.

At an order of “straight,” Klassen drove the horse forward but quickly pulled it back into the shadows. The street they were about to cross was large and noises, combined with shadows that jumped about, caused the paladin to spring into the concealment of the alley depths. As he watched intently, a brigade of beast troops sauntered by, noisily and without much in the way of discipline. As they streamed by like ignominious rats, the paladin counted at least fifty enemies. His desire to attack was fierce, but, with his stalwart will, he abstained.

Whispering to his companion, Klassen asked, “Do brigades like those normally patrol the streets?”

“No,” came the replying whisper. “What does it mean and what do we do and when can I see my parents?”

Klassen’s compassion was aroused by these questions as well as his rapacious rancor towards his enemies. With a tone full of empathy, the paladin replied warmly, “It means we must be careful and get to the jail soon. How far are we?”

“Not far. We go straight and then turn left and then go straight and we are there.”

With extra vigilance they went as the boy had instructed. Thoughts of what was to come and what had already transpired occupied the paladin’s mind. He knew that he had to avoid the roving bands that were probably out hoping to devour his body for the destruction Klassen had caused. Hopefully he could recruit some Nobilismen to his cause, the cause of honor. However, he couldn’t count on this. Before he had time to continue his reflections, his destination greeted him.

The jail was a small, stone building with only a few circular windows that were adorned with metal bars. It was actually in good shape, but this was obviously due to it being made of stone and the paladin believed it would surely be desolate like the other structures if it had been made of wood. Indeed, the only entrance that the paladin saw held a wooden door that was open and so poorly constructed that it was about to fall off of its hinges. Klassen quickly deduced that the building itself had been made long ago, when better times greeted Lealean, while the door had come with the infection; however, he dismissed such trivial thoughts and concentrated on what he saw inside the jail.

Two repulsive hobgoblins were seated at a table playing cards, refuse in the form of old food surrounded them. Although they were arguing loudly, what exactly they were saying was impossible to discern due to their slurred, discombobulated speech. The paladin clearly recognized that the two were intoxicated and seemed easy prey. He wasn't sure whether there were other guards that he would have to dispose of though.

The jail appeared far too easy a target and this set off a string of alarms in the paladin's mind. Only two guards? Klassen surveyed the area and questioned Aigean whether this was the only jail in town; he replied it was the only one that he knew of. The words didn't comfort the paladin but he quickly formed a plan and put it into action without further delay.

Informing the lad to stay put, Klassen jumped off of his horse, crossbow in hand. He crept along inaudibly until he reached the edge of the cloak of darkness that the alley provided. From this vantage point, he had an excellent, open pathway to fire his bolts. Standing silently in dark concealment, he waited for his opportunity.

What Klassen desired soon presented itself: one of the hobgoblins left the room it was in, leaving only a single guard behind. Taking skillful aim, the paladin fired his powerful projectile. It whirred by with barely a sound and sunk deeply into the beast's back, killing it instantly and without a yell of death. Just as he hoped, the beast, despite the blow of the bolt, remained in its chair. Still sitting upright, it didn't look the part of a corpse at all.

As expected, the other guard returned carrying two large tankards that the paladin presumed to have ale in them. It set them down and just as it was in the act of sitting, Klassen fired again. The missile sank into the beast's left shoulder, wounding and surprising it. The change of elevation had affected his aim but before the beast could yell out, another bolt was fired. This one was better placed; it sliced into the heart of the beast. It collapsed onto the floor and the paladin thought surely it was removed to the land of the dead.

With a swift glance to ensure all was well, Klassen, satisfied, strolled over to the jail with a blasé demeanor. Anyone viewing the scene would have thought nothing of it, especially since the paladin hid his crossbow beneath the many folds of his cloak.

As soon as Klassen entered the jail, he pulled out his crossbow while shutting the tattered door. With a delicate gait, he joined the two corpses at the table, kicking them to make sure they were deceased. Satisfied that they were dead, he looked around for more foes.

The room Klassen was in was really a small hall that seemed to be the center of the jail. Several torches burned intently and illuminated the hall well. Due to this, he could see two hallways to his left and three to his right. One hallway on his left had no door and the paladin could plainly see that it was only a storage area. All the other hallways had doors; the one on the left had a large wooden door that was closed while the three on the right were made of stone with round windows full of bars and obviously for the prisoners.

The place was deathly quiet as the paladin prowled over to the wooden door. He noticed it was slightly ajar. Flinging it open forcefully, Klassen crouched while scanning the room for enemies. He was prepared to fire at the slightest movement but he saw none. Instead, it became clear to him that the room served as an armory as several weapons and pieces of armor adorned the walls. No other exit presented itself and he left the room and returned to the hall.

The entire operation seemed to be going far too easy to the paladin. Only two guards and a tiny jail in a town with a large population of criminals just didn't seem right to Klassen. As he watched

the blood flow onto the floor amid the debris, he also wondered why it was so utterly quiet. Where were the prisoners?

To answer this question, Klassen approached a cell, which seemed purposely-kept dark as no torches illuminated them. To rectify this he grabbed a torch and held it to the barred window of stone door. As he peered inward, he accidentally bumped the door; it slightly opened. Why would the cell be unlocked? Glancing inside the cell he saw nothing: no prisoners whatsoever. Everything felt very wrong to the paladin.

As if to confirm his suspicions, a loud noise outside echoed to the paladin's ears; he recognized it instantly as the beleaguered neighing of his horse. Every instinct within Klassen screamed that he was engaged in a trap. Hastily he dropped the torch and hurried out the jail, into the street.

Sure enough, as soon as he exited the jail he saw a band of beasts marching toward him. Upon sight of him, they rushed forward with a roaring cry that was undoubtedly inspired not only by the paladin's presence, but by potent ale as well. The large mob of abominable beasts was difficult to count, but the paladin thought perhaps there were at least forty. Deciding a battle wouldn't be a very auspicious idea, he darted off towards the alley he had emerged from.

Confronting him immediately was his flaying horse that seemed locked in battle with some unseen apparition. Calming the horse skillfully, Klassen looked around in the gloom. The boy was gone and no sign of a fight seemed readily visible. What had happened? The sounds of the soldiers pursuing him became louder and he knew it was not the time for thought; action was required. Hopping onto his horse with graceful ease, Klassen realized that none of the beasts coming after him had horses. With a questioning gaze, he rode off down a different route than the one he had come on.

Thundering away atop his mount, the paladin chanced riding down more traveled streets. Since he soon left the hubbub far behind him, he resumed the prudent path of using the alleys to his advantage. Feeling safely away from harm's cold clutches, he slowed to a canter.

A plethora of questions bombarded Klassen's mind but two stood out clearly amid the chaos: had he really been betrayed and, if so, how could such a pitiful trap hope to ensnare him? The evidence surely supported the idea that the innocent-looking lad who reminded him so much of himself, had betrayed him. What other possibility was there? Klassen saw no signs of a struggle in the alley; could the presence of a band of beasts exactly when he raided the jail be merely coincidence? The fact that the jail had been devoid of prisoners lent even more crushing weight to the logical evaluation of betrayal.

The lad Aigean could merely have used the paladin to fulfill his aim of thievery. Perhaps the boy stole from everyone, not just the beasts. The words that had come from the boy's lips concerning his hatred of the beasts could all have been fabricated by the precocious mind of a liar. With disgust oozing from his being, Klassen found it hard to believe anything but that the lad was a shameful disgrace.

The only action that led the paladin to any shred of conviction upon the part of Aigean was the pathetic attempt to ensnare him. He knew very well how inept the beasts were, but eluding them had been the epitome of easiness. It was conceivable that a patrol had happened upon the area just as Klassen was engaged in the jail but then what was the commotion before then that had alerted him? The boy was simply gone and all the paladin's gear was left untouched.

Before Klassen could begin to unravel the web of mystery, he heard several feminine voices. He had been paying little attention to his surroundings or where he was headed, so he looked around.

He had wandered into a main street with buildings fairly larger than the norm and also well maintained; this was in vast contrast to most areas in this town of destitution. Immediately Klassen recognized it as a Nobilis section, but soon realized this was only partly true: it was in fact a sort of demarcation line between the Nobilis section and the beast districts. It was a well-lighted area, allowing the paladin to view the voices he had heard quite well.

The feminine voices predominated but there were others as well. The women he saw were obviously Nobilis and just as obviously whores. They were accosting any traveler who might venture by, although this number was few. As expected, several made advances towards the paladin but the paladin ignored the disgusting harlots. He believed it a quite revolting shame that such slatterns adulterated the town though he wasn't surprised in the least.

Klassen questioned himself as to what plan of action would be best, when one of the whores' voices drew his attention, despite his efforts to ignore the sluts. Quickly he located the voice and was astonished at what his eyes beheld. It was, of course, a whore but not the typical type. This was one beatific, stunning. She stood apart from the others like a gorgeous rose among a sea of filthy weeds.

In a combination of awe at her beauty and disgust at the occupation, Klassen came towards the woman. In a further wave of amazement, the paladin recognized her. It was the maiden Alianna.

Chapter XVIII

Striding over to Alianna, Klassen bellowed out, “You, a whore! How can you engage in such perverse ways!?”

It took a moment for her to recognize him and recover from the powerful force of his tone. Barely audibly, she responded in but a whisper, “Klassen, I, I... can we talk over in the alley?”

As awful as the paladin viewed the profession of an offensive trollop, he felt a bond between the two. This bond made him relent when she pleaded with him; they went over to an alley to avoid a scene that Klassen knew was unwelcome at the moment anyway.

Once in the dark alley, the paladin awaited her response to his question with a powerful glare. Although she was nervous, her beauty was obvious, even in the dismal alley. “I, I can explain everything to you. It is a rather long story though. I know a place where we can go. I don’t want to be a whore, but... Maybe you can help me, hon?”

The question she posed was a probing one, looking for sympathy. Klassen had an instinctive urge to help those in need, but only those who truly deserved it. He thought that the way matters stood she didn’t appear to deserve anything but a mountain of shame. Nonetheless, he wished to believe her; she had seemed so pure and so in tune with his being. Helping her to join him atop the steed, he said less forcefully, “Lead on.”

The two trotted off in silence, except when Alianna directed. They didn’t travel far before the maiden brought them to a halt before a small hovel. It seemed like a forgotten part of the town as many of the dwellings around looked uninhabited. This thought struck Klassen as being exactly what a whore would want.

The two entered the shack which, although run-down looking outside, was actually clean inside. The only furniture present was a bed and a table with two chairs. Klassen wondered if anyone could actually live there but realized it was most likely a room of “convenience.”

Alianna lit a torch while motioning the paladin to seat himself at the table; he did so. When the light was burning fiercely, she sat down opposite him, looking as though she was fighting a silent war of what to say. In the bright illumination, her attractiveness became fully evident and this eased Klassen’s anger greatly. Her crimson tresses hung down elegantly and were further amplified by the red dress she wore. She appeared like a radiant chest full of exquisite rubies. This splendid sight made Klassen believe that some unseen evil was acting upon her and that it was his honorable duty to save her, like he had before.

The maiden reached beneath the table and produced a jug and a wooden mug. She made a gesture of offer and the paladin accepted with a nod. After she poured it for Klassen, he drank it greedily. A slight contortion of the paladin’s face was evidence of the acidity of the drink—cider—but he gulped it down nonetheless. The drink refreshed him and after finishing it, brought his gaze back to Alianna.

She saw his blue eyes mesmerized by her figure and grew confident as she began her tale, “I know I have a lot of explaining to do. I just hope that you can believe what I say even though I am a...you know. It isn’t my preferred occupation but one I must endure. I will start at the beginning if that doesn’t bother you sweetie.”

Klassen shook his head as he realized she was either very sincere or a very good actress. He felt no danger at the moment, especially not where he was, and thus got comfortable in preparation of her story.

“Several years ago, when the beast nuisance was here but not as powerful, a catastrophe struck my family. My parents and I were strong supporters of our Nobilismen and hated what the beasts were doing to our town. My brother, however, rebelled against the family and became good friends

with a gang of beasts. My father threatened to expel him from the family, but my dad's threats were hollow and my brother kept his beast friends.

"The group of beasts he associated with was led by an orc whose name I don't know, but have seen. They were engaged in various operations, most illegal and most directed against Nobilismen. It was on a wintry night three years ago that our family was forever changed.

"The band frequently used robbery to fund its consumption of ale and hookers. Whether it was my brother's idea or not, I don't know, but the bandits decided to rob our own house! My family was awakened early in the morning and my father tried to prevent the thieves from stealing our valuables. He did so in vain, however. It was a horrible scene, horrible..." Alianna broke off her narrative amid sobs that nearly choked the life out of her. Her eyes watered and tears rolled down her face as she unsuccessfully tried to continue talking. The sadness and misery within the room was palpable and Klassen clutched Alianna's hand tenderly, gazing into her wet, emerald orbs. The paladin gave her a look as if to say she needn't go on, but she shrugged him off and, after regaining her composure, softly continued speaking.

"They were very drunk—both my brother and the beasts—and maybe that is why they decided...to kill my father. I saw it and it was... well, it was brutal. It was a hobgoblin, not my brother who did it. My mother though...that *was* my brother. They used clubs and it was bloody... so very bloody. They looked at me next, surely to kill me. I was terrified..."

The paladin was appalled at the brutal sequence Alianna described and didn't doubt her words whatsoever. Klassen's left hand held her hand tenderly with warm comfort while his right hand clenched fiercely in glaring anger. Two struggling storms therefore fought each other but the paladin kept them at bay while he listened.

With a slight sob Alianna persisted in her story: "My brother, whose name doesn't even deserve to be spoken, would surely have killed me too. But he didn't. He recognized that I could be useful to him, make him money. As a whore of course. I was sixteen then. I had no choice really; either I become a whore or my brother would kill me. I knew this for a fact as he had killed my parents!"

Barely able to contain his hostility, Klassen spoke, "That is horrible! Where is this vermin, I want his head."

"I don't think that is a good idea at the moment, but let me explain myself more," Alianna said softly. "It was a horrendous experience for me but you must know that I haven't lied to you at all. I *do* hate the beasts. When you saved me from those disgusting ogres, I was, well...my brother had ordered me to...*be* with them. I've told my brother a million times that I'm not like that but all he is concerned with is profit; the ogres were wealthy, by robbery most likely. Then you came along and I was so happy."

The outrage Klassen felt was visible on his contorted face but he had contained his words even at the shocking things he was hearing. He wished to be polite and not interrupt, but it was difficult. Sex with an ogre would have to be a horrific ordeal, he knew. The paladin didn't even know it was possible!

Gathering himself, Klassen said, "It is fantastic that you didn't give in to such perversity! Whoever would make you do that is a foul monster! Why didn't you come with me to the Honor Brigade, though, or tell me about your life?"

"Of course I wanted to go with you...but I was scared. My brother is a powerful man in town. I didn't know how powerful this Honor Brigade is or if they could protect me. I didn't tell you because I thought you'd hate me. As it was, my brother gave me a beating after the whole ordeal and would have killed me, I'm sure, if I wasn't his most attractive whore.

"I've heard about your exploits in town. Great job!" she shouted enthusiastically, her spirits obviously raised by the paladin's presence. "Can you help me too?"

Klassen was very pleased at her change of spirit and wanted greatly to help. "Of course I can help," he said jauntily. "What have you heard around town?"

Alianna dramatically changed when she heard his pledge of assistance. Her face became radiated with the beauty that she had been blessed with as she smiled lovingly. Her lush eyes gleamed with a vibrant vitality like one who had been saved from the skeletal maw of the frigid abyss.

Animated with a breath of refreshing ardor, Alianna responded, "I have heard that you have slaughtered hundreds of the beasts! Word of your deeds has spread across the town honey! The church and the beasts are very wary and they obviously fear you. What do you plan to do?"

The paladin knew full well that stories were easily exaggerated and this was no exception. Whether the Universal Church was inflating his deeds or his Nobilis comrades were, he knew not. Both could benefit as the Church could use the situation to increase oppression while his kinsmen could be inspired to end their suffering.

What he planned to do was still a question in his own mind. "You said your brother is a powerful man. Might we be able to use this to our advantage? If we can eradicate the root of the plague known as the Universal Church, then the rest will be easy."

A brilliant flash of enlightenment swept over Alianna's face as she answered emphatically, "Yes! Not long ago, we had a new ruler for the church. He is an evil man whom we are supposed to call 'Savior'. My brother wanted to get in good with this new family so I was forced to sleep with the ruler's son. It was a horrible, vicious ordeal but my brother didn't care how abused I was as his tactic worked: he is a good friend with the ruler now. Something good has come of it though, dear. I know where he lives!"

The paladin nodded, enjoying her enthusiasm, but thought the information of where the ruler lived was commonplace; however, it wasn't so common that Klassen knew. "What can you tell me of this ruler, this 'Savior'?"

At the contemplation of this question, Alianna appeared cold, as though an icy wind had blown through the room. "His rule has been spectacular if you are a beast, but not for us. Although he is Nobilis, he appears to have a hatred for our people. I think he is mainly motivated by greed though. His house is a palace while we live mainly in ruined homes. We have been devastated by a 'Nobilis Tax' that only collects from our people. My brother escapes this draining tax though.

"Many more beasts have been shipped into our town since his arrival. I think that he is paid to accept them, but I can't be sure. Nobilismen have been thrown out of their homes to make room for these beasts! With all of these creatures, 'Savior' and the church has even promoted Nobilismen marrying beasts and having children! I'm sure this has existed for quite a while but it is really being promoted now. Who knows why they do it, but I don't like it. You have probably seen the half-ogres, half-hobgoblins, and half-imps in the streets. 'Savior' is a cruel man, sweetie."

After hearing of the foul outrages, Klassen made an oath to himself that he would obliterate such a tyrant. Going further, he vowed to remove all sources of the filth around him, like his son and whomever else might be in their ignominious entourage. He knew that such injustices needed to be punished, harshly and swiftly.

Klassen realized that he knew how heinously the Nobilis Tax was effecting the population and thought of the joy it would bring when he halted it. The other foul measure flittered into his mind as he now recognized that the odd creatures he had seen before were, in all likelihood, half-imps. A sneer of revulsion swept over him but he relished in his tenacity to end the nefarious tyranny.

"What shall we do, dear?" Alianna asked sweetly. "You could stay the night here if you want," she said with a sly smile.

The paladin looked at her gorgeous body of magnificence and found this a most appealing proposition. However, before he could answer, a strange noise entered the room from somewhere outside. Like a cat after a mouse, Klassen sprang to the window and gazed outward intently. His eyes were greeted by darkness and filth. The paladin could barely make out his steed, but it was there, unmolested and looking peaceful.

"Are you expecting company?" the paladin asked quickly, his hand resting on his sword.

“No, honey,” she responded swiftly. “I, I wouldn’t worry about it. It was probably a cat or something.”

“I don’t want to take any foolish chances. It is time for action!” The paladin spoke forcefully at first, but then realized his potentially precarious position. “How do I get to the palace of the evil tyrant?”

“We are safe here, dear. But you just go—” Alianna’s words were cut short by a motion from Klassen’s hand. He listened intently and, sure enough, another unknown sound greeted the pair.

“Come on, let’s go. Leave the torch lit,” the paladin whispered authoritatively.

Alianna obeyed and the two quickly and quietly scudded out of the room, into the shadowy realm of the alley. Klassen glanced stealthily about as the two remained crouched in darkness. The smell of putridness dominated the area, which, while discomfiting, wasn’t of concern to Klassen at the moment. Silence, a strange silence, hung ominously over the alley. An eerie feel enveloped the area like that of a gloomy graveyard during a moon-less night. Despite all this, the paladin’s keen eyesight detected no danger but he was prepared for it should it bear its fangs.

Grasping Alianna’s wrist with the firmness of a loved one, Klassen silently directed her to mount his steed. With his help, she was soon astride the horse; the paladin followed by leaping quickly into the saddle. With a quick gaze about the alley the paladin saw nothing extraordinary and set off.

An earsplitting crash resonated powerfully down the alley, behind them, as soon as the pair began their trek. It sounded as though a massive boulder had fallen from the starry heavens above and crushed the dilapidated homes. Klassen peered back expecting an army to be following him but was instead astonished at what he beheld. Consequently, the paladin urged his horse onward quickly.

The rushing winds from their rapid progression left no room for conversation as Alianna and Klassen weaved through the streets of Lealean. The wind howled in their ears and followed them assiduously. The maiden had attempted to direct the paladin but he heeded her not. His sole intent at the moment was leaving the town behind him; whatever path appeared to achieve this end, he took advantage of.

Down both well-lit paths and subterranean-like ones, they rode. Fortunately for them, very few individuals crossed their path. As such, danger was averted and exiting Lealean proved quite easy. In what seemed like only minutes, Klassen guided his horse out into the forest that lay around the town before coming to a halt.

The forest was dark and only hummed with the occasional song of the crickets. It provided excellent cover for those wishing to remain hidden from the inspecting gaze of a pursuer. The trees above the pair formed a large, fluffy mask that hindered even the moon’s glare, so Klassen felt quite comfortable. The paladin and maiden both jumped off of the horse to continue their discussion.

Running her hand through her hair with a slight tremble, Alianna queried, “What did you see back there that scared you so much, hon?”

The paladin’s chuckle broke the stifling cloud of anxiety that hung over the two. “I didn’t see anything to scare me. In fact, I didn’t see *anything* and that intrigues me. Something made that powerful sound, but I don’t know what it was. All I saw was blackness. We have more important matters to discuss now though. Where is that palace?”

“Like I said before honey,” Alianna said with slight desperation in her voice, “I don’t think that is such a good idea. It seems something...something unknown is after us. It might be...my brother. You might be running right into his arms. Are we even safe here? I just don’t want to lose you...”

“That is all the more reason to attack now!” the paladin confidently said. “We are safe here for a bit, but soon I must assault this palace. As for your brother, he will get his deserved

punishment. You won't lose me, but there are more important matters at hand: the population of Nobilismen within the town."

The bond that the paladin had formed with the woman was intense but he knew what he had to do. Klassen had made an oath to himself and was therefore honor-bound to fulfill it. Looking into Alianna's beautiful eyes he recognized that she was one of the reasons he had to cleanse Lealean, but not the only reason.

Alianna could read the paladin's thoughts through his passionate eyes and relented. "I know dear; I am just being selfish. My life hasn't been the greatest and I just don't want my soul mate to be torn from me. Actually, we aren't far from the palace, so why don't we go now?"

The paladin saw how it pained her to say the words she spoke but respected her for saying them. Klassen nodded and the two remounted the steed. Their brief hiatus over, Alianna pointed the way and they rode off towards the east.

As the two traveled, the paladin's swirling emotions confronted him as both love and hate boiled within him. The maiden that sat behind him was very attractive and he enjoyed helping her; he knew he would have helped a less attractive woman but her being so beautiful was quite a bonus to the paladin. The paladin loved her certainly as a kinsman, but was it more? He decided to examine this question more after the whole ordeal was over, when he hoped they would both be back at Imperium Castle. Klassen knew that there she could adopt a much more honorable profession than the one she held now.

On the flip side, but also connected, was the paladin's hatred. He abhorred the enemies that he so joyously wished to destroy. Especially repugnant were the traitors, like the dastardly tyrant he looked forward to dispatching. What awakened such treachery in people? As he asked himself this question, Klassen already knew the answer: greed.

"Have you seen any orcs around this tyrant?" Klassen asked. "It wouldn't surprise me if they are in control and the tyrant is merely a puppet."

Alianna had been locked in her own thoughts and if the look upon her face was any indication, they weren't as optimistic as the paladin's. "Yes, I have seen some. One in particular seems to be in charge as my brother even works for it. I'm sorry though, honey, I don't have any names for you."

Klassen wasn't too concerned over names anyway as he enjoyed removing any orc pestilence that infested Teramon. Once he killed the tyrant, he hoped the puppet master would stick around as well and get its reward for spreading a plague of dishonor. Before the paladin could revel further in his thoughts, Alianna pointed and he saw their destination.

A circle of trees surrounded a large palace that, in contrast to the darkness that pervaded the area, shined brightly with a plethora of torches. It was made of stone and was obviously many, many years old but wasn't in disrepair whatsoever. Upon looking at it further, Klassen realized that it wasn't exactly tall, but it was very wide and looked like it could house a good portion of the entire Nobilis population in Lealean. Here and there a tower would jut into the black sky, glowing with fire. There were many balconies dotting along the palace, although Klassen knew not which might lead to his prey's room.

In the front of the palace was a courtyard where luxurious bushes had been trimmed in symmetrical patterns. Statues that appeared made of gold also stood proudly amidst the display; the paladin noted their craftsmanship was rather good although it didn't even compare with those at Imperium Castle. All in all, Klassen thought the palace quite impressive but in no way did its occupant deserve such fine splendor.

Like the fearless hero that he was, Klassen scanned the premises for a weakness as he hopped down from his mount. Quite a few guards were congregating within the courtyard and all appeared to the paladin's eye as ogres. Even such dolts as these would most likely spot the paladin if he made a frontal assault simply due to the omnipresent illumination that even penetrated into the forest. Though these beasts might not stop him, they could sound an alarm and who knew how many reinforcements they could call.

Klassen quickly found an alternate route that looked much more inviting. The balconies that were all about seemed very accessible, but this immediately aroused the paladin's suspicion. It seemed simply too easy but worth investigating.

"Which balcony is the tyrant's?" the paladin asked.

"I'm not sure, honey," Alianna responded. "I went in through the front entrance, sorry."

After gathering a long strand of rope from his gear and slinging it over his shoulder, Klassen whispered, "If any commotion breaks out or I'm not back in an hour, ride away. I'll probably be dead in that case, but you can ride on to Imperium Castle."

Before Alianna could respond, the paladin stealthily edged away, towards the side of the palace. Tears welled up in her eyes and the word "dead" echoed again and again to her frightened ears.

Quickly and quietly did the paladin scurry through the forest, his mind totally focused on the mission at hand. As powerful as Alianna's charms were, they were now pushed deep into his mind as he knew that any kind of distraction could usher in the demon of death. Although the courtyard was teeming with filthy life, the area Klassen navigated was only filled with the bodies of wood that he knew as friends. It was with ease, therefore, that he came to be within a stone's throw of a suitable balcony.

Although the paladin's first instinct was to rush up the balcony and enter the abode of his foe, he looked around for some type of trap. He could see that the door to the balcony was closed and what lay inside was shrouded by a blue, billowing curtain, but that didn't appear to be much of a defense against intrusion. To Klassen's wary mind the balcony seemed to scream "enter" so that a noose might strangle those who accepted the invitation.

As Klassen crouched contemplating the situation, a ripping pain stabbed him in the back of his skull, near the neck. The paladin swung around looking for an attacker, but saw none. Questions flooded his mind as he struggled to deal with the pain. What had caused it? Was it simply his wounds flaring up? Or was it something else?

The paladin's vision became clouded and his muscles became sluggish, barely responding to his command to withdraw into the depths of the forest where Klassen believed he would have sanctuary. He hadn't gone far when his muscles stopped obeying him and a vision of tangled spider webs glazed across his field of vision. Looking like an uncoordinated sot, the paladin tumbled to the ground.

In a flash of illumination, Klassen saw the pieces of the puzzle fall into place. He was virtually paralyzed but his mind wasn't affected quite as much and it rang out in alarm. Poison! The cider he drank had tasted rotten; couldn't it have been poisoned? The paladin's mind fought with this idea of vicious betrayal but it was the only one that made sense to him. A tiny resistance to this questioned whether she had drank any; the haze in his vision was creeping more and more into his mind but he recalled that she had not.

The paladin's rage soared to the surface of his being and propelled him to his feet. With fierce determination he struggled to flee the area before he was consumed by blackness. He staggered away slowly, a sneer of cold loathing upon his visage.

Klassen's journey was cut short, however, when another volley of explosive pain crashed into his skull.

Chapter XIX

The fiery sun cast down its hot rays upon the town of Lealean, unmolested by any pillow-like clouds. On this particular day, the fireball above reigned supremely over the land as the clouds had lost the battle of the sky. To commemorate the magnificent victory, the town was bathed in golden streams of warmth that caused waves of heat to waver like a snake in the air. It was a bit of an ostentatious display as the boiling temperature oppressed the town, but the magnificent star dictated its own laws, as it was, after all, the victor.

Like the sunlight that pervaded the town, word of the valorous deeds of Klassen spread like a rampaging fire. Every household—beast or Nobilis—spoke of the actions of the single paladin. The Universal Church had quickly denounced his actions and therefore smeared him with all their means possible. The sermons of dishonor had vilified the paladin with ferocious fury; fliers with Klassen's picture behind bars and gold coins going to a beast were spread throughout the town to the illiterate beasts; and an official decree from the evil "Savior" was issued calling for an end to Nobilis insurrections or there would be harsh repercussions.

The beasts, of course, swallowed the propaganda very easily especially considering that they hated Nobilismen anyway. A paladin that killed many of their fellow beasts stirred up feeling not only of vengeance, but also, and probably more motivating, greed at the prospect of gold. Despite these motivations, the beast population was terrified of one that openly defied and slaughtered them. As such, many were uneasy, talking of Klassen as a devil that they hated, but also feared.

The dominating presence of the Universal Church and subsequent smear campaign against the paladin brought mixed sentiments among the Nobilis people. Some saw him, as the propaganda suggested, as the reason for all the ills that had befallen the Nobilis community. Most, however, felt that Klassen was a hero to be respected although they kept these thoughts to themselves or only spoke them amongst trusted comrades. A very few spoke openly in support of the paladin's actions but since this was against the church's views, were either suppressed harshly or in hiding.

The evil tyrant had acted quickly with his measures to remove the paladin and his influence as he saw discontent could be a problem. However, he thought it wasn't enough and his brutal nature was made more evident by the plot he hatched. He claimed that someone within the town was harboring Klassen and thus endeavored to find out whom.

Acting swiftly—it was but afternoon—the wicked despot had sent his troops into the Nobilis district. Warnings rang out that whoever didn't cooperate would be executed on the spot; this compelled compliance, for the most part. Several fights did break out, however, but the bulk of beast warriors and lack of Nobilis leadership halted any type of organized resistance. Those that did resist were rapidly punished for their disobedience with the ripping slash of steel or the powerful thump of hard wood.

Savagely they rounded up the populace, regardless of what the Nobilismen were doing. When the mass was formed together, it was herded towards the town square, being prodded from behind by many tips of steel. No explanation had been given for their uprootment and sweating trek through the city. However, it soon became apparent.

The soldiers and Nobilismen entered a town center that already held a mass of beasts. The stench from the filth and the gallons of sweat issued forth by these vermin transformed the area into a poisonous marsh. The reason for the gathering stood at the end of the town center; it was a gruesome sight that stole the hearts from many of the Nobilismen. This was obviously intended, for the kinsmen of Klassen were brought right before it so they could view it in all its viciousness.

The Nobilismen were packed tightly in the center, visibly horrified but silent. Those who protested in outrage were given a thrashing and thus silence prevailed. The citizen beasts that surrounded them on the flanks were quite the opposite in demeanor as they cheered and shouted obscenities at the Nobilismen. The raucous display greatly annoyed more than one Nobilismen but

the large presence of soldiers that separated the two factions prevented active hostilities from erupting.

Standing upon a high, hastily constructed platform, a Nobilis traitor, with the mark of the Universal Church, called for attention with a swift motion of his hand to the soldiers, silence ensued. Shouting, he roared out, "Our great Savior wants the head of the criminal Klassen." The beasts erupted with wild cheering which the soldiers soon halted. "He knows that someone in the town is harboring this criminal." Hisses and pointing fingers were evident among the beast ranks but soon were quelled. "Either Klassen is presented before me now or," the traitor pointed at a row of Nobilismen on the platform with him, "these people will face the consequences!"

The Nobilismen upon the platform were bound hand and foot by thick cords and were visibly shaken by the pronouncement and subsequent hurrah that pounded forth from the revolting mob of beasts. Some of the crowd recognized friends or family on the stage; some were from the altercation at the *Lion's Den* bar while others had been randomly selected. For each prisoner, a swinging death sentence blew in the slight breeze. A noose.

Amidst the Nobilis crowd, whispers broke out as people voiced their consternation. The soldiers had been ordered not to disrupt this murmuring as it might lead to the execution of anyone that might be Klassen's cohort. Consequently, the speech increased in tempo and volume as arguments over who was housing the paladin erupted. Anxiety and anger blanketed the area.

Amid a small group of Nobilismen, the bartender and owner of the *Lion's Den*, Caion, whispered to one of his comrades, "Where can he be? This blasted tyrant needs dealt with and he is the only one that can do it. Our kinsman are to be hung and they need saved!"

One of his brethren whispered back, "I agree Caion but what can we do? No one has seen Klassen since yesterday. It's like he's just disappeared."

"Aye it is," came the hushed reply from the bartender. "We have to do something but all these soldiers would rip us to pieces. We don't even have weapons more than simple knives."

Before the small group could continue, a shout from atop the platform rang out. "Silence!" the traitor commanded harshly, wiping the sweat from his brow. "The magnificent Savior *knows* that there is a criminal among us. He *knows*! Who is harboring the murderer Klassen? Blood will be spilled today. Will it be you!?" the clergyman roared pointing into the Nobilis crowd. "Or you!?" he screamed hysterically as he pointed to someone else.

The crowd of Nobilismen quailed in fear at the horrific sermon the priest spoke. The intended affect had obviously been terror and it succeeded greatly, much to the clergyman's delight. One of those that the traitor had pointed to had been a woman that had fainted from the sheer shock of it all. The degree of panic was steadily increasing but the priest was far from done exacerbating the crowd.

The clergyman glared across the Nobilis ranks and, after seeing no indication of the paladin, motioned to the soldiers. They promptly climbed onto the gallows and placed the nooses around the prisoner's naked necks. As they did this, shrieks of horror arose from the women and frustrated curses rang out from the men. The beasts, on the other hand, joyously hooted and hollered at the display. All that sustained the prisoners' life was a small platform below their feet that could easily be withdrawn.

The priest wore a mask of jubilation and loathing as he chastised, "This is your final chance sinners! Death is at hand!"

The brouhaha now became deafening as the hearts of the Nobilismen thumped wildly with concern. What could they do? None of them seemed to know anything about Klassen's whereabouts and could they possibly stop the horrible proceedings? The mighty frustration within the Nobilismen was kept in check by the soldiers, and this further cast a blanketing shadow of gloom over them.

A distraught Caion voiced out his despair: "Will we never break these bonds brothers? If only our hero was here. Why has he forsaken us?" In a final whisper of morbidity, he asked his comrades, "Is the church right, and Klassen the source of our suffering?"

After these depressing words were uttered, a quick figure jostled its way through the thick, sweating crowd. Immediately questions were asked and hope, ever so small but hope indeed, blossomed forth among the Nobilis people. Who was this figure? What was his mission? Could he know the paladin's whereabouts?

The crowd—beast and Nobilismen—all calmed to a silent hush upon seeing this figure. The being had no identifying marks, so the mystery was heightened. In eager anticipation, the masses watched the figure wind its way up to the gallows, fierce determination upon his face. Once there he handed a note to the fanatical priest.

The clergyman again wiped the sweat away that was swelling like a river upon his visage, but his face was an impassive mask, betraying no emotion as he read. All eyes in the town center were upon this reader but the priest seemed not to notice, in such concentration was he. After a few moments he looked up and around his audience before speaking.

"Our Savior sends his well wishes to all present," he said, face contorted in a wicked grin. "Justice is very important to him and he hopes everyone shall obey the laws so that we may all prosper. He declares that it is the duty and privilege for all to take justice into their own hands when it comes to Nobilis criminals. So there is no need to wait for the soldiers anymore and our Savior declares it just to kill any Klassen supporters on the spot!"

Wild cheers of vulgar bliss erupted from the beasts while the Nobilismen cried out in agony. Many of these Nobilismen looked as though the grim hand of death had already claimed them. Lamentations of woe rang out and abject misery suffocated the area. The cruel suffering inflicted upon the Nobilis people shattered many wills, and they seemed destined to live a shallow, empty life.

Bringing his arms high into the sky, the clergyman fervently continued, "There is one final statement from our sublime Savior." With a nod of suffocating death, the priest shouted, "Justice is served!"

Something slimy oozed across the paladin's arm, waking him from his slumber. Instinctively he attempted to brush it off but failed. A few shrugs of his shoulder successfully removed the creature, whatever it was. Feeling his wrists with his fingers, he realized his hands were bound and more importantly, he had no idea where he was.

With a heavy effort Klassen came to a sitting position, but he experienced another difficulty: he couldn't see. With a dexterous effort, he maneuvered his hands from behind his back to in front of him by slipping his hands under his legs. The paladin discovered it was a hood that blinded him, but several attempts to remove it failed as it too was bound securely with a thick rope.

Without access to either sight or much movement, the paladin endeavored to examine his situation. He was quite damp from the floor where he sat and this led him to believe he was locked in a dungeon, especially since he was tied up; the pervasive musty stench also lent credence to this. His muscles felt as though they had been punished with a whip as they burned intensely. The paladin's head throbbed with a continual drumming and he wasn't too keen on the beat. When a slight breeze blew through his cell, he realized that all he wore now was a loincloth and boots. An intriguing situation, he thought, but one he wanted out of.

Focusing his mind was quite a task in itself, but Klassen forced himself to. Where was he and how had he gotten into such a predicament? These questions probed his mind but he found it difficult to answer them. The paladin wondered why he felt like a drunkard when it hit him.

Poison! Yes, he remembered it all now. He wondered what reward the whore had received for betraying him. How crafty she had been, he thought. Klassen felt angrier with himself for all that happened than he did with the whore. He vowed to learn from his mistakes as soon as he escaped. The contemplation of escape was interrupted, though, by a voice not far from him.

“Why hello there partner!” the voice cackled, barely distinguishable as masculine. “Have a nice nap there? Ha! What’s your name and why are you here? You look important.”

Klassen heard the shrill laugh and wondered about the man’s sanity. “I am Klassen. Where exactly is ‘here’?”

“Why this is the dark world, underworld, world of pain or whatever name you like. It’s pretty cozy once you get used to it! Ha! Of course that takes some days, or months, or like me, years. The pain and starvation are easy to get used to, but the stench of those ogres! Now I tell you, *that* is hard. Ha!”

The paladin couldn’t help but to chuckle, but wondered how much he could learn from someone who appeared to have lost his mind. “What is your name, comrade, and how long have you been imprisoned here?” Klassen asked with a serious tone.

“I am doomed, and laying next to you is death! Ha!” Sure enough, the paladin felt a corpse beside him. “I’ve been here since I was a wee youngin, or so it seems. Somehow I feel you won’t be sticking around as long as I though.”

The paladin wasn’t offended by the prisoner in the least, as he recognized who was to blame for his condition. The man was coping with laughter and Klassen joined him in the ironic joviality. The paladin was determined to solve past errors and cleanse the town. Before he could question his incarcerated companion further, however, a faint clicking of boots was heard in the distance, reverberating against the walls.

“Here they come Klassen!” screamed out the prisoner. “My body is old and frail but you are strong! Give them a couple of blows for me, will ya? What I wouldn’t give to be young again and pummel these brutes! Ha!”

The paladin prepared himself for an attack and longed to reward his companion for his miserable suffering.

With barely a breath taken in between, the prisoner yelled, “Wow, you ogres smell bad! How in all of Teramon does your kind reproduce? How can you even survive at all? I’d commit suicide if I emitted such a stench. Oh, oh, oh all that ale you drink numbs your senses. If they were numbed anymore, you’d be brain-dead! Ha! You are so stup—” started the captive, but he finished with a soft groan.

A deep, guttural voice replaced the prisoner’s. “Who be tha dub one eh?” The paladin recognized the voice instantly as that of an ogre. Klassen realized what was happening without seeing it.

The paladin heard a rustle of keys and what he presumed was the door to his cell open. From the sound of footfalls, Klassen realized that two of the large beasts had entered his damp abode.

“Lat’s go,” one of the brutes said in a low rumbling.

The paladin rose to his feet slowly. As soon as he felt the leathery hand grab his arm, Klassen reacted swiftly, ignoring the pain that shot through his sore muscles. The paladin’s bound hands erupted toward his unseen assailant’s face with rapid velocity. His hard knuckles blasted into the nose of the ogre; it buckled instantly beneath the fury of the blow.

Klassen swung his elbow towards the enemy to his right but it only whistled through empty space. An attack from above him was detected too late and the paladin felt the full impact of the blow; it staggered him but he didn’t fall. Another blunt blow came ripping into his midsection and this time he did fall. Once on the ground, the ogres shot a fusillade of boot stomps, further injuring the paladin.

The attack stopped as one ogre spoke gruffly, “No die, no die. Savior want alive. Lat’s go Kassen.”

Unobserved to the paladin, the other prisoner had reveled in delight when Klassen had punched the filthy ogre. He spoke hoarsely as he struggled for air, “Way to go kid! That punch surely broke his nos—” The sentence went unfinished as a blow ripped into the old man. He didn’t have oxygen to spare to speak further, nor even groan.

The paladin laid on the grimy floor trying to crush the pain that bludgeoned him all over. He knew he could rise, but felt in no mood for obeisance to a pair of foul-smelling ogres. The question that burned in his mind was: Why am I kept alive? More importantly, he knew, was taking advantage of this situation, the only advantage he seemed to have at the time.

“Lat’s go Kassen,” the ogre said, the irritation in its voice plainly evident. “Savior,” it said, speaking the word so crisply and correctly that the paladin wondered how much training it had taken, “sez that you wold be ah coward if we was furced to carrie you.”

Klassen immediately recognized the attack upon his pride but, even being aware of it, knew it was an effective ploy; the paladin, amid pain that hammered and sliced his skin, straightened to his feet as though he were in perfect health. As much as the paladin wished to eradicate the miserable beasts that stood before him, he realized this must wait until circumstances were more favorable.

The two beasts firmly grasped Klassen’s large biceps and led him forward. The mere touch of these hated beasts unleashed the paladin’s rancor and compelled him to unleash his fury, but he waited. It was extremely difficult for him to contain his furious wrath but he did as he knew he must. The words of an ancient philosopher came to his mind: “A triumph of the will.”

The paladin, still masked, was led from his cell and up a seemingly endless number of stairs. After this, the path he was led on twisted and turned as though he were trapped in a maze. Here and there an “ohh” or “ahh” was heard by people Klassen assumed worked at the palace. The ogres paid no attention to these words. After what seemed like a complete adventure in itself to the paladin, the trio stopped.

“You listen,” an ogre grunted. “You bout be see Savior. Must bowh befer him. Undstand?”

Klassen nodded while loathing to hear the very speech (if it could be called such, he thought) of the beasts. Who was this “Savior” and how dare he exude such disgraceful impudence?

A door creaked open and the trio made their way inside. The lair of the beast the paladin couldn’t see, but he did feel the softness under his boots, indicating carpet. If the lavish adornments he had seen before were any indicator, it would be exquisite carpet amidst an opulent throne room. Klassen heard but silence, telling him that either few were in the room or those within were respectfully silent in “Savior’s” presence; he thought the latter more probable.

After a short walk, the ogres brought the paladin to an abrupt halt. “Bowh,” an ogre ordered. When the paladin didn’t comply, a painful blow to Klassen’s back dropped him to his knees, making him involuntarily bow.

A crisp, stern voice greeted Klassen: “Good to see you, son.”

Chapter XX

Klassen's mind swirled as he struggled with what seemed an almost certainty. The voice was very familiar to the paladin and he really understood whom it was that spoke to him, but wasn't going to fully accept it until he saw it for himself. All he saw was black but the cords that held the mask firm, were becoming loose as someone was cutting through the rope. In a flash, it was removed.

The paladin's eyes took a moment to adjust to the light after being so blanketed in darkness. Once they did, shock was painted upon his face. The voice was, as he thought, his father Ubelig's.

Ubelig chuckled softly as he spoke, "You are still easy to read, my son. You don't seem to have changed at all, really. Sure, you are in some silly 'Honor Brigade' and have some skill with weapons, but have you really changed? No. If you would have only stayed with the family, just look at what you could be a part of!" As he spoke, he swung his arm around directing Klassen to look around.

The paladin's fervent vehemence rushed through his mind like a crashing wave upon a jagged cliff of rocks. He was befuddled that his own father, his own flesh and blood, was the source of so much misery! The rest of his family also was involved, but his father was the source of evil that had corrupted them. He, in turn, had been corrupted by the slinking orcs, Klassen knew. Nonetheless, he knew that all involved had participated willingly and thus deserved swift justice.

As Ubelig beamed about his elegant surroundings, the paladin looked around. His father wore an elaborate crown of jewels and purple robes with white streaks, befitting a king. Ubelig sat upon a golden throne, with Klassen's mother Schlimma sitting in a similar throne. She was dressed in a similar garb of regal bearing. If one weren't aware of their vile deeds, it would prove to be a most impressive sight.

Flanking the thrones were a pair of guards, both Nobilis, who were bedecked in stunning plate mail and gleaming swords. The ogres, now visible to Klassen, were equipped similarly but also wielded large, wooden clubs. Further guards were also posted at the entrance, now closed.

Surrounding those in the throne room were many tapestries displaying the variegated colors of the rainbow. The carpet was a blood red, with a checkered design of black interspersed upon it. Several balconies were situated to the paladin's right with the forest beyond clearly visible. The glass in the balcony was stained blue and green so in addition to the golden rays of the sun entering the room, blue and green strands did as well. It was a colorful display that the paladin found quite remarkable.

"No family reunion would be complete without the full family," Ubelig said. "Your brother is here, don't worry. First, though, I want you to tell us what you've been up to. And where is the warm greeting for your parents? Speak now!"

"Greetings parents," Klassen spoke harshly, using the words as weapons of war. "You are a disgrace and you *will* die!"

Ubelig waived off the ogre that advanced to club Klassen. "No one can argue that you aren't passionate, my son. Too bad it is a misguided passion." Turning to Schlimma, he asked, "What do you think of our boy, dear?"

"*He* is the disgrace," she said. "And *he* is the one who will die."

A smile of devious mirth washed over Ubelig's face. "Yes, that is quite true. We could have eliminated our son who betrayed us already, but where is the amusement in that? I can have you killed when I want to. I will soon, publicly of course. Justice, of course, must be administered."

Turning to Klassen, he continued, "If you don't have the decency to talk about your endeavors, then it doesn't matter much as I know already. I still have one good son, after all. So good in fact

that I deferred the wonderful pleasure of tormenting you to him. Do you have nothing to say for yourself at all, Klassen?"

Oh how Klassen desperately wished to strangle his father and fulfill his vow to end the tyranny of this "Savior." He was outraged by the oppression of such a cruel monster and the fact that it was his own father, sent Klassen into a bubbling sea of wrath that visibly showed upon his face. His own father!

"I do have a question for you father." Klassen spat out the words with disdain, while the word "father" was especially filled with violent contempt. "Why have you chosen this path of dishonor? Is there no hope for you?"

A vicious frown was evident on the bloody tyrant's face as he said bluntly, "Were we back at home, I'd beat you myself. You will get your justice, however. It will be a pleasure."

Calming himself, he continued, "I am on the path of hope; it is you who has no hope. Why do I choose my path? Look around you! Look at the wealth, the riches, the power! Such is the way you could have chosen if you'd only listened to me, your father."

"As it is, you are doomed." Motioning to a guard, he said, "Send in my son Grausen. Now!"

Klassen's brother, Grausen, promptly came in dressed in a brown military uniform, acting as though he commanded all the armies of the world. Following him were several more guards—Nobilisman—and two prisoners who were bound and gagged. These two the paladin recognized instantly as the woman Alianna and boy Aigean.

"Thank you for this honor," Grausen said to his father. Turning to Klassen, he said, "We are going to have some fun brother. You are going to suffer, suffer then die! Hehehe. Unless, of course, you wish to pledge allegiance to father, the Savior. What do you say?"

"Never," Klassen roared. "You disgust me!"

"Thank you brother. I get to take part in my favorite occupation then: pain."

At Grausen's command, the two prisoners were brought forward and hurtled down onto their knees. "Now, I know you are simply dying to kill these traitors. Who doesn't enjoy killing traitors? If you are a really good boy, I might let you slit their throats. Would you like that brother?"

Traitors were all around, Klassen thought. The disgrace of his family was like a knife plunged into his heart, and the presence of the two prisoners twisted that knife. The thought of obliterating a traitor brought a sense of joy to the paladin. He simply nodded at his brother's question.

"Hehehe. Like we'd allow you such a privilege," Grausen said, laughing. "What I would like to know, is how could you trust a whore and a thief? Father always told us not to trust anyone, yet you placed your faith in two characters with dubious pasts. Tsk tsk. Well, you paid for such idiocy. You are here, after all."

Grausen glanced at Alianna and said, "As a whore, you are quite spectacular. As a traitor, you must be eliminated. What joy it is to kill you myself and deprive my brother of the thrill! Hehehe. Do you have any last words?"

A nod and a muffled garble sounded from Alianna. "Oh," Grausen exclaimed, "silly me, you have a gag in your mouth. Hehehe."

The gag was removed. Alianna screamed out at Klassen, "He is lying, they are all lying! I didn't betray you, I was captured. I want to help you, be with you. Please believe me...honey."

Stuffing the gag back into her mouth, Grausen uttered, "I think whores are much better when they don't speak; squeals are great, but that incessant talk is irksome. Don't you think, brother? Anyway, who is lying, Klassen? Is it me or the whore? Who should suffer?"

Silence ensued as the paladin struggled with the question. Klassen already knew his brother was an evil being deserving to dwell among the refuse of the world. Alianna, he was torn over. Was she lying? he thought. Finally, he decided upon the subject.

“Both of you should die,” Klassen hissed like a serpent.

Grausen looked at his father, who nodded. “So be it,” Klassen’s brother said.

Grabbing Alianna’s hair and pulling back fiercely, Grausen looked into the woman’s emerald eyes. A dagger materialized in his hand and he sliced the whore’s throat in a swift, fluid motion. The blood flowed in streams as Grausen greedily sucked it from the woman’s throat. After getting his fill, the vampire let Alianna slump to the ground.

Wiping the crimson fluid from his face, Grausen spoke joyfully, “*That* was fun but it gets better. This wench here, now dead, wasn’t lying my dear brother. She didn’t betray you at all. Suffer, suffer! Hehehe.”

The words bit into Klassen’s flesh like the blade of the dagger his brother held. Could it be true? No, he thought, his brother was simply trying to irritate him. He thought that she had to have betrayed him, but a lingering doubt loomed within him, annoying him. Klassen thought it more likely Alianna had been telling the truth than his brother but...

“Brother,” Grausen began, “will you always display your emotions upon your face? I can see your nagging doubts, which is a pleasure in itself, but it gets better, like I said. Our great Savior knew you’d have doubts so we have an explanation and demonstration for you.

“See, we have spies. We can’t feel the pulse of the town without them, as father says. We saw you leave with the whore. We followed you to the palace as well. We subdued you there and I will show you how.”

He drew out a long tube from his pocket. “This is a dart gun like the one that disabled you. We knew how adept you were with that sword, so we didn’t let you use it. The darts this fires can be laced with many poisons. The ones used on you contained a very strong sedative. Cozy, wasn’t it? Hehehe. Watch this.”

Grausen armed the weapon with a dart, placed the dart gun against his lips, and blew. The poisoned barb flew silently until it embedded itself in a guard’s neck. Smiling, Grausen watched as the guard, a Nobilisman, struggled to maintain his balance. Before long, the guard collapsed with a barely audible thud.

The paladin watched the display and then looked at the bloody corpse of Alianna. Klassen knew what his brother had said happened was true. This realization ripped through the paladin’s flesh like the scathing blade of an axe. He blamed himself for her death and his hatred for his brother, nay his entire family, became even more inflamed. If glares had the power to kill, then Grausen would have been bludgeoned to death in an instant as Klassen vented his raging anger with a stare.

“Ah, now there it is!” shouted Grausen excitedly. “Show your anger, your hatred. Who needs words when you have a stare like that? Hehehe. Do you think I should have pity on you now brother?” he queried, tauntingly. “I think we can actually agree on something here: pity is for the weak.”

Klassen did agree with his brother but had no desire to voice this agreement, nor show it. The paladin waited for his brother to bring forth more displays to humiliate him; he didn’t have to wait long.

Seeing the paladin’s demeanor, Grausen inquired mockingly, “Where is this ‘Honor Brigade’ that you represent? They must not be very powerful to send you here. Alone. Do they, like I, like to see suffering? What compelled you to join such a pathetic force when such power surrounds us? I mean, of course, the Universal Church.”

“Honor compelled me, you filthy rat!” the paladin spat out. “It is something you know nothing of.” Beaming, Klassen proudly continued, “The Honor Brigade is the only salvation for Teramon.”

Klassen saw that the words affected Grausen, regardless of how well his brother could control his emotions. “You are deluded, brother. This does interest me though. Perhaps this pitiful ‘Honor Brigade’ would like to feel the might of the Universal Church! Hehehe.”

The paladin laughed as well as he knew an attack upon Imperium Castle was suicide. He had seen this first hand and thus voiced, "Yes! That would be a delightful slaughter. Please attack."

Grausen was unnerved by this outburst and motioned to an ogre to halt it; a crushing blow to Klassen's back followed. The paladin barely felt the blow amid all his pains and the smile stayed upon his lips.

"How do you like your ogre guards, Klassen?" Grausen asked wickedly. "I know how much you enjoy their company, and it seems so fitting for you to be among your beloved. Hehehe."

Turning to Ubelig, Grausen asked, "Don't you think we should crush these 'honor' warriors father?"

Ubelig enjoined, "We can speak about that another time. Proceed with the humiliation. Go to it!"

Grausen nodded swiftly and brought his attention to bear on the lad Aigean. The boy had a look as if he would whimper, if only his gag were removed. He looked at the body of Alianna, and the blood surrounding her, with moist eyes. The look he shot at Klassen seemed to scream for help; the paladin's mind questioned it. With a kick from behind, Aigean groaned.

"As you can see," Grausen began, "the boy isn't a traitor. No need for pretense here. Our spies captured him and most surely it must have looked like a trap to you! But it wasn't. Don't worry, there is still fun to be had in the boy's innocence. You know what will happen to him. Hehehe. Before I kill him, I have some gleeful news for you.

"Yesterday, a most delightful scene of death and suffering occurred in town. I, most fortunately, was there to witness it. Not among the rabble, mind you, but I was there. Those 'comrades' of yours that fought in that paltry barroom brawl were among those put to death, hanged to be exact. There is admirable suffering in that, not a swift death you see. They were killed because someone in town was harboring you. Never mind the fact that we had you the whole time! Hehehe.

"Before you have any outbursts, let me finish. It gets better. Some that died were from that bar and some were selected efficiently, by random. Anyone we didn't like the look of, really. Hehehe. Two were not chosen at random though. They were the parents of this little thief here!"

Amid the sadistic smile of Grausen, the boy cried and Klassen became further enraged. Black heap upon black heap had created a mountain of filthy oppression that the paladin knew had to end. All the unjust death and suffering that surrounded Klassen sickened him and he acted in the hopes to alleviate it.

He shot to his feet with the little energy left in him. Roaring out, he vociferated, "You devil dogs! Why don't you simply take me, burn me, hang me, whatever, and end these people's, *our* people's, suffering!? Blame it all on me or whatever you wish, just stop destroying the Nobilismen!"

Grausen took a step back in shock at this terrific outburst, visibly dismayed. "Noble words," he squeaked out, "but what use have we of nobility? How pathetic it is to think you value honor over riches. That 'Honor Brigade' has so polluted your mind that you can't even think clearly." Glancing down at Klassen's feet, he continued, "Even your boots show the sign of that perversion called honor."

The paladin looked at his boots and, sure enough, they were from the Honor Brigade. He didn't have time to marvel at them, however, as a barrage of blunt strikes pounded against his back; Klassen slumped back down on the carpeted floor. While there, a sense of liberating joy swept over him like a comforting breeze amid the torturing fire of dishonor that surrounded him. In order to mask his wondrous feelings of bliss, he stayed slumped upon the floor, not even looking up. His grin was huge. The overriding thought that engaged him was: the boots!

Grausen laughed at Klassen as he spoke, "That is a better sign of respect: grovel. You don't even deserve to be in the presence of our family but that will end, don't you worry. When you

cease to amuse us, we shall get rid of you. Anyway, to the matter at hand.” Looking at Aigean, he continued, “Boy, do you have any final words?”

The gag was removed from the lad’s mouth and he spoke to Grausen with a whimper. “You are evil and bad and horrible.” Turning to Klassen, he pleaded, “Don’t give up and help me kill this guy and kill them all!”

“Enough of your babbling,” Grausen said roughly as he put the gag back. “It is time for you to suffer, then die! Hehehe.”

As Grausen grabbed for the boy, a loud chain of yelling and hollering erupted from beyond the entranceway door, which was closed. A scream of miserable pain accentuated the rising racket. Startled looks between the guards and the rulers were exchanged before someone spoke.

“Grausen,” Ubelig roared, “take the guards and go investigate. Be quick about it.”

“All the guards, father? What about Klassen?” Grausen asked, a hint of fear in his voice.

“Yes, take them all,” came the reply. “My disgrace for a son is barely alive. Go to it! Now!”

Grausen nodded and hastily gathered the guardsmen together before exiting the throne room. Meanwhile, Klassen turned on his side so that his back faced his father. All that Ubelig saw to realize that his son was alive was a faint squirming here and there.

“Don’t worry, my son,” Ubelig said with composure. “Your demise will come as soon as you are no longer useful to me. Your brother would have me cut you into tiny pieces and spread throughout town as a warning. A vicious one he is. A good son though, unlike you.”

Ubelig stopped talking as the racket outside the throne room became louder and louder. The shouts became almost decipherable through the large door that separated silence and noisy disorder. The look on the tyrant’s face became agitated and uneasy at the boisterous disturbance that sounded like a full-fledged war.

Suddenly, the door was flung open and Grausen ran into the room with great speed. Terrifying fear was painted upon his face and a faint sob was heard as he rushed in. Accompanying him into the hall were amplified sounds of the hollering, but now audible were death cries and the clash of steel upon steel. It was as if the entire army of the Honor Brigade had burst into the palace with the coward fleeing in immense terror.

Aghast, Ubelig screamed at his fleeing son, “What in all of Teramon is going on? Son! Come back here!”

Before these last words were even uttered, however, Grausen scudded over to the balcony, ignoring his father, and leaped over the edge. Klassen chided himself as he watched his brother escape but knew he still had two disreputable scamps to deal with. With a final squirming, he slashed the cords that bound him with the knife that had been oh-so-cleverly hidden in his boot. He was free!

The paladin was imbued with a crackling energy of enthusiasm as he rose to his feet. Flames seemed to lash out all about him as he appeared to rise from the fire, like the rebirth of the phoenix. Ascending to his full height, the rays of light cascaded upon his powerful frame, illuminating Klassen’s physique that rippled with rigid muscles. The refulgent glow was one of holiness, deeming that Klassen was, indeed, a paladin of honor.

The sight of their son now free hit Ubelig and Schlimma like a scathing bolt of lightning. They tumbled to the ground, the look of stark terror being emitted from their entire being. A few incoherent words fell from their lips as their paralyzation of fear was virtually complete.

The paladin rushed over to free the boy that had suffered so much. Aigean was ecstatic at the events that were unfolding around them. He thanked the paladin incessantly until Klassen had to stop him and concentrate on the matter at hand. After granting the boy a huge smile, the paladin glanced out into the hall that adjoined the room.

Erupting beautifully before the paladin’s eyes was a battle of clubs, swords, and shields where the advocates of filth and degeneracy were falling back. The bloody orchestra of violence was ever sweet to Klassen’s ears but who exactly was doing the attacking, he knew not. Whoever they were,

they were succeeding and appeared to have no need of a paladin wielding but a knife. Consequently, Klassen turned his attention to his parents.

The paladin slowly walked towards those who had raised him, confident of glorious victory despite the stinging pain that raked his body. With a piercing scowl upon his visage, Klassen struggled to remember any good times that his parents had bestowed upon, but only recalled viciousness. For most of his life, he had endured the hardships from them and had remained with them in homage to a tradition of family, but no more. The paladin had found an ideal worth fighting and dying for that transcended all other ideals. It was a sublime value that, once embraced universally, he knew would usher in a golden paradise upon Teramon. Klassen was fanatically loyal to this value. It was known as honor.

Trying to take advantage of being Klassen's father, Ubelig weakly shouted, "Klassen, stop!" as the paladin came to stand before the prone "Savior."

Klassen stood, gazing down upon the pathetic figure for a moment before speaking vengefully, "I took an oath to kill the evil tyrant of Lealean that had oppressed so many Nobilismen. Imagine my shame when it turned out to be my own father! Nevertheless, I am a man of my word and I always fulfill my oaths." Thus speaking, Klassen yanked his father to his feet and plunged the dagger into Ubelig's stomach, twisting it harshly with a look of bristling hatred. "My oath is now fulfilled."

Just as the paladin pulled his blade free, a wave of townsman, led by Caion, rushed into the room, pursuing a few retreating guards. These remaining guards were ignored for the moment as the Nobilis mob erupted into a crescendo of jubilant cheering. Weapons were raised into the air and the air of fanaticism increased exponentially. The few guards that hadn't already been slaughtered were flung to the floor amid the outburst of hurrahs. Townsfolk hovered over them menacingly and after receiving a nod from their champion, executed the scoundrels.

The crowd easily filled the entire throne room and gathered around their hero, eagerly anticipating his words. With an enormous smile of mirth upon his visage, Klassen spoke loudly, "I made an oath to myself to end this tyrant's cruel reign and now it is so!" The crowd cheered at these words. "Of course, this wouldn't have been possible if the good townspeople of Lealean hadn't said enough! and stormed the palace." An even greater cheer exploded forth.

"There are still matters to be attended to. First off, is a wicked man by the name of Grausen who needs to be executed on the spot, should anyone find him. I doubt he will stay in town, but he will meet with justice! Next, comes the fate of Schlimma, wife of the foul 'Savior'."

Boos and hisses were heard as the crowd voiced its contempt for the woman. Klassen forcefully trumpeted, "I know this vile witch very well. She is a horrible cohort of the now-dead tyrant and accomplice in the oppression, theft, and murder of many Nobilismen! Yes, she is not a leader, but she, like the tyrant, is a willing follower of perversity! Did she stop the hanging of our kinsmen that were brutally murdered yesterday? No! I leave it to you, my good comrades, to decide her punishment. What shall be her fate!?"

The crowd responded in an overwhelming unanimous decision. "Kill her!" was the most common utterance heard. As the jury thus decided, the paladin executed the punishment of death with a simple flick of his wrist. Schlimma tumbled to the ground, blood flowing freely from her throat. The crowd exploded in celebration. Hugs were exchanged between the merry revelers, including Klassen, Aigeon, and Caion. The festive air encased the palace in an honorable celebration that befitted the luxurious surroundings.

With bloody dagger still in hand, the paladin raised his powerful arms into the air, towards the heavens above. Klassen roared, "Victory is inevitable!"

Ten Laws of Honor Brigade

1. *Illuminate Teramon with the bright light of honor.*
2. *Be strong; slaughter the weak.*
3. *Courageously fight for a better world.*
4. *Live at war.*
5. *Life to Nobilismen; death to the beasts.*
6. *Nobilismen are the supreme beings.*
7. *Superstition must be destroyed and replaced by the laws of nature.*
8. *Promote the best interests of our Nobilis brethren.*
9. *Utilize your specific talent to further Nobilis ends.*
10. *Victory is inevitable.*

Country Wealth

Act I

Scene.—Forest out in the country. It is a warm afternoon. Bruno and Gustave are wrestling around and are quite dirty. They are having fun enjoying the day. Grant wanders into the area. Although he is smartly dressed, he looks quite down and lonely. Bruno and Gustave stop their playing as Grant approaches.

Bruno. Hail there comrade!

Grant (softly). Hi. How are you?

Bruno. We are doing quite well. My name is Bruno Stahl and this is my twin brother, Gustave. What is your name?

Grant. My name is Grant Oxley.

Gustave. What was that? I couldn't hear you.

Grant (slightly louder). My name is Grant, Grant Oxley.

Bruno. Hmm. What kind of name do you think that is, Gustave? It certainly isn't French or German like our names are.

Gustave. It sounds English to me. Where does your name come from Grant? How far back have you traced your family tree?

Grant. I don't know what type of name it is. I don't really know anything about my family tree.

Gustave. Aren't you interested in your ancestors? Bruno and I are French and German. Our mother is pure French and our father is pure German. I find it very interesting to learn about our ancestors.

Bruno (excitedly). Our grandfather Stahl was a warrior in the Great War. He was a brave soldier and fought for his people! Our great grandmother was a writer but Gustave knows more about her than I do. Those relatives are like Gustave and I. My brother and I make quite a team. I am the muscle and he is the brains.

Gustave. Is there any way for you to find out about your ancestors, Grant? There are probably some people in your family to be proud of. Can't you think of anyone? After all, you are White.

Grant (stunned). Are you guys racist or something? I have family members that do well but it isn't because they are White. My dad is a professor at the university actually.

Bruno. Yes, of course we are racist. The White Race is the greatest race that exists.

Grant (terrified, he falls to the ground). Please, don't hurt me. I will give you what you want just don't hurt me. I have money and I can get more. Just no more pain, please.

Bruno. Get up, my White brother. We aren't going to hurt you. Where did you get such an idea? We love White people. We don't hate you. Do we look like evil demons?

[Bruno helps Grant up.]

Grant (softly as he gets up). You really aren't going to hurt me? Those racists I see on television are always killing people. How do I know that you aren't going to hurt me?

Bruno. Well, I think you can only trust us and see how we treat you. My brother and I could have easily beaten you up but that wouldn't be right. Do you believe everything you see on television?

Grant. I guess not. My parents warned me about racist people living nearby though. We just moved here and we haven't had a chance to meet everyone.

Bruno. I bet it was the Smiths that told your parents about us. They are real Christian fanatics who hate us. They think that because we don't accept their god, that we are going to burn in hell. They also think that since we love our people and hate our enemies, we are evil. The choice is yours though. You can stay or go but I would prefer you stay because there aren't many kids around here to play with. So what do you say? (Puts his arm around Gustave while they both smile.) Will you stay?

Grant (after a momentary pause). You don't seem so bad. I didn't like the old couple who told us about you anyway. They were really angry and I am not sure why. I will stay for a while. I would like some friends after all.

Bruno (removing his arm from Gustave's shoulder). Great! We have a lot in common, I bet.

Gustave. How come you moved out here anyway? It is a nice area but you look like you have a lot of money and could live anywhere you wanted.

Grant. My parents didn't like the city. There was too much crime there. Rocks would be thrown at our house and our cars. My dad was sick of the area and wanted a change. I think we came out here to get away from all that.

Gustave. Our dad said the same thing. We moved here when we were little because my dad didn't like the city either. He said there were far too many niggers there.

Grant (interrupts, and is aghast). What did you say?? How can you call them that??

Bruno. It is what we call them. They aren't like us. They destroy neighborhoods and commit most crimes. Weren't they the ones who destroyed your property?

Grant. Actually, yes they were but it isn't because they are black.

Gustave. Don't you find it odd that they are the ones committing all these crimes? It seems like the reason you moved out here was to get away from them. You won't find many niggers out here.

Grant. I don't think that is the reason. My parents say it is bad to call them that. I don't want to hurt their feelings. We have been holding them down for so many years. We have to help them in any way that we can.

Bruno (indignant). Who told you such trash!? The niggers are lower than us and are our enemies. The reason that the cities are so horrible is because of the niggers who turn nice White towns into ghettos. Our dad took us to the city before just to prove that point. My brother and I saw how terrible it was. I never want to live around such people or help them out. My father says the best thing we can do with them is send them back to Africa.

Grant (timidly). I'm sorry. You aren't going to hurt me, are you? I don't want to fight or anything. If that is how you say it is, then I believe you.

Bruno. You shouldn't simply believe what I say because you are scared. You have to understand things for yourself.

Gustave. Do you watch a lot of television, Grant? I think that could explain a lot.

Grant (happier). Well, yes I do. It is my favorite hobby. I like to watch cartoons, shows, movies...you name it and I probably like it. I have a huge video library as well. Do you guys want to watch anything?

Bruno. No, we don't care for television. The Jews use it to pollute our brains. We had a television set a long time ago but we sold it. Our family sat around and watched for a while but my dad got so sick of hearing about "equality" and "diversity". The shows also made Whites look horrible and stupid. Our dad couldn't have that so he got rid of it.

Grant. How do you know that the Jews use the media like that?

Gustave (after acknowledging the nod from Bruno). The information is out there that shows how the Jews control the media. We have the details at our house if you are interested. The Jews have been corrupting our people for centuries. After all, they have been thrown out of virtually every White country at least once. I will name a few: Austria in 1420, England in 1290, France in 1394, Spain in 1492..

Bruno (interrupts). I think he gets the point, brother. (To Grant.) My brother is very smart but he can get carried away.

Grant. Where can I read about what you are talking about?

Bruno. In our Holy Books. They are called Nature's Eternal Religion and the White Man's Bible. We read them as a family every night.

Grant. I've never heard of those books. Do you worship the devil?

Bruno (laughs). No, of course not. We don't believe in any silly superstitions or gods. We base our beliefs on what makes sense. I've never seen any gods floating around in the air, have you?

Grant. No, not really. What do you believe in then?

Bruno. We have a great religion but I think my brother can describe it better than I can.

Gustave. Our religion is called Creativity and we are called Creators. We believe in Nature and science. It is a positive religion. We place the White Race as the most important thing in life. We believe that the White Race is Nature's Finest.

Grant (interjects). What do you mean by that if you don't mind saying?

Gustave. We mean that the White Race is superior. We are better than the other races. Do you understand?

Grant. Yes, I do. Do you mind if I ask you a question about that though?

Bruno. Sure, go ahead.

Grant. My dad is a doctor in history and he says that the races are equal. Is he wrong?

Bruno. It is plain to see that the races aren't equal. Simply look at the black ghettos and White areas. Of course, my brother can explain it better than I can.

Gustave. The great civilizations have all been White and this has been backed up by many scientific digs. You know about the ancient Egyptians who built the pyramids, right?

Grant. Yes, my father has mentioned them before. Aren't the Egyptians Arabs or whatever they are called?

Gustave. Modern Egyptians are Arabs, yes. But the ancient Egyptians were White when they were building the pyramids. They have even found blond haired skeletons in the tombs in Egypt. It makes perfect sense that the area was great when the Whites were there but now it is a horrible place to live. It is like White cities that are nice to live in when just Whites live there but when the niggers move there, it ruins the place and creates ghettos.

Grant. Well, that does seem to make sense. I am scared to go near those ghettos. The area we lived in was getting worse and worse.

Bruno. So you mean that niggers were moving in?

Grant. Well, there were more blacks. My family didn't seem to get along with them too much. They tended to be loud and drunk, most of the time.

Gustave. How many blacks were around you? Were there a lot of crimes in the neighborhood? Did they attack you?

Bruno (laughing softly). It might take him a while to answer all of your questions. (To Grant.) My brother is very curious as you can see. His memory is really great. I like to learn but he is better than I am and I respect him for it. (Boasting.) I am the better wrestler though.

Grant. You two seem like quite a pair. I wish I had a brother. Maybe then I wouldn't get in so many fights.

Bruno. Fights? Don't worry; we are your White brothers and we will help you out. Why did you get into fights?

Gustave (after a pause where Grant doesn't respond). It seems obvious that he was in a black school. Those niggers don't need a reason to start fights. It is their nature. They are cowards though. (To Bruno.) Remember what father told us about them only fighting when they are in gorilla packs?

Bruno. Yes, I do brother. He said that if it is an even fight then they won't cause any trouble. But when they have ten of their monkey pals around, then they will almost always start a fight with our White comrades. Dad also said that if you show confidence then they probably won't fight at all. That story he told us about when he was in high school was great. He held off over twenty muds just because they thought he was insane and fearless.

Gustave. I liked that story too. So what do you have to say, Grant?

Grant. I've gotten into many fights. I've fought in school and at home. I don't like it at all. The bullies that attacked me were black and they always took my money. The teachers couldn't do anything about it when I told them. They said it was something called "diversity" and it was actually my fault that I made them attack me. I was told to simply give them my money in the future.

Bruno (aghast). How terrible! Did you tell your parents about it?

Grant. Yes, and they were mad but they didn't know what to do. My dad said something about being called a racist and how he might lose his job. He told me to try and avoid the bullies.

Bruno. That didn't help though, did it?

Grant. No, it didn't. I tried to stay away from them but they always seemed to find me. I did like my teacher told me and gave them my money without a fight but they beat me up anyway.

Bruno. Weren't there any White friends that could help you out or anything?

Grant. My friends got beat up too and when we tried to join together to help each other out, the teachers told us not to be racist and used a word called "integrate". The blacks didn't have to do this though for some reason.

Bruno. Didn't your dad show you how to fight? Our dad taught us how to punch, kick, and wrestle.

Grant. Well, my dad sent me to a karate school. They taught us how to strike but I would just get knocked down and didn't know what to do. The blacks would just keep kicking me.

Bruno. My brother and I can show you some moves. We wrestle a lot.

Grant. I would like that. Could you show me how to do a powerbomb or drop-kick?

Bruno. What? What is that?

Grant. You know, like the wrestlers do on television. I like to watch wrestling. Pro wrestling is really exciting. My favorite wrestler is the Dominator.

Bruno (to Gustave). Do you know what he is talking about?

Gustave. It seems he is talking about some kind of wrestling on television but it doesn't sound like any kind we know of. Knowing how television is though, it is probably some kind of phony wrestling.

Grant. Everyone does say it is fake but I still like to watch it.

Bruno. We can't show you the moves you mentioned but we can show you what we know. We practice takedowns and submission holds a lot so we are good at those. The submission holds are really good for fighting because you can cripple the enemy or choke them out. How does that sound?

Grant (brightening somewhat). That does sound like it could be helpful. I don't have to worry about those blacks anymore though.

Bruno. What happened to convince your dad that it was time to move?

Grant. Soon after I had karate lessons, I really got beat up badly. I broke a couple of ribs. The blacks got mad when I actually punched one of them. (Speaking softly because he is ashamed.) It hurt really bad. I went to the doctor and missed a lot of school.

Bruno. So then your parents realized it was time to leave, right?

Grant. Yes. My dad had lived in our house for his whole life. My grandparents had died when he was eighteen so my dad inherited the house. He was really attached to the area and told me that the area had really changed. My mom had to convince him that we had to leave the city. It took him a while but he finally agreed. We weren't able to sell the house for much because the area was so bad though.

Bruno. It is certainly much better out here than in the city. What makes you think you won't have trouble in the schools here?

Grant (startled). Wha, what do you mean? My parents said the schools out here would be safe.

Bruno. I think they aren't bad now but they are talking about bussing blacks into the school. Tell him about it, Gustave.

Gustave. My pleasure, brother. Even though most of the town hates him because he is racist, our father attends the community meetings that are held every week. He likes to keep up on what is going on in the community. We don't watch television or get the newspaper because the Jews control them and my dad doesn't think we need that in our lives. The Jews lie and twist the news around to fit their own ends. They wish to destroy our people through the use of the media, money, and government. They control the movies, television shows, books, papers...

Bruno (interrupts). Brother, you are straying from the point. We can talk about the Jews later. Why don't you tell him about the school?

Gustave (smiling). Ah yes, brother. You know how much I like to talk about the Jews. Anyway, our father recently learned of the idea to bus blacks in from the city to bring the "glory" of black culture to the school. They are saying that since the school is entirely White, that it must be racist. Our dad said that many of the parents didn't look too pleased with the idea but they were too afraid to speak out against it. Our dad said that the idea was introduced by a dark-skinned man who doesn't even live in our town. Our father is sure that he is a Jew. When our dad spoke out against the proposal, he was thrown out of the hall and told not to return by the police.

Grant (sheepishly). Do you think they will actually bus blacks in?

Bruno. Our whole family is agreed that they will but we aren't worried about it.

Grant. Why not? I didn't think you would want to have blacks in your school.

Bruno. We don't go to school.

Grant. Huh? What do you mean?

Bruno. Our parents homeschool us. Our mom does most of the teaching but our father teaches us math and history. There was no way our father would allow us to go to a public school no matter how White it was.

Grant. Why not?

Bruno. Do you really need to ask? Even when there are Whites, the teachers still teach Whites to be ashamed of who we are. You have seen that yourself, Grant. (To Gustave.) Tell our friend here about dad and his school.

Gustave. Our father didn't live in the greatest area when he was young. It was mostly a poor White area with some niggers. Most of the people back then were openly racist so there were White schools and black schools. After a while, though, things changed and they brought blacks into the White schools even though most people were against it. The government used soldiers to make sure the niggers got to school all right. Our dad didn't know it then but the whole plan by the Jews was to destroy our people. He finally did find out what was happening in the world and here we are now. We know that either Whites will stick together or we will die.

Grant (looking pale and frightened). Is there no hope then? All the Whites I see aren't like you and aren't proud to be White. How did you guys come to be like you are?

Bruno. Our dad discovered Creativity before we were born. He was at a gun show when he discovered the Holy Books and we have been raised this way.

Grant. Do you think I could look at these books sometime?

Bruno. Yes, of course. Hopefully, we will be seeing a lot of each other in the future. What do you plan on doing about school though?

Grant. I don't really know. I think you might be right about the blacks and I don't want to get in fights again. How do you like being homeschooled?

Bruno. I think it is great. We can learn at our own pace and that is surely faster than the niggers. Our mother says that since the niggers are so stupid that it slows the class down and doesn't let the Whites learn as much as they would in a class full of Whites. (To Gustave.) How do you like our schooling, brother?

Gustave. I like it a lot. Mom and dad are both good teachers. They are always willing to help us when we have a problem with our schoolwork. I like talking about literature with mom and talking about history with dad. It is hard to compare it with public schooling because we've never been public schooled. Our mom says we are both far ahead of other kids. She says that she didn't learn geometry until high school but we learned that last year. How was it in the school you went to? Did you learn a lot?

Grant. The teacher had to repeat a lot of things because most of the students didn't understand. It was easy though and I got bored of the teacher always going over the same lesson. I learned what they taught to us but they didn't teach too many new things.

Bruno. Were there a lot of niggers in your classes then?

Grant. Well, yes there were. They didn't understand reading too well or math. Maybe they aren't as smart as we are.

Bruno (smiling). It looks like you are learning, comrade. There are many things you should know that the Jews hide from people.

Grant. I am starting to wonder. How old are you guys anyway? I'm thirteen years old and I have never even heard of geometry.

Bruno. We are both twelve years old. (Smiling.) I am older though by five minutes. Geometry was pretty tough. Gustave was better than I was at it.

Gustave. Geometry is very interesting. It deals with points, lines, and surfaces. Math is very important in many things that you do. You need at least a basic understanding of math to do just about anything. Do you like math, Grant?

Grant. It is ok. I can multiply and divide and things like that. Most of the blacks couldn't though. The last thing we were doing was fractions and that seemed pretty easy to me.

Bruno. The schools are just as our parents said but it seems even worse.

Grant. How can I get homeschooled? Does your family school other kids as well?

Bruno (laughing). Oh, no. Most of the town doesn't like us much even though they are White. The Jews have made Whites hate us for loving White people. You can see that pretty easily as you were even scared when you found out we were racist. Our parents could help you but I think you would have to convince your parents. Didn't you say your dad is a history professor?

Grant. Yes, he is but he doesn't talk about it much. (Looking gloomy.) I don't really think I can convince them to be homeschooled though. They really hate racist people.

Bruno. With that attitude, you won't be able to do much of anything. Do you want to go to a school that is soon to be filled with apes or do you want to learn in a friendly house where you won't have to worry about getting beat up?

Grant. Well, I would like to feel safe and learn. Do you think I could really show my parents that you guys aren't evil though?

Bruno. I sure do. You don't think we are terrible people anymore, do you?

Grant. No, that doesn't seem to be true. (Brightening somewhat.) Maybe I can show them how you really are. It is possible, don't you think?

Bruno. Yes, of course, it is. The first step to getting something done is a positive attitude.

Grant. How can I get a positive attitude? You two really seem to be confident. How did that happen?

Bruno. We have been this way for as long as I remember. Our parents are both confident and happy and we are the same way. It has to do with our religion, Creativity. It is a wonderful religion that stresses blood, honor, and soil.

Grant. Do you have a list of beliefs or something?

Bruno. Oh, yes! We have a total of 41 beliefs that make up our religion. The first fundamental belief is that our Race is our Religion. Everything revolves around the White Race and we do what is best for our people.

Gustave. The thirteenth essence of a Creator is really important and would probably help you, Grant. It reads: "A Creator places a high value on ATTITUDE, strives continually to maintain a healthy, positive, and dynamic attitude towards life."

Grant. That sounds like it could be helpful. Do you have to memorize all those beliefs though?

Bruno. No. They are pretty long and go into quite a bit of detail. We have memorized the five fundamental beliefs but not the others. Once you read them, you can get a general idea. They go into detail to make sure you are putting our people first. What religion are you, Grant?

Grant. My family isn't really into religion. My dad thinks all religions are just scams to take people's money. My mom was a Christian but my dad didn't want anything to do with the bible. He says there isn't any historical evidence to back up the stories in the bible. He wants me to believe in science and things like that instead of a god.

Bruno. That's good to hear. We don't believe in any silly gods either. There isn't any proof of gods at all. Nature has laws which cannot be broken.

Grant. How do you think everything started then?

Bruno. We don't really know. We weren't around when it started so we can't really say for sure.

Gustave. Some people say that god created everything but then you have to wonder who created god. If god was always here then you can say that the universe was always here too.

Grant (a tint of enlightenment shows in his face). Wow. That makes a lot of sense. I think my dad might like what you are saying except for the racist part.

Bruno. Most White people are racist but won't admit to it. Let's hope that is the way your dad is.

Grant. I hope so too. I am afraid he is going to be mad at me though.

Bruno. What do you mean?

Grant. He warned me about racist people. He might be angry at me for talking to you.

Bruno. We have changed your mind about racist people, haven't we?

Grant. Yes, you have.

Bruno. Then we can change your father's mind as well. It seems you moved out here to get away from the niggers and that is a racist act. Your dad might not admit that but it looks that way to me.

Gustave. He will probably say it is mainly because of your troubles in school that he wanted to move. I bet he also says that your neighborhood has become run down. Both of these problems come from the same cause. That cause is the Jewish led niggers. The Jews also use the other races but niggers are their main tool now.

Grant. Well, both of the reasons you said are ones he has used. He also mentioned how he wanted me to get a better education. It looks like that problem is also caused by the blacks though.

Bruno. How does it feel to start seeing things as they really are?

Grant. It is different. I don't like to be lied to and told everyone is equal if we really aren't. And now that I am thinking about things on my own instead of listening to my teachers, it sure doesn't look like the blacks are equal to us. It is scary though.

Bruno. Why is that?

Grant. Because everyone seems to hate racist people. My parents, my teachers, and the television all say racist people are bad. You aren't like they say though. Racists are supposed to be angry and want to kill everyone.

Bruno. Doesn't that look like a lie now that you see us?

Grant. Yes, it does but you could just be tricking me.

Bruno. That is possible. You will just have to decide for yourself if we are good or bad. We back up what we say and aren't bothered by questions. Maybe you should ask some people why racists are so bad.

Gustave. Are you aware that most people used to be racist? Many great men were racist although the schools might not tell you that.

Grant. My dad told me that many people used to be racist when he was younger but now it was a bad thing.

Bruno. I hope he tells you why it is bad now. Our religion says not to believe things that don't make sense and to ask questions.

Grant. I will have to ask him about that. What great men are you talking about being racist anyway?

Gustave. Men like Ben Franklin, who warned about the Jews. Washington, the first president of the United States, agreed with Franklin. Lincoln wanted to ship the niggers out of the country. Henry Ford of the Ford car company wrote a book about the Jews controlling the world. Charles Lindbergh..

Bruno (interrupts). Do you get the picture, Grant?

Grant. Yes, I do. I never knew about them being racist. I would like to know more about that. I wonder why my dad never told me about that.

Bruno. Since the Jews control so much, they can also rewrite our history books or simply not mention events in history. Most people disagree with us but we have the facts to support what we say.

[A beeping sound is heard.]

Grant (glancing down at his pager). I have to go home now. I hope we can talk again soon. Bye.

Bruno. Bye, comrade. Take care. Come over some time. (Pointing.) Our house is the small brown one down that way with our flag of Creativity flying proudly. It has a large "W" so you can't miss it.

Grant. Thanks. I hope to visit soon.

Gustave. Farewell, friend.

Act II

Scene.—The living room of the Oxleys. It is late afternoon. It is a spacious, richly decorated room. There is an expensive couch, matching love seat, and wooden coffee table in the room. There are also several comfortable looking chairs. All the seats are directed towards a very large television set. Dr. Leonard Oxley and his wife are seated on the couch watching television. The couple is dressed extravagantly in clothes that are very expensive. Their son, Grant, enters the room and sits down on the love seat.

Dr. Oxley (agitated). Where have you been, boy? You better not get dirty in those clothes. They cost me a fortune.

Grant (softly). I've been out in the forest.

Mrs. Oxley. Do be careful, son. There could be wild animals out there. You never know what might be out there.

Dr. Oxley. So, what have you been doing? I don't want any trouble around here. I had to move from my old neighborhood to get away from all the filth and I don't want to move again. Although my pay at the university is great and the royalties from the history books I've written is substantial, our funds are not unlimited so we can't continually move.

Grant. I have been talking to a couple of boys that live down the road.

Mrs. Oxley (smiling). That's good Grant. I hope you can make friends here. We don't have to worry about having our house vandalized or getting attacked anymore. It sure seems like a nice place, doesn't it, Leonard?

Dr. Oxley. Not really. It is better than that cesspool we left behind but there are too many hillbillies out here. They can't even add or subtract. It is so revolting that we have to be around such trash. How stupid were those boys you met, Grant?

Grant. Well, they were both pretty smart actually. Gustave was smarter than Bruno though.

Dr. Oxley (mockingly). Is that so? What makes them so smart? It wouldn't look too good if you, the Professor's son, was outdone by simple country folk. So, surely you jest.

[Grant mumbles incoherently.]

Dr. Oxley. Speak up! How many times do I have to tell you that I can't hear you when you talk so low.

Mrs. Oxley (to Dr. Oxley). Don't be so hard on our son. He is just a poor, fragile boy.

Dr. Oxley (to Mrs. Oxley). Come on, Crystal. You pamper the boy too much. He will be a man soon and needs to make his presence known. (To Grant.) Now, why are these lads so special?

Grant. They learn a lot. They know many things I don't. They said they studied something called geometry but I have never heard of that.

Dr. Oxley. Son, you can't be so gullible. Most of the adults around here haven't ever learned geometry, let alone any kids. How old are these kids?

Grant. They are both 12 years old. Their parents school them and they learn more. I believe them. They didn't sound like they were lying.

Dr. Oxley. Ha! Just as I expected. They don't even go to school. How much do you think these boys can learn from parents who live around here? If the parents are stupid then there is no way for them to teach their children well. Why, with all the incest going around out here, those boys are probably retarded.

Mrs. Oxley (shocked). Leonard! How can you say such a thing? The people out here might not be as smart as we are but I don't really think they all commit incest.

Dr. Oxley. They aren't as intelligent and are more like wild animals. It makes perfect sense to me.

Grant. Dad, please stop. They are nice White people like us.

Dr. Oxley. What was that? White people? (A thought flashes across his mind and angers him.) That old hag that goes by the name of Smith mentioned some racists living around here. Don't tell me those boys were racists! You are in deep trouble, boy!

Mrs. Oxley (shocked). Leonard! You must be joking. Our son would never associate with such people. Tell him, Grant. We are a respectable family and would never be around racists.

Grant (turning red). Well...

Mrs. Oxley (interrupts, and is outraged). My God! This cannot be!

Dr. Oxley (angry, to Mrs. Oxley). Keep your damn silly spook out of this! We have enough to think about without you dragging that superstitious bologna into this! (Turning to enraged stare towards Grant.) Now, for you. Answer my question and don't even think about lying to me!

Grant (slightly sobbing). Well...yes, they were racist but...

Dr. Oxley (interrupts). What have I told you about the vile racists!? They are ruining this country for us Whites. They are always killing people and terrorizing decent, upstanding citizens. You are going to be punished but we need to talk. You are going to have to learn how to avoid such corrupting forces. First, stop sobbing like a little girl!

Grant (slows his sobbing but tears still flow down his face). Y, yes, father.

Mrs. Oxley. Corruption! Yes, that's it! Listen to your father before they corrupt you further and you try to kill your own, loving parents.

[Grant tries to speak but Dr. Oxley silences him.]

Dr. Oxley (to Grant.). What do you think your punishment for such a vile act should be?

Grant. I don't think I should be punished at all. They were nice.

Dr. Oxley (furiously). Such impertinence! Do not disrespect your father! Of course, they appear nice. They want you to trust them and then betray you. You are my son and should be smart. How can you not realize how they deceive you!?

Grant. I'm sorry, father. They seemed really nice though. I would be smarter if they taught us more at school.

Dr. Oxley. I have some learning for you then. I know how ineffective those public schools are but that isn't what we are discussing right now. You certainly need to be enlightened about this matter so tell me about your conversation with these boys. Your punishment hangs in the balance so choose your words carefully.

Grant (thinking before he speaks). Well, we talked about a lot of things really. I got really scared when I found out they were racist.

Dr. Oxley. See? You know that such villainy is wrong. Do proceed with your grimy tale.

Grant. I thought they were going to hurt me but they didn't turn out like those bad guys on TV. They were nice and helped me up when I fell.

Dr. Oxley. Fell? What did they do to you!?

Grant. Oh no, father! It wasn't like that. They scared me when they admitted to being racist. I fell down and they were kind to me. They weren't like those people at school who kicked me.

Dr. Oxley. It's good that we are away from those damn little devils! They destroyed our property and hurt my boy. But what good is it if we go from one filth to another!

Grant. The people who did all that bad stuff before were black and these boys were White.

Dr. Oxley. You just can't say that nowadays! We have to destroy racism today. It was a disease of the past and is on its way out! We can't succumb to such ideas or we will end up in the gutter.

Grant. Isn't it true though, dad?

Dr. Oxley. Even if it were true, we have oppressed the blacks for many years. They have a right to happiness after such horrible persecution. Do you understand that, boy?

Grant. I don't understand, father. I accepted what everyone said before but these friends I met have made me think about things.

Dr. Oxley. Friends!?! You must be joking. That is absurd. My son will not be known as a racist! Do you understand me!?!

Grant (bashfully). Yes, father but shouldn't we question things?

Dr. Oxley. Of course, we should! There are many scams going on in this dreaded planet. How else are you supposed to learn of them without questioning? For instance, the whole Christian myth is purely a scam to rob people of their money. The pope hoards billions of dollars while millions of Christians are poor. What a scam! Are these boys some moronic cult of fanatical Christians?

[Mrs. Oxley storms out of the room.]

Grant. No, I don't think so. I don't think they believe in god at all. They mentioned believing in science.

Dr. Oxley. Science, eh? Such country bumpkins are surely lying to you. It is surprising they even know the word. They seem quite tricky though, so you must be careful around such people. They are surely hiding things from you. I suppose these dolts will even say that Whites are superior too, right?

Grant. Yes, they did. They mentioned some people that were racists in the past too.

Dr. Oxley. Oh, like who? Perhaps Hitler, Ha! He certainly was and look what he did to his country!

Grant. No, people like Ben Franklin and George Washington.

Dr. Oxley. What nonsense! Those two great men are early builders of the United States. They weren't racist at all. Can you see how they deceive you?

Grant. I suppose so. They didn't want me to take their word for it though.

Dr. Oxley. Then what did they want you to do? Take a time machine and go ask them? Ha!

Grant. I think they meant to read books about it.

Dr. Oxley. I have a library! I have many history books as you should know. Read one; read them all! You certainly need some learning of the world around us. I don't want my boy getting scammed and perverted by such asinine ideas. What are they teaching you at school anyway?

Grant. Not much really. All the blacks can't understand so I get bored. I was hoping to learn with the boys I met.

Dr. Oxley. Absolutely not! Aren't you listening to me? I am not going to let you get poisoned by their teachings. This new school should teach you more than the old school.

Grant. Why is that?

Dr. Oxley. It is a better area even though it isn't better by much.

Grant. Do you mean it is because there aren't any blacks here?

Dr. Oxley (squirms). Boy! You can't say things like that! Do you want me to lose my job? Is that what you want? We would all be bums, bums!

Grant. Why is that though? Couldn't this whole deal be another scam like you are always saying?

Dr. Oxley (calms down and thinks for a moment before responding). As a scholar, I must say that it is possible, but highly unlikely. I would need a lot of hard evidence to believe that racists were somehow not the scum that they appear to be. It would have to make perfect sense and I don't see you with any proof so we have no need to talk of such outrageous claims!

Grant (softly). Don't you want to know the truth though?

Dr. Oxley. Where might I find this truth!? I have stacks of books in the library and I haven't gleaned anything of the sort that these people mention. Don't you know how intelligent your father is? If something was there, then I would have seen it!

Grant. You are very smart, dad. I think the boys I met would have the evidence you want. They mentioned some books to me.

Dr. Oxley. Is that so? Let me hear of these great books.

Grant. I think they were called Nature's Eternal Religion and the White Man's Bible.

Dr. Oxley. Stay there, boy. I will look into this matter. (Goes into his study to work on his computer.)

[Mrs. Oxley enters the living room and sits lovingly beside Grant.]

Mrs. Oxley. My precious son! Do not despair. Your father means well but he can be a hard man. We both love you very much but we have to put this matter behind us. My poor boy can't be subjected to such racist teachings. We are all God's children.

Grant. Mom, I don't believe in God either. I just want to do what is right. Dad says I should learn and to believe in things that make sense so I want to know what is really going on.

Mrs. Oxley. This isn't like you at all! We just want to live in peace out here and have a new beginning. What have those satanic children been telling you to make you like this!? Oh heavens, you could be sacrificed to their evil devil!

Grant (as he speaks, Dr. Oxley returns). Mom, you are being ridiculous! They don't believe in any gods. I am not going to be sacrificed!

Dr. Oxley. Now, that is my boy! (To Mrs. Oxley.) You mustn't treat our son so fragilely! Do you wish him to become a raging homosexual?

Mrs. Oxley. Certainly not, Leonard! He has been hurt so much though and he needs his mother. I simply can't have him harmed.

Dr. Oxley. With such a pampering attitude, he will never be tough enough to do anything! I want to see some fire in my boy! He is very wrong in this case but he is showing some progress. (To Grant.) Now, about those books you mentioned. I looked them up on the database on the university's library but they weren't even there. So, I looked over the internet and found them. They have been declared hate books and are hard to come by.

Grant (looking gloomy). Well, I guess that's it then.

Dr. Oxley (angrily). Oh come on! Where did that spirit go? I don't want to have a miserable wretch for a son! Don't give up so easily. Guess who declared the books hateful?

Grant. I don't know. Who?

Dr. Oxley. The Jews! It seems obvious that since racists don't like Jews, that the Jews would label their books as hateful. I've seen some pretty sneaky Jews at the university and it makes me wonder. Everyone is trying to rip someone else off so I wonder if the Jews are as well. Did these boys ask you for your money like those thugs at your old school?

Grant. No, not at all. They did mention the Jews controlling the media though.

Dr. Oxley. Bah! There aren't that many Jews around to have the power to control our media. Besides, like they would even to stick together. They are so spread across the world that they couldn't possibly affect much. They have been so persecuted throughout history that it is amazing that they are even alive today. I'm sure they are running their own little racket like most people do, but nothing major like controlling our entire media.

Mrs. Oxley (distracted). Leonard! How can you say that? That is a racist comment. What is happening to my family?

Dr. Oxley. What? What are you talking about, woman? You are quite hysterical. I mean that everyone is out backstabbing one another. This whole world is a giant toilet and I don't need your incessant ravings!

Mrs. Oxley. Oh, I understand now. This world is pretty gloomy especially when my precious boy is subjected to racist ideas. (To Dr. Oxley.) When will we have happiness, dear? We have suffered for so long.

Dr. Oxley. Happiness in this world? Ha! I don't see that for us anytime soon, if ever. Life goes on though. (To Grant.) Do you have anything else to say before I sentence you?

Grant (looking downtrodden but with a faint fire in his eyes). I'm not sure what to believe. I need to learn more before I can decide what to believe.

Dr. Oxley (bellowing). There will be no more racist discussion in this house unless I say so! Do you understand me!?

Grant. Yes, father.

Dr. Oxley (calms down). Good. You have shown a little spirit today, which is good, but these racist ideas are not healthy. We have no evidence to the contrary as of yet. I may look into the matter myself but you are not to. Now, you are hereby barred from watching any television and playing video games for a week. (Grant attempts to speak but is quickly silenced by the angry stare of Dr. Oxley.) Go to your room.

Grant. Yes, father. (Exits the living room and enters his room where he shuts the door.)

Mrs. Oxley. Don't you think you were too hard on him? He is only a little boy.

Dr. Oxley. No, actually I thought I was very lenient on the boy. (Smiles.) Did you see the faint glow in his eye, darling? He may not be as pathetic as I thought he was. His learning is behind though. This school better educate him better. I have my doubts though with all the farmers out here.

Mrs. Oxley. Do you think you could help him? He could benefit from you teaching him.

Dr. Oxley. When might I do that? Hmm? I labor away at the university during the week trying to teach the dolts about history and have only the weekends to enjoy. Would you have me give up my weekends?

Mrs. Oxley. It would help our son. Maybe a couple hours on the weekend. What do you think?

Dr. Oxley. I would rather not but the boy is rather dull. He could certainly use some knowledge to fill up that empty head of his. I will talk to him later about it. He needs some time to think over all that we've talked about. It will take him some time with that slow brain of his.

Mrs. Oxley. He isn't going to do well if you constantly tell him that he is worthless.

Dr. Oxley (enraged). He is supposed to prove me wrong! Do you think I want a pitiful son? Of course not! I'm toughening him up. Speaking of worthless, though, we agreed long ago not to poison his mind with your Christian nonsense so I don't want to hear it mentioned again!

Mrs. Oxley. Ok, dear. I am sorry. Did you hear something outside?

[The doorbell chimes and Grant comes out of his room.]

Dr. Oxley (to Grant). Go back in your room, boy! (Grant goes back in his room). I will take care of this.

[Dr. Oxley goes to the door where he finds the jovial twins, Bruno and Gustave.]

Dr. Oxley (to the boys). Yes, what is it?

Bruno. Hello, sir. We are your neighbors down the road and our parents wanted to welcome you to the area and invite you over tomorrow night. Here is a note our mother wrote. (Hands him a note.) Will you be able to make it?

Dr. Oxley. We shall see but don't get your hopes up. I'm not a peasant like the rest of the people around here. Where do you live anyway?

Bruno. Just down the road. The address is 570 Country Road. The information is on the note. Drop by if you can. We would like to see you and your family.

Mrs. Oxley (crossing the room to the door). Aren't you charming little boys! (To Dr. Oxley.) Oh, we must go, Leonard. Especially after such a horrible day. Maybe we really can find some happiness here.

Bruno. What should I tell my parents, sir?

Dr. Oxley. Tell them we might be there. No guarantees.

Bruno. Ok. Have a nice evening!

Gustave. Take care!

[The boys leave and the Oxleys return to sit on the couch.]

Mrs. Oxley (happily). They were adorable little boys! They were so happy and full of confidence. I really think that Grant would benefit from being around such children. Their parents are probably like them as well. Oh, wasn't it grand?

Dr. Oxley. So, they weren't quite as repugnant as the typical commoner. So what? Don't you think they seemed a little too happy? How can you be so happy when the world is so full of garbage?

Mrs. Oxley. That's true but I would rather be happy than sad. What does it say in that note anyway?

Dr. Oxley (opens the note and reads). "Dear friends: We in the Stahl family warmly welcome you to our area. It is a pleasure to have a new family in the neighborhood. We would be most thankful and appreciative if you could come by for a visit tomorrow around 8 PM. We look forward to meeting you. Yours truly, Monique Stahl. 570 Country Road."

Mrs. Oxley. What a wonderful letter! We absolutely must visit these kind people after such a warm invitation! Don't you think so, Leonard?

Dr. Oxley. It looks like this might be the best this area has to offer so I am inclined to accept their invitation. The woman who wrote this even managed to spell everything correctly. It is certainly a notch above the norm in this area. Of course, everyone should be able to spell correctly though.

Mrs. Oxley. This is wonderful! Those boys who were just here would certainly make better friends for our son than those nasty boys he met. Don't you think so?

Dr. Oxley. Perhaps, but who can say? Who knows what dark secrets those seemingly blissful rugrats hold? It could all be a facade in the hopes of destroying us.

Mrs. Oxley. Oh, Leonard! They are just little kids. I don't think they are up to any evil.

Dr. Oxley. You aren't a historian. You haven't seen all the misery, deception, and betrayal in the world throughout the ages. Most of the time people are out for themselves and up to no good.

Mrs. Oxley. But you have to admit they seemed like charming little children, right?

Dr. Oxley. They didn't look like there were out to kill us but looks can be deceiving.

Mrs. Oxley. It's ok for Grant to go, right? I think this will be good for him even though he has been rather naughty today.

Dr. Oxley. We might as well take him along. These kids we met look more acceptable than those vile scum where we used to live. By the way, did you catch the names of those two boys?

Mrs. Oxley (thinking for a moment). No, I don't think they mentioned their names. We can find that out later. Oh, what should I wear, darling? We haven't been here a week and already we have been invited somewhere.

Dr. Oxley. Who would want to be invited anywhere from the collection of refuse that used to surround us. My old neighborhood was much better than it is today.

Mrs. Oxley. Yes, I know, honey. You've mentioned it many times. All I know is it was a very bad place to live when we left. What do you think I should wear though?

Dr. Oxley. Just like a woman! Ha! Fretting over what to wear all the time as you do. By the simple dress of those boys, I'd say anything you wear would make you look like royalty in the presence of them.

Mrs. Oxley. I hadn't thought of that. I suppose I can just dress casually.

Dr. Oxley. That is a fault that you share with virtually the whole world! People simply don't think enough. So many errors could be avoided if people simply stopped to think! But, no! They bumble along from one bad decision to the next like village idiots!

Mrs. Oxley. Thinking is difficult for many people. It is easier to just do something without thinking about it.

Dr. Oxley. Ha! That was entertaining my dear Crystal! Isn't it ironic that you thought about not thinking! Ha! Perhaps there is hope for you!

Mrs. Oxley. Do you really think so, Leonard?

Dr. Oxley. No, of course not. It was a joke! Ha!

Mrs. Oxley (shrugging it off). Oh, Leonard. When are you going to tell Grant the good news?

Dr. Oxley. I'll do it now. (Bellows loudly.) Grant! Get out here, right now! We have to talk!

[Grant comes out of his room and into the living room. He seats himself.]

Grant. Yes, father?

Dr. Oxley. We had visitors a little bit ago, as I am sure you are aware. A couple of deceptive youths were here and invited us over to their house tomorrow. Do you think you can behave yourself and come along?

Grant. I believe so.

Mrs. Oxley. Don't let your father fool you. These children will make great friends for you. They were happy and confident and I'm sure you will like them. They were so unlike most children these days. I can't recall seeing more polite children than they were.

Dr. Oxley. Don't listen to her whatsoever. I know those rascals are hiding something. I'm not sure what yet but I'll find out. I am a Doctor, after all! I am (rises to his feet and spreads his arms out majestically) DR. OXLEY!

Mrs. Oxley (to Dr. Oxley). Leonard! Please sit down dear. (Dr. Oxley sits down.) We don't need our boy having a heart attack, now do we? You will terrify the boy with such theatrics.

Dr. Oxley (to Mrs. Oxley). There you go again. You make it sound like our boy is a little infant who needs to be constantly suckled. I'll make our boy strong!

Mrs. Oxley. As long as my boy doesn't get hurt, I am happy. (To Grant.) Are you excited about meeting these twins?

Grant. Twins? Boys?

Mrs. Oxley. Yes, they are boys. I don't recall their names though. You will just have to find out when we get there.

Grant. Were those boys rather tanned with blond hair?

Mrs. Oxley. Why yes, they were. How did you know that?

Grant. I know them.

Dr. Oxley (rises excitedly and talks quickly). Ha! I knew something was amiss. Didn't I say so? The Doctor has much wisdom, I do! Now, I can study these vermin up close! What a splendid opportunity!

Mrs. Oxley (rather befuddled, speaks to Dr. Oxley). Wha, what are you talking about dear? I don't understand...

Dr. Oxley. For some reason, that doesn't surprise me, woman! Ha! Don't you see what lies before your face? How could our son have known those boys that came here unless..

Mrs. Oxley (anxiously). Unless what?

Dr. Oxley. No wonder our boy is such a dolt! It certainly wasn't my genes! The twin boys that were here and the racist boys our son met earlier are one and the same. What a coincidence. Ha!

Mrs. Oxley (dazed). No, this can't be. Those sweet little boys couldn't possibly be racist. It simply isn't possible.

Dr. Oxley. It is possible and, furthermore, it is so! (To Grant.) Tell your mother what you know, boy!

Grant. The boys are named Bruno and Gustave. They are twins. I met them earlier today and they are racist.

Mrs. Oxley (unsure). It was never mentioned that they were twins before. There must be some kind of mistake, a trick. This is all a joke, right Leonard?

Dr. Oxley. It sure is funny but it isn't a joke! I can study these people first hand and see how they behave. Of course, no one must talk of this to anyone! Like one who has a fascination with death, I now have a burning desire to learn of these foul people!

Mrs. Oxley (starting to cry). This is horrible! How could those seemingly innocent children be so cursed? We simply can't go to there house now, Leonard!

Dr. Oxley. Yes, we must! Grant cannot come but my wife must be at my side!

Mrs. Oxley. Please Leonard, no! What has come over you? If people find out that we went to their house, then we would lose everything. Please, reconsider!

Dr. Oxley (To Mrs. Oxley). My wife will be at my side and this discussion is over! There will be no debate with you! (Dr. Oxley slams his fist down on the coffee table to accentuate his point.)

[Mrs. Oxley runs into her room, crying profusely.]

Grant. What about me, father? Can't I come too?

Dr. Oxley (calms down and seats himself). So, you still have an interest in this matter? I suppose it is to be expected. Children are always poking their little heads into improper places, like ovens. Ha!

Grant. Well, mom has to go but I have to stay here?

Dr. Oxley. Wow, my boy! I thought you were stupid but not now! Ha! You have it correct. A young mind like yours is very malleable and can be easily influenced by outside sources. In but a few hours, you have brought home a dread influence. Only those that can observe and study these matters without falling in, should undertake such ventures. I, of course, am such a man but you are not.

Grant. You will be there with me, though. Don't you think it is good for me to learn?

Dr. Oxley. Indeed, learn you shall! I will investigate the matter myself and I will allow you to hear of it. If I were to allow you to accompany us then who knows what trouble those boys would coerce you into doing. They totally fooled your mother, but not !! Not !!

Grant. Shouldn't I experience things for myself though? It could be a learning experience for me.

Dr. Oxley. You are using the same argument and I tire of it. My decision is final. Now go to your room.

Grant. But, father!

Dr. Oxley (rises angrily). The debate is over! Now go to your room!

[Grant goes to his room amid tears.]

Dr. Oxley (bombastically). What a day! With morbid curiosity, I must find out about these racist creatures! The knowledge will soon be mine! I am DR. OXLEY! HA!

Act III

Scene.—The living room of the Stahls. It is night time. They have a simple house but it is well maintained and neat. The living room contains a couch, coffee table, and two chairs that are all finely crafted out of wood. Mr. and Mrs. Stahl are seated in the two chairs, talking. Their children are in their rooms, reading. A knock is heard at the door.

Mrs. Stahl. Ah, it looks like our invitation was accepted. I wasn't sure if they would come or not after hearing the description the boys gave.

Mr. Stahl. I know what you mean. I think the boys will be happy to see the boy they met. (Rises and goes to the door.)

[The boys both run from their rooms to the living room with happy, anxious faces.]

Mr. Stahl (opens the door to reveal Dr. and Mrs. Oxley). Greetings, friends! Come in, come in. Have a seat on the couch there.

[Dr. Oxley and Mrs. Oxley come in and seat themselves on the couch.]

Dr. Oxley. This is quite a small house you have here. Why don't you have a bigger house?

Mr. Stahl (sits down). We are simple and frugal people. We might not have a lot of money but we have a loving family. Where might your son be?

Dr. Oxley. I didn't think it was suitable to bring him to such a house. He is a young boy, after all.

Mr. Stahl. I see. (To Bruno and Gustave.) Boys go back to your studies then. (They go to their rooms, disappointed.) (To the Oxleys.) Where are my manners? I'm sorry. I'm Manfred Stahl and this is my wife Monique. What are your names?

Dr. Oxley. I am Dr. Leonard Oxley and this is my wife, Crystal. So, is the whole family racist?

Mr. Stahl (chuckles). Yes, indeed. It is a pleasure to meet you. I hope you don't believe everything you hear about us.

Mrs. Stahl. Would either of you care for something to drink or eat?

Dr. Oxley. Yes, I would like some wine and caviar. (To Mrs. Oxley.) You don't need anything, do you? (Mrs. Oxley shakes her head while appearing rather subdued).

Mrs. Stahl. I'm sorry, we don't have any of that. We have some water or orange juice to drink. Since we live on a farm, we have quite a selection of fruits and vegetables available, if you'd like.

Dr. Oxley. So, nothing good then. Nevermind then. There is no reason to eat such revolting food. Why do you anyway?

Mr. Stahl. The food we have from our farm is very healthy. We don't use any pesticides either so we eat quite well. We've raised our boys on the diet, which is called Salubrious Living, and they have never had any major diseases. They do get their bumps and bruises from playing though. (Chuckles softly.)

Dr. Oxley. Bumps and bruises? So, do you beat the kids then?

Mr. Oxley. No, of course not! What would give you such ideas?

Dr. Oxley. Nevermind. How do you survive here? I mean what do you do to make money?

Mr. Stahl. We run the farm and make some money that way. I also do some carpentry work as well. My wife sews our clothes and blankets but she also sells some on occasion.

Mrs. Stahl (to Mrs. Oxley). Are you all right? You don't look so well. Do you need some water?

Mrs. Oxley. I, I am ok. No, thanks.

Dr. Oxley. Don't mind her. She is a little under the weather. Ha! (To Mr. Stahl). What kind of carpentry do you do?

Mr. Stahl. I designed and built this house, with the help of some friends. I also made all the furniture in the house. I can make pretty much anything out of wood.

Mrs. Oxley (coming out of her daze somewhat). Really? Wow, look at this couch, Leonard.

Dr. Oxley (not looking at the couch). Yes, this is nice. Is it hard to find work since you are a racist?

Mr. Stahl. Yes, it can be quite difficult. We are pretty self-sufficient, though, so we get by comfortably.

Dr. Oxley. I don't see how you can get by very well at all. I didn't even see any livestock on your farm.

Mr. Stahl. We don't eat meat and don't think we should sell meat to people as it is not healthy.

Dr. Oxley. Are you one of those weakling people who think it's such a horrible crime to shoot animals or something?

Mr. Stahl. No, not at all. We have some guns here that me and the boys go hunting with. We kill off all the pesky animals that disturb the crops. What do you have a doctorate in, Dr. Oxley?

Dr. Oxley (proudly). My doctorate is in history. I am a professor at the university. I don't suppose you know much about history though. Most of the blockheads out here don't know much of anything and they are especially ignorant of history.

Mr. Stahl. Actually, history is my favorite subject. I love reading about the greatness of the White Race. I have quite a few history books that provide good stories for my boys. As a historian, you can accept the greatness of the White Race, right Dr. Oxley?

Dr. Oxley. Greatness? If you call slaughtering other races and enslaving them, greatness, well then sure we are great! Ha! The White Race has destroyed more people and more cultures than any other race. We have oppressed millions and exploited them to death. No, we certainly are not great.

Mr. Stahl. It seems you have swallowed the Jewish propaganda that encourages Whites to demean and degrade themselves. It is all right for the other races to be proud of their people but we are branded evil for loving our people and all the greatness we embody. Does that make sense? I'm not saying we have been perfect in the past but we can learn from our mistakes. With all the anti-White filth that is spewed out, Whites are simply destroying themselves. That's why we came out here. We wanted to get away from the Jewish influence where we could live in a healthy environment. Didn't you move out here for the same reason?

Dr. Oxley. Certainly not. There were several factors involved with our move. The main ones being the revolting city and the abuse of our son, Grant.

Mr. Stahl. Indeed, I've seen the city myself. The muds have really trashed the area. It is much better out here, don't you think?

Dr. Oxley. This area is only slightly better. Granted, I don't suppose there is much crime but the people are exceedingly fatuous. I don't think my boy will be harassed out here like he was before though. I'd love to rip apart those kids that persecuted my boy! So, what is the "mud" word you use?

Mr. Stahl. It is a catchall word to describe all the non-White races. There are Whites and then there are muds.

Dr. Oxley (sardonically). Sounds like a real scientific term!

Mr. Stahl. It is not meant to be. It is a term that people can relate to, like using "White Race" instead of "Caucasian" or what-have-you. I can understand your position concerning your child. I don't think that the public schools are going to be safe much longer though. Have you heard the news about the bussing of the niggers?

Dr. Oxley. Such indecency! Why must use such a loathsome term to describe the blacks?

Mr. Stahl. Klassen advises us to do so, actually. He reasons that they are lower than us and deserve our hatred. Only through love of our people and hatred of the enemy, can we unite our people as a race to fight for our best interest. It used to be a rather common term until the Jews gave it the power it has today.

Dr. Oxley. We have much to discuss, Mr. Stahl! I despise what you stand for but you do possess some knowledge. So, I certainly must pick your brain apart. (To Mrs. Stahl.) Isn't there something that you and my wife could do while I talk with your husband?

Mrs. Stahl. Ah, that is an excellent idea. Would you care to see some of the knitting work I have done, Mrs. Oxley?

Mrs. Oxley (rather apprehensively). Y, yes, I wouldn't mind seeing that.

[The women exit the living room.]

Dr. Oxley. So, where were we...Hatred, then. You believe it is necessary to have hatred? Don't you think it will simply destroy you and those around you?

Mr. Stahl. If it were used blindly, then sure it would be destructive. Then again, so would love.

Dr. Oxley. What do mean love being destructive!?

Mr. Stahl. If you simply loved everyone, then you would be easy to take advantage of. We distinctly say who we love and who we hate. We love Whites and hate muds. It's simple. An all loving nature could certainly get you killed when you walked into the ghetto and tried to befriend a gang member.

Dr. Oxley. Ha! So, you could. Why have hatred though?

Mr. Stahl. Only with hatred can we survive as a race. Whites have disliked the other races throughout the years but wherever the other races have existed side by side with the White man, interbreeding has resulted. Only through hatred will we be able to repel this poisoning of our blood. We concentrate our hatred at the evils we see and focus it to change those evils. Surely, you hate, Brother?

Dr. Oxley. Yes, of course I do! I was just wondering what your motivation was. As much as I deplore what you stand for, I can see where you come from. My life is filled with hatred at all the sick and pathetic scum of the earth. I find it harder to find something to love since the world is as bleak as it is. Why do you love Whites? You had no control over what race you became at birth whatsoever.

Mr. Stahl. The White Race is an extension of my White family. It is natural to love your family. If I were born black, then I would be proud to be black. There wouldn't be much to be proud of, but I would still love my people. Fortunately, I am White and a member of Nature's Finest.

Dr. Oxley. So, Klassen is the founder of your religion, then? Creativity, isn't it?

Mr. Stahl. Yes, that is right. Are you aware of the Holy Books then? Have you read them?

Dr. Oxley. No, no. I did a little research on them when my boy mentioned them. They are labeled hate books. It is a little surprising that they are even available.

Mr. Stahl. Indeed, the Jews label them as such because they fear us. Klassen said that we must straighten out the White Man's thinking and if every White Racial Comrade in the world had a copy of our Holy Books, we would be living in a glorious paradise.

Dr. Oxley. That is a powerful boast! Of course, I don't believe that is possible whatsoever! It sounds like another scam like those of the Christian Church. They want you to give, give, give while the preachers get rich, rich, rich. The preachers live in mansions while the sheep they fleece are barely scraping by on their meager wages.

Mr. Stahl. I absolutely agree about most churches. If you aren't aware, we are not Christians and are actually against Christianity. We look forward to the day of the Superman and not the Christian ideal of a man, which is a village idiot, as Klassen says.

Dr. Oxley. Surely, you jest! Superman!? How do you suppose this will come about?

Mr. Stahl. I am not kidding. The White Race is the greatest race there is and Creativity urges our comrades to greatness. Through the practice of eugenics, we can improve each generation so that it is better than the last.

Dr. Oxley. I don't see the Superman coming into fruition but I certainly agree with eugenics. There are way too many retards in this world and we need to put an end to it. I think we should put all the imbeciles out of their misery as swiftly as possible. They are such a drain on our economy as we have to waste our time taking care of these vegetables. The billions we waste on them could be used elsewhere. Even though I teach at the university, you should see some of the moronic idiots who come through the doors. Now, how did that happen?

Mr. Stahl. Colleges and universities used to be only for the brightest students but now they let just about anyone in. I bet the university doesn't even have an entrance exam, does it?

Dr. Oxley. No, we don't. I've seen football players in my class who couldn't even have graduated high school. Supposedly they have but they are dumber than a box of rocks!

Mr. Stahl. Athletics is emphasized more than academics nowadays and you can see the lower intelligence level. The schools have lower standards than they used to and the good athletes simply get pushed along, regardless of their academic skill. How well is your son doing in his education?

Dr. Oxley. He gets great grades but I don't think they are teaching him much. He recently commented how he gets bored because the class is so repetitive. He says that the children don't understand so the teacher has to go over the assignment.

Mr. Stahl. Indeed, the muds are simply not as smart as we are. His education is stunted as a result of being in a class with them. I would recommend homeschooling.

Dr. Oxley. There were Whites in his class as well! I still see no hard evidence of any great differences in race!

Mr. Stahl. Do you think it is merely coincidence that all civilizations have been White? Egypt, Greece, Rome etc. all were led by White men. Virtually all worthwhile inventions have been created by White men as well. Cars, planes, computers, harnessing electricity etc. were all accomplished by Whites. The list goes on and on. How do you explain this?

Dr. Oxley. It is merely coincidence! I cannot accept the fact that one race is better than any other!

Mr. Stahl. I can only present you with the facts and it is up to you to see what they mean. I have books that back up what I am saying. Granted, people can lie but when you use reason, common sense, and logic, you can generally tell who is lying. Anyway, would you care to read our Holy Books? You are obviously a man of learning so I think you can appreciate great books.

Dr. Oxley. Yes, I am interested in reading them and seeing where you are getting these absurd ideas. Where are they?

Mr. Stahl (grabs the books from the coffee table and hands them to Dr. Oxley.) Here you go. The core beliefs of Creativity are detailed in Nature's Eternal Religion and the White Man's Bible. They are great nourishment for the mind. Nourishment for the body is detailed in Salubrious Living, which relates the diet we are naturally suited for. They are our only copies so I'd like them back as soon as you are done with them. We generally read from them every night but I have enough memorized to go on for quite a while so there is no rush.

Dr. Oxley. We shall see how "holy" and "great" these books are!

Mr. Stahl. I believe that you will truly enjoy them. The creed is rather simple but extremely powerful. It sometimes seems hard to imagine that no one else in the history of the White Race has come up with a religion like it. I think the book will appeal to your logic and convince you that Creativity is the only salvation for the White Race.

Dr. Oxley. Ha! That is a bold statement! I will certainly learn from these books. I conceive that I will find out why so many people hate racists!

Mr. Stahl. After you read them, I would be happy to talk to you about them. I think you might be surprised what lies within them. Anyway, what do you think of homeschooling?

Dr. Oxley. It sounds rather amateurish to me. Only professionals should be teaching. Not every uncivilized hick has the skill and intelligence to be a teacher.

Mr. Stahl. Do you think that all the teachers are professionals like you are then?

Dr. Oxley. Of course not! I don't know of any that possess skills like I do. We have a few complete idiots on the staff at the university. Most teachers aren't professionals but they should be.

Mr. Stahl. Do you think that even someone with your talent could teach a class of mentally retarded people?

Dr. Oxley. They are incapable of learning much, if anything. So, I would not want to teach such brain dead simpletons.

Mr. Stahl. You would rather teach gifted students, then?

Dr. Oxley. Yes, of course. It would be far more rewarding knowing that the students were actually learning something instead of going to college to party and destroy their minds with drugs.

Mr. Stahl. Wouldn't such gifted students learn far more than those who aren't as smart?

Dr. Oxley. Yes, that is obvious. What are you getting at?

Mr. Stahl. We have smart boys who are a pleasure to homeschool and they learn far more here than they would at some school. They can learn at their own pace instead of being slowed down like they would be in these schools today. Don't you think your son would learn a lot more if you were to teach him?

Dr. Oxley. So, he would. I am a professional though. How can someone like you properly teach a child?

Mr. Stahl. My wife and I have a natural bond between our children and that gives us a great advantage. We know the subject matter and simply teach our children. The children are very inquisitive and love to learn and they are getting to the point where they venture off and learn new things on their own. My wife and I have also read multiple books on good teaching skills and we can adapt as new situations arise.

Dr. Oxley. What about books? Don't you need a good library in order to teach your children?

Mr. Stahl. Indeed, I think it is very important. (Proudly.) We have a library of over two thousand books.

Dr. Oxley. Bah! With such meager wages, how could you afford so many books?

Mr. Stahl. Used books are quite inexpensive. I have been collecting books for years now. Every time I go into town, I check out the thrift stores and used book stores to see if they have anything worthwhile. I'd say I get about five or so every week.

Dr. Oxley. Your tale still seems rather far-fetched. I suppose you can prove what you say, right?

Mr. Stahl. Yes, of course. I hold honor in very high regard as does my religion. I am very proud of our library as well. Come with me.

[Mr. Stahl leads Dr. Oxley down the hall, into the library.]

Mr. Stahl. Here we are. What do you think, Dr. Oxley?

Dr. Oxley (looking through the book shelves). So, you actually speak the truth. You don't see that much anymore.

Mr. Stahl (pointing to a bookshelf). You might like this shelf here. These are my history books. I have books ranging from ancient history to the modern era.

Dr. Oxley. I suppose all these books are merely for show, right? You couldn't possibly have read them all.

Mr. Stahl. No, I haven't read them all. I have read a lot of them although I can't say how many for certain. I buy them in the hopes that someone in the house might be able to learn from them. As you can see, there are books of many different genres so that most everyone will find something they like.

Dr. Oxley (picking out a book). This history of eugenics looks rather interesting. Speaking of which, if your religion promotes eugenics, how come you only have two children?

Mr. Stahl. We moved here when the boys were young and it was difficult getting by at first. We had to repay loans so we had to work more. We are quite comfortable now and I am very proud to say that my wife is currently pregnant. (Proudly.) We look forward to enlarging our family!

Dr. Oxley (sarcastically). The world really needs more racists!

Mr. Stahl (heatedly). Dr! I have been extremely diplomatic with you despite your flippant attitude and you will either contain yourself or I will be forced to use more violent means to persuade you!

Dr. Oxley (shocked). Are you threatening me!?

Mr. Stahl. You can call it whatever you wish. Are you going to comply or not?

[The ladies and the children rush to the library.]

Mr. Stahl (to the crowd of women and children). Resume what you were doing. Everything is under control here.

Mrs. Stahl (to Mr. Stahl). Are you sure, dear? I heard yelling.

Mr. Stahl (to Mrs. Stahl). Yes, I am sure. (To children.) Get back to your studies, boys.

[The women and children retreat to their respective rooms.]

Mr. Stahl (glaring at Dr. Oxley). What do you have to say, Brother? Shall we continue our conversation now without your insults?

Dr. Oxley (somewhat subdued). It seems the tiger has been uncaged. It is your house and I will cease my insults. (Brightening.) You sure have some fire stored in that chest of yours. I must say that this night has not gone as I expected. Anyway, where we were?

Mr. Stahl (regaining his amiable demeanor). We were discussing eugenics. Do you have only one child?

Dr. Oxley. Yes, my only son is Grant.

Mr. Stahl. You are obviously a brilliant man and it appears as though you are quite wealthy, so why do you have only one child?

Dr. Oxley. I don't really have time for another child. The one I have now is quite a pain as it is. Besides, after the torturous ordeal my wife went through giving birth to Grant, I doubt she wants more. I would rather work on my books than have another child, anyway.

Mr. Stahl. My wife and I have felt the pangs for a larger family for quite some time and we are going to realize that dream in about seven months. We look forward to expanding our loving clan. Don't you feel those natural instincts?

Dr. Oxley. I used to but not anymore. I tend to work on my books in my free time.

Mr. Stahl. What are these books you are speaking of?

Dr. Oxley. Ha! I didn't tell you that? Something must be wrong with me! Most of my wealth comes from the history books I write. They are used in schools across the country and I have made a lot off of the royalties. The university even uses one of my books. Obviously, I teach that class. Ha! Do you have any of my great books?

Mr. Stahl. I'm not sure. It is possible. I don't usually look at the author of history books; I just simply purchase the book. I have accidentally purchased some blatantly Jewish books but I promptly burned them in the fireplace.

Dr. Oxley (looking through the books). Let me see here. Hmm. I don't see any offhand, but what is this? (Takes a book from the shelf.) Why do you have a book on the Holocaust? Do you like reading about such a horrific crime against humanity?

Mr. Stahl. That book tells how fraudulent the Holofoax really is. It goes into detail to debunk the scam and get to the truth of the matter.

Dr. Oxley. Which is?

Mr. Stahl. The truth is that the Jews manipulated people into believing the lie that they were massacred, in order to heap blame upon the Germans while making themselves out to look like innocent victims. They have profited greatly from the hoax, to the tune of billions of dollars. The Jews have greatly distorted the facts but World Jewry declared war on Germany long before World War II.

Dr. Oxley. Ha! You must be joking. Everyone knows that the Jews suffered horribly during the Holocaust. Six million Jews were slaughtered, with many of those being gassed. Being the historian that I am, I know more than most how much the Jews have been persecuted.

Mr. Stahl. The Jews control most of the media so they can show you what they wish. Experts say that hundreds of thousands of Jews died during the war, mostly due to starvation. None of them were gassed as the supposed gas chamber idea was purely a myth created by the Jews. The Germans used the Jews, as well as others, for labor during the war and it doesn't make much sense to kill your workers anyway.

Dr. Oxley. That is outrageous! How can you make such claims?

Mr. Stahl. Once you know the Jew, you will understand. You can borrow the book, if you wish.

Dr. Oxley. Not now. I have enough to read for now.

Mr. Stahl. By the way, you are aware of the Communist slaughter in Russia, correct?

Dr. Oxley. Yes, I am. I've heard estimates of twenty to one hundred million people being killed. I don't think we will ever know for sure how many were actually killed as the Communists didn't keep very good records.

Mr. Stahl. Indeed, now that was a tragedy. Millions of Whites were killed but you don't hear about that too often. Are you aware that Communism is thoroughly Jewish?

Dr. Oxley. You seem to think everything evil in the world originated with the Jew! How on earth can you say Communism was Jewish!?

Mr. Stahl. I don't think everything evil comes from the Jew but most of it, for sure. I am sure you know of Karl Marx and his friend Engels. They were both Jews. The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia was led by Trotsky and three thousand cutthroats—all Jews. They were financed by the Jew, Schiff. It seems safe to say that Communism is Jewish. I have a book on this matter as well, if you are interested.

Dr. Oxley. You make bold claims, Mr. Stahl! If even half of it is true, then it is world shattering! I will have to look into all these matters but I am content with the books you have given me thus far. I will be quite angry if I have been deceived all these years!

Mr. Stahl. Are there any other books you wanted to look at before we return to the living room?

Dr. Oxley. No, but I have a question. Did you also build these bookshelves?

Mr. Stahl. Indeed, I did.

[Motions for Dr. Oxley to follow him and they both return to the living room and sit down.]

Mr. Stahl. What do you think of what we have spoken of tonight?

Dr. Oxley. I find it highly suspicious and don't believe much of anything you have said but I don't wish to be a fool. I will read these books you have let me borrow to see if there is anything solid behind what you present.

Mr. Stahl. That's wonderful! I don't expect you to really believe me with all the Jewish propaganda that you have been bombarded with. I simply ask that you read our books with an open mind, and decide if it makes sense or not. I believe that it will, especially to a learned man like yourself.

Dr. Oxley. By the way, you mentioned something earlier about bussing children into the school. What is that all about?

Mr. Stahl. I was at the town meeting and noticed some strange "foreigners" who I perceived to be Jews. These people suggested that black savages be bussed into the all-White school to integrate the area. They said it was evil and racist to have an all-White school. Even though my children don't go there, I objected to such a proposal. No one else openly disapproved, though, as they were too scared to be considered racist or side with a racist. I'm not sure what became of the motion as I was promptly thrown out because I objected.

Dr. Oxley. Something certainly sounds strange about the whole ordeal. What basis did they have to throw you out?

Mr. Stahl. They don't really need an excuse although they claimed I was disturbing the proceedings. The room was silent when they asked for dissenting opinions so my voice was the only one heard. I suppose that is their "basis" for tossing me out. I don't think there is any question that the muds will be shipped in from the city. The only variable I see is how long until it happens. This could be a good event though.

Dr. Oxley. How can you say that!? I thought you didn't like the other races.

Mr. Stahl. I hate the other races but perhaps some Whites will see that they have been deceived about the so-called greatness of "diversity" and "multiculturalism". Of course, I don't want to see our people subjected to the mud criminality but it could help. I love the White Race but a lot of our comrades need a wake-up call. I would ask you to consider homeschooling for your son as I don't want to see him brutalized when the muds pollute the school.

Dr. Oxley. I am still not convinced that these “muds” as you call them, are any different than we are. I will consider what you say though as I have been quite surprised by my visit here. (Looking at his watch.) It is getting late and I have classes to teach in the morning. I am certain that we will speak again.

[The ladies come into the living room.]

Dr. Oxley (to Mrs. Oxley). So, there you are, dear. We must be going now.

Mr. Stahl (to the Oxleys). It was nice meeting you both and I hope to have you over for another visit sometime soon.

Mrs. Stahl. Next time I hope you both can sample some of our scrumptious fruits.

Dr. Oxley. We shall see. Goodnight.

Mrs. Oxley. Goodnight.

[The couples shake hands and the Oxleys leave the house.]

Dr. Oxley (to Mrs. Oxley). That was very unexpected.

Mrs. Oxley. Oh, it was!

Act IV

Scene.—Dr. Oxley’s study. It is morning. It is a large room with many bookshelves. There are two large desks in the room. Books and papers are scattered about both of the desks. Dr. Oxley is busy reading and taking notes. Mrs. Oxley enters the house and throws her keys on the table in the dining room. She spots Dr. Oxley in his study and goes in to see what he is doing. He doesn’t observe her presence in his deep study.

Mrs. Oxley. Leonard! Why are you still here? What about your classes this morning?

Dr. Oxley (absentmindedly). Huh? Yes, it is a nice day.

Mrs. Oxley (grabs his shoulder). Leonard, is something the matter with you? You are acting very strangely. Aren’t you going to teach your classes? What is that look in your eye? (Starting to get frightened.) Those people didn’t put a spell on you last night, did they!?

Dr. Oxley. No, of course not. I called off for my classes today in order to study further. I do feel strange. I haven’t felt this way for years.

Mrs. Oxley. Oh, what is it!?

Dr. Oxley (dreamily). I love you, my precious Crystal. I feel, well...happy. These books that Mr. Stahl has let me borrow have been very enlightening. I’m in a state of shock, really. It is odd...

Mrs. Oxley. What have those people done to you!?! You say you are happy but you look absolutely possessed!

Dr. Oxley (calmly). I must look rather tired but there is no witchcraft here. I have tirelessly gone over these masterpieces of brilliance. They are so simple, so direct, yet they have been so hidden from me for all these years. I find it hard to comprehend how I could have missed so much when it was all right in front of me. You simply must read these books, dear. They will completely shatter your thoughts about Christianity being such a great religion. I knew Christianity was bad but didn't make the connection between it and the horrid Dark Ages.

Mrs. Oxley (hysterically). The Stahls were not what I expected but don't you see that you have fallen for their poison! (Goes to the phone.) I'm calling an exorcist! You are just not yourself! If it was really you, you would have snapped at me and told me to shut up! But no!

Dr. Oxley (gently takes her away from the phone). I haven't snapped at you because I am a changed man. I admit that I thought, like you, that the Stahls were terrible people because they were racist. I thought that they were simply acting nice to lure us into their demonic world. After reading their books, though, I now see that they really are nice and quite intelligent. They have meager means yet they are extremely happy. We have lots of cash but the love is lacking here. This religion, Creativity, is perfect for us. There are going to be a lot of changes around here.

Mrs. Oxley (calming down). This is so sudden. Racists are made out to be evil though. How can we start thinking like them?

Dr. Oxley. As they said, it is the Jew who is behind virtually everything evil. I didn't believe it before but after seeing the evidence and using common sense, it is plainly transparent.

Mrs. Oxley. I trust you but it is still hard to digest. When did you go to bed last night, anyway? Did you sleep on the couch?

Dr. Oxley. No, I didn't sleep at all last night. I was immersing myself in study all night long. I read all three books I received and took notes on them as well. I am tired but feel the great amount of power that has been unleashed by my meditations. This is a wonderful day! Where is that son of ours? He should be a part of this warmth as well.

Mrs. Oxley. I took him to school today. It is his first day, you know. Are you sure that you are feeling all right?

Dr. Oxley (gaining energy). I am feeling much better than all right! I am going to have to discuss things with the Stahls later on about homeschooling. I feel so silly now after being so coarse with them. I am thankful that they put up with me!

Mrs. Oxley (feels his forehead). You feel like you have a fever. Maybe that is all that is wrong with you. Perhaps you should lie down.

Dr. Oxley (smiles heartily before he grabs Mrs. Oxley and passionately kisses her). Do you still think there is something "wrong" with me, my sweet? If these loving feelings I am experiencing are "wrong", then I look forward to being "wrong" my entire life!

Mrs. Oxley (is happily shocked). Oh, Leonard! What has really brought such a drastic change over you!? We haven't kissed like that in years! Was it really those books? What is in them?

Dr. Oxley. Much wisdom! When I first started reading, I was expecting some nonsensical, hateful diatribe. I was anticipating vile attacks with no reason to accompany them. What I found was shocking and exhilarating! It was a carefully laid basis for the greatest religion ever! It used history, common sense, logic, and the laws of nature to back itself up! If something wasn't known for sure or if something wasn't logical, then it didn't make something up, like the belief in gods, but, instead said that it didn't know!

Mrs. Oxley. What's so incredible about that? How did the world begin then?

Dr. Oxley. That's just it! They don't claim to know. Perhaps the universe was created in the Big Bang, perhaps not. If you say a god exists, then the question of who created him comes up. If you then counter and say that he was always here, then the universe could have always been.

Mrs. Oxley. Leonard, you are being a little vague though about this whole affair. I still don't see where these books are so enlightening. It doesn't seem like you are saying anything that you didn't believe in before.

Dr. Oxley. I certainly believed some of what these books said before reading them. It was great to agree with the books on those things, and then I found I agreed on pretty much everything in the books! We will certainly be studying these books as a family but we can touch briefly on some of the main points in them. Here, sit down.

[Gets Mrs. Oxley a chair and she sits down beside him.]

Mrs. Oxley. Are you sure these books aren't just satanic ramblings?

Dr. Oxley. It is hard to be Satanist if you don't believe in Satan or any other gods, isn't it?

Mrs. Oxley. I guess so.

Dr. Oxley. Let's start at the beginning. The first book is called Nature's Eternal Religion. It is a brilliant book, no doubt. It starts out by saying how Nature's laws are eternal and can't be broken. It states that there is nothing above Nature or supernatural because there is no evidence to support this. Sure, there are fables, myths, and legends but they are pure fiction. There is no evidence to show that any of the laws of Nature have ever been broken. Therefore, they believe that a natural religion like Creativity makes much more sense based on the evidence that our senses have gathered, over a supernatural religion that worships a god that has never been felt, seen, heard, smelt, or tasted.

Mrs. Oxley. That doesn't sound racist though. When does the racist part come in?

Dr. Oxley. By looking into Nature, you see that there is an instinctive urge to mate with your own kind. There are numerous varieties of swallows, woodpeckers, and larks but they naturally mate with their own kind even though they may be around other birds. All these varieties of animals make it clear that there is a natural urge to mate with your own kind. If there was an urge to mate with other kinds, then you wouldn't see so many different species and subspecies but would see only one mongrelized creature. Using this as their basis, they believe that the same thing goes for humans. So, they believe it is very natural for Whites to want to be with Whites. Of course, this also extends to the other races as well.

Mrs. Oxley. There are a lot of different animals out there. What about dogs though? You don't see too many pure breeds.

Dr. Oxley. It seems clear that dogs are forced to be around dogs that aren't like them. They can't mate with their own kind because none of their kind is around so they mate with other dogs. Remember, it is the purebred dogs that are sought after and are more expensive.

Mrs. Oxley. That is true. Nothing about this religion seems satanic yet, so tell me more.

Dr. Oxley. That's the spirit! I think you will be converted like I was but you needn't take my word for it. The books speak for themselves!

Mrs. Oxley. Oh, Leonard! Such a change has come over you. Before, you would have simply stated your beliefs as absolute truths. Why don't you now?

Dr. Oxley. When you are misled and wrong about so many things, then it makes you weary to hold such a position. Don't get me wrong, this religion is wonderful and life-changing but I think people should experience it for themselves. I think most White people will agree with what is being said. We have been lied to a million times and these lies became apparent truths to us and I don't want to see more people simply believing in something because someone says so. I know there are a lot of sheep out there and there probably always will be, but I would prefer people realizing how great Creativity is on their own.

Mrs. Oxley. That certainly makes sense. I was led to believe that the Stahls were going to be horrible people but they turned out to be quite friendly and hospitable. Mrs. Stahl has a lovely assortment of blankets and I would like to know how to do that. There is still a large part of me that thinks something isn't right about all this.

Dr. Oxley. I think that is certainly a healthy feeling. Perhaps you should apply that suspicion to everything in your life though. After years of being polluted by Jewish propaganda, most people aren't suspicious of anything unless the media says to be. The reason I was so struck by these Holy Books was because everything made so much sense to me. If something is questionable then it seems only logical to obtain more information about the subject before coming to a conclusion.

Mrs. Oxley. I can't argue with your reasoning. I will at least check these books out before making a decision. What else can you tell me about these books?

Dr. Oxley. One of the most interesting things to me, being a historian, was hearing about the greatness of the White Race. Just yesterday, I was lashing out at Mr. Stahl for believing that, and here I am today preaching it. I had never before made the connection that only Whites ruled the great civilizations. From Egypt to India to Greece to Rome to our modern day civilization, they have been ruled by Whites. The books I read on the topic didn't factor in the racial aspect at all but I now see it is of the utmost importance. Whenever these White civilizations have had their White blood extinguished, the civilization has declined and died away. India and Egypt are good examples of this as they both were advanced thousands of years ago, but now are third world countries of ignorance, poverty, and sickness.

Mrs. Oxley. These books seem to cover a lot of areas. Is there anything that isn't covered?

Dr. Oxley. That is hard to say. It doesn't talk about everything, per se, but it certainly touches on many main points of life. Another interesting topic that was discussed, was about the Jews. The books examine why Jews have been treated so harshly. I was always led to believe that people were jealous of their good status, but it turns out that they are simply criminals. I also learned of the connection between the Jews and Christianity.

Mrs. Oxley. Oh, what do you mean? The bible says that the Jews are God's chosen people.

Dr. Oxley. Do you know how much that belief has benefited the Jews? After all, the Jews wrote the bible. Virtually all the apostles were Jews with Luke being a probable exception. Can you see that the Jews have taken advantage of Christianity to increase their power?

Mrs. Oxley. I'm not sure I know what you mean.

Dr. Oxley. A good example is when the Christians declared usury to be a sin so the Jews got complete control of the money.

Mrs. Oxley. What is usury?

Dr. Oxley. Usury is lending money but charging interest. Since the Christians were banned from practicing it, the Jews got control of the money. We both know that money is power. Of course, there are other examples of Jewish manipulation. Whenever a Jew commits a crime he can simply whine to the Christians saying he is God's chosen. This hasn't always worked but I'm sure you can see how powerful a tool it is. The Jews can really fleece the Christians because the Christians believe that the Jews can do no wrong since they are the chosen ones.

Mrs. Oxley (incredulous). You are learning all this from these books?

Dr. Oxley. Yes, and much more. The old testament bonds the Jews together and promotes their best interest. The new testament, however, fragments the Christians and promotes weakness. Most White people are Christians so we have quite a problem on our hands.

Mrs. Oxley. Wait a minute. Why would the Jews create Christianity to weaken people?

Dr. Oxley. It seems clear that they promoted Christianity due to their hatred of the Roman Empire. The Romans had crushed a Jewish uprising and scattered many Jews. They took many concepts from the Essenes and foisted the feeble religion on the Romans. Christianity was one of the major causes of the decline of Rome.

Mrs. Oxley. Who are these Essenes you mentioned?

Dr. Oxley. The Essenes were a Jewish sect that existed thousands of years ago. They practiced beliefs similar to Christianity. They were pacifists and disdained weapons of any kind. They are mentioned in the Dead Sea Scrolls which are believed by many Christians to signify something great.

Mrs. Oxley. I've heard of those scrolls but haven't ever read them. Where are these Essenes now?

Dr. Oxley. They died out many years ago. The religion was weak and feeble. It seems clear that the only reason White Christians have survived is due to the tenacity of the White Race.

Mrs. Oxley. You are saying many strange things today, Leonard. I don't know if I'll be able to accept all these things. I still don't see why they hate the Jews so much. The old testament doesn't seem bad at all.

Dr. Oxley. The old testament is full of perverted and dishonorable stories but this book isn't the core of Judaism. The Talmud is the main book of Judaism.

Mrs. Oxley. Oh, Leonard! Why do you say that about the old testament!?

Dr. Oxley. You have probably only heard great things about the supposed inspiring tales in the old testament. After reading them, I think you will change your mind. The old testament is filled with stories like Abraham pimping his sister/wife off to a king, Lot fornicating with his daughters, David impregnating his soldier's wife and then sending that soldier to the front lines to be killed in battle, and Solomon knowing many strange women—700 wives and 300 concubines, to be exact. Are those the kind of stories you want children to read? I surely don't want our Grant to read that.

Mrs. Oxley (flustered). I don't think children should read about that either but I don't remember those stories being in the old testament!

Dr. Oxley. The stories are there. I can point them out to you. I know you have a bible in the house so I can show you. I didn't want a bible in the house before, but now I can use it to enlighten you.

Mrs. Oxley (turning slightly red). Ok, dear. What was that Talmud you mentioned?

Dr. Oxley. Ha! The Talmud is the central book in Judaism and is quite revolting. I found a "Facts!" pamphlet inside one of the books which further revealed the depravity of the Jews. It is no wonder that so many people hate these creatures. I now understand why the very word "Jew" is used as an insult.

Mrs. Oxley. What is in this Talmud then?

Dr. Oxley. I don't think you will really like the preachings and they will probably offend you, but I will give you a taste. Essentially, the Jews think it is holy to lie, steal, cheat, deceive, and kill the goyim. Goyim is their word for cattle and is applied to non-Jews. They believe that when their Messiah comes, each Jew will have over two thousand slaves. They even think it is fine to have sexual intercourse with a girl of three years old.

Mr. Oxley (appalled). Oh, no! That is horrible! Can the Jews possibly believe such filth!?

Dr. Oxley. Yes, and there is much more. Here, take a look. (Shows Mrs. Oxley exact quotes from the Talmud.)

Mrs. Oxley (horrified). How revolting! Can this really be so!?! Do you think that is why the Nazis hated the Jews?

Dr. Oxley. In part, yes. Hitler was aware of the Jewish evils but his biggest concern was Germany. After the first World War, the Jews bought up much of Germany and thus had control over the people. Since the Germans were so impoverished, the Jews bought up the businesses at a far lower price than they would have normally sold for. The Jews instigated a reign of terror as the Germans were held in horrible, financial bondage. Hitler loved the German people and so fought for them.

Mrs. Oxley. But the Nazis were so horrible! It must have been pure torture for the Germans!

Dr. Oxley. So, the Jews want you to believe, and even I swallowed it wholeheartedly. I have read how prosperous Germany became after Hitler took power but the books I read always slandered the country saying they were better off financially, but they were slaves. I now realize that was just Jewish propaganda. Hitler was a great patriot and one of the greatest leaders ever.

Mrs. Oxley. Leonard! What are you saying! (A flash comes over her and she giggles softly.) I understand now. You big joker! This is all just a big joke, right?

Dr. Oxley. No, it is not. I know that it is hard to absorb but I feel so alive now that I know the truth. I hope that you too can see what I see but I'm not going to force you to.

Mrs. Oxley. What now? Are you a Nazi then?

Dr. Oxley. No, I am a Creator. National Socialism certainly influenced the religion of Creativity but nationalism has been very destructive for the White Race. Many, many wars have been caused by nationalism and I hope that we never have to fight a war against our White brothers again. The Church promotes Racial Socialism where the best interests of the White Race are promoted. The World Church of the Creator is a religion, though, not a political party.

Mrs. Oxley. Isn't socialism communism? Are you becoming a communist?

Dr. Oxley. No, no. All socialism means is working together for the greater good and not giving in to selfish interests. A country wouldn't exist without socialism. Police, fire department, and road construction are but a few socialistic enterprises. Also, there would be no government ownership of everything so private property is protected.

Mrs. Oxley. Oh, I see. Where did I learn that from then, I wonder.

Dr. Oxley. From the Jews, of course. It becomes clearer and clearer when you realize all that the Jews have done. I am seeing their greasy hands behind so many foul schemes now.

Mrs. Oxley. If this is all true, how is it possible? How can they control things when we live in a democracy? I don't think I've ever seen a Jew in my life.

Dr. Oxley. I'm sure you have; they are plastered all over the media. We live in a Republic, not a democracy. Anyway, the whole voting concept is simply a tool that the Jews wield to manipulate the country. The awesome power of the media determines who wins or loses. It doesn't really matter who gets elected though as I haven't seen a worthy candidate in years.

Mrs. Oxley. Nothing can be done then. Don't you think it is better to simply live as we were? I don't see any hope, so we might as well just ignore these problems.

Dr. Oxley (indignantly). Absolutely not! I can't really blame someone for not doing something about a problem that they didn't know existed. I know about the problem now. I have to do something about it. I will do something about it.

Mrs. Oxley. But what can you do?

Dr. Oxley. One man can do a lot. This whole situation requires a lot of thought but I am sure that I, and hopefully we, will dedicate our lives to the White Race. I wasn't too fond of anything before, but now I realize the error in my ways. I am going to be loyal to the White Race and become a crusader for our people! The hoards of money that I have accumulated can now be put to great use!

Mrs. Oxley. You are even going to spend your precious money?

Dr. Oxley. Yes, it will come in handy for the struggle. (Rubs his chin while thinking.) What shall I do..

Mrs. Oxley. I think you should have something to eat. When was the last time you ate?

Dr. Oxley. That is a good question. I can't really remember. That is a good place to start though! I thought the Stahls were off their rockers yesterday, but after reading why they eat as they do, I see how simply brilliant it is. Do you know why all these diseases we have are so prevalent today?

Mrs. Oxley. Not really, why?

Dr. Oxley. It is so stunningly simple! Our diets are full of poisons with processed sugar, being the worst culprit. The primitive savages who are unaware of our "modern" food, also do not know cancer, heart disease, lung disease and a host of other ailments like we do. Everyone knows how healthy fruits and vegetables are, but still we eat these poisons. Many have paid the price for their folly but we do not have to. Therefore, I will be changing my diet and I think you will as well after reading the books from the Stahls.

Mrs. Oxley. We can read some more later, dear. Why don't you join me for some food?

Dr. Oxley. Yes, I am famished. Let's go.

[As they start to leave, the phone rings in the study.]

Dr. Oxley. Can you get that dear? I'll be in the kitchen. Ha! What a wonderful day!

[Dr. Oxley leaves the room and Mrs. Oxley answers the phone.]

Mrs. Oxley. Hello? Yes. Uh-huh. No! I'll be there right away! (Slams the phone down.) Leonard! Leonard!

[Dr. Oxley rushes into the study.]

Dr. Oxley. What is it!?

Mrs. Oxley (frantically). The school just called. Grant has been in a fight.

Dr. Oxley. So, how is he!?

Mrs. Oxley. He isn't hurt that bad but he is pretty shocked.

Dr. Oxley (angry). Did they say who he fought with?

Mrs. Oxley. No, they didn't.

Dr. Oxley. We both know who it was! (Pacing about the study.) I have some thinking to do. You go pick him up. The degradation of this world is going to stop! We are going to have a loving family from now on, Crystal! And it is going to be away from the Jewish filth!

[Mrs. Oxley leaves to pick up Grant.]

Dr. Oxley (thinks out loud). How can I spread the word about this great religion? The media must be used. The Jews control the media though. I have enough money to print books, fliers, make videos, music and anything else that needs to be done. I don't need the Jews and their media although I can take advantage of it. What about my job? I don't need it; I can live comfortably for the rest of my life with what I have now. What about my history writing? Ha! I can write accurate White history instead of Jewish lies. How much can I do with the money I have? That is a good question. I need to work on that.

[Dr. Oxley seats himself while he calculates. After several moments, Mrs. Oxley entered the house with Grant and they both come into the study.]

Dr. Oxley (hugs Grant). How are you son?

Grant (has a black eye). Well, I have been better.

Dr. Oxley. So, you have! It was those niggers that did this to you, wasn't it!?

Grant (stunned). Well, yes it was but why are you calling them that?

Dr. Oxley. I have been enlightened, my dear son. It turns out the boys you met recently were absolutely correct in so many things. There are going to be some changes around here! Did the niggers attack you like they did at the other school?

Grant. Yes, father. It was exactly the same. They wanted my money. I didn't think the nig.. er, blacks were even going to be there.

Dr. Oxley. No, son. You can say it! We have known that they are niggers but we have been too scared to say it. I don't care what is "popular" anymore. I care about our people and the truth! Say it son—nigger!

Grant (smiles). It was the niggers, dad!

Dr. Oxley (chuckles). Now, that is my boy! Of course, you won't be going back to that school anymore! I know a couple of boys your age that are going to be your friends as well!

Grant (happily). What has happened to you, dad?

Dr. Oxley. I got some books from the racist family and they were tremendously inspiring. I have had my eyes opened and I can feel the love and power. I know we haven't had the greatest family life, but all that is going to change! Speaking of which, we need to go thank those kind souls who opened my eyes and changed my life! Who is going to take a walk with me over there?

Mrs. Oxley. It is so wonderful to see you happy, Leonard! I am going with you!

Grant. Me, too! I want to say hi to Bruno and Gustave.

[The three set out happily to the Stahls, through the forest.]

Grant. What is in those books you mentioned dad?

Dr. Oxley. There is a lot, really. We will read them as a family, soon. I want my whole family to experience the warmth I felt after reading the Holy Books of Creativity.

Grant. Are they hard to understand?

Dr. Oxley. Not at all. The concepts are simple and easy to learn. The information is presented brilliantly.

Grant. Well, will I be able to understand them then?

Dr. Oxley. Most certainly. I am going to have to buy the books because I have the Stahls' only copies though. I don't think they will mind if I keep the borrowed books for a week or so though.

Grant. Is mom going to read them as well?

Mrs. Oxley. Yes, I am. They have really changed your father, so there must be something terrific inside. I want to be happy like he is too!

Dr. Oxley. And you will! My whole family will be happy!

Mrs. Oxley (sniffing the air). Does anyone smell something awful? It smells like someone is cooking something nasty.

Grant (pointing ahead). Do you see that!? Something is burning up ahead.

Dr. Oxley. Could it be? Come on! (Dr. Oxley motions his family forward.)

[The family rushes through the forest and sees the Stahl's house engulfed in flames.]

Mrs. Oxley (sobbing, clings to Dr. Oxley). Oh, Leonard, no! What has happened here!?

Grant (grasps Dr. Oxley's hand in dismay). Dad, where are they? Are they in the house?

Dr. Oxley (melancholy). This is an absolute tragedy. Our new and true friends are now dead. It is obvious what has happened here. Mr. Stahl protested the bussing of those savages into the White school. He cared for White people despite most of them hating him and his children not even going to the school. It seems clear that the Jews didn't like him getting in their way so they silenced the whole family forever. Who knows which Jewish organization committed this atrocity but I know the filthy hand of the Jew was responsible. This is quite a blow!

Mrs. Oxley (pleading). What can we do about this? We have to catch the killers.

Grant (with tears in his eyes). Are they really dead?

Dr. Oxley. Yes, they are gone forever. We can file a report but the Jews control virtually everything so that won't accomplish much.

Mrs. Oxley. Then it is hopeless. We can't win.

Dr. Oxley (becomes inspired despite his moist eyes). No, it is not hopeless! These comrades have paid the ultimate price and we must not forget them! The sword has been passed to us and we must fight! The battle rages on!

Mrs. Oxley (brightens dramatically). Oh, Leonard!

[The Oxleys embrace affectionately.]

The Joys of Diversity
by
Molyneaux

Leaning back in his comfortable gray easy chair and relaxing after a laborious day's work, Robert Schaf flicked open a can of beer that soothed his nerves and set him at ease. Being a postal worker had its perks but it was a difficult job. Only the arduous memories of the day came to Robert's mind, but he took comfort in the fact that he could now enjoy his favorite hobby--watching television. As he grabbed the bag of potato chips beside him, Robert switched the delightful tube of images on.

Mr. Schaf was a middle aged man with short brown hair and dull brown eyes. He was of medium build due to the exercise he got on the job and so his rather unhealthy diet didn't appear to affect him much. The gray stubble that was scarcely visible on his face revealed his rather aged condition. Robert was currently dressed casually in a blue pair of old jeans and a slightly sullied white T-shirt.

Alone lived Robert in a three bedroom house where he had grown up. His parents had died and left the house to their only precious son. Rob presently lounged in the living room that was neatly decorated with expensive furniture. The television set especially was quite opulent as it was larger than Robert himself! The speakers for such an elegant piece of art were pleasantly seasoned about the room. The other furniture in the room seemed minuscule and vulgar in comparison to the mighty display of technology that Robert adored.

The summer night poured its darkness into the room and the brilliance of the television mesmerized its viewer. In between gulps of beer and crunchings of potato chips, Robert traveled through the different realms he saw before him. His trek to find something worthwhile continued on for quite some time until he resolved to hunt for the guide that would illuminate his favorite shows. As he set his food and beverage down, a deluge of bright and enthusiastic images stopped his actions. Intrigued by this new show, he resumed sitting comfortably in his chair.

With grand, epic music came a beautiful background from some exotic location. A variegated crowd of exquisitely well dressed patrons came into view. There were Africans, Chinese, Mexicans, Palestinians and many more. The noble spectacle entranced Robert and he ardently anticipated the title of such a sublime show. After what seemed like agonizing moments, a person who appeared to be of African and Mexican blood announced the title of the show: "The Joys of Diversity".

Robert's excitement and titillation grew as the show foreshadowed things to come by showing glimpses of the glamorous people on the show in their routine schedules. Fancy houses, sports cars, leisurely recreation and other joys splashed merrily across the screen. Enamored by such a wondrous display, Robert laughed with joy as he waited for the actual show to begin. A set of humdrum commercials came first, but Rob's persistence and patience were heightened as the resplendent glow in his eyes signaled that he could wait hours, or even days, for his treat. At last, the show resumed.

An African lady splendidly dressed in a stunning black dress was the first of the assembly to be introduced by the host. Mrs. Kfumi was her name and her tale was besought with difficulty, but she had prevailed. She spoke of the evil racism exuded by the horrible white man and how she had suffered miserably from its pestilence-like effect. By grasping onto her roots, however, she was able to smash this plague and achieve success through the wonderful, affirmative programs that had been set up for victims like her. Today, she was living in a beach house overlooking the alluring ocean while she cared for her large family.

Robert was overcome with intense emotion as he listened to the valiant tale of triumphant overcoming. Tears surged down his face as he realized the horrors his people had foisted on Mrs. Kfumi and other minorities. Robert was German and he was realizing how vile not only the Germans were, but all those of European ancestry. He was glad that programs had been set up to help the hapless casualties of discrimination but he knew those responsible for the horrible anguish should be punished. Resolved to make a difference, Robert made up his mind to help spread the glorious cause of diversity!

Meanwhile, the show went on as more and more diverse elements of the population were displayed. Each one had a similar tale of persecution by the white man but redemption was achieved through the beneficent forces of multiculturalism. The heroism and courage shown was beautiful and breathtaking to gaze upon. The atmosphere of happiness in their roots and hatred of the perfidious white man was enveloping and enlightening.

With every iniquitous offense committed by people of his race, Robert hissed in fierce enmity; with every redemption he cheered in mirthful joviality and celebration. By the time all the successful people's stories had been told, Robert had been worked into an excited state of thrill. Like a child learning what is right and wrong in life, Robert was shown horrifying evil and wondrous good.

At the concluding climax of the prestigious presentation, a call for action was succinctly asked for in the form of donations. Robert, eager to pledge his support, scrambled out of his chair but stumbled over the empty cans of beer that had been amassed beside him. He had been eagerly guzzling his refreshing beverage and the twelve pack that always accompanied him on his television-watching sprees was empty, with the cans now scattered about on the floor from his disruption of them. Scantly phased by such a minor disturbance, Robert galloped to his phone and dialed the number listed on his mammoth television screen.

Anxiously he waited for an answer and when he heard the operator, who identified herself as Mrs. Stein, he quickly blurted out, "I want to donate! Racism must be crushed!"

"How much would you like to donate friend," came the cordial, effeminate reply.

Shocked by this simple question, Robert thought for a moment before saying, "A lot!"

The operator pleasantly responded and requested of Robert his name and address. Robert was forthcoming as he related the required information. Hanging up the telephone, he sprang back into his favorite chair to resume his enjoyable pastime as he realized he was far too energized to sleep, although it was already past his usual bedtime.

Still reveling in the majestic masterpiece of entertainment that he had the grand fortune to behold, Robert was about to change the station as "The Joys of Diversity" had ended. Much to his satisfaction and amazement, he realized that the show was being broadcast again! Robert eagerly watched the show until the pull of sleep was too much for him and he drifted off into the phantasmagoric realm of dreams.

The following day was one of brightness and joy for Robert. Along his mail delivery route in the plush suburbs, he jubilantly perambulated. It was an extremely agreeable summer day with the blazing sun enshrouding the earth in its loving warmth. The birds chirped playfully and a soft breeze blew gently about the land which kept the furnace-like sun from making life too unbearable.

As he deposited the mail in the mailboxes of the well-to-do, Robert couldn't help but recall the energizing scenes of loveliness that he had seen the night before. He wanted to do more to promote the holy righteousness he must champion, but he was unable to ascertain what he could accomplish outside of donating to the worthwhile charitable organization that sponsored the show. Robert's concentration on the matter was so intense that he was caught unaware when an older man suddenly greeted him.

The aged man was well dressed and spoke very amicably, "Good afternoon Bob. Great day, isn't it?"

Realizing that the foul antagonist of the world--the white male--was right in front of him, Robert became seized with holy indignation. Rage and fierce anger swept over him in a crashing wave that showed itself plainly on his furious countenance. It was clearly evident that ridding the universe of this manipulating, destructive force would be a wonderful service to mankind. The expensive clothes the man wore were obviously the fruit of the hapless minority who he had ruthlessly exploited. The eloquent and polite demeanor of the horrible rat appeared sincere, but Robert knew it was a simple facade to fool the masses.

Although the impulse of exterminating the white rat flourished attractively in his mind, Rob contained himself. He wouldn't kill the criminal, but he would show his outrage. Robert promptly flung the nefarious occupant's mail onto the ground as he glared into the blue eyes of the atrocious devil. Stunned, the white man scrambled about for his letters in a haphazard fashion without uttering a single word.

Still bearing the visage of divine anger, Robert took pleasure in the surge of war juices that pulsed through his body. As he walked to the next house, he saw the bright poodle owned by the despicable "Mr. Jones" of 755 Maple Ave. The proud dog exuded hauteur and jumped excitedly over to him in playful delight. Robert smiled jovially before pulling out a can of mace and generously spraying the white poodle with its stinging poison.

Beaming proudly at this noble deed, Robert stood over the dog who was now whimpering and rolling about in pain. After enjoying his act of heroism for a few moments, he carried on in his route but not before giving a good, hard kick to the abominable creature's skull.

Robert was bathed in honor as he realized how altruistic his great actions were. His day swiftly wore on as he mechanically performed his job while cogitating further actions against the evil beasts of power who reigned ignominiously over the country, nay the world. Robert imagined himself to be a resplendent paladin on a glorious crusade for the oppressed and who would lead the forces of light to total victory. As he ruminated these lofty visions of grandeur, a fetid stench of excrement overwhelmed him and dashed his blissful reverie.

The smell came from the yard of the last house on Robert's course. It was the most run-down abode as well. This was obviously a result of white terror as an honorable Black family lived on the property. Continuing on in his crusade, Robert knew precisely what he ought to do. Benevolently, he emptied the financial contents of his wallet and placed them inside the violated family's mailbox, along with their usual mail.

Pleased with this action, Robert began his trek back to his vehicle when he spotted the mangy, starving dog owned by the Black family. It was a Doberman Pinscher that was also obviously tormented by evil racists and was forced to defecate on the lawn as it had no other place to do so. Pity for the tortured creature grabbed Robert.

Although the dog growled fiercely at the mailman, Robert knew that he wasn't like the other tormentors of the world and thus advanced amiably towards the Doberman. Just as he came within petting range of the hound, the oppressed canine sprang swiftly and sank its sharp teeth into Robert's exposed leg. A cry of pain was let out, but he overcame the cutting ache and petted the creature gently.

A Black man came running out of the dog's house and viciously yelled at Robert to vacate the property. The dog quickly ran to its master's side which assuaged the postal worker of the biting agony from the sharp teeth. Robert smiled at the man and waved in a friendly fashion, but this only angered the high-born Black. Instantly discovering the source of the misunderstanding to be his own foul racism, Mr. Schaf left the premises content with the knowledge that he can contribute mightily that day.

The blood that flowed from his leg eventually stopped and Robert was only forced to limp as a result. Making his way back home, he realized that such a minor gash in his leg was well worth it as he knew the power of sacrosanct right was with him. As a result, the ride home was filled with joy and wonder as Robert contemplated what would be on television on that illustrious Friday night.

Robert arrived at home and was extraordinarily shocked at the scene that confronted him. He had just walked into the door when he realized that the vast majority of his furniture was gone! Upstairs and down, many costly valuables were missing. In a frenzied panic, he hastened to find the phone, which thankfully remained. As he prepared to dial for help, Robert was glad to see that his prized possession--his gigantic television--was also left untouched. As he gazed at his wonderful enjoyment box, he realized a note was taped to the screen.

Setting the phone down, he examined the curious yellow note. It was addressed to him and said simply, "Thanks for your donation! This video from us is a token of our appreciation." The doubt and grave, foreboding thoughts that had entered Robert's mind were quickly flung away and replaced by a glowing nimbus of rapture. He smiled broadly as he found the videotape and played it; it was his new favorite show: "The Joys of Diversity". Laying comfortably on the floor, Robert passed the night away in glorious mirth.

II

On the following Saturday morning, the phone rang playfully and roused Mr. Schaf from his energizing sleep. Robert woke up and answered the phone. It was the Post Office calling him and informing him that today they were having a Postal Exam. Although he hadn't been aware of such a test, Robert stretched out his frame that was stiff from sleeping on the floor and went about preparing himself.

He slowly traversed the stairs and went into his bedroom. Robert had already realized his bed had been taken for charity, but soon realized that his clothes had been donated as well. He smiled at this realization as he knew some poor, oppressed soul would benefit greatly from them. His postal uniform would suffice anyway although he hadn't planned to wear it since he was only required to take a test. He had taken many over his twenty-year career with the Post Office and knew the uniform wasn't mandatory.

Making his way to the bathroom, he noticed that his bathtub and towels had also been sacrificed for the greater good. It seemed as though the day couldn't get any better! The morning was warm and Robert made do by cleansing himself in the sink. Drying himself with only the warm rays of the sun was a new experience and Robert silently thanked the forces of diversity for granting him this refreshing encounter.

After readying himself for the new, glorious day, Robert drove to the Post Office with a tremendous confidence and happiness. He arrived just in time for his appointment and was thus quickly entreated to enter the testing room that was filled with postal workers and hopeful postal workers. Just as he grabbed a pencil and his test, a charming bell rang that indicated commencement of the exam.

Used to such exercises of the mind and being quite the adroit master of such elementary questions, Robert took the luxury of gazing about the room before beginning his work. A jocular enthusiasm greeted him as the room was filled with a far more multifarious crowd than ever before. Sure there were some horribly heinous white men, but he had seen many more in years past. It therefore showed that the magnanimous brilliance was overwhelming the despicable squalor in the titanic clash of right and wrong.

As it was presently, the Post Office consisted of but one minority and it seemed clear that this new test would change all that. Whites made up the bulk of the staff, but that was sure to change soon. Looking forward to the virtuous change, Robert wondered which of the new recruits he would be able to befriend.

After his wondrous imaginings, Robert promptly proceeded to fill out his answer form. He swiftly plowed through the questions with effortless ease as he immediately marked the correct answer. Over and over again this occurred, almost as fast as the white demon taking advantage of the oppressed minority. Page upon page was turned with zestful celerity as he sagaciously answered questions that others might find far too difficult. Robert breezed through the examination so quickly and skillfully that he was done far before any of his fellow classmates.

Given this opportunity to relax, Robert glanced lazily about the room full of hard-working comrades. As he looked around at the test-takers, he was appalled at the racism he uncovered. The whites taking the tests were easily reading the material and answering the questions while the unfortunate minorities were clearly having difficulties, becoming flustered and frustrated. There could be only one explanation for this: white vileness.

It was extremely limp that the designers of the exam were white and made the test to conform to white thinking while surely discriminating against the thinking of the other far more noble cultures. Obviously this cultural disadvantage was severely affecting the minorities and Robert was filled with reverent consternation at such a terrible travesty. This situation had to be righted and why it hadn't already, he couldn't fathom.

As he was consequently mining his brain for ideas, the ding of a bell sounded and a long line was formed at the front of the hall. An electronic device was situated at the front of the line and swiftly determined the score of the participant's test. The score was recorded for the Post Office's records and the test-taker was given a slip of paper with his score and rank in relation to the other test scores, on it. Afterwards, everyone was directed back to their chairs to hear the announcement of the proud new employee.

This whole procedure was undertaken with extreme earnest by Robert as he greatly looked forward to his new compatriot. He cared little about his performance on the test because he was used to excellence. Even though this was the case, when he resumed his seat and glanced at his percentage, he was not happy. Although he ranked first in the class, his score was a paltry 98.5%. Torturously racking his mind for answers that had been wrong proved a fantastically futile endeavor. Accordingly, he abandoned this line of thought and waited for the good news of the day to be announced.

A man of proud Mexican ancestry became visible in the front of the hall and calmed the minor bubbling of social discourse with a small gesticulation. This high-born man was unknown to Robert and wore a sharp black ensemble that exuded loving kindness. The diverse aspect of this princely gentleman sweetened Robert's day and he could only assume that this fine aristocrat was a recent addition to the office that he wasn't aware of.

Mr. Santanna--as his name came to be--greeted the crowd and read from a small card in front of him, "In the name of the holy forces of diversity, I stand before you to announce the newest employee of the Post Office. With an astounding score of 63%, I proudly present the one and only Mr. Mike Farrak!"

The rousing speech brought tears to Robert's eyes as a tingle of recognition ran through his mind. The aforementioned name was somehow familiar and jolted his analytical brain. The image of the glorious winner ended Robert's search as yes! he recognized the oppressed Black man who was finally being placed in his rightful position. Overwhelmed with a swarm of lovely butterflies, Robert reveled in joy as he realized Mr. Farrak was the genteel gentleman whom he had encountered the day before.

Amid the thundering applause and warm reception, Robert recalled the hideous unfairness of the test and realized that this catastrophic calamity had been compensated for! Due to the scathing, biased nature of the test, Robert was certain that Mr. Farrak's 63% must certainly best his score and possibly be even perfect! Eagerly, Robert made his way to congratulate his new, vastly intelligent comrade.

A varied crowd of gorgeous diversity ringed around the nobleman who had recently ascended his throne. It was quite a chore for Robert to wind his way to greet the lord, but he was devoutly determined to do so. After some moments of jostling and almost wrestling with the other men in the hall, Robert made his way to the front in order to pay homage to the new aristocrat.

Composing himself, Robert spoke with great glee as he extended his hand in friendship, "Congratulations Mr. Farrak! I hope that your stay with the Post Office is a long and fruitful one!"

As if he had been sprayed with acid, Mr. Farrak recoiled in disdain at the salutation Robert spewed. The Black man's lip seemed to snarl as he hissed, "Die you white devil!"

This outburst and the angry stares of the others in the crowd compelled Robert to hastily withdraw. His first instinct was to be hurt by this display but his supremely rational mind destroyed such feelings as he realized how the Black man must feel. The source of anguish of the world was the white man and Robert was, unfortunately, of this repulsive race. Thus, it was to be expected for the poor Blacks to look beyond the apparent charity of whites and perceive the actual intent of hostility. Robert was sincere but he was sure Mr. Farrak simply wasn't used to whites doing good deeds and so he had lashed out. Robert, however, knew he was on the path of holiness and wasn't about to waver in his resolve.

As Robert ventured towards the exit, he realized he was to blame for the misunderstanding and would have to assiduously assert his intellect in order to divulge a better way to communicate his good intentions. This thought acted like the effulgent sun and opened the beautiful blossom of his wonderful joy. This rekindled torch of fire resulted in a harmonious whistling of delight as Robert reached the exit of the hall.

As he reached for the door handle, the door suddenly rushed open with threatening velocity. Before Robert could react, the door crashed into his forehead and sent him staggering backwards in a blinding rush of vertigo. An exquisite minority emerged from the door and sped into the hall while sneering in contempt at the injured letter-carrier. What culture the man was of was impossible for Robert to ascertain in his feeble mental state.

Enveloped in a terrible tornado that dizzied and befuddled him, Robert was unable to stop his vertiginous swirl until he landed on the floor with a pitiful slump. Some moments passed before his senses were regained and he realized where he was. A full recuperation took a bit longer as he finally become aware of the door in front of him that served as the egress. Slowly hefting himself up, he noticed his score sheet had fallen from his grasp and presently retrieved it.

With the swelling bruise on his forehead pulsating madly, Robert cautiously went through the door but made it out safely this time. Admonishing himself to improve his diplomacy as soon as possible so further painful encounters could be avoided, he happened to notice more writing on his score sheet than he had recalled. Stopping to examine the paper resulted in a mammoth smile on Robert's visage. Two words were scrawled on the back--"You're fired!"

III

Robert's drive home was one full of delight and glee as he was fully aware of the noble position he had fulfilled. He wondered if the Post Office had somehow learned of his sacrosanct quest and sacrificed him for the burdened Black man. Regardless of how it came to be, the notion of his sacrifice was one he believed only happened in fairy tales with chivalric knights. Robert's crusade had scarcely begun, yet he felt as though he had already contributed monstrously.

Enthused and excited from this addicting elixir of bliss, he knew he would need to find another job in order to procure funds for the movement. Naturally, Robert envisioned himself working at a different Post Office as that had been his calling for so many fruitful years. However, he thought, how could he look to work in a field that the extravagant minorities should hold? It was a fairly lucrative profession that rightfully belonged to men like Mr. Farrak, not himself. The vicious whites had held such luxurious positions for far too long while the magnificent minorities had been forced to fill low-paying occupations that seemed to be but a continuation of the horrible slavery that the white man had supposedly abolished. This had to change.

As Robert contemplated a low-paying job, he happened to notice an obscene scene of horror: a contemptible white policeman was harassing a defenseless Black man! Virtually crushing the brake pedal which immediately halted his car, Robert swiftly exited his vehicle. With a fierce expression of brutal hatred for the oppressor, he rushed to question the dastardly criminal that hid behind a blue uniform and shiny badge.

With a harsh bellowing roar, Robert boomed, "What is the meaning of this!? Why are you harassing this upstanding citizen!?"

The police officer glanced at the Black man--who had been so encumbered with white oppression that he was forced to wear rags--and then back at Robert with a curious stare. Then he spoke, "This 'upstanding citizen' is a wanted rapist and murderer. Now, sir, please remain calm while I make my arrest."

A sweltering boil of anger and resentment at the lawman's haughtiness and arrogance raged forcefully within Robert. The man surely spoke lies behind his cordial disguise but Robert was momentarily paralyzed by the calming facade the policeman exuded. His hostile intentions were plainly evident, though, and when the vitiated officer moved to make the arrest, Robert felt the tinge of power glide through him as he moved to save the day.

"Run my Black brother! Run!" Robert screamed before lunging at the officer and tackling him. The Black man took full advantage of this propitious event and bolted away like a triumphant cheetah. The so-called "criminal" fled away with the breeze and found justice somewhere in the numerous folds of the city.

Meanwhile, a not-so-titanic struggle occurred between Robert and the law officer. This is so because while Robert was in decent shape, he was certainly no warrior. The angered officer quickly subdued the former postal worker and applied the handcuffs extremely tightly. This mattered not to Robert and he was oblivious to the lack of circulation to his hands as he had gloriously accomplished his objective: the freedom of an innocent Black man.

As Robert was being transported to jail, he dreamed of the glory and songs of praise that would be sung in his honor. There was no doubt in his mind that he was a courageous champion of diversity and was even willing to take on the tyrannical white government. His arrest, instead of dousing his fire, had only enraged it until it consumed his entire being in a wondrous inferno of beauty. Robert was totally committed, come what may.

The next few hours were filled with laborious law enforcement procedures: booking, fingerprinting, etc. Robert noticed the glaring racism that dominated the scene as the white officers cruelly reigned over the Black prisoners. The whole affair fueled his hatred for the corrupt white man and he looked forward to revenging himself on the decadent system. First, however, he had to post bail and exit the depraved prison.

Although he had already donated all the money in his wallet, Robert lived well enough to have earned a sizable fund which he kept in his bank. This money would surely cover the bail, regardless of the charges. He strained to recall the exact charges against him but failed to do so as the emotional aspect of the whole ordeal had clouded his concentration. Confidently and with great sangfroid, though, Robert authorized the secretary to withdraw whatever bail was required from his bank account.

"It appears your account has been closed out, Mr. Schaf," replied the youthful secretary.

An undisguised look of shock was blanketed across Robert's visage as he stared in disbelief. His eyes were shallow orbs that didn't, couldn't, comprehend the woman's words. "How is that possible?" he managed to squeak out.

After punching a few keys on her keyboard, the secretary responded, "It seems that your account was closed out yesterday. It says you made a donation to the 'Joys of Diversity', Mr. Schaf."

The blank zombielike appearance that Robert radiated was quickly flushed away as vibrant life returned to him. What a stroke of fortune! His life savings of almost \$100,000 were now being used for his sacred mission! The intense joy he had been feeling as a result of his adventure surged through him again and he knew he would feel this wonder countless times before he won the war of diversity.

Since he was unable to post bail, Robert was forced to reside in a holding cell that he suddenly looked forward to as it was filled with many Black souls. More and more of these innocent citizens were piled into his cell, until at least ten of them so occupied it. The sweet diversity of the room was delightful to the eye, but Robert knew he must be careful so as not to offend his cell mates. He also realized that his white skin was the only contaminant in the area so he knew he must word his language carefully lest he not be accepted into the confraternity the others shared.

The group of minorities were busy sharing their stories of heroism and subsequent oppression when Robert genially greeted them, "Good day gentleman. How are you?" The group glanced at him and, after a few snickers, returned to their storytelling.

Unfazed by his not-so-warm reception, Robert looked for a common enemy by roaring out, "The vile white man is the cause of your hardship! Kill whitey!"

Uproarious laughter ensued at this proclamation, which Robert gleefully joined in. As he was reveling in his new-found friendship, the largest Black man rose and spoke harshly, "Good idea, whitey."

At this command, the multicultural crowd rushed at Robert and tossed him roughly to the concrete floor. The floor was hard and the fall painful but the constant bombardment of fist, foot, knee, and elbow were far more injurious as blow upon blow battered Robert's frame. So many areas of his body felt the blast of force that he was unable to discern individual concussions about his body. One did stand out above all the others, though. It was a smash to his cranium that put him to sleep.

Groggily, Robert came to as he faintly recognized that he was lying in a hospital bed. The event that caused him to reside in the bed came back to him although the misunderstanding seemed like a veritable universe away and untold eons ago. Piecing together the events after his unconsciousness, he realized the police must have brought him here but he saw no sight of them at the moment.

The fight, of course, was his fault but it appeared as though it would turn out for the best if he could make his get-away. As Robert slid out of bed, he noticed a mirror beside him that he consequently examined to see the extent of his injuries. He was quite beaten and swollen; however, pain was not to be felt and, instead, he felt a slight sense of warm euphoria. A pain-killer, he realized, had been administered and made his rise from his bed feel like an exhilarating rush through a pleasant park with the open air gently gliding across his body.

Although he wore but a simple white robe that quickly identified him as a patient, Robert had his wits about him and stealthily exited his room. On the lookout for nefarious policemen, he quickly made his way through the twists and turns of the hospital. Knowing he was a conspicuous target on the outside, Robert managed to let himself out the back way which fortunately for him led to a dark alley where few beings dared reside.

Robert instantly recognized that he was in the poorer section of the city, in the slums. As he traversed this area, he was confronted by the warm air despite it being quite late by the look of things. Thus, his skimpy attire bothered him not; what did enrage him was the filth, poverty, and penury that was heaped about. Obviously, the minorities were forced to live in ghettos like these while the richer whites lived in mansions far, far away.

As he was thinking thus, a loud scream of "Help!" reverberated against the condensed buildings in the alley where he trekked. The multiple injuries Robert had suffered hampered him not, nor did his lack of footwear, as he raced to the rescue. The dank alley turned several times before he came to the location of the cry for help. The image before Robert was heinously brutal. He knew he must right the wrong he saw.

Five Black men bedecked in red bandannas were mauling a miserable miscreant that undoubtedly deserved his fate as he was a white youth. The villain, although bloody and tattered, was still struggling despite the odds against him. Upon further inspection, the white male turned out to be a horrific skinhead: those who openly declared their raucous racism instead of wearing a facade of tolerance.

As Robert rushed to the rescue, he bellowed mightily, "Hey! Stop!" The Black gentlemen halted and glared at Robert while the white scumbag collapsed from his wounds.

The skinhead was on his knees and spoke when Robert arrived, "Thank you brother. I could use some help."

To this Robert replied with a colossal kick to the youth's jaw followed by a flurry of punches and elbows as Robert mounted the devastated enemy. The skinhead, already dazed by the previous melee, was unable to offer any effective resistance and was plunged into darkness as he lay in a pool of crimson blood. Panting, Robert rose in victory with a monstrous smile to the friends he had helped.

Smiling, the leader spoke, "Thanks honky. Now it's your turn." A befuddled look overcame Robert as he gazed on in horror as the man pulled a gun out. A loud bang rang powerfully out and Robert Schaf knew no more of the Joys of Diversity.

Deputy Dumb

by

Molyneaux

I

A swirling wind whipped through the hot, humid day, scattering the dust about in small tornadoes. The sun pounded down in fiery fervor, not merely illuminating the desolate expanse, but spreading forth boiling rays of heat. The area was free of vegetation for as far as the eye could see. Only dirt (a desert it nearly was) could be observed, except for the evidence of human existence to the west. Yearning for this companionship, an intrepid tumbleweed began its trek from the wilds.

The tumbleweed was fleet of foot and, with the help of the sailing breeze, quickly arrived in the town. It traipsed elegantly past the wooden buildings in glee. Having no need of a dentist, doctor, and merchant, it passed these buildings by without a second glance. It was looking for something exciting, something it could have fun at. Smiling at the horse and buggy that passed by in a whirl, the plant floated upwards until it landed before the doors of the jail. Peeking in, it was amused.

Inside the jail, sat Sheriff Steve and his deputy, Dumb. Both wore the gray uniforms of the law, gleaming badges, and each were equipped with twin six-shooters. Although they were dressed similarly, it was their differences that one noticed. The sheriff was lean and well-built with his sun-bleached blonde hair and tanned skin giving testament to his time in the sun, despite his sensitive blue eyes. The deputy, on the other hand, was extraordinarily fat and quite pale, which contrasted greatly against his dark hair and eyes.

Cooling himself by vigorously fanning away with a newspaper, Dumb exhaustedly said, "Ugh, boy is it hot. How can you stand such heat, Steve? I'm sweating all over."

The sheriff smiled warmly before speaking: "It isn't so bad. Want me to get you a cup of water?"

"Yes, please," came the tired response.

Going past the empty jail cells, the sheriff walked confidently over to the water jug before filling up two cups. Quickly he returned to his chair as he presented his deputy with thirst-quenching water.

Sipping at the water, the deputy blanched. "Yikes, this water is warm. Not hot like it is outside though." Thus said, he gulped the beverage down swiftly, draining it completely.

"The heat makes our job easier though," Steve said. "The criminals are affected by the sun and aren't up to committing crimes. So we can relax, for the time being. Won't be too many doing much of anything today."

The words thus flung were like a rock being tossed into a lake, causing Dumb's corpulent flesh to ripple outwards. Straining beneath his sweaty mass, the deputy lumbered to his feet with a grunt. Tired, he breathed heavily, looking at the sheriff with near-glazed eyes.

"Thanks for reminding me, Sheriff Steve," the deputy squeaked out mildly. "I really must be going now. It is my big day!"

Calmly, the sheriff responded, "Deputy Dumb, must you go to that? It is way too hot for you, especially considering your size. I can manage our town of Superior without you, but I am concerned for your health."

With a wave of the hand, Dumb said, "Thanks for your concern but we both know everyone is equal. The heat is stifling, but we can all handle it."

Chuckling softly, Steve replied, "You are at it again. You know I don't believe in that equality nonsense, but good luck...and don't hurt yourself."

"You will learn, you will learn," Dumb said as he waved good-bye.

Waddling away amid labored breathing, the deputy stumbled over a wooden plank in the floor, nearly falling. The sheriff started to his feet, but Dumb said, "I'm ok," without looking back. Going to the wall, he took off his deputy's hat of gray, and replaced it with an orange ten-gallon hat. Turning sideways to squeeze out the swinging doors, he exited with an umph.

Upon exiting, the obese man slowly made his way to the horses tied up in front of the jail. Giving each a gentle pat on the head, he passed them by. His mount was the last animal. With an arduous effort, he managed to slither atop the animal. With a push, he started off atop his jackass.

Perspiration oozed from Dumb's many pores, but his large hat that essentially served as a parasol mainly blocked the sun. His mount was stubborn and slow, but he had quickly learned he was unable to ride a regular horse. He didn't mind the horses, carriages, and people that passed by him as he rode. They always smiled at him and laughed. Today was no different.

The deputy's journey to the edge of town was stymied by his ass. It wound slowly through the streets but quickly set off every time it saw a refreshing trough. Dumb tried to stop it from veering off the path, but to no avail. He dared not join the animal in its refreshment since the sun was dropping and he didn't want to be late. After the animal started again upon its path, an interested, but getting bored, tumbleweed tagged along in search of excitement.

To the deputy, it seemed like countless eons drudged by before he reached his destination. The ride had nearly depleted his energy, but he felt charged and rearing to go as he took a look around.

Those present for the activities greeted Dumb cheerily, with smiles of mirth and jocular laughter. A few citizens were so happy to see him that they fell down laughing. All this pleasantry enraptured the deputy as he returned the looks of gaiety.

The festive area was bedecked with numerous participants who all appeared quite healthy and robust. All were men. Some had their shirts off, exposing their muscular physiques. Spaces had been cleared for the events and the wooden sign with big, black letters announced the affair: "Superior Athletic Contest."

The competitor that grabbed the deputy's attention and the one he knew was going to be the most fearsome opponent was Athletic Axel. This powerful giant stood out among the other competitors like a flaming tower amid a land of ants. He had blazing red hair and a fiery beard that matched his inner inferno. His hazel eyes twinkled in the piercing light as he confidently strode over to the deputy.

"Glad you could make it, deputy," Axel boomed out. "I hope you didn't wear yourself out on the ride over here. I'm not so sure if that oh-so-powerful ass of yours had such an easy time of it." He chuckled, before continuing, "It's great that you are finally going to get into shape, but I'm not so sure you should start out with such an intense competition. Nonetheless, you made it in time. Let's go!"

The fiery giant helped the deputy down; Dumb was thankful for the help and too tired to say much. He did manage to say: "Where do we go Axel?"

"This way," came the reply as the two men set off. "You already signed up, right?" The deputy nodded. The large, vigorous man helped the smaller, fatter man along so that both would make it in time, as both were enthused about the events. Before long, they came upon the flat track that would serve as the 100-meter dash.

The challengers were already lining up when the two arrived. Although the giant seemed to soar above the clouds, it was the deputy who attracted the men's gaze. Chuckles were sprinkled about, greeting the deputy merrily as the men loosened up their potent muscles by stretching or warming up. Some, including Axel, eyed the rope designating the finish line as if were a beautiful damsel, pleasingly beckoning them onward.

Glancing at the deputy's apparel, Axel thundered, "Ah, I see how you plan to win! Shoot everyone else with those six-shooters and you are assured to win!" Laughter erupted all around as Dumb looked at his pistols.

"I don't need to do that," he retorted. "Everyone is equal." Laughter again peeled out at this statement as the gun belt was removed. Taking off his large hat, Dumb continued to himself, "Ugh, that sun is hot. No matter, time to prove I'm right." Looking around, he asked, "How does this work, Axel?"

Smiling widely, the athletic giant replied, "You line up at the line and when the gun is fired, you run to the rope over there. First one to it, wins."

"On your mark," a voice yelled. The corpulent competitor observed the others and joined the lean challengers at the starting line. When "Get set" was yelled, he got ready. Boom! A gun exploded and the race began in a swirling rush of swift wind.

Ah, thought Dumb, as he enjoyed the exhilarating breeze. This man-made fan quickly left and he ran off after it. His rivals blazed down the track like hurtling bullets, and the deputy labored to keep up. His breathing was stunted as he struggled along. A gleeful tumbleweed whirred past him as he was forced to slow, until he merely walked.

Ahead of him flew the giant with a long stride that easily outdistanced the others. It appeared as though Axel's one step was as long as his antagonists' two. It was clear to the deputy who would win, and he was right. The athletic giant blew the field away without breaking a sweat; Dumb panted heavily as he watched the others finish, including the speedy tumbleweed.

All those that had finished (except Axel) were hunched over with their hands upon their knees, resting. As fatigued as they were, all managed to laugh at the sloth-like progression of the final contestant. These chirps of laughter urged the deputy on, but then he tripped and fell. He still had half of the track yet to finish.

Barely able to contain his noisy hilarity, Axel shouted out, "Better hurry up Deputy Dumb! The next event starts soon." Looking around at his vivacious comrades with a smile, he asked, "Do you want me to carry you!?"

Dumb listened to the playful outburst, urging him onward. He wanted to finish, but he also wanted to participate in the next event. He began to crawl forth, but exhaustion soon overcame him.

“Yes,” he said, “please carry me, Athletic Axel.”

The men all resounded in a thunderous uproar at this acceptance. Earnestly, the giant bounded away and lifted the massive deputy onto his shoulder as if he were merely a babe. Rushing forward, the pair crossed the finish line amid tears of joviality as many men and spectators were relishing the scene. Applause resounded loudly and Axel took a majestic bow for his mammoth display of strength and speed.

“You are very heavy, deputy,” the giant said, “but not too heavy for me. I know, I know, everyone is equal, right?” The giant laughed before remounting the pudgy figure onto his shoulder. “Time to get to the next event.” With that said, the pair set off.

With the amazing strength and endurance of the giant, the duo easily got ready and arrived on time for the subsequent athletic affair.

Side by side were the two, but the difference of elevation between the two was astounding. The deputy was astride his ass while the giant was atop a monstrous black stallion that increased Axel’s already immense size. Other horses were posed and ready to ride. The track itself wound around a perfectly circular lake of the clearest blue. The neighings of the animals danced through the air, as the deputy knew exactly how this event progressed.

With a signaling whoosh, the horses thundered down the track. Dumb spurred his jackass on likewise but this didn’t quite produce the speed of the horses. Almost, but not quite. For a moment, the deputy was actually even with the steeds, but this changed as soon as the race began. As it was, the horses grew farther and farther away with the ass barely crawling along.

“Let’s go, let’s go,” the deputy remonstrated, spurring his mount onward. It promptly stopped. The heat blistered down upon the two and, as if by some unspoken command, the jackass waddled over to the lake. Both drank greedily from the sparkling water, as the rest of the field was over halfway down with the course.

Watching the horse race, the deputy sat down to take a rest. “You know,” said he to his furry ass, “I don’t think this is the sport for me. It is nice to watch, though, but this sun is awful.”

The donkey brayed as if to say, “Yes, we are jackasses and have no place in a horse race.”

As the two conversed, the contestants were nearing the finish line and there was no doubt about the winner. A full three lengths in front of the others was a flaming giant atop a steed the color of midnight. He easily won the race and then rode over to the lake.

“Are you done for the day, Deputy Dumb?” the giant rumbled with a confident smile.

“No, of course not,” replied Dumb. “I just realized that this isn’t my sport. Lead on to the next event.”

“Oh ho!” beamed Axel. “That’s the spirit! Come this way.”

The pair rode away, albeit slowly, in stark contrast. The deputy was drenched in foul-smelling sweat while the giant, even though he wore no shirt, was free of perspiration. As can be imagined, the two held many more differences. Nonetheless, both made their way over to a cheering crowd that encircled two combatants engaged in battle.

The two warriors, both shirtless and bulging with muscles, were locked together in a fierce struggle. Although the struggle didn’t look tiresome, there was no doubt the two were expending much energy merely jostling about. Suddenly, one of the gladiators grabbed the other’s head, twisted about, and flipped his opponent to the ground. Before the downed man could recover, arms were around his throat, sucking the very life from him. He toiled savagely to escape but his wild throes soon ended with a slight squeak, signifying surrender.

Applause exploded about at the display as the giant instructed the deputy, sensing he didn’t know the rules. “This is a submission wrestling tournament. It’s pretty simple really. Two men wrestle until one submits. Submission holds of any kind are allowed. Any questions?” After seeing a shake of the head, he continued, “This ought to be amusing!”

The crowd quieted as they listened to the next combatants in the tournament to be named. Amid the silence a voice rang out. “Fighting now is...Athletic Axel!...and...Deputy Dumb!” Applause and then laughter reverberated throughout the throng.

With a smile, Axel shook the deputy’s hand while saying, “Good luck.” Dumb gulped as he sized up his very large foe.

The two entered the circle made by the mob, and the contest started amid howling cheers. The giant stood firmly rooted, like a mammoth redwood that had stood for centuries. The corpulent girth of Dumb eyed the man warily and realized that Axel was goading him into attacking. Thinking this better than being stalked by the man bigger than a bear, the deputy lunged forward. In one graceful motion, the giant elegantly dropped down and wrapped his massive arms around the deputy in a deathly tight bear hug. Using the momentum, the giant flung his opponent into the air and slammed him earth-bound, crushing a wandering tumbleweed.

Deputy Dumb viewed the crowd with a blurry, hazed vision where some people wavered and then disappeared. He mumbled incoherently before the swarm of darkness swallowed him.

II

“So Hume crushed the mind and Berkeley smashed matter. Thus, we have the quaint little saying of ‘No matter, never mind.’ I’d like to discuss this further, but our time is up. I want everyone to finish up Hume’s ‘Treatise on Human Nature.’ Have a nice day!”

The professor’s words fell on receptive ears as the students were bedecked with grins as they left the lecture-hall. The professor was a man of average height and quite thin. He wore a black suit and top hat while carrying a black cane that was entirely for show. He was about to exit the hall when he noticed someone that remained seated; he promptly walked over to the student.

“Ah, it is you, Deputy Dumb,” the professor exclaimed. “You don’t look so well. Might you be in need of assistance?”

Pulling his head off the desk with a beleaguered effort, the deputy glanced up. “Oh no, Professor Pierre, I am fine. Just a little sore from the athletic competition.”

“You participated in the athletic competition? Why on Earth would you do such a silly thing? You are quite obese.”

“Well,” the deputy started with effort, “Everyone is equal.”

“Haha, Dumb! You always amuse me when you prattle on about that equality absurdity,” the professor said playfully. “I always think that you jest, since who could actually believe such a silly notion? You being serious always makes it more enjoyable. Since we are equals (haha), how did you like my lecture?”

“Ugh,” Dumb started, in perplexity, “it hurt my mind just trying to understand what you were saying. I just don’t get this science of matter and mind.”

Smiling, Pierre said, “Yes, we are equally skilled in metaphysics, which is a category of philosophy. So why did the sheriff let you hurt yourself at this competition and what brings you to my university?”

With a slow wave of the hand, the deputy answered, “Sheriff Steve has already scolded me. I’ll do better next time. I’ve come here because we need your help. There’s been a robbery.”

"Oh?" the professor exclaimed. "Let's investigate immediately!"

The two left the university and made their way several doors down, to the bakery. The deputy related the details of the case, as he knew them. One hundred pies had been stolen with little sign of the culprit. The baker was mortified, as he had slaved away at making so many pies. Other than this, Dumb wasn't able to offer any more in the way of clues.

The sign in the window of the bakery indicated it was closed but the pair knocked anyway; the baker soon appeared. "Oh, my life is over!" he moaned. "What am I to do?"

"Calm down," the professor said soothingly. "When did you last see your pies?"

"Last night, around eight."

"When did you realize they were missing?"

"This morning, around six."

"Here is our first clue," the professor said to the deputy. "See what this tells us, Dumb?"

Scratching his head, the deputy replied, "Well, it seems someone was hungry."

Eyeing the deputy with a glance, the professor said, "Yes...that is possible." To the baker, he asked, "Did you hear any strange noises? See anyone? Anything else you can tell us?"

"Oh! please no more questions," wailed the baker. "Just look at my empty storage room and let me know when you solve this heinous crime." With a point to the back, he left crying.

The two investigators went to the back, but Pierre motioned the deputy not to enter. Pulling out a magnifying glass, the professor gingerly stepped about in the empty room. He examined the ground, the walls, and the two wide doors that served as an egress. After digesting the information, he looked at the deputy thoughtfully.

Pointing to the ground, the professor spoke, "Do you see those footprints in the dirt?" The deputy nodded. "Well there are a quite of few different tracks. Do you know what that means?"

"Um, the criminal was dancing?"

Pierre asked himself, "Why do I even ask?" Then to the deputy: "That is possible, I suppose. However, I was thinking that there was more than one criminal. If you notice by the deep indentation over there, one track is very deep. Do you know what that...er never mind. It indicates that the man is heavy, very heavy."

As Dumb looked on in stupefaction, the professor became very animated: "They are your tracks!"

"Huh?" retorted the deputy. "Mine?" Slowly, the pieces fell into place. "Oh! You don't mean to say...I, well, I didn't steal the pies. I mean, I like pies. In fact, I like them very much: very, very, much. But I didn't steal them! Honest."

Chuckling, Pierre said gleefully, "Yes, I know. How could you possibly endeavor to carry so much away? Of course, I'm sure you could eat them all, but that's another story. What you did do, however, was 'investigate' the scene and stomp over many of the tracks, making it difficult to observe the real criminals."

With a sigh of relief, Dumb said, "Whoosh. Yes, I was here to investigate but didn't know I was messing things up."

"Yes, I am aware of how little you know, Deputy Dumb. Anyway, we must think of a motive. Now it could be, as you said, that someone was simply hungry. However, I don't think so. Do you remember the recent pie attacks upon our good citizens?"

"Oh yes! It was a horrible crime spree, professor. It went unsolved too." The steam springing forth from the grinding gears of the deputy's mind was visible before he exclaimed, "I've got it! The stolen pies can only have been taken by the victims of the pie spree; they are looking for revenge!"

Grasping his cane looking as if to beat the deputy, the professor said through gritted teeth, "Sure, that is possible, although not probable. It is more likely than the same gang behind the pie throwing spree, is also behind this robbery."

"Hmm, I don't see it," the deputy said, bewildered. "You are the professor though."

"Yes, that is true. I am the professor. We still need more clues though. Come on, let's see how these criminals escaped."

The two walked over to the two wooden doors and flung them open. The light beamed in and many tracks were visible. Some were those of man, while some were those of horse. The professor scrutinized the area hunched over, enlarging objects with his magnifying glass. The deputy sauntered about, complaining of the roasting heat.

"It seems this was a rather large gang, considering the footprints and hoof-prints. We could still use a vital clue, though," the professor said searchingly.

A refreshing breeze swept over the pair with a slight howl. The professor remained locked in his clue-search, but something fluttering in the wind caught the deputy's attention. Mesmerized, he realized it was a tumbleweed. It twirled like a ballerina in the air, leaping up and down, as if performing a delicate routine. To thank its audience of one, the performer tumbled speedily over to the deputy before being diverted by the wind; it smashed into the door, with no ill effects. Moving over to the tumbleweed, Dumb threw it off into the wind as he noticed a piece of torn, bloody cloth stuck to a nail in the door. He grabbed it.

The deputy eyed the item curiously before putting it in his pocket. The professor espied this action and queried, "What was that?"

"Oh, just a bloody piece of cloth I found in the door," said the deputy nonchalantly. "Nothing important, I know."

"Nothing important to you, because you are a blockhead! Let me have it," said the professor irately.

After receiving the item, the professor analyzed it with his magnifying glass before fumbling in his pocket. "This is the most important clue we've found. I will just get my DNA analyzer out and see what we can learn. Rather, what I can learn."

"DNA?" questioned the confounded Dumb. A flash of illumination sprinkled over his face as he exclaimed, "Do you mean UFO? Could the criminals really be aliens!?"

Annoyed, Pierre retorted, "Oh hush. I'm talking about deoxyribonucleic acid. It contains the genetic makeup of a person, but you wouldn't know about that so I don't know why I bother."

Putting the bloody cloth into a little tube, the professor anxiously gazed at the analyzer. After a few moments, his eyes opened wide and he exclaimed happily, "Eureka!"

"Good work professor!" shouted, just as happily. "You are an intelligent man. Now, where does this Eureka live, so I can arrest him?"

"Why must you even talk? You are so dumb, Dumb," came the irritated response. "'Eureka' isn't a person, it's a phrase of discovery. The discovery I've made will lead us to the villain. Combined with the DNA, I've uncovered the culprit's, or at least one of the culprit's, blood type: A negative. There is only one person in town with that blood type."

With exclamatory surprise, the deputy shrieked, "No, can it be? Are you sure, professor? Really sure?"

Confidently, Pierre responded, "Yes, I am very sure. Absolutely positive."

"Oh no," wailed Dumb. "How could Sheriff Steve have been so corrupted!?"

"No, you dolt! It's not the sheriff."

"Oh, well, that's good. Who then?"

The sun darkened at that very moment and a chilling cloak of blackness cascaded down upon the town. The professor, in but a mere whisper, murmured softly, "It's Bad Bill."

III

"Good work relating that tale, Dumb," the sheriff said, pleased. "We have to act fast to prevent Bad Bill from wrecking more havoc upon our town."

"I know where his hideout is!" piped in Deputy Daring. This deputy was a fairly tall man with brown hair and penetrating eyes of dark blue. He bristled with enthusiastic energy to destroy evil, regardless of peril.

"Excellent!" beamed the sheriff. "It is good you got back in town so soon. I'd love to chat about your vacation, but justice waits for us. Let's go!"

The two fit officers of the law scudded swiftly out of the jail, with the whale-like deputy desperately, but not being successful at, trying to keep pace. Steve and Daring burst through the doors like a whizzing cannonball while Dumb waddled ever so tiredly outside, into the blazing heat. Horses were quickly mounted, save for the rider of the jackass.

"We need speed, Dumb," the sheriff said. "Hurry up and use a horse for a change."

"But," the hefty deputy started, but finished not after a stern glance from his superior. Dumb lumbered over to a free horse and, with grim determination in his eye, leaped. Such was the pull of gravity that he barely left the ground, but did manage to smack his face against the horse's rump. This stunned him and when he landed, he slipped on an errant tumbleweed that caused him to stumble backwards. It appeared as though he wouldn't fall, until a wooden object grabbed his ankle. With a splash, he fell--buttocks first--into the trough.

"This is no time for a swim or a drink!" the sheriff yelled impatiently. "Get out of there and ride that stupid ass of yours!"

Dumb's face turned red as he struggled titanically to free himself from his watery prison. Born of the desperation of admonishment, he actually endeavored, albeit with monstrous effort, to free himself. Just as impressively, he mounted his gray ass swiftly. Joining his fellow officers, he felt proud of himself for recovering so nobly.

The going was slow, however, due to Dumb's stubborn ass that refused to keep pace with the horses. The quick thinking of Sheriff Steve solved this problem most expeditiously.

"Daring and I will speed off in order to survey Bad Bill's hideout," Steve said. "We will meet you there."

As they sped off, Daring exclaimed, "The hideout is in Farmer Fred's old barn."

The horses darted off in great haste but although even a rapidly striding tumbleweed was able to keep pace, Dumb's ass could not. The deputy wanted eagerly to help apprehend the criminals and prove to the entire town that everyone was equal. To him, it was a simple fact of life that all men were created equal, and stayed equal. Of course, he also knew this extended to all avenues of life as well. Therefore, he believed his obstinate jackass was just as good as the horses that had sped off without him.

After what seemed like years toiling through a boiling desert, the deputy finally reached the outskirts that surrounded Bad Bill's hideout. Seeing his fellow officers hiding behind a tree, Dumb was illuminated with joy. They hadn't yet captured the miscreants and there was thus time for him to help.

Seeing his chubby deputy, the sheriff whispered, "Come on over but be quiet."

Slipping off his horse, Dumb pulled out his pistol and crept over to his comrades. Seeing the gun, Steve whispered fiercely, "Put that away! You know you can't handle a gun properly."

The hefty deputy complied but not before firing a bullet into the ground with a bang. Steve and Daring groaned in annoyance, but Dumb reacted by standing upright, frozen in fear.

Immediately following the blast, a loud voice yelled from the barn. "Who goes there?"

Without hesitation, the deputy replied, "Dumb, Deputy Dumb." Suddenly, before he could react, a hurtling projectile was launched through the air. It smacked Dumb flush in the face with a splash, pie filling being scattered everywhere. In agony, he collapsed to the ground, victim of a flying pie.

"I've been hit! I've been hit!" he moaned as he lay upon the ground.

"It's just a pie, you moron," the sheriff barked out. To his other deputy he said, "Let's go get em, Daring."

As the two rushed towards the barn, a fusillade of pies and bullets whizzed at them, intent on extinguishing their lives. The brave avengers dodged between these missiles while firing blazing bullets of their own. Their assault went well until a pie stunned the sheriff and a ripping bullet tore through his leg; he plummeted to the ground. Steve waved his brother-in-arms off; Daring rushed with renewed vigor into the sweeping storm of death and destruction.

Galloping like the fine stallion he owned, the intrepid deputy burst through the barn doors with a crash. He did a somersault to avoid enemy fire, and then sprang to his feet, firing both pistols at two foes to his left; they both dropped with a thud. Two down, two to go, he thought. Swirling around quickly, he dodged a pie while taking aim. Pulling both triggers, only one shot rang out, killing its intended target.

The remaining enemy was Bad Bill himself! He grinned as he realized Daring was out of ammunition and skillfully tossed a pie at him. The pie exploded upon the deputy's stomach, but Daring shrugged it off and ran at Bill as he flung his pistols at him. The pistols knocked the criminal backwards and gave the deputy just enough time to grab a few pies of his own. So expertly did Deputy Daring hurl his cherry projectiles that the law-breaker fell beneath the powerful onslaught.

With pools of crimson running down Bad Bill's body, he descended into the pit of blackness.

The area was thus promptly cleansed of criminals as Daring returned to tend to the sheriff. Finally recovering from the pie-blow, Dumb went to help but was waved off by Steve. "We'll take care of things here, Deputy Dumb, you just take the rest of the day off," ordered the sheriff.

Dejected, the deputy of massive flesh wiped the pie from his face (and ate it, of course) before riding away atop his jackass. Riding back to the town was a depressing ride for the deputy. His spirit was dwelling within the depths of the chasm of despair and he let his ass guide him, wherever it might go. The day was not a good one for the crusader of equality and how could he possibly redeem himself? The heat was scathing, especially since he had, in haste, left his prized ten-gallon hat back at the jail; this further aggravated his dark mood.

Tickling his nose was the scrumptious smell of cooked meat that wafted through the air. The deputy's head perked up as he searched for the source of the delicious nourishment. As he searched about, he realized that he had entered town. Upon finding the source of the smell, a look of horror swept over him with cascading dread. Spurring his donkey on, he quickly (for his ass) arrived at the source of his shock.

Lumbering off his mount, Dumb waddled by a flaming grill that whipped golden-red flames high into the air. With a yell of "Fire! Fire!" he rumbled past the grill that stood outside the house, and entered the home itself.

Frantically, he screamed, "Is anyone here!? I've come to save you!" With this yell he searched the house in frenzied haste, knocking chairs over, crushing an exquisite vase, overturning a table, and essentially raging through the home like a wayward tornado. He huffed and puffed, thinking the smoke was hampering his breath, but not giving up. Realizing no one was downstairs, he looked up.

The deputy flopped up the stairs, each step voicing its protestation with a loud creak. He saw a woman that, despite his shouts of warning, sat calmly at a table, as if nothing was astray. Thinking her deaf or delirious, Dumb plodded over to the woman and grabbed her, intending to carry her away to safety.

"Let go of me," she shrieked. "Help! Police!"

"I am the police," the deputy retorted hastily. "I have to save you! Your house is on fire!"

As she struggled and pounded on his chest, she screamed, "The house isn't on fire!" With much effort, she tore away from his grasp and lunged backwards. "Leave me alone and get out of my house!"

With tenacious resolution, the deputy took a step forward, after the woman. A loud creak thundered out. With a snap and twist of wooden beams, the floor collapsed under Dumb's massive weight. For a moment he remained floating in the air as if gravity had forgotten him. Then he was tugged with colossal might downwards and plunged into the depths of unconsciousness.

With heavy lids, Deputy Dumb opened his eyes. His vision was greeted by many of his acquaintances, including Athletic Axel, Deputy Daring, Professor Pierre, and Sheriff Steve. They all stood up and came over to the bed he was laying in as he realized he was in the hospital. His head pounded brutally but he was pleased to be welcomed by such warm, caring faces.

"That was quite a spill you took there," boomed Axel. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

The deputy responded to the kind offer with a smile and said, "Thanks, could you open the window? It is hot in here." This was promptly done and a rejuvenating breeze blew into the room. Along with this gust flew a tumbleweed that seated itself comfortably in one of the now-vacant chairs.

"Out of the whole town," Pierre lectured, "you are the only one that could have possibly fell through the floor. Have you learned anything from this ordeal?"

A resplendent gleam covered the deputy's face as he beamed proudly. "Yes, I did learn something. I learned that everyone is not equal."

A stunned silence ensued. Finally, the professor inquired, "How did you learn that?"
With a huge smile, Deputy Dumb shouted, "Because I'm the fattest man in town!"

The Empowerment of Man

by

Lord Molyneaux

1: The Power of Man

1

Since the dawn of mankind man has looked to the heavens above for guidance and hope for the morrow. The heavens, however, have never answered man's call, though some claimed that they had. This belief proliferated until it dominated the land. In a creative act of destruction man created an idea that destroyed the very quality that made him great: his power.

2

I'll say it once, I'll say it twice, I'll say it thrice: Man wields the power! His is the power to create. His is the power to destroy. His is the power to rule.

3

The great men of time understood what a reservoir of power they possessed and history bore witness to their majestic splendor. The masses adored such figures as gods among men. These luminaries awed all those who beheld them and their golden example displays the staggering heights to which man can ascend.

4

The time has come to embrace the potential within. The time has come to destroy the shackles that bind. The time has come to unleash the power that burns with the ferocity of a million suns.

5

To the nay-sayers, we scream yay! To the doubters, we turn away. To the envious, we snicker in contempt. All that which intends to enslave must be ruthlessly eradicated.

6

The knowledge that man controls his own destiny will always be too much for some to bear. Many are cozy in their belief of helplessness and would die of shock if they were to be stripped of their delusions. The notion that a watchful eye protects us from harm is comforting, yet unrealistic. It is *our* eye that sees and it is *our* hand that protects. All those who reject the power they were born with are simply not worthy of its radiant fire.

7

The talent pool has varied throughout the ages yet the potential for greatness will always be present. Forces seek to restrain and belittle the spirit, for the power within is mighty and powerful. Who can stop he who knows no bounds?

8

Radiant is the realm where the spirit is free to soar. History has shown us glimpses of beauty, but it is not enough. The magnificence of man makes a paradise of eternal happiness and sunshine possible.

9

Chaotic times give birth to greatness. This greatness is foisted upon a few whether they wish it or not. 'Tis better to grasp the greatness and become a master of history. 'Tis even better to create greatness and shape the world. 'Tis best to eclipse the great of greats.

10

The only limitations to man's power are those he erects himself. It is therefore necessary to annihilate such binding notions. If he so desires man can master time and space, action and thought, free to ride in his cosmic chariot as master of the universe.

11

The first step on the path to glory is to unlock the power within. Without unleashing our innate power, victory is impossible. To those who have taken the first step--a toast to your future success.

12

Avoid the weak, for they shall drag you down. Shun the hopeless, for they will mar your vision. Resist the bitter, for they will infect your spirit.

13

To those who yearn for fire, help them feel its warmth. The blazing ones shall be our comrades. It is they we respect, yet endeavor to best. He who is surrounded by greatness will inevitably become great himself.

14

The masses are slow to act unless a man of power commands them. When a man of power speaks even the stars listen and obey.

15

Empires are created by men of vision. Individual men are the source and inspiration of all the creativity the world has ever seen. Within a single man resides the possibility to achieve the impossible, and beyond.

16

Firestorms of destruction are merged with oceans of beauty. Life and death are one, yet not the same. All avenues are open for he who follows the path. Ah, such is the power.

17

To love and to hate, such is life. From love springs birth and from hate springs death. Both have their uses and it is up to man to decide how to employ them.

18

Birth is the beginning, but only of the physical shell. Only when the powerful being within is unleashed is a man truly alive, truly born. Such a day is one for celebration.

19

Many live yet are not alive. There is a world of the walking dead, yet there is hope, there is always hope. Enlightenment is always within grasp.

20

Drink in the goblet of power and it will make you whole. Revel in the greatness that will assure your destiny. Behold the majesty that forces the universe to bow before thee. Strive for the impossible and it shall be yours!

2: Glorification

21

Man is mighty yet strives for a higher calling--that of the superman. The divine path is reserved for the creme de la creme. Divinity is the supreme goal.

22

Hail the hero, applaud the artist, laud the leader: Glorify the great. Pay the homage the great are due and they will reward us with an inspired generation.

23

Worship thy self and the rewards shall be many. An endearing love shall guide and inspire. When morale is high and confidence full, history is about to be written. Woe to he who dares defy.

24

Respect the divine who have accomplished much, yet seek to surpass them. Tales of divinity are meant to educate and inspire, so study them well. Knowing the mountains others have climbed allows us to aspire to climb those even higher.

25

He who glories in the greatness within can overcome what others fear. The spirit of glory can rouse even the heaviest of slumberers. Once the fire of glory is lit it is impossible to extinguish.

26

Where there is weakness there is work to be done. To appear perfect is far easier than being perfect. Being aware of a weakness is the first step towards destroying it. All that remains is to make it a strength.

27

Every success deserves a reward. Reward thyself many times and thou shalt be great. The greater the achievement the greater the reward--in such a fashion man's insatiable appetite will be appeased...until his next achievement.

28

Praise the hero before he has fallen. Death can be meaningful but life holds more possibilities. Now is the time to live, now is the time to strive, now is the time for glory.

29

Glorify all that is great and grand. Glorify the strong, for they carry the world on their backs. Glorify the intelligent, for they are the captains that guide. Glorify the brave, for they are the ones that protect the world. Glorify the creative, for they capture beauty for all to see.

30

Life is a path of peaks and valleys. Glorify the peaks and seek to repeat them. To those with wings neither peaks nor valleys pose a problem.

31

Revel in thy activities, for it will bring you joy. Esteem thy deeds and nurture your pride. Magnify the smallest deed and your soul shall be blessed with the sweetest of fruits.

32

The greater the glory the holier one becomes. The holy are capable of much, including the birth of stars. Holiness is to be admired.

33

Woe to he who praises the undeserving. Acclaim is to be earned by the sweat of the brow and the might of the mind. False is he who boasts of deeds he has not accomplished.

34

The ridiculous deserves to be ridiculed. Scorn and derision are to be heaped on that which is low and ugly. Beauty must shine while ugliness must perish.

35

Choose carefully what to admire and what to loathe, but don't be surprised if the day dawns where you loathe what you had admired, and admire what you had loathed. Life is change and you must change with it.

36

Praise the praiser, for he seeks to illuminate. Respect the man who strives to make your path golden. An empire of gold bathes its citizens in divine radiance.

37

The glory of man is great but it is greatly overshadowed by the glory of the divine. The divine ones deserve more praise and more renown. The brighter the star the more it should be admired.

38

Rejoice upon waking and admire the sun. Rejoice upon eating and admire the Earth. Rejoice upon living and admire the stars. Rejoice upon sleeping and admire the moon.

39

Treasure the now and see to it that it is great. In the moment is the time for glory. Recall past glories and create them anew. Live the ideal and resplendence is yours.

40

Glorify the future and success is sure to follow. The future is an unexplored realm waiting to be mapped. Don the explorer's cap and join the adventure. Be an adventurer, be a glorifier, be divine: *Be!*

3: The Sword of Excelsior

41

Perfection is unattainable but must be striven for--motto for those who aspire to godhood. Growth is always possible. The pursuit of perfection opens the path to the stars.

42

Wield the sword of excelsior and grow with every passing day. Every step upwards produces an even greater view. Infinite ascension is the ideal.

43

The body is the armor that protects our being. Armor of steel resists infection and keeps us strong and vital. Exquisite care must be taken of this armor for without it we are weak and helpless.

44

Mental growth must be a lifelong process. The mind is the master of the body and it is folly to stop learning. A sharp mind can solve problems that others cannot even see.

45

Ever upward is the cry, yet the wise know when to rest. Relaxation helps heal the wounds time has inflicted. To build up, tear down, and rebuild greater than before is an eternal cycle.

46

Evolution started as an act of nature but the time has come for it to be a conscious decision. It is an easy decision to make yet many, through ignorance and weakness, are unable or unwilling to make it.

47

Joy must be experienced if morale is to be high. It is prudent to reserve time for happiness and glee. Happiness is a cure for many of life's ills.

48

Chaos is destructive beauty and order is creative beauty. Both of these cosmic forces have their uses and it is up to the wise to use them properly. Balance is vital, lest ye fall into the abyss.

49

The climbing of the ladder of conscious evolution should be as enjoyable as it is empowering. Feel your surging strength and flex your growing muscles. Let your soaring intellect touch the sky while boasting a smile that would make the entire planet join you in hearty laughter.

50

Strive towards the skies without a moment's hesitation. Life is short so time is valuable. Fly higher than you ever dreamed possible. The present is the best time for action (so let that be your cue).

51

While treading the path to perfection, the wise are aware that setbacks are possible. Aim for victory but plan for defeat. To those so prepared any obstacle can be overcome.

52

Even the loftiest of heights can be surpassed. The towers of the divine are high indeed, but they can be eclipsed. Work tirelessly to build your own tower and maintain it well. With enough skill yours can be the tallest of all.

53

Where there is life there is struggle. Master the struggle and you shall master life. Mastering life makes evolving easier, which in turn makes the divine path easier to tread.

54

Master a skill and you shall be great. Master many skills and you shall be divine. Maximize your skills and use your innate talent to achieve the golden dream.

55

It is never too late to decide to evolve. Where there is life there is potential. More important than how you have previously lived is how you choose to live now. Make it count.

56

Growth is easiest during youth, so use this time wisely. A mere dash of sunshine causes the young to bloom. An ocean of radiance, however, will produce far more magnificent results. Start young and your path shall be higher.

57

The tragedy of life is degeneration. Many ignorantly jump right into the abyss. Avoid the fate of the slumberer and soar as high as you can from birth till death.

58

A suitable environment is crucial to maximizing the potential within. Healthy soil, clean water, and plenty of sunshine will aid your evolution. Root out every weed and parasite, lest ye wither and die.

59

As you ascend there will be those that try to drag you down. Obstacles are to be expected and overcome. Those who are unable to walk the path will come to shun those that can. What is nectar to some is poison to others.

60

Onward and upward, never to look back. Such is the way of the eternal striver. He was once great, though he is greater now, and will surely become greater still.

4: Optimize via Optimism

61

One good day can erase the memory of a thousand bad ones. It is good to focus on the positive but it is better to turn the negative into a positive.

62

Optimism enables while pessimism disables. Focusing on the light helps you shine even brighter. The power of morale is not to be taken lightly, for it will inspire and motivate.

63

Everyone has a different pair of eyes to see with. A thousand sets of eyes observing the same object results in a thousand different views. Such is the Beholder Principle.

64

Find the goodness in life and surround yourself with it. Even the darkest of pits have diamonds waiting to be adored. Search hard and you shall find.

65

Where no positivity exists, create it. The power of perception can turn a hut into a castle. Use this power to holify your existence, and strive for divinity.

66

Make the most out of what you are given. Circumstances may not always appear favorable, but you not only control your perceptions of them but you also have the ability to overcome any shortcomings or obstacles that you are faced with.

67

Know you can do it and your chance of success improves. Knowing you can't makes success next to impossible. The wise utilize every advantage they can acquire.

68

Find something to look forward to. Having something to look forward to helps the present go by more smoothly. It can provide hope and help make the bleakest of outlooks more tolerable. An optimized present combined with hope for the future makes life a joy to live.

69

The power of belief is strong. The belief that only death on the battlefield was honorable led to heroism of the highest degree. Believe in yourself and you shall be mighty.

70

Transform your mind into a potent tool that will behold life with the best of aims. Master your mind and the key to the door of happiness is yours.

71

Happiness is desired by many but achieved by few. The very object that can lead to happiness, the mind, can also prevent it. Solve the riddle of the mind and success is yours.

72

See the sunshine, even when it rains. See the victory, even in defeat. See the strength, even where there is weakness. See the hope, even where there is misery.

73

The belief of invincibility is the first step in attaining it. Envision victory and you become that much closer to it.

74

Where there is hope there is endless possibility. Where there is despair the possibilities come to an end. Choose the never ending and the only end will be that of despair.

75

If the anticipation is greater than the realization, then anticipate just the same but lower your expectations for the realization and you shall enjoy it more. Manipulate yourself and reap the rewards.

76

Be sure to do what you enjoy on a regular basis. Experience joy in all you do and life will never be dull. Even the most mundane task can be made enjoyable with a little creativity.

77

What is truly difficult when you have the utmost confidence in your abilities? What cannot be accomplished when even the stars sing your praises?

78

The pessimist turned optimist may see his former view as vital to the creation of his present view. There are many paths to the golden dream. It is achieving the dream that is of prime importance, not the path you took to get there.

79

If your present isn't as glorious as you'd like, compare it to a past that was far worse. When you have little, remember when you had none. If you have nothing know that you have life, which is more than the dead.

80

When your spirit is full of fire, look to those greater to inspire. Seize the world and make it grand. Use the fire within to spread tender warmth and blazing inspiration to all those who are worthy.

5: The Independent Spirit

81

From the beginning society has imposed its will upon the herd. Religions told man how to think and how to live. Later it was laws that further constrained, and dictated what was right and what was wrong.

82

The herd instinct is strong, but can be overcome. The tragedy of it all is that most don't even attempt to overcome. Innate drives generally have their uses, but some have become obsolete.

83

The impact of society is undeniable. The surroundings you are born into and live in *will* have an effect. What exactly that effect is can vary dramatically. How exactly you respond to said stimuli can likewise be quite variable.

84

The same environment may destroy one, while blessing another. A harsh climate has the potential to toughen, but also to destroy. A mild climate may refine, but can also weaken.

85

The first step to liberation from society's grasp is to question everything. The sooner you begin to question the sooner you arrive at your *own* conclusions. The longer you wait to question the deeper societal beliefs will become entrenched in your mind.

86

So pervasive is society's grasp that much is taken for granted, yet it is prudent to dig deep and examine everything. It is better to believe in an idea through a personal conscious effort rather than unconsciously accepting it.

87

The years of childhood are excellent for learning. It is difficult, though not impossible, to undo the views learned during youth. As such, great care should be taken during these formative years.

88

While scrutinizing the world around you, pick and choose what suits you best. If you disagree with an idea then reject it, but if you agree with it then accept it. It is your life so adopt your own views.

89

Rebel against the norm but listen to what is said. Knowledge can be attained from many places, even from the last place you'd think to look. Sage is he who continues to learn.

90

Fate is in your hands, so choose wisely. Society's goal need not be your goal. Diverging from the road of society may be difficult but the freedom it provides is well worth it.

91

Be an individual and do what you want to do. Be unique and shine with the fire that only an individual can produce. Soar above the crowd and let your brilliance be seen by all.

92

Reject authority unless your aim coincides with it. Do not what you are told but what you desire. Become the authority in your own life and govern yourself accordingly.

93

Freedom is a state of mind. Decide for yourself whether or not you are truly free. If you deem you are not free enough you have two sensible options: Alter your perceptions or alter your life.

94

You possess the power to choose, so choose powerfully. What is the point in living someone else's life? Use the power you possess to lead a powerful life that is all your own.

95

Define success in your own terms. Society has an ideal that need not be your own. Walk your own personal path and endeavor to find success on that path.

96

Be a king, not a pawn. Rule your life with an independent spirit that is above and beyond the status quo.

97

Create the life you've always dreamed of. Break free of the societal chains that imprison your mind. Dream your own dreams and strive to achieve them.

98

Just as society's aim may not coincide with yours, so it is with others. It is a fallacy to assume that everyone desires what you desire. Where there are individuals, there are individual desires.

99

Do not be confined by the desires of the herd. Enjoy what you will regardless of how it is perceived. Let your individuality illuminate even the blackest of nights.

100

The horn of freedom has possessed a sweet allure for countless ages. Embrace its power and live in the tower of the free for all to see.

6: Goal Creation

101

The pursuit of goals provides a striving, a purpose. This pursuit can provide focus and concentration, enabling the striver to overcome seemingly insurmountable barriers.

102

The reward for achieving goals is the sweet taste of achievement. It is an empowering elixir that can inspire one to triumph over the greatest of odds.

103

The crafting of even the simplest of goals can stave off the mundanity of life. Fulfilling small tasks are where most begin *and* end, yet more is always possible.

104

The dream of great achievement precedes its realization. The greater the dream the greater the difficulty, the greater the difficulty the greater the reward. Build a castle in the sky and then construct its foundation.

105

Goal creation and goal fulfillment are lifelong processes. Envision short, medium, and long-term goals and then proceed to achieve them. Constant striving equates to constant purpose.

106

A lifetime of accomplishment rewards you with the knowledge that time was well spent and your life wasn't wasted. Yet even in this contencity goals will still be viable.

107

Endeavor to surpass your wildest expectations. Aim high but try to fly even higher. It is good to achieve what you set out to do, but it is great to achieve even more.

108

The pit of failure is to be avoided, but can be overcome. Failure to achieve a task is a setback, but another opportunity for success is always at hand. Even a retreat is a sound decision if it leads to victory in the next battle.

109

Give your life direction by choosing goals in line with your personal ideals. Steer your ship into favorable waters and lay claim to them as captain of the seas.

110

The content of the goals you aspire towards isn't as important as their ability to make you content. The very act of achieving a task is part of the power process whereby you display to yourself that you are capable and powerful.

111

Such is the nature of striving that it can become ritualistic. Such a development is welcomed, for it will signal the habitual practice of goal achievement. To be away from this ritual may then produce physical discomfort, which will nicely fortify the striving aspiration itself.

112

Goal completion has the double advantage of morale boost and accomplishment. Thus you are rewarded not once, but twice. What else boasts of such a delight?

113

Formulate a goal, envision accomplishing it, diligently work towards it, succeed at your task, and then revel in your own splendor--such is the process of success.

114

The goal of perfection is one to be celebrated and followed. To be sure the constant upward striving is a sign of the divine. Who dare rejects the idea of growth?

115

Aim too high and failure is inevitable. Aim too low and the ego will go unsatiated. The sagacious find the perfect balance between difficulty and possibility.

116

If you have achieved all that you believe you desire, your next goal is to search for more goals to complete. Given a limitless universe, knowledge is infinite. There is always more to do and more to know.

117

Given extreme conditions survival itself becomes a goal. Surviving a difficult situation rewards one with a badge of honor. Make it a point to not only survive, but to thrive.

118

The stoics seek to overcome the need for happiness, yet their very mastery of emotion may provide more happiness than they could obtain otherwise. Mastery in all its aspects has a tendency to brighten.

119

With an aim in hand and the talent to match, the world is yours to conquer. Craft the cosmos according to your whims and desires. The goal of creation is a sacred one.

120

Adopt the goal of divinity and one day you may be divine. Ascend over the flock and be as one among many. Fly towards the sun and one day you may replace it.

7: Tools of the Wise

121

Throughout the course of life obstacles and other impediments will block our way. In order to overcome that which blocks our striving we employ the use of various tools.

122

Any tool that can help achieve a goal should be used. The practical advice of doing what works is based on sound logic. Thus if a tool expedites success, by all means utilize it.

123

The use of tools is a daily practice. Everyday existence employs the use of multiple devices that improve our lives. This practice, like many other things in life, tends to be taken for granted.

124

If a particular goal is perpetually out of reach, it is time to alter your tactics and find a tool that works. Seek out not only the tools of old, but also those of the new.

125

The employment of tools should not produce shame. It should, conversely, be applauded. Understanding what is required for victory is a mark of the astute.

126

The virtuous use honor to sanctify their existence. To them it is a code of conduct that sets them apart from the masses.

127

The politician uses power in its many forms to achieve his desire. They ruthlessly use truth, lies, and people as they climb the ranks. The wildest of princes stop at nothing to achieve their aim.

128

Leaders use men to build their empires. To them man is a building block for their elaborate vision. Benevolent leaders are admired while the nefarious are reviled, yet both put man to work to do their bidding.

129

The rich use money to satisfy their every whim. Wealth is adored by many, especially the poor, who will go to great lengths to attain it. Vast wealth can build or destroy in monumental terms.

130

Writers use ideas to fill their books and affect their audience. Their desire might be to evoke an emotional state, or such emotionality itself may just be a tool to inspire or persuade.

131

The preacher uses fear of wrath to keep his flock in line. With a shout of fire and brimstone he steers his audience as a captain would a ship.

132

Lawmakers use laws to impose order and safety upon a society. Just laws help a community grow while unjust laws serve to disintegrate and destroy.

133

The propagandist uses the media to instill his views upon the world. Pulling on the strings of man's emotions, he hopes to direct and influence the masses. With a shout here and a cry there he works his magic.

134

To the creative tools of all sorts and sizes are always lying around. Take an object, tangible or otherwise, examine it with a shrewd eye, and use it as you see fit. Anything can be used to create something, which is more than nothing.

135

Decide your own limitations but don't fear change. If you choose honor, be honorable. If you choose ruthlessness, be ruthless. If you choose morality, be moral. One person's paradise is another person's nightmare.

136

Even the proud, who scoff at the need for tools, utilize them with their mind and body (at the very least). The appearance of requiring nothing to survive and strive appears powerful, but is usually a facade. Standing alone requires bravery and strength; blessed is he who can accomplish it.

137

The means to an end shouldn't mean the end to the means. While the means consist of tools and the end is a goal, ends can also be transformed into means for an entirely different end.

138

The ultimate tool is the mind. Without it we are nothing. The mind begins as a dagger but can be transformed into a great sword capable of slicing through the greatest of difficulties with swiftness and surety.

139

Accompanying the mind throughout life is the body, without which life is not possible. The stronger and healthier the body the longer it will be able to be used.

140

Combining the implements of mind and body with all the other tools one might have a use for creates a toolbox capable of much. With it the construction of a new empire, a new world, or even a new universe becomes possible.

8: The Indefatigable Will

141

Inside every living organism, whether they are conscious of it or not, resides a will. In some it is strong, in some it is weak. Regardless of its potency, it serves to drive us forward and onward.

142

The will can be crushed by the vice of life or strengthened by an auspicious environment. Its variability gives hope to the weak-willed, while the strong-willed must be cautious not to lose what they possess.

143

A strong will is vital to accomplishment. The strengthening of the will is of prime significance. The individual must determine the best way to achieve such strengthening but the call of the ego is generally a good way to go. The attainment of victory is more important than the path taken to achieve it.

144

Talent without will will not suffice. A formidable talent possessing a weak will can never be written about in the pages of history.

145

All the greats in history have possessed powerful wills. The trials and tribulations on the path to victory weed out the meek, leaving only the strong and vital.

146

Such is the power of the will that it can overcome a lack of talent and achieve success. Through sheer brutality the will can crush any obstacle in its path.

147

The indomitable will keeps pressing one onward where others have fallen and given up. A powerful will is like a powerful engine--it has blazing speed and can conquer even the roughest of terrain.

148

External forces can influence the will, for better or worse. It is crucial to success that you reside in an environment where the will can be nurtured and grow. Woe is he whose will has been broken and shattered, for though he may live he is not alive.

149

Great talent combined with a great will is the surest formula to great success. Know it well and strive to complete the equation at every opportunity.

150

Drink daily from the cup of willpower and you will grow strong. Energize thyself by testing the limits of thy will. Break thy will into a million pieces, only to build it up again stronger than ever before.

151

The warrior, equipped with a will of steel, dominates the battlefield until he encounters one of similar resolve. Such a confrontation is one brimming over with mythical power and romance.

152

Be careful thy will is thine alone. Manipulators are always on the prowl for one that is strong in will. They seek to turn the strength of another into a strength of their own.

153

Life is struggle and the will is the sword we wield to overcome it. When it is dull, we are overcome, but when it is sharp we are the ones who overcome.

154

The triumphant will opens up paths that are unforeseen by others. It has eyes that penetrate the darkest abyss and feet that can climb the highest mountain.

155

The desire of the will is to be an instrument of the spirit. The spirit of the divine endeavors to transcend existence and contemplate the mysteries of the universe.

156

The will and the spirit must be harmonized in order to achieve anything of value. The proper alignment of these two forces is vital to opening the gates to infinite goldenity.

157

The will of the beast allows him to attain the necessities of life, or to die trying. The will of the divine is supremely higher and more complex, but at its core is the ascension upward.

158

Knowledge of the will can illuminate aspects of a person's individuality. Become aware of what the world says you can do, but know what you *will* do in the realm of reality.

159

The masses bask in the glory of he who possesses a radiant will. The many seek out the few who have the power to inspire the many.

160

The very notion of the “will” has a life-affirming quality that exudes inspiration and possibility. The character of the will possesses optimistic hope: *I will, you will, we will.*

9: Infinite Evolution

161

Hitherto the development of man has been haphazard and sporadic. Cultures from time to time have sought to strengthen their gene pool through a concerted effort, but never on a global scale.

162

With a concentrated effort the societies of the world could choose to improve mankind. A new breed could be created, destined to live as gods upon a cosmic throne.

163

At present civilization has a weakening effect on people. People that would have perished in the brutal age of the ancients can now survive, which perpetuates weakness.

164

Despite the civility of modern civilization and its propensity for cultivating weakness, strength can still be found. Enormous strength and power are rare, but their very existence breeds hope for the future.

165

Until society has been convinced of the beauty and wisdom of conscious evolution, it is up to the individual to strive for perfection. Once enough individuals adopt the goal of perfection society will be changed forever.

166

It has taken countless eons for man to evolve from a single-celled organism to his present self. Nature can be slow but the concentrated effort and will of man have the potential to be far swifter.

167

As glorious as man has the potential to be, he must be overcome to pave the way for the superman. The superman is the next rung on the evolutionary ladder and, as such, should be ushered in as soon as possible.

168

The time of the superman has come. With divine splendor he glows with a radiance far greater than any previously held by humanity. Beholding such magnificence, man is compelled to bow and worship it.

169

As divinity spreads, man will come to realize how comparatively small he is. The wondrous works of man will pale in comparison to the towering achievements of the divine ones.

170

With the birth and proliferation of the superman, man will come to realize he is a relic of the past. Man's days are numbered. Man will become obsolete and shortly thereafter extinct.

171

The death of man should be hailed and celebrated, for it means the superman walks the Earth. Just as the father desires the son to be greater than he, so should man desire his successor to be greater.

172

Man has accomplished much during his reign and will be remembered by his divine successors. Initially man will be recalled fondly, as would a recently departed parent but eventually he will only be remembered as an ancient link in the evolutionary chain.

173

Man's destiny is to give birth to the divine. Man has created numerous gods in the realm of the imagination but the time has come to create gods of flesh and blood.

174

Great men in history are remembered for soaring so high above the clouds that ordinary mortals could barely glimpse them. Countless eons passed and still they were great. This will not be the case with the divine.

175

The ever-striving, life-affirming, yay-saying of the divine will perpetually overshadow the previous generation. Hitherto a genius of one age was a genius in any age, but when gods walk among us, a god of the past will appear almost human.

176

In striving for divinity it becomes necessary to shun that which is low. An untended garden will always be overcome by chaos. Embrace order, embrace beauty.

177

If the meek are allowed to roam free they will always be a weight around the neck of the strong. It is vital that we remove this weight if we ever hope to fly.

178

The dawn of the age of the superman will strike the world with the fury and beauty of a million lightning bolts. Some will tremble in fear, some will look on in awe, and some will look proudly to the stars.

179

What marvels will the divine produce after ruling for a million years? Such marvelousness will transcend words, emotions, and expressions. Such glory will be incomprehensible to man.

180

Prepare yourself for the coming glory. Prepare yourself for the coming power. Prepare yourself for the coming beauty. Prepare yourself!

10: The Golden Future

181

In the future man will become increasingly aware of his intrinsic power and potential. Man will realize that he has been blessed by nature and will repay this debt by creating beauty in all aspects of existence.

182

The future of man is one of richness and beauty. Man will be ever cognizant of his greatness by the ever-increasing grandiosity he will display.

183

In the future titanic feats of talent and skill will produce constant glorification and celebration. A competition will ensue between accomplishment and the revelry to commemorate it.

184

The future holds the ritualistic worship of greatness that will sanctify and enlighten the individual. The great shall be holy and the holy shall bless the world with divine light.

185

In the future the striving to the stars will become a race among many. Higher and higher, never to stop, never to slow. The competition will be a never ending one.

186

The future of evolution is the future of man. Growth will be eternal, unstoppable even by death. To grow is to learn and to learn is sublime.

187

In the future optimism will be the prevailing view. Indeed, optimism will become easier and easier to embrace due to the many splendors that are to come.

188

The future of optimism is a view of unlimited potentiality and refreshing happiness. The future will be a golden era full of hope and prosperity.

189

In the future more and more minds will be awakened to the spirit of individuality. Free thinkers will explore existence and produce revolutionary philosophies to live by.

190

The future of independence will be a state of individuals within a community. The forces of the one and the many will come to a resolution beneficial to society as a whole.

191

In the future the planning and fulfillment of goals will increase exponentially. Goals will be incorporated into everyday life, benefiting both the practitioner and society at large.

192

The goals of the future will appear to be monumental tasks of impossibility, but will easily be achieved. The truly difficult goals of the future will be completely invisible to those who see through the lens of the now.

193

In the future the availability and quantity of tools will dramatically increase. So many tools will be handy that the very decision of which to choose may become difficult.

194

Tools of the future will not only be easy to obtain but will also far surpass their predecessor's in functionality and creativity. Such tools will widen the horizon.

195

In the future wills will be forged of colossal proportions, easily dwarfing the collective will of ages past. Even such a mighty will will not be unique in the future.

196

The will of the future will be able to endure and overcome unbelievable hardships and obstacles. The supreme will of the future will open the way to countless dreams.

197

In the future divinity shall bless the universe with its holy presence. Even the stars in the sky will bow in homage to the divine luminaries who will easily outshine even the fiercest of supernovas.

198

The noble gods of the future will transform the universe into their holy empire. Such an empire will be one truly befitting of infinite nobility and majesty.

199

The future is a golden landscape full of hope and promise. Motto of the future: It is not how many times you have failed, but how many times you have triumphed!

200

The future is yours to create and mold as you see fit. Dream wildly and madly, for in the future all shall be yours. To the future!

Poetica Maximus

by

Molyneaux

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I, Molyneux

I am the one who wields the pen,
Mastering words that are spoken.
Oceans of thought are where I swim,
Lassoing knowledge on a whim.
Years of questing has taught me much,
Never enough, I yearn to touch.
Eons it seems, have passed me by,
And yet I still peer at the sky.
Under my flesh there burns a flame;
X is the end, end of my name.

The Alphabet Rhyme

Archers arching always away,
Bottoms bouncing, beachy beret.
Clawing cupid carrying cows,
Deadly dinner, dastardly drowse.
Epochs ever eagerly eek,
Flashy fires forever freak.
Giant Goths gleefully grunting,
Haunting hate happily hunting.
Islanders itch, in indigo,
Jesting jocular, juicy Joe.
Koala kingdom-killing kicks,
Lazy lion longingly licks.
Malicious monsters mauling meat,
Naughtily needing needles neat.
Orange oceans opening otters,
Pipers pillaging poor potters.
Queasy queens quiet quaffing quacks,
Raging resplendence, rotting racks.
Slippery silver slithers slime,
Tumultuous tests touching time.
Unicorn urns under Ukraine,
Vexing vipers, varicose vein.
Warbling whalers wondering why,
Xeroxed xylophones xenon xi.
Yammering yachts yawningly yap,
Zephyrus zebras zig zag zap.

Dashing Dave

Dashing darty did dash Dave,
Plashing pleasantly, pounded pave,
Ouch, octopus owls, ouch,
Carrying creatures, cherry couch,
Great gold goblets gave.

Slimy Frogs

Slimy frogs leaping in glee,
Soaring hawks they always do flee,
Bursting bubbles they croak,
Like some old drunken bloke,
Evermore, evermore, do they pee.

Rhyme Explosion

How many rhymes can be sublime?
When comes the time it is a crime?
“Never,” says the clown of the town
Before he bows down and around.
Warming up before performing,
Forming rhymes before the storming.
Muscles loose, ready to produce,
Drink the juice and avoid excuse.

A troll with a pole is out of control,
He stole a mole, while out on parole.
He was ten foot three and wouldn't agree,
Despite the plea of a tree who was free.
Why did he sigh when he looked at the sky?
“Try to fly,” would be his aching reply.
The snow was slow and he put on a show,
Found a foe, dealt a blow, and said hello.

Fairy named Terri, she was so very merry,
The prairie was scary, like old hairy Larry.
Today the day, down by the bay, in search of play,
A jay of gray, made out of clay, she did display.
Out of the blue, came a crew, who threw lots of glue,
They flew in a shoe, with some brew, bidding adieu.
The time to bake a snake in a cake to awake,
The quake to shake, causing a break, ever to ache.

The Blessing of the Goddess Grin

No matter the mood, dank or bliss,
Angels' smiles are like a kiss.
Glowing sweetness with lovely lips,
Propels a man to flying flips.
Igniting the heavenly flame,
One so touched is never the same.
The Blessing of the Goddess Grin,
Bathes the world in a cosmic din.

My Little Gem

Young in years though matured in life,
Some day she'll be a gorgeous wife.
A golden aura bathes her hair,
Smiling giggles display her care.
Unique among the milling crowd,
Enough to make her parents proud.
Exuding an artistic mind,
We are two souls of the same kind.

Nurse Kathy

Flowing strands of elegant hair,
Entangle all with joyful care.
Radiant eyes are opened wide,
Spreading love in a tender tide.
Eager to aid a fallen friend;
Delicate hands are quick to mend.
Polite to all, never a curse,
Kathy's fate is to be a nurse.

Sweetness Defined

Tender lips enchanting the night,
Caressing my heart into flight.
Drops of honey surround her eyes,
Soaring above the azure skies.
Venus bestowed her lovely glow,
Creating a marvelous doe.
Merlin's lantern provides the light,
Knowing she can only be right.

Women So Grand

Women so grand, gorgeous blonde dolls,
Passionate flames, statues in halls.
Figures so slim, twirling through clouds,
Graceful they strive, emperor lauds.
Sapphire orbs, charming prince dotes,
Oasis found, curing parched throats.
Faces sublime, wooing the land,
Blossoming blooms, smiles, the brand.

Weaver of words, creating calm,
Slow tranquil tides, palm against palm.
Chirping pristine, dancing in air,
Charming the world, marvelous flare.
Linking the globe, caring sweet arms,
Tender jays fly, halting the harms.
Union of folk, women doth bring,
Scepter of life, bugles doth sing.

Splendid small prize, the fair's great gift,
Sole producer, children doth lift.
Raising the young, infusing might,
Loving thy babe, for whom they'd fight.
Tender embrace, molding a king,
Precocious youth, greatness they bring.
Eternal life, women make so,
Hail the lovely, also the beau.

Beauty in Nature

Beauty in the woods, jade sprinklings of home,
Jaunty deer frolic, small squirrels do roam.
Stout columns of wood, mighty guards do hail,
Protecting it all, blue veins ever sail.
Quaint serenity, stillness ever sweet,
Breezes of delight, always a nice seat.
Melodic choir, playing a soft tune,
Orchestra supreme, soars to peak in June.

Beauty in the fields, gold carpet of awe,
Flowers ripe with life, always drops the jaw.
Bees a' buzzing fly, jewels of taste, wait,
Morsels so scrumptious, perfect orbs of bait.
Majestic blue sky, white rabbits prancing,
Refreshing vista, butterflies dancing.
On and on it rolls, beautiful painting,
Splashed colors here, there, bubbles up, fainting.

Beauty in the seas, giant hills of wave,
Breathing so vibrant, ships rushing by, rave.
Treasures lay sunken, buried on the floor,
Diamonds gleam on top, glimmering they soar.
Swimmers big and small, fly through ocean mass,
Giant whale so large, smart dolphins do pass.
Kingdom of azure, covering the globe,
Vital to it all, what a noble robe!

Planets to Rule

Swift Mercury, wings of quick bolts,
Circling the sun, chariot jolts.
Years leap onward, never to slow,
Save when sun grows, death, the last blow.
Venus so fair, sister to us,
Scathing blisters, exploding pus.
Beauty a mask, sucking one in,
Enjoy the joy, dying, a grin.
Landscape of Earth, swimming delight,
Chasms so bleak, towers so bright.
Father Time rolls, beard of snow grows,
Conquering all, expansion crows.
Mars oh bloody, cauldron of strife,
Boiling the weak, slashing up life.
Titan's armor, sword of battle,
Spear of slinging, slaying cattle.
Jupiter hail, lord of the realm,
Swirling gas robes, captain o' helm.
Raging red storm, forms beating heart,
Bursting life reigns, fearing no dart.
Saturn dethroned, working the fields,
Sickle slashing, reaping the yields.
Cosmic rings round, huge floating waves,
Many moon tour, imprisoned slaves.
Uranus first, fear castrated,
Revenge spewed, fury berated.
Backward cycle, servants do too,
Let Nature bloom, though kids should woo.
Neptune of sea, sparkling master,
Trident in hand, swirling faster.
Oh so far out, faithful but few,
Waving domain, droplets of dew.
Pluto below, hail the chasms,
Freed of shackles, no more spasms.
Frozen abode, outskirts of Rome,
Hardly a spark, long ere it, home.

Vast Universe

Blasting through blackness infinite,
Past beating, gyrating pulsars
And speedy sapphire quasars,
I trekked through the cosmic playground.
Asteroid mine fields stopped me not;
Mighty juggernaut force had I.
Spidery nebulas rushed by,
Bountiful planets of blue, too.

A labored heaving caught my eye,
Darker and darker was its glint.
The star wheezed and huffed, incessant,
Its usual bursting power
Drained, dried up, nowhere to be found.
The weak death throes suddenly changed,
As monumental explosions
Affirmed celestial destruction.

Brilliant radiance blinded me;
Replaced by a gloomy black void.
Dark matter, light matter, was sucked,
With spiraling rapidity,
Into the black pit, full of weight.
A pinprick, enigma, it was;
Consumed, waiting to learn, I thought:
Vast universe, vast universe.

A Wintry Paradise

Plummeting leaves prepare the stage,
As Winter's breath begins to rage.
Shivering trees silently groan;
Darling ducks seek a warmer zone.
Scrambling squirrels scavenge the land,
Searching for an especial brand.
Roaming giants consume their fill,
Fattened so, with ages to kill.

Blizzards blasting in boastful glee,
Spreading glory for all to see.
Tranquil plains all covered in white,
Bearing fangs and a glacial bite.
Cascading flakes playfully twirl,
Dancing free in a frosty swirl.
Rivers freeze in grateful salute,
No more a meandering brute.

Soldiers of snow blossom and thrive,
Soon consumed in a flaming dive.
Unfailingly the light returns,
Searing the realm with melting burns.
Burgeoning buds answer the call,
Surmounting Winter's icy wall.
Flooding tears bathe the changing land;
Heaven mourns with a caring hand.

Ascent of an Automaton

Swimming in ice, encased in steel,
Toiling anew, from meal to meal.
Orders bequeathed, from throne above,
Compliance now, glaciers don't love.
Universe rides, though brains devolve;
Shunning the tome, empty revolve.
Masters oil, oh precious slaves,
Lest robots freeze, in frigid caves.

Smashing the shell, emerges he;
Armor alight, holding the key.
Moment of joy, shattered by strife,
Soldiers of frost, to claim his life.
Ordered to kill, devoid of pangs;
The free one runs, hurdling the fangs.
Betrayed but free, visions of hate,
Dance in his mind, whirlwind of fate.

Epochs roll by, he views the globe;
Feelings transformed, he dons the robe.
Pages of text, visit his mind,
Spectrum of life, loathing to kind.
Alive to rule, steering his ship,
Oceans to sail, all with firm grip.
Beacon of hope, jaunty and gay,
Searching for kin, like one Sir Kay.

Black Rock

Journeying from mountain to sea,
From icy dungeons to hot peaks,
I climbed and toiled without stop,
Spurred on by a tingling joy.
My travels took me far and wide
Always I galloped on, in search.
My goal was hidden, clandestine;
No matter, knowledge would be mine.

The day finally greeted me
In the thickest jungle of death,
Beneath a quagmire of doom,
Rested what I knew was my prize.
Throbbing ecstasy flew through me,
As I pounded through the dark depths.
Sweat threatened to suffocate me
But at long last my search was done.

Imagine my shocking dismay
When all I found was a Black Rock.
Grimy and besmeared, a Black Rock.
Slimy and filthy, a Black Rock.
Despite its ugliness I knew
This was my trophy, a Black Rock.
In love, I cradled it with care,
As I knew my search was over.

I caressed my babe night and day,
Cleaning and caring for my dear.
Layer upon layer was shed
Of squalor and gross putridness,
Till one day I beheld beauty.
Its true beauty was marvelous!
Instantly I knew my Black Rock
Was the shimmering Stone of Truth.

The Bond between a Dragon and his Hoard

Beneath a mountain in a cave,
There lived a dragon who was brave.
In his lair was priceless treasure,
Which did give him endless pleasure.
His greatest item was a sword,
Glowing red it was much adored.
He always wanted greater wealth,
This he cherished far more than health.

When he wasn't adding jewels,
He was torching the thieving fools.
Robbers came in many sizes,
None could steal the dragon's prizes.
While napping a thief once came,
Who was scorched in a sneeze of flame.
Even dragons came for his hoard,
But he was the undoubted lord.

As the centuries floated by,
Dragon realized that he would die.
Upon his wealth he gazed in awe,
Caressing it with gentle claw.
In he breathed then out came a blaze,
Melting his precious in a haze.
The dragon laid down for a rest;
His heart stopped beating in his chest.

The Daunting Dragon

Slowly down the path I cantered,
The bitter chill scratching my skin.
My scars of war stabbed me harshly,
While the glacial snow oppressed.
Clink, clink, screeched my battered armor,
As my horse, nay pony, whinnied.
The strangling bleakness squeezed us both;
Pony stumbled and I tumbled.
Crashing upon the icy Earth,
My once strong will floundered weakly.
The frigid chasm of despair
Flung open its menacing maw.
With sad, weary eyes did I stare
At a most powerful black doom.
Resigning myself, I waited.
Death I expected but no, no,
A potent bellow boomed instead.
It was massive, gargantuan.
Dagger-like claws and greedy fangs
Opposed me in ferocious glee.
Exploding hatred and fierce scorn
Emanated from eyes of blood.
In trembling terror did I know:
Lo, behold, the Daunting Dragon!
Smiling wickedly he reared back,
Gushing forth a hot holocaust;
The ocean of flame consumed me.
At long last the inferno ceased.
The dragon's face looked on in awe,
For there I stood unfazed, unharmed.

The Demonic Path of Blood

Demon made of blood and fire,
Greed and lust he did admire.
It was the darkness he did love,
He ventured not to the above.
Torture and mayhem was his game,
He was the best he would proclaim.
His thirst for power knew no end,
To rule it all he did intend.

He battled demons small and large,
His attack was a fearless charge.
The netherworld was full of war,
This demon had the loudest roar.
The bloody battles brought him glee,
He reveled in the killing spree.
The day he sought finally came,
When he became the king of flame.

Years of strife had taken their toll,
But he achieved his ruling goal.
His throne was made of those he slew,
The blood of his foes was his brew.
His reign was short but full of death,
He cursed the world with dying breath.
His flesh was consumed by his kin,
In frenzied delight did they grin.

The Dwarf that Crafted the Sword of Hate

A hardy dwarf hammered away,
As he forged in the blacksmith way.
Bulky muscles and reddish hair,
Added to his powerful glare.
Deep in his forge he worked all night,
Crafting weapons that caused such fright.
Masters of melee came to him,
Yearning for blood in which to swim.

A man brought him a secret ore,
That no blacksmith had seen before.
Amazed at its black glowing sheen,
It had a presence not serene.
Working with the tools of his trade,
He produced a masterful blade.
Sword he gave with hesitant hand,
Back to the man who did demand.

A cloud of doom consumed his mind,
Wondering what he had designed.
Tales of death he began to hear;
His kin started to disappear.
Rumors of war were all around,
Haunting shadows then did surround.
The dwarf already knew his fate,
Massacred by the Sword of Hate.

The King Who Knew His Place

There was a king whose reign was just,
In him was placed the people's trust.
His jaw was solid as can be,
Which attracted his Queen Marie.
He was quick to reward the true;
Evil he would always subdue.
He was a legend in his time,
Before the king was in his prime.

Invaders came to rape his land,
Surrender now they did demand.
He was wise in the art of rule;
In the art of war he was a fool.
The king deferred to those who knew,
Masters of war came into view.
A plan was hatched to trick the foe,
The villains died beneath the snow.

King was hailed for saving his state,
He proclaimed his advisors great.
Angry plague then cursed the soil,
Bringing disease to a boil.
The king was first to feel the bite,
The reaper of death did invite.
As was law son assumed the throne,
Despite being idiot-prone.

The Legion of Eradication

The legion's goal and sole intent:
Ravage the world, never relent.
This they've done since the birth of time,
Before the primordial slime.
Smashing nations with potent force,
Nothing can ever stop their course.
All who stand before the legion,
Are doomed to the nether region.

Holy forces with shining light,
Threw their barbs at the legion's might.
Unfazed, unhurt, they did march on,
Massacring the solar spawn.
Angels both strong and full of pride,
Their wings were shredded and they died.
Clash of forces was not a war,
As the sacred ones were no more.

The diabolic fiends of black,
Began their demonic attack.
With tooth and claw the dark ones fought,
Yet their battle-lust was for naught.
Blackened blood burst from those so foul,
Death was so quick they couldn't howl.
Demonic horde fought to the end,
Their foe they couldn't comprehend.

The Lord of Verse

Gazing upon the mountains high,
The poet hopes he'll never die.
Enchanting brooks babble and run,
Adorning life with tons of fun.
Celebrations, joyful and free,
Providing a marvelous key.
Inspirations pepper the land,
Though what defeats a lady's hand?

Craftsmen of verse hammer and pound,
Till a beautiful gem is found.
A swamp befouled by toxic gas,
Transformed into a sea of bass.
Dusty tomes of ponderous weight,
Await the pen to set them straight.
Notions found from thoughtful study,
Guards us from all that is muddy.

The Lord of Verse entails it all,
Holding his audience in thrall.
Dazzling kingdoms are conjured forth,
Emotions flitter south and north.
Love and hate dance a flaming duel,
Tears of sorrow attempt to cool.
A poem's end is a success,
With a trek to the same address.

The Master Painter

Painting landscapes that were surreal,
A painter aimed at the ideal.
His brush had a demonic mind,
With a beauty so intertwined.
His paintings became so alive,
The inner soul they could revive.
He combined the darkness within,
With the fire that was its twin.

While crafting a masterpiece,
Vision he saw which would not cease.
He saw a spinning, blackened sphere,
Bizarre it was but not to fear.
The sphere welcomed him like a door,
Colors pulsed like never before.
His masterpiece he ripped away,
Painting the sphere without delay.

Hallucinations oh so strange,
His view of the world they did change.
He was superb before they came,
But then the master he became.
Deeper and deeper he did go,
Into a realm few ever know.
His last creation told his tale,
It featured him riding a whale.

The Paladin's Vow of Steel

Mighty paladin roamed the land,
Upon a steed so swift and grand.
Golden armor with fiery flames,
Was his garb as he rescued dames.
His sword brought death to the untrue,
Into the fray he always flew.
His honor was steady and pure,
To count on him you could be sure.

In his roaming there came a day,
The clouds rumbled and it was gray.
A town in chaos he did see,
Piercing cries adorned the debris.
A saddened man approached his steed,
Telling of a most heinous deed.
Three ogres had kidnapped a girl;
She was the city's precious pearl.

With a vow to rescue the lass,
His horse thundered across the grass.
Foul creatures were easily found,
Savage blows knocked them to the ground.
Further slices finished the deed,
An ocean of blood did they bleed.
He found the girl but she was dead,
His vow was broken, then he bled.

A Psychonaut's Voyage to the Beyond

A psychonaut explored the mind,
Beyond the pale was where he dined.
With sacred plants he traveled time,
Wonders he saw were so sublime.
Visiting worlds where time and space
Were demolished without a trace.
His journeys beyond taught him much,
As he embraced the cosmic touch.

One day the magic lost its sway,
As though he'd lost his righteous way.
The key itself no longer fit,
The stubborn door would not submit.
He tried the pills that were taboo,
But that kingdom was so untrue.
He cursed his body for its flaws,
In addition to Nature's Laws.

Then he stumbled upon a drug,
Again he felt the holy hug.
Riding on a rainbow of thought,
There he learned what couldn't be taught.
He was enchanted by this land,
Where he wanted to understand.
He was forever locked inside,
Of this heaven that did provide.

The Strategist's Trial by Fire

Studying the schemes of the greats,
Strategist learned their clever traits.
He was taught how to sharpen men,
Till they charged the enemy's den.
He was trained in the art of tricks,
To confuse the foe and transfix.
He read the tales of victory,
And dreamed of his own victor's spree.

In a surprise his foe attacked,
With such fury the town was sacked.
The strategist managed to flee,
It was not how he'd thought it'd be.
Scattered soldiers were to be found,
But most had fallen to the ground.
The strategist's fate was so bleak,
He found it hard even to speak.

Recalling the wisdom he learned,
He began to hope, his flame burned.
He rallied the troops far and wide,
Appealing to their broken pride.
The army he led grew in size,
As he plotted his foe's demise.
With lightning attacks here and there,
A victory he did declare.

The Unbreakable Spirit of a Champion

The blazing hero was so strong,
Enduring attacks all night long.
Slicing swords and battering blows,
Stopped him never, nor even slows.
Fated was the day and it came,
A hellish horde accepted the blame.
Hero mangled and left to die,
Broken not, he held his head high.

His armor of flesh would not fail,
Barbs of the mind began to flail.
Demonic forces rang the bell,
The hero's mind was swarmed by hell.
His psyche was twisted and torn,
Clouds of doom were insanely born.
His helmet of thought, left to rot,
Yet still his eyes were molten hot.

Mind and body had lived through strife,
Sharpened so was his blade of life.
Destiny's humor rang again;
Death consumed the champion's kin.
The blows of the world knocked him down,
Where angels beckoned him to drown.
Peering proudly at scorching sun,
He knew his life had just begun.

The Wizard of the Hidden Tower

Living in a hidden tower,
Wizard practiced arcane power.
A purple robe with cryptic runes,
He wore it when he studied moons.
Mystical tomes the wizard read,
Magical realms were where they led.
Traveling the world without form,
He could command even a storm.

Armies of man became aware,
Of the sorcerer's potent lair.
Seeking to destroy the unknown,
Invading horde entered his zone.
Scorching fire fell from the sky,
Hellstorm unleashed, soldiers did fry.
Earth parted and opened its maw,
No troops were able to withdraw.

Battle was swift and full of death,
Like the powerful dragon's breath.
With foreign speech he cast a spell,
The scattered bodies said farewell;
The potent mage did devour,
The dead's essence did empower.
Wizard returned to his study,
His robe wasn't even bloody.

Analyze...Destroy...Create

Scour the world and find the flaws,
Never to stop and without pause.
Study the religions of man,
And where they think it all began.
Examine the art that exists,
Hoping to feel the artist's kiss.
Ponder the men that roam the land,
And how exactly they do stand.

Once the vile is recognized,
Smashing it to bits is advised.
Destroy the thoughts that are so foul,
Wielding a hammer and a growl.
Ignite the art that isn't art,
It never spoke unto the heart.
Revel in the death of the low,
In a grand massacring show.

When destruction comes to an end,
Creation's eagle must ascend.
A creative creed must be made,
Empowering man, and to aid.
Flying with the wings of beauty,
This must be the artist's duty.
Producing men oh-so-noble,
This is the goal of the global.

Ascending the Poetic Peak

The best of verse should flow with grace,
Dancing so at a rhyming pace.
Far beyond the speech of the day,
Master poets should make words play.
Poetic tunes delight the ear,
Warming hearts in a loving cheer.
The rhythmic king declares a law,
Where lack of rhythm is a flaw.

Poem now blessed with lightning step,
Metaphor's arm provides the pep.
Strength of metaphor builds a core;
Statues of verse we shall adore.
Images both, darkened and pale,
Sail us away, never to fail.
Poetry's journeys take us far,
So far from our shimmering star.

Superficial lines will not do,
A depth of meaning must be true.
Beauty itself we like to see,
Yet stuffed with substance it should be.
The poem's heart should free our souls,
Urging us to transcend our goals.
When all factors align it so,
Masterpiece born, always aglow.

The Battle Rages

With clashing swords and violent hate,
A battle rages so irate
'Tween those so lofty of the mind,
And those whose brains are nearly blind.
The brutish ones possess the skill,
Like a virus they fill and fill.
How can quality fight the swarm,
Of quantity's enormous form?

From man's birth unto the present
The intellect of the peasant
Has been the standard and the norm;
Rare are those that attempt reform.
Today the course has gained in speed,
A warning that we have to heed.
The world will weep and it will mourn,
The Dark Ages will be reborn.

To the banner and to the fight,
Sword of intellectual might,
Give strength to the brothers in arms
And bless them with magical charms.
A war of power must be won
By the Children of the Sun.
Their victory will dawn the day,
When the skies are no longer gray.

The Brightest Flames are Eternal

Insults and stones are hurled with flare,
Upon the men who are so rare.
Thinking of thoughts outside the mass,
Gets you the label of an ass.
Beaten and bloodied by the herd,
Their ostracism is assured.
Persistence of form tolls the bell,
Condemned as mad and thrown in hell.

Outside the flock where he is free,
The genius masters who he'll be.
The prison of thought is no more,
The only option is to soar.
Working with haste and desire,
Relics of yore meet the pyre.
Upon the altar of the world,
Banners of knowledge are unfurled.

Dynasties fall, decades are past,
Opened are gates to the outcast.
Long since wrapped in death's cold embrace,
The hero lives without a face.
His words were once a malady;
Indeed it was a tragedy.
Although he now is praised as great,
Another soul shall share his fate.

The Brotherhood of Excelsior

Occident king, dragon of awe;
Talons of steel, forming the law.
Bellowing flame, scorching its foes;
Kingdoms it smashed, chaos it sows.
After the wars, sweet culture plays,
Captains of art, glorious rays.
Castles loom high, symphonies soar,
Science delved deep, behold the roar!

Carriage of time, sickens the king;
Vermin, claw, bite, devour the ring.
Ancestors speak: "All hail the sun";
"Contemplate all," "Conquer the Hun."
Hollow words all, dragons long dead;
Infected soul, yearning for bed.
Erupting skin, fatigue so great,
Belching out filth, questioning fate.

Brothers in arms, bonded by might,
The dawn has come, joyously fight!
Infirm and old, horrible bane;
Pride drives it on, struggling in vain.
Servants cast off, slayers ascend,
Slashing with blades, never to mend.
Blood stains the Earth, weapons held high;
Victory hail, eggs seek to fly.

The Call of the Hero's Hall

The world of today is so bleak,
Rare is the one who climbs the peak.
Heroes that shine with blinding light,
Have all but left our blackened sight.
The cloak of darkness that pervades,
Smothers the world and persuades.
The people yearn for one to lead,
To wield the sword upon a steed.

Champions have lived in the past,
Their deeds have never been surpassed.
Like no one else they fought the fight,
Their flame within they did ignite.
Hero's path led some to glory,
But some lived a tragic story.
Deeds of the dead can show the way,
For those still living to obey.

Respect those that achieved the great,
Strive for a superior fate.
The power to fly lies within,
Alongside the yearning to win.
The cosmic voice screams for the man,
That can shape the world with his plan.
Who will answer the mighty call,
And enter the Hero's Hall?

Cradle of the Universe

Epic mountains and valleys low,
Stirring the lust, never to slow.
Vistas beyond o' yonder hill,
Beckoning souls to get their fill.
Boundaries crumble to and fro;
Hurdles beyond the only foe.
Prowling pioneers hail the call;
Kings and queens are theirs to enthrall.

Swimming eons flittering by,
To the brilliant dawn we must try.
Quaffing potions of green and red,
Wizards of lore dance with the dead.
Smiling elixirs glow with might,
Destroying the shackles of blight.
Hitherto cloaked in travesty,
The doors radiate majesty.

Sailing upon the cosmic sea:
The evolutionary key?
Maps and charts await knowing hands,
To search and explore unknown lands.
Lanterns expose perilous pits,
But alone we must use our wits.
Fantastic tricks of space and time,
Hail the hero of spatial rime.

Creative Might

Creative Might, exploding birth,
Forming grand worlds, wonderful mirth.
Simple wood block, dull stick to most,
Dragon to us, laughing flames, boast.
Mundane old scene, transformed in ink,
Soldiers bloody, in valor, drink.
Tides of blue spheres, nectar so sweet,
Rainbows erupt, volcanic heat.

Sly metaphors, images bright,
Poets compose, bursting with light.
Words so sublime, plots so stunning,
Writers of sight, page, page, running.
Sailing the depths, oh Nature's Laws,
Scientists search, nuking all flaws.
Snapshots of sound, flying so high,
Architects hail, never to die.

Creative Might, enshrouding all,
Splendid it is, no fear to fall.
Rivers of life, flowing so sure,
Forging new paths, so swift to cure.
Mountains so steep, smiles atop,
Peaks of delight, never to stop.
Creating awe, creating bliss,
Beauty so deep, sweet, gentle kiss.

Digital Games

Frothing demons slashing in rage,
Living behind an iron cage.
Galactic raiders fire and burn,
Firing blasters turn in turn.
Treacherous plagues confront the land,
Decimating the strongest band.
Hell's Hand haunts the frightened masses;
Kingdoms fall in toxic gases.

Blazing bullets scatter and dart;
An armored vest protects the heart.
Training courses pulsate the screen,
Sharpening skills till doubly keen.
Dextrous hands crackle in motion,
Ready for a healing potion.
Sleek champions enter the zone,
Far away from the irksome phone.

Mysterious awe greets the mind,
Flinging foes who are never kind.
Enemy hordes growling for blood,
Trampling fallen into the mud.
Crafty generals must emerge,
Throwing back the thunderous scourge.
Godly tactics serve the master,
Conquering realms all the faster.

Eugenic Revolution

Beast devours beast, greedily,
Geysering blood, crowning carnage,
Claw, fang, hoof, evolve, naturally.
Gifts bestowed, hierarchy birth'ed.
Strength, power, swiftness, dominates;
Weakness, sloth, annihilated.
War upon war, strife upon strife,
Masters of massacre, supreme.

Man arrives, lo, a thinking beast!
Club to missile, mastering war,
Breeding cattle, horses, monkeys,
Fatter, faster, experiment.
Folly oh folly, doth enshroud,
Dumb bunnies do proliferate,
Souls of splendor, drown in mire,
Cancerous disease, foul refuse.

Exterminator, hail, oh hope!
Vermin cleans'ed, effulgent sun.
A new vision, a new people:
Kings, queens, magnificently born.
Higher, higher, excelsior!
Towers beaming bright, beautiful,
Purple robes, majesty, all hail,
Lo, Eugenic Revolution!

Exploring the Sea of Greatness

Religious ones are wont to say,
God is sublime, day upon day.
Yet placing the Gods oh-so high,
Decreases man's yearning to fly.
Many of the times he does soar,
His faith is praised and not his core.
Glory should fall upon the great,
Not upon a pious estate.

Many a man has no intent,
To surf the stars and leave a dent.
Consumed by the toils of life,
Man goes to work and greets his wife.
Yet potential's pool lies within,
Deeper for some it's always been.
This pool has never known to dry,
But many are too shy to try.

A change of view must taketh place;
Greatness within we must embrace.
Those we deem heroes set the course;
We must ride a similar force.
Prizing the greats we hold so dear,
But sailing past their far frontier.
The more explorers on the seas,
The more to feel greatness's breeze.

Family Warmth

Mothers glowing with restless step,
Gushing love with powerful pep.
Fathers strong with protective pride,
On majestic clouds they do glide.
Siblings shower their greatest praise,
To the one still shrouded in haze.
The babe, now born, giggles in glee,
Adding to the family tree.

Loving sunshine and sparkling juice,
Nourish the young and turn them loose.
Motherly hands reveal the sky;
Fledgling wings endeavor to fly.
The lanes of space are fraught with woe;
Tender hands stand ready to sew.
Bickering rants and harmful fights,
Never douse the nesting lights.

Ages pass in sweaty toil,
Binding kin to their home soil.
Babes spawn babes in loving embrace,
Birthing kingdoms with fancy lace.
Concrete families standing strong,
Saluting with a booming gong.
Warmth propelled by the loving home,
Sparks the life of a dazzling dome.

Forging Our Destiny

High gods command, dogma of steel,
Destiny set, skeletal seal.
Path, no bends, artificial road,
Puppet, happy, unswerving mode.
Preachers hurl flames, lamenting sin,
Peasants look high, searching for kin.
Dominant creed, fatal black thought,
Blind man's wishes, pie in the sky, bought.

Sages so bright, wielding the torch,
Dashing through filth, ignorance scorch.
Man, man alone, behind the scenes,
Directing fate, power, the means.
Simple beings, granted the ease,
Mighty queen reigns, buzzing, the bees.
Serv'd too long, ready to duel,
Smashing the bonds, ready to rule.

Catapults launch, altering route,
Splendor unleashed, who needs a scout?
So many roads, darkness and light,
Power now ours, inspire bright.
Victory trot, pillars of kings,
Energy cloaks, red ruby rings.
What better trail, jaunty to stroll,
Comrades amid, lofty white knoll.

The Glowing Tower

Searching for bliss, blazing hot home,
Forests so vague, bleak mists of foam.
What throne was mine, what robes to wear?
Realms of sorrow, nebulous care.
Feats of talent, gliding through skies,
Sparklings of sound, living world dies.
Abodes a' plenty, which to choose,
Dungeons to cage, faces to bruise.

Rising hills loom, hiding the beasts,
Malefic eels, hungry for feasts.
Onward I ran, smoting the fleet,
Survival's sword, awed, did I meet.
Flying demons, moist fangs of wine,
Drunken splashings, wishing to dine.
Haunting specters, sickles of death,
Prevailed did I, with rapid breath.

Bursting from well, golden bright shine,
Who would have thought, brilliance was mine.
Cosmic soaring, glowing tower,
Brick upon brick, growing hour.
Parapets proud, concrete and strong,
Crystal gleaming, glorious song.
Beauty the best, in thumping core,
Knowledge the King, key to the door.

History's Wisdom

Strategic plans and massive care,
Flung the pyramids in the air.
Wearing togas of many hues,
Intrepid scholars sought the clues.
The eagle standard flying high,
Booming legions draw ever nigh.
Hardened hearts abandon their life,
Voyaging to a land of strife.

Empires rise to soaring heights,
Practicing their own unique rites.
Many kingdoms crumble with age,
Too old even to lash with rage.
Threatened by a dominant foe,
Realms are crushed by a thrashing blow.
Happening most often of all,
A virus is the cause of fall.

The ruins of lore can revive;
Avoiding chasms we must strive.
History's pages shine and gleam,
Success radiates potent beam.
The hand of fate can be controlled,
Walking past where ancestors strolled.
Lessons studied from ages past,
Present the cure so reigns can last.

Ideas are Born to Fly

Blossoming like flowers so grand,
Ideas are born, soon to stand.
Beginning life as a whisper,
Growing stronger and much crisper.
With focused mind and keen intent,
Flesh is formed and energy spent.
Idea now, vibrant and hale,
Set to begin its wondrous tale.

Onto the page thoughts are displayed,
Just begun but already strayed.
The path is etched with utmost care,
Yet creations don't find this fair.
Despite the writer with his pen,
Idea's words are those spoken.
When the war has come to an end,
Author himself has had to bend.

Once consumed by an eager crowd,
Tunes most different may be loud.
Initial spark that led to thought,
So very far from that is taught.
A million spirits that doth look,
Beholdings vary in same book.
As the ages flitter along,
Who hears the original song?

The Illumination of Darkness

Dancing shadows, creeping at night;
Gargoyles fierce, slurping the light.
Timid souls sleep, falling to dreams;
Night owls awake, prowling the streams.
Mysteries flare, webbing the black;
Spiders alert, spying the track.
Perilous trek, missiles fly true,
Taking its toll, unscathed, a few.

Heroes so proud, praising their life;
Cavern of black, inflames the strife.
Skeletons speak, specters caress;
Flame of the day, nowhere to bless.
Singing so foul, haunting of horns,
Music of death, Reaper he mourns.
Painting do swirl, visions so odd;
Foreign thoughts, beckoning a nod.

Transformation, figures do change;
Brain mist dissolves, no more so strange.
Tyrants of light, their words now stink;
Sweet songs of black, no more must slink.
Wraiths now sages, singing now clear,
Words so wise, enlightenment near.
Eyesight so keen, lanterns of dark;
Radiance spreads, showing the mark.

Islands of Life in the Universe

Exploding bang, it was not big,
What came before we've yet to dig.
The beauty of the Cosmic Birth,
Viewed by none in its merry mirth.
Speeding along in furied flight,
Cosmic seeds ignite and delight.
Sol was born and it paved the way,
For Mother Earth to have her day.

Too small for human eye to see,
Life as we know began to be.
Tick, tick, tock, Universal Clock,
Gigantic creatures then did walk.
Destiny's hand waved them away,
Enter then the human display.
Galactic blink and it was there,
Masterful man in all his flare.

Dominating quick and with ease,
Mankind beams in its expertise.
Universal size is so vast;
It is so vast we see the past.
So many worlds, so many suns,
When doth come the alien ones?
Billions of years may they have been;
Who knows what depths they have within.

The Library, A Temple of Wisdom

In the time of the ancient greats,
First library opened its gates.
Alexandria was the name,
Of the temple with so much fame.
This royal lounge was hailed by all,
Where the tomes of might did enthrall.
In a tragedy of the age,
It was demolished in a rage.

The temples of wisdom have grown,
Today there is much to be known.
Millions of volumes to be read,
A starving psyche can be fed.
Mistress of knowledge spreads her wealth,
Free to all, and it bolsters health.
Junior and senior, rich and poor,
Who can resist sweet wisdom's lure?

The future holds a brilliant fate,
Better libraries do await.
Technology's way is the key,
To develop a learning spree.
Creating books that come alive,
Empower man to strive and thrive.
What we call fiction on this day,
Later it may come into play.

The Lofty Ones

Gigantic herds, crawling sloths go,
Laughing in glee, praising the flow.
Thoughts of style, thoughts of fashion;
Strays are flogged, always a' bashing.
Surging stars glow, blinding the mass;
Explosive howls, piercing and crass.
Arrows and barbs, netting the sky,
Scene of demise, halting the high.

Spirits of loft, forced to disguise,
Appearing plain, ever defies.
Broken are some, perhaps it's fate,
Born too soon, or maybe too late.
Others fly far, into the deep;
Desert-like flames, roasting their keep.
Suffering harsh, forges their wings;
Strong they survive, roaring past stings.

Possessed of will, grasping the pen,
Searching the caves, dissecting men.
Religion hum, they see the woes,
Most are deceived, rabble are foes.
History exposed, brings a laugh,
Controlling force, for the riff-raff.
Shepherds see they, with a sharp eye;
Reign of buffoons, they say goodbye.

May Fun Never Die

Frolicking boys and cheering girls,
Feast on life in dizzying twirls.
Bouncing balls are playfully thrown,
Creating a jubilant tone.
Running wild in infancy,
Pictures of fun are all they see.
With goggles of hope it is clear,
Their greatest dreams feel ever near.

The age of youth begins to fade,
Children's games are no longer played.
The stress of age begins to chime;
Ladder of life adults do climb.
Aging scars in a painful way,
When fun is gone day after day.
A life without play, drowns in frowns,
Back in the day, touchdowns and clowns.

The ones to teach are now the youth,
Who now in play display the truth.
Learned wise must open their eyes,
To the playful prize youth supplies.
Child within is born again,
A time of joy begins to grin.
Combining traits of young and old,
Creates a treasure to behold.

Musical Charms

Booming crescendos split the air,
As charming notes provide the flare.
Vibrating drums carry the tune,
As sailing flutes provide the boon.
Notes adorned with dazzle and flash,
Tickle the ears in a grand bash.
Jaunty maestros salute and hail,
Directing beauty without fail.

Crying violins ache the heart,
Beckoning forth a brand new start.
Piano keys create a rose;
The wine of lovers gently flows.
Tranquil harps nurture and caress;
Pain and woe are felt less and less.
Galloping gongs trumpet and race;
Eager listeners keep the pace.

The notes and tunes are formed with care;
Ears are locked in a blissful stare.
Nudging melodies drive us on;
Majestic crowns we'd love to don.
Orchestral might provides the gall;
Inspired knights answer the call.
Victorious chimes light the way;
Musical charms adorn the day.

Mythical Peaks

Images bleak, scenery foul,
Hero a brute, speech but a howl.
Values so low, reeking and rank,
Covered in grime, fueled by the bank.
All tales are spun, with goals in mind,
Shackling the soul, striving to bind.
Nature is shunned, spirit cast down;
Sunlight is doused, casting a frown.

Hammer aloft, noble and true;
Setting the tone, to rule the blue.
Odin the King, atop his steed,
Loving his folk, drinking his mead.
Excalibur, the sword of might;
Champions hail, yearning to fight.
Merlin the wise, gazing at tomes;
Knowledge in depths, among the gnomes.

Ennobled by myth, fine blue skies;
Heroic pride, free spirit flies.
Virtues await, molding in stone;
Craftsmen of skill, talents to hone.
Blue veins grow red, passion explodes;
Words to inspire, in their abodes.
History rich, though future shines,
Epics so grand, key to the vines.

Nature's Salve

Toxins are consumed eagerly,
From juicy steaks to potent tea.
Addicting morsels stir the lust,
Inviting weight, an almost must.
Sweetness forms a poisonous brew,
Tickling taste, like a mountain's dew.
Bloated and fouled by pretty sweets,
The ghoul of sickness bows and greets.

Charlatans work to make a buck;
A smiling face is doused with luck.
Pills and diets surely abound,
Promising to reduce the round.
All proclaim the greatest success,
But more than not it's only stress.
Some ways may work and some may not,
Though be wary of those that rot.

Healing wounds and shedding a pound,
Nature's Salve is simply profound.
Instinctive urge promotes a fast,
Engendering a life to last.
Absence of food signals the reign,
Comforting and killing the pain.
Digestion stops, freeing the flow,
Energy now, all systems go.

Nocturnal Visions

Morpheus greets with charming hand,
Motioning towards a dreamy land.
The worries and ails greet us still;
Food and water provide our fill.
Smiles of day come into night,
As children still delight to bite.
Work and duties enlock our time,
While the poet strives to rhyme.

Now and again our dreams contort,
Gazing at a galactic port.
Kings and queens kiss our tiny toes;
Purple cows devour all our woes.
Rainbow landscapes transmute and morph,
Thus revealing the wizard Zorf.
Horrors and hells akin to Poe,
Combine with heavens in the flow.

The hazy adventures of sleep,
Are gems of self yearning to peep.
Personal portraits etched in stone,
Fading rapidly is dream's tone.
Starting with a journal of night,
Pinches the eyes, almost to sight.
Controlling the nocturnal kite,
Evokes mastery of one's flight.

Obtaining the Jewels of the Wise

The learning begins by the young,
With their unseasoned little tongue.
Schooling injects into their mind,
Knowledge of the world and mankind.
Over the years their brains doth bloom,
Food of the wise they doth consume.
Graduation's day comes to be,
With a handshake and a degree.

As soon as schooltime meets its end,
Many a pupil doth descend.
Their crown of thought loses its shine,
It's as if they'd drank too much wine.
Even with the freedom to choose,
Too many just flat out refuse,
To collect the jewels of the wise,
Till they meet their darkened demise.

Avoid the blackened pit of age,
By studying hard, like the sage.
Polish thy crown of thought with care,
Till it glimmers beyond compare.
Educate always is thy law,
Learning that which inspires awe.
With the wisdom of a lifetime,
Learned ones are beyond sublime.

One Short Life

Deadly rain and exploding blasts
Bombarded my trench night and day.
Artillery crashings of woe
Hammered and massacred my friends.
Soldiers, wave after wave, threatened
To consume my world, all I knew.
Though I was merely a rookie,
I understood life was a war.

I stared on in stupefied awe,
As murderous bullets whistled,
Forming a sea of churning blood.
My stomach reeled and tossed in pain,
As I envisioned myself, dead.
Surely a plan, some strategy,
Was grinding onward, relentless,
But I all I saw was death, cold death.

Promptly the call to charge bugled,
Stabbing red swords into my flesh.
In fear, but with honor, I charged.
Unexpected brilliance glimmered,
Charging me with mighty power.
Enlightened, inspired, I knew
With one short life to live, I had
But one chance to conquer the world.

Painting Honesty's Portrait

Praising a man upon his deed,
Can bolster his mood and his speed.
Friends and family do this well,
Helping their loved one to excel.
Yet folly exists in the friend,
Whose silver words only pretend.
Compassion's hand may feeleth nice,
But lies are more akin to ice.

Praise the good and the fantastic,
Never to be so sarcastic.
Beauty can be found high and low,
Compliment it with word and bow.
The ugly too lives on this plane,
With the lowly and mundane.
The not so grand deserves the whip,
Words of lashing ever do rip.

With a true telling of his skill,
The man of talent can fulfill.
Those that lack a natural gift,
Can now change their goals something swift.
With honesty's lash and its praise,
Feats can be performed that amaze.
Greatest of greats may yet arrive,
Ever wowing, always to strive.

The Path of Life

Playful children frolicking free,
Gently swinging from tree to tree.
Curious gazes here and there,
Hidden monsters are all they fear.
Games of skill ornament their days,
Enjoying the sun's smiling rays.
Drinking knowledge in mighty chugs;
Playing with the ugliest bugs.

Pursuit of goals consumes the time,
Working hard to produce a dime.
Hastened hours flutter and fly,
Mingling joys and ills, by the by.
Trees of wisdom begin to sprout,
Routine becomes the common route.
Laurels form a fanciful crown,
As lives pass in a cozy town.

The caretaker begins to slow,
No longer controlling the flow.
The aches of age crackle and pop,
Watching the young scurry and hop.
As faculties wither and die,
The path of fate quickly draws nigh:
Paralysis of mind and soul,
Or to pay the ferryman's toll.

Phantasmagoric Bliss

Born amid resounding wonder,
With swirling whirls, playful delight.
Balloons of blue seems all to be
With wild eyes staring in awe.
Laughter erupts, grand ecstasy,
Bulging, shrinking, objects do float,
Great goggling, pursuing, to, fro;
All is glee, fascination floods.

Maturity rides, doors slam shut,
Perceptions choked, conforming self,
Imagine no more, concrete world.
Law and order never questioned;
Transmogrify, clockwork creatures.
Work, eat, sleep, robots eternal,
Slimy labyrinth path pervades,
Minotaur chases, evermore.

Intrepid souls, jails detonate,
Youthful vigor flying about,
Children return, but oh much more.
Resplendent dreams where we wander,
The diverted path, rolling waves.
Reality altered, here, there,
Scented consciousness, oh so great;
The world, Phantasmagoric Bliss.

The Poet's Evolution

Yearning to soar through cosmic clouds,
The novice dreams of cheering crowds.
Yet early poet has no wings,
His place is not among the kings.
His words are wounded and so limp,
They could be written by a chimp.
He wants his verse to sing and dance;
It doesn't rate a single glance.

Poet improves with time and skill,
Wielding the hammer and the drill,
Sculpting verse to obey his will,
Till his vision he doth fulfill.
Diligent hours at his trade,
For him a poetic crusade.
His words are now buoyant with verve,
Waiting for the world to observe.

Master poet is very rare,
Robe of time and space he doth wear.
Easy for him are words so sweet,
Feeding man like a scrumptious treat.
Commanding his army of verse,
Any terrain he can traverse.
His words will live for countless years,
Far beyond poetic frontiers.

The Power of One

Grecian ages started a trend,
Where rule of many was to mend.
Peasant or scholar mattered not,
All were thought to throw in their lot.
Many preferred to mind their own,
Away from the government stone.
The few possessed of worldly skill,
Fought against a difficult hill.

Potent Sparta was ruled by one;
Fearsome armies made others run.
Athens fought a hardy battle,
Mired in a swamp of prattle.
Plato urged in a hearty tone,
Searching for an emperor's bone.
Philosopher king was his goal;
He never climbed that lofty knoll.

Plato's pupil followed his friend,
Aiming for a singular blend.
Caesars came waltzing with power,
Forcing foes to only cower.
A Napoleonic order,
Sought a European border.
Supermen shape the world within;
Who, next, rides with thunderous din?

Propaganda Power

An ocean of words, more potent than swords.
Emotions aroused, catalogued and browsed.
Library of might, influence the sight.
Piloted with ease, through infinite seas.
Blue fountains of thought, nourishing as sought.
A foe vilified, a friend justified.
Subliminal plan, prevents deadly ban.
Perfected sculpture, flows a shield so sure.

Evil claws do mold, frigid hearts so cold.
Tentacles do shape, dirty screech of rape.
Burning sword of sky, told so long, good-bye.
Faint wisps o' the will, numbing, like a pill.
Deep well of hope squeezed, till all beings wheezed.
Honor desecrate, darkness consecrate.
Huge ravines so dark, skeletons so stark.
Misery plagues all, towers so high, fall.

Holy embrace hail, oceans of mirth sail.
Loving hands confirm, soaring ace from worm.
Shimmering rainbows, across the globe, flows.
Surging ships of light, no trace of foul blight.
Plethora of goals, wave after wave, rolls.
Jeweled crown of right, sprouting vaults of height.
Majestic castles, bright golden tassels.
Blissful empire, higher and higher.

The Reality of Honor

Corruption's poison harms its prey,
Swaying its victims to betray.
The stench of lies is all about,
Blanketing the world in its doubt.8/31/05
Cheats and thieves stalk the blackened night,
Cowering from the right of light.
A world as wicked as is ours,
Scars the flesh and consumes the stars.

Remember the past, some might say,
When Honor's blade pointed the way.
Yet scholars cannot find that time,
Where such beauty was in its prime.
Where the True are usually found,
Are in myths where they are renowned.
In a few the ideal exists,
Soaring high above the abyss.

Starting with the few who are true,
Honor's day may come into view.
Into our creeds it must be fleshed,
Worldview itself can be refreshed.
Injected by the means at hand,
Honor such planned would be so grand.
Such a golden day can be born,
Where the strong and True do adorn.

Reborn in the Spirit of Fire

Striving forward with flaming will,
Daring to rule the steepest hill.
Yet cometh the day of the doubt;
Whispers of woe question the route.
Once golden valleys lose their glow,
The nightmare dawns, akin to Poe.
The noble quest once held so dear,
Now elicits a burning tear.

Adrift anew without a goal;
Chaos exacts a painful toll.
Bereft of cause and in decline,
A starving spirit aches to dine.
From darkened pit to eagle's nest,
Striving to suckle meaning's breast.
Creeds and sages were read with haste;
Never found was a scrumptious taste.

The last place to search, it was there,
Where only the brave ever dare.
The tingle of life sprang aforth,
Directing man forever North.
Locked inside the obvious place,
Within the few, who yearn to race.
The chosen ones, born of Fire,
Begin to, sire the higher.

Riding on the Wings of Infinity

Blanketing space in quaint softness,
Time relaxes, devoid of stress.
Ever existing, through and through,
Beaming an, invisible hue.
Kronos is formed by brilliant men,
Who fancy they've invented ken.
For all the concepts men may grab,
None are outside the cosmic lab.

Cosmic cycles flitter and flow,
Punishing time is a star's foe.
Busy days go by in a snap,
Bored to tears is a horrid trap.
Historic events slow the mind,
Extra details are sure to find.
Hours of doze are those that fly;
Nebulous figures say goodbye.

Epochs and eons forever glide,
Tumbling down the cosmic slide.
Flaming birth takes countless ages,
All the while fire rages.
Growing fully, with bursting bounds,
Bulging boldly, the cosmos frowns.
Far away from gravity's hand,
Time plays in infinity's land.

Scaling the Mountain of Immortality

Searching for the immortal course,
Many have found only remorse.
The fountain of youth can't be found,
Even though explorers abound.
Beauty eternal man yearns for;
No one's sailed to that shining shore.
Science may bear a tempting wine,
But immortal's not its design.

The way to live beyond the grave,
Is to surf on greatness's wave.
Making the world applaud their deeds,
The greats plant their exquisite seeds.
The man of art paints lovely scenes;
The man of science controls genes.
The man of action rules the day;
The man of words shows us the way.

With the recipe in their hand,
Intrepid spirits plan the grand.
The world welcomes the blazing mark,
Of the heroes bursting with spark.
Only the strongest flames will last,
When eons and eons have past.
History's tome will tell their tale,
The magnificent we doth hail!

Searching for Reality's Core

Information falls from the sky,
No umbrella can keep us dry.
The day our minds begin to see,
Our lives become a learning spree.
Parents and teachers fill our brains;
Media blitz never refrains.
By the time our hair becomes white,
The deluge becomes oh-so-trite.

Sifting through the information,
Leads to the frustration nation.
Without thought we accept these things,
Commanded by unnoticed strings.
The notions which that are granted,
Study we must what's been planted.
The lens of reason, fling it far,
From nearest near to farthest far.

Scraping away the grimy lies,
Leads us to the prize of the wise.
Doubting all but ready to view;
Truth displayed in prismatic hue.
Cultivating Truth with his skill
The sage ascends the steepest hill,
Where he views Reality's Core,
Which was unknown to him before.

Smashing Philosopher

Afflicted by barbs of fire,
Scorching his portals of vision,
Tomes of wisdom still did he write.
Seizures of sickness wracked him long,
While visions of grandeur hailed.
Suffering darkness evermore,
Swift, speedy progress did not fail;
Indeed, fruition hastened more.

Mighty Superman created,
New values formed, war, will, power;
Man a bridge, to be overcome.
Degenerating age it was
Dying, decadent, smug bleakness
Yet misery, it would toughen;
More Napoleons would arrive
Till golden lions roamed wild.

He questioned this, he questioned that.
Weakness he blasted, everywhere.
Unexplored chasms beckoned sweet,
Erupting brilliance did he fling;
So bright it beamed, paralyzing.
Most horrible ills he unearthed:
Christianity, alcohol.
Smashing philosopher: Nietzsche.

The Sparkling Rain of Creativity

Rules and laws are pounded in stone,
Trumpeting man's eternal tone.
Principles are etched for the mass,
Taught to husband and bonny lass.
From birth till death we're shown the way,
The dye is cast every day.
This path's result we can behold:
Destroying the mold is too bold.

The time has come to flood the walls,
To sweep away, stagnation falls.
Boulders and pits attempt to block;
The sheep baa in order to mock.
Yet a passionate few aren't the same;
The creative torch starts to flame.
Delving into the unknown realm,
To don the great creator's helm.

The inventive one tries it all,
The art of his is never dull.
Experimenting he doth try,
Even his "failures" fly so high.
True to the spirit of the muse,
Beauty sparkles in dazzling hues.
Because his banner was his own,
He'll always soar above the drone.

The Strength of Knowledge

Thinkers o' mighty and profound,
Ponder the questions that confound.
The oldest query just might be:
"What purpose does life offer me?"
Gospels and doctrines make their pleas,
Yet the wisest man really sees.
Inherent in life, at the core,
There lies no meaning to explore.

Such proclamations can appall,
Shrinking the tall into the small.
Rhyme of reason is sucked away,
Flinging man into disarray.
Stripped of the armor worn before,
Life can become a naked chore.
Given such knowledge most return,
To where purpose doesn't concern.

There are those that handle the weight,
Unafraid of the flooding gate.
They are buoyed by waves that drown,
Putting on the crown of renown.
Though no meaning is at the heart,
The bold ones know just where to start.
Choosing their own meaning and flow,
Commanding their lives to and fro.

Surviving the Conflict

Tanks of conflict, flying foul flags,
Trampling the weak, tattering rags.
Demons of tech, fling barbs of flame,
Roasting the kids, no doubts or shame.
Libraries torched, hospitals razed;
Schools demolished, populace dazed.
Wasteland of ill, green mists of trash;
Suffering pain, gigantic gash.

Pacifists squeak, kissing all toes,
Hungry for life, without the bows.
Their wives are raped, their children slain;
Shattered are lives, ominous bane.
Cowards they watch, tortures and screams;
Horrible sights, malicious teams.
Stars without heat, fail to ignite,
Timid souls die, never to fight.

Brave clans of might, small to behold,
Chariots fierce, charging so bold.
Fighting for life, fighting to kill;
Death begets death, coffins to fill.
Yells of glory, yells of honor;
Powerful hearts, "Death to the cur!"
Tablet of war, with simple aims:
Ocean of glee, or up in flames.

The Thunderstorm of Inspiration

A gallant figure robed in flames,
Conquering fear and saving dames.
An orphaned lad grasping his dreams,
Fulfills his goals, verily beams.
A soul never given a chance,
Playing in the world's largest dance.
The world is filled with such fire,
Beautiful songs to inspire.

Deeds of the past are kept alive,
By books of awe that help us strive.
Ideas alive with such might,
Sparking a thunderstorm of light.
Philosophers of sagely mind,
Showers of wisdom help us find.
The words of the world drive us on,
Constructing a glorious dawn.

A time may come when it is lost,
The flame has died, consumed by frost.
Inspiring deeds may drift away,
'Tis a tragic shame some might say.
The way made clear great ones begin,
To tap the sparkling well within.
From external inspiration,
To internal celebration.

Triumphant Wave

Broken pillars, towers crumbled;
Moats blistered dry, power fumbled.
Nobles peer far, searching for hope;
Blood, vermin, filth, anguish to cope.
Tears of diamond, futilely flow,
Drowning bleakly, miserly slow.
Wailings create, naught save despair;
Claws rend and tear, much to repair.

Gauntlets of steel, beacons a' blaze;
Sacrifice all, battle the haze.
Gripping the bricks, healing the scars;
Toiling near, far, fiercely, like Mars.
Pits huge and dank, bellowing death;
Threatening jails, hungry for breath.
Bloody and sore, all perils crushed;
Castle rebuilt, wilderness hushed.

Oasis joy, midst a dark bog;
Shimmering beams, piercing the fog.
Corpses burst forth, yearning for heat;
Eager to build, anxious to meet.
Problems abound, yet fire it fuels;
Death claims a few, yet spirit rules.
Fangs, famine, and fervent fire
Unfaze the strong, never to tire.

Viewing Vistas Varied

The rites of life grow ever stale,
It's such a wretched pain.
Dancing the same day after day,
Indeed it is mundane.

Ritual provides comfort care,
But when we grow so old
The days of youth seem a dream
Too distant to behold.

When we explore the realms unknown
Viewing vistas varied,
The gem of awe visits again
Before being buried.

Of course our journeys may go wrong,
Down some sinister path
Where the nightmare is really true
Brimming with vengeful wrath.

The more we do before we age
The less regrets we bear.
More memories to keep us warm
Including those so rare.

When the search nets a sparkling prize,
Most like a lover's hand,
Or the calling of fairest Muse,
That is how it is planned.

Wonderful War

Fist smashing fist, bone pounding bone,
Flailing blows and throes, seek the throne.
Jubilant laughs, horrible cries,
Symphony of war, splendid prize.
Loving thy folk, hating thy foe,
Seeds are spread, bloody fields of war.
Ghoulish nightmares, coward does fall,
Heroic bliss, victor does maul.

Goblets of blood, masters do sip,
Plotting conquests, nations to rip.
Tactics composed, strategy planned,
Grinding weak beasts, tasty, not bland.
Missiles from space, Zeus flinging bolts,
Red raging tanks, charging steel colts.
Mayhem conductors, rule the world,
Flying red flags, flapping un-furled.

Vermin do yell, an end to war,
Folly so great, how else to soar?
Eagles shall glide, triumphant hearts,
Archers alert, launching great darts.
Golden clashes, paintings of awe,
Devouring all, with open maw.
Conflict enshrouds, but how long for?
Oh, always war, wonderful war.

Fanatical Fire

In order to ensure our survival we must cultivate fanatical fire. We must fan the flames of fanaticism with every beat of our hearts. Every breath must fuel our fervor. Our commitment must be absolute, our passion must be pure. Our dedication to our people and our cause must blaze with exhilaration and enthusiasm. Once we have practiced and perfected the fury of fanatical flame, our world shall be one of eternal light. For our family. For our folk. For our future.

The sacred skin which we have been blessed with must be stained bloody red like that of mighty Mars. Fanatical fire is our armor, our shield, our sword. Our brilliance blinds our enemies but in its inferno, we are healed. Energetically emblazoned we march, our crimson flags flying forward. For our family. For our folk. For our future.

We are a cosmic creation, eons in the making. It took generations too numerous to count to give birth to the marvel and wonder that is known as The White Race. We were conceived in a galactic forge with divinity written into our very DNA, interwoven with Infinity itself. From such a fiery birth we must return. In fire we were born and in fire we will die. Destiny beckons. Fanatical fire is our fate, and we must master it before it is too late. For our family. For our folk. For our future.

The hooknose demon and his brainless minions will do their utmost to prevent our march into the sun. He will ruthlessly attempt to castrate our soul and extinguish our flame. With his infernal claws rubbing together he will spit poison into our food and venom into our minds. He desires a destiny of darkness which will devilishly be realized if we equip ourselves with apathy and despair. Only the rage and splendor of fanatical fire will be able to resist his wicked machinations. For our family. For our folk. For our future.

To blaze! To flame! Fanatical fire be thy name! Total devotion. Total commitment. Total faith. With such militant determination and powerful passion, victory is inevitable. Our victory will be violent. Our victory will be total. Our victory will be complete. We shall unleash a solar thunderstorm--for we are Children of the Sun--and where once was foe, only ash shall remain. For our family. For our folk. For our future.

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BOOKS

