

Shuke's War

moon w/ more clouds

shuke -
close up
mountain

the lovers

At Engachmetel

out perspective of
battle scene

Hurdles

Frabaga Larangus

Guh'THL

Hlun

Bloxghisk

T'mork



CHAPTER 1

The unctuous dark green skinned goblin with wart ridden pointy mottled ears darted off to the side of the road just in time for Gaelron to make his way past without detecting the foul demonic fiend's presence. Though in a happy hurry to enter his sunken 'castle', Gaelron would have been able to perceive the odious green one in most any circumstances as the magical handsome human was inordinately sensitive within his perceptions and this was within his own personal domain. The dwelling he was heading to was entirely underground accessible one way — by going through a little rounded entrance. The entryway to this unusual lair appeared unimpressively against the natural terrain as set of stones formed into a circular outcropping with prickly fat shrubs ensconcing it. A powerful illusionary enchantment made whatever appeared to go into the rocky portal disappear, as if the object or entity who had made their way through had merged with another world while leaving no trace behind where they had come from.

The devious and maniacal goblin laughed in a hysterical series of raspy exhalations as he clutched fervently to what he had in his splotchy green hand, a mysterious object he had found recently on his dark quest. He would hold it closely as if it were burned into his body until reaching his foul sanctuary. A fitting name for his sorcerer master was 'Herdoles' and the bizarre necromancer human was unique in his ability to conjure with the natural forces of their world. The great skills of this warlock were a result of his natural innate ability coupled with carefully cultivated research, So great was his power that he had become one of the very few who were able to cavort with the hideously dangerous beasts which existed only across an ocean like murky bog which separated the tamer, calmer and prettier territories from which he came. The life-forces of those living in the much more hostile (and larger) lands across the impassable bog

would intermingle with his energies while he drew power to cast his unique spells. The inordinately great land mass on the other side of the ever burbling, bubbling gooey brownish sea-bog existed as another plane of reality with beings inhabiting it which would be far too powerful with their potent vibrational energies to dwell for any span of time on the more peaceful 'tamer' side.

In addition to the innumerable odd and ferocious life forms which lived across the great boggy sea, there were dragons there comfortably thriving in their incomprehensible generations — a rare and mystical situation for any who understood the reality of what a dragon actually was. If a sentient humanoid were somehow able to make it across the slimy bog-ocean to the other side, they could find (if survived long enough) so many dragons that it would appear they would just get more and more the long and longer the exploration would last. Dragons require a very special place to be born and mature, chosen very selectively for them to evolve into the most powerful beings of all worlds. Wherever dragons are, logic ceases to make any kind of relevant connection to whatever circumstances are at hand if the environment is perceived by any non-dragon. In this uniquely treacherous and powerful location across the oceanic bog, there was obviously enough of a concentration of magic on a grand enough scale for them to be contented in their pursuit of evolution.

What the wiry little green goblin had in his grimy hand was a shiny lock of fine hair which shone unnatural brilliance as if a distant moon were reflecting sunlight on its light golden strands. The hair itself was formerly in the hands of a man of many mysteries, a mystical gaunt figure whose extremely wild and long long jet black hair was itself intensely magical. The strange human wore a majestic garment with a rainbow of hues which was made of hundreds of fabrics woven into a finely tailored garb which was impervious to weather or wear. The majestic

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hooded cloak was very light because the fabrics were comprised of silks which came from the rarest most deadly spiders on the nicer sod of the oceanic bog, making it both strong and lightweight. These spiders, which this strange man was the only human to ever lay eyes upon and survive, would weave intricate multi-colored webs in uniquely complex geometric ways which would ensnare predators many times the size and weight of the arachnids. How this cloaked man acquired such marvelous threads was as cryptic as the secrets to what made the garment appear the way it did as he moved! A shimmering convex of every imaginable color would ripple and flow like a waterfall with each shift of the garb's surface area. A microcosm of motion echoing each dynamic movement of the bearer's kinetic physicality would register throughout the spider-silk threaded garment, often with swirling colors abounding around each other from every spectrum of light. The lock of hair the goblin clutched had slipped absently from this odd and powerful man with the multi-hued cloak as he cavorted from one place to the next in his freaky route to wherever he was headed. It was probably a gift from one of the people he consorted with in a city which he frequented but was clearly not dark enough to have originated from this gangly odd human himself.

The grand city of Ulohjr was where this magically dressed man would be most commonly seen, though the inhabitants of the bright city viewed him as somewhat of an oddity and definitely as an outsider with an aura of a missionary's isolation. The streets themselves of this wonderful city were always luminous with a similar collection of coloration as the spider-silk threaded robe that the strange man wore. Even deep into the night, all the different neighborhoods within it would reflect the spiritual tendencies of the local humans by with various colorations underfoot, as if the terrain was directly responding to the vibrational fluctuation of the moods of the collective consciousness rendered by the people. They ambulated everywhere, no machinery or wheels would be found in the grand yet humble city of Ulohjr and most of the buildings were literally

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made of light— physical manifestations of energy which the population had formed out of ritual chants, hums and meditations together in their own harmonious version of magical architecture. The people rarely used any form of physical speech to communicate there (sometimes an utterance would erupt from them but it was mostly a form of reflexive emotional tendencies which were not created with elongated syllabic intentions). They were able to understand each other within a synergistic combination of natural ideation and refined social culturing which was refined through their habitations over countless eons. They all knew what the other wanted to communicate just by being around each other and their mannerisms were distinctive to the elemental grasp of one another through effortless practice of joyous purpose. The attuning of their souls this way was the energetic wellspring which they were able to form their dwellings and other city structures by and such shelters strengthened their long patient quest for transcendence into light forms from flesh.

Many of their buildings of illumination resembled certain flowers which were indigenous to the region in their primal essence, thus a lot of the constructions were a bulbous shape as if they were budding posies. Structures which were closed up and impenetrable would lazily open up, spreading their petals of fluxing light outward then downward in response to the presence of those wishing to enter once they had arrived outside. When rain occurred (which was always with orange and purple raindrops), the luminous petals would scrunch inward and form a perimeter like an awning above the Ulohjrians in a natural harmony with their needs. A soft flooring made of cellulose within the entryways always was accompanied by fresh moist and sweet air swirling about as feet sprang along the bouncy surface.

The slithery goblin fingered the lock of hair in his slimy dark green fingers and the lock crackled at the friction, spitting off blueish-yellow sparks. The filmy grey and black nail on the hand of the blotchy skinned creature bubbled slightly for a moment then emitted an acrid smoke as the goblin's living matrix dipped in and out of the nether world from which its body was formed! The touch of goodness from the sparks of the hair conflicted with the purely evil nature of the mean goblin.

'Yaaahhooaooch!' shrieked the accursed wretch with a reflexive guttural wail.

The goblin's physicality was obscured within a veil of shadowy energy that was placed upon him magically by a sorcerer we can call "Herdoles" and the magical protection was quite similar to an aura of invisibility. This granted the wicked goblin fiend an advantage of being undetectable by most inhabitants of Ulohjr, which did take a magnificent level of spell weaving to achieve as Ulojhrians were very perceptive and sensitive to any or all changes within their environment. The goblin would become much more apparent if he lingered about long enough in the same place for his malicious energy to begin altering the harmonious integrity of their city. The spell of obscurity would also begin to fail if his uncanny stench permeated from a stationary position a while as even the mighty spell-making of Herdoles would be unable to contain such a rotted filthy odor originating from the nether world and the odiousness would lead anyone not as foul to notice, eventually. For these reasons and other various ones (like the natural impatiences and missionary motivations to get things accomplished while in the highly offensive boundaries of the disgustingly happy place) the goblin rarely remained immobile to spy on anyone while he remained within the city of Ulojhr and typically he would trek skillfully only along the perimeters of the brilliantly colored streets. These streets were not paved or laid with brick but rather formed from long evolutions of happy feet treading upon them so that natural pathways were

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formed with smoothed thoroughfares, which bothered the infernal goblin to make the well traversed areas even more unappealing. He was nightmarishly fast and always able to evade even the subtlest human from awareness of him, something he would have been quite confident of even without the powerful cloaking spell of the master sorcerer who he saw as Master. This was a goblin more dangerous and magical than most, one who was spawned from the blood of a dragon which had a demon living inside its belly! Some would say only those goblins who had been created by a dragon would qualify as an actual goblin but there were an uncountable variance in those which could be mistaken for one, very similar in appearance and similarly wretched, evil. The demon spirit which had helped to breed this particularly nasty goblin had been imprisoned in a tree for a bitter eternity but had finally broken free when a dragon happened by and began bashing the tree with its tail in order to get some ripe fruit to fall for a tasty snack.

This yellow scaled dragon with three large green horns on its massive head blew a noxious mustard-like poison mist at the fruit tree before the feeding because the gassy fog would deter hordes of invasive insects from the juicy food after the tasty morsels had fallen onto the ground and burst open, the fresh juices attracting massive amounts of parasitic pests. Dragons would occasionally consume an entire tree in one feeding session, chomping through the base then devouring the rest from the trunk up chomp by chomp. What may have prevented that occurrence in this instance was the unusual situation of a demon being flushed out of the inner tree! This demonic being was apparently banished by some other dragon many ages ago for some provocation or another, isolating him permanently within the trunk of this unusual timber.

Though all dragons were able to control and transform their inner organs at will (if they had any at that moment) with a whimsical natural empowerment, such as to instantaneously create a

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new stomach capable of digesting this specific demonic entity which happened to be made of almost pure nether energies, this was not exactly what the dragon decided to do. Perhaps it was the red and blue fresh fruit that was more interesting at the time or that the nether demon was not impressive enough on his own to convince the yellow scaled dragon with three green horns to bother with any new organs on that day. When the dragon's tail smashed into the sturdy orange-red tree trunk and freed the craven black demon who appeared something like a wispy greenish shadow with rough humanoid features, the dragon casually inhaled the ugly devil into its mouth without much distraction.

Upon swallowing the misty formation of the nether-demon, the immense yellow dragon converted the monstrous humanoid from demonic nether flesh to a vaporous spirit - something which was accomplished without any further issue since the putrid mustardy gaseous fumes from the pit of its belly (which subdued all life forms it had tried the poison on, including many other dragons) were partly drawn from the infinite pools of nether energy converging with the physical realities of whatever world it happened to be inhabiting at the time. The dark yellow dragon simply sucked the demoniacal life form in then belched grotesquely after the body had become a delicious soupy vapor spirit. Without pausing to reflect the change to its consciousness at the dispensation of the added treat from the tree trunk, the dragon eagerly feasted on the recently hatched red and blue fruits which had broken apart all over the purple soiled ground in a sweet sticky mess. As the delightful produce was consumed, the dragon absorbed the nether demon's spirit within its inner tissue without forming any special new organs to continue with the digestion of the beastly thing for another eternity of horrific imprisonment. It happened that this particular fruit was real dragon fruit, which is most probably the reason why the previous dragon who had visited it had banished the demon into the tree trunk! The energies from the nether spawn would enrich the fruits which were otherwise

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poisonous to all entities but a dragon. Obviously it was intended by the previous dragon that the marination of the fruits would continue for eons until it decided to return, then make a special meal of the especially sweet dragon fruits. The food of the tree was not intoxicating to the dragons who were lucky enough to find one of the rare trees (and if it were revealed where a dragon fruit tree actually was, it would be impossible to understand how anything or any creature actually got to one) but it was a delicacy that was rich and tasty beyond measure to a dragon.

The bottom of any dragon fruit tree had garish thick black 'hairs' encasing its bark which was so hard and thick that even for most dragons it would take an enormous effort to chew through for any kind of nourishment. Underneath the bark was a dense meaty wood which had the unusual property of turning into a liquid if penetrated by fire— if that ever happened! Dragon fruits all had a bit of this black tree hair on their tough green husks which made it impossible to get through by any creature but a dragon, for the hairy black fibers had jagged fine articulations along them which would injury even the hardest wildlife (except for certain insects). When a dragon would chew into the heavens fruit the moist fruit meat would liquify on the tongue upon contact, creating a heightening of the enjoyment. The only hitch to the blissful experience for the lucky dragon to locate and feast on such rare treasures was that the consumption always attracted another dragon to the tree— and usually a conflict ensued! Something about the magical nature of the fruits themselves coupled with the ecstasy of the meal would trigger a vibrance across whatever expanse of geography (or otherwise) was separating a nearby dragon, and usually the newcomer would appear rather quickly. Dragons did not need to travel physically from one place to the next, though commonly that's what they did since it was a domain where they were the unchallenged masters and ambulating, flying, leaping or other forms of transit typical to most beings other than dragons was the norm for them all when they would be traversing through

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their lands. They could, however simply appear elsewhere at the speed of their ideations and a dragon fruit being devoured by another invariably would cause this to occur (though often a dragon would appear in the area in flight, being more impressive in its displays of passion for the nutritive rarity).

The day that the mustard colored dragon had dined on the demonic entity as well as the fresh ripe dragon fruit which was improved from the long gestation of the nether spirit of the prisoner within the tree, the dragon who had sensed the meal was one with reddish pink scales. As a rule, it was exceedingly rare to see a pair of dragons in proximity without a battle soon erupting and this was no exception! A great fight began before the pinkish red scaled one had even got close to the tree as it flew grandly through the air with dark magenta smoke erupting from its flaming nostrils. All the insects who were kept at bay by the poison yellow cloud from the green horned dragon caught fire and turned to smoke at the heat the clash as the dark yellow dragon had burst off the ground into the air before the interloper had any chance to strike! The reflexive whipping of its tail was the greeting the pinkish red scaled dragon got for creeping up on the pleasurable scene and soon a raging tempest of furious violence was surrounding the otherwise tranquil locale. The demon spirit coursing through the insides of the yellow dragon managed to find some nourishment itself by feeding on all the murderous passion embodied by its battling host and this flux of power gave the demonic soul a new start on return to a corporeal form. The captured demon's energy began to reshape itself into a devilish humanoid only now it was manifesting three horns on the shadowy shifting shape of its head. The dueling dragons swiped at each other in the air, screeching horrifically to each other in combative engagement. They drifted downward and landed on the ground at about the same time, causing tremors to shift the plant life and all the other natural geology (magical as it was) to the area at the vibrations of the magnificent beings. Without losing any advantage, the pinkish red scaled dragon dramatically

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and unexpectedly flicked its thick tail with a three-pronged fang tip and pierced its enemy's stomach!

A bellowing wail shook the territory even further with the unbridled rage of a wounded dragon. Suddenly a thick pool of dragon's blood formed on the dusty purple ground and feeling victorious (but not as hungry apparently), the deep reddish pink scaled dragon sauntered away then disappeared as suddenly as it had come. Three goblins sprang up from the deep blackish-green puddle (all dragon's blood changed colors according to the mood of the dragon, and in this case it had started out silvery and was now stable for the time being in this new coloration), each one with distinct characteristics of the dragon fruit tree. The first goblin's form was covered in thick black hairs which gave him a special advantage for stealth, especially at night. The second goblin was tremendously tough-hided like the bark of the tree. The third was a fleshy, drooling mass of a thing with rolling blubber which shook with unnatural violence as he moved, encapsulating the likeness of the divine fruit itself as if it were comprised of the richness of the unique crop. This was the birth scene of the goblin trespassing in Ulohjr and its black fibrous hairs were in fact working tremendously toward his advantage in gaining a covert presence.

The demon spirit inside the yellow dragon managed to escape from the three holes in the wounded scaly gut by poking through with newly formed clawed fingers. He created one large hole with his razor sharp nails (which were capable this feat only because of being bred to new physical shape within the magical matrix of the dragon's body, giving it unnatural temporary strength). Then the lucky nether demon freed itself quickly by jutting through the quickly sealing holes before rolling onto the ground. The impish demon couldn't help but snigger at getting the better of his captor and becoming corporeal once again, but just then the mustardy scaled dragon happened to turn its head and noticed the act then hastened to snap its gigantic jaws

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around the celebratory humanoid, chewing it into nothingness this time! The hole in its abdomen closed itself up quickly (all dragon's wounds healed this way making it impossible to kill them, but a wound from another dragon would scar...and if they were bad enough, could even slay a dragon but only if that dragon actually wanted to be dead— but death to a dragon does not mean what it does to human beings so it's better probably not to pontificate much more about this all). The demon's fate was sealed with the contents of the stomach and this time the dragon would remember the source of its new scar with some entertaining company locked away for long digestion in a chamber of its digestive tract made especially just for the pickling of this demonic upstart. The mustard yellow scaled dragon decided to take a long long nap, perhaps to wake up to another opportunity to the delectation of more ripened sweet dragon fruits!

The stealthy goblin clutching the golden lock of hair in Ulojhr was not visible even to light faeries which hovered inside the multitudinously snapped and sized tunnels alongside the river. These tunnels appeared sometimes extremely tiny, so small that not even the smallest of Ulojhrians would possibly dare try to fit into but more for a rodent or even a large insect. Others were inordinately large but all of them were of a different shape, obviously not carved with any tool but appearing much more like the steady erosion of waters as if the river had once seeped through that rock then had decided to contain itself into a more traditional orientation of being channeled by a rivulet. The odd collections of passageways may have served some purpose long ago but Ulohjirans themselves never seemed to really make use of them now, certainly not for traveling and the formations created a maze near the turbulent flows of water, echoing the insanity of the logic to the unusual waterway. Light faeries would see just about anything which was within their domain but the the goblin with his uncanny enhanced natural stealth with the aid of Herdoles' magically weaved cloaking was too murky to notice— so long as he moved fast enough. The coarse fibrous black hairs all over his body flitted in the wind as he moved, the

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breezy contact helping him sense air pressures and magical resonances which enhanced his swiftness and evil grace.

As he softly stepped along while slicing through the air with his deft agile movements at the less traveled edges of the light filled city, his thick blotchy green nostrils sucked in more and more of the fresh local breeze. Coughing and spluttering frustratingly at the fragrant aroma of flowers and sweet night mist on his way near the city borders, he glanced back to catch a last glimpse of the wondrously bright location he would have before exiting the area to reach his dour destination. A rolling stream of purple waters by a powdery blue avenue caught his attention. An arched light bridge with colors that rolled from yellow to green then orange and back again greeted his slitted pupils, the sight making him giggle feverishly-- such disgusting beauty! The city boundary he was headed to was perched on the edge of a large cliff and there were enormous thorny bushes all around inhibiting the rare traveler from veering off and plummeting to their fate. Taking no notice of the treacherous obstacles, the unnaturally fast and sneaky goblin bolted through the thick prickly brush which caused them to catch fire where his fetid skin made contact! The hole he burned into the spiky bushes created a vile smelling acidic smoke that lingered on and on and on long after he had left.

Flying off the cliffside in a grotesque display of acrobatics and malicious glee, the goblin spun downward through the air for a long while before finally meeting a mercurial hole in the ground below! This hole was not sensed by any of the wildlife because it drew power from the invisible netherworld and was only detectable by those who were able to enter. The speedy goblin merged with the entry to the darker realm as if a greedy hand had snatched him out of the air and stuffed him down a chute. It was a great relief for the feisty brute to return to a more

suitable environment away from all the putrid happiness and love being regurgitated everywhere in Ulojhr.

Just as the goblin had been diving off the edge of the city into the hole in the ground below, a particularly brilliantly plumed golden bird with a frosty white beak was sailing by! This bird did not like the antics of the revolting green goblin somersaulting through the air but was unable to do much more about it than drop some digested lunch in a tactically precise direction toward the spinning anomaly. This excrement was a phenomenal weapon bred by nature for hunting down prey as it would plop with acute timing by the bird onto a rapidly moving target on land. The primary nutrition source for hunting was a red-tailed rodent which was easy to spot and track from high above and when the birds missile scored a direct hit on the target, the ordure would instantly change from runny doo to a rubberized kind of state. The toughened poop was sticky and it acted as a trap by clinging to the unfortunate animal to the ground in while it was in mid stride which slowed the prey down with enormous distraction. Then the rubbery stuff would rapidly harden and cause a state similar to petrification, immobilizing the unlucky critter who had been smitten by the dropping. Later, sometimes days afterward the bird would return and by spitting up a digestive enzyme from its short blue beak could dissolve the rock like exterior which the previous incarnation of the animal had become. This enabled the bird to feed on many critters which were struck by the guano at various times as the trapping would act as a sort of a marinade, disabling any other predators from consuming the meal while preserving the nutrients.

The goblin got smacked with a large glob of the rare golden bird's dropping while he was rotating in a crouched posture downward! The glue effect didn't work as it would have on a typical victim of the birds hunger but it did cause the goblin some irritation and discomfort

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enough to slightly alter its trajectory into the nether hole which he was heading into. As the impish ruffraff merged with the circular pit to the nether world in the hole and disappeared, the bird dropping which had already petrified on the goblin's skin shattered and splattered in rocky tiny shards all over the area surrounding the invisible dimensional void. The goblin's body melted into the nether hole, wiping his existence from the world where Ulohjr was for him to rematerialize into an abysmal form beyond comprehension for all but those wicked enough to endure the impossibly endless hollowness, evil and desolation of the nether. There, the goblin was perfectly at home and within his element would be able to receive his next working orders from the master— Herdoles.

When the goblin had passed into the unending darkness of the underworld, he felt completely satisfied, natural and befitting of the environment. Nowhere else would he be so at 'peace' (whatever version of it he could possibly experience in his ice cold and empty character). Immersed in the impossibly dark stretches of woe and despair which were what made up the nether itself he would be bathing in a constant climax of wicked delight, a blissful permanence of his sadistic nihilism. Only the dank rot of isolation was to be found in this sensorial nightmare, a world of power for the goblin who was committed to the ugliest side of experience. Only oblique unconscious mechanisms would let the evil this creature did become a helpful good for those he would otherwise knowingly oppose- one of the more challenging and unappealing truths of the universe where judgment was left for the perceptions of the boundaries within preconceived moralities. Thus in this place like within his foul life the goblin was completely secure, a well-adjusted member of the cruel sect of beings who were content only to be harmful, malicious and repudiating of everything wholesome or righteous. It was a boundless hollowness that supplied the anchor for his expressions of ill will and it was all he ever would dare to be.

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Though he was no longer physical while basking in the desperate expanses of the nether, he was still as real as any life form— an infusion of spirit with the embodiment of his impossibly unreal surroundings. Without purpose or measure, time would eat away as life went on outside the invisible dankness of existence within the barren territory of the damned. He became something closer to a gnarly dream at that point, where he slipped between all things moving and independent of tangible barriers. Virulently supplanted within his vile niche, he was focusing deeply in a meditative trance to prepare for seeing his sorcerer master who he realized would position him as a dynamo for a grandly perverse and destructive spell!

Herdoles had learned the most about controlling the flows of essence across the boggy ocean in the land of the dragons. This unique training path was what made it possible for him to contain and manipulate demonic goblins in the netherworld, something which would rip the soul apart of most who managed to find themselves in the void or worse yet— survival for eternities of agonizing grief, inescapable hellish thralldom. How exactly this sorcerer managed to reach the other side of the sea-bog was a fascinating story in and of itself. The gating of his spirit using his own bodily vibrations would manifest through conjuring of the most dangerous sort into an indeterminately long singular strand across the gurgling boggy sea. This was such an inordinate distance that it would be incomprehensible to try even getting a small fraction of the way in their mind. Besides that, the surroundings all appeared identical in any direction once past the point where the shore could be seen— and this would not change until they reached the other side, presuming they had some way to deal with the multitude of lifetimes it would take to physically traverse from one side to the next. The soul gate of Herdoles required that the great sorcerer astrally project himself all the way over the bog through a ritual meditation then

the song of his being (his physical vibrances) would follow and 'pull' his physical form to the other side.

Once Herdoles had achieved the method of transport for putting himself from one side to the other, he made use of the land of dragons as a theater of knowledge, experimentation and entertainment. It had energies that the tamer side could not produce or maintain, so powerful that it would rip apart the terrain if the boggy ocean was not preventing the transference of such dynamism. There he was free to seize hold of infinite fountains of magical flows, all for his own personal designs in his mischievous sorcery. The philosophy he beheld for his ascetic work was beyond words or belief for most mortals to comprehend but he did not feel that he was either good nor evil in what he did but conversely felt expressly necessary. There were many secrets to be gleaned by being among the dragons and he chased after every single one with a fervent uncanny lust as well as an insatiable curiosity. While there he had come across numerous mystical artifacts which he'd learned eventually to come back with— a feat which required endless trial and error as he was not of corporeal form when transiting across the endless boggy ocean. When he was finally able to return home with objects along with his own body, he would use them for study and applications of his sorecerish magics.

There was one item Herdoles needed to empower his soul-flight from the nicer side to the dragon side and that was an anchoring piece of petrified wood from trees which had stone hard bark but liquid centers in their trunk. These trees were distantly related to those which bore the dragon fruit that the demon spawned dragon born goblins had been born out of. These timbers however would not bear any fruit but instead produced a crunchy red nut with a juicy and sweet red center. These were used by tribal peoples for energy and sometimes as an aphrodisiac but Herdoles found them as a utility for his efforts to escape from the calm shores of his origins to

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supplant himself across the depths of bog-sea for his pursuit of crafting ever greater spells! The sorcerer used a petrified piece of the tree's bark and magically separate it into two equally sized pieces. Taking one of them and planting it on the shore where he was traveling from, he would begin to hum a dark chant until the hardened wood (which was from bark as hard as stone to begin with but petrified was closer to something like a diamond) would begin to churn inside with a liquid that resembled the juice inside one of the tree's energizing seeds. This somehow was what made Herdoles able to attach his consciousness to the object which would in turn embed the wood fragment into the ground, making it impossible to move or dislodge no matter how much strength was applied by whatever creature, animal or humanoid.

After Herdoles had elongated his consciousness and slingshot his body to the dragon lands, he would position the other half of the wood into the ground there and hum his same chant— in reverse. The water in the soil, the air and near the shore on the dragon inhabited shore (which was actually the same bog-sea fluid but there it appeared as variously hued water...a matter of perception for those who were close enough to the source of the magic which created the illusion of the muddy ugliness) would excite the nature of the bond between both petrified wood fragments and Herdoles. This allowed him to tolerate the different air quality and also to endure the more hostile and intense nature of the habitat in its profound magical pressures— something which would rip anyone from the other side apart without special protections! It would be impossible to say if anyone else had made it there before Herdoles but probably so, though their survival would be highly questionable if they had someone managed this astounding feat. For him, it was part of his destiny as he was born in a peculiarly special way.

It appeared that he had been designed by dragons themselves which meant of course that he was to be an integral part of some great event when fulfilling his destiny. Whenever he

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associated with peoples from tribes, cities and everything in between he was an electrifying presence with an aura which separated as distinctly different from anyone around him. His loner nature was brought out inevitably while in the company of others because eventually he would always feel an overwhelming need to leave groups to find his own solitary path, the comfort of himself in his pursuit of identifying whatever it was which distracted him at that time. After many journeys and experiences with a vast collection of people, creatures (intelligent and beast) he retreated a special lair which was all his own where he could devote his tremendous mental and magical gifts to studies of spells and the meditation would wholly feed his soul. This was what he found solace and comfort in, was the manifestation of his unconscious within a peaceful devotion to learning more and more secrets to unlock greater and greater mysteries. His quest was not a selfish thirst for power as much as it was to satiate his indelible thirst for understanding. Comprehension of new things startled his being and he wanted nothing more than to spark that curious drive in him to perpetuate his longing for finding fresh and exciting clues to how things worked at a cosmic and microcosmic scale. He was as spiritual as he was mechanical in his practices and at all times he felt a responsibility for how to use it— one which grew with each passing moment that he gained insight to the composition of the world.

The derivation for all his sorcery was rooted in exploration of mystical woods where he found countless trees, mysterious waters (creeks, rivers, ponds, lagoons, etc.), endless varieties of animals and insects, flowers and vegetation. All of it had function and utility for his craft which also had much to do with moon cycles. He would wander and drift off in his mind as he went from forest to forest, observing and interacting with the life within them that he began harnessing their essence automatically. This reaching into the spirits of living things of the wood was a natural step in his immersion of investigation and without realizing it the magical matrix comprising all living matter had begun being manipulated by him in an innocent repose. The

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divinity of balance and the universality of consciousness was where he surrendered but found his role, his place. His cadence of jousting to comprehend his own power and what to do with it became the answer, thus his sorcery was simply a matter of maturation.

The wood sorcerer had spent huge amounts of time investing in the search to find a way across the bog-ocean. Season after season, solar year after solar year...and much more than that! In doing so he consumed many varieties of mushrooms which grew in abundance near many of the trees he became so familiar with. Fungi was not his particular field of interest but he knew much about them and did find it useful to prepare for his trips to the dragon side by engaging in a very enjoyable ritual of ingesting copious amounts of several fungi types which were marinated in some of the liquid from the boggy sea. This assisted him in transporting his spirit farther and farther distances, always with a pivotal displacement at some point when he had reached his limitations to be ricocheted back into himself instantly. In equally spanned frames of the days motion with the heavens while he was imbibing these specially pickled mushrooms to fuel his visionary transports of his soul across the sea-bog, he would turn a device similar to an hourglass over (though he never used it to measure time exactly). The crystalline instrument contained some of the sea-bog fluid inside of it along with a shiny scale of a tiny bog-sea snake. The tiny plate from the skin of the serpent would react to the churning of the liquid in the encasement by scintillating with a magic electrical pulse that Herdoles would meditate to induce his chakras to align with! This brought his perceptions to the sea snakes in the bog which were related to that from which the scale came from. The serpents welcomed his presence and stabilized his travels, making him much more secure as well as more comfortable, less lonely, more aware of all that was of the ocean-bog.

One of the turning points for his mastering the migration across the sea-bog was when he was out gathering some green and purple spotted black mushrooms under a pair of full moons. He was near the outskirts of Ulohjr at the time and in order to help locate these special fungi he was using a spell he had mustered which created a bright blue aura around his body which heightened his senses. The brilliant nimbus surrounding his physique would mingle with the intense moonbeams and the harmony between the two forms of luminosity would help the mushrooms he sought harmonize with his own energies, as these particular types of fungus were ultra-sensitive to light. It was when he was very very close to discovering the location of these prized gems of the soil when from out of nowhere a pack of wild beasts stampeded toward him! This was unusual to say the least for it was deep in the night and such critters would normally have some kind of warning preceding their arrival but they had come with no sound or alarm sounded by any life nearby. It was clear to him right away that the critters were of a magical sort, possibly illusionary to some degree but real enough to pose a serious and immediate threat upon his life—and upon his quest for the desired shrooms.

The animals had great green tusks on their thick orange hides and they were focused on reaching some location, it appeared to him but fortunately not one in the path that he sensed his treasured fungus to be found. The radiant luminescence around his body steered the pack of wild creatures away but one particularly muscled, tawny and riled up member of the pack seemed to be attracted to his magical presence. It was as if the ambience of intense blue light which was emitted from the form of Herdoles was a beacon for this furious orange beast and it charged at the sorcerer with reckless abandon! Before it got too close, the power of Herdoles' deep blue glowing radiance protected him by fusing with the critter and at the point it crossed into his field of light the animal was blasted from the inside out into oblivion! Large chunks of bright orange flesh with black blood with yellow streaks went flying all over the place. A big

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carcass smoldered on the ground, unrecognizable from the shape it had been in before as a burning odor permeated throughout the area. The herd pressed on as if nothing happened and Herdoles continued with his trek upon the concourse of his applied focus to locate his special mushroom. Ironically, though he did locate what he was after that night he found one that he didn't seek at all and that helped him much more on his quest to get across the oceanic bog. This fungus was especially brilliant orange with green spots and when he gathered that then stewed it with his bog juice in a marinade, a touch of the black blood with yellow streaks from the berserking animal which had tried to bash into him was splattered onto the odd mushroom.

Herdoles did not understand this at the time but it was actually this very event that finally made it possible for him to traverse his way across the sea-bog. The species that he encountered that late evening under the dual twin moons was from the imagination directly of a sleeping orange dragon with green horns on the other side. This particular dragon had fallen into a deeply wonderful sleep and in order to encourage the elongation of the dream state it was in (though it's arguable that dragons were only ever in a dream state, which in a way made it yet even more delicious for them to dream since they would be within one already) it decided to spawn some new critters to move around for it. Then it wouldn't have to wake up at all but could still go off hunting, cavorting around and generally living a wakened life but while remaining sleeping for much much longer. Thus the new animals materialized into being on the other side of the bog, which was where the dragon had been dreaming of being in the first place. The stampeding nature of the wild beasts represented the desire for the dragon to be as lazy as possible, a countervailing duality which would be more relaxing the more frenetic the creatures would be in their fevered rush. Eventually, the dragon awoke and the orange beasts immediately vanished in a puff of green smoke. Fortunately for Herdoles, the sorcerer happened upon one of the mushrooms that grew after the trampling beasts had run away. It would not be untrue to say that

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he was able to transmit himself across the oceanic bog on the dreams of a dragon which had merged with his own slumbering imagination.

His experiences within his beloved forests led him deeper and deeper into his own consciousness, more and more attuned with the rhythms of all life forms inherent to the endless varieties of woods he explored. At some point he began to evaporate spontaneously into a mist only to reform at another location, always near a certain kind of tree which had fluffy white moss growing all about its trunk. He would vanish and re-emerge this way without conscious effort simply as a matter of causality for his searching and enjoyment of the pleasantries in the peaceable woodlands. He sang to birds who sang their songs back while they rested in their tree branches or sailed through the air. Unable to know exactly why he was able to understand them perfectly well in their language and how he could answer with his own melody as naturally as if he were a winged aviary himself, he was nonetheless delighted to be communicating with such affinities with harmonious joy. When Herdoles climbed trees to their tippy tops sometimes he would lay flat along their uppermost branches and fall asleep for days on end. Often when he dozed off this way a furry creature or two would wind up nuzzling up between his pits while he dreamt away the time with affectionate abandon. One season ran into the next for him and he felt at times his journeys would never end. One day when he had felt that he had found the pinnacle of beauty amongst all the forests, a place of profound peace and comfort for him that was unlike any other place he had ever known to arouse his senses...he suddenly stopped and simply sat down on the ground! He didn't want to move on, feeling that his satisfaction could grow no more. This was it! He had somehow fulfilled his desires and would venture no more into any deep wood for answers. After a long contemplative introspection, he got up with the intention of returning to where things were less solitary— perhaps a friendly tribe or Ulohjr or another place filled with souls who mingled and socialized as he was not so often to want to do.

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He turned around and suddenly laid eyes on the most magnificent tree he had ever seen.

The lengthy tree trunk went as high up into the air as any he had ever seen and it had a pointy tip like no other specimen he'd laid eyes on either. It seemed to almost stab one of the visible moons in the pitch black night sky. It was particularly thin with spiraling shelf fungus encircling the entirety of the murky grey bark. Another unique facet of the organism had not been seen before were the branches in how they were formed to wrap around the trunk in circular formations. They merged with each other as they rose so that one branch would appear to align with the next one above it and the effect was that it looked like one contiguous corkscrew of branches flowing into each other. This created a canopying effect and the sparse leaves of varying colorations allowed the twinkling stars to poke through their spaces causing a sparkling contrast with the breezy dull foliage. He saw a family of bushy tailed rodents eating insects with minuscule suction cups on their red little hands as the bugs lingered in a trail along the bark. These funny creatures would plunk down a palm with absent agility and several dozen of the tiny green insects would be trapped in the suction cup to be sucked into the hungry rodents mouth.

Herdoles knew he was at home and found himself so bedazzled, contented and spiritually uplifted that a warmth began brimming within him which led to an eruption of air spontaneously underneath his feet! Suddenly he was floating on the cool night air and soon he made his way to the very top of the oddly spiraled tree. When he had reached the peak, a strong instinct overtook him to meld his magics with the energies of the bark and he focused all the powers he had into bonding with the surface of the outer shell of the timber. He was rewarded after some time hovering in the air this way as a spiral opening began to appear, one which would close to reopen again as if the skin of the tree were melting away in a whirlpool of mystery. Carefully

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timing his delivery, he slipped inside the hollowed apex's interior, unable to fathom whether it had been solid material internally before his presence or not. Red smoke poured out from the swirling window, a misty fog which heralded his entry and the vapor seemed to cleanse the meridian so that it would be free of parasites, straggling rodents and anything else which would be a distraction for the new resident.

Inside his new home, he would peer outward from the window of spinning nether energy (for the hole he created was bonded with the netherworld) and he found that he could see with increased acuity, able to peer all the way down to the bottom of the tree and focus on the teeniest of details upon the ground as if what he were looking at were in the palm of his hand raised up to his eyeballs only a hairs width distance away. He also noticed that the nether window would respond to his emotional balance thus if he was upset by a thought then a storm of green or red electricity would dance chaotically about its composition. If he felt a chill then the circuitous gap of whirling nether energies would waft warm air into his little lair. It had just enough room inside for him to pace around in thought, to sleep on a comfortable bed of soft bird feathers and leaves, for storing things on various curved natural shelves and compartments. Eventually he drifted off to sleep and snoozed in the most gratified way that he had ever known—his search was over and he had definitely found what he had been looking for, without knowing precisely what that may be before finding it!

The speedy goblin who dove into the nether hole had very recently met with his sorcerer master in the dank abysmal realm. His two demonic dragon spawn brothers were in the habit of meeting Herdoles in the spire where they had special niches to rest within the spacious

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hollowness of the treetop. There Herdoles would weave magic into their nightmarish thoughts while they wavered between dream states and wakened realities, lost in the nether world to be permanently adrift—especially while they were resting. His spell making went directly into Theo their innermost motivations and would manifest in ways most beneficial for his visions of achieving balancing and preservation of the spirits of the wood. The master sorcerer presently stood and stared out from his nether window with hands clasped behind his back. He wore a flowing white spider web cloth robe which had been sewn together by his own hand after a special ritual to seal his magics into the tawny substance so that it would never rot, tear, break or otherwise be anything but a perfectly comfortable garb to last as long as he saw fit. Reflecting upon his life and the spans of time he would trek through forest after forest, he closed his eyes and let out a dense cloud of pink smoke from his fleshy lips. This was his manner of enjoying a relaxing moment of leisure, something similar to smoking a pipe only he would consume the herbs in question long before as a master sorcerer could exhale a rich satisfying cloud of smoke without the aid of any such instrument.

As Herdoles was enjoying his delightful smoke, he had been reminded about the pleasantry while in the land of the dragons of when he came across a strange yellow tree. It was hypnotic in its unusual appearance with spindly blue branches and orange tinged dark blue leaves which made a rustling that sounded more like hollow rocks clanking together by the thousand rather than a kind of sounds leaves or foliage. would make against the wind. It's bark had little curved peaks as if it were a frozen oceanic surface in a brisk breeze and it also made a sound, a very slight buzzing which he determined was definitely sourced from a collection of flying (or any other kind of) insect— it was definitely just ever so faintly making a humming noise itself. The sound was quite soothing and and as he strode closer to get a better examination of the odd tree he began to hear the telltale sounds of a dragon approaching! The sorcerer surmised from

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the lazy waltz of the great creature that it was not interested in him at all and was fortunately a good distance away in the brush which sectioned off the area he had wandered into. Quickly, he scuttered around a clump of dark red bushes near the base of the bizarre tree then crouched carefully to hide amongst their dense foliage. This would not fool a dragon who would instantly detect his presence but it might not be encouraged to take further notice if he was not an affront to it in whatever it planned to do. He managed to find a tiny opening in the tightly packed soft red shrub and through it he peered at the magnificence of the dragon off in the distance. It appeared to be mostly red and yellow scaled and very fortunately for Herdoles it was sauntering off to another location, probably to find a fresh meal he thought; a much bigger, riper and juicier feast than the bony appetizer the gaunt sorcerer would have provided.

As soon as the dragon had gone out of sight completely, Herdoles expediently pursued his study of the curious tree and upon carefully inspection discovered that inside this bizarre yellow tree with clinking blue foliage was a very special sap. He noticed some of the thick sticky stuff seeping out of one of the curvilinear sections of bark at the very bottom of the trunk and after getting onto his belly in order to smell it closely, felt that it was probably not poisonous for him. He had an inkling to get hold of some and determine if it could be useful for some of his spell making but he also wondered if he was really lucky if he might locate a petrified hunk of the sap somewhere closeby!

He saw the appearance and subsequent exit of the wandering dragon to be a good omen and with a great excitement began to search all around the base of the tree for some of the hardened sap. He checked under a clump of magenta colored roots with blue veins which were bursting from the ground. Other sections of roots were yellowish, brown, blue then dark green and he meticulously combed through every possible place among them that there was any

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scant possibility of even the tiniest piece of the tree's amber. He noticed on one side of the tree there was a sizable gash in the trunk which had obviously been made a very long time ago by claws or teeth or something similar. It very well could have been the result of a battle between wild animals as the swipe against the timber had left fragments of bone or claws imbedded into the dark yellow bark. It was clearly not the result of a dragon penetrating the tree because the tree would not have survived such an assault. He felt that maybe the damage to 'skin' of the tree had yielded some possibility that more of the sap would have leaked out, thus increasing his odds for finding some petrified sap nearby!

Herdoles whipped his body around in a flash of inspiration and began to madly thrust his long bony fingers through the soil with diligent concentration. It was a reddish brown dirt mostly with blue and white rocks to be found here and there. There was also plentiful blue grass (grass there sometimes would be so fine that it was like walking through oceans of fine hairs) surrounding the area where the tree was. The wild blue threadlike grass reached all the way to a small hill quite far off in the distance which was spotted with pale blue and rusty yellow, orange and red bushes bushes. Sweat began to pour off his large forehead as he dipped his hands repeatedly into different sections of the soil in a systematic perusal of all of the surface area available to poke through. He revealed root after root section, encountering numerous forms of insects (none of which he confirmed were making any sort of noticeable sound). He lost track of time and may have fallen asleep at some point but kept searching. It was within his ability since becoming magically aware and manifesting spells derived from the life spirit of the forests to continue moving in action with distinctive purpose while he slept, though it would be impossible for most human beings to notice any difference from his waking state. Finally, after an eternity of exploration he found purchase on his sensitive fingertips as they rolled gingerly past a cool rounded object. He felt an immediate bond with the rocky item, as if it were filled with

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some history and accord with the duality of what was physical and what was in the ether. It was concentrated with powerful magic and purpose beyond him to comprehend. Though he was looking for the amber specifically, he was too taken with the attuning to what he had found for his consciousness to register that in fact he had finally found some! than a moment for him to realize it was what he was looking for because he was suddenly struck with a vision! As he gripped the amber tightly in his hand, his eyes instinctively clenched shut and he saw in his mind's eye a dragon with blue scales and fiery orange wings sailing by the enormous sun.

Could this unique tree have been one that this dragon within his second sight had used to incubate an egg? Tree tops were quite common for them to place them upon because the trees themselves were very gentle spirits who would nurture them to life with their slow pulsing energies. Trees were one of the very few organisms which had anything like the patience of a dragon and they were not afraid to be eaten by one, either since they would never lose their roots to grow back from once a dragon had eaten or destroyed one otherwise. Also there was nothing to worry about for the parent since no predators but other dragons would be able to break through one of their eggs no matter how hard they tried, no matter what impact would come to the shell, no matter what temperature, acidic substance or anything at all would possibly interact with one. In fact, a dragon egg would only grow stronger and whatever assaults would come to it would feed the gestating embryo, often resulting in powers for it upon hatching which would not otherwise have been present which related to how it was treated. If another dragon happened along and got hungry enough or for whatever other reason (which was fantastically rare) would attempt to consume or break into one, then the dragon egg might blip out of physical existence on that plane of reality and travel to another planet for a while until things got easier where it had been put in the first place. Even a sun would not burn up a dragon egg if they touched up against each other but in the exceedingly, almost impossible

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circumstance where a dragonling was pierced while incubating then the baby dragon in whatever stage of life development it was in at the time would be reborn and become a sun, a star system, a planet or something else which would eventually spawn yet another new dragon egg for it to start its ascent to life all over again!

Although Herdoles had only caught a brief hazy glimpse of the blue dragon with wings that were lightly aflame he sensed that in fact this treetop had seen the presence of an egg upon its treetop! This would make the tree enormously magical and grant a special kinship with the parent dragon that the sap would inherently carry within it. After attuning with the sap and seeing the grand vision he had, Herdoles felt so drained that he wondered if he was actually about to expire but instead he fell into the deepest slumber possible for him to remain living and dreaming. Eventually he had slept under the tree for so long in such without moving that he appeared as a tree root to all the wildlife which happened upon the tree, an illusion that was part of his magical shroud innate to his being but also from the presence of the dragon spirit. He had apparently absorbed some of the protective nature of the parent dragon and would always be connected to its jealous nature. It was the habit of Herdoles to disappear from sight when he went to sleep without the intention of performing some duty or continuing to socialize mindlessly, then he would simply rest while it appeared that he was fully awake. In this case, however he was still experiencing the weight and profundity of the bond with the vision of the dragon and its guardianship of the territory for the egg it had planted on the top of the tree. He would not sleep normally and the fact that he was asleep while touching the roots of this majestic life form gave him an inner peace while he dreamt that was all the more comforting.

He awoke suddenly after what seemed to be an infinitude and when he did, felt totally refreshed, energized and ready for anything! He rubbed his sappy, dirty, sweaty face with his

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hands and sat upright against the tree trunk collecting to pontificate about his situation. He closed his eyes and cupped his hands, burying his face in them in a stuporous awe of what had transpired. When he opened his eyelids he was startled to find an eyeball staring back at him from the center of one of his palms! The eye blinked a few times and studied him intelligently but it was not a normal looking pupil that focusing upon him. There was a tiny speck of what he surmised to be a fragment from a claw that had swiped at the tree in some ancient moment of pageful fury. His mind snapped to the conclusion that the petrified piece of the spiked nail had scraped the tree trunk and released some sap, then a clump of the stuff had flown to the ground by the force before hardening over time— with the remnant of the event still inside! Thus the center of the amber was filled with this tiny bit of the claw. At some point during his slumber this unique object had fused into his palm and attuned with the spirit of the origination of the amber, from paw of some beast losing it's nail and into the palm of Herdoles. He was changed from that point on with a renewed vigor and a slightly more feral instinct, a bit surlier and in touch with something more dangerous, more jaded than his previous self. This was balanced with a comforting vibrance of the tree's essence, which was stable and warm, understanding and inviting with a peaceful harmonious rhythm which went with all of its natural elemental surroundings.

The sorcerer leapt to his feet feeling a sense of power and understanding which was mildly intoxicating for him, as if he had become both younger and wiser but more ancient and innocent at the same time. He held his eye-ridden hand high up into the air to sense the hot breezy air and he immediately was struck by the profound measure of his environment, knowing without thinking that whatever it was he sensed would react with the eye in his palm. His new eye flickered with a sparkling energy in a maelstrom of colors which swirled around within the iris like chaos contained. Since then, his new eye would behave unpredictably in response to

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whatever was being experienced by Herdoles himself. Sometimes it would burst into a subtle flame with blue and green tendrils or it would arc with wisps of dark energy which flickered and snapped into a climax before disappearing into thin air, the eye then settling to a state of temporary calm again as if his hand were the storm with the eye being the center. He also had grown much taller than he was before after the oculus had bonded with him and he felt slightly more agile, strong.

It was the same day of his ocular addition that he had returned to the other side for a repose on in a calm haven away from the hostile constant pressure of the dragon lands that he met for the first time greeted by the three goblins born from the demonic dragon's blood! We can call the individuals of this ternion "H'aru" with great speed and stealth, "Gu'hthl" who was capable of impermeable petrification and "Blixighisk", who was so obese that it was impossible to see any shape but many roundish ones all at once which jiggled together as he moved even the tiniest bit. The three gloriously brutish fiends spawned from the demon possessed dragon were waiting for him on the shores near Ulohjr and when he shimmered back into existence there from his soul journey across the boggy sea it came as no surprise by him that they were there. The trio peered into his eyes (the two on Herdoles' face) with greedy vacancy and demoniac patience, similar in a way to newborns who await the presence of their parents for attention, protection, love, food and instruction. Herdoles appraised the impish goblins with intensity.. All over H'aru's body were thick black hairs resembling that of the mythical tree bark of his 'roots' and though they were stationary, it was clear to the sorcerer from his magical perceptions that he was by far the swiftest of the three. the he was swiftest by far of the three. Guh'thl had impossibly tough dark green skin which was like an epidermis infused with the characteristics of the rigid bark from the dragon fruit tree and to Herdoles, it was known that the goblin could transform himself into a state of petrification making it nearly impossible to penetrate his adamantine flesh. Finally

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Blixighisk was considerably bigger than the other two both in stature and in bodily dimensions with enormous rolling mountains of blubber so saggy and prolific that even under his arms were collections of baggy folds. Herdoles perceived that his subcutaneous fat was no ordinary feature and was capable of turning to an oozing liquid like the inner core of the dragon fruit tree.

The Master of the three goblins sought for understanding of the triplets in accordance with his natural curiosity and logical character. After a great deal of assessment he concluded that these goblins were a neutral force within the paradigm of the mechanisms of infinite reality, which was a complicated meaning for him because they were definitively evil by their intent and motivations. In fact it would be possible that they were almost purely evil without a hint of goodness in them except to understand the source of their hatred, their insane malice and their viciousness. The necessity of the continuum which fed the spiritual fortitude of the woods he knew as home were connected to the infinity of all other worlds. The function of the forests was bound to a cosmic vitality which he would not question nor judge for there was only mystery to be found and humility to be gained from any such attempts to understand how everything fit together. The way of the wood was always dangerously enigmatic as were the gears of all which existed and thus all things were possible so long as freedom to believe in anything remained constant! It was as obvious as the weather to him that these three infernal goblins were of use to the grand design of something beyond his grasp of cognition and that he would be using them for a spell beyond the measure of any he had attempted before. It was all part of the composition and maintenance as he saw it of the sacred mystical woods.

He raised his eye-palmed hand upward and poured silent thoughts into their perceptions! Each of them seethed with hideous excitement at the recognition and the predictive message from

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their Master. The sea bog boil of the sea-bog increased slightly due to the extraordinary presence of nether energy present in the situation. Herdoles smirked wistfully as light began to pour out from the eye-pupil— a warm blue light which pressurized the air surrounding the beam with a low hum to punctuate the event. Within the glowing azure radiance began to appear a watery sea with rapidly cresting waves which curled and broke in thunderous magnificence. The foamy ocean inside the controlled shaft of shimmery deep blue luminescence split suddenly into three channels and connected with the grim eyes of the triplets. A misty void took the place of their slitted pupils and green sparks raced around their eyelids while a crimson glow began to emanate from their eyeballs. Whatever communication was transpiring made the lusty goblins utterly and richly satisfied and this was signified by them all drooling a grimy green liquid which plopped to the ground and turned black on contact with the reddish moist soil before bubbling into a smoky goo.

Their mouths were agape with lips hung low as Herdoles funneled his ray of obedience into their latent consciousness. This concentrated form of communication transmitted patterns, frequencies, homing archetypes and pure ideas into the core of the goblins impulsive motivations and desires. The wood sorcerer laid the foundation of an elaborate magnificent spell for these three impish life forms to help carry out with missionary exactitude. As the blue incandescence receded and finally stopped with Herdoles lowering his eye-hand to his side with his head bowed low the goblins began to awaken and as a wicked smile crept across their faces from ear to ear. Frothy green spittle dripped off their dark thick lips and it was clear to the Master that his directives were burned successfully into the matrix of each one of the demon dragon spawns.

H'aru was the first to return to full consciousness and a shrieking yowl erupted from his smirking lips! He began beating his hairy fists on his wiry chest and yellow with red lighted tracers followed his arm motions from the speed with the nether magic in his passionate display. He crazily whooped then dove into the sea-bog! This act would have killed most any life form who attempted such an unnatural and dangerous feat but for H'aru, it was like a fish returning to the water. As he disappeared under hiccuping gurgles by the brownish disgusting bog liquid, Guh'thl began rocking on his clawed back and forth then sprang suddenly away from the shoreline with enormously dexterous acrobatics. Blixighisk howled feverishly then grabbed at his impossibly plump belly then shook his rolls of blubber with his fists and slammed his hanging fatty skin onto the ground which caused red and yellow sparks to fly off it, a small impact tremor punctuating his delight. Herdoles lowered his head even further under the white hood of his spider-web silk garb and grinned solemnly— his war generals were prepared for the grandiose design of his Master spell-weaving.

H'aru burst from the surface of the boiling sea-bog and landed spritely onto the reddish soil with the bog juices dripping off him disgustingly. The three were arranged in a triangular uniformity with Herdoles at the apex of their formation, his back to the oceanic bog. The dark sorcerer closed his eyes and cupped his hands together in front of his breast— a clear signal for the goblins to leave and begin with their missionary work. The demonic trio growled gutturally in ascending volume and fervor, eyes closed and gathering energy for their exodus. Herdoles continued to bow with eyes closed as a crimson mist gathered stormily about his clasped hands, a protective magic for his battle leaders to take with them as they left to prey upon the defenseless and weak, the innocent and the good. A cackling laugh escaped from Blixighisk in his greedy lust to begin his malicious work. Pyramiding outward and away from each other, they trotted in a rush heading in opposing directions with surly unyielding determination. Omnious

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sparks arose from the moist turf as they jogged upon it with their gnarled feet, hoary claws piercing and scraping the ground as they darted out of sight. Their dark and ancient magical forces chafed with the more natural, elegant and serene side of the bog thus their adjustments were beginning to attuning for life on the other side. Soon they were gone and Herdoles had magnificent confident in his hell-spawns being successful in their directives— though they were equally assured not to understand their significance within the conjuration nor what the vision of the overall effect of it that they would have!

Herdoles slowly opened his eyes and retracted his hands from in front of his chest, the swirling dark red collection of energy dissipating as he did so. With a slow heavy sigh, he collected himself then strolled off into the woods for a trek which would be long lasting and one in which he could really decompress and consider all that he had learned since becoming a new man in the dragon world. By the time he reached his spired home, he knew that he would be using his new eye on the palm of his right hand to assist him in finding the way inside his special tree. Touching the amber eye to the bark at the base of his spire, his body slowly began to twist out of form until it dematerialized into a spumescent thick white liquid which wrapped quickly around the trunk before rising upward in a spiraling haze. When his fluidic ooze reformed he had circumnavigated all the way to the top of his sappy castle and penetrated into the nether window, re-materializing fully into his previous physicality.

Herdoles had returned with artifacts! Each of his little treasures found a neat place in his keep with obsequious priority for representing different fields of his studies. The first object to find its new place was a chip from a dragon tooth and a fully intact scale from the same organism. He'd found both of these objects underfoot while preoccupied in communications with a noble creature which was reptilian looking, brilliant blue and had two sets of arms from the same joint

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at its shoulder (something like a crocodile, only much larger, double sets of teeth and its back was raised in a fabulous rigid hump). A white spotted baby blue dragon had been gnawing at some of the tree trunks nearby in a hungry first feeding since hatching from its egg and one of its teeth had splintered off and regrown instantly in the dragon's mouth, allowing Herdoles to locate a large segment of the cuspid as it happened to be in the location where he was having a wonderful (and silent) conversation with his new friend. The scale was veined with ultra-fine white patterns which he found on his journey home from the meeting at the edge of the bog outside Ulohjr with his goblin minions would sparkle with a magical resonance under moonlight. The chip from the dragon tooth was a powdery blue and speckled with tiny white flecks.

Another artifact he had brought home was a broken red eggshell with its yellow interior that came from a gigantic dark red bird which he knew regurgitated its meals into puddles of frothing lava that was in turn cooled into obsidian by a hypersonic flapping of the birds tail. This unusual bird would then invoke a terrific flatulence which would contained a liquid chemical that instantaneously froze the igneous vomit solid before stomping on it to break into innumerable shards. The bird would then eat the fresh icy and rocky igneous treat only to digest it all again in a second stomach, so that when it returned to its nest of plutonic rocks inside the lip of a nearby volcano, it would spew a nutritious syrup for its chicks to feed on gleefully. Herdoles had a way with birds more than any other animals and found that when he rubbed this especially rare shell that he would be comforted by the presence of the family of birds from which it came in a psychic union which he found comforting, refreshing and very reassuring.

Herdoles had seen one of these rare birds on his way to a lava swamp where he had been hunting for a fresh meal. All of his walking, flying (his form of flight was more like jumping and sailing on the wind for a time) and teleporting around the enormous fascinating dragon habitat

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made him extremely voracious in his appetite, On this particular hunt he had planned to fell and consume a medium sized wandering beast— and he did mean to eat the whole thing! He would find no trouble in locating a position and way to roast the animal once it was ready to cook.

There were lots of hot pits around the location which were filled with smoldering molten globs. Although he used his sorcery to make kills for food some of the time, generally he would avoid expending any of his magical energy (except for the cleaning once the deed was done, for he refused to pluck innards out with his hands and deal with all the messy preparations instead relying on a gust of his magical wind which would force only the desired body parts out of the critter leaving only the desirable edible parts for him to heat). Usually what he did instead of relying on sorcery for these executions was to strike the animals with a rock using brute physical force and shocking agility, always on a critical place on its body. It was a primordial experience for him which connected to his raw feral instincts and this experience fed his soul as much as his hungry belly.

EDITOR NOTE: ORANGE EYES ON HERDOLES —MATCH FOR 'DARK' IN PREVIOUS TEXT

The lava bird which had laid the egg that Herdoles found the shell of was sailing low in the air on its way back from a recent and very pleasurable digestive ritual, returning to its rocky nest with a fresh second stomach full of crystallized obsidian food for its young. It had bright yellow feathers around its broad neck like a halo that had slipped off its round head and got stuck at the collar. Its loud orange w beak leaked smoke from two wide dark vent holes and its piercing brilliant blue eyes greeted the sorcerer's orange irises as the bird was soaring by at a low altitude just passing Herdoles, who was watching in awe and admiration as the great avian went by. Instantly at the point of eye contact, they knew each other and from then on it was as if they were old friends.

The egg he had found on the dark brownish-orange ground was close by a running stream of molten lava. The heat didn't bother Herdoles for he was able to manipulate his own body temperature in order to match the environment wherever he was (within certain limits) and he also was able to create a resist within his skin which would help him survive or even be injured at all if he happened to be spewed with some of the molten fluids as they uncontrollably meandered about the range. Trickling in a meanders, the bright red, orange and yellow stream lazily greeted him as he stepped close to the hot flow to grab the gorgeous broken yellow spotted red eggshell. These eggs would never crack, burn, melt or otherwise suffer from lava and Herdoles considered it a gift from his new pal! He knew that the cracked shell was from a freshly hatched chick and the only way it would be found outside the volcano was it had been intended by the parent bird. The broken shell felt warm to the sorcerer but would have singed the flesh off of his hands had his magical defenses not been aiding him in withstanding the infernal heat, for the embryo case was not only exceedingly hot but also was coated with an acid which was known to fry predators who were unlucky enough to attempt feasting on one.

That was his most personal item gathered from the recent trip but not the one which held the most fascination and interest for him. Instead, a peculiar green stone which he had collected at the bottom of a marvelous waterfall. He discovered with some experimentation that the glittery green stone was able to turn from hard form to various states of matter: a liquid (which would stay true to its shape and not need a vessel to be contained), gelatinous, putty, a mist and back to solid rock. The various ways he would roll it around in his hand was what determined which state it would reform into and it quickly became his favorite item to feel while he was feeling ponderous. The location where he had lucked upon the object was riddled with sparkling gems. They would pour down within the streams of water in the lush waterfall so that when he simply stuck out his hand into the curtain of gloriously refreshing and beautiful water, it plopped into his

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hand randomly from innumerable other. He stuffed the green jewel inside his spider-web white silk garb where it clung to the inner surface without any pockets, which was one of the facets and advantages of his magical cloak. A spider from the web where the garment came from was always present within it and it would tend to the needs of the material as they arose (such as if a hole somehow managed to appear, despite the magical protections inherent to the silky threads and Herdoles potent magical protections he had woven into it). He quickly forgot about his little green find and took a dip in the lake the falls fell into which was littered on the bottom with brilliant gems of every imaginable color. Some were so large they wouldn't have even fit into his hand while others were only visible by the reflections of the sunlight which they reflected in sparkly glory. He took a nap while he was under the water, basking in the beatific locale. The way he was able to breathe underwater was from countless times he had swam in bodies of water throughout various forests and he'd crafted ingenious spells to make it possible for himself to enjoy longer, deeper excursions without interruptions.

Yet another object he had come home with was a vial filled with an extremely viscous greenish blue liquid which he had gathered from a tiny pool he had found beside a den of canine cousins. These beings had six legs each and thick green fur, enormously long snouts with an unusually numerous set of teeth. The extended span of their muzzle was matched by an elongated jawline with richly packed dentition which seemed to Herdoles to indicate they were accustomed to chewing through extremely large carcasses, making them most likely fierce hunters with a capability of taking down much bigger beasts than themselves. These greenish dogs were extremely tall, the smallest of them was at least a match for height with Herdoles. When he had arrived upon their turf, it was under a serene night sky and they were all sleeping in huddles together without any sentries awake to keep watch over the pack. This was another sign of confidence that the sorcerer took with extreme caution because they must be able to wake and

defend themselves quickly with great efficiency in order to laze about under the moonlight without any concerns of predators. There was that but also the enormous number of them was intimidating. They were scattered across the distances as far as his fiery orange eyes could see and under the dreamy silver moonbeams he saw their heaving chests with their billowing bellies to resemble leaves of his precious forests writhing under a gentle wind.

It was clear to him that these strange critters drew power from the reservoir of thick blue-green liquid. It was almost goeey, like a sap but flowed like a watery stream of rain coming off the trunk of a tree— clearly a highly magical property that made it contradict its own material conformities. The little pond of gummy fluid was surrounded by strange rocks which upon close inspection Herdoles found when he touched some that they actually felt soft rather than hard like typical stone. The danger was acute and he decided not to risk more thorough evaluation of the bizarre rocks (or whatever they were) but he did determine that if he squeezed them hard enough, they would be squishy somewhat like a fruit or a spongy creature from a tide-pool. On top of the pregnant risk of the environment taut with the presence of dangersome canines, he was reticent to dislodge or move and possibly disturb the formation of what obviously were sacred objects around this intensely mysterious basin of mercurial blue-green liquid.

He knelt down on his hands on knees, putting his face closer to the pool and saw that the closer he got to being in proximity to touch the gelatinous-liquid (which was still perplexing him in how it defied its own properties), that more energy would manifest into it. Thus when he was almost touching the gummy stuff it became a spinning whirlpool which silently swirled in a majestic response to his ever growing curiosity. He surmised that the fluid was connected in some way to a hole in the heavens and anchored the celestial mechanic to stabilize some tandem elements of the composition for the planes of reality which were balanced between the

two. He knew that such a vital stabilizer for cosmic alignment would be guarded by unusually powerful, magical and formidable sentinels. He calmly surveyed the landscape with the countless six legged green furred wolf creatures and reminded himself to tread with extreme caution and as much stealth as possible lest he startle any one of these menacing animals into action.

He reached into his cloak and produced a petrified wood vial from wood he found near his tree spire home. This vessel was prepared by him using his fingernail (with some magical effort) to scoop out a hollow space from within the solid ancient material which he capped with a dried mushroom stopper. He removed the fungal lid and turned the container upside down which he hung over the reservoir, suspended in mid-air by some wiry grass he'd attached to the bottom with some strong sap. Slowly, the blue-green glop oozed upward in a trickling route into his flask! Before too long, his little petrified wood bottle was filled and he sealed it with his hardened mushroom cap to snugly preserve the contents. Stuffing the vial back into his cloak, he carefully retreated from the supernal pool and skulked away. As he was stepping backward, his foot trampled upon one of the spongey rocks which were surrounding the reservoir! Apparently he had set it loose by gathering some of the liquid into his vessel, which disrupted the delicate equilibrium between the circular formation and the contents of the mystical basin.

The rock scrunched under his foot with a juicy affirmation of his suspicions as to the nature of the stone's response to enough pressure being put to it. Unfortunately for Herdoles, this made a rather obvious sound and one of the sex legged creatures with a long white goatee on its chin awoke and snapped to attention in his direction! An involuntary rumble erupted from its crocodile like mouth and soon this was followed by a tenacious growl, then a high pitch squeal which was an alarm for the entire pack to wake at once! Many of them began to appear from a nearby cave

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which Herdoles had not noticed was even there for it was shrouded in a shadow which shimmered and only when the canines moved through it did it appear to his perceptions. They began to stream down from the surrounding countryside in droves but none of them were rushing to attack him. It was as if they were more curious than anything, perhaps never having seen a human being before and it was realized by Herdoles that his success in gathering some of the precious gel-liquid from the source was perhaps a symbol to them that was fated to be, or perhaps that it could have been deadly for any who tried had they not possessed a benevolent spirit in doing so.

He was now surrounded by a sea of these large six-legged animals which all stared at him with a startling intelligence and poise. The moment was very tense and the only sounds underneath the whistling of the cool breeze was the rumbling of the throats of so many of them that it was beginning to unsettle his stomach for they were joined together in a low bestial murmur which was effecting all of his chakras with challenges to retain his inner harmony. Herdoles didn't know what else to do but to simply stare back in respect and admiration, actually enjoying his moment as much as he could with these sublimely magical creatures. All of his experiences from his entire life flooded into his mind with a rush of his consciousness and his heart was racing at the danger along with the intensive scrutiny he was under. The pressure was beyond measure but he was also feeling an odd comfort in meeting such an uncannily interesting and profound group of beings! A long moment passed with Hurdles sweating large beads and he began to sense their feelings as if their wakened states were fusing their consciousnesses with his— a psychic bond which was overwhelming and unavoidable to him! After some time, he felt that they had judged him and that the verdict was-- he was an amusement,

He believed from that moment on that if he had just removed even a slight bit more or less of the divine blue-green goo that the fragile levity which was the outcome of their study of him would have become a mortal mistake. The pack of green six legged canines began to howl and preen in what he considered laughter (and he felt ridiculed but fortunate in that) and more bemusement. They began to rub up against each other and some rolled around on the ground with their bellies exposed. They where whining and barking in loud affections and eventually they all began to return to their former positions and casually returned to sleep. Herdoles strolled off as silently as he could with a smile across his face which was the result of part of him being bewilderingly elated as part of their cackling group but also from a state of pure shock. He eventually reached the conclusion that he had stumbled upon a dream reservoir, a pool of energy from the essence of those who were traversing through their slumbering worlds and depositing a piece of themselves within it.

Finally, the last thing he had come back with from his excursion in the dragon lands was an ignimbrite which he had found at the base of an extraordinary tree. This exceptional timber was an anomaly for it was as much rock as it was wood. It appeared in a permanent flux between identities as it was burning constantly at the base within a black smoke and was surrounded by a clear green water which was formed in an irregular oval. The natural moat prevented any flames from spreading beyond the perimeter, the source of which appeared to be a magma flow under the hard red soil which resulted in a churning smolder for which the tree had adapted and become petrified into a unique lava stone-wood at the very bottom of it near the roots. It was obviously immune to fire in its stony bark which was obviously immune to fire completely. When Herdoles had come upon this scene he dove straight into the glassy greenish water of the wide circular pond and gently emerged to climb himself up over the edge to be near the rock-tree.

Without thinking, he plunged his hand into some of the flames which were spewing upward from a fissure in the solid ground. He clenched and withdrew his fist in a hot instant and looked to see what was in his grip. He had come up with a scoop of little insects which had an armor like exoskeleton similar in quality to the dark reddish stoney exterior of the tree base. Though Herdoles had his magical defenses up which would have prevented any kind of burn in almost any situation such as this, he realized that his hand was badly burned! This unexpected turn of events made him realize that the tree was much more magical than he had noticed from any of his senses, an underestimation which would have cost him dearly if it had not been for the healing powers of these forgiving insects. They sucked out the heat from his singed hand spit up some sort of enhanced enzyme which returned his appendage to its recent condition with a soothing coolness that made him feel both relieved and grateful. These insect friends were shaped similarly to seashells on their outer form and had countless little legs underneath them which were a whitish coloration. They migrated happily across his spiderweb silk garb until many them finally disappeared within it.

He felt a vibration within his cloak and heard a crackling sound. It seemed that the horde of insects had fused with the spider web silk material and their magics were interacting in an unpredictable way! After a time, a bulge formed at the end of the sleeve where his hand had dipped into the flames and the cloak spit out a rough white stone with bubbly air pockets contained within it. He caught the stone in his hand and reflexively tossed it inside of his white cloak then swam away from the tree-stone, content to find himself another place to captivate his wonderment.

Herdoles peered out over the landscape from his nether window and delicately tapped the void within the opening, directing a strand of nether fiber to sink below to the ground so he could see

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what was happening at the base of his spire. He perceived twigs and leaves in a variety of colors, some wet and some dry but all with insects similar to millipedes (though these were shorter, fatter and rounder with even smaller legs) and they began to float upward into the air from some kind of gas sack in their bodies which temporarily rendered them lighter than the air. This beautiful sight reminded him that he had been wrapped up within his ideations to reflect on what he had gleaned from the other side of the bog for quite a long time. These little magnificent creatures down below who were floating on their own organs were not concerned with any artifacts from a foreign land or learning any new secrets from a hidden forest which was yet to be discovered. He focused his consciousness on the bustling insects near the ground and asked them to prepare his landing, for he was about to leave the spire and descend onto the ground near these hovering life forms. A chattering sound was heard as they clearly had attuned with him to receive his message and those in the air deflated their sacks then they all hustled to clear out a little area for his feet to land on.

The Master sorcerer sensed that H'aru had entered the nether hole outside of Ulohjr. Herdoles stuck his head out of his nether window and stretched himself through eternity and beyond until he was pushed out the other side, birthing himself from the portal of the unreal. His ultra fine silky white cloak billowed with the air inside, magically assisting him in his free-fall and he floated atop the encircling branches using their aura to glide on. When he was about midway down the splendid spiring tree, he sensed that H'aru had made his way through the abyss into a position which felt very comfortable for him. It was as if cold water were flowing through the sorcerer's veins when H'aru had found his point of contentment within the great abyss. The disembodied state of the lithe goblin was bound with Hurdles and used his Master to anchor his bearings from the other side.

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Herdoles reached the bottom of his towering spire to land softly on the area cleared out for him by the friendly millipede like insects who had all taken to the air with their swollen sacks. A cool breeze swooshed around his rather large ears and he sucked in some of the crisp cool night air, then bowed slightly in honor of his friendly helpers who had assisted him with his landing.

He floated away instead of trekking by foot because he was still somewhat asleep after his long study of his recently acquired relics. He was intent on finding a place in Ulohjr which had fresh drinks and tasty eats to help him refresh his conscious mind, rejuvenating him enough to pay full and careful attention enough to mind his footing with a more traditional mode of travel. When he arrived at the glorious city of light, he found merry Ulohjrjians dancing together and laughing in an oblong purple light structure which had a wonderful meditation center inside filled with many forms of nourishment. Herdoles was not feeling terribly social (which was almost always the case, but in this instance he was particularly uninterested in participating with the groups for any reason at all, at least until he had replenished his vigor) and thus he focused on submerging his energy to blend into the scene as much as possible without being visible to the Ulohjrjians. He became part of the ambience more than a physical form or participant in the festivities and since his mood was one of an uplifted benevolence, he remained wholesome to the party which helped him remain undetected (or rather, so uninteresting that he simply remained out of sight or other forms of distinction). For a long, long while he patiently rested and let his mind attune to the waking tasks before him. The luminous pink walls of the housing were rippling, shimmying and flashing in their constant flux which fed on the communal spirits of the inhabitants. He was marinating with anticipation before materializing into a more ordinary form which would be followed by a healthy dose of the inviting foodstuffs and various restorative drinks which were plentiful within the happy location.