

Michael Moorcock's **Hawkmoon** GRANBRETAN

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Contents

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| History of Granbretan | 6 |
| The Realm of Granbretan | 11 |
| The Beast Orders | 21 |
| The Lords of Granbretan | 43 |
| Equipment | 52 |
| Scientific Sorcery | 58 |
| Creatures and Foes | 65 |
| Mass Combat | 72 |
| The Course of the War | 81 |
| Hunters of Granbretan | 92 |
| Introduction | 93 |
| A Dark Night in Karlye | 96 |
| Bloody Streets | 105 |
| No Way Out | 109 |
| When Destiny Calls | 116 |
| Characters and Beasts | 119 |
| Appendix | 124 |
| Index | 128 |

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

From Tozer's unfinished and suppressed play, *The Mirror of Nature*:

Dramatis Personae:

The KING, swimming in his royal throne-globe. A merry fellow, quick to laugh;

A WOLF, ambitious and cunning, with a fine beard;

A GOAT, a little cranky, who is also Archduke of Londra;

A BULL, as witty as he is handsome;

A DRAGON, but newly hatched from an EGG;

A SERPENT, nocturnal by nature;

A HERON in search of entertainment;

TICK-TOCK, a Fool wearing a Clock for a Mask;

A CYNIC, wearing his Face on his Face and his Heart on his Sleeve;

A MAD MUSCOVITE, Risen from the Dead for Comedical Effect,

ALSO

HAWKMOON, a Phantom Born Of Too Much Cheese;

A SLAVE, servant of the HERON, and he could be any man, or woman either, and gods know many of us have wished ourselves in his position;

A MESSENGER

WITH

Sundry GUARDS and BRAVE WARRIORS, every man-jack of them a prince among men and lord of the earth, courageous and bold and never shirking, disciplined as iron and strong as steel;

A Full Chorus of Slaves, Maskless, Wretches, Courtiers and Damned Souls

AND

A NARRATOR who should have more sense.

Scene 1: The Throne Room of the King. Discover KING, stage left. Enter WOLF, GOAT, BULL and SERPENT. The SERPENT carries the EGG. They walk to the King. It is suggested that the audience go to the lobby and buy refreshments as the characters cross the stage, which should be a mile wide to fully convey the grandeur of the KING's hall.

GOAT: My legs ache. My lords, let's stop and rest awhile.

WOLF: Never! Granbretan's conquest shall never cease until all the world's beneath our heel.

BULL: But... is the world not round, and thusly, there's no top from which to crush?

WOLF: Shut that fool up.

GOAT: His roaring offends the ear.

SERPENT: Aye. Our sorcery-science proved the world is shaped very like a map, with 'to be conquered' writ in mountains across Asiacommentista.

WOLF: I'll conquer all the east in a day and Amarekh by Tuesday week!

GOAT: And what of Darkest Afric, and Turkia and Slough?

WOLF: They'll all be mine – I mean ours, by which I mean his.

BULL: Whose?

WOLF: Why, the King, of course. Hush now, we approach his awesome sphere.

To The King: Oh mighty King-Emperor, the Lords of LilBretan would speak to you.

GOAT: Look, he sleeps.

SERPENT: Like a little infant, curled up in the mother's womb.

BULL: Aye. It warms the heart and makes me want to kick pregnant women in the belly.

GOAT: What doesn't make you want to do that?

BULL: Getting them with child in the first place! Haw!

WOLF: Be quiet, fool! Don't speak of such things in front of the King! Don't you know he hasn't gotten any since the dark of time?

SERPENT: You've woken him and he'll be wrathful. I'll not wait.

The SERPENT leaves the EGG on stage and exits through a trapdoor. Noxious fumes and the crying of the damned are heard.

KING: What? Who? Where? Are those my feet?

GOAT: Nah, lord. Your feet atrophied before the Tragic Millennium was done.

KING: I liked my feet. Ah well, no matter. Report, my lords. How goes our war in Europe?

WOLF: It's done.

KING: What, already?

Introduction



WOLF: The roads from Karlye to Istanbul are paved with skulls and signposted with crucifixes and all the distances are now marked in miles, not kilometres.

KING: What of Espanyia?

WOLF: The Serpent's plagues were most efficacious, majesty. All of Espanyia's a charnel field.

KING: Start building holiday homes there immediately.

What of Muskovia?

BULL: Er, was I supposed to conquer that?

WOLF: You were! Did you not heed my cunning plan?

BULL: I thought the Muscovite would do it.

WOLF: He's dead!

Enter A MAD MUSCOVITE and TICK-TOCK.

MAD MUSCOVITE: Dead! Dead! Death to Life!

TICK-TOCK: Behold! I resurrect the dead! I am the Lord of Time!

WOLF: Could you not resurrect someone useful?

TICK-TOCK: Why, with all of Europe conquered and Asia lying defenceless, I thought we'd need a challenge. Thusly, I brought back a moron who's more trouble than he's worth.

WOLF: Well, kill him once more.

MAD MUSCOVITE: Death to Life! Black to white! Murder to kittens! We'll cross the Black Sea by filling it with corpses!

TICK-TOCK: I lack the will.

BULL: I'll do it. Pass me yon axe.

GOAT: You can't kill people in front of the King.

KING: You can't?

GOAT: The last cleaning expedition set out seventeen months ago, sire, and has not yet reported back.

KING: Bah! You're saying my throne room hasn't been cleaned in two years?

GOAT: No, my lord, two hundred years. And with all the weekly orgies, sire, this room's gone rather rank.

KING: Bah! Send the madman to his wife, that'll finish him for sure. And have the Serpent find some way to clean up this ordure.

GOAT: Verily, it shall be so my lord.

Exit A MAD MUSCOVITE

KING: Anything else to report from Europe?

Enter HAWKMOON, who is visible only to the WOLF

HAWKMOON: Ich bin ze Duke von Köln, the dastardly ally of the mad genius, Count Brass! I live in an invisible castle and I weak ze moustachios of ze Wolf in every battle from the Kamarg to Hamadan! Ho ho ho! And though I am but vun mench, mit my hairy-dwarf wife, I am still ze greatest threat to Granbretan! I will invade Goudra with an army of feral flamingos!

WOLF: Hawkmoon yet lives! By the Runestaff, I'll have yet another revenge upon him! The Kamarg, all fourteen marshy square feet of it, is the greatest threat to our continent-spanning thousand year empire! Why, they have at least a dozen soldiers, and a flamingo and a giant militant corkscrew! My King, I demand that we immediately send a million men to find Castle Brass!

HAWKMOON: Did you send me there in the first place? Look how well that turned out...

Exit Hawkmoon on a rope from on high.

WOLF: Rragh!

GOAT: Look, the egg hatcheth.

The EGG cracks, and a DRAGON emerges.

DRAGON: Ho! I seek conquests and glories!

WOLF: We've conquered all of Europe already and I bagsied Asicommunista.

GOAT: You can have Amarekh.

DRAGON: Nay, I fear death by water. I'll find amusements elsewhere.

Exit the DRAGON.

KING: My wolf, attend to the conquest of the East. My good goat, attend to the cleaning. My lord bull...

Introduction

The BULL kneels.

BULL: Command me, King of the World.

KING: Give me but a moment.

BULL: A million lifetimes are yours, oh most terrible majesty.

KING: Good point. Wait there.

Exeunt Omnes, save the BULL, who waits patiently, kneeling, for a time.

TICK-TOCK (offstage): And thus, ten thousand years pass!

Scene 2: Another room in the castle. Enter a HERON, stage left. She is dressed in the greatest of finery, silken garments from the east, jewels most rare and precious, gold and gilt and silver and all manner of treasures. Immediately upon entering, she casts them off and walks naked save for a mask to centre stage. A SLAVE follows her.

HERON: Oh, fie upon this dull life. I desire entertainment.

SLAVE: The sexual gymnasts?

HERON: Done them.

SLAVE: The mutant horses?

HERON: Ridden them.

SLAVE: Perhaps –

HERON: Both ways.

SLAVE: The Serpent's excessive machine?

HERON: Broke it.

Enter a MESSENGER, stage right.

HERON: Done him.

MESSENGER: Milady, I bring joyous news. Your husband lives!

HERON: You'll have to be more specific.

MESSENGER: About what?

HERON: Well, which husband, firstly... and how exactly it's joyous.

Enter a MAD MUSCOVITE, stage right, who lops the head off the MESSENGER.

MAD MUSCOVITE: Honey, I'm home! Da!

HERON: Did you not conveniently die in France, leaving me control of your legion of elite warriors?

MAD MUSCOVITE: Death to Life! Murder to Birth! Fire to Ice! Roast to Chickens!

HERON *to the SLAVE*: Slave, fetch me my poisoned lipstick.

SLAVE: Which one?

HERON *to the SLAVE*: I'm in a burgundy mood today.

Exit slave, stage left. The MAD MUSCOVITE casts off his armour and stands naked on stage, save for his chicken mask.

MAD MUSCOVITE: Look, they stuck all my bits back on! Hardly any rotted!

HERON: Well, no more than was rotted before. I suppose you want to ravish me then!

MAD MUSCOVITE: Lie back and think of Granbretan, my love.

HERON: *aside* Where is that cursed slave?

aloud Wait, who's that I hear approaching?

Enter the DRAGON, stage right.

DRAGON: It is I, the Dragon! Young and full of pep and fire.

HERON: My, that is indeed a fine worm.

MAD MUSCOVITE: She's mine! Be gone, or I shall call you by strange insulting names from my homeland.

HERON: We could share?

MAD MUSCOVITE: Never! Death to Life!

Enter a SLAVE.

HERON: *to the DRAGON*: Be with you in a moment.

DRAGON: You should know this is my first time. I'm less than ten minutes old, after all.

The HERON takes the lipstick from the SLAVE and applies it to her beak.

HERON: Kiss me, you fool.

TICK-TOCK (offstage): I'm coming, hold on!

HERON: Not you. My husband!

CHORUS (offstage): Which one? You'll have to be more specific!

THE MAD MUSCOVITE KISSES THE HERON ON HER POISONED BEAK.

MAD MUSCOVITE: *Oh venomous glasnost!* Too late I (standing in for my homeland of Muskovia) learn the truth of Granbretan. *He dies.*

DRAGON: Have I come at a bad time?

HERON: Nay!

They embrace.

DRAGON: I've come at a bad time.

Curtain.

Scene 3: The dungeon of the Serpent. Discover the SERPENT, with a chorus of moaning SLAVES and buzzing machines.

SERPENT: Hubble, bubble, toil and trouble, I'll blow Europe into rubble!

Enter a GOAT

GOAT: Hail, Baron!

SERPENT: To the weather control machine! I'll make it hail icebergs over Basinstoke!

GOAT: No, I mean, hello Baron.

SERPENT: Hell, O Baron? It shall be so! I'll tear open the walls of reality and open a gateway to Hell itself!

Introduction

GOAT: Gods of Westminster! I mean, how do you do, Baron!

SERPENT: How do I do it? I'll reveal my secrets to no man!

GOAT: I'll try another tack. The King commands you to find a way to clean his throne room, immediately.

SERPENT: Feh! Such a thing is a mere trifle for a sorcerer of my power! I command the very elements, like fire, air and water!

GOAT: Water sounds good.

SERPENT: By Runga I command thee, oh ancient river Tayme! Burst thy banks and wash the filth from the King's throne room!

GOAT: This cannot possibly go badly. Let's go and see what we have wrought.

Exeunt Omnes.

Scene 4: The Ruins of the Throne Room, all awash with muddy river water. The corpses of many BRAVE WARRIORS bob in the floods. Enter a Ship of Fools, Stage Left, bearing a WOLF, a GOAT and a BULL.

WOLF: By the Runestaff! Hawkmoon has, under cover of night, crept into the King's palace and left all the taps on! Revenge!

BULL: My guts heave; I think I'm seasick.

GOAT: But we're in the throne room, not at sea.

BULL: Well, then I feel better.

Enter another ship, piloted by a CYNIC.

WOLF: Where's the King?

CYNIC: I passed his throne-globe, which was floating down river. Why, don't you know that this river is The Course Of Events and even the King may be Swept Up in Them?

WOLF: Lies!

GOAT: Half of Londra's drowned! Oh, the ignominy.

BULL: Ah, a little drowning builds character.

CYNIC: One would almost think it a commentary on our practise of relying on sorcery when but a little forethought would have done us better service.

WOLF: No man may accuse me of forethought and live! Brothers, let's take arms against this sea of troubles and by opposing end them!

He leaps into the floodwaters. They are but ankle-deep. He slashes at them savagely with his sword.

BULL: Verily! Where the Wolf leads, I'll follow.

He stands very still, and looks about himself with bovine stupidity.

GOAT: While the King's missing, his cousin the Heron must serve as regent! Where is the Heron?

CYNIC: In bed with a Dragon, who incidentally is not just a mockery of Lacasdeh but also symbolises our dangerous alliances with untrustworthy powers. Just so you know; I'd hate to be misunderstood.

GOAT: I'll go fetch her. Cynic, take your ship and this shrimp net and go rescue the King. The tide's going out, so be swift, lest the throne end up in the east end.

CYNIC: Oh, I'll conquer the east, never fear.

Exit the CYNIC, stage left. Exit the GOAT, stage right.

We linger, for a moment, at the stock-still BULL, and the WOLF still madly thrashing in the scummy water.

WOLF: Hawkmoon! Hawkmoon! Hawkmoon!

Curtain.

Historical note: The original manuscript of The Mirror of Nature was discovered in the apartments of Elvereza Tozer when the playwright was exiled from the court. It was taken as evidence of Tozer's seditious ways, although some critics have suggested the writing style of the piece is closer to that of Murrain, Tozer's arch-rival. Following the Battle of Londra, Queen-Empress Flana ordered the still-incomplete play to be performed, despite its less than flattering portrayal of her. She held that it provided a valuable insight into the state of King-Emperor Huon's court in the months just prior to the Battle of Londra.

The Dark Empire

'I'm not saying Britain always behaved herself properly, and I knew a fair bit about empire, but these people seemed to have come up with the ideas and methods of Adolf Hitler combined with the imperial instincts of Cecil Rhodes.'

— The White Wolf's Son

This sourcebook for the *Hawkmoon the Roleplaying Game* describes the Dark Empire of Granbretan, the all-conquering enemy of life in the age after the Tragic Millennium. It is primarily intended as a book of villains for the Player Characters to battle, a corrupt cornucopia of evil lords, foul sorcery, new monsters and hideous beasts. Optionally, campaigns can even be set on the Isle of Granbretan itself, with the Player Characters being criminals, freedom fighters and renegades battling against the Empire from within its very heart.

Player Character Granbretanians should not be allowed, unless the Players have the ability to convincingly act as empire building sadists!

THE HISTORY OF GRANBRETAN

The historians of the Dark Empire consider the beginning of modern history to be the Sealing of the Throne Globe, which is said to have taken place 2,187 years before the Battle of Londra that ended the reign of King-Emperor Huon. According to tradition, King-Emperor Huon led the forces of ancient Granbretan in a heroic battle against the French, saving the whole nation from destruction. He was mortally wounded in that conflict. To preserve the life of this most valiant son of Granbretan, the healers Nahass and Bupha built the Globe which has sustained the King for two thousand years.

Winners write the histories though, and it is common knowledge among the intelligentsia of the Dark Empire that the official records have been rewritten many times. Little stigma is attached to this, as Granbretan has little use for such fragile things as 'truth'. If it pleases the King to have been a great hero in his youth, why, then he was a great hero in his youth and anyone who denies this is destined for an appointment with the gallows.

Prehistory

One must turn to the mythologies and legends of the land to learn anything of its prehistory. Granbretan has a rich heritage of strange tales and folk-heroes. Huon specially venerated Aral Vilsn, the Howling God and his worship of this primordial deity has spread to the whole of Granbretan. The Fearful Four, though, the gods of change and renewal, are almost as powerful and still have a strong following among the peasantry. Some of these folk-tales describe a Granbretan that was altogether more peaceful and – in the eyes of the Beasts – weaker than it has become in modern times.

In one story, for example, the trickster deity Blaise (the teacher of Merlin) wishes to avoid his arranged wedding with a brown troll, who will eat him as soon as they consummate the marriage. He hides in a farmyard barn but is discovered by a slaving pack of hunting hounds and plain farmers, whom he had banished to the

wilderness in another tale. In the nick of time, Blaise is able to escape capture by finding the blind village idiot and using a spell of disguise to make him appear to be a town guard. When the farmers drag Blaise to the stocks, the blind man forgets to lock the trickster in and Blaise is able to slip out and hide once more. Other, more martial tales insist that Granbretan's Dark Empire is actually the second empire to have arisen from this land and that another vast empire on which the sun never set was once ruled from Londra (historians interpret this to mean that this first empire included other worlds, conquered by the fabled skyships of old).

The Tragic Millennium

Granbretan was struck hard by the war. The whole west coast was blighted by a poisonous rain that lingers yet to this day and places like Yel and Cornwallis are still uninhabitable by humans. The rest of the country was also blasted by weapons and terrible plagues. There are glass-walled craters where towns once stood and wormwoods even within the precincts of Londra. The cities survived better than the countryside, as mighty thick-walled buildings and arcologies offered shelter from the toxic vapours and plagues. Millions crowded into the cities and whole neighbourhoods became mass graves as plagues spread. The land fell into utter anarchy.

The first of the Beast Orders were born during this tragic, brutal time. Groups of survivors would band together, wearing masks to protect themselves from the foul vapours and disease-ridden corpses. Some of these gangs were formed from surviving military units, others from the clans. The practice of naming the groups after beasts arose in the north and swiftly spread over the entire country. The Beasts saved the people of Granbretan by separating the healthy and uninfected from those who were doomed to die or who were carriers of disease. A third class, those who were mutilated or mutated by the effects of war but were not actually a danger to the healthy survivors grew up and the Beasts permitted them to live as slaves. The practice of mask-wearing spread