

Days Of Yore

"The Hand Of Truth"

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To walk in this part of the realm aroused grievous memories in the warrior's mind and he knew it was no coincidence. To the north lied the vestiges of an ancient province of Syrakia called Kol, that had been reduced to the size of a vulgar town after its numerous assaults against the motherland. This town, that was split by an abyss of discord, appeared through the centuries being the home of corruption and deceit. It was under the domination of two notorious crooks that ruled over the two halves of the village. If the antique province had been a plague for his ancestors, the village was a torture for Arbo and the prospect of returning there seemed an agony. Something terrible had occurred in this very town, something that had killed a part of him. Yes, the warrior had a bone to pick with someone there and his fists clenched as he divined the nature of his final task. In the distance, the sinister village was appearing in all its hideousness. Nothing had really changed since the last time in this place where ignominy had its own odor. Just breathing this air seemed the most reprehensible sin. Instructions were futile, thought the elder, but all the same he gave a last word of warning to which the warrior seemed deaf before vanishing into the night.

Arbo watched the old man slowly fade away, wearing a worried face as darkness stole the day. His heart pounding, he entered the decadent place, making himself ready to be put to the test.

As he trod these streets of ill fame, the stare full of suspicion, then came back into his head the old man's admonition.

Dark hand, hand of greed.
Hand that gives, hand that steals.
Bright hand, hand of truth.
Hand that bleeds, hand that cures.
Don't ever trust in the hand of greed.
Whatever she gives, twice she steals.
Always trust in the hand of truth.
The pain she gives, she always cures.

Walking for a while, Arbo landed up in a deserted street.
This place was evil, all his senses were on the qui vive.
Then arised from nowhere, a short man chubby and balding.
He slowly came up to Arbo and then said unto him:

"Descendant of Syrakia, thou art said to be brave and strong.
Slay my foe, the mage Zorka, and I shall give thee all thou want."

"I am surely as brave as you are greedy and liar
and what I want is surely beyond your skills by far."

"I will give thee gold, more gold than thou shalt ever need.
Show me what thou art made of coward, kill my ennemy."

"Gold's not despicable, but I think your gold surely is.
Now get out of my way, you wimp, before you make me ill."

Leaving Urmeech, Arbo hurried to the northern part of the village.
There he would have to eschew the lure of the old mage.
Suddenly, in a flash of fire, Zorka appeared.
Lust glinted into his eyes as he said unto him:

"Descendant of Syrakia, I can give thee power and glory.
Bring me the head of Urmeech, and then by all thou shalt be feared."

"A king must not be feared by his people, but by his ennemies.
When I reign over my kingdom, I'll show you what a true king is."

"I heard that recently thy beloved Nadya met her fate.
Shouldst thou kill Urmeech, I shall rise her from the
dead."

"There is but one justice in life and this is the justice of
death.
It is not given to man to question the quirks of fate."

Then Zorka leaveth him, and, behold,
angels came and ministered unto him.

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