W A R L O R D S

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Let it be known that once (though no one knows for sure when) there existed upon a distant world, four kingdoms under the dominion of four warlord brothers, each wishing to wrest from the others total control of that clean green world. Few, of course, profited from this perpetual state of siege; but one who did is as well-known today as he was then.

His name was "Just Plain Dwayne," a troll of remarkable wit and guile; a warlord who played all four corners against the center and lined his pockets well upon this, the world of the...
MMMM... TASTY!

FWIP!

ON YOUR FEET, YOU!

HUN?

BUT NOW, WHERE WAS I?

THAT DREAM WAS JUST GETTING GOOD!

A HARP FOR EACH SEASON! AND I WAS ON... AH YES... SPRING!

THEN CONSIDER THIS, KNAVE--EITHER YOU END YOUR RETIREMENT, OR I END YOUR LIFE!

YOU AND WHOSE ARMS?

BEING NEW TO THIS PARTICULAR AREA, I NEED DIRECTIONS; THUS, YOU SHALL SERVE AS MY--

I HAVE NO TIME FOR LOST SOULS! BESIDES, I NO LONGER DO GUIDE WORK!

UH-OH!
Uh... You know you never did finish that request of yours, m'lord.

Now, what exactly is the name of this place you and your friends would like directions to?
AND ELSEWHERE...

MOVE, YOU OLD FOOL...

...LEST MY MIND EMPTIES OF THE INVENTIONS THAT IT STORES!

YES, SIRE.

...WORKS THAT WILL SEND MY REPUTATION TO EVEN FARTHER BOUNDARIES OF THIS WORLD!

BUT IF I MUST DEPEND ON YOUR ANCIENT LEGS TO CARRY THE KEYS...

...I MAY NOT EVEN ENTER MY LABORATORY THIS YEAR!

AT LEAST MY LEGS, FeeBLE AS THEY MAY BE, DO THEIR OWN WALKING, SIRE.

WHAT? HOW DARE YOU QUESTION MY GENIUS!

OOF!

PERHAPS A GOOD FLOGGING WILL SET YOUR MIND STRAIGHT, TURNKEY!

YES—A LESSON TO TEACH YOU WHEN AND HOW TO USE YOUR OLD TONGUE!

MANY THANKS, SIRE.
THE DOOR OPENS TO THE ERRATIC
DIN OF A MAMMOTH WORKSHOP
UPON ININDIGEOUS SUBHUMAN
LADERS WORKING LITERALLY
UNDER A TRUE SCIENTIFIC GENIUS...

AH, MY LIEGE! I
AM GLAD YOU CAME!
I HAVE ANOTHER
GREAT CREATION TO
SHOW YOU! PERHAPS
MY GREATEST YET!

THEN COME DOWN FROM
THERE, LEO! MY FRIEND!
CONVERGING FROM THIS
DISTANCE IS A STRAIN
ON YOUR VOICE!
I am not concerned with my voice, sire!

Though it may not be the most noble of desires, my only concern is that my name, Leo Nardo, go down in history.

Here it is, sire! Feast your eyes!

You have nothing to fear, old friend?

Idiot! You do not even suspect that I--and I alone--

--take credit for every one of your scientific marvels!

What? A suit of armour?

Ah, sire, but not just a suit of armour...

...it is a very special suit of armour!
A very special suit of armour indeed, and soon, upon entering the main hall, King Redwood reveals “His” latest wonder!

Faithful Knights, there is someone here I would have you meet... for he shall be leading you into battle!

You may salute my new champion!

HA--DUMBOUNDED, EH?...

TOO SHOCKED EVEN TO SPEAK!

We can speak, sire! But finding the proper words—that is the problem!

To become the King’s champion one must prove oneself in battle...

But, though this headstrong knight lands his heartiest blow...

And I say it is the same for this one!

Come, let us see the stuff of which he is made!

By my soul! He is not even shaken!
Instantly, the others join the fray...

Have at him! My knights! Best him—if you can!

But the result is hardly to their liking!

Enough, my champion!—Halt!

Return this "knave" to the floor and allow me to reveal you!

Good Lord! What is it?

My latest invention... the ultimate man of war... with him at my side, I am invincible!
Meanwhile...

Faster, troll! We are eager to test the mettle of Bistofo’s troops!

Don’t worry! You’ll arrive soon enough!

As I’ve said, I know of a short cut!

Behold!—This should shave many hours off your travel time, Sir Conqueror!

Pray you, knave, this log had better be sturdy enough to...

A bridgeway wide enough for even you and your horse to pass!

Trust me, Captain! It’s strong...

That is, at least strong enough to hold me!

But, as for you...

Ho! What antic do you press?

No antic, m’lord... just a test of your steed’s nose...

...and your own gullibility!
NO-O-O-O!

THE ANCIENT LOG, ALREADY HALF ROTTED THROUGH, CANNOT WITHSTAND THE FULL WEIGHT OF THE FALLING STEED...

WHEN! I'M GLAD THAT WORKED!

YEEE!

IT WAS NICE OF YOU TO PROVIDE ME WITH THE MEANS OF MY ESCAPE!

...EVEN IF YOU DID PUT IT AROUND MY NECK!

Ah, your archers are trained well... their arrows strike the earth with great authority!

Let me lighten your burden, sir...

You shall pay dearly for this... bolloww... attack! attack!

I deserve some payment for my service!

MY HANDS AROUND YOUR SCRANNY NECK WILL BE YOUR ONLY REWARD, TROLL!

A CURSE BE ON HIM -- NO GOLD... just... aahh... a rough layout of Ristino's castle...

He ought to be interested in what his enemy is up to -- perhaps even grateful!
... FURTHERMORE, IT MOVES! IT OBEDIES THE KING'S EVERY COMMAND! AND, WITH ITS AID, WE SHALL EASILY EMERGE HARMONIOUS OVER ALL ENEMIES!

SOON, THE FOUR KINGDOMS WILL BE UNDER KING RESTIVO'S CONTROL, AND YOU, THE SUBJECTS, SHALL REAP THE BENEFITS!

DOES HE TRULY EXPECT US TO BELIEVE IT MOVES?

PHew! If this device is half as good as he says, it still should be worth quite a price!

... AND, WHEN I STEAL THE PLANS FOR THAT MONSTROSITY AND SELL THEM TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER...

... I WILL BE SET FOR LIFE!

SO, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THERE IS A SCOUNDREL IN THE AUDIENCE... AND JUST TO MAKE THE SCENE COMPLETE, ANOTHER KNIFE, ONE ALREADY FRIENDLY TO OUR EYES, APPEARS...

WELL, WELL... DIDN'T EXPECT THIS MANY PEOPLE TO BE MILLING ABOUT!

SOME SORT OF CELEBRATION Goin' on!
These celebrations sure have a way of bringing out the hay-fever. 'Naww... that fellow over there!

What,ho, Bertram? This certainly is a surprise! Can it be two seasons have passed since we last schemed together?

Oh no!— not Dwayne!!

Quiet! Can you not see that I am in the guise of a monk! Calm down, friend Bertram! Nobody’s paying attention to us! They’re all too caught up in the festivities!

You’d think you weren’t glad to see me!

You’re not still upset about that little mess that fell upon us when we acquired that magistrate’s prize mare and entered her in a fair auction?

Eh... how was I to know it was the same auctioneer who...

Listen, troll—if you foul my attempt to steal the plans to that invention I’ll...

Plans to the invention, huh?

...sold the same ware to the same magistrate only the day before... eh?

That’s the trouble with you—for a sizable fellow you think too small!

Now, listen, I have an idea!—I recently came into possession of a loyal plan to Restino’s castle!

I’ll make sure everyone in the castle sleeps very soundly tonight!... then you’ll sneak into the royal chamber... and...
What am I doing... how could I let that troll talk me into this?

OH NO! Only two people in the bed and you grab the queen?

One kidnapped king on his way down! Truly he is putting up quite a fight!

Just get him downy here!

Oh, no! Two people in the bed and you grab the queen?

One kidnapped king on his way down! Truly he is putting up quite a fight!

Just get him downy here!

You do not know? Can have no idea what it is like!

Restivo has become so utterly consumed with power.

Lament! You've

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Lament! You've

Yes, that's it. Best... shut her up! And while you're at it, notice her absence of a beard!

That should have been your first clue that she wasn't the king!

We still have time to exchange her for the king and then get out of here before the potion I slipped into everyone's wine starts wearing off!

But this time I'll go with you!
A full week's journey from the city's castle, there stands an even more impressive royal dwelling-place, albeit a cold and foreboding structure. This is the Palace of King Marcus...

...And as cold as it may seem on the outside, things are warming up...

...within -- truly this is a place of powerful magic...

Please, mighty one, have mercy! I was only moments late to your summons -- I meant no disrespect!

I trust you have learned your lesson!

Very well, first minister -- I shall prove myself benignant and allow you to live... this time!

Hear me! I am the power and I shall not be so lenient if anyone again disobeys me.

Not bad... your... 'mishiness'?
WHO DARES SPEAK THIS TO ME?

FORGIVE ME, HIGHNESS...

...BUT THIS IS HARDLY A SITUATION IN WHICH YOU WILL NEED YOUR WIZARDRY!

WE COME TO BESTOW UPON YOU A MOST IMPRESSIVE GIFT!

IF THIS BE SO, LITTLE ONE, I'LL...

RESTIVO!!!

YES, SIRE! WE TOOK HIM AS OUR CAPTIVE, KNOWING YOU WOULD BE MOST PLEASED TO HAVE HIM!

WELL, MY BROTHER—HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE IN THE REALM OF MAGIC??... AS MY PRISONER!

GOLD? HA!

WHOA—?

...I Doubted IF A FEW SMALL SACKS OF GOLD WOULD...

...DESPITE YOUR "GIFT" YOU HAVE ACTED IMPUDENTLY!... THUS I SHOULD SNUFF OUT YOUR LIVES! BUT I WILL NOT APPRECIATE THAT AND BESORE!

MMMPH, PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE ASKED FOR THE GOLD BEFORE I SHOWED HIM WHO WE HAD!
Realize, my brother, that with but one flip of my wrist, I can...

No! I am not about to leave!

Perhaps we can devise some other scheme that will...

But there's nothing we can do!

Come, Bertram! Let's get out of here!

That may be what you think, but I believe otherwise!

Hear me, King Marcus— you cannot shoo us away like flies!

How dare you affront me so! You were dismissed!

We deserve payment for our task, and I...

Never again will I team with anyone so stupid!

Bert! Don't be a fool!

Sorry about this, Bert, but it's for your own good!

Be careful, fools!

Uh-oh! Didn't want him to fall on anybody!
It happens then, a scientific wonder revealed!

An unworthy trick has been attempted! That is not restino!

Good Lord! I've been taken!

The thing's a fake!... A mechanical imitation!

Now we're really in for it!

I--you thought you... thought you could...

Marcus is so consumed with anger he can't even speak straight!

It is the foulest treachery ever to be played upon this royal personage.

And, for such a blasphemy, you shall pay dearly!

But really... all I wanted to say was--

Let every creature that breathes... every thing that lives, know...

That I must have more than mere satisfaction!

Ugh--Oh, he's going to blow!
YOU SHALL
ALL FEEL MY
WRATH!-
LET THIS BE
YOUR DUE!

WHEN!—IF I COULD
ONLY FIND A WAY TO
BOTTLE THAT STUFF,
I COULD MAKE A
FORTUNE!

OH, MY SWEET
LORD! WHAT HAS
THAT TROLL GOTTEN
ME INTO THIS
TIME?
NO!... WAIT!... IT WAS YOU, TROLL!... YOU ARE THE ONE WHO BROUGHT THAT THING TO ME!

BELIEVE ME, YOUR MAJESTY; YOUR HIGHNESS, YOUR GRACE!

I, UN, BROUGHT IT HERE SIMPLY AS AN EXAMPLE OF HIS WORK!

YOU ALONE WILL PAY!

I WASN'T TRYING TO KICK YOU!

I DIDN'T MEAN FOR YOU TO THINK IT WAS YOUR BROTHER!

HE HAS BUILT AN ARMY OF THESE MECHANICAL BEINGS...

...AND PLANS TO STORM YOUR CASTLE!

NO!...HE BOUGHT IT!

SIT, STILL! I DO WISH TO MAKE AMENDS.

FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE I HAVE CAUSED YOU!

EH, PLEASE, TAKE MY SERVANT, BERTHAN...HE IS A BIT SLOW, BUT A HARD WORKER. HE WILL SERVE YOU WELL!

EH, I ONLY WISH TO REGAIN THE PEARL HE HAS BEEN HOLDING FOR ME...

AS YOU WISH, MAJESTY!

SILENCE, OAF... AND AS FOR YOU, TROLL! I WISH NEVER AGAIN TO SET EYES UPON YOUR UGLY FACE!

HEY, YOU CAN'T!
HEH, HEH. LUCKY FOR ME POOR OL' BERTRAM WAS A THRIFTY FELLOW!

AND THIS AMULET I COPPED OFF OF MARCUS...

...OUGHT TO BE WORTH SOMETHINGS TO SOMEONE!

BUT, RIGHT NOW, I THINK IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE STILL BEING ALIVE!

GROG ALL AROUND, INNKEEPER!

I COME TO REGALE YOU ALL WITH MUNDANE TALES OF TRUE ADVENTURE...

I HAVE MET WARRIORS WHO ARE NAUGHT BUT MACHINES! I HAVE BATTLED A KING WAS LIFTED ALLOFT BY HIS MYSTIC HARPES!—YET, I ESCAPED UNHARMED!

AND TO YET TESTIFY TO THE TRUTH OF MY TALE, SOME OF YOU MAY RECOGNIZE...

THE VERY AMULET OF WARLORD MARCUS!

AND YOU, TROLL, MAY RECOGNIZE THIS AS THE SWORD OF A MAN WHO ONCE PRESSUED YOU INTO SERVICE!

NOW, TELL THESE GOOD PEOPLE THE TALE OF HOW YOU CAUSED ME TO TUMBLE INTO A BEAST' S FATE I PROMISED YOU!

HNNH?

UH-ON!
I HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT YOU FOR SOME TIME, TROLL—MY ANGER GROWING. MULTUERU! THUS HAVE I DECIDED TO WHITTLE YOU DOWN TO AN EVEN SMALLER SIZE...

...BY DETACHING YOUR LIMBS ONE BY ONE, AND THEN BY—

WELL, HERE! WHY DON'T YOU START WITH A LEG?!

YOU SHALL NOT WIN THIS FIGHT THROUGH TRICKERY THIS TIME, TROLL!

YOU SHALL NOT WIN THIS FIGHT THROUGH TRICKERY THIS TIME, TROLL!
STOP THIS FIGHTING, ALL OF YOU!

MANY TIMES IN THE PAST HAS THIS TAVERN BEEN DESERTED BY YOUR LIKE! I SHALL NOT LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN!

IT IS I WHO MUST CLEAN UP YOUR MESS! DID ANY OF YOU CONSIDER THAT?

NAY! YOU SOLDIERS ARE ALL Alike! RUFFIANS WHO CAN THINK OF NAUGHT BUT BATTLE!

AND I SHALL NOT HAVE IT PERSIST! DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

MAHHH--A BIT HEADY--STRONG, BUT QUITE NICE--INDEED!

LOOK! SEE WHAT YOU HAVE DONE! THE LEAST AMONG YOU HAS BEEN INJURED! WHY MUST IT EVER BE THE SMALL AND INNOCENT WHO SUFFER?--POOR DEAR.

AHH, THIS IS WONDERFUL... BUT I MUST NOT GET TOO COMFORTABLE!

INSTEAD, I'D BETTER START CONSIDERING MAKING MYSELF SCARCE, WHILE MY OLD FRIEND, THE CAPTAIN, IS STILL UNCONSCIOUS!

Oдоо... Where am I? My head--the pain--it's--

UNLESS IT IS NOT TROUBLE FROM THE CAPTAIN THAT ENDURE MUST CONSIDER... BUT THE HORRIBLY DIFFERENT KIND OF MENACE WHICH IS AT HAND...

GOD SAVE US!
...THE EVIORS OF KING DOMINIC!

BE NOT AFRAID, SIMPLE FOLK, WE COME NOT TO HARM YOU.

...OF COURSE...

...TO SAVE US...

FROM OURSELVES.

YES...

...BOARD THIS COACH NOW... IT IS ONLY THAT YOU SHALL ULTIMATELY RECEIVE YOUR SALVATION.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOUR FRIENDS HERE, BUT DON'T WORRY, MAIDEN...

IT'S NO GOOD! SHE'S NOT LISTENING! SHE'S JUST LIKE THE OTHERS! IN SOME SORT OF TRANCE...

I DON'T LIKE IT, BUT I GUESS I'D BETTER PLAY ALONG!

YOU TOO, LITTLE ONE! DO NOT LAG BEHIND!

APPEARENTLY EVERYONE IS UNDER THESE KNIGHTS' SPELL BUT ME... AND I DON'T THINK THESE EXIASBES WOULD TAKE TOO KINDLY TO ANY OF MY TRICKS!

ONWARD, FOR THE LOVE OF DOMINIC!
AND AS OUR DIGNIFICATE HERO DEPARTS FOR CLIMES UNKNOWN... WITHIN REGIGNO'S KINGDOM WE FIND --

THE TIME HAS COME, MY FAITHFUL KNIGHTS! WITH MY NEW CHAMPION TO LEAD US, WE SHALL EASILY DEFEAT MY BROTHER MARCUS'S MYSTIC FORCES.

LEAD ON, THEN, MY CHAMPION! WE HAVE MANY MILES TO RIDE BEFORE BATTLE!

THWAK

HA! SURELY MARCUS DOES NOT EVEN SUSPECT MY STRATEGY! WE SHALL TAKE HIM COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE.

KLUNK

THAT SIMPERING OLD IDIOT, NARDO! HE DARES CALL HIMSELF AN INVENTOR, AND YET HE CANNOT EVEN BUILD A SOLDIER SMART ENOUGH TO DUCK!

TRULY, MY CHAMPION'S HEAD MAY NOT BE THE ONLY ONE TO ROLL THIS DAY!

REGIGNO, YOU ARE INDEED A FOOL...
...and if it were not for the amulet you wear, even now I could easily...--wait! my own amulet of will!

it was here... about my neck! of that I am certain! yet it be gone! stolen!

I have been betrayed! but who would dare...?

The guards are distracted by some new and most frightening noise from war—Lord Marcus!

...it must have been he! and when I find him, I shall...

This is my chance!

You enjoyed seeing me lift these heavy blocks! now I will enjoy sharing with you the weight of my burden!

Marcus is still ranting up a storm! apparently wishing to tear that imp, dwarven, limb from limb!

But not if I can make good my escape to Jon Boxtiard and find that little traitor first!
Soon, within a small stolen craft, a fleeing giant of a man attempts to cross the sea of the Children of Krimish...

It almost bemuses me that, that small conniver, who made profit by my imprisonment, was also most responsible for my crafty escape!

Nonetheless... I am free!

My presence, however, does not exactly go unnoted...

Lord Almighty! This goes from bad to worse!

My only wish, foul serpent, is that I sit undigested in your stomach for days to your great displeasure!

They, within but a matter of moments, this once turbulent sea is now strangely calm...
WE'VE BEEN TRAVELING FOR QUITE SOME TIME—ON THESE HARD WOODEN SEATS! YET EVERYONE ELSE SEEMS PRETTY CONTENT...

...Far too content, if you ask me!

Wait! What's this? Some sort of inscription! Almost impossible to pronounce!

As for myself, at this moment I actually believe I'd go as far as to trade this pretty little trinket...

...For a more comfortable seat!

But let's see now... Pro-My-

What in the name of...

Hold! What is this I sense?

My wish... About the hard seat! I said the word...

Somewhere someone is making use of my amulet...

Mmmm...

...And if it is that accursed troll...

...I will find him!

Yesss... I'm beginning to see...

Yes...
Himaph! Just my luck! Now that I'm finally comfortable, we're slowing down...

Come out now and back in the light, my children!

I do not like the sound of this!

Or the... look! Of what little I can see in this blinding light!

Something has happened! The mark... gone!

But it was the troll, of that I am certain!

Peace be with you, my children! Your lives were filled with strife and pain. Yet now, all of you will be one with me!

All hail, the great and good King Dominic!

Warlord Dominic! From what I've heard, the maddest of the four brothers! I should have figured as much!

These people are looking upon him as though he were a god!

What is this... a troll?

At last my prayers have been answered!
Mmmph! Just my luck! Now that I'm finally comfortable, we're slowing down...

Come out now and bask in the light, my children!

I do not like the sound of this...

Or the... look! Or what little I can see in this blinding light!

Something has happened! The maze... gone!

But it was the troll, of that I am certain!

Peace be with you, my children! Your lives were filled with strife and pain. Yet now, all of you will be one with me!

All hail the great and good King Dominic!

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What is this... a troll?

At last my prayers have been answered!
MEANTIME... A SEA WHICH USUALLY PROVIDES LITTLE MORE THAN BREAD. AND... ONCE WAS NOT TOTALY COMPLETED ITS TASK...

HE STILL BREATHES! THAT, IN ITSELF, IS AMAZING!

HE SIMPLY APPEARED CLOSER BECAUSE HE IS SO MASSIVE.

I HAVE HEARD MANY TALES OF MEN SUCH AS THIS, BUT HAVE NEVER SET MY EYES ON ONE! COME, WE MUST TELL OUR LIEGE OF THIS EVENT!

AND SOON...

...HE WHO WAS MY FRIEND!

FEAR NOT, GOOD SUBJECTS... TRULY, THE FATES HAVE SMILED UPON US. FOR THIS GIANT OF A MAN HAS THE SAME COUNTENANCE OF HIM WHO PASSED ON MANY YEARS AGO...

AS THE DAYS PASS AND HEALTH RETURNS TO A BEWILDERED GIANT, KING PHILIP WALKS BESIDE THE ONE CALLED BERTHAT ...

I AM! YOU LOOK EXACTLY AS HE DID, BACK UPON THAT FATEFUL DAY BEFORE. HE LEAPT IN FRONT OF A SPEAR INTENDED FOR MYSELF...

THEN, AS HE WAS ONCE YOUR CHAMPION, SO, NOW, I SHALL BE!

...DURING THAT BLOODEST OF WARS WHICH ULTIMATELY DIVIDED THIS ONCE FINE LAND INTO ITS FOUR PRESENT KINGDOMS!

AND NOW YOU ARE HEIR TO HIS LANDS AND THE FORTUNES HE ACQUIRED WHILST IN MY SERVICE.

AND WE MUST REUNITE THE PEOPLE OF THESE LANDS... SO THAT FINALLY WE MAY ONCE AGAIN LIVE IN PEACE!
And so it comes to pass upon the following day that the forces of
which we are ready to meet in battle, ready to fight for the
noblest cause in life...

While elsewhere...

Fear not! This but the entrance to the land of the
Trolls!

What in the name of all that is unluck?

A place where even the
stalwart guide has been afraid to venture!

Follow me! This was not constructed for those of your size!

Can't let them know that this is
as much to me as it is to them... but
right now this is my only hope!

If this be deception, Troll...

Lower your spears... and
your heads as well!

And more divine
do as they travel
through a cavernous prison!
AFTER DAYS OF DARKNESS, THEY Emerge, ONLY TO FIND THEMSELVES UNDER...

ATTACK! WE ARE ATTACKED!

YOU WILL PAY WITH YOUR LIFE, TROLL!

ONLY IF YOU WAIT YOUR TURN, SIR KNIGHT...

AND NEARBY...

THOX

THEN, SUDDENLY, THROUGH THE STILLNESS...

THAT SOUND... WHAT IS...

LOOK!

QUICKLY! OVER THE SIDE!

AND THERE IS NOT EVEN A BREATH'S TIME FOR MEDITATION.
Regroup—let us pursue the light—for the holy cause!

We're in some sort of a cavern! And hopefully, this opening will lead us out of these accursed troll lands!

The forces of Philippe assemble for battle!

Hopefully our message from Domino will quell their yearnings for bloodlust!

You were right, troll, and you have delivered us to the heart of Philippe's domain.

Then I shall take my leave, since my service to you is ended.
INDIEED, TROLL, AND IT SHALL BE MY GREATEST HONOR TO ASSIST YOU!

OF ALL THE FOUL, ASKED.

WAIT!

IT'S WORKING...

THANK SAM HUN!

THE AMULET! IT HELPED ME BEFORE! AND ALL I NEEDED TO DO WAS READ ITS INSCRIPTION ALOUD!

I ONLY HOPE THAT I CAN TALK FASTER THAN I CAN FALL!

APPARENTLY WARLORD DOMINO HAS A VERY PECULIAR WAY OF REPEATING GOOD TURNS!

KUB-C9-JUN!

GOOD HEAVEN! DOMINO'S KNIGHTS ARE CUTTING THROUGH THOSE MEN AS EASILY AS A BLADE PARTS LARD!

SO MUCH FOR THEIR MISSION OF PEACE.

ALL I KNOW IS THAT I DO NOT LIKE BEING CASED AND SAY UPON!

LET THEM DO WHAT THEY WILL, BUT I HAVE MY OWN LITTLE SCORE TO SETTLE WITH THEM!
KUB-C9-JUN!

BY ALL THAT IS GOOD AND TRULY HOLY—SEND THOSE EVIL ONES TO THEIR JUST REWARD!

Ah, I have him!
I may have saved a lot of lives... but knowing how much the soldiers of this world enjoy battle, I dare say these may well be displeased with me for spoiling their pleasure!

But, Your Majesty, it is not my desire to...

Gads! Behind the king! It's... Aha! The cause of my greatest pain...

- I shorn, Dwayne, that I would one day remove that ugly head from your clean body and now...

No, Bertram! Do not act rashly! Did you not see what he did?

He has served us without thought of reward for himself and mayhap he shall...

Look! He... he vanishes!

For the first time in my life I'm really scared!

My gods! What in heaven's name has transpired this time? Come to me, troll... come!

Come so that you may at last feel my wrath!

Amulet... if you are truly what you seem... please relieve me of this dilemma!

KUB-C9-JUM!
NO! THE LITTLE ROOL IS RESISTING, USING THE AMULET...

...IF HE PERSISTS, HE WILL...

KBLLOOOGG

SPA ROO! NOW WHAT??
THIS PLACE SEEMS STRANGELY FAMILIAR! THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT ALL OF THIS, SOMETHING WHICH JOGGED CERTAIN MEMORIES—MEMORIES OF LONG AGO!

IT MUST BE, THEN, THAT I AM BACK IN THE TROLL LANDS!

YES! THESE ARE THE SURROUNDINGS I KNEW AS A YOUTH!

WAIT! I'M NOT ALONE HERE!

AND STILL, I LIKE THIS EVEN LESS THAN EVERYTHING ELSE I'VE SEEN THIS DAY.

MY PARENTS TOOK ME FROM THIS PLACE WHEN I WAS ALMOST TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER. THEY TOLD ME HORRIBLE TALES OF THIS LAND! NEVER TO RETURN HERE!

YET NOW...

SOMETHING MOVES IN THOSE BRUSHES... WATCHING ME!
No matter what sort of hideous creature this may be, it shall not best me.

Huh?

Truly, I do not remember any living thing as gratifying as this!

Hey! What are you doing? Put me down! O'ion! That tickles!

Pah pah ha, please, nymphs, stop heeding the bushes... I--

Besone, fairies! This is no time for play!

Uh-oh!
Those who enter this forbidden place... Stare upon our sacred totem... Must die!

I-I cannot!... He squirms from my grasp—into the sacred place!

I-I am a fool, not unlike yourselves! You can't...

I hate to do this, soldiers... I know you're only duty-bound...

But right now, I have some things quite more important to consider than that of your charge...

Wait... I...

Hold him!

Kub-c9-jum!
CEASE THIS FOOLISHNESS! WE, THE TRUE INHERITORS OF THIS WORLD, SHALL NOT FIGHT AMONGST OURSELVES.

YOU VIOLATE THE PLACE MOST HOLY TO OUR KIND--YOUR KIND--YET, YOUR DIVINE APPEARANCE SURELY IS THAT DECREED BY THE GREAT ONE...

...WE MUST EXCHANGE COUNSEL!

LET NO HARM COME TO THE VISITOR...HE SHALL BE ONE WITH OUR LAND...ONE WITH ME!

THIS I DEGREE!
WITHDRAW, STAND AHEAD, AND MAKE WAY FOR OUR ENEMY. GOOD WARRIORS! WE MAY NOT YET KNOW HIS NAME, STILL, HE IS GREETED AS ANY BROTHER WHO AT LAST HAS RETURNED TO HIS HOME LAND!

UH... YOU CAN CALL ME DWARNE!

THEY SEEM ALMOST AFRAID OF THIS OLD ONE! AND RIGHT NOW, SO MUCH THE BETTER FOR ME!

COME, THEN, YOUNG DWARNE... WE HAVE MANY PLACES TO TRAVEL!

AFTER DAYS OF HARD TRAVEL...

SPEECHLESS, EH, MY SON? CAN IT BE YOU HAD ALL BUT FORGOTTEN THE TRUE BEAUTY AND MAJESTY OF OUR HUMBLE CITIES? OR, IS THIS, PERCHANCE, THE FIRST TIME YOU HAVE LOOKED UPON ONE?

IT'S DIFFERENT THAN ANYTHING I HAVE EVER SEEN!

AND TRULY, BRIGHTER AND LESS FOREBODING THAN I MIGHT HAVE IMAGINED!

YET, I DO REMEMBER MY PARENTS' DIRE WARNING ABOUT THIS PLACE!
AND, IF BUT ONE OF THOSE TALES MY PARENTS TOLD IS TRUE--

COME! I KNOW YOU MUST BE EASIER TO MINSELE WITH OTHERS OF YOUR KIND!

AND PLEASE BE AT EASE... IT IS ALL TOO OBVIOUS THAT YOU STILL QUESTION MY SINCERITY!

...AND, AS IS OUR CUSTOM WITH STRANGERS OF OUR KIND, YOU SHALL BE EVEN LONGER HERE, WITHIN MY ROYAL PALACE!

UH-OH! I HAVE A DISTINCT FEELING THIS IS WHERE THIS IDYLLIC SETTING IS GOING TO FALL APART! IT MAY SEEM PLEASANT OUT HERE, BUT IF THIS TROLL KINS BE ANYTHING LIKE THE OTHER KINDS OF THIS WORLD--

YOU MUST TELL ME MORE ABOUT THIS PLACE! IT ALL SEEMS SO STRANGE TO ME!

THIS IS UNLIKE ANY CASTLE I'VE EVER BEFORE SEEN! THERE SEEMS TO BE NO ATTEMPT TO INTIMIDATE THE COMMONER...

YOU SHALL HEAR IT! BUT ALL IN GOOD TIME!

NOW I WISH YOU TO TELL ME HOW YOU CAME TO BE IN OUR SACRED PLACE, AS WELL AS ALL ABOUT THE MIRACULOUS POWERS YOU SEEM TO POSSESS!

STRANGE... THESE TOWNFOX ARE NOTHINGS LIKE THOSE OVERBEARING WARRIORS! THEY ACTUALLY SEEM HAPPY, PLEASANT, EVEN FRIENDLY...

YOU MUST BE TIRED FROM OUR LONG TREK...
Ah, I see there are war-trolls within this castle, after all! But only two of them! Whatever that is they're guarding, it must be important!

But it should not concern you right now, you must be hungry...

No, it is not my stomach which affects my mood; it is the weariness of the rest of my body.

Very well, we will speak again on the morn!

Sleep is what I am most in need of...

These trolls are certainly treating me like a king! If they were a lazier type, I wouldn't mind spending the rest of my life here...

...but no! I think my presence here may be much more fortunate to me than I might first have imagined!

And hours before the sun rises...

Kahmah! The same guards are still there! They must never sleep!

And it should undoubtedly bring a nice back of coin upon the open market!

Better wait 'til it gets a bit later, though... besides, a few winks of sleep in these elegant surroundings would do me well!

But if I don't act now... I may not get the change!
QUICK! THE KING IS ATTACKED! SOMEONE IS TRYING TO KILL--

NO GOOD! THEY DON'T MOVE A MUSCLE!

I HATE TO DO THIS-- BUT...

KUG-CO JUM!

CAN ONLY MAKE OUT A FEW OF THESE WORDS! BUT I SUPPOSE IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER WHETHER I CAN READ IT OR NOT!

WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT I GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE SOMEONE NOTICES THEIR PRECIOUS DOCUMENT IS MISSING!

I FELT YOU WERE A BIT TOO EAGER TO BED DOWN FOR THE NIGHT! YOU ARE LIKE ALL OTHER GUTSHERS-- YOU MAY BE A TROLL, BUT YOU ARE TAINTED BY THE CERBERUS OF HUMANS!

I SHOULD HAVE LET OUR WARRIORS KILL YOU WHEN FIRST YOU APPEARED!

DO NOT EXCITE YOURSELF, OLD ONE! I ADMIT MY UNDERSTANDING OF THIS 'SCRIPATURE' IS NOT VAST... BUT OF WHAT IMPORT CAN A TALE OF OUR ALMOST FORGOTTEN PAST BE TO...
You... you can read it??—
Until this day, I was the only one who could read the sacred...

I can't make most of it out... just enough to understand what of it?

The amount you can read does not, in truth, matter! What is OF TRUE IMPORT is that you have come, that finally you are here!

Please—you must excuse my former heated words, my liege! I did not know...

Now, if you want to stay on your knees, it... just makes it easier for me to escape with the...

The old Troll's gold is not unlike that of a wise...

No, please, my lord... you must hear me!

And it is not long before our hero finds himself within the strange, private chamber of this ancient gnome...

If you could but have read the entire document, you would have realized it was more than history: it's prophecy as well...

And it is within those prophecies that you play a most important role...

W-well?

Yes... your parents, knowing of your destiny, were wise in stealing you away to the foreign lands...

... but unwise in believing that the infant born lit by the star Akar would follow a path other than is written!
Even now, as we speak, the armies of Donying, Philip, and Restia march to wage battle with Marcus, the most dangerous to their world as well as ours.

Each pursuing their own purpose... each to their own death!

This talisman you wear. It was part of a gift we, the rulers of the ancient world, bestowed upon Good King Alexor.

Yet this be but one quarter of the whole. Its power alone is virtually naught when compared to that which the entire relic can accomplish!

We presented this gift of alliance unto the worthy rulers of the outerlands. The father of the four present now, doth, as long as he lived, there was harmony betwixt our two races!
...before Alexor died and sailed to the Nether World...

...he divided the gift we had given into four, giving one piece to each of his sons...

...never imagining that Philippe, his youngest, would be the only one with honour among them!

We trolls could only wait... for the promised savour of our people to appear!

I have waited many years for this moment!

Wait, I--

Even now Marcus seeks his lost prize...

...to destroy its holder!

No!

Peace will return to these lands only when these amulets...

...are possessed -- by none!

Follow the little one, my warriors! I--

EEEEEAAAHHH...
The amulet! It lies untouched!

This thing holds great power...and death!

Aaaaaah!!! He should not have died!

I do not wish the responsibility which has been thrust upon me!

The blame for this abomination lies with those three brothers who seek power by the death of those around them! Why cannot they strive for peace as their good brother Philipes? Those insane bastards...those...

...eh—what is this...why do you kneel to me, trolls?

We would serve you now, my liege...

Even as we served the ancient one!

Then serve me, you will.

I know this...that his death shall not have been in vain!

If all they understand is blood...then we shall address them so...with blade and lance and a fury they have not witnessed in their lifetimes!

To the castle of Warlord Marcus!

To decide the fate of this world!
“Even as the trolls ride to do combat, we find the warlord Marcus on a high rampart with both of his hands quite full!”

“Power I must exert without the amulet of will drains me!”

“I must perceive less difficult means to counter the attacks of...”

“Domine, who follows his holy knights through the castle’s south wall even now...”

“Restivo and his war machines from the east...”

“Wait, I know where I must go... what I must do!”

“And Philip, who in his righteousness, may prove my most dangerous foe today...”
STAND ASIDE, YOU FOOL! I SHALL RELIEVE THESE TIRED WARRIORS OF THEIR DUTIES!

AGGH!

UNGH

ENNII

AASSG

SEE HOW EASILY THESE POOR UNFORTUNATES FALL BEFORE ME, MY KNIGHTS?

UNFF!

MARCUS HIDES BEHIND THE PASSAGE MOST GUARDED. CUT A PATH THROUGH THEM, MY CHAMPION, SO THAT I MAY PUNGE MY BLADE INTO HIS EVIL HEART!

YES, I CAN FEEL MY SORCERER BROTHER’S DEEP DESIRE FOR REPENTANCE!

FOLLOW THE REST, THEY WILL LEAD US TO...

SO, MY LEGIONS...

...GUARD THE ENTRANCES OF THIS CHAMBER TO YOUR LAST!

AND LEAD THEM TO ME!
Philippe! Stand aside that my army gain entry!

Hold thy reins, troll... we have traveled far and each breath I take grows hotter to be the first to challenge Marcus!

Come knave, you fall too easily... how should I rest tonight if I have not even broken sweat in this skirmish?

Then let us join forces for the present...

...but I have learned of things in these past days that make the defeat of Marcus imperative... things that you could not know!

I know that he is my brother and that I must encounter him... or all that I and my father have lived for shall be for naught!

We will guard your rear until you are out of my sight's view, then I must follow...

...and then if you have not done the deed -- my ax will go for his blood!

I consider it fair, troll... God be with you!
THUS...

KEEP HIS FORCES BUSY, BERTRAM! I SHALL PROCEED ON, SO THAT I MAY FACE MY BROTHER MYSELF!

WHATEVER THY WISH, MY KING!

PHILIPPE ARRIVES JUST IN TIME TO WITNESS A MOST CHILLING, A MOST AWE-INSPIRING TABLEAU...

THE TROLL WAS RIGHT! MARCUS'S POWER IS BEYOND IMAGINATION!

I CAN ONLY HOPE HE HAS EXPENDED TOO MUCH OF HIS ENERGY PROTECTING HIMSELF THUS...

OH, GOD, SAVE ME!

...LEAVING HIMSELF DRAINED AND UNABLE TO STOP MY BLADE FROM ENDING HIS EVIL ABSENCE OF MALIGNANCE!
I CAN WAIT NO LONGER... GUARD ME... I'M GONNA IN!

HMMMPH... SEEMS MY SARES ARE THE ONLY MAP I NEED TO FIND YON PRAY...
AND I HOPE AT LEAST ONE OF THOSE SCREAMS COMES FROM THE LUNGS OF THAT JONAHPOS, MARCUS!
NONETHLESS, I WILL BE MAJORLY DISAPPOINTED IF I DO NOT GET MY CHANCE TO PUNISH MY BLADE INTO...

...THAT NO-GOD, EVA...

WHAT IN THE NAME OF DARKNESS... AM I GETTING MYSELF...

...INTO?

SAVE ME, SAVE ME, PLEASE!

ROGG! NONE OF YOU ARE A MATCH FOR ME!

AND THE THREE OF YOU TOGETHER ARE AS EASY TO DEFEAT AS YOU WOULD BE SEPARATELY!

BROTHER... TAKE THIS HELLISH THING AWAY! I PROMISE, I WILL DO THY BIDDING... JUST TAKE IT AWAY!
YOU WILL ALL DO MY BIDDING!

WITH THESE THREE AMULETS I SHALL BE NEARLY INVINCIBLE! AND ONCE I FIND THE FOURTH, I SHALL BE A GOD!

YOU YOURSELF STOLE IT FROM ME YEARS AGO... AH! MY HEART SINGS... AAAAHH... TO SEE IT LOST FROM YOU!

AND EVEN IF I DID KNOW OF ITS LOCATION, I WOULD NOT... AAAAHH!

YOU CERTAINLY ARE THE MOST FOOLISH OF MY BROTHERS, PHILIP! DO YOU NOT REALIZE I PLAN FOR YOU TO DIE WHETHER I FIND THE OTHER AMULET OR NOT?

MARCUS!

I BELIEVE THIS IS WHAT YOU SEEK!

BUT BEFORE THIS MOMENT IS PAST, YOU WILL NEITHER SEEK NOR NEED MORE FROM THIS LIFE!

THE AMULET... AND THE TROLL!

I AM PLEASED... GIVE IT TO ME!

KUB-C9-JUM!
As long as I hold the last amulet, you are powerless against me...

...and I command this ancient thing to send you to the farthest reaches of Hell!

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

You foolish little man!

Did you honestly think that you and that one small piece of metal could truly vanquish me?

Whoomp!

Oooff!

I, who take league with forces darker than your comprehension—release the amulet!

Ah! Its life streams into my very being... gives me strength, rebirths me!

Think, Dwayne... think!

I become Lord of All!
I grow weaker... I... cannot... hold it...

...ahh... the... pain!... Pain... I... wish... that...

The amulets...

...should no longer exist!

No! It's force... You turn it in on itself!

Are you mad? You cannot have uttered it! The amulets that I possess cannot subsist without the fourth!

Fwoom!

You fool! You foolish little fool!

Aaagh!

The amulets!

They're burning up!

Marcus... drop them! They live now only to their own end! Drop them...

...they're consuming you!

Never... I am one with them... I...

Aaaaaahhh...
LORDS ABOVE! HE SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO ME! HE...

HE WOULD NOT HAVE LISTENED TO ANYONE! HIS GREED WAS FAR MORE CONSULTATIVE THAN THE PRIZES HE SOUGHT!

AND IT WAS THIS GREED THAT TRANSFORMED HIM INTO THE TWISTED THING BEFORE US!

THOUGHT I DID WITNESS EVERY POSSIBLE EVENT ON MY TRAVELS IN THIS WORLD... BUT THIS... IT SURELY GIVES ME GOOSEBUMPS!

YOU TWO, NOT UNLIKE MARCUS, DERIVED ALL YOUR STRENGTH FROM YOUR GREED AND FROM YOUR AMULETS! YOU DEPENDED UPON THOSE MYSTIC CHARMS!

AND NOW THAT THEY NO LONGER EXIST, I COULD EASILY PUT YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE UNDER MY COMMAND!

BUT THIS I DO NOT WISH! I DEGREE ONLY THAT YOU RETURN TO YOUR LANDS AND CONSIDER THE LESSON YOU HAVE LEARNED THIS DAY!

AH, NOW I REMEMBER-- WHAT THE OLD TROLL SAID! THAT ONE DAY THE AMULETS WOULD NO LONGER EXIST, AND UPON THAT DAY PEACE WOULD REIGN THROUGHOUT OUR WORLD!
Well, Bert, good fellow... things have turned out quite well, eh? Remember how this whole thing started? We had captured what he thought was resting and...

Yes, Dwayne... I remember! I remember too well!

ULP!

I remember how you forfeited me to Marcus and how you strolled off with my purse... how you left me to...

BUT...

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU HOLD AGAINST OUR GOOD FRIEND, DWAYNE. IT WAS HE AND HE ALONE WHO WON THIS WAR FOR US! HE HAS SAVED OUR LIVES!

HEROIC... HMPH!

Very well, I shall drop the entire matter!

YOU NEED NOT WITHDRAW, GOOD DWAYNE! THERE IS MUCH WE OWE YOU!

WHEN! THAT WAS CLOSE! I'LL BETTER TAKE MY LEAVE BEFORE BERT CATCHES HOLD OF ME AGAIN!

AHH! OOWAH!

WHEN! THAT WAS CLOSE! I'LL BETTER TAKE MY LEAVE BEFORE BERT CATCHES HOLD OF ME AGAIN!

YOU NEED NOT WITHDRAW, GOOD DWAYNE! THERE IS MUCH WE OWE YOU!

AH, YOUR GRATITUDE IS ALL I DESIRE, SIRE! FOR I HAVE FOUND A PLACE IN THESE LANES THAT I CAN TRULY CALL HOME! -- FAREWELL!
AND AS ALL TALES SHOULD CONCLUDE, THERE NOW IS PEACE AND CONTENTMENT BETWEEN ALL THE FOLK IN ALL THE LANDS OF THIS WORLD!

IF ONLY THESE KINDLY TROLLS KNEW WHAT IMPISH MENACE THEY CALL UPON THEMSELVES!

FAREWELL!

FUNNY... EVEN MARCUS’S CASTLE HAS LOST THELOCK OF ITS FORMER EVILL TRAPPINGS!

IF ONLY I COULD BE CERTAIN OF SATISFACTION IN MY NEW POSITION IN THE TROLL LANDS!

I WILL BE AS UNACCUSTOMED TO MY STRANGE NEW HOME AS ANY OUTWORLDER... THE ODDB LANSCAPES... THE REGULAR BUILDINGS... THE...

WAIT A MINUTE. THAT IS IT! THE TROLL LANDS!

I WONDER JUST HOW MUCH THESE OUTWORLDERS WOULD PAY TO SEE THEM?

GUARD TOURS, MAYBE...

YEEH!