inside erin

THE AIF COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Contents

Mission Statement

Inside Erin is written and published by people who enjoy AIF. It is done for fun, but we also have some goals that we seek to achieve through the newsletter:

1. To encourage the production of more quality AIF games by providing advice from game developers, and by offering constructive criticism that is specifically relevant to AIF.

2. To encourage activity and growth in the AIF community. We aim to generate a constant level of activity so that there aren't long periods in which people can lose interest in AIF.

3. To help document and organize the AIF community. This is done through reporting on games and events, as well as by helping to organize community-wide activities such as competitions and the yearly Erin Awards.

A Letter From the Editor
Purple Dragon

Welcome one and all to another installment of the best online monthly newsletter dealing with the subject of Adult Interactive Fiction. Okay, to my knowledge it's the only newsletter dealing with that subject, but still. I've been getting ready to throw myself into the Halloween spirit. I love this holiday. I always have loved it. First it was wearing the costumes, going door to door to see how big a haul of candy I could pull in. Then later I traded in my candy sack for rolls of toilet paper pallet wrap. Costume parties, ghost stories, secret midnight ceremonies in the graveyard – er, maybe I've said too much. Now I get to watch my own kids dress up in the costumes. Of course, times being what they are we don't just turn them loose in the neighborhood like when I was a kid, but it's still fun.

I would have liked to do the Halloween stories again this year like we did last year, but since that whole idea flew like a lead balloon, I decided against it. However, we do have a story for you this month, and strangely enough it was originally written for last year's Halloween contest. GoblinBoy sent it to me a couple of months ago saying that he hadn't realized at the time that the stories were supposed to have a Halloween theme, but wondering if I wanted to print it now. I was only too happy to take him up on it, and so I hope you enjoy *The Dragon Spear*. It sounds kind of spooky even if it isn't a Halloween story huh?

We're taking a little break from Coder's Corner this month, but it will be back next month for all you budding authors out there. I do have couple of game reviews of some older games that I played earlier this month, and ExLibris joins us to give his opinion of graphics in AIF. Have a spooky month and we'll see you in November. ◆

This Month In AIF
by BBBen

Whoa, first up, my apologies to Purple Dragon and the whole community for my part in delaying this month's newsletter. I and the other staffers will try to avoid letting this happen again.

It feels like things have picked up a bit lately, with some of the long anticipated projects finally being released. We've still got a problem of escalation (everyone's trying to write massive uber-games these days, and those take a million years and rarely get completed) which is choking off the rate of releases, but the death of the community hasn't quite come yet. We're also still in the process of shaking off the "feed the beast" mentality where we have to create games just because we're supposed to.

Another interesting point is that A. Ninny got AIF mentioned on a podcast called *The Porn Identity* – a funny and enjoyable show that I'm listening to now that A. Ninny has called our attention to it. The show is about porn – a different topic each week – and is made in good old Australia. They make fun of porn dialogue, discuss weird kinks, and all sorts of stuff like that. Here's the link if you want it: http://pornidentitypodcast.com/

Good games should have the right balance of text to plot (and maybe pictures). And writing takes time. I bore easily, but rather than make little games with just a few pictures and sparse text, I bounce around from project to project with vast periods of time between anything resembling a finished product.

This affects even this article with poor ideas waiting months before finally being written. I wish at this point I could deliver a moral that would make this random babbling have some meaning, apart from saying that I need more sleep, but instead I'll enlighten you with news from this month at TFGamesSite

It has been pointed out that a Beta is really a rough draft of a finished game, and many games are never finished, so the less suggestive demo or teaser has been suggested. So this month's teasers are:

First, Apokol's insanely large plot structure has begun its early transformation under MadBirdCZ's capable hands into a game called *Morrigains Island* (RAGS). In a similar vein both Gunny and TinaB have released code snippets of possible future RAGS games. Gunny's is a simple transformation script, whilst Tina's a standard dungeon crawl style RPG.

Speaking of which, Bandit has made a well documented fantasy based RPG style game, this time using the Inform engine. *The Siege of Hardcastle* is threatening to go from teaser text to full blown demo stage. In the more traditional demo/beta styling are *The Mansion* (RAGS) by RichardX, and some idiot has taken it upon themselves to try and finish one of TinaB little games *The Doll*, oh wait that would be me.

So now this is finished, hope you enjoy my babbling. I'm off to finish a game or maybe even another article for the lovely Purple Dragon. ◆

This Month At TF Games Site
By Nandi Bear

COLLECTIVELY MADE...
This Month at the Collective...
By TeraS

Hi everyone!

A somewhat quiet month of game-making at the Collective this month...

Benmbedlam has released Rough Landing 2. The current version is 2.03 Alpha. You can find it at these links: http://www.mediafire.com/?5ym4t2zwjmn and http://www.megaupload.com/?d=1DTT2RKO And the comment, bug, and hint thread is here: http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=16144

TinaB posted a demo called *The Onyx Ring*. She commented that:

> *"I've been struggling with creating a roleplaying style engine for RAGS...and although it's not yet complete, I wanted to share what I have so far. The spell casting component is not complete yet, so if you try the demo, I suggest you choose a thief or warrior class. This demo is simply my attempt to create a random gameplay experience with stat building and random magic armor/weapon collecting."*

You can find the demo here: http://www.tfgamessite.com/phpbb3/download/file.php?id=147
You can comment here: http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=16189

Orcha has released a new version of *Demon Town*. You can find it here: http://www.4shared.com/file/133494820/593f2d27/_2__DemonTown46.html]DemonTown.4.6.rag The discussion and bug thread can be found here: http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=14673

Firstborn678 popped into the forum and left a note about version 14 of *Spell 4 All*. He noted that:

"The game is not DOA just yet... I still have it - and as I said before I have added to it... but I'm not willing to post what I have now as I have intentionally broken a few paths in an attempt to fix them and I haven't finished that yet. So, version 14 of Spell-4-All is still very much a "work-in-progress" with absolutely no realistic expectation of completion "date" in the near future. That might change next week if I get a bug up my butt about it. Don't know. The fact is I'm not willing to release a version 14 until I have added a few specific plot paths and also included what could be a definitive END for the game... (ie - an actual "I win" moment). Until I have the time to weave the threads of this story in and out of the old one all I can do is say "Thank you" for everyone who has played, enjoyed, commented, and answered questions regarding the game during the time when I was much less attentive to the forums. Thanks again, I've never *truly* left, and we'll see where we go from here."

If you liked the game and would like to see a new version, how about leaving a note to him here: http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=8402

Wightwashed and Nandibear posted the third and final section of *The House that Jack Built*. You can find the game here: http://rapidshare.com/files/284081963/T%20...%20-0.2.3.rag and you can discuss the game here: http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=15092

Lydia02 posted version 007 of *University SIm2*. You can find the game here: http://rapidshare.com/files/254607511/dating_sim_demo_posted_007.rag The discussion and hugs thread can be found here: http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=14221&start=380

Dollmistress posted another version of *Space Ditz*, version 1.1 which has some spelling errors fixed and one additional image in it that wasn't in the previous version. You can download it here: http://www.megaupload.com/?d=C4CQSCH5 and the discussion thread is at: http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=16031

Finally this month, a new game has appeared!

Tranz2deep posted a question on the forum, wondering if people would be interested in RAGS games with furries in them. Anyone with a comment is invited to do so in this thread: http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=16203 In response to that, NeoSilver posted a new demo for a game called *Doors Left Unopened*. The game is:

"Just a (very) short demo of a RAGS game I've been working on. I'll say it up front: It's a furry game, for the time being; I'll get around to replacing the pictures with something more normal before too long; they're just the pics I had on the hard drive at the time."

The game can be found at: http://www.mediafire.com/download.php?hjzzncywjjo and of course the discussion thread can be found on the Collective at: http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=16191

And that's this month at the Collective! ◆

This Month, continued from page 1

Funny thing, I don't seem to have put in a proper notification of the release of *Last Week Before the Wedding* in last month's column. Sorry about that! I'll stick it in this month at the bottom of the article. Actually, the reason I didn't is because I knew that the author was planning an updated version and wanted to wait until that was ready. Yeah, let's go with that. Version 1.2 is now available and a list of changes between the versions is included in the game's zip file.

In the speculation this month: there are some people out there lobbying Goblinboy to go back and put graphics into his earlier games and it seems like they might be getting somewhere with him, so I guess we can expect a re-release or two eventually (so long as you don't forget to finish your GoP series, GB!). Meanwhile, Lucilla Frost has made some encouraging noises about *British Fox and the Nationalist Conspiracy* – it's not around the corner but apparently it's in progress, which is great news for all us fans of superheroine smut.

New Games

Last Week Before the Wedding ver 1.2, by Raul. Released Aug 17th 2009 (ver 1.2 released Oct 4th 2009) for ADRIFT 4.0. "*You are about to get married to Samantha. However due to an emergency which has taken place, the two of you have decided to have your wedding in town instead of in the nearby city. This means you must complete several tasks to insure your wedding will still take place.*" You'll need to go all over town trying to solve the problem and, this being AIF, have lots of sex too. ◆

Graphics in AIF

By ExLibris

Playing a text adventure is an experience that is much closer to reading a novel than it is to playing, say, *Doom*. Consequently, including pictures in a text adventure seems a little strange. After all, how many books on the bestseller list are illustrated? However, we're such visually-oriented creatures that graphics have been a part of text adventures for almost as long as the genre has existed.

The very first text adventure that I ever played, Melbourne House's *The Hobbit* (1982), included pictures of many locations. Although the graphics were still primitive, (to save space they had to be redrawn and form filled each time you saw them) by the time *The Hobbit* was released the graphical text adventure was already celebrating its second birthday. [1]

Although a majority of commercial text adventures in the 1980s had pictures, not everyone was in favour of them. Infocom, one of the most commercially successful text adventure companies and probably the biggest influence on modern IF, actively resisted including graphics in their games, even making it a selling point:

> "We stick our graphics where the sun don't shine. You'll never see Infocom's graphics on any computer screen. Because there's never been a computer built by man that could handle the images we produce. We draw our graphics from the limitless imagery of your imagination – a technology so powerful, it makes any picture that's ever come out of a screen look like graffiti by comparison. And nobody knows how to unleash your imagination like Infocom. Through our prose, your imagination makes you part of our stories…" [2]

Not having graphics has allowed Infocom's games to age better than most of their competitors', but it didn't help the company survive the demise of text adventures as a viable commercial genre. Companies that embraced graphics, such as Sierra, managed to survive another decade or so but the graphical adventure genre seems to be reaching the end of its commercial lifespan as well.

The very first graphical AIF that I can remember was NewKid's *Generic New York Apartment (1999)*, which also included sound. Most games since then have followed *GNA*'s lead in providing character pictures (dressed and undressed). Location pictures are more uncommon, although they were used to good effect in *Tomorrow Never Comes (2005)*. Pictures of sex scenes are also rare, and until *School Dreams 3* (2009) were largely limited to shorter games.

There are a number of types of graphics that can be used in AIF. The most commonly used is straight photos, filched from the internet or elsewhere. This method has the obvious advantage that it requires no real skills to produce the photos, you just need to be willing to search until you find what you want (which can be fun in itself). However, photos have a number of drawbacks. Firstly, if the author intends to have anything more than basic pictures of the characters then the game is limited by what photos are available. For example, if the author wants to have pictures of two different MF scenes that the PC participates in during the game, then two different sets of photos have to be found that have a common participant (the PC) and which fit the story. Obviously this can be a difficult task, and the possibility exists that the author will be forced to let the pictures drive the story rather than the other way round. Using pictures of real people also means that the player might recognise the actors. In a game like *GNA* or *Mount Voluptuous* (2004) that's the point. But in other games it can decrease the player's immersion if they recognise someone from a completely different context. Lastly, there are copyright issues.

The second type of graphics follows on from the first: Photoshopping or otherwise manipulating existing photos. This method reduces some of the drawbacks of using straight photos. The end result is likely to be closer to what the author wanted, and the player is less likely to recognise the actors. However, photo-manipulation requires specialist software, as well as the skills necessary to use that software. The copyright issues would likely remain as well.

The third option is hand-drawn art. In this case the author can get the exact image they want, the only limitation being the skill of the artist. To someone like me, who has little in the way of artistic talent, that's a major limitation. Learning to use a program like Photoshop or DAZ 3D seems comparatively easy compared to learning to draw well, which is probably why this option is used so rarely.

Finally, there are graphics created using programs such as DAZ 3D or Poser. As with drawing, the author can get exactly the picture they want, the only limitation being their skill with the program (and possibly the models and props they have available). However, depicting realistic human beings via computer graphics is quite a tricky task. We know what human beings are supposed to look like, and when they don't it stands out to us. In my experience, 3D art varies pretty widely in this respect. Even within *SD3*,

which is at the upper end of the scale in terms of quality, there are pictures that don't look quite right.

No matter what type of graphics you use, there are a couple of unavoidable disadvantages to adding pictures to a game. The size of the download is increased, making it a more painful proposition for anyone on a slow connection, and not all operating systems have interpreters that can handle graphics. If you're on a Mac, for example, you won't be able to enjoy *SD3* in its full glory at all.

Of course there are advantages to adding graphics as well. The most obvious one is that providing pictures of your characters shows the player exactly what they look like, making them seem more 'real'. A written description can only provide the player with a general impression of what a character looks like, unless it is excessively detailed. In any case the player will probably only read that description once or twice, so when they try to imagine that character it will be in terms of how they have been written rather than in a distinct visual sense. For example, when playing *Last Week Before the Wedding* the main thing I remembered about the characters was their jobs and their personalities. Even after playing the game through several times I can't remember who's a blonde and who's a brunette, or anything other than the most general details about what the characters look like. Conversely, in *SD3* I have a crystal clear image of what Becky, Molly and co look like and that image is what I think of first when I imagine them.

However, not providing pictures doesn't necessarily stop characters from seeming 'alive' to the reader, as prose fiction proves all the time. If I may be allowed to take a detour into the world of Victorian literature for a moment, the most interesting female character in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859) is not the love interest Laura Fairlie but her half-sister Marian Halcombe, who is introduced this way:

> "She left the window--and I said to myself, The lady is dark. She moved forward a few steps--and I said to myself, The lady is young. She approached nearer--and I said to myself (with a sense of surprise which words fail me to express), The lady is ugly!"

Despite this, she was extraordinarily popular with readers. Collins even received letters from men demanding to know the identity of the original for Marian, and asking if she would accept their hand in marriage. This was because Marian was written as being bold, resourceful and intelligent, while Laura was something of a drip. However, would the reaction have been the same if Collins had included a picture of Marian that showed her as ugly as she was described? [3]

That kind of leads to what I see as being a potential problem inherent in using pictures in AIF. If you provide the reader or player with a textual description of a character who is supposed to be attractive, they will probably agree with your conclusion because their imagination will fill in the blanks appropriately. However, if you provide the player with a picture of a character who is supposed to be attractive then they will make up their own minds and they may not necessarily agree with you. Standards of human beauty are hugely variable, from era to era and person to person. I've certainly played graphical AIF where the character the PC was supposed to be attracted to was someone I personally didn't find attractive at all. Because we are such visually-oriented creatures, that initial judgement is not something that can necessarily be overcome by how the character is written, to the potential detriment of the player's enjoyment of the story.

Of course, that strong visual orientation is a big part of the reason why we enjoy pictures in AIF. Pictures produce an immediate reaction, while text has to be mentally digested as it is read. As an example, consider a voyeurism scene. Merely having someone described to you isn't very exciting, unless it's somehow important to the story or they're doing something. But if you add a picture, then the scene becomes more interesting. However, this does not mean that pictures can easily replace writing. A picture may be worth a thousand words in terms of the immediacy and impact it has, but you can tell more of a story with a thousand words than you can with a single picture.

The rule that a picture of a naked woman is more arousing than a mere description also starts to break down a little when the PC moves from being an observer to an active participant. It's easier for the player to put themselves in the protagonist's shoes by reading a description of a scene than it is by looking at a picture where the protagonist potentially looks nothing like the player. In this case using graphics increases the distance between player and character. This can be mitigated by not including the protagonist in any pictures or by obscuring their face whenever possible. However, this can look contrived, and either way it makes the scene less personal for the player.

Unless you're using straight photos, graphics take time to create. Goblinboy has mentioned that each picture in SD3 took anywhere from thirty minute to a couple of hours to complete. On that basis one hundred pictures would represent approximately fifty hours of work. To me, who has never managed to finish writing any sort of IF, that is a colossal amount of time to spend, especially on

something that isn't a core part of the game. It begs the question, how would the game be different if those efforts had been directed elsewhere? Would it have been better in some respects? Those are not questions I can answer, although I'm willing to speculate that SD3 might have been released earlier if there had not been quite so many pictures.

Given the level of effort required to produce good graphics, I actually hope that they won't become a standard part of AIF and expected by players. All it takes to write a story is some basic literacy skills and sufficient inspiration and determination. If you want to write AIF then you also have to learn an authoring system. That's not an insurmountable barrier by any means, but it's enough to stop a lot of people. If you also have to master something like DAZ 3D, then the barrier becomes even higher.

I also agree with the Infocom quote above. Part of what attracts me to IF is the fact that it isn't graphical, that both author and player are limited only by their imaginations, that one player's exact conception of a particular character will be different from anyone else's. The addition of graphics decreases how personal the experience of playing a game is. Of course graphics can potentially strengthen other aspects of the game as well, but it is this double-edged nature that makes me ambivalent about them.

Bearing all of the above in mind, is adding pictures to a game a good idea or not? Opinions will vary, but to me they're a 'nice to have' rather than something that automatically improves any game. Images, especially erotic images, grab our attention. That's why they're used so often by advertisers, even when the product is completely unrelated (Evony, I'm looking at you). But pictures alone cannot carry a game. As a case in point, none of the things I liked or disliked about *Camping Trip* will be affected by whether or not there are pictures. Having pictures of the scenes will add some enjoyment, but it won't change the story in any way, and I'll think of Mike and Melissa the same way whether there are pictures of them or not.

However, in the final analysis the only person who can decide whether it's worth the effort to add pictures to a game is the author. In the case of *Camping Trip*, Goblinboy thinks it will be, so that's enough for me. ◆

(Footnotes)
[1] The first graphical text adventure was Sierra's *Mystery House* (1980), which featured primitive black and white vector graphics. Coincidentally, Sierra's only true text adventure was *Softporn* (1981), probably the very first AIF.
[2] For a scanned image of the ad from which this is a quote see http://www.ifarchive.org/indexes/if-archiveXinfocomXadverts.html
[3] Although *The Woman in White* was not initially published with pictures, it was subsequently. The only picture I've been able to track down (J.A. Gilbert's frontispiece to the 1861 Sampson Low edition) features a Marian Halcombe who looks no more or less attractive than Laura Fairlie.

Loving Family
Review by Purple Dragon

Game Info:	Loving Family
Author:	Bill Carroll
Release Date:	January 2004
Platform:	ADRIFT 3.9
Size:	109KB
Content:	mf, voyeur, incest
Type:	T&AIF
Length:	Medium
Reviewed:	October 2009
Extras:	None

Game Reviews

Basic Story (From the game intro)

You play an 18 year old boy who looks to have a little fun on a boring day during the summer. Along the way you will try to get some from your sister's college girlfriend, and if you play your cards right you might just get a little more than you bargained for.

Overall Thoughts

This is a straightforward sex romp with no real puzzles, and no real plot. Although there is nothing necessarily wrong with that, poor implementation, technical problems, and guess-the-verb errors trampled a lot of the enjoyment out of the game and left a fairly mediocre project in their wake.

Puzzles/Game Play

There really isn't much in the way of puzzles, or at least there shouldn't have been. Game play involves doing one girl, which unlocks the next and so on. Each scene starts with a different command, but that really doesn't work out to be a puzzle so much as a guess-the-verb problem.

Sex

There really isn't much else to this game other than sex, and there is nothing wrong with that in and of itself. The writing isn't bad and a few parts stand out as being pretty darn hot. Unfortunately there were a few problems with the whole thing. Leave aside for the moment that each of the four girls proclaim you to be the best they ever had (After all, if I try to actually put myself in that situation then, referring to me, their comments are certainly valid). The big problem is that it felt like there was really only one girl. There was no real difference between the four of them, to the extent that you could have taken any one of the description with any girl, tacked it onto another one's scene, and you wouldn't even bat an eye.

Another really annoying thing (for me at least) is that each response is a single paragraph no matter how long it is. There is also dialog sprinkled throughout, but in almost every case the author decided to forgo the use of quotation marks, so it gets kind of hard to tell when someone is talking.

It is also very clear that the author had a certain progression in mind for each scene. By which I mean that he knew which command 'should' be typed at each step in each scene. Sometimes he actually blocks you from making the 'wrong' choice. But even when he doesn't, it is still clear that he had the progression in mind and that I wasn't doing it right because you get some really strange responses. Like one response mentioning the PC stripping, and the next saying something about the girl opening his pants, and some even stranger than that.

Technical

There are quite a lot of problems here unfortunately. I already mentioned a few of the guess-the-verb problems that show up, and there are a few more of those. For instance, the words 'touch' and 'rub' are NOT synonyms. This would not have been all that big a problem if the author had chosen one or the other and stuck with it. You can probably guess by the way I put that that he didn't. You 'rub' the girl's body parts, but you have to 'touch' your cock if you want to masturbate. Also, if you want to have the girls touch themselves then you have to tell them to 'rub' their pussy, but 'touch' their tits. The other way around doesn't work.

Speaking of tits and pussies, the girls don't have any of them as far a looking goes. There are a lot of objects missing in the environment. That is bad enough, but it is much easier to overlook a bathroom that doesn't have a toilet, than it is to overlook a girl who doesn't have tits (not to mention our poor cockless PC). Just my opinion, but there you go. Add to all this quite a few typo and spelling errors, and the game could certainly have been cleaner.

Final Thoughts

If the author is reading this review then I have two words for you, beta testers. Nearly all of the problems with the game could have been fixed if it had been tested beforehand. At least I assume that it wasn't tested since many of the problems would have been caught by a tester, and a lot of them would be pretty easy to fix. There are a few things that would have involved a lot more work to change, but just fixing the easy stuff would have stepped this game up a few notches.

Rating: C-

Stowaway
Review by Purple Dragon

Game Info: Stowaway
Author: Johnny Freebase
Release Date: July 23, 2004
Platform: ADRIFT 4.0
Size: 14KB
Content: mf
Type: ANW
Length: Short
Reviewed: October 2009
Extras: None

Basic Story

You are the captain of a small ship running cargo around the solar system. On one run you discover a stowaway among your cargo.

Overall Thoughts

I liked the idea of the game, and in the fairly small introduction the author managed to paint a good amount of background and give the story a good setup. Unfortunately, the extremely small size of the game did not allow room to develop the story as much as I was hoping.

Puzzles/Game Play

There are a couple of small puzzles involving finding the stowaway and winning her over. Nothing too tricky and the text tells you what you need to do if you pay attention as you read.

Sex

The sex scene in the game is fairly well written, but like the game as a whole, it is much too short. The response for when you actually have sex with her was especially short, giving the impression that the author was for some reason rushing through the ending.

Technical

Nearly all the technical problems in this game were ones of neglection, things that were left out, rather than errors with things that were there. The reason for this was explained in the readme file that came with the game (yep, I am one of the few people who actually reads those things). The author admitted that this was written with the unregistered version of ADRIFT 4.0. This means that he has only 25 tasks to work with, and as anyone who has worked with the program (including this author) will tell you, that is not enough for a full game.

The limitations of the program led to many cases where objects that should have been present were either not there or did not act as they should. It is also the reason that the sex scene and the game as a whole feels so rushed. With only 25 tasks to work with, you simply don't have enough to work with to produce a full game. It is interesting (and unfortunate) that the author himself pointed all this out in his readme file, yet still went ahead and released the game as is, rather than either stepping up to the registered version, or back to ADRIFT 3.9.

Final Thoughts

This was a disappointing game to play. Not because it was bad, but because it was heading toward being good and simply didn't have the room to make it there. Another thing that the author mentions in his readme file is several other games sitting on his hard drive in various stages of completion. Five years after his only game release, it is probably too late to hope for his return to those games, but I hope so anyway. I would love to see what he could do with a full game, and room enough to tell his story.

Rating: C

The entrance to the cave was huge. Black rocks, torn asunder by a titanic force which had become all too well known in the many long years since this cave had been gouged out of the cliffside. The air moved in and out of the cave mouth like breath, hot and dry with undertones of acrid sulphur and the sweet decay of death.

Caryth's left hand moved to the hilt of the long knife at his belt while his right hefted the heavy metal spear, seeking some sort of reassurance from the solid, grim weight of his weapons. Even he, King's champion and veteran of the Battle of SilverNight, was struck with the sudden realisation that this was a task that was completely beyond him.

Lyriath, the Wyrm. Waster of Kaziath and slayer of more men than anyone could count.

Closing his eyes for a moment, he took a hesitant step towards the dark, forbidding mouth. With each careful, slow footfall he remembered only too well his boasting and bravado of the night before…

…A dozen of the King's own concubines sucked on his cock, eyes wide with admiration and lips smiling as they pleasured him. Afterwards, the prettiest three were his for the night, an orgy of soft breasts and smooth thighs, pale skin brushing against him, arms and legs clutching and tangling in a desperate dance of lust...

His groin stirred even remembering it. Now, though, the warm softness of full breasts was a stark contrast to the cold, hard stone under his fingers as he reached the entrance, his hands reaching out to steady himself on the cave walls. The hot, wet corridors of willing pussies was as far as could be from the dark, dry, forbidding tunnel he now entered. He remembered spilling his seed into each of those tight, moist corridors. All that would be spilled at the end of this tunnel was blood - and probably his own.

He took more steps, fully in the tunnel now, crouching as he walked, his spear raised, poised, every muscle tense and ready for violence. His thoughts could not keep from wandering back to the aftermath of the previous night's revels...

…He had lain with his three wenches, satisfied and satiated, when he had heard the door to his bedchamber open and then close.

"Who is it?" he called out, blearily raising his head.

The buxom blonde girl on his left moaned and stirred and he reached out and squeezed her full breasts once again, even as his eyes searched amongst the shadows of dim torchlight for the source of the disturbance.

"Caryth, I see you are enjoying the King's hospitality for your last night," a soft voice that seemed like warm steel drawn over black velvet. Definitely female.

"Of course," he laughed. "What of it?"

"If you have finished planting your seed in these fertile young wombs, send them away. We have things to discuss, you and I."

"Send them away?" he had laughed again. "What if I wake up in the night and want another taste of fine peach?"

"You'll get all you might need from me," the voice continued. "Send them away."

Caryth's eyes strained but he could make out nothing more than the faintest suggestion of an outline in the shadows to the left of the door. Hesitating, he came to a decision.

"Come on you three," he said, delivering a slap to each of three lovely bottoms. "Leave me for a while. But don't go far. If I need you again tonight I will call."

Muttering and complaining the three girls had slipped out of his bed, stark naked, and left the room, closing the door behind them with a slam that was slightly more than was required.

"Show yourself, then," Caryth said, his curiosity piqued. If the woman was as attractive as her voice suggested then the loss of three concubines might not be such a sacrifice after all...

A rasping scrape, like metal on stone, drew Caryth back from his thoughts. Cursing, he shook his head and continued forwards. Darkness enveloped him. His fingertips trailed along the wall, the stone growing warmer to the touch with each step forwards. His heart thudded in his chest, his ears straining for any more sounds which might help him locate the beast he had been sent here to hunt.

The tunnel took a sudden turn to the right, and Caryth followed it, his soft leather boots soundless on the rocky floor, his leather kilt whispering quietly around his thighs. A turn to the left, and then there was a sudden suggestion of light before him, which gradually grew brighter as he drew nearer...

...Just as the face of the woman had gradually come into view as she glided forwards. Shadows seemed to melt away from luscious curves like water as she entered the soft radius of torchlight near the bed. Raven black hair fell to pale shoulders, framing a face that was stunning in its beauty. Her eyes were either green or blue, seeming to shift and sparkle with reflected fire, her lips full and set in an enigmatic smile. His eyes were drawn further drawn almost against his will, as if her large, firm breasts exerted some sort of magical power over him. What she was wearing was not so much clothing as elaborate jewellery. Golden bands circled her arms and thighs, twisting in an intricate, breathtaking display of elaborate workmanship. Similar golden bands circled her torso, spiralling around her breasts. They exposed just as much as they hid, serving to emphasize rather than hide.

"Who... who are you?" he managed to say, his mouth suddenly dry as he stared at the incredibly display of female flesh before him.

"I am Sashiana," she replied, her voice smoky and alluring. "And I have come to see the great Caryth, hero of the King, who has been charged with defeating the great dragon Lyriath."

His eyes had moved down, now, to the golden swirls of metal which barely covered her sex. She was obviously hairless down there, and his whole body ached to see her properly. He held out a hand to her and was almost surprised when she took it, joining him on the bed. She moved to straddle him, her soft buttocks resting on his thighs. His cock was still naked from his previous carousing and lay on his stomach, fully erect once again despite being drained and satisfied so recently. Sashiana looked down at him, and her face was an intriguing blend of glowing skin and dark shadows, her body hidden more by the darkness than her scanty clothing.

She leaned down to kiss him and her large breasts brushed his chest, skin and metal both warm. Her lips tasted of wine and honey and he kissed her back with a passion that none of the other girls had been able to draw from him. She let his tongue slip into her mouth for a moment, and then she pulled away, looking down on him once more.

"It would be a shame to lose a man such as you to Lyriath," she almost purred. "You have heard the prophecy, of course?"

"Of course," Caryth nodded. Then he quoted the old rhyme:

> *"Lyriath the ravager,*
> *Slayer and scourge of man,*
> *Her flames will burn eternally,*
> *Unless a hero will come -*
> *A man of strength and stamina*
> *The one who knows no fear*
> *Who follows the beast into her lair*
> *And slays her with his spear."*

"Are you a man who knows no fear?" Sashiana asked, an eyebrow raised. She reached down and curled a hand gently around his cock...

The light grew brighter as Caryth edged slowly down the corridor. The light was coming from around another bend, he realised. It was steady, as if from the sun rather than fire. An opening, perhaps? He stopped and listened. Silence. Was Lyriath here at all? Had she gone out to hunt?

Reaching the corner he breathed deeply. The air was hot and sweat dripped down his face. He spared a moment to wipe it away with the back of his hand, and the he dared a quick peek around the corner.

The first thing that was obvious was that there was no dragon. What there was, was a long stone promontory reaching out into a pool of lava, the molten rock giving both the light and the heat which seemed to beat at his face. And there - there it was! At the far end of the rocky spur there was a low stone plinth, and on it lay something that glittered. Was this the fabled Spear of Alathair? He glanced down at the spear in his hand. Although it had served him well for many years, bathed often in the blood of his enemies, he knew that the Spear of Alathair - lost a century ago to once of Lyriath's attacks - was a far more powerful weapon. It, surely, was the spear that he could use to slay Lyriath!

Taking a deep breath, he rounded the corner and sprinted across the fiery bridge. He felt his clothes singe in the extreme heat, felt his hair crackle and curl, but he did not pause until his left hand closed on the smooth haft of the spear, cool and white as bone beneath his hands.

Immediately, the discomfort from the heat vanished. A smile curled his lips, and he turned back towards the entrance. Then froze.

Lyriath!
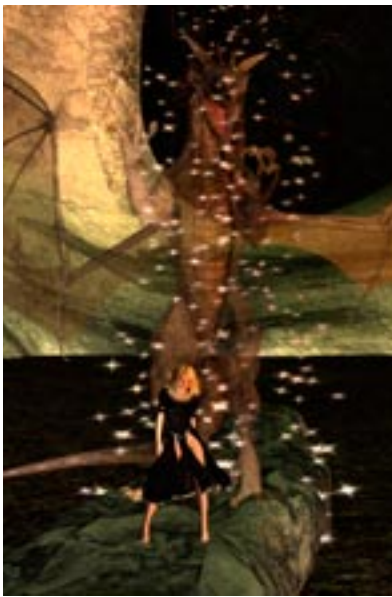
The dragon was rearing up on its hind legs at the far end of the promontory, scales red and gleaming, reflecting the boiling lava. It was larger even than he had thought, a long tail and powerful legs tipped with claws as long as his body. A long, scaly neck led up to a head crested with twin horns and dozens of snake-like appendages which swirled and twitched. And its eyes were red, gleaming with an intelligence far beyond that of any beast.

"So, you have come to slay me, brave hero?"

Caryth started. The voice was warm and sultry, feminine tones rather than a bestial roar. He took a step back, dropping his old spear and switching Alathair's weapon to his right hand, raising it threateningly. Lyriath laughed, a high, sweet sound that make him back away uncertainly again.

Then, suddenly, the form of the dragon shimmered like a heat haze and the much smaller form of a woman strode forwards out it. She wore a robe of black velvet, skirt slit up both sides all the way to her waist. Her hips swayed as she moved, pale thighs flashing into view beneath the split skirt. The top of the dress was low cut, showing off a pair of large, soft breasts. Her long hair was golden with a hint of fiery red, tumbling around her shoulders as she strode towards him.

He felt his mouth go dry, and even though his death probably approached, his mind could not help going back to the previous night. To the woman who had come to his bedchambers uninvited...

..."Are you a man who knows no fear?" she had asked, her hand reaching for his cock.

He had laughed, shifting his hips beneath her as she began to stroke him, slowly and gently. Then she slid her bottom down his thighs and leaned forwards, taking him in her mouth. His eyes closed, a moan escaping from him as her lips and tongue worked a magic he had never known. She looked up at him in the instant that he came, his

seed spilling into her mouth. Her eyes shimmered between blue and green...

Those same blue and green eyes looked at him now, shimmering and dancing between shades as Lyriath drew near to him. He had nowhere to go except into the lava, so he stood his ground bravely until she reached him. Then her eyes narrowed.

"I smell my sister on you," she growled...

...Sashiana had drunk him down and then she had raised her head, licking her lips.

"Take me," she had whispered. "Show me what kind of man you are, who would hunt Lyriath."

He didn't remember removing her jewelled outfit, but she was naked beneath him when he rolled her over onto the bed and mounted her. His hands grabbed at her breasts as his cock thrust forwards, splitting her soft pussy open and plunging deep into her warm embrace.

"Ah, yes!" she gasped, her raven hair spilling across his pale sheets as she writhed in bliss. "That is the spear that no woman can resist!"...

Immediately, Caryth knew what he had to do.

"This is the Spear of Alathair," he said, raising the weapon.

"I know," Lyriath laughed. "I'm the one who slew him and took it from his mangled body."

Caryth swallowed back fear, and then dropped the ancient bone weapon to the stone floor between them.

Lyriath's eyes narrowed. "What are you doing, foolish mortal?"

"I am facing you unarmed," Caryth said. Then he reached down and unbuckled the belt of his leather kilt, letting it fall also. "And unclothed."

Lyriath's eyes widened as she saw his cock. Fear normally renders a man incapable, but Caryth was as hard as the spear he had just dropped.

"But..." Lyriath sounded confused, her aura of unstoppable confidence suddenly melted away.

Caryth took a step forwards. He reached out and knotted his hands in the bodice of Lyriath's dress. Then, with a quick jerk, he ripped her gown open. Perfect pale breasts came spilling out, her nipples large and pink atop her mounds. He continued ripping down until her gown was shredded, and then he tossed it aside, not even looking as it fell into the lava and was incinerated.

Grabbing Lyriath by the hand he pulled her forwards, swung her round, and then laid her back across the stone plinth which had, until recently, borne the fabled Spear. It was another spear, though, that finally vanquished the enemy. Lyriath gave a scream as Caryth's cock parted her lower lips and thrust forwards.

Meeting an unexpected blockage he pulled back and punched forwards again, spearing through her virginity and up into her womb. Lyriath gasped and moaned as he began pushing himself in and out of her. His right hand lifted her leg, opening her up more as he fucked her, while his other hand played with her magnificent breasts. His face moved at her bosom also, his mouth closing on her nipples in turn, sucking them into

his mouth as his lower body kept hammering at her pussy.

"Oh yes..." Lyriath gasped. "I never knew men could have such uses..."

Her head lolled back and her body suddenly tensed. Sensing her nearness, Caryth slipped his right hand down her thigh to where his cock entered her. Finding her small clitoris just above the site of penetration he flicked his finger across it with a gentle but rapid motion. Lyriath responded, her body spasming as she climaxed.

Just like her sister Sashiana, Lyriath's pussy exploded with a gush of juices as she came, splashing out over his cock and thighs as she thrust her hips against him with an animal lust...

..."Ah, my hero!" Sashiana had gasped as he fucked her to orgasm, her juices spraying over him.

Her pussy contracted around him, a pulse passing through her vagina that drove him crazy. Immediately he found himself spraying his seed into her, his lust pouring into this mysterious woman with an urgency that made his toes curl. His hips banged and slammed against hers with a bruising force. He grabbed her buttocks and ground himself deep inside her, almost desperate to get farther inside this amazing woman. At last, they had collapsed together in a tangle of limbs on his bed, sweating and gasping together...

When he had awoke the next morning, she was gone, with no explanation for her presence. Now, though, as her sister squirmed and gasped and orgasmed around his cock, he knew exactly why she had visited him. Lyriath's vagina milked him the same way Sashiana's had, and even though he had been expected it this time he still could not stop himself from joining her in orgasm, emptying his seed into her virginal womb.

Lyriath gasped as she felt him explode into her, clutching him close as his sperm swam inside her, her loins still pressing against his as they both tried to hold on to the fleeting moments of orgasm, before he collapsed on top of her naked body, completely spent.

"At last, sister," the steely velvet tones of Sashiana made Caryth raise his head.

Sashiana was standing by the plinth watching the both with a smile on her beautiful face. She was completely naked, of course.

"I'm sorry, sister," Lyriath gasped, a smile still on her face. "I never understood what you meant. It always seemed so... pointless, when I watched you doing it with men. I thought you just wanted me to join you in doing it so that you could bring me down with you, to trick me into debasing myself."

"No," Sashiana laughed, shaking her head. "I just wanted you to see that, despite their violent tendencies and other shortcomings, men really do have their uses!"

Lyriath began rocking her hips again, stirring Caryth's member slowly back into a wakeful state inside her.

"They do," Lyriath purred. "Now why don't you join us here and show me anything else I might need to know."

"Of course," Sashiana smiled, moving to join Caryth and Lyriath at the plinth. "Have you taken it in the ass yet? Here, let me show you..."

The new prophecy:

"Lyriath the ravisher,
Layer and user of man,
Her lust will burn eternally,
And make each hero come -
Each man of strength and stamina
Can take her, pussy and rear
To find the woman with the shining hair
And pleasure her with his spear."

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