

The Hin Warrior, Ecthel Northo

My family has lived in Beluir for many years. Although we have lived in the village of Crimel and the city of Chethel for a time. Every year or so it seems, we try out a new home. It's sort of a custom for us Hin. We always return to Beluir though and consider it our true home. Mostly, because father is good with livestock and farming, we've worked the farmlands nearest the bay. Ever since I can remember the animals and I have had a special bond. Perhaps it was when my father sat me on the back of a pig that I got my riding skills. Either way my father and I have had numerous arguments about raising living things, only to kill them and eat them. It's part of the reason I moved away to live with the local Marchwardens. And NO, I did NOT eat the pig; I refused. I ate only vegetables that week. And some watermelon... I did NOT eat any bacon, fried or otherwise. Okay, maybe I did. Mother did not tell me what kind of meat it was. But I did NOT eat it. I was forced to eat it; I was tricked into it. Yeah.

Two years ago I began training with the border portrol as a warrior. A group of us would be assigned a path that usually circled the city, or ran down the edge of the Luirwood. Wherever it was, it wans't more than a few miles from town. Most forays were chasing an odd monster back into the forest by yelling or throwing a

stone or two at them. Not so on the day I nearly got mouthed. My first instinct was to charge, but my comrades signaled to range him down. The arrows and stones that we launched at this thing had no effect. The whirling arms and the bobbing head were just about impossible to hit. As a warrior in training, I felt I had to take the fight to him. I had to prove myself, make a name for myself. The encounter with that tall moulder would define many of my choices for a long time. That's all I'm going to say about that. I ran as fast as I could, glided really, my two-handed sword balanced perfectly above my right shoulder, while my head was bent toward my prey. I felt like a bird swooping in for the kill, so agile and smooth was my gait. My feet were a blur under my barely moving torso. The blade felt light as a feather and it was poised for a deady upswing as I hollered a war cry (actually, I don't even know what a war cry is, but I definitely yelled, really loud. I might have said something too, I'm not sure)... I didn't get 15 feet from him before shadow fell upon me. I started to dodge the swipe of a big blue hairy hand rushing at me from the right, as the huge fist above me appeared. I heard a really loud slam, the world jolted and grew instantly dark.

The next thing I remember, was Spencer licking my hand, as I lay in a strange bed, every bone in my body broken. I looked down at my legs twisted like pretzels.

Everything was blurry, and both my eyes were burning. When I awoke again, the clerics said they did their best to heal me. My left eye was all but useless, like looking through a murky fish bowl. I still had my legs, but they were not straight anymore. They said I wouldn't walk again. But I proved them wrong (well maybe not completely wrong, cuz what I do isn't exactly walking, but you get my meaning, right?).

I wear an eye patch, like a pirate, but me one good eye seems to have compensated; I see things a little sharper at a distance. My right leg appears shorter somehow, I am bow-legged and I walk with a grotesque limp. It's painful to watch, I've been told. So if I can help it, I avoid letting anyone see me hobble around. Spencer saved my life. He was only a 6 month old pup at the time, but he already weighed twice as much as me. After I fell, the party sent a volley of every kind of missile they had, which distracted the mouter. Spence raced in and dragged me away from the fight. Eventually, the filthy aberration got tired of its guerilla tactics and went back into the woods.

After that, for several months, the guys made fun of me calling me "Northo" which is luirc for charge. They said it kind of sing songy. Maybe because I was stupid enough to charge a full grown mouter. Or maybe because they know my movement is hampered and it is

near impossible for me to run. I'm not sure. Could be they just were imitating the yell I did before I attacked. Anyways, little did they know they gave me the perfect nick name because my Marchwarden stuck a 10 foot pole in my hand and called me the "Ecthel Northo", or the Charging Spear.

It's actually a lance and the charging is done by my 185 pound War Mastiff, Spencer. We've developed a deep, unbreakable link over the past two years. He's been specially trained for war; he'll continue to fight even without my command. And Spence hasn't left my side since the accident. The Druid Circle and local Marchwardens have agreed to "lend" him to me. That's Luiren for "Spencer and you are paired for life, but your loyalties lie here. We expect you back soon." For the Hin, that could mean a hundred years. They understand the strong bond that Spencer and I have made risking our lives protecting their borders. I doubt that he would allow another rider. Sometimes I fall asleep atop him, so comfortable are we. And we are unmatched in the games (at least in Beluir, and probably other cities, most likely all cities. Actually, probably all of Luiren), and we don't even use a saddle (that's probably why we're the best in Luiren because we don't have all that extra weight). There's no need for one, as I can predict every move that Spence will make (or vice versa); I can practically hear his thoughts.

I don't actually need to do that, because I've learned to Speak with animals. Spence and I talk most nights if I haven't used that spell for something else. We've won numerous prizes in the games (especially the obstacle course) and you know that's a big deal because everyone, even outsiders, come to compete in the games. We've also single handedly chased more monsters than I can count back into the Luirwood (actually that's 2 hands and 4 paws, but I haven't made up a word for that yet; sextipedally?) including a nasty, blue, hairy, stinky, smelly, gross, tall moulder. I probably should have killed that last one. But it wasn't THE one that maimed me, at least I don't think it was. But he could have gone back and told his friends and they might have told the One that I'm still alive. Not likely, but I'll be ready for that slimy bastard if he ever decides he wants to face me. Really not likely, cuz I might not see Liuren for a long time. But if he ever followed me like the local legends say they do, I will kick his butt (or face, or chin or whatever). It will be an epic re-match.

As I write this, my family is preparing to move to a city called Whillip. I didn't want them to come with me... I mean I did, of course, want them to come I mean, but I wasn't going to rip them away from the heartland so I could be coddled by momma and dadda on my far away journey. We've booked passage on a small air ship and

bartered with our skills, since we don't really have the gold. It's due to set sail from Chethel in a couple of weeks. Mother and Father have hired on as part of the crew. I didn't stick around to get all the details, as the captain was giving me the eye. I hope we don't get air sick, cuz there's still a few more tricks I need to perfect with Spencer. Not that we will be air sick, because we haven't sailed before. If we did, I don't remember. Not sure what I'm gonna do yet, besides train I mean, but the guy nodded his head when he looked me over like he knew exactly what I'd be good at. Uh wait, that didn't sound right. Perhaps my eye patch persuaded him to give us a break. Yeah, that's it; He thinks I'm a pirate and he wants me to steer his little boat. Oh... yeah that, didn't sound good either. Although, he did see me try to "walk" around the deck. Otherwise, I'm not sure if the captain would not have let Spencer stay in the cabin with us. That's what we're going to be doing! We're going to protect the other passengers and the stuff on his ship. Definitely. That was what the nod was for. I can tell because I'm a druid and druids are really good at reading people. Actually, druids are not that good with people at all, are they? Which is why that guy gives me the skeevies. Well, either way, all of the druids of the patrol insisted that my talents were needed in this particular city. And not for driving a boat either. Although I could if I wanted to. I might. I'm sure the captain will let me. Actually, I don't really

know why a human sized city would need a half-blind cripple, but my Marchwarden has all but ordered Spencer and I to go. Spencer told me he's glad the militia decided to let him go with me. And most importantly, the priestess of Mielikki said many evils would go unpunished if we refused the calling. I'm not really sure what that means, but she made it sound kind of scary... so yeah. The Mayor was quoted saying "When it come to the Hin, there's no such thing as a half anything." So the humans are getting a full sized, larger than life, hin warrior. Wait, druids can be called warriors too right? Well, it was most likely high time to move anyways. And who am I to argue with a goddess? I am, after all, Ecthel Northo.

Charge = Northo

bottom = Nu

Spear = ecthel

fast = lim