



HEROQUEST



HeroQuest Voices *Peoples of Glorantha*

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A Personal View of Tarshite Life
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*Legion are the peoples of the world, many and varied are their ways.
All are connected by the cosmic webs of Arachne Solara
Who brings and binds all together, in life as in this book,
Who takes and rends apart those who would tear her webs.*



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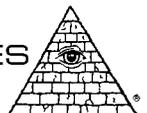
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A Personal View of Tarshite Life

What My Father Told Me

Who are you?

I am Eirik Pavelsson, huscarl of the Icerni Clan.

Who are we?

We are the Icerni Clan of the Geroini Tribe. Our tribal founder, Geroin Foxrunner, was a shrewd and daring man, who joined Arim the Founder when he led his people over the Death Line and back into Tarsh after the dragons had scoured it. Geroin was a man who could seize opportunities quicker than anyone else could even see them, and this is why we worship him as our ancestor and why we prosper today.

Are we a great people?

Geroin said it: "The strongest seed grows the greatest tree," and there is nothing stronger than a Tarshite. When we were still enemies, we resisted the Lunars for generations, and now we are allies and their Emperor sends praise and gifts to our king. We Geroini are the swiftest and canniest of all, and our family the finest among them.

What is the difference between men and women?

Remember what Geroin said: "Man and woman, axe and cookpot. Without the axe, what is there for the pot, and without the pot, how do you cook the axe's tillings?" Men are people of the physical world, the warriors and the workers, the merchants and the rulers. Women are deeper, darker, secretive: theirs are the mysteries of the Earth and the hearth, theirs, as you will soon discover, are the ways of making both love and peace, or raising lust and fear. When Arim came to Tarsh, he became King of Dragon Pass by wooing and bedding Ana Gor, the goddess of the Six and Seven Secrets, but he also had to gift her his life, which she gifted back to him. That is powerful magic, and it is women's.

Where do we live?

Right here, in Blackhorpe Farm. When you were born, we still lived in an old-fashioned stead like our backward cousins in Sartar, but we have done well. Now our farmhouse stretches round all four sides of the courtyard. You see those fields over there, on the other side of the village's palisade? We own that. That barn over there, and the slave huts next to them? We own them, too. We also own a room in Dunstop, where your brother Ingomark is studying letters and learning with your cousins: as Geroin said, "Nothing learned is wasted." We did not always own all this, but that is the Tarshite way, always growing, gaining and planning ahead. Our neighboring clan, the Berelenos, used to be rebels of the Kerofini tribes, until we Geroini conquered them, and now they are learning the rewards of loyalty. Some day, our king will lead his armies with those of our Lunar allies to finally crush the Exiles who live around mighty Mount Kerofin. Then there will be more land and slaves to be taken, and we Geroini will be at the fore!

How do we live?

In Geroin's words, "Back and brain, wit and main." When we have to, we work hard in the fields, but now we have slaves from Sartar and even Balazar to do much of that work, and your uncle, Braggeh Broadarm, has a sacred Barntar Plow with which he breaks up the hard soil for us. While you and the other child-

ren were polishing the plow and playing run-furrow-down, I was handing over six tuns of our best wheat-vodka to him. That is the way life works, favor for favor, gift for service.

Our ancestors thought trade beneath them, but we now understand its ways. Those fat barges that take our wheat north into the Empire, where the hungry cities spill for leagues, they make us rich, and buy us slaves and horses, this house, those trinkets that delight your sisters and Ingomark's education. But we never forget that what we trade we first must earn, whether with guile, force or toil.

What is important in my life?

Soon you will be an adult, and we will gift you the man-portion: a room, an axe, a mail shirt and a horse. Because we are rich, I shall also add a slave and a bag of silver.

As Geroin said, "Life is a battle, to the winner the spoils." Decide what you want in life, marshal your forces and devise your battle plan! You will have to work hard and be both brave and shrewd, but I know you will do well. Perhaps you will be a trader, but remember that we are at heart a nation of warriors. You have done well in training with the village fyrd, and I would be proud to see you become a huscarl like myself.

Find yourself a wife both strong and shrewd, like your mother. I have seen you eyeing Kallindi, but she is the daughter of a mere cottar and you can do much better for yourself.

Who rules us?

We are all subjects of King Moirades, although these days he is moon-struck, and his son Pharandros is Regent. We are proud to be Tarshites, with a glorious history and a glorious future.

Our tribal chief is Angkel the Brooding, armsman of the king, but his health weakens. His brother and son scheme and plot as if he were already on the funeral pyre. Angkel may spend most days in bed and can no longer lift The Exacting Bite, our tribal warspear, but I would not risk such presumption. His mind is as sharp as ever. This is the man who outwitted the Nine-Voiced Shrew and won us a year's tax exemption in a three-day long game of swords-and-shields with Moirades himself. As Geroin put it, "Even a rusty axe can cut deep and fast."

We obey Angkel, both through our clan chief Indrin Indrinsson, and also through the shrieve, Gray Ostyr. Beware the shrieve, son. He is not from our clan. Instead, Angkel appointed him from the Valarings to be his eyes and ears among us. The Valarings have always resented us, and Ostyr would do us mischief. But he knows that we watch him, too, and if he oversteps his powers, Indrin will have his head. Yes, I saw you look at Blond Crescent. As Indrin's fyrdmaster, it will be my axe that does the deed.

What makes a man great?

Pride, wits, courage and gold, all these make a man these days. Be proud of your family and your people, for these are exciting times. Since we allied with the Empire, there are great opportunities for all, whether in war or in trade. Seize them with both hands, but never forget your history, either.

What is evil?

Evil is a word we used to use too easily. Once, we thought the Lunar Empire evil, because it was different, but now they are our allies. I think Chaos is evil, but Ingomark tells me his Lunar tutor teaches him that Chaos is no more evil than the storm, destructive when untamed but a source of power when controlled. But then again, I don't know much about religion.

What is my lot in life?

You are a Tarshite and my son: destiny smiles upon you!

How do we deal with others?

Times are changing, and sometimes even I find it hard to know who is a friend and who an enemy or when something new is an boon or a threat. In these times, hold to those upon whom you can rely: your family, your friends, your village and clan.

Of everyone else you should be wary. Most of them offer you opportunities. They may be useful allies, like the Empire whose armies fight alongside ours in Sartar and whose silver flows into our coffers. They may have something you want, in which case you should think how to get it. Once this might have meant axe-taking and blood on the snow, but this is now a peaceful land and instead, we might trade. You should never break your word, but neither should you be afraid to use your wits to strike a bargain in your favor. After all, as Geroin said, "If Voriof had not meant them to be sheared, he would not have made them sheep." If they take up arms against you, though, strike without mercy and hesitation, and sell them as slaves or let their blood fertilize our fields.

Who are our enemies?

Remember what Geroin said: "Family make the worst foes." Our greatest enemies are our cousins and wayward sons, the Exiles who live around Kerofin and the Sartari. The Exiles have become bandits and savages, sacrificing free men in bestial rites to savage goddesses. Where they raid, they bring fire and ruin, earthquake and infertility. But soon, they will be tamed.

Then there are the people of Sartar. They are half-civilized,

A Prophecy of the Hero Wars

And Arim came back. And Arim was angry. The rocks outside Maranaba groaned and sang, then split lengthwise, thrice three manheights. Varstapoor's shade shone with joy, but the earth-women tried to stop the Pauper, so blinded by their bloodlust and mean-spirited selfishness were they. Arim drove them from his path with furious sweeps of his staff, the bloated priestess he flung down from her chariot. As she began to summon black blood-earth monsters from the Seventh Cube, suddenly Ana Gor stepped forth, clad in the mute Firstblood girl they called Nobody, and the women and their not-men prostrated themselves in awe and fear and hope.

And Arim came home. The moonlovers barred their doors and cast magics of every kind, but he did not even deign to notice their spells and spirits. Bagnet's gates he wrenched from their iron hinges, but when trembling hands offered him a crown, he flung it aside. Instead, he gathered the people and spoke. He spoke of their destiny and their duty, of strength and mercy, of humility and pride, of offering a haven to the desperate, a terror to the degenerate. When he spoke, huscarls and scholars, farmers and slaves, all stood as one, for one they were now.

Arim had come back.

living in squalid poverty and refusing to acknowledge our monarch as King of Dragon Pass. The problem is that they still worship Old Gusty, Orlanth. Once we also thought him a mighty god, but now we realize that we can do without him and that he is just a troublemaker and rebel. Soon, they will be tamed.

The Valaring Clan is our foe, too. They resent our good luck, fine looks, and great wealth. They cast jealous eyes on our golden wheat fields and make spurious claims about our having stolen the Broader March from them. Now their young men seek to steal our cattle and their old women mutter in the tribal court, but Indrin has a plan, and he has told me it. Soon, they will be tamed.

Who are our gods?

While we have seen through Old Gusty, we still worship the gods of the Storm Tribe, who were revealed to us by the ancient hero Alakoring Dragonbreaker. Many are the sons of Ernalda Earth Queen, from Dar the Chieftain to Durev the Farmer. I worship Starkval the Huscarl, like most warriors in the lowlands, although farmer gods like Barntar, Durev, and Orane are most widely worshipped. Watch Invoc Longfinger next time he comes to buy our grain to sell in the markets of Furthest: he worships Issaries the trader god, who is a smart god indeed. He is honest, but tricky, so you need to make sure he is not taking advantage of you. At the same time, you might learn something from him.

There are many who, like your brother, have turned to the Red Moon Goddess of the Empire, whose mother was Ernalda. The Lunar gods are powerful, but even if you turn to them, you should not forget that you are a Tarshite first and foremost.

What is there to do around here?

Now that we have slaves to do our work, we have more time to do what we want. For some, that is hunting and weapons-drill, wrestling and axe-dancing. We have many festivals, including those secret rites of our tribe and clan, like Geroin's Day, when we show our wits by playing practical jokes on each other, and Tun-Breaking, when we open the first casks of vodka. But there is always work to be done and play to be had, whether a game of kick-the-ball or an evening in the clan hall spent singing and listening to Har-nafel's bagpipes, while the Elders play swords-and-shields at the high table.



Talking to the Moon Woman

What the Lunar Priestess Preaches

Where did the world come from?

The Creatrix made the two races of gods first, the Gloranthan Court and the Tribe of Chaos. Neither understood the other, nor accepted the other's role in Creation, and from this initial conflict arose the imperfect world in which we live.

Where did I come from?

The Gloranthan Court and the Tribe of Chaos fought each other to destruction, and where they died lay a heap of ashes and slag. From that matter Glorantha, goddess of compassion, fashioned First Woman. She bore the ancestors of all the sentient races, whether they came from stone, dirt, wood, animals, or some human demigod. The races of people grew healthy and numerous, and you are of their descent.

Why do we die?

The disharmony of the Gloranthan Court and the Tribe of Chaos created an illness that sickened all creation. As a result all the world must now die too.

What happens after we die?

All souls, living and dead, move within the compassionate harmony of the world. As a follower of the Lunar Way, when you die you shed the gross matter of your life and ascend to the surface of the Red Moon or some other paradise reflecting your personal patron. Hope that when you are again purged and whole you may be reborn into a new body for a new life.

Why am I here?

The races of mankind were created to restore health to the cosmos. We exist to purify ourselves and, thereby, the wretched parts of the world. Our duty is to restore unity, harmony, and joy to the world of the living and the dead, heal the cosmos, and attain the bliss of immortality.

How do I do magic?

The world is filled with invisible powers. Sedenya places all those powers within your grasp, and you can integrate them in many ways: spirits may aid you, gods can help you, or you can manipulate energy with your own force of will. But all magic should be used to heal the world.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about them?

All the gods who came before Sedenya's rebirth as Rufelza are hurt, incomplete and unwell, stuck in their old ways. Rufelza is the part of the cosmos that has already been healed. We worship her and the New Gods.

...Aldrya?

Aldrya is the uncivilized, untamed, untouched. She is all that is wild—both the dancing light and the sinister dark. Her children are innocent, simple servants to the spirit, born of wood.

...Kyger Litor?

Within us all lurks a shadow, hiding and ready to pounce upon us in a moment of fear. Sedenya has conquered those inner secrets, so no longer fears her dark side. Kyger Litor herself must be cured to no longer fear the world, so that the world will no longer fear her.

...Magasta?

The sea gods have always been secret initiates of the Lunar Way, for their tides are caused by the Blue Moon. The sea heals, and the fear that mankind feels of the sea is the fear of a health unknown to their mortal bodies.

...Mostal?

The dwarves never learned to yield before change, so to them it brings defeat and death, where we would see opportunities for transformation. Their artificial constructs are cold and sterile, whereas our work brings new dynamism to Glorantha.

...Orlanth?

Orlanth is the sterile force that is rebellion without purpose. His creed is change and freedom, yet he is unchangeable and un-free, defined not by a positive vision but negative opposition. He resists the Goddess' liberation and suffers because of it, but with compassion Sedenya reaches out to him and will prevail. We shall free him!

...Yelm?

This proud god of emperors is regaining his divine strength and freedom through the liberation of his worshippers. Honor him, praise him! The bright and shining fire of the universe is the keen mind and sharp eyes of the goddess.

I have heard of other worlds. Can you tell me the truth about them?

Of course, but remember that the distinction between different worlds is a reflection of the fragmented nature of creation. Sedenya's power is manifest in all of them, and Her physical form, Rufelza, is present in each. When Sedenya has healed the cosmos, all worlds shall be as one.

...Chaos?

The Life/Death duality of the Mortal World is mirrored in the Chaos/Divine duality of the Immortal World. The gods of Glorantha fear Chaos in the way that living mortals fear death. But even Chaos, which we prefer to call Entropy, can be conquered and harnessed, as proved by Rufelza. Each thing, monstrous or metaphysical, has its place, even if only as a precautionary tale, for those who understand the entirety of the cosmos.

...Sorcerers?

The god called 'invisible' by the monotheists is visible to Sedenya. She alone has mastered its identity and secrets, and can use those natural powers called sorcery as her own. It is the unhealed cosmos itself, weakened and abused but still vibrant with potential.

...Spirits?

There are myriad minor spirits of the world. When healed each, like you, will be a god. Some are important now, but all are equal before Eternity. Nurturing them brings equal healing and friendship to you. Help them.

Gods of the Lunar Religion

The Forms of the Goddess

Since Before When, there has been a Cyclical Power at work within the universe, known by different names and displaying different powers. The present form is Natha the Avenger, both light and dark, merciless and compassionate.

Natha's powers were brought into the world through a mighty ritual into the body of a girl, Teelo Norri, some four centuries ago. She became Teelo Estara, living embodiment of the Goddess, and she heroquested through the cosmos and her own heart to awaken her godhood, becoming Sedenya, the highest Lunar power.

When Sedenya took physical form, wrapping herself in earth and rock and ascending into the sky, she also became Rufelza, the Red Moon, who still today hovers reassuringly above us. This cannot be understood by the unenlightened, but Sedenya, Natha, and Rufelza are all aspects of the same cosmic power, and we worship them together and separately.

Takenegi Moonson, Our Father, the Red Emperor

Our Red Emperor is one in a long line of wizard-kings, responsible only to their mother, Rufelza. Our emperors are immortal in that no natural death can claim them. Even if slain, they are reborn in a new form, a new Mask, at once different and yet the same. The present Mask, Takenegi Argenteus, is beloved of his people and beloved of them. We burn a pinch of borrhig and light a candle to bless his Seventh Soul every Full Moon day, and you should come and join us then for a reading from the *Rufus Script*.

The Inspirations of Moonson

These are deities and demi-deities born from Takenegi himself. The First is Glamour, patron and guardian of the Lunar capital. The Second Inspiration is Yara Aranis, Goddess of the Reaching Moon and scourge of the horse nomads who threaten the Empire from the east. HonEel is Third, goddess of maize, dance, and seduction. She it was who came to Tarsh and revealed that Ernalda the local Earth goddess was a form of She Who Waits and thus one of the Seven Mothers. The Fourth is JarEel, poet, swordswoman, and heroine, but still a mortal, of sorts.

The Seven Mothers, recreators of the Red Goddess

The Goddess prepared all the world for her coming, and seven individuals came together to bring about her rebirth: Deezola, queen and healer, Yanafal Tarnils the warlord, Jakaleel the witch, Irippi Ontor, sage and scribe, Danfive Xaron, the Bridge of the Seeker, Teelo Norri, the innocent girl whose body Sedenya inhabited, and the mysterious force that we call She Who Waits. In return, the Goddess taught them all of her secrets, and they have achieved immortality.

The Seven Mothers may either be worshipped individually or all together. The branches of the cult act in harmony to familiarize outsiders with the stories of the Red Goddess.

Jakaleel the Witch

One of the Seven Mothers, Jakaleel is the spirit shadow of the Goddess. She teaches of the Spirit World and of death. She founded the all-embracing tradition called From Dark, which recognizes Sedenya as its great spirit.

The Cerise Church

Sedenya transcends the usual boundaries of life and magic. Thus, she is venerated in the manner of the western wizards, through the teachings of the *Cerise Book*.

New Gods

All humanity seeks to regain the immortality lost during the Gods War. Sedenya can show the way to it, and many of those we worship were once mortals, made deities by Her power. These New Gods include the Seven Mothers; Etyries, the patron of communication and merchants; Erana Halfmoon; Pinugia the Protectress; the Moon Bear; and more than seven times seven sevens more.

Healed Gods

Sedenya's way is one of inclusion: "We Are All Us" is her creed. She does not seek to replace other deities and powers, but to awaken their Seventh Part and bring them into the Lunar Way. Many are the local gods, spirits, and saints who have been so awakened, even here in Tarsh, ranging from Ernalda the Red Earth to tribal ancestors such as Perun of the Barastaros.

