KULTHEA CHRONICLE

The Official Monthly of GemStone III

© Copyright 1994, Simutronics Corporation. All rights reserved. GemStone III and Kulthea Chronicle are Trademarks of Simutronics Corporation.

Volume 1 Issue 1 March 1994

Kulthea Chronicle Premieres

It is with great pleasure and anticipation, hope and expectation, and not without a small amount of trepidation, that we offer up this premiere issue of the Kulthea Chronicle. We are excited and honored to be given the opportunity to continue to serve, inform and entertain the players of GemStone III in the tradition of its predecessor, *Kelfour Edition*. At the same time, we are seeking to build upon what came before, with this, the first GemStone III newsletter to feature a fully formatted, self-contained version consisting of carefully chosen fonts, professionally designed layouts, and outstanding bitmap artwork, that can be viewed and printed out on PC Windows and Macintosh computers.

In a sense, this first issue offers a transition between old and new, almost in the same way that enhancements in GemStone III itself are based on what has gone before, but seek to improve upon that solid foundation. One of these improvements is the introduction of several new regular columnists who will

(Continued on page 2)

Upper Kaldsfang

News Briefs...

Vast Catacombs Discovered

According to early reports from intrepid adventurers, a new section of the catacombs beneath town has been unearthed. A young sorcerer, one Hastur FlutterWing, appears to have been the first to happen upon a vast network of ancient underground tunnels while in hot pursuit of a wounded rat. Rumors of more tunnels deep under the streets have been rampant for many years, but this was the first concrete proof that such an extensive subterranean system still exists.

Researchers Uncover New Magic

A team of scholars and researchers gathered from the greatest seats of esoteric learning all over Kulthea has happened upon lost scrolls which reveal powerful new spells for rangers

(Continued on page 2)

A Survival Guide: What they forgot to tell you!

by Jerusha Monfjoy

Early one afternoon, I saw something in Kelfour's Landing that made me pause and think. It was a young woman (well, half-elf, really), tall and lithe, with shimmering golden hair. But it wasn't her beauty that caught my attention, it was the glazed and overwhelmed look in her eyes and her lack of any of the usual paraphernalia which so marks most of the adventurers in the Landing. As I talked to her, pointing out the shops in town and explaining who was who and what was what, I realized that I myself had worn that same bemused look when I had entered the Landing a scant six years ago. Suddenly, all the questions, confusion and indecision

(Continued on page 12)

Inside This Issue

See page 2 for departments

Visions of Marliese	3	Poetry, Lady Heart	14
Dreams Sacred and Profane	5	An Outcast's Journal	16
What Ya Gonna Be, Sonny?	8	Food for Thought	17
Poetry, To Serve	11	Notes of an Apprentice Mage	19

Departments

Commentary 3
Fear and Loathing in Kulthea
Bloodsmythe's Bestiary 4
Concerning the Dreaded Kral
Fame Rankings 6
Trachten's Travels 20
Dark Shrine and Dark Gratto
Bardon's Corner 22

KULTHEA CHRONICLE

Publisher
David Whatley (Bardon)

Managing Editor
Nancy Gross (Gira)

Assistant Editors
Steve Clark (Jarran)
Nancy Shriner (Kalagay)

Contents are copyrighted by Simutronics Corporation. GemStone III is based on the Rolemaster and Shadow World series by licensing agreement. Rolemaster © Copyright 1989 Iron Crown Enterprises, All Rights Reserved. Shadow World © Copyright 1989 Iron Crown Enterprises, All Rights Reserved. Iron Crown Enterprises, P.O. Box 1605, Charlottesville, VA 22902. No unauthorized use permitted.

Fanciful names of characters and places derived from Rolemaster and Shadow World are trademarks used and owned by Iron Crown Enterprises. Additional names of characters, places, and things in GemStone III are trademarks of both Iron Crown Enterprises and Simutronics Corp.

Other original works created in the GemStone III world setting are © Copyright 1989 Simutronics Corp. and Iron Crown Enterprises. All Rights Reserved. No unauthorized use permitted.

The terms "Rolemaster" and "Shadow World" are registered trademarks used and owned by Iron Crown Enterprises.

SIMUTRONICS CORPORATION

(Premier Edition, continued from page 1)

touch on subjects ranging from cartography to spell slinging. These new features are combined with contributions from some of Kulthea's favorite writers, bards and reporters.

And while we have worked very hard to make this premiere issue noteworthy from the graphic design point of view, a newsletter, after all, lives or dies by the quality of its content, of its literature and its reportage. Here again, we have tried to balance the old and new. Several of the articles in this issue focus on topics of interest to new adventurers, such as the *Survival Guide* by Jerusha, while others are directed toward more seasoned veterans, such as this month's column by Trachten on the Dark Gratto. The poetry, fiction, narrative accounts, news and features we hope will appeal to everyone.

During the next few months, we plan to introduce new columns, continuing series and other features suggested, requested and authored by our players. Above all, we value your contributions, ideas and feedback. Letters to the Editor are encouraged, and can be Emailed to TESOL. For those of you interested in contributing to Kulthea Chronicle, you can find the Editorial Guidelines in the GemStone III Software Library (File #264, KCGUIDE.TXT).

Welcome to our first edition, we hope you enjoy it!

(News Briefs, Continued from page 1)

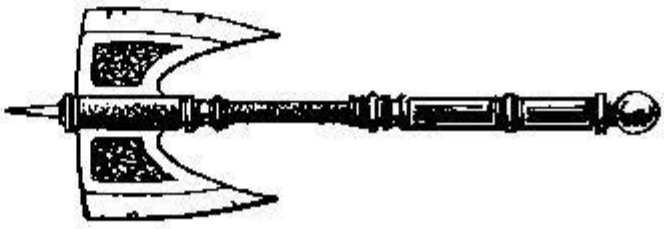
and sorcerers. Sorcerers of appropriate training have rejoiced to gain these long-lost spells, including *Phase* (the ability to pass through solid objects), *Quake*, and *Energy Maelstrom*. Rangers likewise have welcomed the powers of *Inner Wall*, *Mass Hues*, *Imbue* and *Whispering Willow*. The researchers quickly added details of their findings to the *Tomes of Kulthea* for all to peruse.

Popular Kelfour's Couple Wed

Belladonna Atropa and Erek SnowMane were married this February, after a long courtship and engagement. The ceremony was one of the grandest in recent memory, featuring a maid of honor, a best man, two ushers and four bridesmaids. The marriage rite was solemnized at the Shrine in Lake Marliese, and the reception which followed took place on the island. Food, drink, good spirits and bad jokes abounded, and the nuptials went off without a hitch...well, with only one that is. Congratulations to the happy couple!

Strange Occurrences in the Wilds

Recently, numerous adventurers have been returning to civilization from far-flung corners of Kulthea with strikingly similar tales of creatures carrying powerful, unique and unusual weapons, the like of which have not been seen before. While this publication has yet to confirm such items, we are on the lookout for more reports and evidence, and will keep our readers informed should the prospect of hostile creatures overwhelming us with superior arms turn to imminent danger.



Visions of Marliese

by Erek SnowMane

Here I sit quietly, as I have done so often in the recent months, before a simple stone altar upon which stands a carving of the goddess Iloura. Many times I have come in hopes of some comfort to ease my troubles but the shrine in which the altar sits offers none, and this tightness and sorrow I feel continues. Always it is the same. Thoughts of a young woman in tattered clothes return to fill my mind. The memories of the look in her eyes that revealed a torn and troubled soul reflect my own inner turmoil and I am once again lost in the past...

It was a warm, humid day when the story began for me. I had been up at the Abandonded Inn with my good friends Crud and Leara trying to drive the unlife menace from the attic. Our hunt had gone well enough but as always the wraiths kept coming in a mad frenzy, hungry to take our souls and steal the one thing they could no longer possess, our very life energy. We decided to return to town for some needed rest before we started our task again.

Upon reaching the square we found the place abuzz with excited talk of an amazing creature that had been there only moments before, a female golden puma. The answers to our queries regarding the creature revealed that it seemed very troubled and that it had a thin gold chain around its neck. The puma apparently wanted to remove the chain most desperately.

I must say that I was extremely fascinated by these events. My love for the great cats had brought me many times to Seolfar Strake to hunt, and be hunted, by the pumas. Mind you, I had no intention of hurting a creature as fine as this golden puma. In fact, I began to feel that the cat somehow needed me to help her in any way I could.

A week went by and I still had not seen the cat again. Others had, however, and they also remarked on another interesting sight. A young woman had come to the square wearing a similar, if not the very same, golden chain. By then I was quite

frustrated that I had not seen the puma myself, and I was full of questions. Who was this girl? How and why were she and the puma both linked? Was the chain the key? None seemed to have the answers yet and my frustration grew.

It wasn't until I met the girl that the mystery began to unravel. I happened to walk into the square one day and came face to face with a beautiful young human. She wore

(Continued on page 9)

Commentary

Fear and Loathing in Kulthea

by Greywulf Alliantha

Of late, there have been discussions in town about the meaning of such terms as *evil* and *good*. For the most part, these have focused on questions of origins–what is the source of the Essence, what is the source and nature of the Unlife, and from where did it come, and what does its presence mean? Wonderful discussions, these, but my concerns are somewhat less abstract.

Evil is one approach to existence, and the approach of choice for many sentient beings in this world. It is the spirit within those who seek to live life abundantly. To walk within the Shadow is to question and push the boundaries of experience, and to feel the drive for greatness at the very core of being.

Others choose another path. There are those who believe that the natural impulses of folk must be constrained, just as fences must be erected around cattle to keep them from wandering afield. Those of this mind, unfortunately, are seldom content to constrain their own herds; they feel the need to fence in all the folk.

Looking back into history, one can see many who chose to pursue greatness. One also sees those more fearful folk, who used their power to subdue and suppress free thinking folk wherever and whenever they could. Old battles between freedom and fear

(Continued on page 11)

Bloodsmythe's Bestiary

Concerning the Dreaded Kral

by Bloodsmythe Gunfsman

The editors of the fledgling paper *Kulthea Chronicle* first approached me on an icy February morning. As on most such winter mornings, I had closeted myself in my room at House Aspis and set to work. The day's task was the annotation of a folio on torkaan spines, an undertaking which might have felt less of a chore had the inclement weather not required that I close the windows tight, shutting out the chill wind off the bay but shutting in the pungent aroma of decay. After having ushered Gira quickly out after informing her that it would be a simple matter to transpose a few of my notes into a weekly column on the fauna of the area, I paused and twirled in my hand the small, weighted hammer I use for cracking vertebrae. As the swirling snow accumulated on the window panes, it occurred to me that the first subject of my column could be only one creature. The beast most sorely in need of dissecting at the moment was the Kral.

The Kral are a seafaring breed tending towards piracy, murder, and a number of other excesses with which I will not bore the reader. Fairly recently a group of them has taken up residence in the Seolfar Strake, causing great concern to the citizens of Kelfour's. Almost-daily forays to slay these barbarians have failed to produce much impression upon their rather small cerebellums. While the Kelfourian interest in these brutes is great, a trick of our climates which causes the dead to decompose rapidly, and the rather long walk to the edges of Lake Mir (among other minor considerations) had previously prevented me from examining them closely. If I were to prepare an analysis of the Kral, someone would have to venture into the twisted winter wonderland that Kulthea had become. Someone would have to trudge through snow banks, scurry over frost-hardened rocks, wade through muck and mire, and generally inconvenience themselves to obtain a usable specimen. Pulling my cassock tighter about me, I rang the brass bell at the edge of my table to summon my manservant.

Twelve hours later Dirtbeard returned sputtering profanities and mumbling about my Dyari heritage. The stocky dwarf was filthy. As always, my gaze was first drawn to his rat's nest of a beard. An army of vivisectionists such as I could have spent days examining the frozen remains therein. He threw down a puma hide, scattering beakers and dissecting knives, but as for the Kral, he had only harsh words. From his demented ravings as he sat drinking a concoction of hot rum and ale that only a dwarf could stomach, I managed to glean a bit about the Kral's habits and combat abilities.

Kral Warrior at Kelfour's Landing

Dirtbeard told me that even more fearsome Kral inhabited the nearby mine. When I asked him for more detail, he hemmed and hawed, claiming an old injury he had gotten while rescuing a clumsy elf had prevented his stooping to enter the mine. I gave Dirtbeard a few coins and sent him happily off to the nearest tavern, tactfully refraining from pointing out the unlikelihood of finding lengths of timber short enough to fashion a door that low. I reached for my warmest coat as I headed out of my workshop. How ironic it would be if my life of dabbling in forbidden arts were to end with a common cold.

(Next month: Bloodsmythe versus the even-more-dreaded Kral Warfarer. Not for the faint of heart!)

Here are the notes I took regarding the Kral of the village, based upon Dirtbeard's somewhat incoherent and agitated account:

	Kral Mercenaries	Kral Warriors
Level	17	19
Approx CPs	175	220
AT	AT1 +3	AT1 +3
Attacks/OB	broadsword/139	morningstar/145
DB	105	111
Round Time	6-8 seconds	6-8 seconds
Skin	None	None
Treasure	Level II chests	Level II chests
Special	Elemental resistance	Elemental resistance

Note: The common Kral Warrior or Mercenary, coming from a barbarian culture, disdains the use of all armor but a shield. Their skin is so thick with scars as to increase the THT of normal flesh by 3. Also, these hardy seamen are unusually resistant to the elements, having THTs of 80 against shockbolts and 47 against firebolts. They are immune to cold.

Dreams Sacred and Profane

by Gallenod Varynesti

[Ed - This is the third installment of Gallenod's popular story. The conclusion will appear in next month's KC]

The little caravan entered Pragor, the ancestral seat of the Duke of Meloria, without fanfare, barely a ripple in the sea of traffic passing through the front gate. Algo Stonearm sighed in relief as the wagons passed through the solid stone gate of the outer keep. After two weeks in the open, the young Dwarf was glad to see that a solid stone roof would cover his head tonight while he slept. He felt safer already.

"Algo! Quit your daydreaming and get the horses and wagons quartered!" Brugo Ironhand, the caravan master, glared at his apprentice with ill-concealed bad humor. The grey-bearded older Dwarf was still surly about being ambushed by ogres in the mountains. If not for a stroke of amazing good fortune, they might have all died.

"Oh, Brugo, let the poor boy be. I'm sure he knows his work." The voice was musical, female, and elven. Delphia Atyanna smiled at the grumpy master trader and lightly stroked his balding pate. Brugo blushed slightly at the attention. Delphia was a typical elven female, which meant she was tall, lithe, and stunningly attractive.

The old dwarf grumbled a bit more under his breath, but deferred to the elven magess. Algo breathed a sigh of relief and started the lead wagon in the direction of the livery stable. Maybe, thought Algo, haggling with the proprietor would improve his master's mood.

The rest of the wagons followed along. Brugo and Delphia drove the second. The teamsters who'd started the trip with the caravan had run away during the ogre attack a week earlier. Only one had returned from the dark forest to rejoin the caravan, and he had been so frightened by the experience that he was almost useless. He rode with Algo. The mercenaries Brugo had hired to protect the caravan had pitched in to help drive the other two wagons for the remainder of the trip.

Mercenaries. Algo shook his head sadly. They'd all been taken completely by surprise by the ambush on the mountain trail. Delphia's magic had been of little use, as she'd been struck down from behind. The half-elven ranger, Gaden Pathwarden, and the human cleric, Pelag Belorson, had both been taken out by cunningly constructed traps. They drove the third wagon.

And on the last wagon, a huge, brooding figure sat alone. Andar Trollbane, the leader of the mercenary group. He had spoken little the rest of the trip, his mood dark and gloomy. Even Delphia could not lift the perpetual frown from the high man's brow.

Algo had been right; haggling with the stable master did improve Brugo's mood, though the stable master was seen glaring at nearly everyone after the negotiations were over. The group stabled their horses and padlocked their wagons in a small warehouse. Algo saw Brugo transfer a small package to his pack. He had no idea what it was. Their official cargo consisted mainly of fine rugs and other woven goods. Perhaps that package was the item the ogres had been seeking.

The ogres. They had beaten the mercenaries and Brugo, but had been tricked by the little halfling that had joined them at their last stop. Algo was sure that something else had happened after that, but couldn't seem to remember exactly what it had been. He'd apparently fainted. The mercenaries had said something about their boss, the infamous sorcerer Whizbamph the Incredible, and a forget spell. Algo shrugged mentally. He was almost glad he couldn't remember; it must have been a traumatic experience for such complete memory loss. He had no interest in dealing with sorcerers, and had no desire to meet one.

"Hey, you! Put that down!" Algo turned to see an apple merchant wagging her finger at a small figure holding an apple almost as large as his head.

"You gotta pay for that, you little thief!" she shrieked. The halfling looked at her brightly, as though she were a particularly amusing stage act. This seemed to infuriate her even more. Algo moved to intercede before she did something drastic.

"Please, Goodwife," offered Algo, "he's not a thief. I'm sure he meant to pay you." Algo looked sideways at the halfling and whispered, "You do have money, don't you?"

Wimby Littlefoot, still smiling broadly at the apoplectic apple merchant, whispered back, "Silver? Why should I carry silver?" Algo's heart sank and he reached for his purse.

Another figure had come through the crowd to see the commotion. He was a tall elf, dressed in midnight blue fighting leathers with a matching cloak and thigh-length black boots. He had flowing silver hair and wore an ornate rapier at his side. Algo noticed that his cloak clasp was a silver cat with emeralds for eyes. The elf's eyes were the same shade as the emeralds.

"Is there a problem, Madam?" the elf inquired. Seeing the halfling with the apple, he chuckled, reached into his purse, and handed a silver coin to the apple vendor. Seemingly stunned by the elf's presence, the vendor fumbled to make change.

"Never mind about that, Goodwife," the elf smiled, "keep the change." The vendor stammered an

(Continued on page 6)

(Dreams, continued from page 5)

unintelligible reply, curtsied, and retreated to her stall. The little halfling beamed up at the elf.

"You're a nice elf," said Wimby. "I like you." He bit into the apple, managing to cover his entire face with juice in the process.

Algo bowed and tugged his whiskers. "Thank you, sir. I appreciate the help. Do you know Wimby?"

The elf looked at the halfling greedily consuming the apple and chuckled. "Wimby?" he replied. "No, I don't know any halflings named Wimby. A halfling did me a good turn though, once. A very good turn. I try to repay the favor as often as I can." The elf smiled, as if at some private joke.

Wimby waved and scampered off through the crowd, always managing to avoid getting stepped on or run over. Algo sighed, realizing that Wimby had gotten this far in life without him to halfling-sit. The dwarf decided he should get back to his duties.

"You're with the caravan that just came in, aren't' you?" asked the elf. "The one with the mercenaries."

"Yes," Algo replied guardedly. After the ambush on the trip, he was wary of strangers inquiring into his business.

"Ah, good," said the elf. "My name is Lachmar Belgesti. I need to talk with your escorts."

Algo started slightly at the name. Lachmar Belgesti was the chief agent of the mercenary organization Andar's group belonged to. He was a legend in the mercenary business, one of the most cunning minds in the known world, and was reputed to be one of the finest swordsmen that had ever lived. Algo had heard that in one duel, Lachmar had signed his initials in his opponent's body before killing him.

"Y-yes sir," he stammered. "I'll take you to the inn."

The elf frowned. "No," he said. "I'd like you to bring them to me at the inner keep. I have rooms for them there. Also your master and yourself. At the personal invitation of the Duke."

****

A day full of surprises, Algo thought as he entered the Sleeping Lion Inn. Meeting one of the more infamous mercenaries in the known world at an apple stall! A human Duke inviting two dwarves and a young mercenary band to stay in his keep! Algo was also surprised that Lachmar had invited the halfling, too. Potential for disaster, Algo thought. The innocent and mischievous little halfling would be an accident waiting for a place to happen at Ducal court.

Brugo hadn't seemed surprised at the invitation. In fact, he seemed to have been expecting it. "About time, 'prentice," he growled. "Now we can get this over with." Algo nodded at his master, reminding himself that Brugo

(Continued on page 7)

GemStone III

Fame Rankings

by Celestin Drowstar February 25

FIGHTER		THIEF		MAGE		CLERIC	
Waldo2 Ptolomy	29	Arturo Bresnahanini	35	Dartaghan Darkstar	40	Ladydawn Diamond	42
Gilthor Longblade	24	Mikhail Minnehan	32	Odds Bodkins	37	Raphael Kinevon	38
Metaboculous Griden	23	Stanyon Sting	27	Catrissa Dakhati	33	Sydna Warrick	34
HEALER		**BARD**		**RANGER**		**SORCERER**	
Strom O'Berin	64	Enegue Lion Heart	38	Trachten Hickapod	37	Thalior Farthor	34
Kayla Kyndhart	43	Oghier Sleepytoes	30	Fxg Lyon	36	Nixie Trevize	33
Caretaker D'BoldHome	33	Heron Vestone	29	Maruko Ashimine	34	Mnesilichus Ectheli	30
COMMON MAN		**HIGH MAN**		**HALF-ELF**		**WOOD ELF**	
Kyreth No-Name	22	Enegue Lion Heart	38	Kayla Kyndhart	43	Thalior Farthor	34
Crud Evidane	20	Raphael Kinevan	38	Ladydawn Diamond	42	Mara Tallow	21
Taes Alchitar	19	Trachten Hickapod	37	Fxg Lyon	36	Joqain Denark	20
HIGH ELF		**FAIR ELF**		**DWARF**		**HALFLING**	
Strom O'Berin	64	Arturo Bresnahanini	35	Caretaker D'BoldHome	33	Dartaghan Darkstar	40
Finrod Felagund	6	Sydna Warrick	34	Aeklug Baeyenbreghaldt	32	Odds Bodkins	37
Crimson Of_Inverness	15	Whilder Planrathe	31	Oghier Sleepytoes	30	Lairaerrykthrok Tykil Vuul	33

(Dreams, continued from page 6)
would tell him what this was all about in his own good time.

The mercenaries, too, seemed to have been expecting Lachmar, though they were surprised at the invitation to the inner keep. Andar's mood darkened even further; he sulked while his companions packed.

"Oh, Andar," sighed Delphia, "you're being silly. Alright, so we didn't do that well on the trip. We're here, and we're safe. Everyone has bad luck occasionally. We're just fortunate enough to have survived it."

Andar closed his eyes and sighed.

"But he never has succumbed to bad luck, Delphia," offered Gaden. "He's never before failed at anything in his life that was important to him. Not combat, not gaming, nothing. Not even love," he said, looking meaningfully at Delphia.

The elven magess blushed deeply. Algo liked Gaden; the ranger was almost as forthright as a dwarf, but a lot more diplomatic about it.

Andar stared at the ranger. "Once again, my friend, you've pierced the heart of the matter. I am a stranger to failure. And I know I should accept it more gracefully." Andar sighed. "But I'm not."

Pelag moved to place his hand on Andar's shoulder. "As someone once said, Andar: 'That which does not kill us, makes us stronger.' We are not dead. Perhaps we shall yet gain something from this defeat."

"And perhaps," Andar replied, "this defeat will make us too cautious." He regarded each of his companions in turn. "Can any of you honestly say that you haven't given in to some self-doubt since the fight?"

No one answered immediately. Pelag lowered his head, as if in prayer. Delphia's eyes were moist; she sat down next to Andar and laid her head on his shoulder. Gaden alone met Andar's gaze.

"Yes," said Gaden. "I have always had doubts, even before that fight. But true courage is not being fearless. It is overcoming your fears and doing what must be done anyway." With that, the ranger closed his pack and gestured at the door. "Time to leave," he said.

The four friends left. Quietly. Algo picked up a few last things and closed his rucksack. Wimby sat in the corner, bright-eyed and alert. He'd not interrupted the discussion once, a rare thing for him. Now, he looked at Algo with a puzzled expression.

"How about you, Algo? Are you unhappy, too?" asked the little halfling.

Algo shrugged. "No, I'm just happy to be alive. I can fight, but I'm not a fighter. I don't take defeat personally, like they do. It may be a trader's view, but losing in negotiation is usually instructive and rarely life-threatening. Comes with the job."

Wimby nodded. "OK. Just checking." The halfling beamed a smile at Algo and added, "And I think you're much more than just a trader, Algo. You're a nice person, and you're my friend."

Algo blushed slightly. With friends like Wimby, he could look forward to a long life full of angry apple merchants. The Dwarf chuckled as he escorted the halfling out of the room.

The Ducal court was not what Algo expected. There were no trumpet fanfares, and the people seemed much like those in the outer keep, if slightly better dressed. Algo had always heard that human nobility were vainglorious buffoons, obsessed with protocol. Not like Dwarven kings and queens, who were more like parents to an extended family than rulers.

But the atmosphere here was plain and simple. Almost funereal, Algo thought. Everyone seemed very quiet. Lachmar briefed them on the proper protocols, keeping a particular eye on Wimby to make sure the halfling didn't wander off.

The Duke arrived, with two of his advisors following discreetly behind. Edvar Thorson, Duke of Meloria, was an older man with flowing black hair and a short beard. He appeared agitated and impatient.

To his right was a cleric: Lord Bishop Derek Thomason, the Duke's personal confessor. Pelag bowed to the senior cleric, who nodded in return.

To his left was a man in plain white robes. His skull was shaven. He was introduced as Master Healer Satryn Patan. The healer nodded and smiled at the group. He seemed distracted, too.

The Duke looked at Lachmar. "You have it?" he asked.

Lachmar nodded. "Yes, Your Highness. Brugo, I believe the time has come to deliver your package."

The old dwarf grunted, reached inside his vest, and pulled out the wrapped package that Algo had seen him take from the wagon earlier. He offered it to the Duke, who accepted it with a sigh.

"Is it safe to open?" the Duke asked.

Lachmar nodded. "It was enchanted so that only you could open it safely, Your Highness."

The Duke nodded. He stared off into space for a moment, and then seemed to come to a decision. "I thank you all for this. You have no idea what this is, or that you risked your lives for it. I feel you have a right to know the story behind your trip, and the forces that opposed you. Please, come with us."

The healer frowned. "Milord Duke, is this wise?" he asked. "Her condition is?"

"Critical," sighed the Duke. "Yes, Satryn, I know. But I don't think they can do any further damage. Who knows, they might even be able to help."

The healer nodded, though Algo could see he still objected to their presence. Just being overprotective, Algo thought to himself.

The Duke led them to a bedchamber. On the bed lay a beautiful young woman, asleep. Her

(Continued on page 8)

(Dreams, continued from page 7)
sleep was not peaceful, however. She twisted in the sheets. Her face was contorted in panic and she seemed to be struggling with something. Two nurses helped hold her still and tried to comfort her.

"My daughter, the Lady Janea, Marquesse of Pragor," announced the Duke. "I am a widower; my wife died giving birth to our only child. Two months ago, Janea was overtaken by this dreaming malady. She has been asleep, ravaged constantly by nightmares." At his voice, the girl on the bed moaned and twisted again. Her pain was mirrored in the Duke's face.

"Bishop Derek," continued the Duke, "determined that she has not been possessed by demons. Satryn felt that the nightmares were a psychic influence, and that the only way to combat them was to get her a mystic diadem that would help soothe her mind."

The Duke held up the package. "This, should be the answer." He carefully broke the wax seal and unwrapped the oilskin. He removed a silver circlet with a single, large opal set in the front. The stone shimmered with opalescent light. He carefully reached over and placed the diadem on his daughter's head.

Janea's face softened slightly, and she sighed gently. She ceased struggling and began breathing normally. The Duke looked relieved and smiled at Satryn. "It appears you were right, old friend." The healer smiled in return, his eyes fixed on the diadem.

"Yes," Satryn replied, "it seems that I was right after all. Now all we have to do is wait."

Maybe it was just his imagination, but Algo had a strange feeling that what the healer seemed to be waiting for wasn't the same thing as the Duke. Silly dwarf, he thought to himself, you're getting paranoid.

They left Janea with the nurses, who had strict instructions to inform the Duke of any change in his daughter's condition. The Duke insisted that everyone join him for dinner to celebrate the diadem's safe arrival.

"Your pardon, Your Highness," said Lachmar, "but might we have some time to freshen up? These good people have just finished a long and dangerous journey, and I wish to see them settled properly so they may fully enjoy your hospitality."

"Of course, of course!" exclaimed the Duke. "How discourteous of me! I'm so overcome with joy I've been an ungracious host. Please, Lachmar, show them to their rooms. Dinner will be at nightfall."

*****

(to be continued)

What Ya Gonna Be, Sonny?

by Raine Zorn

I was just sittin' outside the gates the other day when my son wanders up and asks, "Pop, if ya could do it all over again what would ya be?" Well, of course, my first thought was I wouldn't change a thing. Life as a thief's been good, all the advantages of a fighter but with a sideline of pick'n and thieve'n to fill in those slow times when yer lounge'n about the Square. But then I look at the boy and remember that it's about time he chose a profession and he just doesn't have the knack for thieve'n. Then I remembered a discussion I had with a sorcerer a while back...

I asked her what made her such a good sorcerer. She grinned and said she wasn't all that good, just an average sorcerer and that to be a really good sorcerer, ya had to do a lot of things right when you were young. I asked her what she meant and she said, "First of all, ya gotta be born with attributes that only one in a hundred kids have. Four or five good attributes plus two or three real good ones." I asked, "Do the gods really have to bless ya with that many good attributes?" She nods and says, "To start with, you need to have a really good natural sense of either *intuition* or *empathy*. Both wouldn't hurt but if you got just one then sorcerer training will bring the other up to a passable level. Then you need *strength* and *quickness* to help your fight'n when yer young, and *agility* to improve your sense of magic. Those'll use up your best attributes, then you'll need *reasoning* and *eloquence* to help you gain experience and *constitution* to aid your physical development. That will leave just two attributes, *self discipline* and *presence* that ya don't need that bad. But that's only half of it. You need to be sure that the potentials are good too, especially for the first five attributes, *empathy*, *intuition*, *strength*, *agility*, and *quickness*." I said, "I can see where that would be a rare individual..."

But look'n at my son now I see that he has most all those attributes she was talk'n about. Funny I hadn't noticed it before. I also recall I talked to the sorcerer about the profession in general.

I asked, "Why the hell did you ever become a sorcerer? Why, some spells aren't even researched yet!" Well, she let out a laugh that would curl the toes on a golem. Then she slapped me up side the head and said, "Why do you pick chests, you old fool?" I started to reach for my sword, then I remembered the effect some of her spells had when we were hunt'n together. I said, "Sorry, didn't know it was such a touchy subject." She smiled and said, "It isn't that touchy, it's just the same question I get every time. Actually, to answer the question, I liked the idea of being something a little different. I liked the idea of dabbling in both the essence and channeling areas. And I wanted to go

(Continued on page 17)

(Visions of Marliese, continued from page 3)
tattered clothing and had lovely golden blonde hair and striking eyes of the deepest blue. The girl had a most timid look in her eyes and in fact seemed very afraid at being around so many people. Dreamweaver and Greywulf were there doing their best to calm her but she still seemed very afraid. I tried as well to help them but not knowing the girl's plight I was unsuccessful in easing her distress. It was then that conversation turned to the continuing frequent Kral attacks on the town as well as in surrounding areas. It became evident that this young woman was somehow involved.

She gazed at me once that evening. Across the crowd in the Square our eyes locked only for a fleeting moment before she turned away, seemingly still afraid of so many people around her. There was something in that look...I tried to grasp it. A mirror of something I felt but could not name. I resolved to myself then and there to not stop until her troubled soul had found peace.

Another week passed. I had not been able to visit Kelfour's for some time as family business led me away. Upon the day of my return the Kral attacked with a vengeance. Mercenaries and soldiers were at the town gates beating back the defenders inside the very walls of the town that we all called home. Crud and I, along with Kali, Bloodsmythe and many others, ran to the gates to help. Essence crackled and swords rang, making the din of our battle sound like some eerie magical song. We held back the warriors for many minutes as others came to add to our numbers. Soon our efforts began to exact their toll on our weary bodies. The Kral kept coming and coming, intent on take Kelfour's from us. In the chaos of the battle a Kral slipped behind me and launched a blow to my head that sent me reeling. I struggled to stay conscious but the blow was too harsh and blackness soon overcame me...

A gentle swaying roused me. I thought briefly of my adopted father's old rocking chair and how he used to sit out on our porch lecturing me about nature and surviving in the wilds. Soon I became more awake and felt the pain in my head. My surroundings became clear as I woke up fully. The smell of timber, rocking, creaking noises, sounds of waves lapping led me to realize that I was in the hold of a ship. The Kral had taken me hostage! Looking around I noticed I was not alone in this fate as others roused near me, groaning as I was.

Turning to check the others for injuries, I saw that there were eight of us. Crud and Bloodsmythe were attempting to wrestle with a hatch that seemed to be locked...

She gazed at me once that evening. Across the crowd in the Square our eyes locked only for a fleeting moment before she turned away, seemingly still afraid of so many people around.

I'll not delve fully into the events on board that ship, as it would take a tale as large if not larger than this one to recount the happenings there. We did however come across a sharp knocking behind a door. Once we got the door opened we rushed in to find a man, hurt and bleeding, chained to the floor.

"Help her...the tears...find them and save her," he croaked out his plea weakly, blood seeping from his mouth.

His head and chest were bleeding at an alarming rate. Neither Crud nor I could stop his bleeding. We tried desperately as the others asked him score of questions. Who were we to save? Where were the tears? The man –we learned his name, Jacob–was in a terrible state, his strength fading fast.

"Promise me, recover the tears and rescue her...tell her that I am sorry and beg her forgiveness. I was so very wrong."

We knew then who he meant. The very girl in the Square that day whose eyes caught mine. She was in trouble and needed us.

"Claedesbrim..." Jacob croaked, "they took her to Claedesbrim. You must find her. Promise me."

We all vowed to Jacob that we would not rest until the task was done. Again his condition got worse. Blood pooled on the floor of the hold now, pumping unchecked from his wounds. I was at such a loss. This poor man's life was draining away and I could do nothing. I knelt and held his hand gently.

"Jacob, hear me. We will not stop until she is safe, I promise you. We will find her and free her. Take comfort. I will deliver your plea of forgiveness and message of love." Speaking those words, tears came unbidden to my eyes as I looked into his and saw in them only the faintest of relief.

He reached upward then and touched me. I could see the life draining away from his weary eyes as he took his last shuddering breath.

We all were quiet for a moment as I laid Jacob back onto the floor of the ship. I looked up then to the others, and saw what I knew to be a mirror of my own expression on their faces. In grim determination we set ourselves to our task and guided the ship home...

The town was a beehive of activity when we arrived. People were running about, making sure there were no more Kral inside the city. Everyone immediately wanted to know what happened, so I set out to tell the story of Jacob and how we needed to rescue the girl and find the three crystal tears.

In truth a tear had already been found. Jacob had it with him on the ship along with a torn parchment that we could not decipher. Before beginning our search for the girl, we dropped off the parchment at the scrivener's shop to see if it could be read.

"Find the other half of this," the

(Continued on page 10)

(Visions of Marliese, continued from page 9)
master scribe told us, "and I should be able to decipher the writing."

The search then began in earnest. Our numbers swelled and it was decided to split up into groups, one to search Claedesbrim and the other to search the Spider Temple, where it was believed a tear might rest.

I heard her then...her thoughts filled all of our minds.

"Someone help me, it's dark here. There are many others here...all dead."

I felt her despair keenly.

"Hold tight, dear one," I thought back to her with the aid of my amulet, "we come to find you."

Her thoughts urging us to immediate action, we set out on our quest. I took my group through the gates and ran to Claedesbrim straight away. What we met there still chills my bones today. Kral. Scores of them set upon us. Mercenaries, warriors, and the dreaded warfarers attacked mercilessly. Countless times the warfarers barked harsh magic phrases calling forth dark ethereal waves of essence that pinned us to the earth. Many of my friends fell. Bloodsmythe, Tomasso, and many others died before me. The dungeon was a living torment filled with pain and harsh magic. All the while a sweet, gentle yet frightened voice called me onward.

"Erek? Are you coming? Help me, it's dark here."

It took us hours. Everyone was combing Claedesbrim. We seemed to get closer to her only to find that we were getting farther away. Then another thought came...

"I think I've found the place."

It was Bleys. Apparently he had searched a seldom-explored part of the dungeon and found the door behind which the girl was imprisoned.

We rushed to the door immediately and found it locked. Logun was able to open it with a word and quickly we rushed into the cell beyond. And there she was...bruised and bleeding, her eyes hollow. She was so exhausted all she could do was lean upon my shoulder. I held her steady and comforted her.

It was then we saw her jailer. A huge, ugly half-Kral stepped out into the open from behind a torture device. My rage mounted again. How dare this foul slug harm such an innocent person! We all launched our attacks in earnest, our swords swinging and spells flying. In moments the thing was dead and upon its body we found a second tear and the other half of the parchment.

We returned to town, taking the parchment to the scrivener as well as healing our own torn bodies. She leaned upon me on the way there and whispered her thanks to me.

"I must tell you of Jacob, little one," I said, remembering the second half of my promise to him. "He bade us find you and beg forgiveness on his behalf."

"Where is he?" she asked, an expectant look in her eyes.

"Gone, dear. We could not save him."

"Then I am to stay this way forever?" She became visibly saddened and a little afraid now.

"No. He told us of the tears. All we need now is the third."

It is here that my story becomes fragmented, and I must apologize for this. I had to leave Kelfour's for two weeks and could not return to participate in the events that occurred during that time. However, I have talked to others who were there and done my best to piece together the gaps...

It seems that the parchment halves contained a map to a ruined village in Seolfar Strake. A valley previously unexplored in our lands lay open now for all to find. A crystal clear lake occupied this valley, and upon an island there was found a shrine to the goddess Iloura. It was not yet a joyous finding, for the valley was inhabited by foul occupants. Kral. A village full of Kral mercenaries and warriors, and a mine that housed the dreaded warfarers awaited those who came to explore there. But that was not the worst. The Kral had a driving force behind their efforts, the evil Lord Kral himself. The recounting of that battle with Lord Kral is sketchy at best, but from what I can ascertain it took most of the greatest of our own Kelfourian Lords to best him.

But the deed was done thankfully by Kelfour's best. After some rejoicing the group set about to free the girl from her enchantment so that she and the puma may walk in the land in peace. At the appointed time, when the great orb Orhan would block out its lesser cousin Charon from its view and taint upon the earth, the crystal tears were brought to the shrine and placed within a skylight that seemed set there for that specific purpose. The tears were returned to their place of origin, and the golden chain removed from around the girl's neck.

What we met there still chills my bones today.

The crowd gathered in joy at finally freeing the girl from her enchantment, most of Kelfour's was on hand for the event. Sadly I was not. For if I was I might have been able to prevent what happened next. A fiend of a man, Lord Siarl was his name, came and took the girl again, apparently to fulfill some foul plot. He kidnapped her in front of all present, and no one could hold him or keep him from doing so.

It has been many months since that day. I have grown beyond the wraiths I once hunted, and now take my fight to the monastery to battle the monastic liches. I have been named Lord, the title I had striven for. Soon I will be able to read the rune and find my way to the broken lands and whatever lies beyond. But still I return to this shrine, sometimes alone or oftentimes with friends. To offer our strength and hearts to Iloura's child who cannot enjoy her time upon this

(Continued on page 11)

To Serve

by Delios

A tired, timid man
whom I saw every day
came strolling past on Windak Street
in a tired, timid way

He was no bold adventurer
He did not wear a sword
He had no spells, no magic charms
He was neither beast nor lord

This man was not a sight
He did not strike the eye
And if you were not looking
He'd probably pass you by

But one day this timid man
He walked right up to me
And in his tired, timid voice
He said, "I thank thee."

The little man then walked away
I've never seen him since
That timid man who was not a thief
A mage, warrior, or prince

Now I know why for I'm here
To keep safe and serve him well
Kelfour's Landing I will protect
And all who within its walls do dwell

(Visions of Marliese, continued from page 10)
land in happiness. On rare occasions, Mother Kulthea sends her voice to us, to lift our souls and remind us that the girl still lives. Mostly we hear nothing but silence and wonder if she's alright.

In the months that followed I began to realize that what I felt for the girl is akin to the feelings one would have for a little sister. I do love this child, but it's a love a Champion can only have for those he has sworn to protect, and on this day do I sit here again in my shrine and speak her name, only hoping she can hear me.

"Marliese."

(Fear and Loathing, continued from page 3)
fill many stories. Truly, it was first in the songs of my childhood that I learned what it means to be Evil, the glory of it, and the fearful and often violent reactions it produces in the timid.

For example, who in history stands taller than the Great-Souled One? Facing defeat at the hands of Utha, the fires of her heart screaming their preference to see the world torn asunder, to see it destroyed rather than seized in the iron fists of Utha and his ilk, she embraced the Unlife. The Evil which filled Kadaena was a fierce love, a great and terrible passion which transcended even its object, and a grand and noble defiance. I think that none who have followed have lived as truly as did she, in those last moments.

During the Wars of Liberation, thousands upon thousands of fair immortals laid down their lives, rather than bend their knees in submission to those hordes who tramped beneath the blood-soaked banners of foul Orhan. Those who long knew life and cherished it most chose oblivion, rather than the living death of enslavement to the will of those who would be masters. The Children of the Woode were slaughtered, it is true, but never conquered.

No, this is not the "history" one finds in the so-called tomes, nor should that surprise any. I do not know the author of those pages, but I know them attributed to those master propagandists of Nomikos, those thugs of the mind. For their Orhanian masters, the near-extinction of free races was not sufficient to satisfy their insatiable hunger for domination, no, they set their minions to thefts of history itself, replacing real events with work of twisted fiction. Well, perhaps they have made a mistake here, for memories remain and immortals yet live who saw those days, so the truth survives, if only by word of mouth, whispered in shadows, or even here, on printed page in Kelfour's Landing.

Any who have read or heard history know that Orhan uses fear as a lash to motivate its thralls, but what motivates those gods of glare? Well, who can know those minds? But by their actions, I say fear rules Orhan as well. Oh, this day their might is sufficient to work their will upon our world. But what if free folk pursue their studies of magic and other arcane disciplines? Is it possible that these tyrants have been suppressing a great truth, that with knowledge, those who walk the face of Kulthea could equal, even surpass those who infest that moon? Could this be the reason they cannot abide any with a genuine thirst for knowledge? How much history that would explain!

But to the main point again. What, you ask, is *evil*? Nothing more, perhaps, than the recognition of the potential within us all.

In Upcoming Issues of the Kulthea Chronicle...

- A candid interview with the ever-affable and often incorrigible Lord Elvanion Darkholt...
- A blow-by-blow account of the February Gladiatorial Games...
- The conclusion of Gallenod's spellbinding tale, *Dreams Sacred and Profane*...
- A guide to getting the most out of GemStone III information online...
- A historical overview of the most powerful, unique and fascinating artifacts ever to surface in Kulthea...
- A first look at the new catacombs...
- Tips on starting out your life in the profession of your choice...
- Creature pointers, area survey, and maps...
- More regular columns, features, gossip, and great artwork coming your way!

(Survival Guide, continued from page 1)
which so plagued me at that time rushed back into my mind, and I remembered...

Another half-elf, long, straw-straight, brown hair braided severely to keep it out of the way, wide eyed, and without possessions except for a small purse of silvers (a loan granted by the local authorities to get me started). I recognized no one, understood nothing. I didn't even know how best to get myself from one place to another. It was pathetic and totally depressing. I was lucky. A young thief, called Chaum, took me in hand and gave me The Basics. I am forever thankful for the time he took. To repay in kind, I would like to pass some of my garnered knowledge on to you who have just started. Life in the Landing (and surrounding environs) is usually exciting, often romantic, and above all, fun. I hope this helps you survive your first year. (Commands to be entered will be in a **CAPITALIZED** format, and Player Notes will be listed at the end.)

When you start your life in Kulthea, you are truly making a new beginning. The best thing to do, I have found, is to get to know yourself. Who are you, and what **INFO**rmation do you have about yourself? What **IN**-Ventory are you carrying? What is the state of your **HEALTH** and **WEALTH**? Knowing these things will better help you to interact with the peoples of the Landing, and the inhabitants and denizens of Kulthea at large.

When you are ready to start exploring, just wander. It's difficult to get into something terribly dangerous within the Landing proper, and very hard to wander outside the gate without being aware of it. If you want go someplace specific, you can always ask **DI**Rections, and you will be read a list of where you can go. Walk the streets and get a good working knowledge of the area. If you become lost or need help with something, ask someone! We have all been in your boots before, and most of us remember how frustrating the first days in Kelfour's can be. Almost everyone is willing to help out, and some will give you the guided tour and be sure you have been equipped in a fashion that makes survival easier. Many of the established Houses of Kelfour's Landing, including House Aspis, House Phoenix, House Paupers, and House Arcane, give extensive tours of the Landing on a regular basis and I am sure they will continue to do so. (Information about such tours is usually posted as you first enter GS3.) As a note, be open to suggestions from others in the Landing. Some of the information they share may not be new to you but since we are never sure how much someone else knows, we tend to reiterate. Believe me, we aren't trying to be condescending, just helpful.

When you start your life in Kulthea, you are truly making a new beginning.

N.B.: If you become totally and utterly bamboozled by life, ask for **ASSIST**ance. Your friendly Game Masters are on call and they can usually answer queries that stump the rest of us. But please, be patient and courteous. Sometimes they have many assists to answer, and few GM's to go around. Plus, they cannot give you specific hints as to how to solve puzzles or elements of the game that you are meant to discover for yourself. Sometimes if you are totally stumped on such things the best bet is to ask an older and wiser adventurer. *[Ed - Or type **ADVICE** for a walkthrough]*

Something which helped me a great deal was going to the GemStone III Library and browsing. I found stats on monsters, advice on roleplaying, and a collection of maps that are absolutely outstanding. And don't neglect the back issues of the GemStone III newsletters, including the *Kelfour Edition* and the *Kulthea Chronicle*. In every issue there is a ton of information, as well as great stories and art. (See Player Note 1.)

Daily Life in the Shadow World

Before you get out and really adventure, you should make sure you are stocked up on the equipment you will need to survive in the wilds, including armor (heavy hide is great), a weapon, and a backpack. Different merchants specialize in different items, and the shops you need to start with are all in close proximity to Town Square. Be careful in your purchases and don't forget to barter. Bartering will lower the price you pay on purchases now but the merchants may tend to raise their prices for persons who try to get too much of a good deal. **LOOK IN BACKPACK**, if you have one, to see what you may already have stashed in there. **ORDER** only what you truly need. Any extras are luxuries and, although nice, cut in on how much other stuff you can carry (like loot).

Once you start amassing items, you need a way to keep them safe. The property on your back is safe enough within the Landing proper, but not so much so out in the wilds. Your purse is subject to pickpocketing even in town, so put any extra silvers in the bank. Any extra equipment you want to save can be placed in one of the lockers at Moot Hall. Use the lockers sparingly, because each time you use them (whether to put in or take out) you get charged a usage fee. The more stuff in the locker, the more the fee. Also keep in mind, if you decide to reroll, the money in your bank account and the items in your locker are not saved to your new character.

The Hunt, and Exploring

Hunting in the wilds surrounding Kelfour's Landing is the main way people gain treasure, artifacts and the all-important experience and fame. Hunting can be exciting and fun, but

(Continued on page 13)

(Survival Guide, continued from page 12)
it can also be a pain in the patootie. Getting in over your head while hunting is the surest way to bring on your own death. As a friend once said to me, "I want you to become a *living* legend..." So, some basic tips for staying alive (which took me four lives to figure out, as I am none too quick on some scores it seems. Well, each death was a different kafaffel on my part...) follow.

First, before I forget, I found that you gain knowledge and/or experience and fame whenever you use any of your skills. This is important. If you are a healer and you heal someone, you gain experience. If you're a thief, hiding, ambushing and stalking can be used. Actually, anyone who has these skills can use them. And the more you do, the more you learn, and the sooner you can train again. So, in town, barter with the merchants, if you have that skill. Skin those rats, torkaans, and all–it uses your first aid skill. The more times you utilize these, the less monsters you have to hit. Make no mistake though, if you want to advance in your training in a timely manner, you will have to get out there and do some whacking!

One of the best ways to stay alive that I know of is to keep on the defensive whenever you are not actually bashing on things. A parry is defined as "an extraordinary defensive action taken by the defender which draws upon and takes away from some of his/her offensive ability. Parrying will lessen the effects of your opponent's attack against you" (GS3 Manual). Your **PAR**ry can be set from 1 to 100. The higher the number, the more you are using your defensive skills. A **PAR**ry 0 will mean an all-out attack–akin to berserking. Make sure your **PARRY** is at 100 whenever you are going from place to place, picking up treasure, are badly wounded or in an area where the monsters are too much for you. This can keep you alive when you are surprised by the monsters getting in a good whack before you even know they are there. Believe me, you can receive a critical hit before you know there is something wrong. I got to experience the realities of death a couple of times because of this. It was no fun and a royal pain in the behind for the others in the group who had to drag my stuff back to the Temple.

Another good idea is to always **GET WEAPON FROM BACKPACK** (or **SHEATH**) first. This puts the weapon in your right hand (all of us in Kulthea are right-handed), ready to attack with. If you **REMOVE SHIELD** first, you will probably end up bludgeoning your attacker with it, doing very little damage. If this happens you can either put everything away, and get it out in the right order, or you can **SWAP** hands. This will switch items to the other hand. To see what you have in each hand, you can check your **INV**entory. As a note, the handedness is also important when giving an item to someone. Whenever you **GIVE [person]**, it is assumed you mean to offer the item in your right hand. Try not to give away your new broadsword! It has happened.

Before you hunt, be sure you know where you are going and what you are hunting. Find out if the monster is well above your abilities. See what creatures live on the borders of the area (sometimes they cross over). It is better to know what may be coming after you. In the wild, you will find that surprises are generally ugly ones. What are your limitations? How is your **HEALTH**? How many Concussion Points (CP) can you take before you are dead? How is your mind? Have you oversaturated it? Only so much combat **EXP**erience can be absorbed before it becomes next to worthless. When you get tired, come back to town, rest a bit, then go out and slay some more! In next to no time you will be at the Inn receiving the benefits of your earlier training.

When it comes to the treasure garnered from hunting, most people share and share alike, selling all the items and dividing the resultant silvers. Some groups share the silvers and give the items to the most appropriate users. Some just grab and whoever is fastest wins. After the monster has been slain, take a **LOOK** around and see what you can see. If the critter has decomposed already, then any

(Continued on page 15)

Lady Heart

by Keener, of the Clan Chudei

've none and none in way of thought,
Which in a haze bleary, lost now.
A voice for soul; My voice be naught,
My soul be silent, dove now crow.
Amongst seraphim high and high,
Sweet Nightingale in midsong hears,
Alights singing on shoulder mine.
Nightingale sings, "Think through thy tears.
Prisons wrought of most hardy stone
Contain yes thy body, but mind.
'Tis too strong; 'Were the poet souls
Which burst though rock; soul such as
thine."
"Can't be this truth? Lost now be art?
"Nay," cries her. "But do what bids heart."

Heart! Oh heart! Thou art true cruel!
Oft art thou said; Still thou art keen
As blade that draws fast blood too well,
Leave ever sear of mournful weeping.
And so 'tis my recollection.
With fury wrought of grief, I feel
It leav'th me feverish and gone
To memry of War, I and thee,
Lady Heart; Thou comst forth from dim mists
That pervade these fell dreams of mine.
Thy silken hands touch my bound fists
And let free my passion to yon sky.
My bloodied arms she strok'th gentle.
'Round my mistress' grace, storm settles.

Familiar land my feet do tread.
Familiar faces mine eyes do meet.
She be here now by mad War's bed,
Tending to a beloved Blood seeks.
A kin to me she be. I love,
Though love from her is naught for I.
She cares for him whose war is god.
War I name him who forced her cry.
She of regal grace and stately air,
I weep to see her lowly so.
She, with halo of majesty, stare
Now on ground at War's boorish tone.
Lady Heart thy tears I bear alone,
But thou art my queen, on love's throne.

'Twas blackest of nights. darker still,
Thou hadst taken blade in slave's place,
That War had swung in jealous zeal.
Thou hath thus fallen in my place.
Innocence pervadeth our night,
Sharing grievances, share our light.
For life's journey, it be too dim
For single flame; Life be too dim.
Now thou hadst left life, War is spent.
As was I for I died as well.
Raging fire be no more I.
He bled away as thou hadst died.
Thy life in my hands bled away.
I took my leave come light of day.

Now I walk long, with one purpose true.
Lady Hearts no more, be young, entombed.
No blood shall seep past my light hand.
Life be saved from falling as sand.
A healing of a fiery soul
To keep the flame alight and strong.
'Tis a fuel from life's earth,
To stay cold and darkness long,
Earthen fire crackling in hearth.
My hands they art for dealing good,
Imparting blessings real and true
To all living under night moon,
To all striving beneath sky blue.
Faithful keep to word past sworn
O'er Lady's grave, whose death I mourn.

(Survival Guide, continued from page 13)
treasure it carried will be on the ground. If it has just been freshly slain then **SEARCH [monster]** to see what it had. You usually can't pick up items (except for coins) if your hands are full. I tend to **PARry** 100 to ward off surprise attacks then **WEAR** my **SHIELD**. This gives me a free hand to **GET [item]** and put them away. Just remember to get your shield back in fighting position, and reset your parry. If your backpack is full, let someone know so they can pick up the item. If you come across a strongbox, chest, trunk or such like, wait until you get back to town before trying to pick the lock or find a "safe" place. Concentrating on such tasks out in the wilds can really get you killed. And remember, some chests may be trapped!

Once you are full, go back to town and sell your loot. Try to empty your pack of nonessentials before you head out again. Silver in the bank won't get stolen or disappear if you die. Most of the stores that buy items (gems, skins, various magic items, old equipment, etc.) will **APPRAISE [item]** for you before you **SELL** it. I keep a list of what things are worth so I know what I want to pick up the next time.

When it is time for you to gain the benefits of your training (the skills you have been improving in over the last year) you would head over to the Inn. When your **EXP**erience has gone up by 10,000 (for the first few levels) you are ready. Just go to the desk in the Raging Threk or Frith's Inn, and **CHECK IN** (this will take you to the Character Manager). This is where you attain the bonuses for past training and select what you want to train in for the next level (you collect and select all at the same time). Just to mention–each time you check in you are charged a small fee for use of the room. The fee will either be taken directly out of your purse or charged to your tab (payable at the Debt Collector's in Moot Hall). When you come down from your room, you will have made it through your first year in Kulthea! Congratulations, and Happy Birthday! You are one year older.

Death in the Shadow World

The first thing to say about death is that it happens to everyone. Some of us get killed every day of our adventuring lives. So far I have bitten the proverbial dust four times. That means resurrected (by the grace of the Goddess Eissa) four times. Our first year, you get resurrected free, up to (I believe) 5 new lives. It isn't much fun, but sometimes you learn things from dying. And sometimes, if you get frustrated or dead enough, you start your persona all over again. You lose all your money if you have to start from scratch, but you may get a better persona out of it. (See Player Note 2.) Just don't get too discouraged. The first year in Kulthea is the hardest, and that is as it should be. The more you learn and experience things, the easier it is to stay alive. And there are ways to stack the deck against death.

The Goddess Eissa, whom it is rumored stands between continued life and the eternal beyond

Most importantly, don't get talked into going to an area where the monsters will eat you alive. It tends to be no fun since you can't hit the beasties anyway and you end up gaining very little experience. Remember to keep your parry up when in extra dangerous situations. Keep an eye on your health, and **TEND** bleeding wounds as quickly as possible. If your health is really bad, especially if you keep bleeding, get back to the Landing and have a healer attend you. If you are phenomenally bad off, your party can sometimes get a healer to come to you. Above all, let the others in your group know if you are in rotten shape. Sometimes they can utilize their first aid skills better than you.

When you are about to enter your second year, start buying deeds. Deeds are procured through offerings made to the Goddess Eissa (who has control over who gets to come back from the dead) to gain her favor, hoping she will grant you additional lives if the unfortunate should occur. Go to the Temple in Kelfour's Landing and then go through the Black Arch. Once in the room, you go through the tapestry. The priestess and her acolytes will take you in hand from there. Deeds usually are given for offerings of valuables. Once you get into your second or third year, deeds cost more. You don't start using your deeds until you reach your second year (since your other resurrections are free up till then). Deeds are a good insurance policy although I have just found out that they are not entirely foolproof. I guess Eissa can change her mind, after the fact. Still, it's better than nothing. I believe a failed deed is rare. I just hope I don't have to find out how rare they really are!

Well, that's about it. Obviously, I don't know everything there is to about living here, but I have survived for a small piece of time, and I guess that counts for something. The thing

(Continued on page 16)

(Survival Guide, continued from page 15)
about Kulthea is that it is always changing, and we keep learning. Hmm, what a concept. Safe roads and good hunting be yours.

Player Note 1: Browse through the GemStone III library (option 6 in the GS3 main menu). There are many very helpful files to download, including a graphical front end to load up (if your computer can use it). Also, search through the *Tomes of Kulthea* (option 1 in the main GemStone III menu), and read the online manual or get it from the files. The manual in itself is worth the time and effort because it explains most everything. Also check the *Multiplayer Games Roundtable* (MPGRT, Page 1045) on GEnie for their GemStone III libraries.

Player Note 2: If you reroll a character, find out what stats are the prime requisites for your character's chosen profession (for example, a thief uses *quickness* and *agility*). The Character Manager automatically ups your prime requisites to 90, so put your lowest rolls in these slots. That way you can save higher rolls for other important stats. I suggest that *constitution* be granted a high one, as it gives you your concussion points score. The higher it is, the more you can get whacked on.

Player Note 3: *Roleplay!* We are rewarded for good roleplaying, as well as the slaying of monsters and the using of our skills. On top of that, staying "in character" can be a challenge and makes adventuring in Kulthea a lot more fun–for all of us!

An Outcast's Journal

by Iore D'Ares

I'm a half-elf, a crossbreed between man and elf. My mother was an elven mage and my father was a human ranger. I had my father's stocky build and complexion, black. I had long silver hair like mom. It was unkempt, I kept it that way on purpose, Mom hated that. My eyes were almond shaped like my mother's. The color of my eyes though was another story, they were multihued, the colors constantly shifting, affected by mood or current level of excitement.

When my parents were married, they were declared outcasts by their people. It was bad enough for them, but for me it was *hell*. I was accepted by practically no one. When I reached my 24th birthday, Mom told me that she and Dad had come to a decision, they were going to send me away. They were sending me to a place where I would be accepted regardless of my heritage. Mom was going to send me to another world she knew of via her magic. I was not thrilled with the idea, but in light of my situation it was the best option I had.

So I found myself on the world of Kulthea, outside the wooden gates of the town of Kelfour's Landing. I had nothing but the clothes on my back. Mom's spell had been only able to transport me and my clothes alone. On arrival I found a sack of coins Dad had said would be waiting for me. He had said it was a loan from somewhere, I would have to find out from where.

I was startled as a bolt of blinding white light arced from the sky to the ground, leaving a majestic-looking man surrounded by lights of scintillating colors. I wondered what I had done to catch the attention of the being. He told me that he was a *GameMaster*. I had heard of them, godlike beings who could sometimes help or confound adventurers, but who are bound by some esoteric rules against getting involved with us mere mortals. I smiled and said hello. He asked me if I was new to this world, I told him yes, and then asked me if I had any questions. He would answer as best he could.

My mind went blank. I couldn't think of anything to ask. I asked some routine questions about getting equipment that would keep me alive and the like. He directed me to the town market. I must have seemed nervous because he told me not to worry, the fates would watch over me, and winked. He then left in the same way he came, in a flash of light. I made my way through the gates and into Kelfour's.

When my parents were married, they were declared outcasts by their people. It was bad enough for them, but for me it was Hell.

I had a general idea where the place I needed to buy equipment was, but didn't know how to get there directly, so I just wandered the streets. Not too far into town I found a building that was marked *Gheldar's Bathhouse*. Having never seen one of those before, I went in. Poking around inside, I discovered not one bath! All I found was a room with chairs and stage (what that is doing in a bathhouse is beyond me) and a another room with a large and extremely lavish bed and decorations. I should also note that I barged into the room thinking it was empty (well, I had knocked on the eog door and no one answered) and found two people inside, much to my surprise and theirs (I probably interrupted something, what I won't dwell on). They took it in good stride, even found it humorous. Well, I hope those threats weren't

(Continued on page 18)

(WhatYaGonna Be, Continued from page 8)
into a unique profession, although there are more sorcerers out there than you'd guess." She scratched her head then said, "As far as the spells go I'm not too worried. Most the spells you'd learn in your first ten years are already researched. Past that there may be some holes but there are still spells to be had and new ones being discovered. On top of those, you can always hit the *open channeling* and *open essence* lists. To learn all of the possible spells would take ya 40, 50, maybe 60 years. Hell, you don't live forever, you old coot!"

Thinking about our earlier hunting trip, I asked, "About those spells...what made that orc's head explode like that?" She giggled and said, "Oh, that was just *Touch of Disruption*, second spell on the list, mainstay of the sorcerer."

"It looked like more than just a touch," I said as I wiped the flecks of orc skull off my cloak.

Wiping a small piece of ear off her shield, she said, "That was one of its better effects; a lot of times you don't even see the damage. You cast it two or three times get a couple grazing shots and a six point hit and your orc will just fall over. Sorcerer spells are deceiving, many work from the inside out."

Looking down, I see that my son is still waiting for the answer to the question he asked five minutes ago. I guess he's used to waiting, I've been a bit feeble minded since that karnelin stomped on my head. Where was I? Oh yea, I asked the sorcerer about training...

I asked, "What kind of training do ya need to be a sorcerer?" She gave me a strange look (like one of those looks ya get when ya rub a amulet) and said, "Thinking of a change of profession this late in life?"

"No, just curious," I says. She nodded and said, "Remember the stuff I told you about the best attributes?" I nodded and she says, "It works out that it kills the amount of time you can spend studying your skills. So you have to be pretty choosy about what you study. First you need to spend ten hours a week studying your spells. Next you'll have to study a weapon for the first five or ten years until you get enough spells and spell points. You'll spend half your time on just those two. Personally, I think wands and directed spells are good choices and runes too, at least single training, maybe even double training. Other things that you may want to squeeze in are body development, healing, trading, channeling, and perception. If you have good potentials you'll get more time to study as you get older."

Well I made up my mind, my boy's gonna be a sorcerer. But when I look up, I see that he's wandered off somewhere. These kids today just have no patience. Well, I'm off to find my son and tell him that a sorcerer is...what ya gonna be.

Food for Thought

by Ahira Hammerfist

I hope, dear friends, you find these pithy parables of some value as you go about your daily business in the lands. I humbly submit these excerpts, gleaned from a series of lessons presented at the Kelfour Ranger University and later collected by my students into 52 volumes entitled, *The Collected Teachings of Ahira Hammerfist.*

When in Romaria...

The sages often say, "When traveling through distant lands always respect local customs." It is true that I have found it wise, and even very beneficial, to observe local customs. For instance, the Kelfour custom of giving drake falchions to new residents of our fair land is very admirable. However, there are certain customs which one might wish to avoid. As an example, the orcs of Orcland have a custom of capturing visitors, roasting them over a slow fire, and serving them for dinner. I have a small problem with this local custom, especially considering that I am viewed as a visitor whenever I travel through Orcland, and have had to go so far as to dissuade several orcs at swordpoint. In such instances I've found it wise to completely ignore local custom altogether.

Blood is Thicker than Ink...

You say "The pen is mightier than the sword"? I admit there are instances where I could agree with you. However, I also think you should examine my point of view. For instance, if you are heading back to town after a hard day of hunting and remember you need to sign a banknote before visiting a merchant then I can see where a pen would come in handy. However, if a trio of Mountain Ogres strolls by and one demands you hand over all your valuables (including the banknote) then I suggest you might prefer a sword to a pen. Better yet, you might wish for a companion or two with storm falchions. Then again, I can see where three fighters with heavy mithril sledge hammers, two level 35 mages and a full division of mounted heavy cavalry with full plate and war lances would be a welcome addition to your party. Ahhh...I see you begin to comprehend the message of today's lesson.

A Matter of Trust...

"Never trust a thief" is a saying which I am sure you have all heard. Over the years I've learned that this statement is not necessarily always true. There are actually several instances when you can trust a thief, such as when no money is involved, when there is no thief within 50 miles or when any thief who is within 50 miles is safely locked away in the local jail. In such instances as these I would gladly trust my wealth, my safety and my very life to a thief.

(An Outcasts' Journal, continued from page 16)
serious; they were smiling. Seeing I was new they instructed me to the shops I had to visit and told me if the eog door is closed then someone is using the room. I made a mental note of that.

Heading where they had told me to go, I wandered into the Town Square. In the center of the square was a large tree with wide, leafy branches. Near the tree the cobblestones gave way to become a lush green lawn that encircled the tree. White stone benches scattered around the tree provided a place to sit in comfort. The whole area was peaceful, quite a contrast from the surrounding town. Near the tree were individuals that obviously who looked like the adventuring type. All were wearing hide armor, and had sheathed swords hanging from belts or slung across backs. Shields slung on their shoulders, large backpacks to keep their booty, some with crystal amulets around their necks or golden rings upon their hands. Some had no jewelry, but wore battle scars as proudly as those that did. Some sat on the benches, one was lying down on the grass, the rest were standing around a large steel chest and watching someone try to pick the lock on it. They succeeded and began to divide the loot. I had to become a part of this life.

I walked up and introduced myself. They all said hello, looked me up and down and muttered something about how I should go get outfitted. Feeling somewhat rejected, I was about to go about my business, when one, his name was Arion, told me to wait. He asked if I was new, I assured him I was. He volunteered to give me a short tour of town. I quickly agreed.

He took me to the armory, where I bought some heavy hide (Arion told me it was the best armor to get, which surprised me), leg and arm greaves to protect my limbs, and an aventail to protect my neck. Our next stop was the general store. There I picked up a heavy backpack. It was large, which meant it could hold a lot of treasure, which I was hoping to find. I also bought a stylish black leather sheath to hold the sword I would buy when it wasn't in use (knowing me, that would not be too often).

I was getting low on money, but Arion knew this and took me to the bank. He made a withdrawal and gave me 200 silvers. He told me it was a gift, I didn't owe him anything, but he did say I would have to get funds to pay off the debt I had. He told me I could do that at Moot Hall. When I asked him where that was, he realized I didn't have a map. I was making one. He told me I could get good maps from someone named Zepath for a nominal fee; I decided I would look into this later.

We went to the arms dealer next where I purchased a broadsword. I was then more or less complete and ready to find adventure. Before we left though, Arion gave me another gift, a crystal amulet. I rubbed the amulet as Arion instructed me and I suddenly "heard" the thoughts of others around me. I could not read their minds though. It was like being in a crowded tavern, everybody's conversations were reduced to an indistinct buzzing. At first I thought this was useless, then I "heard" Arion think *at* me. He explained that if you concentrate and think on a message, everyone with an active amulet can hear you. I equated it to standing in the same tavern and yelling something that everyone could hear. Such an amulet could be an extremely useful thing to own.

On our way to our next stop I listened to these mental shouts. I didn't have much choice since I didn't see any way to turn it off. Arion did say it would wear off in five to ten minutes though. I "heard" all kinds of stuff from the silly to the pleas for help from a dying adventurer.

Our next stop was the Catacombs. He said there was a giant rat infestation problem. The rats would provide me with practice to hone my combat skills which needed to be improved for me to survive in wilderness outside the city. He took me to a deserted cul-de-sac and led me through a small opening. It was a dark, slimy place, filled with sounds of something skittering around in the distance. We didn't have to wait long before a nasty-looking rat as big as a dog came into the room. I drew my sword and attacked. Arion gave me pointers from the sideline. He told me that I didn't need to concentrate as much on parrying the attacks from the rats, so I went all out. After three well placed hits, the rat went down. My first real kill! Arion told me that I should skin the rats and sell their pelts at the furrier so I could make a little silver. I thought it strange that someone would actually buy rat pelts, but if it paid well, I'd do it. And I did need to repay that debt I had. Arion gave me instructions on how to get back to the Town Square and wished me luck. It was the end of the tour and he was heading out.

Left alone, I continued to hunt. I wasn't alone long though; others came into the catacombs and we hunted and joked together. I made a couple of acquaintances who I hoped would become good friends soon. (You need lots of friends in this lifestyle.) After a few more good kills I retired for the day, my first day in Kelfour's Landing. Maybe I'm not such an Outcast after all.

How? By contributing to *Kulthea Chronicle!* For more information, download File #264 from the GemStone III Software Library.

Notes of an Apprentice Mage: Magic Edge Spell

by Darkraven Grim

Herein, my young mages, may ye find the path to power. As I study the spells of power from my master's tome and use such power in the wilds, I shall gladly impart to ye what I hath found. Herewith follow the notes of my second year as an apprentice mage and of the second incantation I learned and use.

The *Magic Edge* Spell is your second spell from the mage base list. Here first is what is told in the ancient tome under the mages' list:

> 2 Magic Edge (902) Duration: 1 attack/lvl MAGICEDGE
> This spell magically enchants a weapon, giving it a +15 bonus for the number of attacks equal to the level of the caster. The spell is cast on the weapon. The effects are not cumulative and this spell will not work on magic, cursed, holy, slaying or mithril weapons.

Notes: Anyone may use the weapon so enchanted. The spell only dispels when the number of attacks is exceeded. (Remember, even misses count as attacks!)

Preparation: The spell (as all spells) must be prepared. **PREP 902** or **PREP MAGICEDGE**, this initiates the spell and takes time to do. A young mage will require ten seconds to achieve this. As you gain in years this preparation time is reduced. You will know when your spell is ready. You can prepare and cast this spell while defending at parry 100%. The spell will not work on a weapon that has already been *Magic Edged*. You must use the weapon till the effect wears off to cast it on that weapon again.

Casting: You must cast your spell soon, for the power will dissipate and feed upon your mana even without your casting the spell, Then it must be prepped again. To cast the spell you simply use the command:

CAST ON MY [weapon]

if the weapon is in your hand, or:

CAST ON [weapon]

if it is on the ground. The spell will be cast on that weapon. If a blue glow seeps into the weapon, then the spell was a success.

The Result: The weapon is now given a bonus of +15 to OB for as many attacks as the caster has years in training. To a young Mage this may seem silly, a +15 Sword for two to four swings. *But therein lies its power*: Your main attack is not your sword! Your main attack should be the Shock Bolt spell. The *Magic Edge* gives you a +15 to OB, but at parry 100 that OB is transferred to DB and an unlimited number of attacks made by your foe will be protected at +15. The spell does not wear off till you attack with the weapon. This is the key. As a young Mage I used the short sword found on so many creatures. I saved these swords and Magic Edged them at my leisure. I carried several Magic Edged swords in my backpack. Using them and dropping them as needed.

Mages have the disadvantage of only being able to train in the *one handed edged weapons* skill once per year. This spell is the same as three years of training (for a short while). Without this spell I could not have withstood the attacks of some of my prey. And once your shock bolt hits for a stun, your weapon is now ready with the +15 to OB for the kill.

As you grow older the spell gains in effectiveness, and lasts for a greater number of swings. Many adventurers save coins for a laen weapon. These weapons are quite expensive, and stronger, yet still breakable. This spell gives you the power to make *any* weapon act as a laen weapon. Granted the strength is not increased, but it matters not when the spell can be cast on any weapon. I now carry two *Magic Edged* rapiers and a *Magic Edged* hand axe in my backpack. These weapons give me the greatest advantage with leather and metal armored foes respectively. If my equivalent of a laen rapier breaks I laugh and pull out a new one (or make a run to hobgoblins to find one). This ability is the power of the spell. 33,000 coins for a laen broadsword, over 60,000 coins for ET'd hide, two power points for +15, OB and parried DB.

There are two other uses for the *Magic Edge* spell. It makes a great gift. Have you ever been in a party where a newbie is having trouble getting in a hit while his companions kill with glee? *Magic Edge* his weapon for him and watch the fun. I have often edged adventurers' weapons for them for small favors in return. It is a well loved gift.

Since the *Magic Edge* spell only works on non-magical, non-special materials it is an easy way to find if a new weapon has any magical properties. If the *Magic Edge* fails, the weapon is special in one way or another.

The *Magic Edge* spell is a key spell for any young mage. The bonus it gives to defense at parry 100% and the attack advantage given once the foe is stunned make this spell one of great value.

Trachten's Travels

My Tour of the Dark Grotto

by Trachten Hickapod

Like *Man'ta Pn'tairken* before it, the discovery of the dark grotto proved disastrous for most of those brave enough to venture within. Apparently (I was not there, fortunately) the large number of intrepid adventurers brought out traglaakhs (acid throwing blobs that live in the first part of the grotto) in droves, leading to the almost immediate deaths of some of Kelfour's finest lords. Notably, the mage Whilder (who first breached the Monastery, I understand) made it the farthest. He reached the stairs to the dark temple before succumbing to the shadowy rakul.

Fortunately, I was not among the first to venture in. I arrived at the grotto later that evening, after all original explorers had left (or died). As a solitary spelunker, I was able to fully map out the area without raising the hordes that proved fatal to so many. That map is shown on page 21.

The entrance to the dark grotto lies on the plain in the broken land. After a quick run north from the cave connecting Uthex's abode with the plain, I saw a pile of rocks. Searching at the top of this pile revealed a crack leading into the grotto.

The first portion of the grotto is a series of tunnels, most of which are too low for any but dwarves and halflings to stand in. Those of normal stature must kneel before traveling through these tunnels. Fortunately, there were caverns interspersed throughout, where I could stand and stretch. The entire area was apparently carved out by the acid blobs called *lug'shuk traglaakh*, or "ugly-fire cavemaker" in common. It is quite extensive and worth exploring, but beware the pit at the deepest point of the caves. If you go down into it you will need climbing skill to escape.

After searching around in the northernmost cavern, I found another crack. This one lead to the *kiskaa max* area. *Kiskaa max* (or "cold claw") are man-sized, lizard-like creatures with incredibly tough, spiked armor. In fact, their spikes are so hard that often, when you attack them, your weapon is knocked from your hand. The area inhabited by the *kiskaa max* is a huge cavern, full of stalagmites and luminous moss. There is also a stream that divides the area in half, the significance of which I'll later explain.

In the northwest part of the raax cavern I found the first of a series of giant steps. Anyone can climb these, but even a high man like myself must rest for a few seconds after struggling up each step. Smaller races, I've noticed, take twice as long. All along this staircase are *dyar rakul* (or "dark, cold shadows"), shadowy creatures that cannot be hit by weapons. Those without strong resistance will find themselves quickly at the mercy of these creatures, which drain magical power and strike with cold.

At the top of the stairs is a relief bearing an inscription in *Iruaric* (an ancient language of power). With my moderate knowledge of that language and a poem I found in the Tomes, I was able to reach the other side of the relief and be the first adventurer in the dark temple (much later I figured out how to leave the temple, with the help of several friends, notably Artuero and a messenger from the gods).

I wandered throughout the area alone, which from all indications was once the abode of the dark servant Morgu. This was my first real clue that the entire area on the far side of the rune door - Uthex's abode, the broken plain, dark grotto and temple - was actually on Charon itself! I think we were lucky that the rune gate led only to an area of Charon where a mere servant lived, and not a dreaded dark lord.

Morgu is a powerful servant, but he is completely vulnerable to water (or so I have read). Even the smallest amount would inflict massive damage to him. Thus the significance of the stream in the raax area: it prevented Morgu from leaving the dark grotto and gaining access to the rune stone.

The minor gogor found in the dark temple are the instruments of Morgu. They appear to be huge animated gargoyles, and they cast all manner of closed channeling spells as well as being able to swing a mean battle axe.

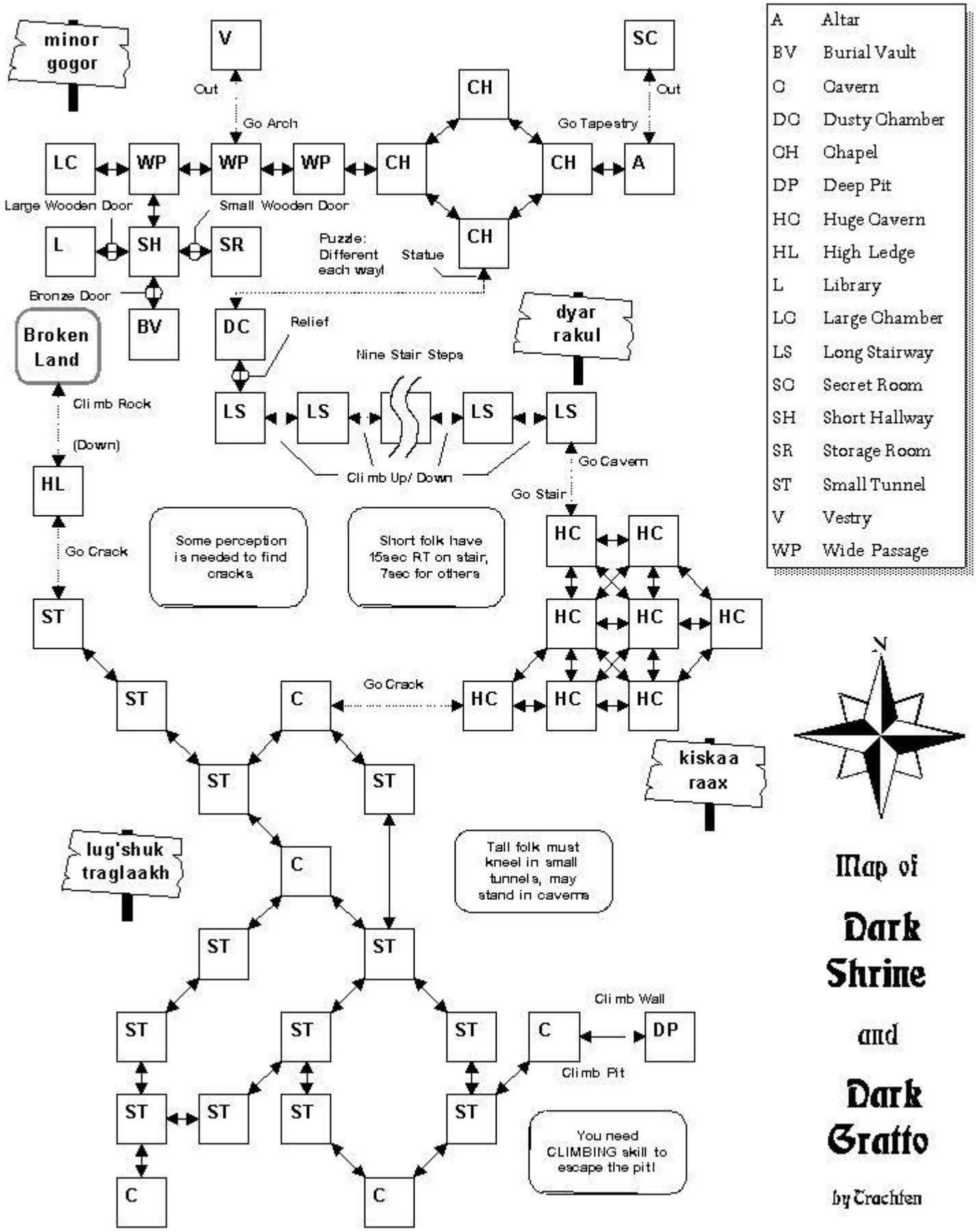
A thorough search of the area revealed a locked door, so I used my *Word of Return* bracelet to go back to town and find a brave picker to accompany me. The sorcerer Thalior was very enthusiastic about exploring the new area, so the two of us returned to the dark temple. We found little behind the locked door, but Thalior did discover a hidden room behind a tapestry, which turned out to be safe from the gogor. Later, Thalior returned and slew the first gogor, though he didn't know it at the time. A messenger from the gods informed him that the gogor bled to death after he left.

In my next column, I will tell more of the inhabitants of the dark grotto, their strengths, skills and how they may best be vanquished.

MARCH TOWN FORUMS...MORE TO TAKE PART IN!

March is a great month to voice your opinions and suggestions at the upcoming Town Forums, beginning at 10pm EST and held in the Assembly Room of Moot Hall.

DATE	TOPIC & CHAIRPERSON	
Mar. 2	The Dominion Wars/History in Kulthea	Kygar
Mar. 9	Mind Your Manners/Etiquette in Kelfour's	Elvanion
Mar. 16	Foraging for Fun and Fronds	Eldron
Mar. 23	Resolving Conflict Through Duels	Giacomo
Mar. 30	Better Spelling For Sorcerers	Raemus


minor gogor
V
Out
Go Arch
SC
Out
Go Tapestry
CH
LC
WP
WP
WP
CH
CH
A
Large Wooden Door
Small Wooden Door
L
SH
SR
CH
Puzzle: Different each way!
Statue
Bronze Door
Broken Land
BV
DC
Relief
dyar rakul
Nine Stair Steps
Climb Rock
(Down)
LS
LS
LS
LS
HL
Climb Up/ Down
Go Cavern
Go Stair
Go Crack
Some perception is needed to find cracks
Short folk have 15sec RT on stair, 7sec for others
HC
HC
HC
HC
HC
ST
Go Crack
C
HC
HC
HC
ST
ST
kiskaa raax
lug'shuk traglaakh
C
Tall folk must kneel in small tunnels, may stand in caverns
ST
ST
Climb Wall
ST
ST
ST
C
DP
Climb Pit
ST
ST
ST
ST
You need CLIMBING skill to escape the pit!
C
C
A Altar
BV Burial Vault
C Cavern
DC Dusty Chamber
CH Chapel
DP Deep Pit
HC Huge Cavern
HL High Ledge
L Library
LC Large Chamber
LS Long Stairway
SC Secret Room
SH Short Hallway
SR Storage Room
ST Small Tunnel
V Vestry
WP Wide Passage
N
Map of
Dark Shrine
and
Dark Grotto
by Trachten

Bardon's Corner

by David Whatley

It was a little over seven years ago that I first became enamored with the idea of producing a vast, multiplayer environment. At the time, I was only 20 years old and, having decided to give up on college, was still living with my folks. Fortunately, my parents, who believed in my skills, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit, put up with my extended stay. My younger years were always full of plans for developing new ideas into a business, and by that time I had already tried my hand at several enterprises. Yet, despite all the false starts, my family remained loyal believers in what I wanted to accomplish. All I needed to do was give my aspirations a form.

When I began working on the GemStone prototype, which at the time was called *Project FoxFire*, I had no real concept of the scope of the job. As a designer, my focus was on producing something that I would like to play. I knew what elements these where, intuitively, but had I paused to really consider the magnitude of this task I probably would never have attempted it.

Indeed, GemStone III, as we know it today, is a truly immense contraption. The world, its mechanics, rooms, creatures, puzzles, unique objects and so forth, expanded to immeasurable quantities. But the road from my early prototype (which, incidentally, was the original GemStone I, and was never released as a commercial product) to the modern GemStone III has been an arduous journey, but one I am incredibly fortunate to have taken.

Even as I take credit for the inception of the GemStone universe, the reality is that this wonderful creation is the product of many people. I have not bothered to count lately, but I would suspect it is over a hundred by now; of course, only a couple dozen at any one time. But each designer who joined on as a GameMaster or programmer left their mark on the product, and contributed their part to the larger and greater whole.

In fact, my role in the daily implementation of new material for GemStone III has been relegated mainly to approving GameMaster designs and proposals. My job now, as far as the world of GemStone is concerned, is to find other ways to improve the product on a strategic level.

One of my goals was to introduce a high-quality newsletter dedicated to the GemStone III world. We have been fortunate in having Phaedra's *Kelfour Edition* for quite some time, and building on that success is no small challenge. But, as I have demonstrated, it would be uncharacteristic of me to avoid a project I believe in simply because it will turn out to be a monumental task. And, it seems, this attitude rubs off on those around me, for Nancy Gross was just as excited about taking on the job of Managing Editor of this new endeavor.

Kulthea Chronicle continues the tradition of a first-class newsletter dedicated to an online, multiplayer environment. Few games are successful enough to warrant a major newsletter effort, but GemStone III is certainly one of them. With that in mind, we set out to stretch a bit, breaking our historical bonds with flat ASCII files and delivering (electronically) a fully "laid-out" newsletter. And, as I put on the finishing touches of my article, on the final day of the deadline, I feel a certain sense of accomplishment...

It was worth it, I hope you think so too!