

"ED-Gar" A short story

Mark Crawford

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It is said that our ancestors were the first sons of the gods and that our First Mother was the creator of our kind; this is the origins of our people according to the Old One's who lived in the far lands. No, I do not know if this is true or not, but what I do know is that I was a man who hated, who murdered and conquered, who ruled and persecuted, a man who did these things for the sake of doing them. No I am not proud of this fact, but in my defense I did these horrible things so that my people could be free from their life as slaves.

I was the first of our people in many generations to be something other than a slave.

The Others, the savages, came to our land ages ago an conquered it; as a result our people were divided. Those of my people who escaped that initial genocide fled into the mountains where their children fell ill in the harsh climate and died by the hundreds. So desolate was the rocky mountain terrain that the old folks starved so that their sons and daughters could eat, but we are a fierce people and we survived. The hatred however, it not only survived, it flowered into the very nature of my people, of me.

Every five years of so, the Others, would raid our mountain villages and carry our women and children off to be slaves. They murdered and plundered and raped my people without accountability; my people were herders and scholars, not warriors.

Long ago my people had learned from the sky gods the art of building serviceable shelter. They taught my people how to pack mud into blocks and then how to cook those blocks of clay until they could be stacked and fortified into walls for homes, and walls for fortification. We were the most advanced people of the planet. I am proud of that.

My blood is the blood of the gods who flew the skies above and beyond the Other gods; the savages of the surrounding lands worshipped the Sun and the Moon. My blood, is the blood of the Star Travelers. Yes, my people, the chosen ones, we are the children of the gods who once flew the heavens above us, it is for this reason the Other tribes hate us.

In the old cities of my ancestors, which the Others now occupy, it was common to see my people being brutalized, raped and beaten in public, especially our women. The Others envied us because our hair was the color of the sun, the same red-orange color of the gods; we are a beautiful people, forever reminding them of our divine linage. More important than our beauty however was that fact my ancestors, had a written language; they hated us for this, also.

There was a time when my people were the most advanced and respected people on the planet, but in truth we were weak and as a result of this weakness we thought it humane to share our knowledge with the other cultures, this was the beginning of our downfall. Being an advanced people we brought their young into our cities and we gave them the secrets of our people, then we accepted their families, and then their kinfolk. We treated them as equals, even though they were

not; they bred like rabbits and over time they came to outnumber us, then they forgot our kindness and they overpowered us, and slew us and enslaved us. It was this way for may generations and during those generations my people forgot what the gods had taught them about agriculture, they forgot much of the knowledge that had made us great and we became like our oppressors; no written language, no mental skills, no knowledge of crop rotations, and in the end we were little more than savages ourselves, savages who thought only of eating, sleeping and procreating. That is when I was born.

I did not blame my ancestors for being subjugated any more than I blamed my mother for not knowing who my father was. I did not blame my sister because her father and my father were not the same. I blamed no one for my life or my circumstances for it is these very hardships that made me the man I am today.

As a child of half years I saw my mother and sister taken into an alley by a group of savages and raped; I learned anger. As a child of half years I watched my sister die giving birth. And as a child of half years I became the very embodyment of anger, and as a child of half years I watched my hands take the life of her child - their child.

Not long after the death of my sister's child, my mother, who was at the City Gates begging for work, resisted when one of them wanted her hair; our masters loved our hair especially when it was golden red like my mothers; they make wigs of our hair; it was considered very fashionable for them in those days. She died that day ... I wept for her.

Even though it was forbidden I remembered the olden ways of my ancestors and in honor of my mother I dug a pit from the ground and inside it I put rocks and then timber, on top of the timber I put my mother's desecrated body. I said prayers for her, then I added dirt and began to cover her with it. I watched as the alabaster body of my mother disappeared with every handful of dirt that I myself threw, and my hatred for the desert people increased within me to such an extent that I drew a stone blade across my chest until the blood of my ancestors flowed freely from me. All of this happened when I was a boy of only ten.

Later that night I looked beyond the stars to the gods of my people and I asked "Why," why had such an evil people been given life? I asked a god I had never known what my people had done to deserve that which they were being forced to endure? I asked what it was that my mother and my sister had done to deserve the life and the death that had been theirs. And I vowed by the blood of my ancestors to bring as much vengeance as possible to my oppressors.

When I was twelve I saw one of them fall to the ground in a drunken stupor by the side of the main pathway leading to the center of the forest, he ordered me to help him. I took a stone and beat him with it until his body was lifeless, then I robbed him and left him for the wolves. The next day the Others murdered twenty of my people because of it. I was responsible, yet because I was afraid. That guilt consumed me until I vowed to never again be afraid, even unto death.

Two years after that, my first murder, three of them fell upon me and raped me, they were drunk, and there is a custom among their people which said that a boy and a woman are the same. This is why they have no civilization of their own, they are a people who believe it better to take than build, and they prefer sex over family, body over mind. They are like rodents in that they take whatever they can from the land and its people without putting anything back to replace it, and

then when all is consumed, they move on. Like I said, they were drunk and that night I laughingly killed them and bathed in their blood. Then I removed their heads and hid them in a cave that had been mine since I was a child.

The next day as I was returning to town one of them saw me, how they knew I was the murderer, I do not know; but they knew. Without provisions and in a panic I ran into the wilderness and there I hid. I had no regrets then as a boy, nor do I now as an old man.

Time in the wilderness was hard and I was near starvation for I had been forty days with little to eat. In my weakened state I fell to the ground and faded in and our of consciousness, and in that delirium I began to pray not to the Sun and the Moon but to the god who made the Sun and the Moon, the god of my ancestors. I wanted to tell my god that I did not want to die in the wilderness and be eaten by animals, but I was unable to say anything except that I wanted to die avenging my people, then I lost all consciousness before I could finish my supplication.

When I regained consciousness a manlike figure was standing over me dressed in white. He was tall and pale with hair the color of gold. "Your people are my people, I am their father," he said to me in a deep voice. I went to my knees and worshiped him there in the wilderness.

Together we were and he, my god, my father, nourished me and taught me how to survive in the wilderness, he taught me a new/old language which he instructed was to be our new language and that this, the language of the gods, would be a sign at the end of time that we were his people. He taught me that in the olden days, when the gods walked the earth, that the gods themselves became estranged, one from the other. That they, the gods, used humans as soldiers to war against each other and he taught me that the Others had been created by gods in a land far away form where we now were, that they had been created by another god to be workers. He taught me that my people had been created last of all the people and that our purpose had been to be the administrators of the new world, that we had been given an inventive spirit, that we had been designed by the gods to be the builders of civilization. He told me that my people had been created in the image of the gods themselves. He taught me that it was he and his sister that had created us, and he told me that when they had created us, the people who looked like the gods, that the other gods became angry because he had given us too much of his blood, and that as a result of violating their laws, he himself had been banished from that place in the sky where the gods in those days lived. It was then that I understood that my creator, like me, had been driven away form his people and into that very same wilderness.

My god told me that as a result of my people having been created in the image of the gods that we were identified for elemination, warred upon and driven from the fertile lands of our original homeland like sheep scattered by a pack of wolves. Even this however did not satisfy the anger of the other gods, they wanted us destroyed, we were considered a blasphemy, monkey's who looked like gods, so in an attempted holocaust they sewed an enmity into the minds of the first men against my people. However, it became apparent that my people could not be easily erased form this planet, so the Other gods decided that the best way to destroy our people was to breed the god gene out of us, to destroy the bloodlines of my people by breeding us with the Others and so it began, with the help of the Other gods, the first men enslaved my people and openly stole our women and bred with them. But my god taught me that our bloodline would survive if we acted together, he told me that my people had to rise up, that we had to move form the lands of our origins and move north past the big river and possess the land promised to us there. Over the next

few years my god taught me to secrets of Warcraft. My god taught me to smelter metal from the earth and with this metal he taught me to forge weapons the likes of which had never been seen and would never be duplicated; to gerther we crafted a War Hammer, we named it "Deliverance".

Later it would become known as "The Hammer of My People," for never had the world seen anything like it.

When our time together ended my god blessed my people and commanded that I be the leader of them, then he turned and left me in that place of high stones with these words, "Take the Knowledge of metal that I have given you, use it to conquer your oppressors and then move your people to the land I have promised you. I have heard your prayers and I have dried your tears." I fell upon my face and wept heartily.

I found honor in the weapons we had made together, I found honor in my knowledge, I found honor in myself and I found pride in being created in the image of my god. No longer was I ashamed of whom my people were, my people had been the Builders and now they would become the Conquerors. A boy had fled into the wilderness, but a man would return form it.

As I approached the village of my childhood an old man sitting beneath a tree saw me coming; he looked at my long red hair and he looked at the warrior's weapon I carried in my hand, and he knew. Rising to his feet he stood and followed me, rock in hand. As the old man and I neared the village those of my people working the fields just outside the gates, and those herding the sheep, and those on errands for their masters stopped and looked upon me. The old man following me shouted "He has returned. The deliverer has retuned!" The women fell to their knees, the children pointed and the men picked up their tools of labor and turned them into weapons.

Together my people destroyed the village of U-DEN and we slaughtered the Others. I, and my people with our metal weapons cut the enemy down by the tens and by the hundreds and the Sun was low in the sky when we finished. I gave no mercy and in anger we hung from the walls those of our people who had willingly whored themselves to our enemies and we spat on them and we hung signs around their necks upon which I wrote the words "Impure Mind, Impure Blood" in the language that my god had taught me.

When the slaughter was finished the hatred inside me was not. When my blood lust had been quenched I tried to leave U-DEN and return to the wilderness that I had known these past few years, but when I did so my people followed me, they kept shouting an chanting my name "ED-Gar! ED-Gar!" I told them to return to their homes so that I could go into the wilderness and give thanks to the god of our people, but they had no homes of their own to go to, so, there, on that spot, I built an alter of stones and there we worshipped our god for the first time as a free people.

I taught my people the importance of our blood. I told them of the sacrifice that our god had made to give us his own blood, his own image. I told them that from that day forward none of my people were to mix with any others outside our tribe, that our hair was a sign to the gods that we were in their image. I told them that my god had told me that in the future the gods would return, and that when they did, they would look amongst all the peoples of the earth to find among them those people who will rule the new heavens and the new civilization that they, the gods would create here on earth. I told them that my god had said that the keepers of the earth will be chosen

by the godliness of our blood. I then slit the throat of a pure lamb and let its blood flow between the stones of the alter we had constructed. "This," I said, "shall be a sign to our god that we understand the importance of our bloodline."

Word spread fast that a Savor had come, and my people came form their hovels and their caves and their mountains; soon I had a great army of over two thousand men. Together we mass produced metal weapons and I taught my people to use them with a military efficiency, and driven by my anger I became a barbarian and a man bent on destroying, on conquering, and so I did.

I created the first army my people had ever known and I created its first war. I was the first warrior and I was the first Warlord of my people and I slaughtered the arrogance of my enemies. In my anger I became a great entity, a great hero who compounded the meaning of tyranny and in the end I became everything I despised.

I was driven to decimate any and all who had molested my people, my culture; I vowed to destroy any and all who had or would subjugate my people because of the color of our skin or our hair. I was a barbarian; I had forgotten the superior intellect that my god had given to my bloodline, an intellect above that of all Others. For four years I marched and made war upon the enemies of my people. I killed and burned my way across the land, form the jungle filled south to the hot lands where the sun sets, and then to the great water of the sun rising and then I made my home around the great stone lion and the giant stone alters of the original gods for this was the original land of my people before the Other gods and their dark armies drove my people away.

But in time I forgot my god. I had forgot that he had instructed me to move my people north and into a new and Promised Land; in my anger I had forgotten my promise to my god, my savior, and my creator. And then one day while climbing a tree I fell and had it not been for a skilled healing woman I would have died. In my transgressions, in my moment of suffering, I remembered my god.

In time I began to heal, but never again did I pass a day free of pain; I hurt all the time. In an effort to relieve my pain I found that if I sat with my back propped straight with my knees pulled to my chest that the never-ending pain of my injury subsided, so I spent hours each day sitting this way. I would sit at the edge of the great river which sustained my people and watch the Sun and the Moon and the Stars and I longed to be among them, to fly the great metal birds of the original gods. Yes I sat and I watched and I contemplated the meaning of life. I sat day after day. I felt the warmth of the morning wind as it blew through my hair and across my cheeks drying the tears of guilt I bore concerning my failure to take my people to the Promised Land.

I continued to sit and watch and I was awed by the great power of the Sun on our land and on my people. I was awed by the power of Light. I contemplated my god, the god who had come to me in the wilderness, the god who had taught me the secrets of war so that I could deliver my people.... and I wondered if I had done right by him.

As my health returned so did my hatred, but this time it was not the vengeful hatred of my youth, this time it was a hatred for ignorance. With this new hatred firmly implanted within me I went to my people and began to teach them about the original gods and about how they had put a part of their own blood into the blood of the old ones to create the first man. I told them about how our god had defied the Other gods by giving us more god blood than any before us had possessed, and that as a result of this we came to look like the gods themselves. I told them the story of my life,

about our god coming to me in the wilderness, these things I needed to teach because many years had passed since we began our conquest and many new children had been born to my people, children who did not know our history. And from that day on I became a teacher instead of a conqueror and I required that all my people learn the language that my god had taught me, and it, became our language.

One day an old healer asked me if our god was more powerful than the Sun whom, in the absence of true knowledge, many of our people had come to worship, I knew not the answer. Because I did not know the answer I did not know what to say, but after some thought I told him that I did not think so, I told him that since my god ate and drank the fruits of the earth, I had to assume that he, like the other things here in our land lived and died by the light of the Sun and therefore could not be superior to the Sun itself. But I was troubled by my answer.

I contemplated what the old healer and I had discussed. I listened as the wind blew among the things around me. I watched children pay. I watched young people mate. I watched children being born, and I heard birds sing. I saw the movement of the flowers as they tracked the Sun across the sky. I touched rocks and trees, water and fire; all of these experiences, all of this contemplation took a long time to bring about the gift of reason, but as all trees produce seeds, so too does the tree of contemplation produced answers. Finally with my old age came understanding.

I was awed at the power of the Sun, but I also understood that the power of the Sun was limited and that the awesome power which beckoned the flowers to turn and to follow its warmth across the sky was powerless when it came to healing the wounded, teaching a history or delivering a child from the tyranny of its oppressors. I also understood that my god was very different from the Sun, the Moon and the Stars. I understood that the power, the purpose of the Sun, was to give life to the earth, I also understood that the only power it had over my people was our need for the sustenance of this earth. Therefore, I knew that the Sun had no power over how I chose to live my life nor how any other man chose to live his life, that the power which directed the lives of men came form other men, the leaders of the people, men and women like me. The Sun, I surmised, ruled the growth of food, and that the Leaders among us ruled the growth of men, but who ruled the Sun? And who ruled the Leaders of the people? To this I concluded there must be some ONE thing controlling the heavens and all other things as well. I understood that there had to be a single point of all control, an undisputed leader, a single God who was able to become the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the birds and who could even become a man, if need be. I understood that my God, the God that had taught me the history of my people, the secrets of war and who had delivered my people from tyranny, had left his place so the he might come the earth as a man to bring justice to his chosen people. I then understood that my God ruled all, that my God was All.

With this firmly embedded in my beliefs I stood at the edge of the great river where the old gods had built their colossal stone edifices, and I took a breath of satisfaction into me. In that satisfaction I looked behind me at the great stone lion and I saw the army of my people spread out before me and I looked to the north and I knew what I had to do.

We left the land of the first gods, the land we had fought and died to recover and we walked around the water in search of the land that had been promised us by the One God.

The land we had left was fertile and green, but the land we now walked was barren. Many of my people died along the way, but after many months we came to an opulent land with rolling hills

of grass, an oasis of good land and good water. Surely this must be the land promised to us by our God, but I was unsure so on we continued.

After several moons of walking in this new land we came upon the remnants of an ancient stone wall. This wall had been constructed of cut stones that were so big that no man could have possibly made them and we camped beside the remnants of them. Surely I concluded, this wall, had been built by the same gods who had built the giant stone edifices of our homeland; there we rested.

That night off in the distance my people saw a light in the wilderness and they had great fear, but I understood. I gathered my people and chose two men and two women and told them to come with me as witnesses to the event that I suspected was going to take place.

The five of us walked towards the light in the wilderness and there we saw a beam of light, a pillar of light, and standing in it was the God of my people and we fell upon our faces in fear and in supplication.

My God told us to rise and then he gave us the history of this land that he had promised us. He told us that one day he would return to earth and rule it completely. He told us that the land upon which we now stood was a scared spot of the old gods, the spot where they came and left earth, and he told us that one day the gods would return and that he wanted his people, the people with the god-blood to be here to welcome them. He told us that others would come and try to take this land for their gods, but that we were to destroy them and to hold this land until the day that he and the Star Gods returned from the heavens. This we have done.

At this telling I am an old man upon his death bed. I have lived a bloody life but one that I am not ashamed of, for I was a man who found his God and worshiped his people. My blood is pure and my hammer remains unbroken. I am the first of the Builders and I am the last of the slaves. I am T-Gar.

At sunrise on the winter solstice I died and when I died my spirit floated above my body and I saw the tears of my sister as surely as I saw the smile of my mother. She started to speak, and I longed to hear her words, but I did not hear them because I was once again inside of the body of another and my heart bled. I looked at my hands and they were the hands of a man shackled.

It is dark here, this is a dark place.

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