

Book 65, Thegainvald

EXCERPTS FROM THE THEGAINVALDE, BOOK 65 OF 65

It befell in the days of [Ylgar Ysgrammored](#) that there was a mighty drake in the south who held war against him long days. Then Ylgar Grey-Eyed spoke with his knights and lords and said unto them “long have we suffered by breath of this wyrm, who holds us in tooth and claw and storm. We dare not send our armies against him for fear they should fall and we should come to ruin. So it falls to me, your king, to march against him myself and match him tongue for tongue if I may. Thus have I seen and spoken.” There was much fear and consternation among the knights and lords for they loved their king as their father. At night, [Thegaine](#) came to him and spoke soft words to soothe and succor him and entreated him to stay his journey. But Ylgar Grey-Eyed spoke and said “I am [Ylgar of Once](#) and Shall Yet Be, and my heart is firm. Take comfort, for as the smith works metal and is wrought by the metal, so shall what may come work me and be wrought by me. Upon my fingers, and my hands, and my lips I shall return to you.” Then Thegaine was soft and still and held him all the long night. And come morning, Ylgar Ysgrammored was buckled bright in harness, with gloves of supple leather. No shield he carried, but upon his breast were writ runes of surety. No helm he wore, but sang he lusty cries of war blood red. And in his hands he bore Wuuthraad, the great axe of his fathers. And with him went nought but one whose name was torn in battle, and he only to bear witness.

It came to pass that Ylgar Ysgrammored came by foot to the hills beneath [Monahven](#) which was at that time the home of [Paarthurnax](#) Fell-Song. Ylgar spoke in heavy greeting, and his voice was as wind borne from the sea. So the Grey-Eyed bid Paarthurnax the welcome of the sons of Mora, keen-biting. And when the clouds broke again, the sun-soft sky unbeaten, then came answer in dread battle-tongue. The Deep-Voiced answered, not in rage but politic, for he knew well the son of Ysgrammor. This was a great debate, and for thirteen days and thirteen nights the Ysgrammored spoke, [Kyne](#)-breathed and willful. But before every argument the drake spoke treachery and deceit, and twisted Ylgar’s words to his own ends. And the King knew that he was beaten.

Broken and exhausted, and set upon by mockery, the Grey-Eyed was soon to perish. But it is said that the son of Ysgrammor was oft of two minds, and that the one did not always know the other. Then the Mage spoke with the voice of the King, taking out of time a word never yet said, and that was Perfection, and all fell-sung theories and furies were quenched as the burning brand before the avalanche. The Deep-Voiced knew that he was lost and named the Mage “Vanquisher” and ever after were they friends, for above even might do wyrms admire cleverness.

They slept then, and when they rose they drank blood-honey and snow to quench their throats, and Ylgar spoke weakly, saying “Now are you my friend and brother, and I ask of you an indulgence. Take from me my [Eye](#), world-staying, and hide it for a time, until the doom-drum sounds again.” At this the wyrm surprised,

and cautioned the Grey-Eyed, saying “This mountain is still young, prince, with many songs unsung. The first canto is barely writ and you would silence the players?” And Ylgar Mage-King answered “Here is a pupa, moth-kindled, elven-bound and beautiful. Yet within is borne an eyas, man-roaring. And he shall work great music. But now, gentle as the piping woodflute, must this music temper for a time. And so shall this land stay, though all the world about it wriggle and dance in progress, until the drum beats a new march.”

And the drake did as he was bid.

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