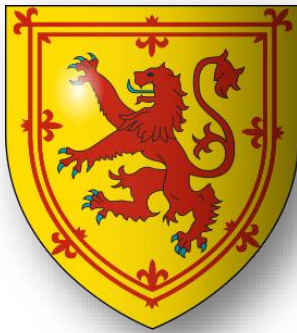


# *Adventures in Filbar*™

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## PANGIA COMPENDIUM

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ADDENDUM - 5



**BY FRANK SCHMIDT**

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## **Tobias "Steelhead" Gladstone**

The fighting pits of Melcore have been a staple of society since the country was founded. Every large town has an arena where men battle each other along with other foes to appease the bored populace. While a few men go willingly into the gladiatorial profession most are forced into the pits. Criminals, military deserters, and renegade slaves fill most of the ranks as well as captured foreigners. Occasionally a disgraced politician will find their way into the "games" but they rarely last long due to their sedentary lifestyle. One exception was a military council named Tobias Gladstone.

Tobias grew up under normal circumstances for those in the Melcore. He studied warfare and learned to read and write just like all other members of the middle class did. When he was sixteen he joined the fourth brigade of the Lion Corps, an infantry unit. There are no scrolls of distinction bearing his name and he appears to have performed his job as a legionnaire and nothing more. In 1744 he was reassigned to an intelligence posting as he had shown aptitude for such meticulous work.



Gladstone was given the mundane task of going through troop assignments as part of a standard inventory of soldiers. The task was uncommon and sporadic but had not been completed for several years for the Lion Corps. It was during this job that Tobias's life changed forever. The young clerk's was quite strict on his documentation and began to notice a trend of irregularities with soldier assignments in the southern mountains.

Tobias began to do an in-depth search on the strange numbers and began to ask questions. His investigation was quickly noticed by some of the lieutenants of the division who promptly reported the activities to their general, Lucius Garrett. The commander was a well-known hero of the 2<sup>nd</sup> War of Cullu with Torusak and was held in high regard. Along with his tactical skills he was known for being quite arrogant. It was General Garrett's opinion that his victory years before was a stern enough beating that Torusak would not infringe on the new holdings of Melcore. As a result he was moving large numbers of his forces east to begin a campaign in the Dwarven lands.

Initially Garrett sent his underlings to dissuade Officer Gladstone to ignore the numbers. These warnings fell upon deaf ears as Tobias's position did not answer to the general but to the overall commander of the armies. He was concerned that the southern holdings were not being protected and voiced his opinion. The lieutenants voiced the response to the general who ordered Gladstone to be paid off. That had the opposite effect with Tobias threatening to turn the lieutenants and the general in to the commandant major of the army. A harsh response was chosen for the young officer.

The day after threatening to turn in the superior officers Tobias found himself waylaid in camp. He was abducted, beaten, and had his tongue ripped out. A steel helmet was fused to his head and he was turned over to the arena masters. General Garrett assumed Tobias would have a quick death in the fighting pits and no blood would be on his hands. This was not the case.

Tobias Gladstone spent the next six months surviving and thriving in the pits. His formal military training allowed him to easily defeat the poorly trained opponents he faced and soon gained him the nickname of "Steelhead". As his fame grew the lieutenants became worried and spoke with General Garrett who was nonchalant about the troublesome "bean counter". He assuaged their fears pointing out that Tobias couldn't speak and was no threat to them.

With no knowledge of trouble brewing on the southern front, the commandant major of the army made a tour of the southlands as he had heard of the proficient fighter and enjoyed taking in gladiatorial events. The venue that day featured Tobias taking on three bandits known as Road Vipers. This event had been organized by General Garrett to finally put an end to his lieutenant's constant concerns. Sitting by the commandant's side the general grinned knowing that the young officer who questioned his judgment would finally get his just reward.

As the pair sat they were equally amazed at the skill exhibited by "Steelhead". Much to the chagrin of General Garrett, Tobias Gladstone emerged victorious. As the arena erupted in applause Tobias spotted the commandant and began to write in the sands of the pit. The leader of the army had been told that "Steelhead" was a lowborn criminal and did not expect much intelligence out of the gladiator.

Tobias scrawled out the word "Traitor" facing the pair. Anger filled both men's faces and Gladstone then pointed at Garrett. The commandant ordered Tobias's helmet to be removed and entered the arena, under heavy guard, to speak with the warrior. As he reached the floor of the pit he noticed that Gladstone had no tongue. The leader asked if "Steelhead" could write and ordered paper and ink after receiving a nod.

Gladstone began to write out who he was and the details that had come to pass for his current situation. As the words flowed freely Garrett attacked the gladiator wounding him across the face. The guard unit moved to protect the commandant as the two men circled each other and the unarmed Tobias weighed his options. Confused the commandant ordered his men to stand down and demanded an answer from Garrett.

Bloodlust had filled the heroic general at Tobias's actions and began to attack. With the deftness of a practiced gladiator, Gladstone was able to dodge most of the old general's attacks but was near exhaustion from the previous fight. With the pair ringed by guards, the general attempted to feint an attack but was met with a face full of sand from the experienced gladiator. Blinded and disoriented Tobias moved in quickly and dodged a weak sword swing. He grabbed his tormentor and snapped his neck with a practiced move.



Lifeless, the general slumped to the floor of arena and again the crowd erupted in joy. The commandant pushed his guards out of the way and asked if Tobias meant him any harm. The exhausted Gladstone shook his head and the leader asked if he could finish the writing. With blood from his wounds staining the parchment he scrawled out his message and slumped into the sand, dead from his injuries.

The commandant scanned the message and began to give orders to his men. The final message from Tobias Gladstone was that the southern holdings were sorely undermanned and open to attack. Had it not been for this warning, the 3<sup>rd</sup> War of Cullu would have devastated the southern portion of the empire.



## **Muma Mengo**

While the Elven Kingdoms of Dri Verdal continue to be a closely guarded secret a rumor has recently escaped its confines. A group of adventurers were seeking gold in the mountains between that nation and Dilad when they ran into a group of Bugbears. Having been surprised by the humanoids the group suffered serious injuries but were victorious. As they nursed their wounds darkness began to fall. During their night's watch another group was discovered interloping onto the party causing them to flee to the west. As the group entered the restricted lands of the Elves they were able to separate from their pursuers but slid down an incline.

The fall from the cliff killed three members of their party but two others survived albeit with serious injuries. With the pain from the injuries overtaking them, the duo passed out from pain but awoke several hours later in a chamber surrounded by Elvish warriors. The pair were brought food and water to refresh themselves and given adequate time to recover. By the time evening fell again the another group of Elves entered the chamber and the heavily armed guards saluted and left leaving four older speakers alone in the chamber.



Two males and two females sat across from the duo and spoke with them in the common tongue. The Elves introduced themselves as elders of the tribe and made

polite conversation. After confirming the adventuring pair would live they expressed their sadness to them that the rest of their associates had succumbed to injuries and could not be saved.

The elders spoke with the pair for several hours although the discussion never seemed harsh to the adventurers and exceptionally polite. The elders had refreshments brought back in and told them they would speak again tomorrow. With guards on a balcony and outside their door the pair slumbered soundly. The next morning found the balcony empty and they opted to take in their surroundings.

The two delvers quickly discovered that they were in a multi-level domicile that was camouflaged in lush green fronds. A closer examination showed that the chamber itself appeared to be in the canopy of the tree with the limbs having been "trained" to create floors and walls. The balcony went in several directions and it appears as though the two could travel at will. Not wanting to risk offending their hosts the duo returned inside to find fresh nourishment awaiting them.

An hour passed as the elders returned to speak with them further. The pair were told that few were allowed into the city of Muma Mengo and even less were allowed to leave. While the tone was not sinister, the pair inquired if they would be fortunate enough to leave. The elders smiled and confirmed the adventurers would be released once they were healed enough to safely escape any further humanoid incursions. The two were asked if they would like to look around the village and were eager to see something few outside Dri Verdai had been witnessed to.

The elders showed the pair around and they were marveled at the craftsmanship of this community nestled within the grove of trees. As they took in the sights they noticed that only they and their guides were present. After an hour of touring they asked where the others were. "Hidden" came the response. The elders pointed out that while the pair seemed trustworthy, the innate suspicions between the two races lingered. After turning a corner the adventurers found the end of the trail was blocked by eight guards.

Gracious as ever the elders told the duo that the time to depart was upon them. They explained that they would be led away, blindfolded but safe, to a location where they could be released without fear of attack. The pair thanked the Elves for their hospitality and prepared themselves. Fine cloth was wrapped around their heads and the sound of flapping wings was heard.

Each adventurer was placed on a large, feathered creature along with an Elven guide. The air changed and the pair soared upwards on the backs of two Giant Eagles. An hour later the party had reached a ridgeline at the border of Dilad where they landed. The pair were released without a word and made their way east towards civilization with a wondrous story to tell of their visit to Muma Mengo.



## Hydo's Wand

I, Favon Raybeck, have been asked to examine a strange item that has recently come into a shop in Torrence. Master Binius, proprietor of a shop known to deal with magic items, came to me a fortnight ago with the unique item. For several weeks I consulted the texts in the library and now believe I am qualified enough to give an opinion on the item in question.

Initial Assessment: The item appears to be constructed of a soft wood, possibly maple. At approximately eleven inches long. One end finishes in a sharp point while the other seems to be made of "links". Notching on the item is detailed and unique compared to other items that I have examined. The wand is lightweight and feels coarse to the touch despite its smooth appearance.



Due Diligence: Initial investigation was done at the Torrence Library in the arcane items section. While I found many items described that were similar in nature, none matched the item exactly. A faint entry without any description gave the name Hydo's Wand but I was unfamiliar with the name. A search with that title yielded no results so I had to make the rounds among the more learned individuals in town.

Positive Result: After discussing the item with my associates I spoke with the sage Meekus Tomo from Timel who happened to be in the city for a discussion. Knowing him from fame this was the initial meeting between the two of us. I found him cordial and

quite knowledgeable about a variety of topic but I digress. He had heard of Hydo's Wand but only had cursory knowledge of the item. He suggested that I check the archives in Redrook.

Redrook Repository: Much to my pleasure I discovered that Sage Tomo had been correct. An older tome in the wand section of the library had a complete listing of the item. I was surprised to learn that the wand itself was not constructed of wood but rather the petrified remains of an adolescent Giant Scorpion. Age had turned the bleached bone dark as well as a protective laminate used to maintain the magic inside the item. The strange shape is attributed to both the source of the wand as well as its functions.

My research uncovered that the item has two spell effects. The first effect comes from the pointed tip and involves the ability to send out a Poison Spray spell at will. The Druids were apparently contacted to assist in the manufacture of the item. The manuscripts I had access to also gave out the keyword "Imbre". Sadly for one acolyte in the library I did not understand the power of the device. I had pointed the wand to an area in front of me and recited the word. The wand powered up and cast its enchantment towards the floor but splashed onto one of the library members. I was severely chastised by the curator and nearly lost my privileges but only suffered a compensatory loss of money.

A second tome was discovered confirming the initial account of the item. This book had a description of the second power of the wand. When holding the forked end aloft the wielder is able to breathe underwater for a period of one hour. This item can be used in clear water, sea water, or even swamp conditions. While it does not specifically state, I would assume that lava would not be a fluid that would be affected by the wand but I could be mistaken. I tested the theory by taking it out into the Redrook Bay and found that I was able to both breathe and see as I traversed the water's basin. On a side note I found a variety of coins and other items contained on the sea floor.

Conclusion: I believe the item in question is Hydo's Wand. I find the item to be moderately powerful and has no need of charges. My assessment would be that a profit could be made by purchasing the item. It is my opinion that a variety of professions, beyond the scope of an adventurer, would be interested in purchasing the item. I would tentatively give the item a value of 600gp but may be worth a great deal more to say a sailor who feared drowning.

I humbly present this assessment.

*Favon Raybeck*



### **The Junius**

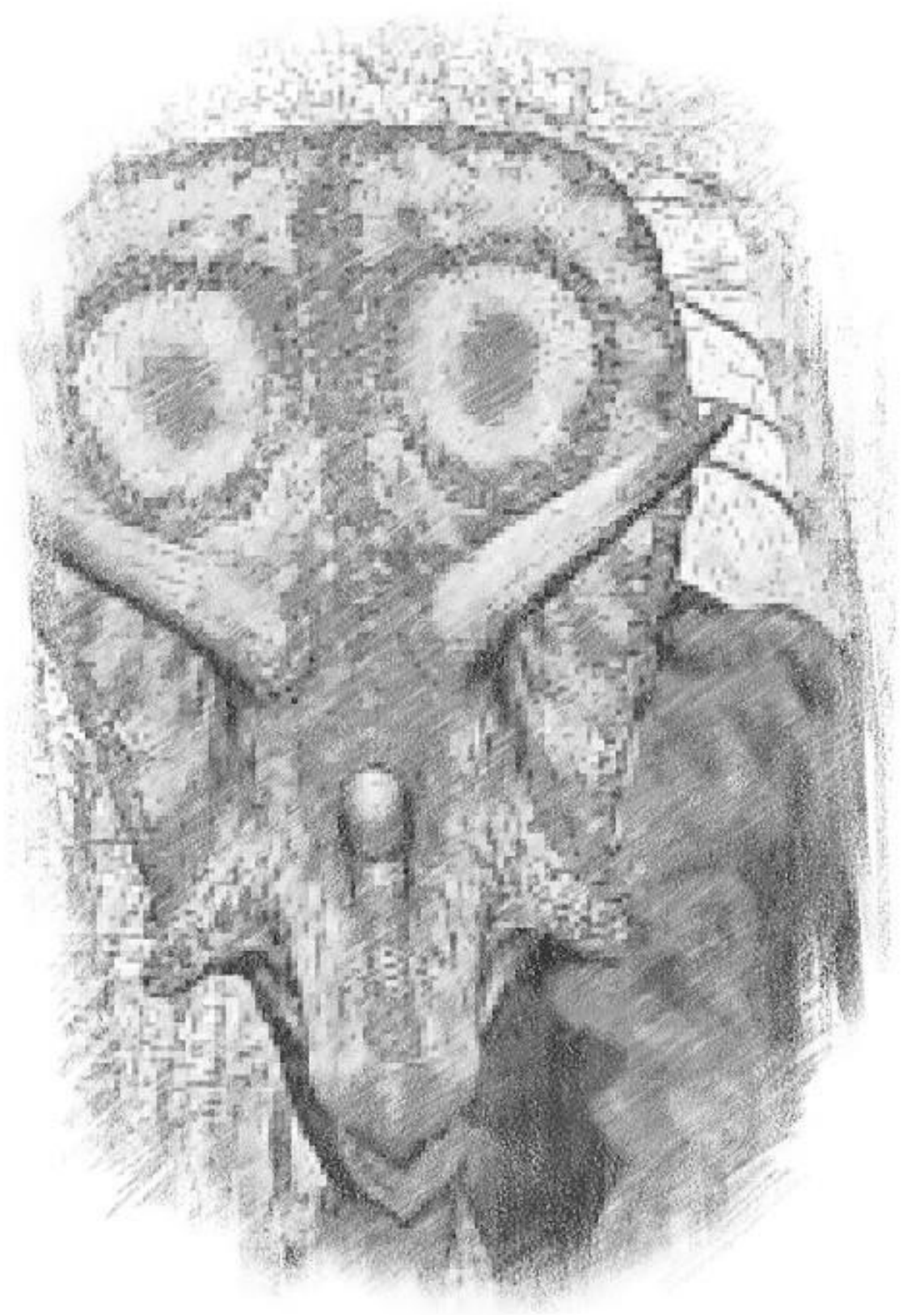
Many people are aware that the Pirate Lords inhabit the southern island of Taxia and are under the impression that the corsairs control the island completely but this is not the case. While the Pirate Lords have two bases on the island, the rest of the land is untamed. The two secluded coves offered an excellent base of operations for Cain and Bartholomew Mercy but forays into the wilderness have been limited otherwise.

Accounts from some of the pirates and visitors to the island all offer a similar account to layout of the two cities. Both inhabit the coastline near a group of caves that were the initial hideouts. Thick forests surround both communities and are rumored to be filled with notorious monsters of all types. Loggers that attempted to perform their work were often discovered in pieces and this is the main reason lumber trade with Allatrama were begun.

One story seems to stand out from both pirate cities and it pertains to a monster called a "Junius". Repeated reports of this monster perusing the edge of civilization are available and all have striking similarities. The Junius is reported to be a four legged beast with horns protruding from its head. A cowl-like protrusion extends from the creature's neck and has some coloration to it. The mouth is triangular and resembles a beak by most accounts. Some accounts believe the creature to be a prehistoric relic from the time before the pirates took root on the island. Others think that it is a bastard child of a Dragon and a Behir.

The creature is large possibly weighing several hundred pounds and can knock over trees if it pushes against them. Stories tell that the creature will attack even if unprovoked and can deliver a punishing stomp, rending by the beak, or piercing damage with its horns. An uncollected bounty stands at 2000gp for the capture of this creature and each brother is eager to pay the money so it can have the creature's head adorn his hall. It is believed to be a solitary creature but this is unconfirmed.

At this time up to nearly fifty deaths have been recorded from encounters with the Junius. All victims have had multiple injuries and some have been partially eaten but it is unknown if the consumption was by the beast or by other residents of forest. Tracking attempts have been made but almost always lead to a water escape through a creek or river in the area.





## **Fable of the Buffalo Man**

Game is easy to find on the grasslands of Uvarno and a major source of food and raw materials comes from the large buffalo herds that roam the area. The existence of these creatures predate any historical references of the tribes but they are believed to have been the first animals to claim the land after the waters receded. Hunting these large creatures is a way of life especially in the fall during the celebration called the "Harvest Hunt". A few weeks before the first frost the herds migrate north where the grass is still green to feed. The tribes of the Uvarno organize themselves and hunt the large packs of mammals to put meat away for the winter.

While the Harvest Hunt provides food and goods for the cold winters it also leaves the weakest members of the tribes at the mercy of bandits and outcasts that may seek to prey on them. The importance of the hunt requires that most able-bodied warriors participate and only a few can be left behind. Attacks on the weakest members of the tribes were infrequent but out of chance came the story of the "Buffalo Man".

The drought of 1441 had taken a significant toll on the crops throughout Pangia including the vast grasslands of the Uvarno. The lack of water had moved the herd animals further east towards the Inland Sea making food scarce for the western tribes. When the Harvest Hunt was called the tribes of the west gathered for what they knew would be a grueling winter. Even the young who had not experienced the trials were called upon to assist leaving only the infirmed and elderly behind. For nearly a week those left behind struggled to take care of each other which is when trouble found them.

A group of starving outcasts had lived in the foothills and were also affected by the drought and descended into the plains. These outlaws had been members of the Uvarno and were well aware of the Harvest Hunt and knew that the tribes would be weakly guarded. On the eighth day of the hunt the sun rose on the Kubac Clan that resided near Fifer Peaks. The elderly moved slowly in the crisp morning but were aroused by screaming and yelling. It quickly became evident that the camp was under attack and several painted warriors charged in and began to kill the weakest members of the tribe.

As the elderly were quickly slaughtered the raiders opted to keep the children alive to sell as slaves in the west. The camp was searched and the scant valuables were collected. The outcasts lashed the youth together and prepared to move them back into the safety of the hills when the "Buffalo Man" appeared. The description of the savior matches that of a Minotaur but with a buffalo head in place of the well documented bull head. The youth reported that the painted warriors attacked the Buffalo Man but were quickly defeated by the large fighter. The children were freed from their bonds and were comforted by the fierce creature who cared for them and buried their dead.



For three days the stranger stayed in camp looking over the youth of the tribe. Each night the subject went out into the foothills and would collect what game he could to feed the children. On the fourth morning the children awoke to find that the stranger had left. The bulk of the tribe arrived a short time later and were told of the attack with some members having their doubts about the fable from the children.

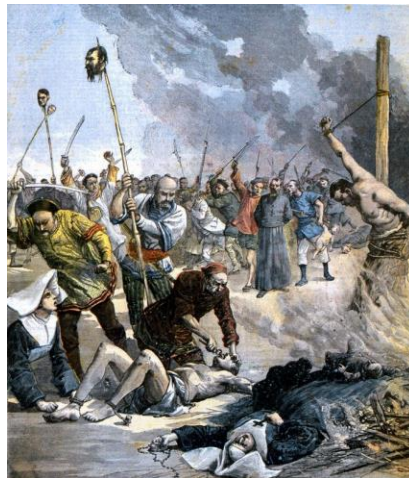
The winter was harsh but most survived. At the spring meeting of the clan leaders several other accounts of a mysterious "Buffalo Man" were told. As the Uvarno chieftains spoke it became quite clear that the youth of their respective clans had all been saved by this man, or group of half men, half buffalo. Patrols were sent out into the hills but no trace was ever discovered of the elusive savior. Every Harvest Hunt since the event has paid tribute to the Buffalo Man but releasing one catch back into the wild as repayment to the mythical creature.



## **Battle of Tears**

Prior to the year 1200 the country of Dilad did not exist. This vast land holding was controlled by no one and humanoids ran freely through the area. Greyloch settlers had crossed waterway north of Fandon Lake and begun to farm the lush land. In that time the Toro River was an extremely dangerous crossing. The site of the bridge at Acre marks the narrowest point and this was where the settlers opted to move west for expansion.

After several decades of scratching out a living the settlers had begun to organize themselves into communities and began to consider independence from their overlords in the east. The Greyloch military offered very little in the form of protection and the pioneers felt that they deserved more in light of how many of their crops were sent to the capital. Talk of uprising grew as the kingdom continued to refuse lessening the taxation on the settlers.

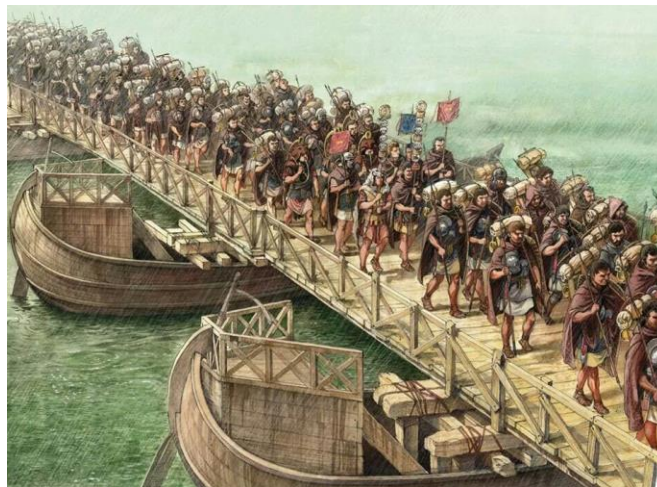


An ultimatum was delivered to throne by the western citizens demanding more protection from the crown in return for continued foodstuffs. When the negative reply reached the group they opted for drastic measures. A revolt was organized and the small group of Greyloch guardians were put to the sword in a bloody coup. The bridge over the Toro was destroyed and the rebels declared themselves an independent state.

Word of the revolt quickly reached the Greyloch military and a detachment of heavily armed guards was quickly dispatched.

As the army reached the river they found the crossing destroyed had to determine a way to cross the fast moving river. General Lolar, a veteran of many campaigns, came up with the idea of a temporary bridge made from boats and rafts. For two days the rebels made fun of the Greyloch regulars on the far side of the gap but staying out of missile range. The cheering was such that tears of joy streamed down their faces.

At dawn on the third day the leaders of the uprising faced a new reality. The military had travelled north and taken every waterborne vessel they could find from the villages and floated them down the Toro River to the landing. Large trees had been felled and were being carried by strong men. As the boats were lashed together and released from shore they formed a "whip" across the watery gap. Quickly the warriors moved the felled trees across forming a floating bridge.



As the Greyloch regulars crossed into the settler's camp a savage destruction was unleashed. The "rebels" attempted to stand against the army but were quickly overrun by superior numbers. The settlers were quickly defeated and the leaders taken captive. A military tribunal was called for and engaged with General Lolar presiding. Initially the settlers were given hope as the commander pointed out their lives would be spared. A rousing cheer was raised by the renegade settlers but was quickly quashed.

General Lolar announced that the leaders and subordinates of the uprising had been sentenced to hard labor in the Sagos Mines. It was well known to all that once you were shipped to this mountain region you would never return. As the leaders and subordinates were led away the tears of their families lined the path. The battle was a victory for Greyloch and a defeat for the fledging uprising. In later years during the war for their independence this incident was used as a rallying cry for the freedom fighters of Dilad.



## **Chooken's Pyre**

The eastern coastline of San Doral is a truly horrible place. The sheer cliffs present a problem for anyone who wishes to scale them and rocks hidden below the waterline make a naval approach nearly impossible. The northwest corner near Swanford off the Mare of Kellen is a perfect example of the rugged terrain. No port exists and the seabed is littered with the bones of those attempting to climb down. The only bright spot to the rough environment is that the cliffs make a perfect location for a burial at sea. For centuries the dead have been ceremoniously pitched into the surf as means of burial.

At the end of the hostilities against the Pardorian Empire in 1237 one such burial went awry but created a legend. A hero of the war and later thane, Chooken Sabar succumbed to an illness. As a local ruler his death was celebrated with more passion than that of a commoner. A grand sendoff was planned and executed with nary a mishap. After the final rites were given the funeral procession made its way to the cliffs for the final goodbyes.

Six strong guardsmen had been given the honor to send Thane Chooken into the afterlife and held him aloft in great majesty. As they reached the edge of the cliff the vicar gave a final blessing and ordered the departed ruler into the sea and back to the loving arms of his deity. It was at this point that everything changed.

The faithful guards lowered the wrapped body and began the customary sendoff which included pitching the body into the waters below. Unbeknownst to any of them, one of the burial wrappings had become loose and was caught in jacket of a guard. The body bearers gave Chooken a healthy toss but quickly discovered the loose wrap. As the thane's corpse went over the side the wrappings began to unwind and pulled one of the guards to the edge of the cliff. With the funeral rags unfurling the guards jumped onto their associate to keep him from going over the side.

The stunned crowd ran to the edge of the cliff and discovered their now unwrapped ruler smashed against the rocks on a rocky perch. Horrified, only the sound of waves crashing below could be heard until Chooken's widow, Marisel, demanded that someone do something. Fearful of her wrath the guards huddled together until a plan was formulated. One of the bearers stepped forward and was recognized as one of

Chooken's lieutenants from the conflict. He explained that the cliff was far too dangerous to scale down but thought that he could use an arrow to send a rope down and possibly "unhook" Chooken from his stone grave. This suggestion caused the widow to faint on the spot leaving no one to give the order. The vicar was consulted who authorized the attempt knowing the lieutenant to be quite skilled with missile weapons.

A runner brought some rope and the bow and arrow to the man and wished him luck. The large group watched in anticipation as the marksman attempted to finish the ceremony. The lieutenant steadied his aim and fired his missile, missing the mark. The flint arrow careened off the rocks next to the body sending out a spark. As the widow recovered she moved to the cliff to see the result. Sadly for all present, the spark ignited a natural gas deposit on the cliff. A bright red flame exited the rocky precipice and draped the body in flames. The widow fainted yet again.

The guardsmen and vicar looked to each other for ideas but none came forth. As the horrified onlookers observed the incident they noticed that the body was consumed quickly in the flames but the fire did not extinguish. For hours the fire continued to burn brightly. The next morning the widow had recovered enough to come to the cliff only to see it still burning. She asked the exhausted vicar what the flame indicated.

To assuage the widow's concerns the holy man explained that it was a sign from the gods that Chooken's spirit would live forever. Relief flooded the widow's face and she took solace in the explanation. The spot was later renamed Chooken's Pyre and is still lit to this day despite multiple hurricanes throughout the years.

