

Lo, the Chronicler of TREL has departed beyond the seas to the Blessed Realm, and the echoes of his songs are now fading faintly down the forest pathways. However I, the last Knight still sworn to the Quest, put hand to lute to tell the men of this forgetful age of the Last Days of TREL, and the last glorious adventures of the Knights of TREL –

The Clash of the Titans

The Great Wyrm

In the final days of TREL, a Great Wyrm did invade the kingdom of Telcordia. Terrible was the damage it inflicted on the land, to the point that men did not fight it, but fell down and worshiped it as a god. Sigma was the name of the beast, and six was its most evil number. Soon priests of the wyrm did spread throughout the land, preaching of its power. Coloured belts they wore, yellow for acolytes, and black ones for High Priests. Verily, they preached to the people that nothing could be done without first invoking the name and blessing of Sigma; and its mark was placed on all Men and things.

Now the Knights of TREL did look wondrously upon this false religion, and pondered its meaning. Then some went on a great journey to the Temple of Sigma, feigning conviction to gain access to it. Then they saw the Mark of The Beast - two snakes swallowing each other's tails. They crept behind the Mark, and saw what was written on the back. For one half of the Mark had:

"Bloody Obvious"

written on its back, and the other half had:

"Bloody Lies"

carved on it.

Then they realized that Sigma was just the offspring of ToQaM, a beast felled many years earlier by Knights of TREL, and ran back rejoicing to spread the news.

The Great Feast of TREL

Baron Hugo called the assembled hosts of TREL and addressed them all.

"Behold, look how great our works are! We have survived the Great Blizzard that has lain waste our foes. And even though our Knights did not succeed in the Quest for the Holy Grail, their manhood and strength has not diminished, and the lesser men of Telcordia do indeed still look up at us. Thus to recognize our great efforts, Governor Cambellus and I have agreed to decimate you all."

Thus lots were drawn amongst all the men, and Lo! It seemed the short straw seemed to fall mainly amongst the more experienced veterans of TREL. Many were glad to receive this fate; forsooth indeed they grew weary of many years of fighting.

Thus a Great Banquet was held for them in the nearby province of Monashium, where many a Knight took succor from the gentle maidens that lived there. In the banquet hall friends new and old gathered, and amongst the company stood Richard the First, and Malfeius, and Trevor of the Long Sword. For these men could remember back to the beginning of time, and of the Apple that gave not only the gift of Knowledge, but also taught people the difference between Right and Wrong.

At the end of the great feast, these noble men were taken outside the walls of TREL and thrown to the wolves.

Now the young knights continued to eat and drink, but the knights neither young nor old turned pale, for if these people could be cast aside so quickly, who would be next?

The Mercenaries of TREL.

At this time Baron Hugo put aside his robes of office and walked amongst the Knights of TREL as a common man. Indeed he hid his gold medallion, his blue battle shorts, his crown of gems and ring of many jewels, and hid his nakedness with a cloak.

In this manner he walked unnoticed by the Knights of TREL, and then, when a time when none expected it, he cast off his cloak and spoke to those nearby.

"Behold! It is I, your Lord. And it grieves my heart deeply that you are not happy. For indeed, our Expectation of Serfs (EOS) survey has shown that you are only 51% happy. Therefore, to increase your bliss in this world, it is our royal decree that you shall be 67% happy, upon pain of the most terrible death."

The Knights were stunned silent by the revelation of their Leader in his New Clothes. This gave Baron Hvgo time to continue.

"Thus to save TREL from further pain, we shall hire ourselves out as Mercenaries to the highest bidder. This will guarantee our future from the vagaries of the Emperor of Telcordia."

To this the Knights Replied, "Did we not swear an oath to the Emperor of Telcordia? Shall we then be fighting for his enemies?"

"Nay, for we leave with the blessing of his College of Cardinals, and we shall vet each battle for you, so you can fight with a clean conscience"

Then they asked, "Can we then spend some of the money we shall earn, and buy new swords. Verily our swords date back to Harold The One-Eyed, and are so old and rusty our allies and enemies both stop fighting to laugh at us"

"Nay, you shall not have new swords. All monies will go to the Emperor"

"But then can we recruit more Knights, for many will surely fall fighting on foreign shores?"

"Nay, you shall not have any new Knights."

"Then can we have better houses, for the thatch in our roofs does leak, and the smell is foul, and many who visit us liken the darkness and silence to a Morgue."

At this point Baron Hugo took all those who asked such questions, and hung them from the neck on the outer wall. Then he assembled all the Knights of TREL, and marched them up a hill.

"Behold, when we are up, we are up"

And then he marched them down the hill...

"Behold, when we are down, we are down."

And then, when halfway up the hill, he did announce..

"Behold, when we are halfway up the hill, we are neither up nor down. And it is with such strategic brilliance that nations of the world will beat a path to our door, paying us handsomely for our knowledge. And look, my plan is working already, there is young Michael, who met the father of a friend's first cousin, who doeth manufacture chariots that are both fast and subtle. Soon the whole factory shall swear allegiance to Telcordia."

And then he marched all the men back into TREL and opened the gates and waited for the world to visit.

The Transmogrification of TREL

As the Knights of TREL did grumble still, Baron Hugo then summoned two witches, and he bid them to erect a large cauldron in the middle of the courtyard. A foul Black Cauldron it was, with eldritch symbols on it.

A mighty potion did these Witches brew. In it they threw many ingredients both quaint and curious. There was Toad that sweated venom sleeping got; Fillet of a fenny snake; Eye of newt and toe of frog; Wool of bat and tongue of dog; Adder's fork and blindworm's sting; lizard's leg and howlet's wing; scale of dragon; tooth of wolf; Witch's mummy; maw and gulf of the ravin'd salt-sea shark; root of hemlock digg'd in the dark; gall of goat; and slips of yew silver'd in the moon's eclipse; nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips; finger of birth-strangled babe - ditch-deliver'd by the drab; and finally a tiger's chaudron.

Baron Hugo took a Chalice from the Palace, and did quaff of the magic potion.

"BEHOLD, I AM A CHANGED MAN. IT IS OUR ROYAL DECREES THAT YOU TOO SHALL ALL DRINK OF THIS POTION. THIS IS VOLUNTARY, BUT IF YOU DO NOT, YOU SHALL BE CRUCIFIED AS A WARNING TO OTHERS."

And to show the Knights of TREL the potency of the potion, the two Witches threw in a frog. Soon it emerged from the black cauldron as a handsome prince that kissed them passionately.

"See," they croaked and hissed, "the potion is harmless, and doeth change the ugly and hideous in the beautiful and compliant."

One by one the Knights of TREL did come and look into the Cauldron, and drank of its contents. Many grew sick at the smell, but felt no change when they drunk it, except for a nausea in the pits of their bowels.

However when it was the turn of the fair maidens of TREL to drink, the Chalice from the Palace broke. Instead, some had to use the Vessel with the Pestle. And others drank from the Flagon with the Dragon. However the potion was drunk, it mattered not, for they started to call each other names, and pulled on the ribbons in their hair, and made un-ladylike comments about each other's dresses.

"SEE, YOU NOW KNOW WHAT HAPPINESS IS." quoth Baron Hugo. "NOW KEEP DRINKING THIS UNTIL YOU ARE 100% HAPPY".

The Knights of TREL then wondered how much happiness they could stomach.

AVE, NAVIGATOR!

It was not well known that TREL had a navy. For Commodore Peter did take a small dinghy out onto the moat of TREL and sail around it. Many a scurvy new recruit was whipped into shape by his acid tongue. None could deny the seamanship of the Commodore.

Now as age wearied his limbs, Peter felt the need to do a pilgrimage to see the bones of St ITU, and speak closely to the monks that guarded his shrine in Helvetica. For the monks of St ITU did study the latest sins in the world, and did warn others on how to avoid them. The Dukes of Telcordia agreed, for in such a pilgrimage they could learn much on new sins that were being practiced overseas, and see full pictures and diagrams on how to commit them.

So they gave Peter a cart and horse and supplies for the journey. But Baron Hugo rode up on his thoroughbred and said:

"NAY, you shall not go. For the sins are too strong, and I am the only one suitable to examine such things without harm. In any case we shall learn of the sins soon enough, when travelers bring them to our shore."

When the monks of St ITU heard this, a great lamentation went up. And they sent a small palfrey to Peter and a bag of beans for his provisions, so that he may join them in Helvetica.

As Peter tried to leave, Baron Hugo did stand tall on the battlements and his shadow fell on all and he pronounced this judgment.

"BEHOLD! The King and the Land are One. What is the Land without a King? Or a King without his sword? In this way you defy me, and this is my doom. You shall go, but all rank and insignia from TREL shall you remove. For you are no longer to be counted amongst our order."

Now the Dukes of Telcordia secretly gave Peter some provisions for the journey, in exchange for pictures and diagrams of the latest sins, and he did commit the long and weary journey without armor or badge or honour from TREL.

CLASH OF THE TITANS

At this time the Emperor of Telcordia decided to change the governors of all his provinces. Some say that he did this out of fear, so that no general should rise in power to rival his own.

So thus did Governor Cambellvs see on the horizon a great brown monster approaching. For verily it was Ted-E-Bear who was coming to claim the land of TREL as his own. Cambellvs grew into titanic size himself to fight the pretender to his domain.

The Clash of the Titans occurred far away, but the Knights of TREL saw the battle. Lightning crashed down upon mountains; rivers changed their courses; the stars themselves left their allotted spheres from the ferocity of the battle.

Finally Ted-e-Bear had the upper hand, and threw Cambellvs from the land.

"This is not too bad," quoted many seers, "for surely Ted-E-Bear will now claim us as his own, and protect us from our enemies."

But David Diamond did speak up. "Surely bears do pass solid waste products in the woods? Have you not noticed how weak and flimsy the toilet paper of TREL has become? What should happen if Ted-E-Bear should pass bowel movements whilst walking above TREL?"

Many turned white with fear when they realized the roofs of TREL could not bear the force of a flaming comet of dung, should one fall from a great height upon the battlements.

"HO HO HO" roared the giant bear as it waddled towards the citadel of TREL. "I AM NOT HERE TO DESTROY YOU, JUST TO USE YOU. FOR YOU ARE STRONG, YET SOFT AND ABSORBANT, AND DO TEAR NICELY ALONG THE PERFORATIONS ON YOUR ARMOUR. IN THIS WAY I CAN GET 0.9 OF A KNIGHT INSTEAD OF PAYING A FULL YEAR'S WAGES FOR HIM".

The Knights of TREL thought this to mean that they would become toilet paper for the monster, and broke ranks and fled. Many ran to the cellars, and behold! They saw Baron Hvgo tunnelling his way out of TREL with a silver spoon.

"Don't Worry, Be Happy" he grinned, and then continued to dig.

And the Knights of TREL returned to their positions and tightly gripped their weapons and waited for the next onslaught.