

GODOLIN'S REMAINS

C.A. Gardner

In the evening, in the chamber
Of the far Millashian lord,
Scent of incense, char of umber
Wafted roofward with a Word,
A mystic rune—a seer with vision,
Speaking unto Rala's thanes:
“We need someone for a mission:
Seek out Godolin's remains.”

“We need some warrior for this challenge,
One with mind of fire and steel,
One with skill enough to unhinge
The illusion from the real,”
Spoke Rala Millash, son of Harmon,
Unto those that graced his hall,
The archers and the warrior women:
“Find the false Arimishal!”

Then rose the Queen from seat of honor,
Stepped into the Mystic's Place:
“O warriors, you have heard the wonder
Of Arimishal's fall from grace.
He it was who called the thunder
To do battle with our swords:
It shattered halls and blades asunder;
Stopped up all the Mystic's words.

“And I have seen, within my Tower,
Sights to make the stout heart weep:
Arimishal, that jealous hoarder,
Gathers power in his Keep:
He sacrifices maids and young men,
Steals their life-force for his aims;
I know of but one way to stop him:
Seek out Godolin's remains!”

Now upspoke the aged Mystic,
Laid his hand upon his staff:
“When the seers gathered, struck
By horror, and from there to wrath,
By the gruesome deeds he plotted,

We Mystics laid on him a curse;
But fighting off the pall, he hid:
His counter-spells left us the worse.

“He draws more power to him daily
By a lost and arcane means;
None here have strength to fight him, only
Godolin, of other times.
Just one thing we know to stop him
Out of all curses and banes;
Since long dead is Godolin,
Seek out Godolin’s remains!”

Under the tall and smoky rafters
Rose three fighters, lank and grim—
“Yasha, Lestor and Aeorthas,”
Spoke Aeorthas for her kin,
“Will do this thing: upon the Hair
Of the Goddesses Lohs and Zäl,
We’ll seek out and retrieve, we swear,
The bane of foul Arimishal.”

The Queen accepted, and the warriors
Journeyed long under the moon;
Fought through moor and crashed through forest,
Conquered the mountain Râl, and soon
Entered the land of Orphalestés,
Where Mage Godolin once dwelt;
Banished ghosts, discerned false graves,
Until beside his own they knelt.

Cautiously they dug by oak till
They had pulled forth ancient bones;
They stuffed these in a sack, and took all
That remained within the ruins.
Then back to Rala’s hall they carried
Godolin’s bones, and eyes, and hood;
The Mystics gathered, gaunt and wearied
From battling Arimishal’s horde.

While many watched, the Mystics fashioned
A spell out of the ancient days;
With Godolin’s remains they formed
A thing Arimishal could not slay.
It held the Words of power once
Bespoke by Godolin the seer;

They raised him from his sleep of silence,
Sent him to find Arimishal's lair.

Arimishal took one step backward,
Trying to outreach his foe;
He hurled a lightning runespell forward,
But that curse was much too slow.
Godolin spoke. A scream of horror
At the Mage raised from the dead:
Arimishal, for all his power,
Fell before Godolin's hood.

But even as they feasted, victors,
In that far Millashian hall—
Mystics, Yasha, Lestor, Aeorthas—
Forth there rang a hollow call.
From beyond the walls it sounded,
Echoing beneath the sky:
“Though I have lain by oak wood bounden,
I will reckon: you shall die!”

At first the Mystics laughed, uncertain;
But fearful grew their bleary gaze.
Within the hour they stank of gangrene,
And the torn land, bandits seized.
Those not killed by plague or poison
Fell by sword, fire, or worse pain;
Demolished lies the land of those who
Dared touch Godolin's remains.

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