

Credits

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K I T H B O O K :

ROCKERS

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A Faerie Tale: Blistertongue Jill's Oath

(Or, Why Nockers Always Speak Their Minds)

It's said that never was a nocker born who didn't have something bad to say about something or someone. Well, it's true. Spite gathers in a nocker's throat like dew in a rusty can, and the best thing for her to do is spit it out before she chokes. But this wasn't always the way of things.

Back in the old times, nockers and goblins were one and the same. Their separation is another tale entirely, but split they did. This caused all sorts of trouble. Nockers had to get used to being nockers in their own right, and in many cases this meant dealing with courtly politics as a proper kith should, even though their hearts still simmered with bitterness.

You see, back then nockers were so spite-filled that their venom would sometimes leak out and hurt things. Love wasn't alien to them — many a nocker fell in love, or willingly lent a hand to a stranger in trouble. But the old goblin practices were hard to break. And while the nockers eventually broke most of their habits, one got worse.

There's never been a human or fae who could outswear a nocker. Natural talent, nockers call it. And back in the old times, they were much better at it. A nocker would get all frustrated, let loose a string of profanity, and something nearby would break or die. Their bile was that potent.

Naturally, this led to all sorts of problems with their work. They were still the best at fashioning things, be

it toys, weapons or castles. But one slip of the hammer onto a nocker's thumb, the artisan would let a curse fly, and his work would fall apart on the spot, unable to withstand the poisonous word. So nockers tried to not swear around their work. They'd bottle up their frustrations until they couldn't take it anymore, and then they'd run out in the backyard and vent. This was hardly the solution, though; sometimes an expletive would kill a passing songbird or peel the paint from a neighbor's house.

Then the wisest artisan, Byzamedas, devised a plan. He traveled to Kayver Cliff, where he labored in secret for a full year. When his work was finished, he sent out a summons to all of his kith, bidding every nocker in the land to come to the cliff and hear what he had to say.

They all came, every nocker from the Shimmering Hills to the Fallowisles. All wondered and guessed at what Byzamedas had made, what lay beneath the tarpaulin at the base of the cliff. When the last among them had arrived, Byzamedas drew aside the cloth and revealed an ivory-hued stone, carved smooth as an egg.

"Behold the Basilisk Stone!" he cried. "I have made this thing as a vessel into which you may pour your venom. If you have something foul to scream, scream it to the stone, which will bear it. Tell it your curses, your black-hearted wishes, your blasphemies. Give your foul words up to the stone, and injure your work

and neighbors no longer!" With that, Byzamedas spat a terrible curse at the stone, and it drank the epithet up entirely – and nothing happened!

Every nocker present then swore an oath (not the profane sort, but the binding pledge) that they would voice their spite not into the air, but into the Basilisk Stone. And when they'd finished, they all journeyed back to their homes and workplaces, confident that Byzamedas' solution was a good one.

So nockers built and crafted again, but they kept their foulest words to themselves. It wasn't easy at first, but the thought of the waiting Basilisk Stone gave them strength. Once a week at first, then once every two weeks, and then once a month, each would journey to Kayver Cliff and let loose all the invectives she had corked up. The stone drank all their curses greedily, one by one. Byzamedas even set balefire lanterns burning on either side of the stone, so nockers could find their way to it as easily at night as in day.

As the Basilisk Stone collected poisonous words over the years, it gradually darkened in hue to a soft pink. This worried no one – after all, it was a wonder that the stone could hold all the nockers' venom at all. If the only side effect was a slight change of color, it was quite a miraculous work indeed.

Before long, the stone was hardly the only wondrous work of nocker ingenuity. Without the baneful influence of their destructive outbursts, nockers created objects far more splendid than any they had made before. Glittering clockwork birds danced between elegantly fluted minarets, while gleaming ships raced one another under silver bridges.

Of course, not all of these creations were peaceful in nature. Swords were now sharper, bows more powerful and shields sturdier. Nockers crafted great engines to hurl boulders, massive ballistas to fire gigantic arrows, and impossibly hard battering rams to be used against the magnificent castles that other nockers had built. War machines rolled across battlefields with the sound of grinding wood and steel. And if the nockers building these clockwork monstrosities had to pause construction to make an "urgent" journey every now and then, mighty lords granted the engineers leave. The nobility coveted the nockers' creations more than anything else, and were loath to anger the creators.

Of the lords of the age, one of the proudest and richest was Duke Malath Owlsbane, Lord of the Brass Tor. Few could best him in personal combat, and his were the fiercest wyvernhounds in the realm, but he wasn't satisfied with that. As he watched great copper clockworks do battle on field after field, a desire festered within him. "If lesser lordlings can have such machines at their disposal," he mused, "then why should I not have something even more grand?" And so he swore that he would have the greatest, strongest, most terrifying war machine of all.

Naturally, such a thing couldn't be devised by just any engineer. Thus he sought out the greatest Unseele artisan in the lands. No matter whom he referred to, all nockers gave him the same answer. Only one of their kind fit the description.

Brimstone Jill they called her, for her temper was as hot as a hell-furnace, and her creations were so wickedly sharp that they seemed to be the Devil's own handiwork. When Duke Owlsbane found her, she was hard at work fashioning war-armor for the dragons of Foulrook. Owlsbane promised Jill fine gold and pure steel, all if she'd build him the greatest war machine of all. Out of pride, Jill agreed. She spat on her palm and shook his hand, grinning to see the haughty sidhe squirm.

Duke Owlsbane gave Jill use of a workshop in Brass Tor, and he set her to work. Her workplace was a grim lair of fire and metal that suited Brimstone Jill just fine. She drew up plans in a mere week, and then set to the forges and scaffolding. She was able to work for two months before her ill will got the better of her, and she asked Duke Owlsbane to let her leave for a time. He denied her that freedom.

"Only when your task is completed," he said coldly. With that, he called for soldiers to guard the workshop, and left. Jill nearly blistered the walls with a curse blurted out right then and there, but she caught herself in time. With no other recourse, and with her pride at stake, she returned to work on the war machine.

She worked for two more months, and asked to be allowed to leave again so that she could visit the Basilisk Stone. Owlsbane refused again. "Only when your task is completed," he repeated. So Jill worked until a year had passed, and asked to be released once more. As before, Owlsbane's answer was, "Only when your task is completed." And so it went, with Brimstone Jill choking back her venom for five full years.

Finally, the machine was done. Brimstone Jill named it the Great Jaganath, and the name suited it. It stood fully 70 feet tall, with massive sweeping scythe-arms that could slice through great oaks like barley. Fire belched from its belly, and wicked dart-throwers lined its back. At its very center rested a massive brass-shod battering ram shaped in the likeness of a mailed fist. She brought it before Duke Owlbane's armies and unveiled it. When the duke saw it, his very breath was stolen away by fear.

Ashamed for being frightened, he turned his anger on Brimstone Jill. "It will suffice, engineer," he said coldly. "You were certainly long enough about it. You may go. I will send your payment along presently." With that, he waved her away, not even concerned that the furious nocker choked on her hatred.

So Duke Owlbane commanded his armies to the neighboring Orange Hills, and set the Great Jaganath at the head of his column. As he marched away, head swimming with pride, Brimstone Jill ran with all her speed to Kayver Cliff. Some say she was so filled with venom that her footprints smoldered, and that travelers fought to get out of her way. Only a foolish manticora dared to cross her path, and she struck it dead with the tiniest hiss from her clenched teeth.

She reached the stone at sunset. No one was there when she arrived, which proved to be a good thing. Brimstone Jill threw her hands to the Basilisk Stone, and pressed her lips close to it. Then she began to swear.

Seelie nor Unseelie, nocker, goblin nor redcap – none has ever uttered an curse like the one Brimstone Jill voiced that evening. The first few syllables that slithered off her tongue were blasphemous and profane beyond imagining, and would have brought tears to the eyes of the foulest mucus-fanged horror in the Witherthroat Pits. Her first sentence would have cracked the cornerstone of Caer Nithayin and melted the sword of the High King. Had Jill voiced her first breath anywhere else, she would have shriveled trees for as far as a mountain's shadow could reach. But five years of toil and five years of Owlbane's abuses couldn't be absolved in a few breaths. That evening, Brimstone Jill uttered the foulest oath ever spoken. All her hateful wishes for Duke Owlbane, and everything he'd ever touched, coiled into a poisonous stream of fury and loathing that wouldn't die.





As sunset turned into twilight, the Basilisk Stone deepened in color from pink to crimson. But Jill's eyes were clouded with tears of hatred, and she never saw the change. At moonrise, the stone was a rich crimson where light from the guide-lanterns bathed it. But still the oath was unfinished. At midnight, the stone was deep scarlet. In the hours that followed, its color curdled to that of wine. And still Jill's oath was unfinished. Only when the sky lightened in the east, and the stone was almost black, did Jill near the end of her curse.

Just as the sun peered over the mountaintops, Brimstone Jill spoke her final passionate words. She lifted her head, her face slick with sweat and tears, and sighed with fatigue. Her heart ached from carrying the great curse for so long, and she was as weak as a still-blind kitten.

When the first rays of sunlight touched the now-black-as-pitch Basilisk Stone, it cracked with a sound like a thunderclap. Jill was nobody's fool, not even Oulsbane's, and leapt back. As she watched open-mouthed, the seam lengthened. A breeze arose, and where it caressed the exposed meat of the stone, it carried away faint voices. The voices grew louder, and the crack grew longer.

And then the Basilisk Stone exploded.

The stone blew to bits with a rush and a roar, letting loose a storm of spite. Every nocker's curse that had been whispered into it was caught up by the wind and carried to the far corners of the land. And wherever the storm wind touched down, things fell to bits.

Now, the storm didn't destroy everything it touched. It slew many a small bird or creature luckless enough to be caught in its path. It melted a small rock or blasted a tree black here and there. But the devices that nockers had built were like lightning rods for the storm; their carefully sculpted forms attracted the rancorous winds. Everything crafted by nockers since the unveiling of the Basilisk Stone, and even many objects made before then, were marred or shattered. Troll axes splintered in meadhalls. Sidhe castles moaned and toppled. Redcap pain-toys pitted and split. The vulgar winds even reached down into the worm-tunnels of the slough and into the sea-palaces of the selkies, poisoning and mangling nocker-forged gewgaws.

But the most horrific black wind whipped across the battlefields of the Orange Hills, disintegrating weapons and armor in its wake. It flew to the heart of Brimstone Jill's finest creation, the Great Jaganath, and dashed it to pieces. Cogs landed leagues away. The massive scythe blades slashed through whole armies before crashing to the ground. And the brazen fist of a battering ram collapsed, crushing Owlsbane flat.

The storm died out quickly after that, but nockers' troubles had only begun. Every fae, from the loftiest sidhe lord to the humblest boggan stablehand, issued a great hue-and-cry and demanded an explanation. Why was everything cast in ruin? What had happened? But the confused nockers couldn't answer them. Making their hurried excuses and apologies, the artisans flocked to Kayver Cliff to vent their spleen.

When they arrived, they were horrified to see the black shards of the Basilisk Stone. They gestured furiously and mouthed questions to each other in a panic, but no one dared voice a profanity for fear of what might happen. Nary a one noticed Brimstone Jill, sitting still to the side of the shattered stone.

Then Byzamedas himself, now bent and weak with age, clambered up onto one of the shards of the stone, and sat down. He thought for a bit, and then looked out at his gathered kith. "Don't keep your words to yourselves," he said, finally. "Get them off your chests, and we'll see what's what."

With that, every nocker who had journeyed to the stone flew into a rage, shouting at their neighbors, the broken bits of stone, the sky—whatever was handy. The obscenities rattled the clouds, and killed every bug within a mile. The nockers screamed and ranted for hours at the tops of their lungs. But even this seemed as nothing in the wake of the great storm of vulgarity unleashed by the stone.

Of all those assembled, only two had nothing to say. Byzamedas himself had grown too old to shout, and what was the point of swearing if you couldn't hear yourself over the din? And as for Jill, her curse had been so potent that it had blistered her tongue. Besides, with all her bitterness spent and all the waste around her, she had nothing left to say.

When all of the nockers' venom and spite was exhausted, they fell silent one by one. As the last slumped to the grass, hoarse and weary, Jill stood up. Speaking

slowly and carefully to nurse her tender tongue, she admitted to breaking the stone. She told her kithmates why such a thing had happened. She spoke of Duke Nalath Owlsbane, and of the Great Jaganath, and of the insults she'd borne. Finally, she spoke shamefaced of the crack in the Basilisk Stone, and how the nockers' spite was loosed on the lands.

As she finished her tale, some nockers muttered among themselves, arguing what they would and wouldn't have done in Jill's place. But most kept quiet, unwilling to let their vulgarities fly once again.

Byzamedas shook his head and looked at them all. "There won't be a second Basilisk Stone," he decreed. "I thought the stone would have worked, but I didn't counted on some young girl being even more nocker than me."

He tapped his hammer on the stone in prelude to a formal announcement. "Blisvertongue Jill—" (and so she was known ever after) "—has proved that we couldn't hold our voices forever. The consequences were all the worse for the trying. The more we bottled ourselves up, the worse the flood when it broke loose. It didn't go away! And if the stone couldn't hold it, nothing ever will!

"So speak your own damn minds as quick as the urge takes you! Perfection for a few years isn't perfection at all if it's bought at the expense of our natures. If your work turns out sullied because you keep cursing—don't stop! Who else is going to get it right? It may take a hundred Springtimes, but we'll hold something flawless in our hands yet!"

With that, Byzamedas fell silent and clambered to the ground. As he did so, the assembled nockers grumbled. In fact, they grumbled all the way home, and even after they began work again. Indeed, as they worked to repair all the damage the storm had wrought (and it took them many years to learn the secrets of all their machines again), they swore and complained.

Although nockers' work has improved over the centuries, despite their cursing, it still doesn't match the glorious perfection it once had. But each nocker remembers, and each works doubly hard to achieve such again. And if their blasphemies still afflict their work with flaws and weaknesses, at least there has never been another curse voiced like that of Blisvertongue Jill.



Chapter One: Just Us and the Mechanical Egg (History)

*We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots?*

— Christina Rossetti, “Goblin Market”

The Ancient World

Let the sidhe, trolls and redcaps whine about who was first among the Kithain; we were fifth, sixth or more probably ninth in the line-up. Who *murbinfurbin* cares? We’re thoroughly modern, and proud of it! Far as most of the stories go, the first nockers came from mountain roots in the middle-late season of the First Times, when many of the great stories had already been written. We might not know our true origin, but at least we don’t make up lies about it.

Some say we’re the frigin’ bastard children of redcaps and slugh. Others say we grew from the cast-off shavings of the first great troll when his “mommy,” Dana, carved him from the mountains. Some of our legends say we hatched from a giant mechanical egg from another dimension. Laugh if you want; that’s no more dumb than any other creation myth I’ve heard. The pooka tell a story about how we came from a giant dragon turd. I like that one best!

The first nockers were five pounds of shit in a 10-pound bag, and no match for the other kith. We were the new kids on the block, and the old kith “took us under their wing.” Translation: They beat the *cuck* out of us “for our own good.” The sidhe and trolls stomped on our heads when we were “bad”, which was often according to them. The whuppings weren’t so bad, in

comparison to the lectures and those damn “very disappointed with you” looks. The redcaps were like mean older brothers — you know, the ones that smacks you the minute Mom’s back is turned, etc. Lucky for us they learned early on that we taste like *mung*, though I don’t know how many fits of *cacafuego* it took to get that through their heads (and other parts). They kicked us around, but we still hung out with them, which only got us into more trouble with the sidhe and trolls (gee, and they wonder why we cuss!). The other Kithain lorded it over us because we were young and didn’t have teeth, then. They bullied us because they could, and got away with it. Why? Beats the *cuck* outta me. Probably because they figured we weren’t worth anything except as punching bags.

Well, we might’ve been young, but we weren’t stupid. We hit the dirt and kept on going, right into the underground. As the seasons passed and the rest of the Kithain were whooping it up topside, we looked for something that would make us valuable and strong. We wandered through caves, learning lessons from the spirits of stone and metal. We studied strange subterranean plants and animals. We learned the resilience of rock, the versatility and beauty of precious metals, the glitter of gems, and the sting of iron.

I should probably add that this was all before there were chimera like we know them today. The fantastic critters of the

Lexicon

Nocker dialogue is a strange combination of 1940s Bowery slang, Yiddish, Medieval English and Irish, Army dialogue, technical jargon and incomprehensible cursing. When nockers get going, they're almost unintelligible. Sometimes nocker conversations deteriorate into the worst sort of juvenile bathroom humor. In fact, this penchant for low-brow comedy is one thing that nockers seem to have in common with redcaps and pooka.

First impressions of nocker lingo can be deceptive, though. Buried under the kith's pungent verbal compost are passionate discussions of alchemy, invention and craft. Unfortunately, nocker cant is so harsh-sounding that even pleasantries have a vicious or lascivious timbre. One nocker might understand that another means no harm when she calls him a "*gebentsht balmalocha*," but other Kithain rarely bother to learn the true meaning of such statements. Nockers sound as if they are cursing, even when they're not.

Alter Kocker: A crotchety, fussy, ineffectual old man.

Badchen: Professional fun-maker, a jester; a semi-respectful term for pooka.

Balmalocha: Craftsperson, expert; the highest compliment among nockers.

Batlan: A person who does nothing, a wastrel; a derogatory term often reserved for pooka, eshu and satyrs.

Bes Din: A combination courthouse and patent office; the highest nocker authority.

Bogey: The posterior. Synonyms include: *Bom, botty, bucket, bumbo, bummy, chuff, corybungus, crupper, dokus, droddum, duff, fife and drum, fud, gluteus maximus, hunkers, labonza, mottob, pod, poofer, prats, quoit, rumdadum, rumpus, toby, tocks, tokus* and over 200 other terms.

Bubkes: A scornful way of describing something foolish or nonsensical.

Cacafuego: Literally "shit-fire," a very difficult or devilish person. Also, the very nasty cramps or diarrhea a redcap gets if he eats a nocker.

Cuck: Excrement. Also: *Alley apples, ca-ca, cack, cacky, clart, cradle custard, cut, danna, dejecta, excrementum, feculence, fiants, fuants, gong, grunt, hockey, jank, job, jobber, merd, mollock, muck, night-soil, ordure, orts, recrement, residuum, scham, scumber, sirreverence, sozzle, spraints, stercus, tad, taunty, yackum* and over 100 other terms.

Dayan: Judge of the Bes Din.

Dreck: Literally translated, "sheep shit"; trash, junk; a serious insult to a nocker's craft.

Farbissen: Embittered, dour, mean. When nockers describe someone with this term, she is *really* bad news.

Farblunjet Mixed up.

Figgerfurbingurbinurbibmurbinmitzermurbin! The curse word that even nockers have trouble saying. Legend holds that a sidhe duke's head melted upon hearing it.

Flavor: The different types of monads (see Chapter Two). Flavors include: *up, down, strange, Wyrd, charm, ana* and *kata*.

FUBAR: Fucked Up Beyond All Recognition; a bad mistake. Also, a will o' the wisp (an electricity or fire chimera) used to power nockers' chimerical inventions. See also *Glitch*.

Furk: Literally, to copulate; also, to cheat or swindle.

Gebentsht: Blessed with exceptional gifts, a high compliment.

Gematria: The use of letters as numbers. Originally Kabbalistic numerology, now used as a mathematical language central to nocker craft.

Glitch: A risky undertaking or venture, or an unexpected problem. Glitches are "Unseele" FUBARs or will o' the wisps, and may be responsible for the flaws inherent to all nocker inventions.

Goblins: The Thallain race related to nockers.

Golem: A chimerical robot or animated creation.

Gridzheh: To complain, carp, nag.

Gurk: An audible release of intestinal gas. Also: *Backfire, blast, blow off, borborygmus, botch, breeze, buster, butler's revenge, buzz, carminate, cheezer, crepitate, drop a rose, fart, fizzle, flatus, hinder-blast, honk, make wind, nose closer, pass gas, pocket thunder, poot, rasper, rouser, scape, shoot rabbits (farting at pooka), sneeze, tail-shot, trump, vent, wet-one, whiffer, wind* and approximately 350 other words.

Heebie-Jeebies: Fright, nerves. Sluagh.

Kibble: "Stuff" accumulated over a nocker's lifetime.

K'nocker: Arrogant big shot. A term of respect when applied to another nocker.

Krechtz: To complain or whine.

Mazuma: Money, dross; a just payment for hard work.

Mishegoss: Insanity, madness. Especially insanity resulting from Bedlam.

Momzer: Bastard, both in the literal and the colloquial sense.

Monad: The nocker's concept of a fundamental particle of Glamour, similar to quarks in human physics.

Naar: Fool, buffoon; a derogatory term for pooka.

Newton: A plagiarist or idea-stealer, applies to any banal scientist. Named after Isaac Newton.

Nice Nellies: Prudes who object to nockers' cursing (almost all other Kithain).

Ongepotchket: Slapped together; constructed without any sense of aesthetics or planning. Also, a scornful way of describing boggan work. It is a supreme insult to call a nocker's craft *ongepotchket*.

Pisher: A young, inexperienced and often inconsequential person; a bed-wetter. Semi-affectionate when applied to young nockers, an insult when used in regard to boggans.

Schlock: A shoddy, cheaply made article (the best that boggan work can be); only one step above *ongepotchket*.

Shtunk: A stinker, an unpleasant person; any redcap.

Tsatske: A chimerical toy, plaything, gewgaw. A useful treasure of some sort, and often a weapon.



First Times were real, no matter what the *blurbimurgin* science books and fossil records say. It was way later, after the Shattering, that these beings faded into the Dreaming. How critters like dragons and rock beasts disappeared into the Dreaming as chimera, while unlikely crap like the dinosaurs became fossil records is beyond me. Have you seen a *Brontosaurus*? Brain the size of a friggin' walnut in a 50-ton body!

Something obviously set the dragons and other creatures apart, though. Some folks believe the fae committed atrocities against humankind, and all human minds ever after blotted us out as a defense mechanism. Considering some of the old stories about how scary some of the early goblins were, I wouldn't say no to that. All that's left of these old beings are chimera, like echoes or ghosts — or gravity waves left by the Big Bang if you want your scientific analogy.

Ours is the history of invention. Fire, the wheel, tools, the plow — we were there to watch it go. Sometimes we followed humans' lead, sometimes they followed ours. Being able to talk to spirits of stone and metal helped a lot. Naturally, after the other kith said "Good-bye and good riddance," we were a little slow about getting back to show off what all we knew. We took our time perfecting our knowledge before trying it out on — er, sharing it with — the other Kithain.

Being underground so much gave us a talent for mining, not to mention plenty of chances to practice, and we riddled entire mountain ranges with our tunnels. We discovered great secrets and treasures along the way. Sometimes one of our tunnels would intersect with a redcap's, and our meetings resulted

in ugly fights or even uglier parties. Even today, we're most comfortable below ground.

We also learned to craft, and soon beautiful things of gold and other precious materials became our trade. Our grottos gained a reputation for their treasures, and the other Kithain were soon coming to us to buy our goods. By the time of the "metal ages" (Silver, Bronze, Iron), we were kicking ass and taking names. I won't go into too many details — let's just say that payback was a bitch for some of our *gorbinmourbin* siblings. But you ask anyone (any nocker, that is), and he'll tell you we aren't ones to hold a grudge. When the other Kithain needed our help to fend off the fomorians and all the other big critters, we were there.

Our founding fathers (and mothers) — Dana, the Dagda and the Tuatha de Danaan — had fought the fomorians before, and kicked them enough to convince them to stay down for a bit. Then they took off for greener pastures, the fomorians got frisky, and we had to pick up their *blabbinfabbin* mess. Now, if you buy that crap about the fae's war against the fo-morons as an allegory for the earliest tribal clashes in Ireland (and who doesn't?), then we're talking as long as 9,000 years ago. The timeline gets a little fuzzy here. When you're dealing with the Tuatha and the sidhe, time has a way of getting all *farblunjet*. The sidhe and the trolls led the war against the fomors, with some help from the few remaining Tuatha de Danaan. We supplied the weapons.

If you listen to the other kith's stories about the time, trolls were as big as mountains, the sidhe were gods, and the pooka could actually turn into something useful. (Well, *furk* me!



I guess our myths aren't so farfetched after all!) We learned a lot; thousands of years of warfare does wonders for weapons technology. We stuck to our subterranean freeholds where we could hold off almost any enemy. The redcaps (many of them, anyway) fought on the other side. They had some connection with the fomorians and other dark powers from before our time, something about bringing back "the eternal night of Fimbulwinter" and all that *stercus*. Some Unselie nockers played both sides, selling weapons to the highest bidder.

The war got bigger the longer it went, with some folks lobbing mountains at each other near the end, or so I've heard. One of our stories tells about a nocker battlewagon the size of a castle. Who am I to say it didn't happen? According to our history, *The Chronicle of the Black Mountain*, the fae finally beat the fomorians at the second Battle of Moytura. The fomorians flooded our caves in the final days of the war. They were as good at mine-fighting as we were, but we collapsed a few of our tunnels and sealed them off for good. As far as I know, they're still there, may they rot in peace.

When things got too hot near the end of the war, many of us decided to make ourselves scarce. With skills like ours, we could write our own ticket in almost any part of the world. A lot of us have been itinerant since the Fomorian War. The eshu travel more than we do, I'll grant that, but we have a lot of dust on our boots, too. I don't know if we can lay claim to the Great Pyramids of Egypt, but *The Chronicle of the Black Mountain* tells how we helped to inspire the earliest irrigation systems.

Many of us also settled in Canaan, in the Middle East, and we've been hanging around with the Jews since 1200 B.C. Funny, that's one piece of history that's stuck with us. Buy one of those new, big, fancy books on faerie lore. Look up nockers; it'll tell you that we're the ghosts of Jewish miners who died in the tin mines of Cornwall.

Sunder and Shatter

The Sundering didn't hurt us nearly as bad as it did the other kith. It wasn't easy to take, but we're used to suffering. Other Kithain — especially the sidhe and the trolls — were talking about punishing us for "bringing Autumn to the world," and all that crap. Seems they thought our use of technology was spreading Banality. The whole thing was bullshit, of course, but it wasn't the first time we'd heard that tune. The sidhe passed a *figgermurbín* edict, called the "Doctrine of Joy," against us during the final days of the Shattering. That's what the sidhe always do if they think another kith's getting too powerful — hand down some imperious law and claim special wisdom from Dana, the Dagda or the Tuatha de Danaan. Don't believe me? They're pulling the same shit on the trolls right now in the Parliament of Dreams with their "Troll Assimilation Proclamation." Still, the trolls backed up the sidhe when they were tightening the screws on us, so piss on the trolls now.

Anyway, the Doctrine of Joy claimed that Glamour was fading because the fae (especially us) weren't following the old