

# The Phargol-Horn

Volume 68

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If you have followed this story over the last many newsletters you know that there are several moving parts. One is an advance party consisting of Groosh, Graffyn, Poffles and Ploot who are at Krak N'Borg. Second is the rest of the search party consisting of Pree and Sal who are flying back to the Obelisk to report their latest findings. The Wizards at the Obelisk who are trying to organize their response to all they are learning are a third. And lastly there is Krak N'Borg itself, which seems to have been abandoned.

At some point these parts are bound to collide. When it does the results are bound to be explosive. Pay careful attention I am sure there will be other surprises.

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A small hole became visible in the carpet. Sal acted as if he didn't even notice but his eyes kept finding their way back to it. When you are traveling over two miles high in the sky it is worrisome that your choice of transport might rip apart at any moment sending you to a very unpleasant ending. Sal did not say anything about the tear to Pree who was on the opposite side of the carpet. Why alarm him, one worried individual was enough.

Over time the hole continued slowly to grow. Then the carpet tore open and a large flying creature flew through the hole and ripped a piece off of his robe. The animal grabbed Sal and began to shake him. Sal screamed for help.

Sal heard a familiar voice. It was Pree's. He was shaking him vigorously and yelling for Sal to wake up.

Sal's eyes blinked several times and then opened. He looked about. There wasn't a hole in the carpet. No large creature was anywhere in sight. Sal had fallen asleep while on watch. He was lucky he had not fallen off the carpet.

It was obvious the effect that fatigue was having on him. Realizing this was an important first step, what to do about it was the question.

Sal remembered Wodema had once brought him some special beans that she brewed into a liquid. This liquid once drank provided a jolt of energy. Be careful she warned too much could make you restless for an extended period of time. This reminded Sal of the time a lightning bolt struck by his carpet while in flight. He was hauling pots and was resting on one when the bolt hit it. Every hair on his body stood up and his toes curled inward. Days later he still had difficulty putting his shoes on.

Sal pulled his backpack from among their supplies. If memory served him right he had placed the beans in a small packet. His hand fondled around and finally found it. Inside were several of the beans. He removed a pot from the back and placed the beans along with some water inside it. A small crystal was taken from his satchel. He held it under the pot. Raising the pot to eye level Sal spoke some charm words.

**As I see you let me say,  
I have saved you for a special day,  
Turn this into a liquid brew,  
To serve a purpose good and true,**

The pot's water began to boil and burn the beans producing a thick black potion with a heavy aroma. After allowing it to cool for a few moments Sal took a large gulp.

He felt like his eyes were rolling inside his head. Then he saw stars. His legs began to buckle, and then shot straight out. Sal started to dance. Realizing that this was not a good thing to do on a flying carpet he tried to stop. No matter what his mind wanted his body would not cooperate. The carpet was starting to move in an up and down motion. Supplies started to fly up and fall off the carpets sides. An alarmed Pree took a seat and held onto the carpet with both hands.

For quite a long while Sal's appendages continued to have a mind all their own. Slowly Sal's body returned to a more natural state, if you ignore an occasional jerk or shake. He still did feel rather peppy.

This had been truly a star bucking experience. There was no doubt in his mind that he wouldn't be dozing off again soon. Maybe he could open a stand and sell the beans to others. He could call it "Star Buckling".

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Seeing the statue of the creature was enough to shake anyone up. For the search party it was a great reason to call it a day. Slowly they inched their way back up the winding staircase. They were careful to be very quiet. What lay below them was still unknown and if they had to face something it would be best to wait for another time.

Hunger was becoming a main concern for all of them. Groosh's stomach was rumbling so loud that it possibly could be heard by someone. They would go back and sort through the supplies that they brought with them. The supplies were full of wonderful edibles. It was a comforting thought after such a stressful day.

As they approached where the supplies were left it was obvious that something was wrong. No longer were they in the tidy groups that they had been left in. Several parcels were torn open. Many items were tossed about and some even rested on tree limbs. It was bad enough that items were thrown about but what made matters worse was what could be missing.

Their food provisions were mostly gone. This was almost more than Graffyn could bear. After looking about they recovered enough food for possibly a few days. They gathered items for a meal and set about preparing it. In no time it was made and devoured.

Things were definitely not getting any easier. Food was a necessity. Other items could be done without. Groosh could eat enough for two. Poffles luckily was a bit of a light eater.

Wizards are not known for dieting and Graffyn like most at the Obelisk was use to eating as much and as often as he wanted. This is one time where he really missed Chef Hottlepottle. He could visualize him whipping up a pot of stew or baking a cake. Graffyn whiiffed the air but all that his nostril gathered was the smell of wet fur. Poffles could surely use a bath.

A set of small wings quickly flew by Gaffyn's nose and brought him back to reality. He jumped backward and swung his hand at it. Just as he was about to make another swipe he pulled back. It was Ploot.

He had wondered where Ploot had disappeared to. Hydro-Glyphs were very independent and trying to control them had no positive results.

Poffles and Groosh started gathering the rest of the supplies from their scattered locations. They complained more with each parcel they picked up. Who could have done this? What were they after? If Groosh could find them, they would be more than sorry. A bigger issue was that they now knew that they were not alone. The supplies did not scatter themselves about. They looked for clues.

Graffyn always thought of himself as a master detective. This had little merit although he did find Hotpot's lost spatula. He found it in his soup bowl when he was eating, hardly a feat of great acclaim. The first clue found was a scattering of black feathers. Small indentations were found on the satchels. These prints consisted of three marks forward and one in the back. The impressions were not deep so whoever it was had very little weight. The feathers would explain how some of the parcels found their way so high into the trees. This thing could fly. It was at least part bird Graffyn shouted loudly.

Groosh stared at Graffyn. Graffyn was ready to accept praise for his revelation and knew everyone was watching him. What he did not realize was that what he was saying was already obvious to everyone. The reason that they were staring at him was that he had in his excitement yelled out his revelation. If anyone heard this they could be discovered. Graffyn realizing his error then repeated his revelation but in a much softer tone. Knowing the possibility of what it was, brought them no closer to who it was.

It was quite late and they were very tired. The wind was chilly but building another fire would risk exposure. A hut would be best. At least this way the wind would be blocked. In the far corner of the compound set a good candidate. They made their way towards it. All except Ploot who was off again.

As they approached the hut Groosh thought he saw a flicker of light. He chalked this vision up to fatigue. They opened the door and walked in. It was very dark. Poffles moved as close as he could to Groosh. Graffyn stumbled over something and fell to the floor.

"You clumsy fat goof," someone said.

It wasn't Graffyn's voice. It wasn't Groosh's either. That only left Poffles and it surely wasn't him.

There was dead silence.

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There was to be much debate at the Obelisk. All wizards were contacted to come and be involved in the discussion. Something of this much importance had to be thoroughly thought out.

When you have a group this large it is only natural that you get several opinions. These opinions fell usually along three lines. There was one group who always wanted to deal with an issue immediately. This group often did not care about facts their mind was made up before they heard them. Their leader was a young wizard of rising influence. His name is Aritostle or Ari as he is known. Many believe he was pushing to be the heir apparent to Azael. Others believe he is just an over confident very arrogant wizard.

His exact opposite is Clemense. There is not a single issue that comes before the Obelisk that he does not dig into thoroughly. None are too big or too small. You may have heard the phrase turning a "Boboll into an Okinawathe". Clemense certainly had the talent to do this. For instance if you ask him about the "Carin Tor versus Master Wizard Graffyn" case he will tell you every position taken and what the final decisions were based upon. He always said that his mind is like a metal trap. Many wish the trap would get stuck shut for a while. It certainly would help move things along.

Dead in the middle is poor Delphus. Dead is the key word here. Sometimes he wished he was, especially when Ari and Clemense get going. Delphus has been known to cry out in anguish for civility. This is a shame as he is definitely one of the smartest wizards and his sense of humor is quite keen. Although often frustrated he is the one most able to broker a deal or find a solution. His most quoted statement is:

**"Extremism for the sake of extremism is too extreme!"**

As the wizards entered the Obelisk they were of course greeted at the door by who else but Ari and Clemense. It was obvious to each one entering that they were being courted for their support. The voting process is registered by voice at the end of a session. This is another reason it takes so long to cover an issue. Whichever way you vote you are challenged. You could sneeze and someone would object. As you can see nothing is easy in the Obelisk and something of this magnitude is going to be hard to come to consensus. Clemense was first to speak.

"My fellow wizards, we have been told of a most alarming development. It appears that N'Borg is holding hostages of a kind that we are not familiar with. How many we do not know but it matters little. Anyone being held against their will by one so evil is undoubtedly in deep trouble. We have released a scout team to see what more can be discovered. They have not reported back and I hope soon they will grace us with more information."

Ari then took the floor to address the wizards.

"I come to you with disgust in my heart for the thought that N'Borg is still able to operate with no concern for our wishes. How do we know who these hostages are? They may have had value to us. Who knows their worth and N'Borg has decided whatever it is he has the right to it. I say death to N'Borg."

In the corner set Delphus. He shook his head. Where Clemense showed more concern for the hostages than the plan itself, Ari seemed to let his hate for N'Borg carry more weight than the hostage's fate. This was all too familiar. Delphus knew this was going to be a long session. Hopefully he would be able to mediate a plan.

**To be continued.....**