

A N O R



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Contents

Editorial.....	2
<i>By the Witch-King of Angmar</i>	
At His Satanic Majesty's Request.....	3
<i>Our usual editor talks to our guest editor, the Witch-King of Angmar</i>	
Dark Times (Part Two).....	7
<i>By Pip Steele</i>	
<i>Timelord of the Rings</i> pull-out.....	Centre pages
<i>Created by Tim Kelby</i>	
The People's Flag is Deepest Black (Part Two).....	12
<i>By Tim Kelby</i>	
CTS vs. 'Winkers Croquet Grudgematch.....	18
<i>By Pip Steele</i>	
Information.....	20
<i>The Cambridge Tolkien Society</i>	
<i>Back Issues of Anor</i>	

Cover art by Lucia Li

Editorial

By the Witch-King of Angmar

Summer is here, graduation day has been and gone, and the wait for another Anor seems interminable. Your regular editor, it seems, has failed in his duty to produce the requisite number of editions of this fine periodical, and so it falls to me to take up my quill and replace him. Don't worry – that shiftless, workshy minion has been confined for his own safety. He won't be harmed... any more than is absolutely necessary.

Unfortunately, being a scientist he has no literary thesis with which to fill the pages of this excellent journal (I strenuously vetoed his suggestion that we include portions of his brain-liquefyingly tedious masterwork, 'Preparation and Characterisation of Platinum-Group Metal Nanocrystals Supported on Niobium Pentoxide'). Hence, I have had to claw together, by dint of threats and persuasion (mainly threats), enough material to make a respectable publication.

So – what *can* you expect to see herein? Well, there's the second part of an excellent, if rather flippant, story about me and my fiendish plan to conquer Middle Earth and overthrow the Dark Tyrant Sauron; an exciting pull-out preview of the upcoming CTS sketch extravaganza (which will, of course, star me); and an exclusive interview with... me. Oh, and there's some stuff that doesn't have me in it: a bit about croquet, the second part of some vampire thing... nothing of any importance.

At this point, much as it pains me to do it, I must acknowledge everyone who contributed to this edition of Anor. And as for the rest of you... I know where you live.

Signed,
Your fiendish Editor,

His Malefic Majesty the Witch-King of Angmar, Warden of Minas Morgûl, Captain-General of the Armies of Mordor, Lord of the Nazgûl.

P.S. – You may see certain comments appended to the contents of this edition of Anor with the superscription 'Ed'. This is not some unknown, reclusive member of the CTS. It's short for 'editor' – that is to say, myself. In case you were wondering.

At His Satanic Majesty's Request

Our usual editor talks to our guest editor, the Witch-King of Angmar

Editor: Mr. Witch-King... um... Your Witchness... Mr. Angmar, welcome.

Witch-King: You can call me Your Majesty. By the way, why the strange title? I was told this piece would be called 'Interview with the Ringwraith'.

Ed: It was going to be, but then I decided Mick Jagger was less likely to sue us than Anne Rice.

WK: What?

Ed: Never mind. So, for those of our readers who don't know who you are, tell us a bit about yourself.

WK: Well, I was born in Númenor some time ago – I don't really like to reveal my age. I studied at Morgul College, Mordor, reading Arcane Runes, then subsequently at the University of Dol Guldur, where I completed a masters in Necromancy which, oddly, didn't actually involve any zombies, but mainly covered subjects like Advanced Looming and Being Mysteriously Alluded To. Obviously, I devote a lot of time to my work as a Troubleshooting Consultant for Sauron, but I do have hobbies – I enjoy amateur dramatics, and recently set up the Mordor Company of Players to take theatre to underprivileged orcs.

You can read about all this in a lot more detail in my new book...

Ed: I thought we agreed you weren't going to plug your book until the second page of the interview?

WK: I changed my mind. Any objections?

Ed: No... no, none... please put that cheese-grater down.

WK: As I was saying, you can read all about my early life in the first volume of my memoirs, *Portrait of the Ringwraith as a Young Númenórean*. It's published by Mordor University Press...

Ed: And available at all good bookshops...

WK: No – it's available in all *evil* bookshops, for just £26.99, which is a very reasonable price for a full-colour eight hundred-page hardback.

Ed: True... but your book is a three hundred-page *black-and-white* hardback, right?

WK: That's correct.

Ed: Are there any plans to release it in paperback?

WK: No.

Ed: That's just evil!

WK: Thank you – I know.

Ed: Right, now we've got that out of the way...

WK: Wait – I haven't mentioned the other twelve volumes I'm planning to publish. We'll release one every year, just before Christmas – the perfect present for that difficult relative you don't really like. Particularly if they've never heard of me.

Ed: Right – *now* can I ask you some of these questions?

WK: If you like. As long as you stick to ones I approved.

Ed: Mr. Angmar – what do you attribute your success to... wait, I don't remember writing this question.

WK: Just ask it, minion.

Ed: No – no, I'm not asking this. It's not just sickeningly obsequious, it's not even grammatically correct. It's got a preposition at the end!

WK: Really?

Ed: Yes. It should say "To what do you attribute your success?"

WK: I'm glad you asked me that. I think the main source of my success is twofold – firstly, my multifarious talents are very obvious to anyone who's ever seen any of my work...

Ed: Your work?

WK: Yes, my work, both in theatre and radio. The Cambridge Tolkien Society's 2003 production of the unimaginatively-titled *Silly Sketches*, in which I starred as myself, and during which I originated the now legendary slogan, "Mock It Not™," as used to advertise the WraithMaker range of eldritch weaponry. That was also the start of my well-publicised running feud with Gandalf. I also starred – again, as myself – in the Cambridge Tolkien Society's 2004 production of the even more unimaginatively-named *More Silly Sketches*; specifically in the short *At Home With the Saurons*, which I also directed.

You'll recall that I also featured in the comedic radio program *Defeat the Dark Lord the Burkiss Way...*

Ed: Will I?

WK: ...being interviewed by Jeremy Paxman on *Newsnight* and captaining the Morgul College team to victory in a special edition of *University Challenge*.

Ed: When you say 'victory,' do you in fact mean 'dragging Jeremy Paxman off to be tortured'?

WK: I'd call that a fairly decisive victory.

Ed: Yes... so, what projects can we expect to see in the coming months, Mr. Angmar?

WK: Well, I'm currently preparing to star in my a play I wrote myself, entitled *Timelord of the Rings*, featuring a certain well-known character in a supporting role...

Ed: If I could just stop you there – we already have a pull-out section about *Timelord of the Rings* in this term's *Anor*¹, so that's probably enough blatant plugging for one edition.

In fact, that's almost all we have time for. I'd just like to ask you one last question, Your Majesty.

1 See the centre pages – Ed

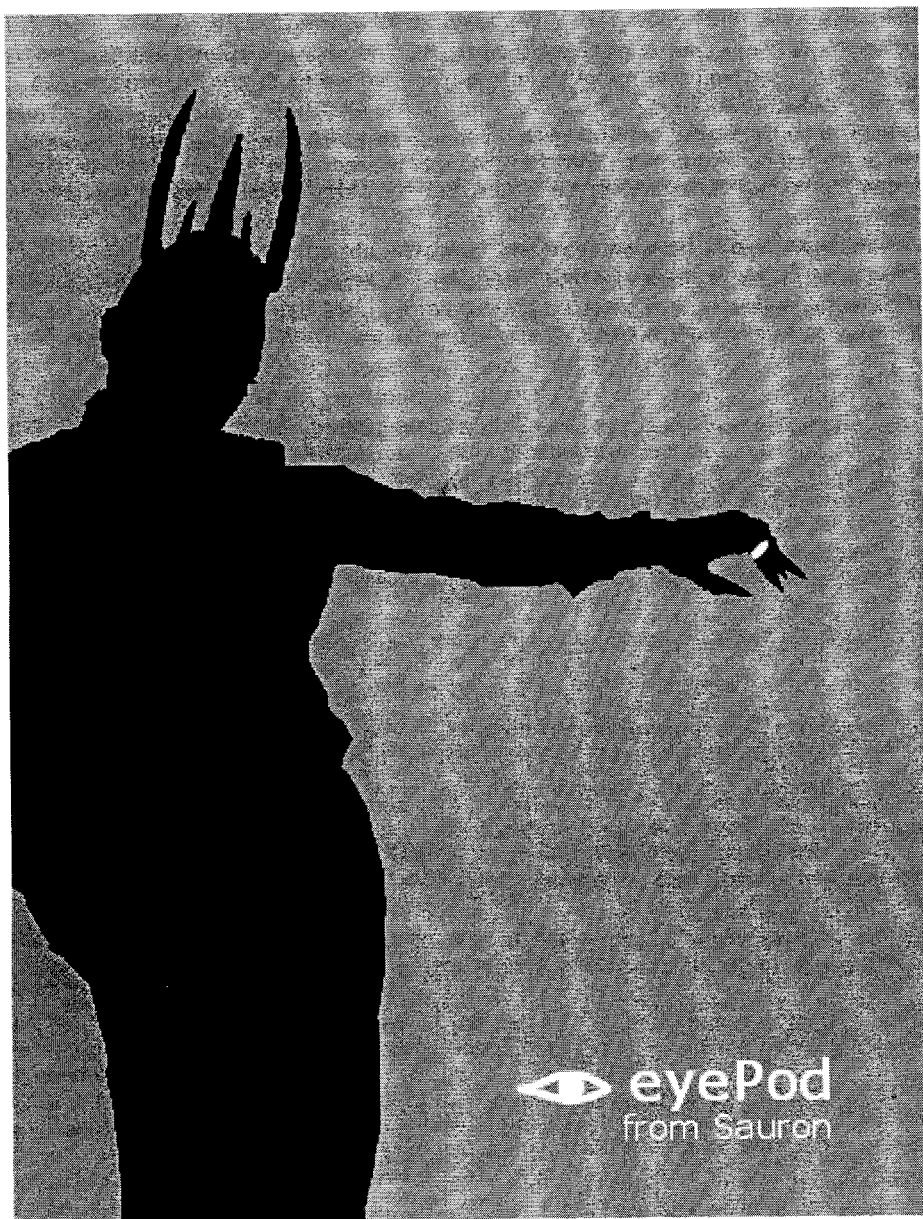
WK: Think very carefully about what you're going to say next.

Ed: There are some wild conspiracy theories out there – some people claim that they've never seen you and me in the same place, so we must be the same person. What do you say to that?

WK: Well, they're clearly wrong – we're in the same place now, aren't we? Anyway, that's a ridiculous argument. They've probably never seen Nelson Mandela and Maureen Lipman in the same place either, but they don't claim *they're* the same person.

Are we finished here? I have some urgent oppressing to attend to.

Ed: The Witch-King of Angmar – it's been an honour talking to you. Thank you for your time.



Dark Times (Part Two)

By Pip Steele

The sun was rising by the time Van Halfling, Isembard, Eloise and Polo Bolger were halfway along the road to Scary. The evening before, Isembard had not really realised that they would be going without sleep all night, just setting out straight away after all the preparations for their journey had been made. Now he felt rather tired, and he had to stifle a yawn. Eloise noticed and tutted before kicking her pony forward a little so that she was riding beside Van Halfling.

"You are very mysterious, Master Halfling," she said quietly, so that her father would not hear. She knew, of course, that Isembard was glaring at her back, cursing her defiance and hoping that the stranger would not instil further adventurousness into his already reckless daughter. Why she did not want to settle down marry a nice respectable lad like Ferdibrand Took, who was rather well-off and clearly interested in her, he did not know. She thought her father was extremely unreasonable in expecting to have such a boring life, and was determined to control her own future.

Now Van Halfling just grunted, barely acknowledging her. His eyes and mind were fixed on the road ahead.

"Do you have a first name?" she asked, not one to give up.

Now he looked at her. "No."

Something in his dark eyes startled her, forced her to disengage from the conversation, if you could call it a conversation. This stranger, who thought to save her people, was not, however, friendly. He grimaced and looked back to the path ahead. She shuddered inwardly and let her pony fall back a little, and she ignored her father when he asked what they had been talking about.

Just a moment later, the village of Scary came into view, and Van Halfling beckoned for them to stop. They had been riding up a slight gradient for some time, but it was quite startling how it now fell away rather sharply, revealing that they were perhaps only half a mile away, maybe less. They were all silent, whether by instinct or by following Van Halfling's lead, and they surveyed the landscape before them carefully.

Turning round on his horse and looking at them, Van Halfling spoke in a quiet but urgent voice. "We are closer than I had intended. That is not good. But I can see nothing stirring. I suggest we ride into the village itself, but cautiously. The creatures we seek cannot bear to expose themselves to sunlight - it brings their death. And so we shall be safe as long as we stay outside while the sun is out. Do not go too close to any building! They may conceal our enemy. But take these." He gave each of the other three a pointed wooden stake and a three-quarter size crossbow, all of which he fished out of his pony's deceptively large saddlebags.

With that he kicked back and compelled his pony forward. The others followed, fearing what lay ahead and their mood darkened by his gravity. Soon they were in the main street of Scary.

Scary was a rather old town, but it might not have seemed so to a visitor. Its buildings were free-standing, some even with two storeys, and there were none of the charming little delvings that old-fashioned Hobbits preferred. The reason was

that the ground here was hard, too hard for Hobbit-delving, Hobbits not being nearly so expert at hewing rock as the Dwarves. Not far away, just to the north-east, there was even a quarry, and indeed it was the situation of the quarry that had resulted in the construction of the town many, many years ago. Quarrymen lived there, or had done traditionally, and, even now that the quarry was not nearly so well-used as it used to be, there were not many inhabitants who were not labourers of some kind. The place was not well-off.

Picking their way carefully through the street, the company came across some curious objects: a frying pan, a piece of cooked meat now covered in flies, some child's set of toy Shirriffs, a lone shoe. The four looked around them and held their breath, grimacing every time their ponies' hooves hit the cobbles because the noise seemed so loud.

Suddenly there was a noise to their left. It sounded like a cry, small but desperate. Van Halfling turned and saw a shadow disappear into one of the houses. The others tried to see what he was looking at.

"Come out!" Van Halfling shouted. "We mean you no harm!"

"What... what if it was a creature?" Polo asked, wide-eyed.

"Then it won't come out."

Polo shrank back, a little embarrassed. Just then, a face peered out from the house's doorway.

"Hello!" Eloise called, seeing that the face was that of a young Hobbit. "It's alright, we're friends."

Apparently encouraged by the fact that there was a girl with the stern-looking men, the child, who turned out to be a boy of maybe ten years, came out into the light. His face was wet with tears. Though it seemed there was hope in the child's appearance, it took some time to get him to speak, and when he did he would say little other than "They're all gone!" and "Monsters!". All they could tell from this and from a quick survey of the town was that there was no-one else left there and that the creatures had something to do with it. The only really useful piece of information the boy gave them he gave by pointing down a track that led out of the village and saying, "They went that way" before bursting into tears.

Not knowing whether he meant the villagers or the creatures, but suspecting he must have meant the creatures, Van Halfling decided that the only thing for them to do was to follow the track and see where it took them. It was heading towards the north-east, and he supposed that meant that it led to the quarry. He turned to his companions. "What we shall do is follow that track. I shall lead. I want Isembard on my left, Polo on my right. If we come to more open ground, you should spread out on either side. Try not to expose our back - I want you both to keep looking behind, all the time." He seemed very insistent on that point. "Eloise, you can stay here with the boy."

At that, Eloise opened her mouth, taking in such a deep breath that everyone thought she must be about to launch into a great tirade of abuse. But she did not know quite what to say, and she let some of the air go, and when she spoke she just sounded a little flabbergasted. "Right, then."

Isembard was not entirely happy about leaving his daughter behind, but he decided she was safer here and fell in silently behind Van Halfling to Polo's left. Soon they were heading slowly down the track, looking all around them and being

very cautious. Eloise was left fuming as she stared after them, knowing she was insulted at being given the job of looking after the child, but unsure what she should do about it.

Then the heavens opened.

The cloud had been gathering for some time, sometimes obscuring the sun, but Van Halfling was the only one who had noticed, for he was very careful in seeing what daylight was available since he had been tracking these creatures so long. The rain, however, took even him by surprise in the strength of its downpour.

Eloise, back at the village, was rather startled, and then rather miserable as she began to be soaked through by the cold, wet, biting rain, and chilled through by the breeze that began to pick up. She hoped it would be enough to clear the rainclouds but doubted it. Looking at the boy, she sighed.

Then it occurred to her that the clouds meant danger. The creatures could not expose themselves to sunlight, Van Halfling had said in his arrogant, annoying, irritating manner. So, now that the sun was obscured completely, there was danger. If he was *right*, that was, and suddenly she felt disinclined to trust him at all. Of course, that was just her pride rearing up, desperate to avenge herself for the insult she had received. And his cold, unfriendly manner! Now fuming all the more, and allowing that she was rather scared on her own, she mounted her pony and set off after the others. The boy she left behind, reckoning that he had survived this long on his own and could do so a little longer. The sound of his weeping faded behind her as she went.

Now, since Eloise's blood was up as she went after her companions, she was not quite so cautious as she should have been. She went rather quickly, ignoring the steady sound of the rain drumming on the hard ground all about her, ignoring how uncomfortable she was in her cold, wet, angry state. Soon she came to a sight that made her stop suddenly.

Ahead, she could see the quarry. It loomed high, throwing a shadow over the already dark land, and a gloomy air seemed to hang over it. Although it was worked by the hands of Hobbits of her own time, it seemed somehow primeval, like an ancient monument, something carved out by dark gods of long ago. Dismissing such unwanted thoughts, which had come over her quite unexpectedly, she trotted forward, remembering to breath, now looking about with a little more caution.

But too late.

She squealed as hands grabbed her from behind, dragging her from her horse. The thing must have been concealed by one of the few trees that were dotted around the landscape, looming leafless shapes, allowing it to get behind her. She struggled violently even as she was dragged back, kicking and twisting and flailing. Just as she was about to scream, a hand clasped tight over her mouth, so tight that she couldn't breath. Whatever had hold of her was gripping her firmly, and she could feel its warmth at her back, overpowering her.

"Quiet," whispered a voice in her ear, the breath hot at her neck. "Quiet."

She was still, and nodded. The hand loosened its grip, and she took the opportunity to shake herself free and turn around. Dark eyes met her gaze. It was Van Halfling.

"What are you doing here?" he whispered. "I told you-"

"I don't always do what I'm told," she said defiantly. Then she saw blood

on his hands. "What happened?" She was meek now.

"They got Polo. Your father is wounded - he is hiding in that dead ground off to our right." He pointed across the path, which they were now to the left of, facing forward. Isembard was hiding among some rocks that seemed to have been hewn from the quarry, and he now gave her a small wave, just visible.

"Will he be alright?" Eloise asked Van Halfling quietly but urgently, and he nodded. "What now?"

"Now I kill them." His dark face was resolute but calm. If he thought that he might meet his death in the attempt, he did not show it. His deep eyes betrayed no emotion but determination. "If I do not return before nightfall, take your father and go."

Eloise did not know what to say. She was not entirely sure that she would recognise nightfall when it came, so dark was the sky as it poured forth rain, but she nodded in agreement. Then she kissed him on the cheek and whispered, "Good luck." She was not quite sure why she did it.

Van Halfling stopped, a little disconcerted, his eyes showing puzzlement for the first time. And then he went.

It must have been an hour later when Eloise heard footsteps approaching her hiding place, which was now among the rocks with her father (she had been very cautious and quiet as she ran over there, wondering if it was a bad idea but much preferring to be with her father and try to look after him). She had just finished bandaging Isembard's left upper arm and was startled to hear that someone was nearby. She had thought she would see before anything could get close, but she had not been watching. She just hoped it was Van Halfling.

It was not.

The creature leapt over the rocks with astounding speed, and it landed just in front of Eloise. Its skin was a pale grey colour, its shape resembling that of a man but its gait betraying its inhumanity. It was lithe and quick, and it seemed to sniff at her. Then it opened its eyes wide and they were blood-red. There was blood around its lips, and as they opened to reveal the dark chasm of its mouth, two long, pointed fangs could be seen glistening.

With a sharp gasp, Eloise took a step backwards and beckoned desperately to her father, who seemed about to cry out in horror, to be silent. Just as she reached for her crossbow, it jumped at her, knocking her onto her back and pinning her down. She could feel its brute strength, but what amazed her was that its flesh was stone cold. It was no living thing. Isembard, wounded but terrified for his only daughter, threw the nearest object he had at the creature's side. It was a stone.

The creature was unharmed, but the stone was enough to divert its attention to Isembard, and it leapt from daughter to father with sickening agility. It made a gulping, gurgling noise deep in its throat and opened its fangs wide, aiming for the Hobbit's neck. Then, suddenly, it crumbled to dust.

Isembard was left shaking, looking up. All he could see was his daughter, standing with a wooden stake in her hand. And then he passed out.

Eloise was worried, still shaking from her own effort in felling the creature. She had not really known what she was doing, but she had picked up the stake unthinkingly and thrust it into the creature's back. She was dumbfounded as she stared at the little pile of dust at her feet that was starting to become a soggy

mixture as the rain pounded it. She knelt down by her father, stroking him and hoping he would be alright, and unwanted tears began to sting her eyes.

Just then, there was a deafeningly loud boom from the quarry. At least it seemed deafeningly loud then, when there was nothing in Eloise's world but cold terror and rhythmic, beating rain. She stood, careless in her fear, and saw a lick of flame come forth from an opening in the rock face. It looked like there had been a cave there, but now it was collapsing. Silhouetted against the flame, she could see a figure running towards her.

Terrified, she picked up her crossbow, aimed it wildly, let her dart fly. The figure went down. But then it got up again and came closer, running fast, and she fumbled with another dart, dropping it as she pressed it to the string.

"You stupid little girl!" the figure cried breathlessly, crouching down when it got to the hiding place. It was Van Halfling. And a crossbow bolt was protruding from his right shoulder. Then, for the first time, he grinned. "Good shot, though." He pulled the bolt out without wincing.

Eloise gasped. She could not speak just then, and simply threw her arms around him. Her tears were running freely now.

Van Halfling, showing a tenderness she would never have guessed he could possess, held her until she was ready to stop crying. "I see you got one of your own," he said when she finally pulled away from him a little. She nodded. "I've never seen anyone else stand up to one of those creatures, and much less live to tell the tale afterwards." There was admiration in his voice.

"What... what did you do? Did you kill them?" Her words faltered on her tongue, but she forced them out.

"They're dead, every last one. I was lucky enough to catch most of them unawares. I took off their heads, and they died. If you could call it death - they were never really alive. Then I burnt out their lair."

After all tales had been told, Van Halfling lifted Isembard gently onto a pony. There were only two ponies now, the other ones have been frightened away, and Eloise had to mount up behind the man to whom she had long ceased to be hostile and now regarded as a hero. She was glad to have someone to hold on to. It was not long before they were riding away from the doom-ridden village of Scary. They forgot about the boy, who turned up in Brockenborings about a week later quite out of his mind, and he was lost until a kind local family took him in.

For Van Halfling and Eloise, the tale was not simple. The inhabitants of Whitfurrows were very glad that the threat had been removed, but they decided unanimously that the whole story should be hushed up. Dark times might sound awfully romantic, but the average Hobbit would much rather have a nice safe story about mushrooms and pipeweed. It did not matter how much Isembard tried to insist that Van Halfling should be treated as a returning hero, the local populace would not have it. They quietly gave him some pecuniary rewards and asked politely that he leave.

Van Halfling had other ideas, and he was given aid in these by Isembard, who gave him his daughter's hand and some land where he might build himself a small house. To this day, Van Halfling and Eloise's descendants still live on the outskirts of Whitfurrows, and they still tell the story of their great bravery, being very careful that it does not spread and make them disrespectful.

The People's Flag is Deepest Black (Part Two)

By Tim Kelby

Previously in 'the People's Flag is Deepest Black' – the Witch-King and Khamûl, his right-hand wraith, have devised a devious scheme codenamed, rather blatantly, 'Operation Orcish Uprising'.¹

The meeting-place was a cavernous grotto deep beneath the tower of Barad-dûr, its rocky walls dripping with filth and slime. The conspirators arrived one by one, hooded and cloaked, in a kind of grotesque procession. There were six of them: three tall and broad-shouldered; two small and hunched, with bowed legs and long, crooked noses emerging from the shadows of the their cowls; and one immense and squat, swathed in enough black cloth to clothe three Nazgûl. They sat in silence around a long table. After a few moments of silence, one spoke.

"Are we all here?" One of the little, hunched orcs hid his fingers under the table as he counted.

"There are only six of us," he decided, eventually. "There should be seven." There was a long pause.

"Is six more or less than seven?" asked one of the larger orcs, in a dull, rumbling voice. There was another puzzled silence.

"Yeah... I think so," a rough voice said.

"Six is *less* than seven," someone else put in, impatiently. "Someone is missing." As if on cue, a seventh black-robed figure emerged from the stygian darkness, glided elegantly to the head of the table, and sat.

"The second meeting of the Orcish People's Revolutionary Council has begun," he intoned, in a low, hissing voice. "I am Sunday." There was another one of those long, awkward silences. "I thought we sorted this out already," Sunday hissed. "We are all named after days of the week. I am Sunday." An exasperated sigh escaped the shadow of his hood like a breeze whispering through a graveyard. "Recite your names," he commanded, wearily.

"Monday," one of the orcs identified himself, eagerly. There was a long pause.

"Tuesday?" another suggested.

"Wednesday," two put in at once, earning them a disparaging stare from Sunday, who continued to glare at them until one said, timorously,

"Thursday?"

"Friday," the fifth council member said, quickly, forestalling Sunday's impatience. Now the attention of all the gathered conspirators focussed on the vast bulk of the largest orc. Unconcerned, he concentrated on extracting something indescribable from under one of his yellowed fingernails. Gradually, he seemed to become aware of their combined scrutiny, and looked up, frowning.

"Yesterday," he rumbled finally, in a self-satisfied voice. An icy silence

¹ *It should be obvious what this operation will entail.*

