

700 - Chapter Summaries
of
Crazy George Takes a Holiday
The Fourth ~~Book~~ 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

Happy Go Lucky Celaphopod

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and in the Earthen Vortex

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700 - Chapter Summaries

Chapter Summaries

An Introduction

Truthfully, I doubt I'll be doing the chapter summaries. I mean, I have some material completed for this section, but every time I try to hammer it out any further, I almost immediately hit a snag. In the end, this is why I decided to do Crazy George Takes a Holiday as the notes to the notes in the first place. OK, true enough, I'm as lazy as can be; and once I hit upon the idea, I was sold; but I didn't feel the need to waste any mental effort thinking about the problem and coming up with that novel solution until I'd actually hit the snag to begin with.

Follow all that?

Maybe not, so let me start from scratch. There's this thing called writer's block. Now, I don't really know what that means, because writing just sort of comes naturally to me; but I do know that some things -- some stories -- I just can't seem to get out and put down on paper for whatever reason: because I can't find the voice, I know the story would suck, I'm convinced it wouldn't sell, or whatever. But let me be clear, it's not a problem of physically transcribing words onto paper, because that's easy. Rather, it is a problem of finding the willpower to trace words out onto paper prematurely, because I know the effort would be wasted... and if there is one thing I despise, it is wasted effort. This is, after all, what it really means to be lazy.

So, are you with me so far?

Do you understand the primary dilemma?

Whether you do or not, let's just leave it at this: the

fundamental reason why Crazy George Takes a Holliday has taken the shape that it has is because although most of my previous work has been chaotic and helter-skelter (to say the least), recently I've had some luck with outlining my stories (odd concept that); but unfortunately for this work (and despite my best efforts), I can't seem to hammer out a workable outline... and that's basically why I'm abdicating the writing of the entire story to someone else.

Of course, most folks will still be wondering why I don't simply tell the story chronologically -- as it happened -- and just be done with it and not worry too much about other concerns; and although that sounds like a good idea, I just can't seem to piece it together in any cohesive manner.

I mean, we had a boatload of K'fr -- OK? -- an entire boatload of the stuff. We were eating K'fr flowers with a light hollandaise sauce for breakfast... it tastes sort of like an artichoke, but that's not the important part. It's the hit -- the wallop that raw K'fr flower pack -- that counts. So, remember what happened? I don't think so. I mean, I've got entire pages of notes that I can't even read, can't even make out a single word that I wrote, much less organize them. And then on top of the K'fr, you have to factor in the Mystic Waters, the fact I was seasick half the time, and finally, rather than being in the Realms, we were in the Kingdoms. Well, after you mix it all together, you've got a fantastic recipe for confusion. Like my mind needed any help with that; being confused is it's natural state.

So, it might not sound like a good excuse, and writers -- perhaps -- aren't supposed to be making excuses, but did you ever see one of those stage shows where an illusionist takes a handkerchief; and as he passes his hand over the cloth, the handkerchief changes color from black, to blue, to red, to green, to yellow, to orange, to white, to purple, and then finally it turns into a dove that flies into the air only to explode in a flurry of feathers over the crowd, which turn into flowers on their way to the ground, each one a slightly different polka dotted color?

Well, that's how the trip went.

We left Market Harbor at dawn, motored upstream, turned left at the fork, and merged into the Ox'ford Canal under Bridge 42 just as we planned.

Which is to say, we left Market Harbor at night, drifted downstream, veered right at the fork, and phased away from the Langdon Canal System at the Fox'ton Locks because things looked more interesting in that direction.

Both alternatives are literally true. both are obviously lies, and then there are the thousand of other iterations that are just as equally true -- or false -- depending upon your point of view. It's like asking a child what color that magician's silk was when the show is over, or whether it's a bird, or a flower. You're likely to get some cryptic response like, "Which silk? The pink or the blue?" "Which bird? The hawk or the dove?" or perhaps more telling, "Which flower? The K'fr or the K'fr?"

I hope you're beginning to understand the difficulties involved. George had a different trip than I did. Lane had a different trip from George. And trust me, when the pair of them were looping reality through those dimensional doors, patterns, and portals, they were just making the entire thing that much harder to deconstruct and unravel. The fact is, my mind hasn't stopped spinning yet.

Not that I mind. I like it that way and I had a great time. We delivered the Egg, smoked a lifetime worth of K'fr, and I finally got to commune with the Mystic Waters (something I've wanted to do for a long time). But you want me to unwind that? Unravel that? And give it all some kind of satisfying connective thread? I've been trying to do that for over a year now, and it just isn't happening.

And then there's the contract I have with The Dragon. He's not big on excuses. So sometimes, you do what you have to do... or in this case, what you can do.

So if it all still feels a little squirrely, well then, at least you know why. And if it seems a little frayed and loose at the edges,

well then, now you know about that then too. And if you're still wondering why I'm going to let someone else put the finishing touches on it all before it goes to market, well then, perhaps you just haven't been paying attention for the past few pages.

I mean, Crazy George, Lane, Morgana, Fritz, Sterling; and then the minors of Yogesh, the Kibbers, and all the others we met; not to mention yours truly; that's a lot of magic, that's a lot of freewill, and if you think it resolves into one static Truth that will sit still long enough for you to paint its portrait... well, if that's the case, you're not looking at the same Reality I am, because mine's a Sea of Confusion.

Which now that I mention it, I knew there was a reason I should have found a way to resolve my dispute with ole Trident Face before things got out of hand...

But come on! 10% of the gross? I don't thing so.

What We Know

a.k.a. The Story Thus Far

I don't believe that the preceding section has cast much light on, well, anything; so perhaps the best thing to do is to take a step backwards for a moment and put CGTaH in perspective, once again. After all, CGTaH is not a stand alone project; but rather, part of the larger Dragon Bound pantheon, so let's look at that series for a moment.

The Dragon Bound Quartet is the first book in the Dragon Bound series, and as such, is the title that launched everyone's career: Ruby's, Grt's, Crazy George's, Nellie's, and yours truly, among a host of others. It tells the (mostly) true story of the quest Ruby had to complete in order to prove herself worthy of becoming Consort to The Dragon.

Minataur Tails is the sequel to TDBQ; and although technically non-fiction, if the truth be known, it was a

manufactured event. That whole quest was sort of a gift from The Dragon to Ruby. Things that needed to get done got done, but it wasn't like Ruby's life was ever in danger. Surprisingly, we made a lot of money on that book (even more than on the first), and seeing as how everyone involved likes gold, we decided to do another.

The K'fr Road: To Ve'kahn and Back Again is the third book in the Dragon Bound series. Which is to say, in most locales it's distributed as a book, even though it was originally shot on film, so go figure. Anyhow, neither Ruby nor Grt appear in K'fr Road, nor does the story have much to do with the previous two installments. But what are you going to do? Personally, I like to bill The K'fr Road as the Dragon Bound novel so violent and K'fr ridden that Ruby's mom wouldn't let her be involved in the project. On the bright side, we got Garg, Targor, and Bruce Brilliant to appear in the venture instead, and we pretty much raked in the dough. We also annexed Ve'kahn into the Realms; but that, oddly, didn't turn out to be as profitable as we had expected.

Crazy George Takes a Holiday is the fourth book in the Dragon Bound series. Though, since the third book is technically a movie, and these are only the notes to the study guide, if you're only going to count books (like written in book form), I couldn't begin to tell you what number we're on. And then, just to add to the confusion, you might want to integrate the fact that each book/story/movie is actually composed of four smaller books/stories/movies. So really, it's reasonable to say that CGTaH is composed of Books 13-16 in the Dragon Bound series, which I -- for one -- think sounds way more impressive than Book IV. Anyway, at this point, you know as well as I do what CGTaH is going to be all about.

Rigor Pass 1866: The Manna Boom Years will be the fifth and final book in the Dragon Bound sequence. It's the story I

actually thought I'd be writing after Minataur Tales, but then, I never got around to it. And since Rigor Pass 1866 is still on the drawing boards, nothing is certain about it, but I'm pretty sure it will take the form of a theater production that is being put on in a Wild West town. Based on the title, I'm thinking the town in question will be Rigor Pass circa 1866 during the Manna Boom Years; but hey, maybe I'm reading too much into the title.

What We Don't Know Can't Hurt Us

I know this section is a repeat of earlier sections, but study guides do that all the time, so I'm not going to worry it too much. Besides, I think it makes sense to take a moment and recap the contents of the four smaller volumes, which together will comprise that most fantastical of all books: Crazy George Takes a Holiday.

The Mystic Waters (by Harry the Story Finishing Gnome) will set the scene and begin the adventure. In it, Lane will hitch a ride with George (because that's the way the story goes) and for the most part they will have an enjoyable (if argument filled) ride down the river/canal.

Sterling Watford (by authorship not decided. Who knows? Maybe we'll get Sterling to do it; he's got a big enough ego) in which George and Lane's "Holiday" takes a distinct turn for the worse as they -- not uncoincidentally -- meet up with Sterling and find themselves in possession of The Egg (or if you want to stay with the cover story, the fact that they are smuggling K'fr is discovered).

Kiss'wick (by Morgana Feldstone) will chronicle the events of George and Lane as they cavort around Kiss'wick killing time and waiting for the Feathered Plume to undergo much needed repairs. Of course almost immediately, someone (maybe Fritz, but

I haven't really decided who) will steal The Egg (or if you want to be bullheaded about it and stick to the cover story, the load of K'fr that they are smuggling). The rest of the Kiss'wick book will revolve around the efforts of the two lovebirds to regain that which is rightfully theirs as they weave their way in and out of Morgana's other stories.

The Dragon's Egg (once again, by Harry the Story Finishing Gnome) will encompass whatever logistical steps are required to get from Kiss'wick to the Sandwich Isles and deliver the K'fr (and/or The Egg) safely to Stef'fan. Though seeing as how this last book is going to be entitled The Dragon's Egg, I'm not thinking I'm doing a very good job about keeping The Egg's existence a secret. Maybe I should just lay everything I know about The Egg on the line and deconstruct that particular element of the story a little bit further.

The Perspectives

A Celaphopod not getting paid by the word, might come right out and tell you everything he knows about The Egg, but I'm not getting paid by the word, so I won't. Of course, even I know that doesn't make any sense, but what are you going to do?

The answer, of course, it to read on...

For various reasons (vanity, ego, laziness, because it will annoy my agent, and because I can), I have decided to deconstruct the various story elements as they relate to the four different books that comprise CGTaH rather than provide definitive chapter outlines. That is to say, instead of providing a blow by blow, book by book, chapter by chapter outline of what happened to us during our journey (as they usually do in these study guide thingies), I have decided to simply ask the different participants to put forth their version of the events as they might apply to the four part story structure that I -- so painstakingly -- have outlined above (and for

those of you with exasperatingly short memory spans that would be Books 13-16 of the Dragon Bound series -- The Mystic Waters, Sterling Watford, Kiss'wick, and The Dragon's Egg -- which together form CGTaH).

What follows, then, in these next few sections is what the different participants said, should have said, could have said, or would have said had I only given them have a chance to get a word in edgewise while I was interviewing them.

Like I said, truth is relative, and I haven't got the patience to listen to Crazy George explain... well, pretty much anything.

The Egg

Since no one will tell me (i.e. The Dragon won't tell me), I still have absolutely no idea what the Egg is: what it does or why it was so all-fired important to transport the blessed thing to the Seven Realms in the first place. However, if we are all willing to overlook that bit of ignorance, the following neatly summarizes all that I know about the Egg (whatever it may be or do) and how it relates to K'fr and the rest of the story. Oh, and this should give you a pretty good idea of the format for the rest of the entries to come in this section.

I - Unbeknownst to the other, both Lane and George each buy a boatload of K'fr in Market Harbor. It might seem like it would be hard to fit two boatloads of K'fr onto one boat while keeping the fact a secret from the only other passenger aboard (that is, the only other passenger aboard for the purposes of the story), but somehow (i.e. with a bit of magic) the two of them manage it. Outside of having a good time, the principle reason for having all that K'fr is so that it can act as a decoy, seeing as how it's pretty much impossible to sniff out a bit of magic -- no matter how powerful that bit of magic might be -- when it is blanketed by a boatload (or two) of K'fr.

II - While Lane and George acquire the Egg (from the cemetery, the hedge stones, or wherever it is that they are going to get it), word slowly leaks out into the surrounding countryside

about how much K'fr they actually have on board -- i.e. more than a king's ransom.

III - Needless to say, rumors of this vast wealth causes every crazy within earshot to come running and one (or more) of them eventually manage to steal the K'fr and the Egg hidden within. Or maybe, just like everyone else, the thieves knew exactly what they are doing and all that K'fr only sweetened the pot for the true prize -- the Egg.

IV - Having recovered the Egg, Lane and George make a beeline for the Realms and the story more or less ends with the two of them getting married, George staring at a treasure map hanging in a bank's lobby as a set up for his next adventure, or... whatever Harry comes up with. I mean, he's pretty good at finishing a story that Story Finishing Gnome, he is.

So? Do you understand the format?

Excellent! I knew there was a reason you'd gotten this far in the manuscript.

Let's move along then, shall we?

Crazy George

I - I was pretty annoyed with Celli for trying to railroad me into another project, but then I saw Lane in all her chain-mail bikini, plate-mail pasty glory and my opinion on the matter did a complete 180. Unfortunately, she opened her mouth a few minutes later, and it was clear she was one of those women libbers and the pasties were just for show. I would have dumped her then and there, but by then, I'd already signed the contract.

II - Talk about an annoying woman. Lane will argue about anything. I was seriously thinking about just giving her the Feathered Plume as a "gift" and cutting my losses. I've already been through three divorces, and this was turning out to be exactly like a fourth -- only without the two weeks of matrimonial bliss that one usually gets with a marriage.

III - After a few weeks of Hell, Lane disappeared. At first I

was delighted, but then I realized she'd taken all the K'fr... and that stupid Egg of Celli's, so you know, it probably wasn't her doing and she'd been kidnapped. I didn't really want to go after her, but I knew my reputation as an gallant adventurer would be shot if I just let her die, so what's a reluctant hero to do?

IV - Yeah, I guess somewhere in there, I finally realized that I loved the woman, and so I told Lane as much when I'd finally rescued her. In your usual romance, this is where I would have proposed marriage, but after the amount of fighting we'd already done, it only made sense to wipe the slate clean first and get a divorce. It really is amazing how happy a good divorce can make an unhappily married man.

Lane

I - I wasn't looking forward to doing yet another project with a bunch of lecherous old men who'd never bothered to grow up. And one look at Crazy George and I knew he fit this description to a tee as he walked around the market in his bathrobe. I mean, it was clear he hadn't bathed in weeks, and what was he buying in the market? Toys. That's when I decided to put in a load of K'fr and sell it on the other side to secure my freedom and fund my independence.

II - Once the "river cruise" got underway, all of my fears were confirmed -- every last one of them. Crazy George turned out to be everything I detest in a "man." His only saving grace was the fact that he fought with Celli incessantly over the smallest artistic detail. "Stick it to the Celaphopod," that's what I say.

III - And then I woke up one morning and realized George was gone. Good riddance, I thought. But that was only until I discovered I'd have to take on Celli and his stupid story ideas all by my lonesome. So I tracked George down and rescued him. OK. Fair enough, I just checked into Morgana's Boarding House with him, while we let Celli sweat it out. But a story's a story, and the story I'm sticking to is: I rescued George.

IV - Yeah, so the crazy old codger knows his magic; and after

that first night at Morgana's, I knew I was in love. We could have gotten married, but I liked his idea of getting a divorce better. Besides, this way I start out with half his crap, and it might not seem like much, but George will do pretty much anything I say for a vintage 78 jazz track in mint condition.

Celli

I - As you can see, Lane and George are both professionals. And thanks to my superb work during the pre-production phase of the project, they meshed together perfectly, as if they were made for each other and were part of the same well-oiled machine. Of course, to be honest, the only reason I mention "well-oiled" in that last sentence is because that's how I like to describe Lane. And truthfully, as to meshing together as one and working like one, that would probably describe the Charlies much better. Anyway, the point is, everyone's a critic (or at least, both George and Lane both are) and the project bogged down before it even got started as the two of them complained about every little detail and aspect of the story. You know, things like whether Lane looked better in a chain mail bikini, a plate mail bikini, a string bikini, or no bikini at all. In fact, she got so testy from having to change "costumes" so much that she just ended up wearing her fur coat. Still, underneath that downy fur coat, you just know she was wearing something like totally hot -- or even better, totally not there.

II - Not too long after the costume show, it became clear that George and Lane had found a common enemy in me -- and they say I don't know how to handle my characters. That's called creative leadership my friends -- the enemy of your enemy being your soul mate for life and all that.

III - Taking that whole, "Celli is the enemy thing," a little too far, the pair of love birds disappeared without warning mid-story. I mean, it's George's boat; he's the one who supposed to see about the repairs (and pay for them too, I might add). Anyway, while Lane and George worked with Morgana and traipsed hither and thither through her stories, Nadia, the Charlies, and me took in a

little sightseeing. And although we saw plenty of Morgana -- Hubba! Hubba! Hubba! -- I never once saw any of those young troublemaking (Yowza!) initiates she's always going on about.

IV - And I admit it, by the time we'd left Morgana's, I was ready for both the trip and the project to be over (and I hadn't even written a single word yet). So I resolved to spend a minute or two each and every day -- that's an entire minute (or two) each and every day, my friends -- writing down a few words, so I wouldn't forget what happened on the trip. As you can see, a fat lot of good that did me.

Nadia

I - Celli likes to complain, but if there is anyone who has the right to complain about the trip, it's me! I was supposed to get the role of female lead, you know. It's true. But then Lane shows up and it turns out the sluice gates at the locks are hard for a little girl like me to open seeing as how they're rusted shut half the time. Like it's my fault I'm a Pixie and she's an Amazonian warrior woman!

II - Oh, and then Celli tells me we're bunking together. I was mad at first, but then I discovered -- in that not so subtle way that he has -- that this had been his plan -- if not all along -- ever since he'd cast Lane for the lead. Well, what's a Pixie to do? The answer is to sleep with the Celaphopod, my dear friends. The answer is to sleep with the Celaphopod. And let's just say, there are certain advantages of... um, ahem... kissing a man who can read your mind. I'm getting all flustered just thinking about it.

III - While we were busy down below, I guess Lane and George ran off or something. And although the K'fr was supposed to have gone missing, let me tell you, I never once noticed its absence. Oh, and I'm not really big on that whole "adventuring" thing, so when it became clear things -- eggs, K'fr, and characters -- were starting to go missing, I planted myself firmly on Celli's shoulder and kept myself there. Besides, he seems to have a certain way with women -- almost like he always knows the exact

right thing to say at any given moment. And from there, well... let's just say the more the merrier.

IV - Some girls (and boys too, I guess) might get sick of Celli's womanizing after a while, but I didn't. I've got a lot of sisters... and well, I'm a Pixie. Though I will say, at the end there, it was incredibly fun to watch him strike out with Mi'lay. When he says he doesn't bother listening to Elves and Wizards, what you've got to remember is, all he really means is that he can't hear their inner thoughts. But me, I'm like an open book, and I like to be read over and over and over again -- page by page, line by line, and curve by curve -- especially at bedtime.

Charlie

I - Dey say Charlie go on da cruise. Et sounders nicers, funs. But den Charlie finders out it be da working cruise.

II - The scalliwagers Celli makers da Charlies swabbers da deck, cookers da meals, and den he makers Charlie pullers da boat throughs da muck! Da boaters gotta da engine, you knowers.

III - Et callered da sabotaguers. Charlie needa da breakers, so we'd breakers da boats. Three weeks in da dry docks... and dey still makers Charlie workers da entire times.

IV - Charlie learner from da locky workers. We forma da unions. Den Charlies no longers workees. Engine be fines. Lane does da cookery. And George' eben snappers his fingers and cleaners da boaters. Tings going great! Charlie just sitters, relaxers, and basks in da suns. And den what dey do? Dey end da cruise. You askers Charlie, it da rippers. Da happily eber after supposeder to laster longers dan dat -- for eber and eber, Charlie tinks.

The Five Kingdoms

I - You're not in Kansas anymore... or for that matter, the Seven Realms,

II - Once you get used to everything being topsy-turvy, they go and switch left for right, and up for down.

III - But guess what? After a while, it makes an odd sort of sense; and pretty soon, you're getting to be an old hat at it.

IV - And then you go back home, realize someone decided to give Kansas (and/or Rigor Pass) a spiritual overhaul, gut the sucker, and replace up for down, right for left, and turvy for topsy -- as if that makes any sense. I mean, it's enough to drive a chap bonkers.

Sterling Watford

I - Most BLOKES, when visiting the Kingdoms or any foreign land, will consult a registry to see what manner of lodgings are available. Not this Celli chap, he takes out a full page add in the Gazette indicating when HE will be available for holiday and that interested parties should contact HIM to make HIM an offer. Of all the gall! I immediately knew I had to meet this Celaphopod.

II - And then I met Lane: the four armed demoness of my dreams. Oh, sweet succubi, torment not my mortal soul.

III - And then they left -- all dramatic like, in the dark of the night. They could have waited till morning, but you know how those Realmers are: mistaking up for down, right for left, and day for night.

IV - They didn't even invite me to the wedding, but that's not what really hurts: Lane won't return my calls or respond to my letters. I mean, it's not like they got married or anything. They got a divorce. So, doesn't that mean she's available to play the field... or at least, play the Watford?

The Dragon

I - I'm really getting marginalized in this series.

II - But at least they were thinking of me and obtained a souvenir for me (i.e. the Dragon Egg).

III - And then they go and lose it. Oh, and just by the by, I should mention that you have not known pain until you've experienced a dragon putting on the hurt firsthand -- just a word to the wise.

IV - But all's well that end's well, seeing as how I got the Egg, and all. Anyhow, rumor is we're doing Rigor Pass 1866: The Manna Boom years next. I get to play a cattle baron (or something like that), and I'm really looking forward to it. I've already got my spurs, and chaps, and this big black hat that really brings out my... Good side? Bad side? Eh, maybe it's a bit of both.

Morgana

I - I find out Celli and the gang are coming for a visit, so I empty the house, get rid of the competition (i.e. my sisters), make up all the rooms nice and special like, and get ready for the darling Celaphopod's arrival.

II - And then I wait. And then, I wait some more.

III - And then when he finally does show up, he's got a whole entourage in tow with him: a nosy wizard, a psychotic demoness, and a full dozen of those smelly little Cobalts, who look like they'd spent the last week and a half trudging through the mud. I mean, I thought I was going to have Celli to myself. Not that I mind sharing him with a Pixie; they know their place. But as to the rest... Well, let's just say, by the time George and Lane extracted themselves from that little "story" I wrote, I'd had about all I could stand of that Celaphopod and his large, bigger than life, over-inflated... ego.

IV - And then he left. And I find myself staring at the rain and wondering when that darling Celaphopod of mine is ever going to return?

Fritz

I - First Morgana divorces me.

II - Then she takes all my money.

III - And then, she makes me play tour guide to her lobe-headed boyfriend!

IV - Well, there ain't no way I'm writing a word more than I have to. I've got my own books to sell, Mister Pod.

Harry the Story Finishing Gnome

I - I can't believe I'm not going last!

II - I always go last!

III - Oh, no... Maybe this means he's going to replace me?

IV - No, that's not it. I haven't written the story yet. He wouldn't, he couldn't replace me before I'd finished writing the story. Whew! That's a relief. And really, besides that little bit of hysteria, nothing much happened. Celli went on vacation, I stayed behind, took care of business, and kept his girlfriend company, which I guess means being yelled at a lot for no particular reason. I can see why he left.

The Hormonal Elf

I - I don't need any lip from a talking throw pillow! You know, I take a lot of abuse from Celli. And I told him not to write me into his stories, but did he listen? No.

II - And then, he tells me we're going to the Kingdoms on holiday. Great! I always wanted to go to the Kingdoms... just not for six months, because then I'd have to quite my job.

III - Of course, he never really wanted me to go with him. From the very first word, he had been planning on going with that tramp Pixie of his. And who do I get left behind with? Harry! He's about as sexy as a clod of dirt.

IV - I'm going to find myself a new boyfriend. I swear to Gra'gl, if Celli doesn't get back here real soon, I'm going to get myself a new boyfriend.

K'fr

I - We bought the stuff.

II - We smoked the stuff.

III - We lost the stuff; but then, we found the stuff again. So in celebration, we smoked the stuff... again, and again, and again. Good stuff that...

IV - Um? What were we talking about?

Mystic Waters

I - From the K'fr we moved on to the Waters of Life.

II - You got this glass of water, right? See, it's water. Just a glass. And you've got to ask yourself: is this glass half full or is it half empty? Me, I don't know. It's not for me to decide. But either way, you drink of it all the same, right? And then it's part of you, in you: coursing through your veins, getting under your skin. And then, you and the water are one, dude. You and the water are one.

III - And then you lose your way. Everything stops making sense. It jumps and it skips. It slips sideways. You have to stop and ask directions. You are the Celaphopodian Grasshopper now: the pilgrim, the seeker -- the stranger in a strange land. Down on your knees, you ask, you beg... you wretch mightily, or Gra'gl but you wretch... and in time you learn, you bask in the truth... and eventually, you become the one to ask the questions of.

IV - The river has moved on; but yet, you remain... here, still, right here. You have awoken to the truth within as you watch the world spin round. In a dizzying state of mind -- where up is down, left is right, and the topside is all turvy -- pause, to feel the rain on your face, and the sand in your toes... as you walk on the shore... of the ocean. It is huge! Awed by its immensity, its majesty, enjoy the waves as they crash over your feet. Smile. You have finally arrived. For this is your home, my friend. This... this is your home.

Stef'fan

I - I'm minding my own business and out of nowhere Celli calls saying, "I'm going to visit for awhile."

II - So I'm like when, and he's like, "I'm working on it."

III - He never really gives me a date and every time I try to nail him down, he's just says, "Just one more snag to clear up. It'll be any day now."

IV - And then one day without any warning, he finally arrives and spends all his free time hitting on Mi'lay, making a perfect

arse of himself. What my sister sees in that Celaphopod, I'll never know.

V - But you're supposed to be there for friends, relatives, or whatever that stupid squid-brain is to me. So when he said, "I'm going to visit for awhile," I tried to stay out of his way.

VI - Still, after a month, I figured I'd been generous enough -- you know, more than hospitable -- so it was time for ole lobe-boy to be on his way. But whenever I mentioned leaving, all he'd say was, "I'm working on it."

VII - Or if he was in a talkative mood, he'd say, "Just one more snag to clear up. It'll be any day now." And then I discovered what that snag was...

Ole Trident Face

VIII - You're on an island, squid boy, surrounded by water, an Oasis of Hope in a Sea of Despair. So whenever you want to talk royalties, I'll be here, waiting for you. Feel free to take your time. After all, until I get paid, the meter's still running...

Example Chapter Summaries

Sometimes I get carried away and make an outline so complicated that when I am done, even I can't fill in the blanks and write the stupid book. Actually, making something so complicated that even I can't write it isn't really all that difficult, but I hope that you'll forgive me if I pretend that it is.

Anyway, what follows are some brief excerpts from the aforementioned outline. Hopefully, they will clarify the tone, format, and structure that I had originally envisioned for CGTaH.

Of course being excerpts, they are by no means complete -- pretty much anyway you want to look at them. I mean, they're pretty darn thin, and this whole exercise is going to stop on a dime after the first few chapters... because that's as far as I got.

Still, with any luck, these bits and pieces will give you an idea of where I was heading with the project. And if we go with

the contest (which I'm thinking we will), and you want to win (which I'm thinking you do), then the following entries should give you some idea of how a winning entry might be structured (and perhaps more importantly, the Point of View to be used -- i.e. not mine).

Of course, as with everything (a phrase my girlfriend seems to think I use entirely too much), quality, humor, and that optional 10g bribe to the judges pretty much trumps anything else.

So, if you think you've got a better idea (encounter, plot, tone, voice, or whatever), you might as well go for it. And hey, if you don't think 10g is generous enough, feel free to up the ante.

Chapter # - Example

Point of view (POV): your humble narrator. In this particular example that would be Celli. And although, the chapters themselves are to be written -- for the most part -- from someone else's point of view, these summaries are written from mine... except for the one that the Charlies.

Major Action: that refers to the plot, my friend. You've got to keep your eyes on the bouncing ball.

Setting Up: you've no doubt heard the phrase, the plot gets thicker. Well, this is where that happens. Lots of writers like to use corn starch for this, but I think it makes everything taste funky, so I prefer to add a potato or two and cook it all down.

Example: this is where the action would start, a few choice lines to prime the pump and set the chapter in motion.

Chapter 1 - Old Man River

POV: if the title didn't give it away, this chapter is going to be told from Crazy George's point of view. He owns the boat after all, so he gets to go first.

Major Action: well, George and Lane buy a lot of K'fr. But what this chapter is really about is describing Lane in all her chain mail bikini, kicking-boxing champion glory. The girl has a body -- a physique as they say in the trades -- and she knows how to use it.

Setting Up: the rest of the story, but oddly, not right off. Lane has her moods -- and let's face it, George is George. So at first, Lane is holding out looking for a better deal, a more glamorous romantic lead, and a bigger slice of the royalty pie. But she should have learned a lesson from how I dealt with Ole Trident Face; I don't negotiate. Room and board, and all the K'fr you can smuggle are fair wages in my book... and since it is my book, she'll learn to deal with that soon enough, but not quite yet, not in the first chapter.

Old Man River (leading in): It was a good day to go shopping. Might as well make the most of it and buy a few toys, I thought. I even got a good deal on a stack of old 8-tracks. And then I saw the girl, the lady, the demoness of my dreams: the woman Celli was escorting through the crowd. I thought he had said something about Nadia being my co-star. I like Nadia and all, she's fine for a Pixie; but truth be told, she's just not my type. My type was the four-armed vixen of delight strolling my way -- fighting Celli every step of the way as hate poured from her eyes. Gra'gl help me! A fair maiden in need of rescuing, I knew I'd be falling in love with her...and how! But that was only if I was sloppy, if I wasn't careful. It was obvious Celli meant for me and this Chaos Queen to have a romance... and that was reason enough for me to fight it just as hard as she was -- tooth and nail every step of the way. Etc.. Etc.. Etc..

Chapter 2 - All Aboard

POV: Gents first, lady's second, or something like that. In this chapter, Lane gets to tell her side of things.

Major Action: in the end, it's the rain that forces Lane aboard George's boat... well, that and the city guard. They don't take kindly to renegade characters in these parts, Missy. So, call it being railroaded, call it being Shanghaied, call it whatever you like, little girl. But one way or another, Lane is finally going to come to her senses and realize that she has no choice but to hook up with George and jump onboard his boat. And then, the moment

they cast off, the chase is on and our little adventure can finally get underway. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to describing what a pig George is and the sty like condition of his boat when we all showed up.

Setting Up: George and Lane's first fight. Enjoying a good row, I put in my own two cents trying to egg them on, but that was a mistake; seems as though the only thing they detested more than being forced together by the fickle hand of fate was the acting agent of the aforementioned fate -- a one Celli the Happy Go Lucky Celaphopod.

All Aboard (leading in): Loosing the two idjits hadn't been that difficult. They had even provided their own distraction: red lines they called them, stupid little toy cars. Just like two schoolboys, Celli and that decrepit old man had focused their attention on the trinkets for a fraction of a second; and that one moment had been all Lane had needed to slip away and disappear into the crowd.

Of course if she thought back to it, she could still see the wizard winking to her as he guided Celli's mind into the diversion. Why would he do that? Why would the wizard help her? Was he in on it. And then Lane suddenly realized, of course he was in on it. It was all part of their plan. I mean, here she was now, hours later, no closer to freedom, shivering in the cold, wet, icy rain, while the town guard hunted her down because of some trivial misunderstanding. It was all clearly part of their plan... as were the barking in the background as they slowly got closer. They would be doubling back on the false trail she had laid down soon enough, and then they would be on to her, and then...

And then, that's when the wizard's boat came into view -- almost like the old man had planned it all along. He was going to pay for this, that wizard. One thing was for sure, if it was the last thing she did, she was going to make that wizard pay. Etc.. Etc.. Etc..

Chapter 3 - Floating on the River

POV: the river's -- or if you like, the Mystic Waters' -- because one thing was for sure, George and Lane had decided early on I was the enemy -- me, your humble narrator -- and that anything they could do to keep me from writing and staying on top of the narrative was the right thing to do.

Major Action: really, just going down the river, working a few bridges and locks to put the mechanics of dimensional travel in place. And then, there's always George lecturing Lane: "If we ever get separated, remember, meet at the bell, and head for the steeple."

Setting Up: getting lost and the need to head for the bell and meet at the steeple, or whatever it was that crazy wizard said.

Floating on the River (leading in): You try to let it slide off your back; that's the way to do it. You try to ignore it: the pollution, the stagnation, and the putrefaction. But every once in a while a Dwarf will go too far -- bad mouth your name, spit in your face -- and then reflexively -- without even knowing what you are up to -- you'll reach up with a wave and drag the ingrate down to the depths, holding him under, suffocating him, and teaching him a lesson. When he finally breaks free, gasping for breath, he's sure to start cursing again -- he's a Dwarf after all -- but he'll no longer be cursing your name or your namesake, so he'll have to blame it all on the slippery footing of the deck, the rotting rail, or the weak ale that the Elves have the nerve to serve in these parts.

I don't even know why I'm telling you this, because the boat that was floating by overhead at the time -- the Feathered Plume as was proclaimed in big bold letters painted on its side -- wasn't like that at all. It wasn't disrespectful -- not outright, at least. It was something else -- more of a subtle feel... or a premonition really. Something about how it rode heavy in the water -- way too heavy for a boat that size -- loaded to the gills with K'fr. It was like a black hole riding on the surface. And as it floated by, it sucked everything into its wake, carrying it along for the ride.

As it passed, I could feel myself being drawn in with the rest, my essence curling with the K'fr smoke billowing from the

braziers on the deck. That's when I realized this wasn't your ordinary bunch of Realmers out for a pleasure cruise. They were going somewhere. They had a purpose. They were going to blaze a trail: one that anyone could follow, and in time, one that thousands would. It was then -- right then and there -- that I knew, like it or not, I would be following them too: wherever they chose to go, wherever their water would flow. Etc.. Etc.. Etc..

Chapter X - Do-da Do-da

(And now it's time to jump ahead through the chapter summaries to some indeterminate point in the future when our fearless heroes find themselves at the foot of the Fox'ton Locks.)

POV: the Fox'ton Lock-Workers Union is an amazingly powerful organization. And if they say a union representative is going to write this chapter, then a union representative is going to write this chapter... or so I hope.

Major Action: on account of the Feather Plume being of magical construction and consisting of multiple dimensional layers, the lock keepers wanted a few extra coins for its passage; and as you can imagine, George didn't want to pay them.

"Oh, just pay them already, you cheapskate."

"That's what I should do, pay every parasite from here to the coast"

"So, that's where we're going, then? The coast?"

I figure, by now you should be able to figure out who said what and so tags aren't necessary. But if you can't, it doesn't really matter. In the end, it's just a lot of filler, which, I suppose, is just another way of saying, this chapter will undoubtedly be me at my finest... or if you believe what you read, those Kibbers sure have a knack for writing dialogue.

Setting Up: well, nothing much in for CGTaH, but if you're a follower of the Dragon Bound series, you may remember a certain frog who has been following Crazy George around for the last couple of books. As in, "I turned a guy into a frog once as a joke, and I forgot to turn him back, OK? But this isn't even the same

frog.” Of course, whether you choose to believe the irresponsible wizard or not, the point remains that one of the Kibbers wants a kiss on the cheek from Lane as payment. Maybe she goes for it. Maybe she doesn’t. I haven’t really decided yet. But we only have one more book in the Dragon Bound series to go, and I think it would be best for everyone -- or at least the frog -- if I resolved this issue before long. Or if you’re going to guest write this chapter, I would be most grateful if you took care of that loose end for me.

Do-Da Do-Da (leading in): It’s better than it could have been. It’s better than it was. I mean, I spent the last 150-years -- that’s a hundred and fifty years, my friend! -- as a toad... or a frog, or whatever was appropriate to the particular vortex I happened to be in at the moment as I chased that irresponsible -- not to mention, unethical -- wizard around the Realms.

Of course, in this dimension -- in the Kingdoms -- I wasn’t an ordinary toad or a frog; I was a Kibber. It wasn’t so bad. Instead of hopping, I could walk. Instead of croaking, I could talk. And I had a sudden appreciation for fine wines, cheese, and classical music, not to mention an intense desire to work in the service industries. But I still wasn’t what I had been. Not that I could remember what it was that I had been. A century and a half is a long time, after all; and frogs, toads, and other warty whatnots are not exactly known for their mental acumen, so you’ll forgive me if I’ve forgotten the specifics.

Still, the wizard knew; he hadn’t forgotten. And now was my chance. I was going to make him change me back into my original form once and for all... or he was going to pay, and I don’t mean by way of an increased tariff for passing the locks on account of the cargo he was hauling. I mean, he was going to pay... that troublesome, potato chip eating, snack food crumb trail leaving wizard was finally going to pay. Etc.. Etc.. Etc..

Chapter Y - The Big Easy

(Once again, jumping another half dozen chapters ahead, we

get to Sterling Watford.)

POV: this chapter is entitled “The Big Easy,” because somebody else is going to write it. And really, things couldn’t get any easier than that, can they?

Major Action: I’ve already told you everything there is to know about Sterling, so let me just say that at one point I had thought about modeling the “monster,” which Sterling becomes, on a “guy” a saw in a Lang’don tube station. Of course, “guy” isn’t terribly descriptive, so I’ll go on to say that “he” was more like a tentacled sea monster all flustered and out of place on dry land than anything else. The saying Like a Fish out of Water comes rapidly to mind when I think about him, mainly because fish and fetid sea water were dripping off of him left and right.

Anyway, on account of my difficulties with Ole Trident Face, this freak of nature sort of caught my attention right away, and I wondered whether the big guns had been called in... or in this case the little guns, since the little twerp only stood as tall as a Lang’don municipal garbage can. But whatever his size, with his tentacles waiving about, it was obvious he didn’t speak the language and that he was growing more and more distressed by the minute.

Picture him if you will. What a character! What a card! I mean, I knew right then and there, even if he was one of Trident Face’s minions, I had to turn him into a character somehow, and then after I’d met Sterling -- and realized what a cad he was -- I realized I had found the way to integrate this creature into the story. You could almost say, my prayers had been finally been answered, which of course, really just sort of explains in a roundabout way why worshiping Gra’gl isn’t always the wisest of things to do.

Religious commentary aside (like I care who -- or what -- you worship), my publisher says Vampires are in vogue this season and sea monsters are out, so the silly little twerp got culled from the story. But all the same, if you’re really ambition (contest wise) you could always write this chapter from the sea monster’s point of

view instead of Sterling's.

Setting Up: with any luck a hard to understand, pissed off sea monster, who doesn't speak a lick of Lang'donese, paying a visit to his Lordship Sterling Watford.

The Big Easy (leading in): What do they call that thing? That thing that's like a coincidence, but everybody knows that it's not? Not serendipitous? But...

Suspicious!

That's what it was: it was suspicious.

I'd heard about this sort of thing -- this suspicious sort of thing. It's why -- as a general rule -- I never leave the water in the first place, but I was on assignment, undercover for my master -- a person who we'll just call "Ole Trident Face" so as to avoid any conflict of interest.

I had been sent by Ole Trident Face to negotiate a deal with those nefarious tricksters at Dragon Bound Publishing. And wouldn't you know it? Here I was in a Lang'don tube station getting heckled by the members of that very same group. It started simple enough with their saying derogatory things under their breaths, but then they started flashing bulbs in my face and taking my picture. Well, I'm used to the dark you understand. I'm sensitive to sunlight, and a person doesn't expect to be exposed to The Burning Light of a Thousand Brilliant Suns when they're on a mission of peace -- and a 100' underground in a tube station to boot. I guess what I'm saying is, the last thing I heard before blacking out was the following exchange.

"Man, he'd make a great split-personality for Sterling. You know, like some sort of Werewolf/Sea Monster thing."

"Why do you hate Watford so much? You haven't even met the guy yet."

"I don't know, maybe it's the fact that he's a Lord, and he never had to work a day in his life."

"Yeah, like you've ever worked a day in your life."

"It's different..."

I can only assume the "witty" banter continued, but I was too

busy blacking out to pay it much mind or take any notes. All I know is: when I awoke, the representatives of Dragon Bound Publishing did not make an appearance at the appointed place or the appointed time... or so, I must presume. There is really no need to mention that I, myself, was a bit late.

But in the end, that little detail is of no matter. I had my orders, so I followed the only clue I had and proceeded to track down a one Lord Watford Sterling the presumed leader of this nefarious ring of villainy. Etc.. Etc.. Etc..

Chapter XXX - Doldrums

(Taking place after the flight from Watford, before we got to Kiss'wick.)

POV: Lane... all hot and bothered.

Major Action: this is all filler and padding. If we were doing a movie, this whole chapter would be done as a montage sequence with Lane going swimming (Hubba! Hubba!), Crazy George fishing, and the two of them cooking together, going on a jungle safari, and so on. At the end of which, their boat gets mired in the muck. I guess they should have tipped that Leprechaun at the bridge a little better, but whatever. This is, also, where Crazy George does the lottery gag to bring the Charlies on board, which in turn allows Crazy George and Lane to have a week alone together (sort of) with nothing better to do than relax and laze in the sun.

Setting Up: Crazy George and Lane finally hitting it off, but also getting a little stir crazy from the cramped quarters; so that when the boat eventually pulls into Kiss'wick, the two of them are off and running, looking for an adventure, something which would have found them soon enough whether they were looking for it or not.

Doldrums (leading in): Can you feel the boredom setting in? Celli's run out of perspectives, so he's handing the narrative over to me -- again!

But what he expects me to do with it, I haven't a clue.

No, that's the wrong way to look at it.

I should be asking myself, what am I going to do with this newfound freedom, this opportunity?

And it only takes me a moment to figure it out. I'm going to take a vacation from it all -- the story, the book, the plot -- and I'm going to teach those Cobalts how to give a girl a decent massage, do her hair up right, and give her the perfect pedicure. And while I'm at it, I'm going to have two or three of them wave those silly feathered fans over my reclining body, because a photo layout of that sort might look good on my resume...

(pause)

And right then, right then and there, only moments after "handing" the narrative over to me, Celli has the nerve to break into my reverie and inform me that the Charlies aren't "officially" in the story yet, so there's not going to be any massage sequence -- at least, not yet.

Well, there's only one thing to do about that. I look over at George -- my go to boy -- and let him know -- with my eyes, my arms, and my legs, but mostly my voice -- that I want a massage and I want it now! Or there will be hell to pay, you got that wizard boy? Quite literally, there will be hell to pay. Etc.. Etc.. Etc..

Chapter Z - The Hills Have Eyes

(During the greater doldrums sequence.)

POV: Charlie be da narrabator, now. Charlie says, if da Celler'painer's can tells da stories, anybody'ers can.

Major Action: major's actions be da Charlie's pulling da boats through da muckity mucks. Et not as funners as it sounds.

Setting Up: Charlie no knows dis one. We's just supposers to pullers da boat. One ting Charlie do know'd is dat dis all be lot's easier, if'n eberybodyes stayers on da boat... or betters yets, getting outers and helpings!

The Hills Have Eyes (leading in): You want to see's things from da Charlies perspectives, you got to be the Charlie; you got to get in the water, and let the muckers ooze over your skin till it

cobers your facers and you'd can no eben recognizer yourself.

Den you pullers da boat. You likers da slave. For a day, maybes more, you pullers dat boat. Den you remembers da world rest on da back of da giant turtle'ese. So you deciders to finds one ob'd dose and let heem do da work for da change.

Et turnees out dat finding da turtle'ese be's da easies parts. But to'd convincering heem to work, you'd gots to feeders heem da K'fr'ee cakkers. Dat when da world'e start to spinners, and you'd realizer et maybe's not so gooders idears anymore. But at dat point, all'd der lefters to do is hangers on, and hopers for da best. Etc.. Etc.. Etc..

Chapter Summaries

A Final Thought

Obviously, this is not where Crazy George Takes a Holiday ends, nor is it even close to what I had outlined the first time through. Originally, I had The Dragon rescuing Princess Virginia (a character loosely based on a hot Elvin wench I saw walking the streets of Amblin) from a Sterling Watford who was himself busy turning into a tentacles swamp monster every night of the week (yep, this is where I wanted to take the story ever since I saw that tentacled freak in the tube station).

Anyhow, since all of this was supposed to have taken place in the first dozen chapters of the book (along with leaving Market Harborough and all the rest), clearly some smoothing out was going to be required. But as to whether that has happened or not, I'm going to let you decide.

All I know is, I'd much rather have way too many things going on in a story than not nearly enough; even if that means most of the items that make it into the final cut are only hinted at and not resolved to any formal conclusion. And since this is my story, that's exactly what I did.