

300 - A Dream
of
Crazy George Takes a Holiday

The Fourth Study Guide

in the

Dragon Bound

a.k.a Dra@g©n B©und a.k.a

a.k.a **The D-B©und Adventuring Series** a.k.a

starring

Ruby FireHaven

and so on and so forth

as conceived, written, and enchanted by

Celli

the

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Happy Birthday to the LeeZards

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300 - The Dream

The second night out on the canals, I had a dream that went something like...

OK. It didn't really go anything like this. I mean, seeing as how I was trudging around in the bottom of a muck filled canal with a bunch of eternally thirsty ghosts, it was a lot more horrifying.

And as such, after I awoke (in a sweat, of course, because Nadia had set the heat way too high), I paced the deck for hours. During this time, the reflective surface of the canal's inky black water took on a whole new meaning. You see, you (or at least, I) can never tell the exact source of a vision like this. I mean, the last thing I want to do is piss off some ancient Gra'gl loving god of old by not paying him, she, or it their due respects by failing including their story in mine. Truth is, some of those eldritch nasties have artistic aspirations and you don't want to get between them and their dreams.

I guess what I'm saying is, I understand that whole desperate aspiring artist thing all too well. It's not a force you want to mess with -- especially when it's backed by some demonic power of old.

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The vision starts with us in an oak paneled boardroom, where a white haired gentleman is explaining to the mistress of the house that she is out of money and there is no way to fund the continuation of the canal on which she has been working.

The introduction complete, we cut to the trenches. News travels fast in these here parts and the workers are already discussing whether they should stay (and work for food) or go (and demand their wages).

Among the masses rises a leader. It is understood that the rest will do as he does -- as he leads, as he commands. It is decided (by him, I suppose, if no one else) that he will go and talk to the mistress of the house on behalf of everyone.

Welcome to birth of unionized labor in the Elvin worlds.

Bathed in sweat, covered in grime: the young Elf walks through the trenches of what will one day be a small stretch of the Lang'don Canal System on his way towards the great house. It is obvious that he is tired, worn out, hungry, and weak.

He stops to raise a cup of water to his lips. It is a beer glass, a mug, and here in the trenches the vessel seems out of place. But no matter, the Elf fills the mug with whatever fetid water he can find. Then, he walks on and he drinks.

As he goes down the line, the Elf passes the vessel to his fellow workers. They drink, and he drinks -- out of mason jars, ration tins, and whatever else has been left out in the open to collect the ever present rain.

Notice the layer of sludge that resides at the bottom of a rusty can as an ogre takes a drink from it before passing it to the next. This is key. This is critical. High or Low, Fell or Fey: they all drink from the same cup. They all drink of the same filth.

Obviously before long, there will be a contagion -- if things do not change, that is. For the Elf does not journey forth to ask for money or gold, but for better working conditions. And, now!

But he stumbles as he walks. He sways. He is dizzy, fever ridden, and the next time we see him, he will be delirious.

In the great house, the mistress sees see all of this -- much the same way as we see all of this. And once she knows of this, she immediately realizes she must help the laborers -- and especially this one that both she and the rest of the workers so clearly adore.

As such, she goes in search of good, wholesome, potable drinking water.

It is comical that a person might own a thing and not know of its existence. Or for that matter, own a thing and not know its extent -- that is to say, where it begins and where it ends. But this is exactly the situation in which the Lady finds herself.

For as she searches her house, her land, and her holdings, she comes upon a waterfall enclosed in a barn, hidden in a back room -- such is the nature of her estate.

“Is this ours?” she asks in regards to the falls, though she says this in Elvin so the nuance is much more subtle-er.

“No,” is the reply, but once again, it is not so straightforward. It is more like, “Unlikely madam. This parcel came into your family’s holdings a mere a generation ago. And before it did, all of the best bits were sold off.” And here, I think we can all agree that “a backroom” containing “a waterfall” would typically regarded as one of those better bits.

This then is the tragic start... of it all.

And this then is where we shall leave you as we flip to the end...

Or, maybe I have that backwards? Or, sideways? Or, twisting about in endless confusion?

I confess I do not know. In these matters, it is always so hard to tell.

But no matter, look again.

It is, indeed, the beginning! And now, the waterfall is virgin and new. There are no buildings in sight. Covered in moss, the Waters run free over cleansing stones. And as we approach this bounty, as if for the first time, we can foresee the future. We shall be buried here. This is our end, our unalterable fate and destiny.

Miserly, but rich: we can dam up the water, tap it off, and hoard it for ourselves, for our own selfish purposes and let the workers suffer. And to be sure, if this is our choice, not only will the workers suffer, but in the hereafter our names will be spat, our

tombs defiled, and the Waters degraded. But in the meantime, we shall be rich.

Or we can give it away, and let the Waters flow free. Flowers will be planted in remembrance, songs sang, and in years to come grateful Wardens will speak openly and freely of our noble nature, our prescience vision, and our generous heart. But make no mistake, if that is our choice, before that future comes to pass, we must first spend a lifetime life sleeping on dirt, where we shall all die cold, lonely, and alone.

So you see, how it ends only you can decide.

But you can bet -- one way or another -- the noble young Elf will live through his sickness, and it is your actions -- alone -- which will decide whether at the end of the day the masses are with you or against you. That is to say, whether they will carry your banner high, or trample your house into the ground -- underfoot, into muddy Waters that will in the end run free... one way or another.

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Oh, and I suppose if this little vision gets into the study guide (or Gra'gl forbid, some mass market publication) somebody might want to remove the activating enchantment first.

I mean, it's just a thought.