



HAROLD

THE CRAVAT BELOW HAROLD'S CHIN HAS THE OPPOSITE OF ITS INTENDED EFFECT, SOMEHOW DIMINISHING HIS GRAVITAS. HE FANS HIMSELF WITH A HANDFUL OF IMPORTANT-LOOKING PAPERS, STRUGGLING IN THE HEAT. BEHIND HIM ARE FRAMED, DECADES-OLD SCHOLASTIC AWARDS AND A SMALL STATUE OF A KEY WITH AN INSCRIBED DEDICATION, BUT THE NAME OF ITS RECIPIENT HAS BEEN CRUELY SCRATCHED OFF. WHEN HAROLD GREET'S YOU, HE FILLS THE ROOM WITH HIS PERSONALITY, LEAVING YOU LITTLE ROOM TO BREATHE.

“ Who sent you!? The Temple? Lady Faulteroy? The Takers?!? No? Well... never mind any of that, just rehearsing lines for a play... My name is Harold Lesley Morgan Harrigold Whistler The 1st, rightfully elected Mayor of this bustling borough, a rare safe haven in these troubled times, but you can call me Milord or Mister Whistler. But *of course* you've heard of me; I've accomplished enough notable feats to fill three lifetimes. But speaking of notable feats, you look like adventuring folk, so you must be here about the bounty, correct? ”

Q&A WITH HAROLD

ABOUT HAROLD

Q. WHAT PLAY ARE YOU REHEARSING FOR?

A. Who said anything about a play?

Q. DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WERE REHEARSING LINES FOR A PLAY WHEN WE WALKED IN?

A. That doesn't sound like me.

Q. WHERE DOES YOUR WEALTH COME FROM?

A. As a Whistler, my mother and father truly believed in my grand vision, so they gave me a small loan. Of course, it IS impolite to talk about money, so I won't say how much it was, but... Okay it was 10,000 gold pieces.

Q. WHAT WAS YOUR GRAND VISION?

A. Well, I wanted to have a lot of money. The lesson? Always believe in yourself.

Q. WHAT “NOTABLE FEATS” HAVE YOU ACCOMPLISHED?

A. I may appear to you as an everyman, a simple banker, entrepreneur and philanthropist, but I have explored the depths of piety in service of the divine Golden Lady, goddess of commerce, I've enjoyed the heights of decadence in the court of Lady Faulteroy herself, and I've labored heroically with a grizzled group of mercenaries called The Takers—though in an administrative capacity, of course.

Q. WHY DID YOU COME TO TOWN?

A. Everyone needs a seachange sometimes, and this town is as remote a seachange anyone could ask for. Sometimes it's nice to go to a place where nobody knows your name.

Q. WHAT DID YOU DO FOR THE GOLDEN LADY?

A. I studied at the temple as an acolyte — shaved head, plain robes, all astoundingly boring. But they clearly didn't appreciate my drive and raw business acumen, because when Bishop Kildren found out I'd been selling old, tacky artifacts to parishioners, he must have been envious that he hadn't thought of it. Although I am technically excommunicated, I'd like to think we parted ways with a mutual respect.

Q. HOW DO YOU KNOW LADY FAULTEROY?

A. We were to be married! Oh, it was a romance for the ages. We were two old souls bonded through adversity—though my old soul was old in the figurative sense, her's in the much more traditional, actually old sense. But when the current Lady Faultroy learned of my tryst with her retired mother, I was banished from court.

Q. WHAT DID YOU DO FOR THE TAKERS?

A. The Takers are—were—a big group, always campaigning for this lord or that lord, and they went through a lot of equipment. Swords, arrows, metal clothes, all those classic adventuring things. So Commander Steel Tongue hired me to be their purchaser and quartermaster. But when I saved the company thousands of gold by finding a cheaper shield manufacturer, he tried to have me arrested! Absolute madman. I've still got a few of the shields if you'd like to have one.

Q. IS YOUR OLD EMPLOYER UPSET WITH YOU?

A. It is the nature of business that some bridges get thoroughly scorched, and despite my best efforts of reconciliation, my previous employers may seek recompense for our falling out. Thankfully the Red Boys are here to protect us.

ABOUT THE TOWN

Q. HOW DID YOU BECOME MAYOR?

A. When I arrived here, poor Mayor Grimsby was mismanaging the town's finances. He clearly needed some help from an experienced banker like myself, so I began collecting on loans, acquiring holdings from those who couldn't pay, and making tidy profits for the township. Eventually, I generously acquired even Grimsby's holdings, so he left town and I was voted in as Mayor.

Q. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN MAYOR?

A. Oh, a very long time! I am a pillar of this community. So over a year, at least.

Q. HOW WAS MAYOR GRIMSBY MISMANAGING THE TOWN'S FINANCES?

A. The fellow was focusing on “works of public interest and social reform,” neglecting the responsibility of a leader: to accumulate wealth. He wanted to build a library, the buffoon! How can you make money from a library!? Not to mention, the whole region was overrun with bandits under his stewardship. But everything's better since I stepped up and saved the town from destitution. Well, the bandits are still a major problem, but regardless; a library!? I don't think so.

Q. WHAT HAPPENED TO MAYOR GRIMSBY?

A. He moved out of town, but I never thought to ask where. There's probably a forwarding address filed around here somewhere though.

Q. WHY DID THE TOWNSPEOPLE VOTE FOR YOU?

A. I made sure to remind those who owed me debts to cast their votes for who they thought would take the best care of this place.

Q. WHAT ARE YOUR DUTIES AS MAYOR?

A. I manage the affairs and finances of the town, funding community services, program and general upkeep, and I also hear grievances and settle civil disputes.

Q. WHAT IS SIR HALLOWINTER DOING HERE?

A. He's looking for a friend of his, Keanu, or something. When a knight of his pedigree asks for a desk, you accommodate him! Besides, there's plenty of space downstairs since all the staff left. Nobody wants to work these days.

Q. WHERE ARE THE REST OF THE STAFF?

A. We used to have a sheriff and an administrator - Clinton and his wife Maria were their names - but they both left town. They didn't even give any notice!

Q. WHERE IS THE SHERIFF?

A. Have you been talking to the half-orc? I've heard his grisly conspiracy about our sheriff Clinton and the Red Boys, but that's just baseless speculation. My understanding is Clinton left town now that the Red Boys maintain order better than anyone could ever hope to achieve.

ABOUT THE REDBRANDS

Q. WHY ARE THE RED BOYS IN TOWN?

A. Even after I had pulled this sorry town from the muck, my trials were not done! You see, this unlucky place was continually assailed by all manner of brute, brigand, and beast. We're lucky the Red Boys arrived when they did to keep order and repel any outward threats.

Q. WHAT DO THE RED BOYS WANT?

A. Like any contingent of town guards, they want to maintain order and demand only the respect due to their station. Though they do have jurisdiction to exact a monthly tithe for their services.

Q. WHEN DID THE RED BOYS ARRIVE?

A. Their leader, an upright and dignified gentleman, knocked on my door to offer his services about eight months ago.

Q. WHO IS THE LEADER OF THE RED BOYS?

A. A man they call Shatter Staff, probably because he carries a very striking crystalline walking stick.

Q. WHERE IS SHATTER STAFF?

A. I offered him space in our offices here, but he needed somewhere larger. So I gave the keys to one of my holdings: the ruins of Trentham Manor on the outskirts of town. The main building is quite unusable, but the basement is intact.

Q. CAN YOU ARRANGE A MEETING WITH SHATTER STAFF?

A. I'd prefer not to bother him. He's busy, busy, busy! If he needs anything, he'll send a missive to me through Grysla, the owner of the local taphouse.

Q. AREN'T YOU GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT ALL THE TROUBLE THE RED BOYS CAUSE?

A. Who am I to stand in the way of justice? Our boys in red are all that protect this town from the wilds. I understand they can get rowdy at times, but that's the nature of soldiers, and boys will be boys.

Q. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE ONYX SCORPION?

A. A scorpion! Where!?

ABOUT THE BANDITS

Q. WHAT'S THE BOUNTY YOU'RE OFFERING?

A. The township is offering a hundred gold pieces for the head of Brunor, the leader of those bandits holed up in hills. Of course, me personally, I don't want to see a severed head, but if you can perhaps have the noble Sir downstairs verify it, you'll be paid for your grim work and heroic violence.

Q. WHY HAVE YOU PUT A BOUNTY ON THE BANDITS?

A. The lifeblood of a remote community like ours is mail. Supplies, missives from loved ones, news about regional threats, gossip from Lady Faultroy's court—does she still think of me—barrels of wine; all crucial items delivered via the post. But the bandits, they're not letting anything through. And that's bad.

Q. WHAT IS WYVERN DEN?

A. I've never been there, but I understand it is some kind of big hill. I don't know why it's called Wyvern Den though, I'd have called it Bandit Den. Ha ha! That's funny, I should write that down.

Q. WHO IS BRUNOR?

A. According to Grysla, the man is a brute, a towering orc with a wicked, magical axe.

Q. WHY WOULD GRYSLA KNOW ABOUT THE BANDITS?

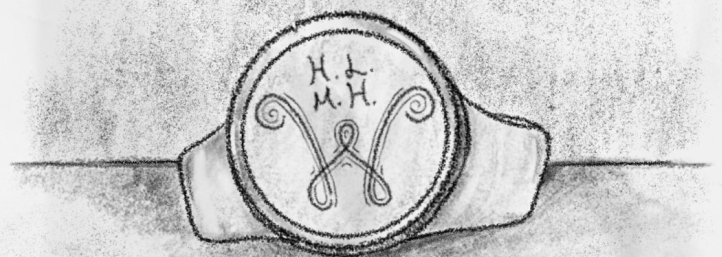
A. Grysla was taken for ransom by the bandits for a time, but the Shatter Staff valiantly marched up there and negotiated her release. So it's no small wonder she keeps her tavern's doors open to her red saviors!

Q. WHY HAVEN'T THE RED BOYS DONE SOMETHING ABOUT THE BANDITS?

A. I will say, if I had one criticism of Shatter Staff's leadership, it would be his outright refusal to march a contingent of Red Boys up that hill to stamp the bandits out. He has his reasons I'm sure, but they aren't known to me.

Q. WHY DIDN'T THE TOWN PAY GRYSLA'S RANSOM?

A. It's a matter of principle! You can't let thugs bully you around and make such demands. Besides, by delaying our response, maybe they would have cut us a deal. It was bargaining tactic! Now that Grysla's back though, she is awfully mad that none of the townsfolk rescued her, and she's the one who insisted I place a bounty on the bandits.



HOW DOES HAROLD FEEL ABOUT...

BART... What's his name again? Mark? Marty? The common folk sometimes just want their betters to hear their grievances, but the innkeeper is awfully droll.

CLINT... Clinton was such a serious man - utterly humorless!

SISTER GEE.' She's such an upstanding citizen. Since my bad experience at the temple of the Golden Lady, I still get nervous around holy-types, but the Sister has never been any trouble.

SIR HALLOWWINTER.' It's such an honor to have Sir Hallowwinter grace our little slice of rustic paradise! I should invite him to a private dinner.

GRYSLA.' I can't help but respect someone who runs their own business as well as Grysla does.

SHATTER STAFF.' We'd be in real trouble if Shatter Staff wasn't here to keep us safe.

COMMANDER STEEL TONGUE... No patience!

LADY AVALINE FAULTEROY... No heart!

BISHOP LATIMER KILDREN... No ambition!

X *Harbin Lesley Morgan Harrigold Wester I*

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