

THE SIGHT OF GUMUG BELEG

FIRST CHAPTER

Neither the languages spoken in all passages and hilliers of Rutasar nor the beetles and the first mournful whispers of Heslimer when the first autumn touched their orchards during the ancient times could define the terror of the massacre. What teased the souls was the surrounding, deep pain, which could not be soothed even by the melodies of the melody performers. It was a time even the most sorrowful days seemed bright beside the darkness of the night. The hearts of the Children of Shaar were suffused with gloom. No one knew what would salve the pain, whether hope would keep them on the road or prophecy would bring welfare and which fire would spark off their hearts once again. The requiem clouds, which Vuhsar trimmed with storms, floated above the homeland suffused with sorrow. No one knew which Fej Piljes, which bright, twinkling dream of a Memory's Offering would efface and ease the burden of the woeful nightmare, no one knew.

What awakened Gumug Beleg from the deep sleep beneath the shade of the Altar of Contemplation around the Crimson Heights was the somnolence of the things he saw in his sight. Embedding the foresight of the massacre of his father, his master and his relatives in the mind of the young Maari, Epemet Murpas manifested the seven Altars of Contemplation were tainted by a cruel Motley leader. His heart was in flames with the somnolence of a deep pain in his tranquil soul, as if a piece of cinder fell. Soon his wrath grew so high that it quenched the pain in his heart. The lightning of Vuhsar flashed in his eyes. He vowed in the name of the almighty altar he was loyal to by drawing a few drops of blood, and sealed it to wreak the vengeance of the massacred relatives and Epemet Murparis, whose souls were tainted through indecent spells of poison.

After two days of an unceasing ride on his ke, when Gumug Beleg arrived at the Thread Horn, he saw all Ketris in his nomad camp were lamenting, whimpering in the presence of the Fountains of Solitude. They tried soothing the torrid sorrow. Hellim Helseris was quite dim that day, even the torch and the rays seemed to desist from twinkling. In the

coves of the Altars of Contemplation within the border of the nomad camp, the elders let their flesh to the sound sleep.

The Chief of Ketri beheld the deep despair rooted in the heart of his tribe. He could not let that feeling conquer and engulf them to the blind abyss. Neglecting his pain, he joined them. He was not pale, but rather spirited. It seemed like the kut, carried by his father whom he saw falling at the Motley Lands in his vision, was flowing and seething in his blood, confidently and agonistically. In every step he took towards his people, he felt the unfamiliar, strange, yet the powerful yeast grew inside.

When the young Maari, happening to meet one by one the glances of the people he joined, climbed the hillock ranged before the tenement of his father Bah Batura, he still felt the somnolence and trace of the deep sleep at the Altar of Contemplation despite the yeast flowing like prophecy. Images appeared in his mind; however, he failed recalling the words. Though he wanted to, the absent memory and the wobbly voice did not allow him. The glances increased in company with the affinity ever growing serious. His lips were eventually unsealed by an inherent force, and his soul spoke through his lips, “The Almighty Vuhsar, deliver the inflamed will of the fire growing in us with your howling! Deliver it to the gush of my nomad camp, to the lonely Heslim sprout on your breast. Let my words flow and purl as a river, I hope for your help on behalf of them!”

He, therefore, felt inside the breath of a high Vuhsa floating above his nomad camp. He was always noble, but seemed sublime as well this time. “My tribe!” he cried. “I sense the sorrow, fear and, the worst of all, despair in your glances. We will not let the phantasm capture us, as long as we are not captured by the greatest enemy in ourselves! His serpent tongue is more fatal than the venomous breath of Qhoras.”

Gumug Beleg faltered, and beheld his people. He could sense the twinkles of hope in their eyes. All awaited the words to be uttered by him. “Do not fear!” the young Maari called out, “Do not grieve! We shall not abstain from our fate, we will not. I beheld the terror at the Motley Lands in the heart of Epemet Murpas. They teased our trees, and massacred our brothers. There, I witnessed the terror. We will now carry their relics in our hearts. We will carry the relics of our Chief, Bah Batura, our relatives and all our companions in our hearts. My tribe! We will not swallow like cowards! If their wish is to tease Nûr, to drench our land in blood, then we will sing our charms before their faces suffused with phantasm, and remind their flesh the zest of our ironleaves.”

Meanwhile, the speech of Gumug Beleg was interrupted by a dominant voice from afar. Valas Zuraq arrogantly stepped forth and shouted, “They killed our Chief, young lord! You speak to us before the home of our Chief, but we have not recognized you as our leader yet!”

Gumug Beleg callously continued, “Our brave men fell with honor at the battlefield. Aye, we may either fall if we fight. If we do not take vengeance, if we bow to what our Lords and ancestors befell, I ask you, can we believe we exist? Will we be merely spectators of the massacre of each of us every day, of the pillaging of our territory, and of the tainting of our sacred ones? If we quail, trot away and hide, we would enrich his fire like the nonliving kindles as the fire coming from the orient increases in our land, which seems sheltered only today!”

Being ignored, Valas Zuraq immodestly pushed his way through the crowd, and stood before Gumug Beleg. “You speak like a brave man, young gentleman. The insolence of your words, however, overshadows their power. Where were you when the blood of our Chief and cognates was shed? Did you taste the whitish fruits at the beautiful Keyipser of our homeland, and chant with Genlim Sasar?”

Lime Benifit was the first to flounce to react to the attitude of Valas Zuraq. The blush on her face expressed the fierceness of her wrath. Lime Benifit threateningly grabbed her ironleafy, directing it to the old Maari, “Know your place, the Black Bayonet, when our lament is fresh!”

Valas Zuraq carried a cynical expression on his face, shouting “Our woe is deep, and our lament is fresh, that’s right young lady. But you do not reckon we would follow a young callow who has not been enthralled by death in the coves of Ilerj Elmiris and has not fought in any great battles, do you?”

Valas Zuraq’s attitude provoked Lime Benifit. The Ketri lady approached her ironleafy to the old Maari’s neck, “You are not even a Ketri! How dare you behave immodestly?”

“This is not the council of Ketris, we are all peers!” said Valas Zuraq.

“Your words spread poison!” said Lime Benifit. Then, speaking in the common language, she said, “Speak no more, or else I will cut off your forked tongue from your horrid

face. The Gumug Beleg is the heritage of the Bah Batura. He is our almighty chief, who went to Epemet Murpas for a season and came back.”

Valas Zuraq answered Lime Benifit in the common language, “The Altars of Contemplation are the cold comfort of poets and mad ones. Beside the torment coves of Ilerj Elmiris, the fresh shadings of Karihas are just pleasant resting places.” With a poor smile, he added, “The tokens of the heroes are hidden in the coves of Ilerj Elmiris!”

Lime Benifit’s wrath raged and her ironleafy were wounding the neck of Valas Zuraq. Meanwhile, Gumug Beleg restrainedly shouted, “the Green Skinned, the daughter of Paka Durez! Though the old man speaks bitter, what he says is not wrong. Gumug Beleg neither fought in heroic battles like Bah Batura, nor immersed in a nocturne-walk in the coves of Ilerj Elmis. My mind has been enlightened, thoughts have been subsided and my soul has found peace in the altars. The knowledge of the hegira’s coves, however, is distant to both my mind and heart. Valas Zuraq is right. If I want to be the trustworthy leader of my people, then I have to be enthralled by death in the coves of Ilerj Elmiris.”

The Ketri lady felt uneasy. Directing her crestfallen glance to the young lord, “Many of them went, my chief.” She added, gulping, “But few of them returned.”

Valas Zuraq pointed an old man beside, as pale as a Sobusa, “But he is the returned.”

“As pale as the earth beneath the dark trees!” said Lime Benifit. Hesitating for a moment, she coyly turned towards the old man she addressed, “Forgive my words, the forefather, if I was presumptuous.”

The old Ketri was quiet. Indeed, he had never spoken during the summers and the winters since the day he was enthralled by death in the cove of Ilerj Elmis.

Silence pervaded awhile. Then Gumug Beleg enthusiastically shouted, “So, the time has come to live our fate!”

As Gumug Beleg’s speech ended, the crowd spread to disclose the field. Funi Fej, one of the eldest of the nomad camp and the uncle of Gumug Beleg was coming. The young Ketri saluted him, “The brother of my mother, the almighty ancestor!”

“The light of my tribe, our young chief!” answered Funi Fej with honor. He was holding the Aya Helse, made of honeyemerald, regarded as the symbol of a chief by Ketri

Maaris and raised by a warrior who survived the massacre. Approaching his nephew, he honored the gorget and put it around the neck of Gumug Beleg. "Like the circling and streaming droplets of Mirelim Lakusar, may you return as you go, our chief!" he shouted, and announced the headship of the young Ketri to all Maaris in the field.

Bowing respectfully before their new leaders, many of the Ketris bade farewell with heart relieving songs of hope, accompanying the warm and sparkling tears shed, like flowing from the twinkle in the bosom of nime flower.

Gumug Beleg grabbed the saddle of his ke and glanced at his people at the nomad camp for the last time. His heart was surrounded by grief. Nay, he did not fear. He was aware of the burden of the possibility of never returning, but his soul was suffused with courage, as if he already embraced death.

When the Ketri lord arrived at the ancient Hegira Tree at the West Thread Horn, where the Barra Stream flowed into the Rising Depths, he first saluted and honored Ilerj Elmis, then kneeled down and glorified the souls of his ancestors embracing his body. Caressing the mane of his ke for the last time, the voice of his soul spoke, "Gumug Beleg consents to your companionship, and may you give consent to his companionship!" Whispering in its ear, he set it free, "Tally ho, go to your homeland!" Then he headed towards the coves of the tree, which would enthrall him with death.

When he touched the body of Ilerj Elmis, the voice coming from the unseen surrounded his existence. It spoke, "Unless you take off your property, you shall not arrive at my property!"

The lord of Maari gulped. Then, addressing to the tree, "My homeland was left behind, and I liberated my animal. At the great battle the brave men of my tribe fell, the treasure of my homeland was seized and pillaged. I can leave behind merely the hodden garment and the bone shoes, which are the memory of the good days."

He took off what he considered his property; however, could not lift the veil of the orchard covering the cove of the tree. The same splendid voice spoke again, "Young lord, you do not regard your weapon as property, do you?"

Gumug Beleg stood doubtful. The name of his ironleafy was Nilimsasa, which meant the bearer of fire. They had never been separated since childhood. It was taken from the

sculptures of Kenail and forged with the essence of fire of Asat Mirepir. It was a magnificent weapon inscribed by the charms made with the evening twinkles of Ufasar. Nonetheless, he grabbed the handle of Nilimsasa and threw it in the bosom of the tree. "I am now undressed, my Lord," he said, "may you absorb me in your depths!"

The voice from the unseen spoke again. "Young lord, what you leave behind is your bravery. But don't you regard your glory as your property? Do you think you would be welcomed in my bosom with your sign of a chief?" said Ilerj Elmis. "Leave what you regard as the self, to reach the true self!"

Though Gumug Beleg was far from the wisdom to comprehend the philosophy of the words of the Hegira Tree, he realized what was required. "The thing on my neck is entrusted by my ancestors. If I leave it now, then how can I presume not to leave my tribe, even when they are the reason I am here?" he asked.

Ilerj Elmis spoke, "Everyone comes here with their own reasons rather than the reason of someone else! To comprehend this, young lord needs a long and deep sleep."

Gumug Beleg seemed to leave all his memories when he took off the gorget. While easing off the strings, he felt unsettled, as if he could reverse his decision. He eventually took it off. As he carefully placed it on one of the visible monuments of his ancestors, which were surrounded by the ivy-like orchard of the tree, a few drops of tear fell from his eyes. "Unless I can return, my precious shall not end up on the neck of someone who does not deserve it," he said.

"It will not be given to someone who does not deserve it."

Gumug Beleg fell flat on the bosom of the tree, "Now I am undressed of all my properties, naked as the day I was born."

"Not only are the old Ilerj Elmis of Barra, but all guardians of Shaar, from Kemj Elmiris to Helj Elmiris, from Vuhsar to the Nûr extracts of Aya Keyipser the witnesses of your words. The time has come for you to be tested with your claim!" shouted the tree. Thereof, the veil on the cove was lifted. "Now my bosom is now open to you. Young lord, you are accepted to my passages, cellars and shelters. Come in and behold your fate!"

SECOND CHAPTER

The veil was lifted upon him at first. Gumug Beleg fell under the darkness he had never seen before; it was void of light in a way he could never imagine. Nonetheless, he was in peace and estranged from the uneasiness like the Maari babies who were sound asleep on the cradles made of foam sculptures. The time he left behind was perchance a longday, a solstice or as long as a hundred of Maari's lives, uneasy to recognize.

The words were erased from his memory at first. His soul became speechless afterwards. He could not remember the whispers of Heslimer and even the melodies of Genlim Sasar, as if he had never heard them. As he eventually unlearned even his own name, the narrow and infinite darkness began choking him, like the first and wildest enemy. The sounds were mute, and all familiar images were already pale. Loneliness was devastating. Neither the memories were not left behind nor the traces did not stand ahead, and there was not a memory to dream about. No one could tell how much time he spent there; he was merely lost in absence. Meanwhile, he found himself in a transcendental conversation. He spoke in a language he never heard before, he uttered the unheard words. It was perchance the language of the first whisperers, the first melody makers. It might be older. He heard a single sound, and sensed a single meaning. But the meaning was as intense as all other meanings. "Hûdā, Hûdā, Hûdā..."

He awakened. Divine light filtered in the darkness, and swept away the whole shadow through a small spring. The veil of a cove was lifted. Beside the bosom of Ilerj Elmis, he saw the hand, made of light, reaching towards him. The hand held the Ketri, and raised him up.

Gumug Beleg endeavored to see the owner of the body in light. However, it was impossible, for the body was covered with sharp light beams. He began following the light. As they moved forward, the sharpness of the beams weakened. In the end, the green light beam remained on the body of the stranger as a cloak in shape of a subtle layer.

As he was walking, the absence in his mind began disappearing, and the memories engraved in his mind slowly came back. They might be a few steps further from the cove, but what he saw and felt in the bosom of Ilerj Elmis slowly dimmed and disappeared, flowing into the sea of his dreams, as if they took shape of the fragile flames of Hellim Helseis during the solstice performed by Ufasar's intensely lighted evening twinkles.

The stranger called the Ketri, "Gumug Beleg!" That moment, the remaining clouds over his memory disappeared. He remembered who he was and the reason brought him to the

cove. He believed he never entered the cove, and all he saw was mirage. He looked around. Neither Aya Helse, the garment he equipped nor his ironleafy Nilimsasa, glowing as a flame, stood where he left. He looked at the stranger with suspicion instead of amazement, and accused him, "Where did you hide my garments?"

The stranger within the green light smiled. This enraged Gumug Beleg, who approached the stranger, grasped his neck, and said, "You wouldn't want to feel the torment of my fists to realize the things you take has an owner!"

The stranger kept his smile; however, his expression was not arrogant. "What I took is not your property," he answered. The Ketri released his hands, and the stranger continued. "What I took is your words, your bliss, and your breath. Besides, you give them with consent." Then he shouted with a splendid voice to awaken Rutasar. Almost everything shivered and quaked. "Look into my eyes!"

When Gumug Beleg looked into the eyes of the stranger, he saw what he had never seen in the eyes of a mortal. It absorbed the spectator like an infinite hole made of light and yet pale. How could this happen? The eyes of the stranger seemed to look at something beyond the earth.

The Ketri trembled and retreated, "My glory and garment might be in the cove of my Lord." When he turned back, he saw the bosom of the tree was covered with the veils. He was flabbergasted. He fell on his knees, feeling in his heart the resentment of failing to achieve the task. He regretfully condemned, "What a great delusion, what a deep sorrow!" Then he twitched his body and looked into the eyes which were hard to identify whether they were completely made of light or they were completely pale. "You diverted my way, therefore my test was taken!" he raved.

The stranger smiled once again. "Perchance you have left a small cove and fallen into a bigger one," he spoke.

The Ketri answered, "Your words are enigmatic, hard to comprehend. Besides, how do you know my name?"

The stranger did not pay attention. He headed for the road. Gumug Beleg stood flabbergasted. He sensed the wisdom and mystery of the stranger he followed, and he ran after.

The Ketri was walking above Rutasar, like a feather floating. The stranger with green beams realized he was followed. He shouted at the Ketri, perchance a hundred and fifty steps behind, "Are you sure you are patient enough to take a journey with me, the young lord?"

Gumug Beleg sighed and shyly answered, "I cannot return to my people without my property and entrust."

The stranger affectionately smiled. "If what you left behind is so precious, then why don't you choose another way to possess different garments and reputation? Wouldn't it be more reasonable?"

"Perchance it would be," said Gumug Beleg. The words of the old man reached his intention, struggling in ambivalence.

"Go your own way then! What you see here is an old man, with poured eyes, who even forgot how the reddish, of which smoke I smell, looks like. Rutasar ceases and I walk above. You can knock down three Motleys servants with bare hands, but I do not know how to defeat a dwarf malign and a fireblower made of the most skillful beaters. When you ride a ke, you can go beyond the lands out and away, but I cannot even reach the speed of the drowsy clouds brought by the slowest travelling Howler. Life stands before you, but I am an old man to whom death approaches. Obviously, this companionship would be uneasy for you, the young lord."

The Ketri lord was confused. His heart, however, felt different with a feeling coming from the depths of his soul. He sensed the person he just threatened and choked with the fear caused by a delusion would be a guide to him. "I cannot return to my tribe," he said. "I regard you as a part of my fate until something cunning, something evil or the destiny appear to separate us. I will abide by my fate and walk with you."

"Then we will not shy away from living our fate, the companion Maari!" said the stranger.

Before being enthralled by Ilerj Elmis, Gumug Beleg addressed his tribe with the same exclamation. "Lime Pesafit! You must be one of the wise men," he said to the stranger. He decided to call him so. Lime Pesafit meant the sparkling green light beams in Ketri language.

"The wise men are the learned ones, aren't they? The old man you see has sacrificed all his knowledge for the sake of ignorance. If you seek a particular mastery in this old man,

aye, the mastery is hidden in my resistance not to sigh and look back, no matter how fate beats. This is my wealth. My fate is unburdened. My breath is soothed. I would not endeavor for a thing that sinks and leaves. Tell me Maari, what does not sink and leave? It is the knowledge of my body which would melt into the body of Ilerj Elmis or Rutasar. My body would touch the body of Shaar and leave. The place of my soul, then, is not here. It would go beyond the skies.”

Gumug Beleg was suffused with a strange feeling. Though the words of Lime Pesafit seemed wise, he felt uneasy. He gazed above and saluted Vuhsar. Then he looked at the poles of the sky and spoke, “Ye the almighty veil circling us from afar, like the compassion of our mothers, our Lord. May the greatest salute be yours!” Then he turned to Lime Pesafit and asked, “You are undoubtedly wise, but you speak as the larky deniers at the gate of Threes. What is the place to go beyond Teriser?”

Lime Pesafit sighed. He raised his shapeless wand made of bone sculpture. Vuhsar was divided, and he poured Orsar on the crust of Rutasar. From the veins of the land, the water, unlike the waters of Mirelim Lakusar, flew and boiled. The zeniths trembled and walked. All clusters of Teriser were folded. Gumug Beleg stood in wonder before what he saw. He looked at his hands and feet. He saw his pale, dry skin. As if he was melting, he dived into the beds of Rutasar like girding on a garment. His life was liberated, and surrendered to Shaar. His soul ascended. It tore apart Vuhsar first, then Teriser. It flew away in an unbounded chamber. Meanwhile, Lime Pesafit descended his wand raised towards the sky. The dream was scattered, and the vision ended. Everything was in their proper places once again. Gumug Beleg touched his body, face and hair in astonishment. He incredulously said, “Was it a vision I saw!”

Meanwhile, Lime Pesafit shouted “Hûdā!”

The Ketri began lamenting with a prayer flowing from the fountains of love. “Now my fate is unburdened! I have fallen in a dreary delusion, reckoned the trees to be my divinity. Gumug Beleg is now the servant of Hûdā!”

The old man smiled. “The Maari has always been so, but he has just realized. This, however, is a tough claim. And each claim requires evidence.”

Gumug Beleg did not say anything. He kept following his companion.

THIRD CHAPTER

It was a time when the twinkles of the day slowly circulated. The first intense green sources of Ufasar awakened. Wandering above the companions, Vuhsar blew cold wind. Enj Elmiris at the Glacier Marsh began awakening, blowing cold breath towards the south. Winter came.

The nearest settlement remained leagues behind for the companions, who passed the Infinite Gratitude Town days before. Their course was approaching the familiar frontier of the east. Meanwhile, they heard a teasing voice coming from the left wing. As soon as they turned back, they realized three pit demons coming from the fracture in the horizon suffused with mist.

“Gotazar!” shouted Gumug Beleg.

The two travelers were suddenly surrounded by the pit demons. The unendurable smell spread around.

Among them, the one who seemed weakest was about to make a move against the old man in green beams. Gumug Beleg, however, avoided the threat with a quick movement. With the hammer forged from a bone sculpture he came across during the journey, he vanquished the demon. The life of the monster, from whose sides the breath of the deep darkness arose, left its body with in peace, being free, exhaling the last breath in the Motley captivity.

Others were more majestic in size. Two of them grasped the old man both from one wing and the other.

One of them spread wings. The wings helped them accelerate rather than fly. He made a move to throw the old man his poisonous sting between the ugly teeth in his mouth, resembling the blunt point hoses. But the hammer of Gumug Beleg vanquished him as well. Then, grabbing his weapon briskly and moving his body swiftly, he vanquished the other before allowing him to defend himself.

The last monster, opening his monstrous eyes, sheltered in the shadow of darkness with a ghoulish yelp.

The Ketri was gasping for breath, and fell on his knees. He hardly endured by stabbing his hammer to Rutasar. He fell exhausted while defending the life of Lime Pesafit.

The old man spoke, “You have sacrificed your own life for the life of an aged man, lord Maari. What a precious endeavor for an insignificant burden.”

The Ketri answered, “Your preciousness overshadows many things regarded as precious. We have vanquished them, but we have to move away. They might return as a crowd.”

“After all, they are the pit demons,” said Lime Pesafit. “They naturally behave like monsters, but they cannot take action by joining the forces even against a common enemy. They do not have strong bonds.”

The Ketri seethingly spoke, “They were the monsters of a different kind! I saw the dark clouds leaving their bodies when the dirty blooded howled to death.”

“The Motleys!” answered Lime Pesafit.

The Ketri stood aghast, “It is a wonder! I witnessed the Motleys merely haunting our kind.”

“Just a few of them could transcend the charming shield of the subtle zone. They do not breathe the same air with us, so they cannot stay long at this side of the zone. They need another body. When they cannot achieve this, their journey is vague and short as a dream. They are obliged to disguise as other bodies. When they do this, they absorb the life of the creatures they disguise as. They do this until the life is taken from their bodies. So, while the hollow and pale crust of the body hosts the usurper, the life is massacred and the body is raped. The Motleys, especially the foolish ones, are possessed by the drunkenness of the pleasure and desire, which is produced by the savagery, which we can never understand. The possession is far too much that they do not even dream of the necessity of returning to the actual homeland. Unless the Motleys, disguised as the bodies return, young Ketri, then they are caught by the darkness within the darkness. The body they have restrained begins holding them captive. Like the misty clouds of a weak Vuhsa, their memories are erased from their minds in a flash. They forget who they are. Besides, they feel dreadful pain because of the captivity in the body. Their sorrow can be expressed neither in Maari language nor in a common language. After days, the longdays, the seasons and years, they unlearn everything.

Their souls are taken, like their minds, and the monstrous inspire flows in. Inspire is indeed the vilest delusion of the Motleys which are beyond the zone, which are once their relatives, siblings or perchance their lords. They are manipulated. They become the servants of the Motleys at this side of the zone, as the soulless orbiters. Their captivity is sealed. A dreary exhaustion, a lost life!" said Lime Pesafit. He added, "Perchance we shall join a caravan to keep on."

Gumug Beleg was confused, "I wonder whether you take offence at my guardianship."

"Exuberant ambition of glorious warriors wanders in your blood. You are surrounded by their unabated greed. You are, like your ancestors, a warrior, but you shall behave wiser if you want to be the leader of your tribe. The gaps of the zone have deepened, apparently, otherwise the Motleys would not deign to the quirky creatures. I still sense the strong smell of the wrath rising in the infinite darkness, beyond the zone. Kemj Elmiris cannot come to help the south. I hear the misty, mournful melodies of them. The beetles no more sing as they did before in Shaar. We shall keep on from other ways, young Ketri. We do not know yet how our journey would be threatened, and you shall sleep some time."

Gumug Beleg hushed, "As my heart senses, the trick of your wand will fade the life of the ones coming from the darkness."

"It is just a hodden," said Lime Pesafit, throwing it towards the ventricles of Rutasar, "So that its trick, confined to its owner, has flown off."

A tiny, blue twinkle of the daylight perched on the shoulder of the old man. The old man opened his mouth, and laughed for the first time in their journey. "I am now defenseless, like the old Maaris from the Howlbottom. Hope our fate twinkles for us, young Ketri."

FOURTH CHAPTER

They walked for days, in tranquility, as a feather floating down Teriser. They did not come across neither any settlers, nomads, bandits nor bewildered travelers who lost their way. The land they walked above was desolate and desert. Besides, the Twinkles of Ufasar were dim. The nights were almost pitch-dark. Winter was about to come. Neither a Fruited nor Aya Keyipse; they merely came across the small sculptures of the yellowdome which help them proceed through the gems on their roots and make simple wands or weapons. The food was finished, and their lips were wounded due to the drought.

Gumug Beleg reproached, “This path will be our death! Don’t you see how your interest in caravans gets us into trouble?”

Lime Pesafit preserved his peace, “I’ve already said, in the beginning, the young lord would not endure this journey. The road gives us what we need.”

Gumug Beleg raged, “Will the wand you have weaved from the yellowdome protect our weak bodies?”

“If we are breathing, our hope is alive then,” said the old man. “Ketri has learned few from the songs of his homeland. He has not learned from the dreary fate of his tribe.”

Gumug Beleg felt the whirlpool of the waters of the wrath seas in him. “The past of my tribe is filled with glory and triumphs. The canny lies of the bards, obviously, are lifted as a veil before reality.”

His companion preserved his tranquility. “My knowledge of a thing cannot take shape through the loud outer sounds. I rather hear them through the whispers growling in them. I hear them through the inspire coming from the offerings of the body of Binimet Elmiris. I see them through Fej yu Abit Piljeris. This is the only way the definite but fragile order of judgment takes shape in my mind.”

Not only the Ketris, but all Maaris sought malicious intention in the words uttered thoughtlessly and wrathfully to criticize their tribes. The Ketris, the Charmers, the Free Easterners or the ones from the Howlbottom were all so. Though they belonged together within themselves, they remained isolated from the external world. They neither completely trust the Heirs nor the Protectors. The roots of the fraction in the sense of trust dated back to the Long March. Besides, the appearance of Lime Pesafit did not resemble both communities. Thereof, the Ketri ended up stepping forth with the tribal motivation instead of reasoning on what he heard. He loudly shouted, “The friend of a Maari is just another Maari.”

Lime Pesafit kindly smiled, and kept on. After the quarrel, they spoke less. They proceeded, but soon heard the rattle from beyond the small hill they saw. Gumug Beleg was all ears. Sensing the noise was coming from a creature he could defeat, he headed towards the noise.

As the Ketri rushed towards the small hill, Lime Pesafit said, “Unless I am mistaken by my old ears, the noise is coming from a baby javelen. I haven’t come across these ironhooflets for many seasons.”

When Gumug Beleg arrived at the back of the hill, he saw a little ironhooflet gathering breath. He enthusiastically shouted, “You are right, Lime Pesafit. An ironhooflet, but it seems like a grown javelen!”

Lime Pesafit rejoiced, “The road has seen what we need! We will find from which Keyipse it is, if we trace.”

Gumug Beleg was confused, “Tracing? I don’t know how many days have passed since we ate the last yellowish in the saddlebag. Rutasar has heard us now, and granted the fleshy ironhooflet as a gift. We will not endeavor to trace it. We will hunt it!”

The companion regretted the Ketri, for he was defeated by his primitive motives and strayed away from the voice of his soul. Hunger made him forget who he was. Pulling out the hammer from the sheath, he grounded the poor animal with a move. The ironhooflet bitterly howled when life exiled its body, and in the heart of Lime Pesafit appeared deep sorrow.

Forgetting he was a Ketri, Gumug Beleg assuaged his hunger by savaging the creature, from which the blood was spilling, with the bloody bare hands, like the rite of the Northern Cannibals, and shouted, “This is a gift from our gods!”

The old companion regretfully cried, “It could have been the other way!”

“Come over! You are going to starve to death!” said Gumug Beleg. Despite the insistence, he did not approach the flesh of the dead ironhooflet which seemed satisfying. Over the hill they stood, the East Sea, the Rising Depths appeared. Lime Pesafit, waiting for Gumug Beleg to assuage his hunger, tranquilly observed the vast blue of the Rising Depths.

As the full stomach of the Ketri began growling, he mused into the thoughts of disbelief. He ended up trembling, and talked to himself, “Nay! I am not a Flesheater. I did a thing my ancestors approved of during hard times.” He preached himself, “Today is the hard day!” He could not, however, relieve the regret preying on his mind. He ragingly turned to his companion, shouting “You have thrown yourself into the jaws of death, is this wisdom!?”

The rage, evoking wrath, grew in the Ketri. He doubted whether what he did was right or wrong. His heart was restless. The customs of his tribe did not embody spilling the blood of a creature without a just cause and feeding on its flesh. His voice quavering, he asked his companion, "What will you do?"

The old man confidently said, "The road will give us what we need." He gently moved on, tracing the clues the ironhooflet left behind. Thus, the way of Lime Pesafit was separated from the way of Gumug Beleg.

FIFTH CHAPTER

Not even a day passed since Lime Pesafit left. The last glance of the ironhooflet persistently appeared in the mind of Gumug Beleg, along with the thoughts of his companion and his wise words. He never felt such a deep regret. The bloody flesh of the ironhooflet, though, weighed almost two plates and did not assuage his hunger as he expected. A Ketri biscuit, as big as the palm of a child, made of the fruits of the fireshells or the summerbrooms would assuage him more. However, he could not forget the strange pleasure he felt as he savaged the flesh with his teeth.

The endless sand path of Rutasar, spread before him, resembled the vast ocean. The Howlers, floating above him throughout the journey as companions, disappeared. Merely Teriser was above. Disappointedly and hopelessly, he walked through the witness of the endless sky below an unfamiliar, pale layer of color.

It was tragically hot. However, it was not the winds carrying the breath of Firepourers that enclosed him with heat. Not merely the sap, but strong-smelling caustic juice, like the fierysalt, spouted there. He doubted whether what he saw was mirage or real until reaching there. But within the distance of a hundred Ketri steps, he saw a pale Enij Elmis.

When he approached Enij Elmis, he was enthralled by its coldness. The tree had nothing but a little ice fruit it was forced to leave like an offering from an eave. Gumug Beleg hardly warmed the ice fruit. The little fruit, however, could assuage neither his hunger nor thirst.

The confusion in his mind raged at any moment, and spread throughout the ridges of his mind. He could not help thinking of Lime Pesafit and the ironhooflet. His regret was beyond endurance. He was sure, then, he did the wrong thing. The weary eyes of Gumug

Beleg caught the glimpse of a rare Dream Offering at the farthest place he could see. He saw an adorable ironhooflet around which the whitemottle babies played. He felt hunger. The lustful pleasure he felt while chewing the flesh of ironhooflet whetted his appetite. Neither whitemottles nor ironhooflets see Maaris as enemy, so they did not run away from Gumug Beleg. Moreover, a baby whitemottle approached him as if pursuing compassion. But the Ketri offensively caught the baby at once. He swiftly pulled out the hammer from the sheath. He was about to make a foolish move against the flank of the baby, but first his hands, then his body began trembling. The regret he felt before oppressed him once again. Releasing the whitemottle from his hands, he let his body to the shade of Fej Piljes.

Feeling exhausted, Gumug Beleg straightened up and began honoring his Dream Offering. He did this in such an unconscious and transcendental way that the twinkles of the day fell, and Ufasar awakened. Ufasar slept, Hellim Helseris shone and a day passed without noticing. He reached his hand towards the offspring fountains of Fej Piljis, and prayed, “O Lord! May you offer a dream of yours for me to learn from!”

The valves beneath the fountains of the Dream Offering opened, like the murderous mouth of a monster, and absorbed the arm of the Ketri into its archaic body. Gumug Beleg was seized with fear. He used his other hand with all his power to hold himself outside the tree, not to be trapped in. Something like a fiery sparkle appeared. The pleasant flame circles, surrounding the Ketri, gradually went away, spread, and began twirling around. Not only the majestic physical effect, but also a spiritual influence surrounded him. Fej Piljis reflected the gift to the Ketri. An image appeared before Gumug Beleg. There he saw the ironhooflet. The moment he killed it; he watched this moment thousands of times from various angles. Each view caused terror surround him to the skin, and the sorrow deepened. He prayed in tears. He begged through the eerie and sorrowful Maari melodies. He begged the sacred tree to withdraw to his self. The circles grew bigger, surrounding him and turning. His eyes were besieged so much to prevent him from seeing the actual things around. The circles eventually gathered, embodied in the shape of the ironhooflet and began choking him. The Ketri weakened, he was out of breath. He nevertheless kept praying with the language of his soul, while burning in the flames of regret. With the influence of another power growing in him, he shouted at the Dream Offering, “You shall not be my lord! Lime Pesafit was right. You and the other trees, all of you can merely be the tools being reflected by his infinite greatness. Only the Hûdā shall garment us with our fate. He stood before everything, and appears behind everything. Not you, but I beg him. Forgive my soul the almighty lord, Hûdā! Relieve the

sorrow of malice on me. I have surely become a villain!” Thus, the fiery shape of the ironhooflet disappeared. The Ketri weakened, and fainted. He threw up the flesh of the ironhooflet, which he could not digest.

SIXTH CHAPTER

When Gumug Beleg awakened, his hands were tied in a way he could not untie. He was surrounded by an unfamiliar colony resembling the Maaris disguising with the ragged garments they weaved from the animal hair. The slovenly men, resembling a colony, spoke a rude language which neither resembled the language of the Ketris, the Protectors nor the Heirs. Their shapes hindered the expression of their faces, their bodies were creepy, and together with their rude language, they seemed frightening.

The slovenly men carried the Ketri to their nomad camp, dragging him on the firm ground of Rutasar. The landscape he espied astonished Gumug Beleg. The nomad camp, of which center there was a colossal castle, was surrounded by various Keyipsers he had never seen. The eaves of each were full of various fruits beyond comparison. The population of the nomad camp of the slovenly men seemed to consist of, perchance, three or five hundred. Some lived in tents and some in Siner. The dwellings of this nomad camp, however, were not pale like the ones in his homeland. Each of them shone as much as a tiny Gerlim.

After throwing away the Ketri, the slovenly men formed a circle, which resembled the council of consultancy, and the discussion began. The tension heightened sometimes, and then the voices quieted. Meanwhile, the youth and the children of the tribe surrounded Gumug Beleg, observed him with pleasure by swishing along with the movements he could not make sense of; and they tried to analyze by poking him with their wands with a whip on one side and their weapons resembling hammers.

Gumug Beleg was both weary and nervous. However, he still felt the warmth he found in the bosom of Fej Piljis.

The circle scattered. A crowd, with the expression of wrath all over their faces, carried the Ketri to a subterranean cove without light. The women, with words resembling the words of a charm, whispered towards the rope around him; they whooped, as a sudden earthquake rising and roaring, and sprinkled dust, resembling the smelly spices over him. Gumug Beleg could merely understand a single word among what he heard: “Gagga.” This word had a common place in all languages, and Gumug Beleg heard this word from his mother at first, in

the creepy child stories. Gagga; Cannibals; they were the murky community, of which the members massacred the people of their tribes and ate their flesh. The Ketri thought the slovenly people were Gaggas and what they did was a sort of ritual.

All stories about Gaggas, also known as the North Cannibals, were told by whispering, with the tone of the same cursed sorrow. At the beginning of the Fourth Age, when the Long Frost came and all natives of the Fruited were frozen with the breath of Enij Elmiris, a crew from the first exiles survived by massacring their companions from the tribe and feeding on their flesh. They enjoyed it so much to turn the tragic thing into a sort of custom even when the warm days came. Their souls grew so dark that some of them did not see harm in being patronized by the dark Motleys who pierced through the zone. Along with the Motley lords and their servants, they devastated the areas they visited, and brought terror with them.

“Nay!” shouted the Ketri upon the word he heard. “I regret. What I murdered was not of my kind, it was an ironhooflet. I consent to pay for it!”

However, the tribe did not understand his language. His words, therefore, could not even evoke something. They beat him with bare hands; the beating was so brutal, like being ripped by nails at the battlefield.

Gumug Beleg had many of his bones broken. He suffered the insufferable pain at the place deprived of the light of Shaar. His body suffered so much pain enough to close his mind to reality. Thereof, perchance, the dream of the ironhooflet appeared to him once again. This time he saw its soul veiled with a pleasant skin. It spoke to the Ketri in his language, “I am in peace now! I forgive you. The price is your name and glory. Now you are paying it.” Then the pleasant skin disappeared, as if being scattered into the beams of Helj Elmiris.

However, it was not only the Ketri who saw the light beams. Some insiders of the tribe witnessed the gleam as well. One of them thought it was a sign sent by Shaar to forgive the Ketri. Though some of them sided with him, one of them stepped forth. The slovenly man seemed different from the others, for he was suffused with ironhoofs. It might be the sign of reputation. He dominantly shouted, quieting everyone, “Our Gods shall not forgive an evil Cannibal!” Silence possessed everyone. Then he almost roared, impolitely, “The price of betrayal is malice!” Then he moved his arms in a way that could not be expressed with any Maari customs. The discussion, therefore, ended without even beginning. Everyone honored

and retreated. Some of them ragingly approached Gumug Beleg, and began carrying him, holding his arms and legs.

The slovenly men brought the Ketri to a dark well on the other side of the cavity, and threw him in the well. Along with exaggerated laughs, they watched him for a while, and then left there by yelling with pleasure.

Gumug Beleg believed the slovenly men were the tribe of bandits, forestallers, benighted ones, and fools. Most of them were far from identifying someone as good unless they resembled themselves or unless they could understand. Their laughs, however, could not be considered impolite because they did not resemble the laughs of his tribe. The tribe was indeed a community, centered themselves in the Glacier Marsh on the broad land starting from a few leagues above the Great Slave Bazaar, living in a world of their own, and their souls did not possess the awakened darkness. The magnificent flame in their hearts found voice each morning in a statement, which was expressed in the common language as, "We are the army in the darkness, fighting for light!"

Unless the advice in the whispers of Heslimer was realized, it was not the insufficiency of the Whisperer.

Most bones of the Ketri were injured, and some of them were broken. Though his freedom was not restrained through the ropes, he felt deep pain, depriving him of mobility. The pain was so deep; it could be seen from his pale face and the faded light in his eyes. His bitterly moaning echoed in the well, and turned back to him, yet no one heard it.

Not to starve to death, he spent the following days by feeding on the dust sprinkled by the tribe's women with the spell-like songs which sounded creepy to him. He did not drink a drop water to quench his thirst. In the deserts spitting fiery salt, he was as thirsty as Rutasar.

Gumug Beleg felt desperate. A fault, seeming little, in the fate might denote a big twist. The massacre of the ironhooflet was a fault which, seeming little, begot the deep twists behind. But, in his heart, he felt he was forgiven. Was not it so; did not the fault, which beclouded the soul, disappear only when the tyrant was tyrannized? If his fate offered him a death in the dark well, then he would welcome it. He grumbled, "This is how the last son of Bah Batura has fallen." His name and his glory were left behind.

Meanwhile, he heard the rattle at the upper side of the well. He moved his head towards the noise, ghastly suffering. His vision was scattered due to hunger and thirst. What he could see was a vague shape. He asked, "Have you come to kill me?"

The stranger on the upper side of the well whispered in the common language. "Be quiet, they can hear! Do you know who locked you in the abyssal darkness?"

The answer helped Gumug Beleg understand the stranger was not a slovenly man, and said, "It was a vulgar tribe, what they said was not clear, and both women and men were slovenly."

"They call themselves the Mutes. There are no other factions living on the sides of the zone but them. They are great warriors. Since the earliest known date, their camps have never been pillaged, and their castle has never fallen. But they serve Enij Elmiris instead of Ilerj Elmiris, Epemet Murparis; they regard them the great Gods. They are, however, honorable people. I have never heard they punish someone for no reason."

"I am not among the innocents!" said the Ketri. "I have accepted my fault. The price has been paid with deep sorrow and tears."

"You did not think an Heir would believe the artsy words of a pillager, right?" asked the stranger. "Can you vow in the name of Ratjar who has fed you in the bosom, and protected you from the coldness of death?"

Gumug Beleg opened his mouth to vow, but hesitated. "My Lord is not a Sculpture, of which the light would fade away, but my Lord is the Hûdā. Only he shall feed me, and predestine my fate."

"Our ancestors have not informed us about the star of the Shaar. Who is he, what does he look like?" asked the stranger curiously.

The Ketri answered, "He is not a tree! He is the Lord of all trees as well. He is the one who has created the first Nûr. He will remain after all things."

The Heir was confused, and asked, "What you have said resembles the tall tales of the zone men. However, tell me, what does the Hûdā look like?"

“He is the one who does not resemble anything, while resembling everything. He cannot be found anywhere, but everywhere is suffused with him.” said Gumug Beleg, speaking with the words flowing out of his soul.

The Heir thought in silence. Then, chuckling, “I do not accept a vow for a nonexistent deity. But I do not find it in my heart to leave you there as well. If you accept the condition I offer, I will save you with a rope.”

The Ketri forced himself to smile. He implied, “Aya rimi does not attempt anything which does not yield benefit, right? You speak arrogantly about Hūdā because you do not know him. I merely wish you could know.” He paused for a while, “Now express the thing you hide behind the veils of your mind. Because the thing encountered us is, I am sure, no one but Hūdā.”

The stranger carefully espied the Ketri. Then threateningly spoke, “Your hands are tied, but it is not enough to be sure of you. You will envelop your feet and body with the rope I will hang, with the help of the tips of your hands. If you attempt cheating, I will pierce through your flank with the poisonous needle on my hooked spear.”

“Not an unacceptable condition for a desperate Ketri!”

“Not over yet!” said the owner of the voice. “We will go to the Great Bazaar with you.”

Gumug Beleg raged, “Do you hope I would guard you in that cursed place? Let alone guarding, I will not approach the cursed area without a charm on my weapon, without the battle yell on my lips!”

The Heir guffawed, and spoke, “I will not present you as a guardian, but a slave who is sold by a respected merchant at the bazaar.”

The Ketri gestured as spitting towards the stranger. But his lips were not moist enough to do it. “Arrogant!” he shouted. “I have not seen a rascal like you even among the insiders of the Dark Skinned. A Maari prefers to die in freedom instead of living as a slave!”

The Heir referred to a historical battle between his tribe and the Maaris, “You gave up the claim of freedom at the Long March!” He could keep discussing with an arrogant attitude, but it was not a reasonable choice when the place he stood was considered. Besides, he could

sense he would fail the endeavor of dissuading the Maari from his claim. With the help of cunningness, he veiled his true intention. Knotting the words through an intelligent lie, he persuaded the Ketri he would save and carry on with him.

SEVENTH CHAPTER

His hands and legs tied in a way he could not untie; Gumug Beleg was carrying on in the baggage of a whitemottle carriage, with the Heir who saved him from the well, on the road brought by his fate. Though he endeavored to untie the ropes, the vain effort merely increased the harm on his body with lots of broken bones and wounds.

It was the coldest days of winter. The road spoilers, iron hoofs or dwarf maligns; almost all of them retired into the safe homes spread beneath the deep cavities or into the coves to protect the power they possessed. The Heir and the Ketri passed beyond the waste lands and the crowded cities, and they moved off, leaving behind numerous landscapes on their course, from the forgotten temples of the ancient deities to the devastated structures built on Rutasar throughout the history.

Day after day, they did not hear anything but the squeaks of the wheels sculpted from stone as they turned above the crust of the land. Besides, they did not talk to each other. Even their inner voices were silent. Gumug Beleg was waiting what his fate would offer him. He sometimes grumbled, "The road gives us what we need!"

During the exhaustive journey which almost took a long day, the Ketri contemplated on life and existence. He quietly threw the burdens and intentions which he carried in his heart, from the past, though they did not belong to him. The captivity he lived, any torment or pain, none of them seemed remediless to him then. The words of Lime Pesafit unceasingly echoed in his mind, and he, then, believed everything, which seemed misfortune not long ago, was indeed a design attributed to him, a test and a lesson spread before him to understand. This feeling, as a compassionate hand, embraced and protected him within the circumstance comprising of sufferings. The days constantly passed whether in enjoyment or suffering, the seasons changed, the light of life was always there, shining and fading, and the beautiful Shaar, the great Shaar, surrounding everything as the floating of a harmonious melody, and enabling the bits to find a place within themselves; when he thought and felt these, they bestowed him deep tranquility. Contrary to the darkness surrounding him from the outside, the inside of the Ketri was shining. The well he fell, everything he left behind, as it were,

brought him to a rather special journey. Despite the misfortune he experienced, nay, along with the misfortunes he experienced, he felt the road; as if watching a perfect dance, he saw and embraced the even harmony of reality, linking and clinching everything.

His name, his glory, and the numerous masteries adorned in them seemed distant from the previous meanings. He carried each of them, like the porter whitemottles, and for many years, he inwardly boasted about carrying the burden.

In the Ketri and in all Maari languages, Maari was an archaic word which meant free, the free ones. This time he embraced the meaning to the bone, like the streaming cool waters of Şaralimer. His hands and feet were trapped in the knots, but his mind and heart were free, they tore apart their prisons. The captivity, as it were, bestowed him the key to the actual freedom. He thought of Lime Pesafit once again, sighing, blessing. Honestly, he was the hand to pull him through the whelming waves of the sea of sins. He lighted the fire of his heart at first, then he unexpectedly put it out and left. He wished to see him again. He fell into the blessed daydream of these thoughts.

Freedom, at the least, was thought to mean escaping. Everyone believed freedom was breaking through the thing which surrounded and oppressed. The captive, however, was a captive no matter where they were. No matter where they escaped, a hand reached out to them, to restrain them. Different places, different faces, but constantly the same infinite cycle... The dungeon was themselves, yet they did not know.

EIGHTH CHAPTER

When Gumug Beleg awakened, he found himself carrying on the poor stony pathway of a nomad camp comprising of, perchance, a hundred tents and some homes, placed around a Binimet Elmis.

The area the carriage entered was the Fallen Twinkle Village, used as the wintery by the tribe of Heirs, located at the outer wall of the Infinite Gratitude Town. The area, which could be considered poorer than an average heir settlement, was the settlement of about a thousand Heirs. As if they were ready for an external threat, the children, and even the women of the settlement girded on weapons. The inner side of the camp resembled a small military post, like the camps of his homeland. Gumug Beleg was surprised, because aya rimi was a zestful community, not good at combating, as against the Ketris.

As they entered the village, the eyes of the Ketri unintentionally sought Ilerj Elmiris and Epemet Muparis with the habitual motive. For, according to the customs of Ketris, first Ilerj Elmis, if absent, Epemet Murpas was honored when the places are changed. No Ketris regard a place the homeland unless there were the sacred trees. But in that village, there was neither a Hegira Tree nor an Altar of Contemplation. Indeed, few of the tribe's children saw a Hegira Tree or an Altar of Contemplation during their lives. Nonetheless, the terror of the massacre in the Motley Lands inflicted fatal wounds in their hearts. Above the castles as high as the zeniths, therefore, the flags of the homeland were adorned with a sign symbolizing the memory of the seven Altars of Contemplation which were teased, as in the homelands of Maaris.

In contrast to the mighty dynasties such as the insiders of the Fallen Twinkles, the Western Guardians, the Eastern Heirs or the Western Heirs; it was a small homeland. However, instead of ignoring the violence with priggish tactlessness and madly arrogance, they gave place to the pain, and they were among the ones who waited for the day of vengeance by vowing every day. Besides, many brave men of this homeland took sides and heroically fought hand to hand with the Ketris and Protectors, defying the great darkness which pierced through the zone, by ignoring the division, which divided the history of two tribes with deep lines, for the sake of an almightier cause. Many of them were defeated in that battle, but few of them returned. All that remained from them were the memories, mournfully encouraging, reaching above like the lament monuments from the posts of the homes.

The name of the one who captivated Gumug Beleg was Fej Narthorn. As a remarkable man in the homeland, Flej Narthorn was a merchant who, to earn his keep, rolled pickaxe and hammer in the deep cracks of sculptures in the cavities, came rain or shine, and he sold the gems at the great bazaar in their rough conditions, without grinding or forging them. In contrast to the Fallen Twinkles, the nature of Flej Narthorn was spiteful and sassy. He regarded the historical enmity between his kind and the Ketris as something beyond the teased trees and the battle of existence against the Motleys. He trusted in neither the Ketris, the ones from the Howlbottom, the Free Easterners nor the Charmers at all. He, therefore, presented the Maari whom he captivated as a guilty sinner sentenced to death. It was not a lie, though. He told he would cure and sell him at the slave bazaar to a Flesheater or a Shadowed Protector with pleasure. For Flej Narthorn, it did not indeed matter whether Gumug Beleg was guilty. The fact that he was labeled as guilty was a sufficient excuse. In the Fallen Twinkles,

however, slavery was an underestimated business. Flej Narthorn told he had found him in the well of the Mutes, and it had evidential value for them.

However, some of them jarred. Some of them could never accept or approve the inhibition to the freedom of a free man, even though he was a Maari, a Protector with a bad history or a Flesheater. Though they did not seem to consent, Gumug Beleg was the property of Flej Narthorn. Besides, there was no one to reverse the judgment, because the ones who could potentially obtain the position by their own efforts took the place of the leaders who were defeated in the Motley Lands.

His wish to cure the Ketri was not because of the mercy of Flej Narthorn. The reason for this wish was the fact that a healthy slave would cost at least three or four times more. For Gumug Beleg to regain his strength, he would feed and cure him, and wait as needed.

In the following days Flej Narthorn entrusted Gumug Beleg to the trustworthy youth of the village, and eagerly kept on digging the sculptures in order to obtain some pieces of precious gems. He was more ambitious than ever because he possessed a hidden intention. Many brave men of his homeland were defeated in the battle. He was one of the few who were left behind. He knew each prize he obtained would bring him forward more than before. A restless voice, haunting his mind, stimulated him with the desire of becoming the head of his homeland.

His wife and children were, however, different from him. They were not like him. They had good and noble nature.

The name of his elder daughter was Iloye. Iloye was a young woman who always smiled with elegant nature. She was familiar with herbal medicine. She created various ointments through the essence of trees and herbs. She had profound knowledge to identify the whole Nerlim Elmiris in and around her homeland from the smells, even if her eyes were closed. She knew how to speak to them, and she brought remedy to the patients and injured ones in her homeland with the mysterious recipes made of them. She, therefore, nursed Gumug Beleg for many days. She prepared strong ointments and elixirs for the wounds in and out of him. The sore and purulent wounds of Gumug Beleg were cured soon. Iloye put on the enchanted ointment, made of the waters of blackthorn leaves and fierysalt, on his broken bones. She was not lazy to do that. Every day, in the early morning and in the late night, she

blew the beamlets on the eaves of the flashes towards the Ketri's body. In order to cure his soul, she gently sang the melodies she heard from the melody performers.

After two longdays, Gumug Beleg was fairly recovered. His body, which was revived through the ointments and enchantments of Iloye, was more alive and healthier than before. He owed her his life. She was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Any words he knew were not enough to describe a part of her beauty. It was not possible. Not only the special love, but also the great compassion aroused for her in his heart. He woke up thinking of her, and he ended the days feeling her. Gumug Beleg fell in love with Iloye.

NINTH CHAPTER

At the solstice when the flames of Hellim Helseris yielded to the pale springs of Ufasar, Gumug Beleg was waiting for his fate to bring him somewhere, with hands and feet tightly tied, snared in the baggage of a whitemottle carriage, like the day he came to the Fallen Twinkles.

The ones who saw the situation turned their eyes away, and pretended to disregard with the burden of the shame of failing to prevent it. Few of them could be regarded regretful indeed. They bade the Ketri farewell silently, with the melancholy of untold laments trembling in their hearts. The greatest sorrow, however, fell into the home of Flej Narthorn. His wife and children were mournful. Especially the heart of Iloye carried the burden of the overwhelming sorrow. Gumug Beleg was the visitor with an eternal feeling at somewhere precious in her heart filled with love and compassion, leaving no room for evil. Though she felt pain, oppressing her chest like the thundering clouds brought by Mirelim Lakusar, she said nothing not to hurt her father's pride for the sake of the respect and loyalty she had for him, and she whimpered the only love song she knew in Ketri language, barely moving her lips so that merely she can hear, with a few drops of tears from the spring of passion.

“Helses zağismes ay lamusaq

Helses zağivmes ay lamusaq

Nan sil pirep upag atsaq parapis

Nan sil pirep upa atsaq parapis

Hamu gem hola jin viler

Hamu gem hola jin viler

Nemir yuzan komiqtele Imikq”

Nemir yuzan komistel elmiq

*“The twinkles of the era have gone
The yeast of the river is now so far
Behold, for the beauties will smile once again
Like nemis, under the tree’s shadow.”*

The land was desolate once again. They almost reached the Great Slave Bazaar. The bitter cold, strong enough to be frozen to the marrow and the black fog spread before with the stormy breaths of howls hindered their way. Though Flej Narthorn nudged his whitemottle with the whip, the animal ragingly neighed, and did not bring them further.

Meanwhile, Flej Narthorn hardly espied a Fountain of Solitude yonder. Persuading the animal to proceed with difficulty, he cautiously drove towards the tree. As they eventually arrived at the shade of the tree, the Heir tethered his whitemottle around the body of the tree, which was covered with colorful eaves, as if including the whole spectrum of colors. Then, checking the knots of his captive once more, he began resting under the protection of the tree. With a thin blanket weaved from the soft feathers of reddish on him, the Ketri began freezing as the frosty motes of Glacier Trees seized his body one by one. He endeavored to move as much as possible to prevent cold from stiffening his body, but the ropes did not let him. He could eventually approach his head towards the fountains of Pakaraz Atsas. The pain in his body was gone. Besides, stirring feelings surrounded his heart as the milk flowing from the fountains mixed with blood.

Meanwhile, with the hope of finding relief, Iloye rushed to another Fountain of Solitude in her village, because she could not find relief for the sadness, which aroused after Gumug Beleg left, haunted and agonized in the desert of grief like a sickness. She was so fast, her silvery bright hair, adrift in the winds of the Howlers, seemed like the beetles with small and fragile bodies spreading around in a storm. The fire in her heart surrounded her wholly. She needed the help of Pakaraz Atsas. With the hope of finding mercy, she reached her head towards the transparent breasts hung on the tree’s trunk, as majestic as a mountain. She saluted the tree through the inner voice, “The unfading light of my hardest time!” The intense sorrow invading her heart was gruesome, and with the influence of it, she fainted and coalesced with the tree. She spoke in trance, “Behold the wrath fell in my soul, ye my star. Be the ointment to my tactless fate!”

The tie between the lovers was stronger than they could expect. Thus, a helix of light appeared between the fountain to which Gumug Beleg was braced and the tree from which

Iloye hoped relief. The strong feeling between them created an effect to fold time and space. That moment, the laws of nature, controlling the nature's process, were invalidated for the lovers. Their souls disguised as pleasant shapes, like the dusts of light floating in the air, and danced with the melodies, so deep and beautiful to be carried by any language, penetrating through their hearts. In such a short moment, as a second, they were not separate creatures. They, as it were, coalesced within the memory and secret of everything happened and would happen, from the moment the first seed was planted on earth to the moment nature would fade out, from the first to the last moment. Then, both awakened from the dream.

When the Ketri opened his eyes, the strong howls of Vuhsar calmed. The rain, brought by the thundering Mirelim Lakusar, relented as well. Almost everything was more silent. The pale night lights spreading from the springs of Ufasar could brighten merely to show nearby.

Flej Narthorn woke up, and settled on the carriage again. The strong insight of Gumug Beleg foreshadowed an impending malice. He warned the Heir, notifying he felt a threat. Flej Narthorn, however, paid no attention, "Nothing but a trick to save yourself makes you say that. The districts nearby are familiar and safe. The darkness of north shall not approach here!"

Soon after they proceeded, a pit demon, suddenly appearing throughout the darkness, jumped over Flej Narthorn and savaged him, biting his back with sharp teeth. The Heir, yelling in pain, did not have time to pull out the hooked spear, and he was ripped by another pit demon. The creature quickly jumped on his face, and tore off a big piece of flesh from the face to the neck.

Meanwhile, Gumug Beleg cried, "Untie me!" Flej Narthorn, however, sought cunningness in his offer despite the opportunity to set him free. That moment, one of the pit demons heard the voice and turned to the Ketri. As it was preparing to descend on him by opening its wings, the Heir desperately straightened and threw the hooked spear towards its hip. Carrying a strong charm, the weapon made a deep wound on the body of the pit demon, and oppressed it. The animal was horribly crying and squeaking in pain. It turned back with the faded strength, and from the serpent tongue to the Heir's body, it injected the poisonous liquid, which could be produced merely at the point of death, and it died.

Bleeding out due to the wounds, Flej Narthorn was quickly withering with the effect of the poison for which he didn't know the cure. Gumug Beleg shouted, "Untie me! We shall go back to your home before the poison in your blood takes you away!"

Flej Narthorn was not willing to retreat. He proudly said, "Do you think helplessness would bring me to the weakness of asking the mercy of a sinner Maari?" Then, pointing Pakaraz Atsas, "I shall pass away as an almighty lord who has saved the life of his captive with God as my witness!"

"Do you think you save my life by leaving me tied in the wilderness?" asked the Ketri. Flej Narthorn paid no attention. The poison, quickly affecting, scattered him. His eyes opened wide at first; then the darkness, spreading from the pupils and completely surrounding the eyes, blinded him. No one knew what Flej Narthorn heard at that moment, but he ghostly yelled, "Speak to me no more, stop!" Though he endeavored, he could not straighten. Holding the wheel of the carriage, he tried to reach his captive by creeping, but soon, the strength of his wrists was deprived of the fountain of life. The hands on the stony wheels stiffened. Like the waters of an exuberant fountain, the pitch black juice gathering on his lips began scattering with strong smell. So fell the ambitious merchant of the Fallen Twinkle, Flej Narthorn.

Witnessing the death of its owner, the whitemottle dreadfully cried. It eventually ripped off the ropes with a strong kick, and ran away from the cursed place. Gumug Beleg was alone at the baggage, tied in knots. However, he did not regard himself unfortunate. For, whenever he failed to endure the pain or starved, he reached his lips to the breasts of the Fountain of Solitude, drank the fulfilling milk which led to the dreams and days passed.

Gumug Beleg spent many days by failing to distinguish between the dream and the real, for he fed on the milk of Pakaraz Atsas. The only way he could understand how long he had been there was to observe his long beard, as much as he could see. So the days and the longdays passed. Winter subsided. As the glacier flowers disappeared, the fiery motes of Asat Mirepir began warming Shaar. The young Ketri got over the hardest days of winter being trapped in the rope, with a thin blanket and the milk of the fountain.

After many days, he eventually heard an approaching noise. The noise belonged to the feet pacing gently, not to harm even Rutasar. He merely heard this. He could not turn and look because of the ropes. The noise, however, did not distress him. The noise went off soon.

Then he felt a gentle hand caressing his forehead. It was warm and compassionate. Before seeing the face, he realized it was Lime Pesafit. He was filled with joy. Then Lime Pesafit spoke, “Can you endure walking with me now? Can you bring strength against what you cannot see through?”

The eyes of Gumug Beleg were filled with tears. He saluted the old companion by shouting three times, “Almighty friend!” A smile appeared on his face, bright as the flames of Hellim Helseris. “The Ketri makes a vow. From this day, till the moment he would see him for the last time!”

With his wand, Lime Pesafit gazed at the smelly pieces of flesh and skin, which were thinned enough to cover the pieces of bones on the ground. “What a great end is silence, for the ones who grudge beautiful words from their tongues, what a great blessing is being deprived of dreaming!”

TENTH CHAPTER

Gumug Beleg mercifully looked at the dead body of Flej Narthorn, “Now he has the white bits of Enij Elmiris on him!” Taking the hooked spear near the hand bones and putting it in the sheath, “This is all that remains from him.”

When he arrived at the Fallen Twinkles Village with his companion, the Heirs were preparing to leave the camps used as the wintery. When Gumug Beleg joined them, they welcomed him with smiling eyes. The Ketri exaggeratedly told the crowd surrounding him that Flej Narthorn fell after heroically fighting to protect him. Even though he spoke in good faith, the lies seemed rough on him. Even if it was not, the subject was Flej Narthorn! Almost neither of the Heirs could associate the bravery with the fate of their cognates. The effect of what they heard, therefore, appeared and disappeared as the weak clouds brought by the howls. Besides, some of them believed Gumug Beleg escaped and beat him. However, the secret thought never found voice even as a whisper’s mist. How strange, it was suspicious whether their attitude would change if they knew he murdered their own relatives. Because, the love and affection they felt towards the Ketri almost went beyond the honor they felt towards Flej Narthorn, though he was one of them. Falling into the flood of shadowy emotions, they avoided prejudging, and they either believed or pretended to believe his words even if they seemed exaggerated.

The insiders of the Fallen Twinkles curiously and amazedly stared at Gumug Beleg's companion, Lime Pesafit. Most of them realized he was a wise man at first glance. They nevertheless preferred to keep him at a distance because he resembled neither themselves nor another kind.

The wife and the children of Flej NARTHORN were surrounded by lament. None of them, however, hostilely glanced at Gumug Beleg. Iloye was not like that. Let alone the affection she hoped, she doubtfully observed him. It was not that she did not believe in what he said, but she did not exactly believe. Even if everything he said was true, wouldn't she remember the death of her father every time she looked at him? Besides, both believed what they lived at Pakaraz Atsaris was unique, and they did not know it was the day dream for two.

Iloye wore the veil on her face. The ladies of the Fallen Twinkles merely did this when a stranger came. She, as it were, wanted to deny her face to him. There was not a clear explanation for the reason of this wrath. The causeless guilt and wrath grew in her. It would take time to comprehend, accept and subside. Lament, reunion, wrath, doubt... She could not even identify dominant feeling in her. If she could, she would disappear as a secret. However, the only thing she could do was to rush to Gumug Beleg without looking forward or back. She did not come eye to eye with the Ketri for once. She pulled out the hooked spear, the token of her father from him, by ignoring his existence. Then she weakly said, "His soul is now free, and with the almighty Nûr."

The Heirs completed the preparation for temporary migration soon. They were setting off. They offered hosting Gumug Beleg and Lime Pesafit at the summery. But the old man gazed around anxiously, "How the Sobusar has increased!" He paused for a while, and then continued, "Since the awakening of Aya Pellar, none of the trees vainly glazed their lights. There is a cursed force nearby, fading their lights. We shall leave here."

However, Gumug Beleg, unlike his companion, preferred to stay. Among them, he recalled the days of tranquility while listening to the soulful melodies of Genlim Sasar. During the longdays he spent with them, he almost forgot he was a Ketri chief, and began feeling like one of them, while touching and beholding the offerings under the guard of Abit Piljeris. He rejoined them, and he did not want to leave the tribe of which the insiders created a circle around the eldest Heslim in their homeland to read each other the dairies on which they engraved the signs they called rune upon the gilded hairparchments, which they produced by forging various unvalued sculptures in their homelands during the most sparkling

hours of the evening flames, told the joyous and sorrowful wishes in their hearts, and sang gentle melodies together. The strongest feeling, however, was nothing less than the feeling flowing in him like the rivers of Charmers. He was thinking of Iloye. Her apathy prepossessed him, as it were, preyed on his mind.

Lime Pesafit sensed the uncertainty of his companion. His cloak, surrounded by the green light beams covering his arms down to his shoulders, opened as a wing as he reached his hand to affectionately touch the face of his companion; “The burden of the ones who passed away shall not weigh on the ones who stay! What if a part of the rising evil is growing in us, and we fail to perceive it? Leaving is the right thing to do then, for the fates of both the ones who stay and the ones, who passed away, isn’t it?”

Gumug Beleg dared to object. But he recalled the sequence of events happened to him after he was separated from his companion for the first time. He did not speak. Lime Pesafit continued thereof, “Everyone thinks they are alive and on the watch. However, most of the ones who walk here are blind. They neither know where they came from nor where they are going. They are like the visions, appearing and disappearing, like the sounds which are heard but not listened, the sounds without echoes. A slow death, like suffering the agony of a sharp weapon, a poisonous needle or savage teeth; like the inkless ke feather wandering above an empty hairparchment, they conclude the unwritten fates and pass away; as if they have never lived. But there are some, who are like the sounds circling around between the two zeniths. Their words are never concluded. Which one are you, the young Maari? Can you endure this road?”

These words brought sorrow to the Ketri, as if the lava erupting from the Faithful Mountains wandered in him. But instead of following what he knew was right; he would realize his advice and set off, binding his fate with his companion.

ELEVENTH CHAPTER

After a day in the baggage of a whitemottle, they could merely move a few leagues, and arrived at the back of the Roaring Savage Village. Meanwhile, they saw a Maari running towards them, horribly yelling. He seemed frantic. The terror of something he witnessed surrounded his eyes. He was shouting, “They did not let us go out!” His eyes expressed fright, “There were the drumbeats! The carriers of the flags adorned with the seven altars which were teased, overshadowed us like a storm! The ground was quaking. The giant reptile pacing in

the depths of Rutasar pillaged our homeland by spitting fire! There were the drumbeats! May Epemet Murparis protect my mind! The dreadful sound of the drums did not come to an end. There were the drumbeats! There were the drumbeats!”

The Maari opened his eyes as if he went mad, and ran away. From where he came, a big cloud of smoke Gumug Beleg had never seen before was rising. The Ketri sighed, “Another land, another doomsday! Yet other sorrowful days we would tell our children! I wish to live in another time.”

Lime Pesafit answered, “But you live in this time, young lord! Would a tree ever wish to migrate by belittling its soil?”

Gumug Beleg sorrowfully smiled, “They merely embellish where they are.”

“They are the almighty guides of Hûdā. Behold, they narrate another advice through our lips.”

The companions passed beyond the pathways, built during the ancient times by the ones whose breath did not reach Shaar anymore, on which a few signs were left to cherish the memory of them, and they headed to the darkness of the rising smoke. Lime Pesafit asked the Ketri, “I see your heart is in flames. Yet you are dazed. Do you think you can vanquish the cast of thousands by yourself?”

The Ketri faithfully answered, “At least I would closely see my enemy.”

“We look out, we see inside of us. It is hoped the young lord is ready for confrontation.”

Gumug Beleg and Lime Pesafit hid in the seam of a hodden sculpture, covered with large gold leaves with dense orchards on the hip of the pillaged camp, and watched the rising savagery. The crowd spread terror yonder. More than five hundred night slaves, most of them rode on the lakehorses, holding the yellowdome triangles and spears, and a group of obsequious Flesheaters brought cruelty to the land. A wide reptile, which, as big as the majestic Altars of Contemplation, he neither saw nor heard in the archaic epics, secretly crept through Rutasar, then appeared, scattered and swallowed the bodies without biting. Each was under the command of five Motleys disguising as a Ketri or Protector, and one of them was the lord of the other four. Apart from a few combats before some homes and tents, of which the doors were protected by the brave men of the homeland with their last strength, the

resistance of the nomad camp almost came to an end; there was left no resistance at all. From the raped tents, the screams begging for help echoed. A handful of Maaris stampeded to the four winds with fear, rising with the terror which devastated them with madness.

Gumug Beleg merely watched what happened. He felt hatred, his nails scratched his palms like claws, and his teeth wounded his lips, but he could not do anything. “There is no hope!” he said to his companion.

Lime Pesafit was tranquil. “Even if the whole Shaar falls into a dream and never awakens, and even if the bitter storms spread above the dark Rutasar covering even Vuhsar and Teriser, there is hope. There is always hope, young lord!”

The darkness spread throughout the homeland grew dense enough to fade the lights of Helj Elmiris which brightened the camps from the skies. The flames of Hellim Helseris were faded one by one, as if the moment of the solstice came. The roadspoilers flocked around the dead bodies following the smell of carrion, and the dark breaths flowing in from the holes of the zone spread around as clouds. Each took the order of a sort of ceremony, looking for the victims to haunt the bodies of, with wild sounds resembling the vulgar howls above the weak Maaris who were captivated or fell by the strike of weapons.

Meanwhile, the thundering sound of the bugle of assault was heard from the north wing, resembling the howl of lamentthuribles. From the same direction, a faction started a sudden assault against the dark division, fiery and wrathful, like the rains of Mirelim Lakusar falling from the wrathful clouds. They were the Mutes. They were driving the chariots pulled by more than a thousand combat whitemottles, crowing over and yelling. Before the Night Division formed the line of defense, being dazed with the unexpected counterattack, they were destroyed by the strikes of animals’ horns, the cold cuts of ironleaves and the curse of the fork head spears. As if they took an oath to polish their weapons with the blood of their enemies, each of the raving warriors attacked with pleasure, by repeating the charms of the zenith, and tore off the heads of Motleys and Flesheaters, like biting the blossoming fruits.

The raid of the Mutes to the field, like the the flashes glowing in dark, changed the course of the battle. The slovenly people, from whom Gumug Beleg merely expected evil, seemed like a reflection of the constant, eternal light of hope, told by Lime Pesafit. Thereon, the Ketri hurled towards the field of the cruel battle from the seam of the hoddan Sculpture hiding him, shouting, “There is hope. There is always hope!”

As he stepped in the battlefield, he took the well forged ironleafy from a fallen Maari. He shouted as a leader, “One day, all lands might be drenched in blood and tears, the fathers might be deprived of an almighty Hegira Tree to bury their children, the friends might become enemies and friendship might become a meaningless word used in the old epics; but the day has not come yet! Be brave my brothers, and fight! If you escape, the place you go would be a prison instead of a homeland, and you will bear the burden of your decision for the rest of your life. Stay and fight here, the brave Maaris of the white land! For your homeland, for the relatives who passed away, for the ones who have not passed away! Fight, to fade the darkness!”

The enthusiasm of the Maaris stampeding at the battlefield arose when the allies arrived. The encouraging speech of Gumug Beleg also polished their excitement by falling into their hearts as a ray. Each regarded him the leader and they lined up once again, gathering around him. The eyes of the crowd of three hundred, with women and children, spread flames towards the heart of the darkness. They all marched behind their leader by singing the spells!

In the frontline there was a group of almost eighty, marching with their ironleaves and hammers, and behind them a group of mostly women and children, girded on less precious weapons. Gumug Beleg commanded them to rip apart the troop of Flesheaters lined before them. Maaris, like a body, began the assault. They were wrathful. Their hearts were suffused with vengeance. Thereon, they lost few, and ripped apart the troop of Flesheaters.

The troop of Nightservants, standing behind, was stuck between the Maaris and the Mutes. The great Motley lord, appearing and disappearing in the darkness as a shadow, commanded his division to retreat upon the severity of the course. However, they could not even grave a hole to escape from. The vibrant spells sang on both sides veiled the terrifying howls of the ones who appeared in dark shadows, and the effect of the charms they casted had gone. The servants of the night suffered losses in a short time, and the strong smell of the numerous dark spirits freeing from the fallen bodies surrounded the battlefield. Before the cursed spirits, spreading around as transparent dark veils, rejoined their freedom, of which meaning they forgot; they were absorbed by their Motley lords at once.

Meanwhile, the earthdigger spread terror, ragingly appearing after the huge explosion of fierysalt in the cracks of Rutasar. Each time it shook its majestic body, quite a few brave men were blown up as if they were caught in a hurricane.

Beholding the massacre with naked eye, Gumug Beleg let out soul shattering yell once more, waving his sword. He wanted the cognates behind to march with him. The flame in the heart of the crowd, however, was not as bright as the one in his heart, and fear prevailed. One of them stepped forward, "We would not die for these mountain animals! Besides, we have not recognized you as our chief!"

A couple of brave men followed the young chief. Their weapons polished with the breath of Parap Seylimer seemed like the clay reeds flaming in the Veiled Lake, and the darkness was torn apart with their lights.

The riot of the Maaris shook the stony heart of the beasts, they stumbled. Benefiting from the negligence, the brave men began piercing through the cursed creature's hips with their weapons, as small as needles beside the body of it, as if they were scraping the sculptures. The body of the huge reptile was covered with holes by quite a few small strikes. As its black blood rose in the huge cracks, like filling sewage; the outcry of the creature was so high, as it were, Rutasar was shaken by earthquakes. Enduring the pain a little while, the creature lost its last strength to react to the enemy, and, ignoring the command of its Motley lord, it returned into the cracks it came from, like the coward desert fuyis.

However, the enemy was not beaten yet. The head of the Motley lords, along with the most distinguished troop, were gathering strength through the evil breaths of the guls covering the skies like dark clouds. The particular troop seemed few in number, but they carried strong weapons called the hoof of devil forged out of the sculptures of the same name. Besides, each grabbed the bridle of a roaring horror, as a servant.

The soul shattering sounds of the shouting of the roaring horrors echoed in the battlefield, and the Mutes had difficulty in calming the whitemottles in fear. Meanwhile, the great Motley lord appeared from within the fog, and showed himself to the enemy. He raised his hands and spoke, "The ones who are together, but fail to belong to each other! Stop fighting behind the mountain shepherds and bandits! Join the guardians of the night. Come and take the eternal life which I promise!"

The Mutes responded with mockery. Their hopes were alive, and their passion was high. The cognates lined behind Gumug Beleg preserved their faith like their allies. But the shy ones, who stood behind or stampeded, were impressed by the bewitching words. Their memories were teased by the dark reveries. They regarded the Motley lord as their leader.

“We will fight for our chief!” shouted one of them, and the others followed. They advanced upon their brother.

Thus, the brother spilled the blood of his brother. The field caught fire once again, and the course of the battle was unclear. Sorrow was nailed to the heart of Gumug Beleg, and he vowed to kill the Motley lord who separated the cognates. However, it was not easy to trace the cursed creature, for it was nothing but a shadow, appearing and disappearing. He shouted, “The almighty Vuhsar, servant of Hûdā, take away the torment of the shadow!” His voice was heard by the heart of Shaar. Thereon, Vuhsar was opened. The clouds, carrying the moistly breath of Mirelim Lakusar, began floating above the battlefield. The water drops made of light fell on the ground, and brought back the daylight.

Gumug Beleg went through the obstacles by means of the light spread from the water drops poured by Mirelim Lakusar, and headed towards the great enemy. He eventually faced his enemy, standing still as a majestic bust in the middle of a mud puddle resembling a marsh. The body of the Motley lord was surrounded by the shadows circling around. But the dark eyes were not veiled. His evil eyes, as it were, spread the fiery mist, the misty flame. The darkness in his eyes took away the peaceful memories of Gumug Beleg, like making him fall into a dark hole towards the infinite abyss, and he was shaken. His enemy was so splendid, causing the distress tremble his heart. Fear, spread through the gaze of the Motley lord, pierced through him deep enough to almost captivate him if he was exposed to the malice charm a little while.

The Ketri chief, however, bade defiance. He recalled and kept in heart all things Lime Pesafit had taught during the journey. The strongest charm he ever knew overflowed from his mouth and the ironleafy was girded by this charm. Thus his weapon caught fire. He walked towards his enemy, and attempted to beat him with swift moves. The lord of the darkness, however, evaded all moves of him, as if he foresaw where the move came from, and he pushed the Ketri through the strikes he grew within the fog. Gumug Beleg could encounter each move without getting harm merely through the insight in his heart.

It was one of the longest combats written in the history of Shaar. How strange, no one was damaged. But the combat took so long that Gumug Beleg began losing power and agility. He could not wave his ironleafy anymore. However, the enemy was not in better condition than him. He was torn and weakened as well. The shadows circling around him like a circle of guardians gradually disappeared and left him alone. When Gumug Beleg sharply gazed at the

unveiled body, he was shaken by the most terrifying thing he ever witnessed. Because, the weapon lifted towards him was Nilimsasa, which he left at the Hegira Tree he was enthralled by to be tested. Besides, the gorget, the sign of the lordship of his homeland, was on the neck of the enemy. As the last fog covering the image of the Motley lord disappeared, Gumug Beleg was bewildered. What appeared before him was the face he had been seeing in all lakes he quenched his thirst and rested at since childhood. Though Gumug Beleg was looking at his enemy, he saw himself. He thought it was black magic. The situation, which he could not explain, made his body tremble, and made him fall flat on the ground. Even in the meantime, he evaded the beats of his enemy through the insight emerged in him as a natural motive. He imagined his whole life as a pleasant strip of sight. The windstorm of inspiration thundered in him. He completely fell into a trance, lost consciousness, and spoke, "I left my laws, my glory and my name once; and then I left the one I recognized as my god, the one I love, and my wish then. Now I realize my thoughts and memories are my properties as well. Oh Ilerj Elmis, the almighty tree, the Star of Shaar! I free myself from me!"

The prayer took away the burden from him, as if being caught by the howls of Vuhsar above. He was relieved, and his heart reached tranquility. As if seeing a mirage, he was serene in the middle of a relentlessly ongoing combat. The peace, however, ended with the strike of the ironleafy, piercing through his right breast. Feeling a great pain, he suffered and cried. Then, with the blind strength, he stood up. He waved his weapon through the inspiration coming from his soul, and walked towards the wicked soul. Neither of his moves hit, but he was shaken and wounded by each move of the Motley lord. He was drenched in blood, and he threw his ironleafy aside, shouting "Hûdā!" Evading the move of the enemy, he began hitting him mortally with bare fists. The Motley lord was eventually out of breath, he was beaten. But he was, as well, exhausted, like the last drops of Asat Mirepir when winter came.

The servants of the night stampeded to the four winds, seeing their lord had fallen. The joyous shouts of the Maaris and the Mutes roared with the pipes of triumph at the field. Gumug Beleg was far from sharing the joyous feelings of his cognates and allies. He was overwhelmed with a feeling hard to explain. It was a devastating feeling, which could not be expressed with any words in the languages he knew. Trembling in pain, he sought Lime Pesafit by hardly moving his eyes.

Controlling the road with his wand, Lime Pesafit headed towards a still lake. In order not to lose him, Gumug Beleg scurried after him with his last strength. Despite the pathway

he walked came to an end, his companion was walking above the water, as if floating above Rutasar. The strangeness of the situation did not even arouse the attention of Gumug Beleg, whose mere hope was to reunite his weary eyes with the healing depths of his eyes for the last time. He almost reached him. Like Lime Pesafit, he was walking above the water, though he did not even realize. He was only a few steps closer to him, but he was exhausted, he did not have the strength to carry on. He saluted his companion; wobbly shouting three times “The almighty friend!” Thereafter, his body was floating above the water, like hairparchment leaves. Hardly opening his eyes, he looked at his companion from the thin gap between his eyelids. Lime Pesafit was surrounded by the glaring green light, and in this light there was not the face he recalled, but the image of a bald, bright child. Then he took a deep, deeper breath. He warmly inhaled the last ether of life. His head fell then, but his eyes were still slightly open. While watching his reflection on the water at the moment the weariness of death arrived, he saw the image of Lime Pesafit, though he expected to see his image. That moment, his eyes were covered with a misty veil.

The place he saw behind the misty veil did not resemble the world he was familiar with. His infancy, at the moment he came out of the uterus of his mother; his joyous childhood growing up at the prairies of Thread Horn; his youth advancing for leagues on the ke; Lime Pesafit, Flej Narthorn and the lord of Motleys; all familiar faces were him at once. He was at all places he had been and he had not been at once. All tastes he knew, and all feelings he had were whirling in him. He did not know how to portray; he was in a huge saloon, but it was not even a space. He was merely the witness of all things he saw. But all he saw was even himself. His skin was not the visitor of his soul anymore. All chains between his skin and his soul were broken. He was freed from the registry and command of time and space. All things he saw about himself was scattered and disappeared in the eternal abyss, like the dancing morning flames. He was everywhere, though there was nothing as the self. There was merely Hūdā. He heard through him, he saw through him.

It was a moment, long as the life reaching eternity with all breathing lives joined together, and short as a second. Like the mothers letting out the baby from their uterus to the life at the moment of birth, Ilerj Elmis let out Gumug Beleg from its bosom, and spoke from the unseen, “You have unlearned all fruitless knowledge, and learned the essence of wisdom. You will thus live for your fate, instead of your name and glory. Your gorget will stand and rise on a body deserving it, and your weapon will flourish and alter for the sake of an

almighty cause. Your property is yours once again, Gumug Beleg, because you are now among the ones who are undressed of their properties!”

When Gumug Beleg got out of the bosom of Hegira Tree, he was someone else.