

The Phargol-Horn

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The Seasons of My Life

Just as there are four seasons to each year, I believe the same is true in our lives. I thoroughly enjoy the seasons and think life would be a bit boring without them. I'm not sure the order they come in is my ideal but it seems logical.

I would start with spring. It is a time of renewal or birth. It is full of wonderful surprises. Plants erupt from the ground to bring new life to all around it. The air seems fresher, the sky clearer and there is a sense of arrival.

When you are young there is a sense of amazement, a sense of wonder or as some of the wizards would call it magic. Why wouldn't it seem like magic to see a bulb turn into a flower or crisp stream babbling over glistening pebbles? I could not wait to remove my boots and dip my toe in the water to see the temperature. Often after close observation to see no one was around I would remove my dressings and slide into the water au natural. This action, oddly enough led to meeting my first love.

I had a favorite pond that I was naïve enough to think that no one knew of but me. It was a beautiful day so I removed my clothing except my shoes and entered the pond. As I floated I tried to erase all memories of the day's woes. It was at this point through a reflection in the pond that I noticed a figure peering from behind a tree. It was probably one of the local boys who had also discovered the pond, so I paid little notice. I was just too relaxed to care. I heard rustling in the bushes and then a gentle flop in the water. A small wave went around. Still I did not care. That was until I looked to me side. The most beautiful face I had ever seen was but a few feet away. At first I froze but then I realized here I was floating naked with a total stranger right next to me. I panicked flailing my arms like a lunatic. I went to cover an area that I thought she should not see but did it with such force that I let out a yell. She laughed.

"Why so nervous" she said.

"I do not know you and further more I have some concerns" I replied.

"I have seen your concerns and you have little to be concerned about" she replied with a laugh.

I couldn't help but laugh also. I could see through the water that she too was unclothed. She turned and started swimming around the pond. Every movement seemed more graceful than the last. I guess you could say I was a bit smitten. I hardly moved. Watching her was a thing of beauty. When she got to where her clothes were she rose from the water and began to dress. I tried to avert my eyes but it did no good. I was in love. As she rose she said "Come visit me sometime, I live in the village over the hills." I visited her for many years and they were among the best of my life.

Summer is a time of volatility and warmth when the atmosphere is vibrant. Splitting your time between enjoying the warmth and staying out of it when it is too hot is a constant challenge. But at that station in your life you may feel that you are pretty hot stuff also. I remember fondly the games we would play. It seems like our energy would never end. There were lots of ball type games. Among my favorites was skittle ball.

You would divide into two separate teams. The object of the game was to move a ball that was placed at the top of tree. You were to skittle up the tree and get the ball and deposit it into a straw basket on the ground. Needless to say there was plenty of pushing and shoving as each person went after the ball. I wasn't the fastest but I could hold my own. Where some had the advantage over me was that I was a bit short and with my arms not very long, it made getting leverage tough. I was most proud the one time that I did help my team win. After snaking my way to the top of the tree and grabbing the ball I tossed it over my shoulder. One of my teammates happened to be standing exactly where I threw it. He had a clear run to the basket and as the ending bell sounded dropped it in. I must tell you I walked around with my chest puffed out for days. That is until the next game when we lost terribly. But I guess a few moments in the sun are better than none.

Who could not like fall with all the beautiful colors. You can hear Wodema singing as she wonders about gathering herbs and boy are they bountiful. Fall is a great gathering time in many ways. People as well as plants. With just a hint of chill in the air you feel so alive. I had a group of friends and we would meet at Wendlock Valley. From there we would hike, or hire a mahoudra beast to pull our wagon. Either way we could enjoy the great scenery. We all brought rations to share. Once the big cook pots were fired up the whole area came alive with odor; wonderful odors. I could barely wait to get a bowl and sample each pot. You have heard the term eating like a snord, well you could verify it by watching us. Later the desserts would come out. Holy skamoloy, you would swear that your stomach would explode.

This is where I met my second love. It was hard to see what she looked like at first. She had layer upon layer of clothing. She looked heavier than Wodema. As the day grew longer and warmer a layer at a time came off. By the time the sun set she looked like a different person. She reminded me of the petite N'Leila. Fine features, lovely hair, and spoke like a bird. Keep in mind I am not biased, just a little crazy. We liked the same food, enjoyed the same activities, and sort of sounded the same when we laughed. All was well. Then her friend showed up. He was a big strapping fellow. Unfortunately his looks were not too bad either. My heart sank. I felt like an apprentice wizard. A little lost, sick to my stomach and depressed. I didn't feel like I was in second place I felt more like fifth and there were only two of us. You can tell I was young.

I had no choice but to show off my skills. I could read faster than anyone, had great writing skills, and at that time, not like now, the thickest hair you could imagine. Now, you know why I was concerned.

They say that it is always darkest before the dawn and in this case it was true. I had almost given up hope when I saw my opening. I observed the two of them walking about along a flowered path. She bent down and grabbed a bouquet of flowers. As she turned to him to offer a smell he went into the worst sneezing fit I had ever seen. Get them away, get them away he was yelling. She pulled away. You could see that she was discouraged. She was a true flower lover and he a true flower hater. They moved off into the distance without speaking another word.

I sent an invitation for Jules to come to my hut for dinner. What a perfect name for such a precious gem. Before she arrived I gathered all the flowers that I could find. Overkill would be a good word here. When I opened the door to let her in she was overwhelmed to say the least. She went from flower to flower touching and smelling. She was in flower ecstasy.

From that day on we were inseparable. We stayed that way until she departed to another world. My memories of her comfort me in lonely times.

This brings me to winter. With the exception of the beauty of a fresh coat of snow, my old bones find little comfort in the cold. But I will admit others do find joy in this dreary season.

The dragons love the snow. They make castles, huge castles that you could live in. I believe some do. They have even developed a yearly contest to determine who can build the largest castle.

Krystonia gets a large amount of snow and once it starts it never seems to end. There is no shortage to the amount needed for these castles. A team usually consists of four dragons. One takes a cart and gathers the snow. Another makes square cubes. The other two carefully place the cubes in position. I give them credit it is a long process and they go at it from morning to night. The winner receives a gold ribbon which they place on their castle and it stays there until a warm day. You know what happens then.

They start out with several teams many drop out as time goes by. In this contest it was reduced down to where only two teams were left. Neither wanted to give up. These castles were the largest of any ever made. They were also much more intricate. Windows galore, drawbridges, and points way up high could be seen. Small candles were carefully placed in the windows. It was very impressive.

It was at this point that the sponsors realized that they had placed no time limit on the contest. The castles were starting to resemble small cities and overwhelm everything around them. They offered to award two gold ribbons. That idea went nowhere. The dragons weren't going to give an inch.

What would finally ended the contest was of no design. It was unusually sunny that morning. Not a cloud in the sky. The temperature started to rise. Warmer and warmer it got until you no longer needed your outer robes. This did not bode well for now what was now being called snow cities. Some were concerned about a great flood as much as anything else. At this point the two teams became more conciliatory. They each received a gold ribbon.

As I said winter is my least favorite season, but I may in the minority. With all this said I feel I have had my say.

On a personal note I believe time not just cold weather takes its toll. I feel my years and have enjoyed being able to share stories with you. I am looking for an apprentice that might shine a new light on the way the scrolls are translated and the stories told. But as you may know it is not always easy to find a perfect match.

With this in mind I wish you a good year and thank you for taking the time to read an old wizards tales. I hear the pot going off and a cup of fresh brewed herbs sounds like it's just what the wizard ordered.

Graciously yours,
KEPHREN