

## Lerrek's Tale

by Andy Seale, aka Fallon, Ranger-Sage of the Vesve

The origins of Lerrek go back to about 163 years ago, 420 CY. Lerrek was born Lerrek Caerynith in the lands known now as the Perrenlands, in the city of Schwartzenbruin. His father was a mercenary captain that served in many of the armies of Oerth. His mother was from a farming community outside the city. Lelond, his father, had retired to the city and wanted to raise a family. However, after the birth of his first son Lerrek, he was killed in a freak accident while riding his horse. His mother, at a loss at what to do, brought the child up as best as she could. Unfortunately Lerrek grew very spoiled and mean spirited. His peers taunted him as being the son of Lelond the Unlucky; he took this in stride and bided his time.

When he was 18 he jumped at the opportunity to leave for Aerdy as a guard on a merchant caravan. Two weeks into the trip, while going through the Vesve Forest, the caravan was ambushed by a group of bandits. The caravan was quickly captured, and its men were held hostage. The bandits were led by a priest of Erythnul named Reynard. Reynard was intrigued by the young man who seemed to disdain his fellow hostages as much as his guards. Ransom demands were sent out for the prisoners and the group waited. Reynard had many discussions with this young man who seemed to hate so much. The discussions then turned to religion and Lerrek became fascinated by the strength and power Erythnul offered. Soon the ransoms came in and it was time for the hostages to go. Reynard offered to take in the young man as an acolyte. He accepted and as part of his initiation ritual they sacrificed the hostages to Erythnul. For 10 years (438-448 CY) the pair traveled through the lands of the Horned Society, Iuz and the Bandit Kingdoms. These lands were known under different names then and were not as organized. The bandits they commanded formed a mercenary company known as the Blood-Seekers. They worked for many an evil lord or lady in those days. Their fame and fortune grew, as did their power. The Blood-Seekers became feared as a ruthless mercenary unit who were fearless.

In 448 CY they took a job working for a necromancer named Iggwilv near the Fellreev Forest. She had set up a small cantonment to do some magical research on some ruins she had discovered there. The Blood-Seekers ruthlessly eliminated all opposition in the area. This included a small tribe of Celbit orcs and a family of trolls. While there, Iggwilv became smitten with the young priest and his steely nature. He too was smitten, for even though Iggwilv was a necromancer she was indeed very beautiful. They soon become lovers, much to the disdain of Reynard who thought mixing business with pleasure was dangerous.

His concerns came to fruition when Iggwilv made a mistake in her research and opened a gate to the Abyss. A Balor prince and his retinue stepped through the portal looking for those that had disturbed him. A tremendous battle broke out as Iggwilv tried to close the gap, and Lerrek and the Blood-Seekers sought to protect her. In the confrontation Reynard was killed along with a majority

of the Blood-Seekers. Iggwilv did manage to close the gate and imprison the Balor prince. With her newfound power came some problems and she thought it wise to move to a safer location. She had some holdings in Ket and took her retinue there. Lerrek and what was left of the Blood-Seekers became her personal guard.

Once in Ket, she rapidly expanded her power base in the form of troops and demonic servants. With Lerrek at her side she never had to worry about her personal safety. The two dreamed of forming an empire together and began to look towards Perrenland. Things changed when Iggwilv told Lerrek she was pregnant with his child.<sup>1</sup> In 453 CY a daughter was born, and she was named Drelzna. This child temporarily put their dreams of conquest on hold. Iggwilv's research took her away for months on end so the child's upbringing was left upon Lerrek. As chaotic as Lerrek was, he truly loved his daughter and spared no expense on her. She grew to be as beautiful as her mother and as willful as her father.

Iggwilv's power began to expand from the keep that they inhabited, and many of the local Kettite nobles began to pay homage to her. Soon tribes of humanoids began to rally to her flag. Lerrek and the Blood-Seekers truly began to command an army. They began to raid Perrenland and slowly began to annex territory. The time apart between Lerrek and Iggwilv began to take its toll, and they started to grow apart. Iggwilv, in her travels to Abyssal Plains, met a Demon Prince named Graz'zt. He soon began to supply her with aid and support.

With this newfound power she directed Lerrek and his Blood-Seeker generals to launch a full-scale invasion of the Perrenlands. With his daughter at his side, and the demonic support of Iggwilv, they quickly overran Perrenland. Lerrek and Iggwilv had made their dreams of empire come to fruition. The empire soon began to experience problems almost immediately after its inception in 472 CY. Iggwilv believed that her power was absolute and began to openly show her favor of Graz'zt over Lerrek. She believed that Graz'zt and not Lerrek was the reason she had succeeded. Sages wonder to this day if Graz'zt had not magically poisoned Iggwilv's mind to disdain her lover Lerrek. Lerrek began to wonder what was truly occurring and, searching the quarters of Iggwilv, realized that she had taken the Demon as her lover. His heart was torn asunder and as evil as he was he could not bring himself to harm Iggwilv. He had neither the power or ability to challenge Graz'zt so he took what we wanted for treasure, a handful of powerful magical items and some of Iggwilv's notes and books and left. Most of the remaining Blood-Seekers went with him. So in 473 CY the grand union of Lerrek and Iggwilv came to an end.

Lerrek and his band wandered for about a year and returned to the Vesve Forest. His band of 12 (the years had taken their tolls on the Blood-Seekers who once numbered 300) quickly subdued a Celbit tribe of orcs and occupied the caves they lived in. Soon Lerrek had the orcs expanding the tunnels beneath, forming a good-sized lair. Other creatures were brought in as slaves, mostly gnomes and some dwarves, and used to create a more refined interior. Atop the former orc caves Lerrek created two huge stone statues to guard

over them. With the use of a ring of three wishes that he had taken from Iggwilv, he imbued them with magic and made them semi-sentient.

His own power was fearsome since he had risen to 19th level, and at that time was the most powerful of Erythnul followers. Rather than see himself wither away into nothing, and still plotting revenge against Graz'zt, he used the notes he had from Iggwilv to become a lich so he could pursue his nemesis. Most of his followers were not too keen on staying and becoming liches and things of that nature, so the Blood-Seekers broke up. Only two of his followers remained, Kalen, a 13th level wizard/vampire and Thjederk, a 10th level fighter who became a skeleton warrior. All these changes occurred by 477 CY, just as Iggwilv's empire began to show signs of collapse.

His daughter Drelzna made contact with her father in 479 CY, asking for sanctuary in case the empire fell. Lerrek made arrangements for his daughter's arrival. A caravan arrived carrying much treasure and some of her personal belongings, but no Drelzna. She was to arrive on the next caravan. That next caravan never arrived. The empire was overrun and Iggwilv and Drelzna were removed from power. Drelzna was killed in the fighting and restored as a vampire, but her crypt was hidden and nothing more was heard of her again. Iggwilv had then been enslaved by Graz'zt, and her disappearance caused the last vestiges of her empire to collapse.

So Lerrek once again had his plans foiled by Graz'zt. This drove him into a senseless frenzy and now he plots for a war in his mad plans. The first thing he did was slaughter all the slaves he had and brought them back to life as skeletons and zombies. He began to organize them into military units for his upcoming "war" with Graz'zt. He then realized that he would need a vast army so he began to recruit within the Vesve Forest. He soon had a large tribe of ogres working for him, bringing him slaves and corpses to reanimate. Among his daughter's belongings he found three gems of empathy,<sup>2</sup> which caused ankhegs, owlbears, and purple worms to migrate to his area. His plans soon had others watching him and some of them were Good. In 519 CY, a Knight of the Hart named Cedric Ostlenberg learned of certain misdoings in the Vesve Forest and organized an expedition into the area. Cedric was a knight in much favor with Heironeous, since he carried an ancient +5 Holy Sword of some power. However his hubris was his downfall, and when he went into the Vesve he only brought a small retinue of his squire, two mages (8th+9th), a priest of Pelor (8th), and 20 men at arms. This small group did manage to penetrate the underground lair of Lerrek. Their luck ran out once Lerrek and his minions arrived. Lerrek however, thought they were sent by Graz'zt and decided to further fortify his position. He used many magically wards to seal all entrances to the dungeon save one.

Between the two towers is a marble slab 10' x 20'. It is the only entrance to the dungeons and can only be accessed by an individual who possesses a Brooch of Lerrek. Only four such brooches exist. Two are with ogres that Lerrek has living around

the tower. They use the brooches to bring him slaves, corpses and supplies that his minions may need. One was lost to the Vesve Forest rangers that ambushed a group of ogres in 527 CY. The fourth brooch is in the hands of one of the few living agents that Lerrek has, Keak. This living member has a position as a member of the Boneshadow, which gives him the perfect opportunity to supply Lerrek with information that would directly influence the Vesve.<sup>3</sup>

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ATOP THE FORMER ORC  
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TO GUARD OVER THEM.

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For the last 74 years Lerrek has been very quiet in the sense of not doing anything overt on Oerth. He has, in fact, been very busy improving his position by contacting various demonic groups in the Abyss who oppose Graz'zt. He also has learned that Iggwilv is indeed alive and is working through her own agents on Oerth. He has been desperately trying to contact her but with no success. He has been attacked on four separate occasions by various bands. Three were by adventurers who managed to penetrate the lair. One was by a group financed by Iuz who couldn't even find the entrance. They were dispatched by a group of ogres and several hundred undead.

So Lerrek now waits and bides his time, hoping one day to face Graz'zt and letting his forces grow. Iuz is aware of who he is and is content to let things stay as they are. If Iuz were made aware of his feelings towards Graz'zt, he might actually attempt to curry favor with the lich. Iggwilv has no idea of his existence, but would she be interested in reuniting with her former love? There might be a flicker of personal sentiment, but it is far outweighed by the desire for the recovery of a few personal items that Lerrek possesses. It seems that among the items Lerrek grabbed in his departure he took two tomes that Iggwilv desires.

The first is a book called, *A Record of the Damned* It possesses the true name of three Balor princes and six Hezrou. The possession of this book would immediately give power over a significant demonic force of devastating proportions. The other is an ancient Suel text called, *The Masque of the Undead* It details two processes that might be of tantamount importance to two types of the undead. The first gives the ability of being able to walk among the sunlight for vampires with no ill effects. The other says that a lich can have his body restored to near perfect condition and also have the ability to walk among the daylight with no ill effects.

The reason that Lerrek hasn't used either text is that they both require a wizard of at least 14th level to cast the correct spells. They also require major human sacrifices. He has made limited use of the first tome and succeeded in forcing a Hezrou into servitude. He has been very crafty and has not let anyone on to the knowledge he does possess.

Lerrek at this time has at his disposal 1100 skeletons, 600 zombies, 50 ju-ju zombies, 6 lesser vampires, a handful of ghouls and a smattering of other creatures. He also has at his disposal: a Hezrou, two Vrock and 10 lesser tanar'i. He also has the services of about 80 ogres living

around his towers. Lerrek is very patient and is not willing to show his hand. Over the years he has amassed a fairly impressive magical collection, including a +5 Holy Avenger, +4 Plate Mail, a Staff of Thunder and Lightning(42), another Ring of Wishes(2), several spellbooks, and a host of smaller magical items.

Several questions are brought up. The first is, "What does Erythnul make of all this?" Being a Deity of battle and slaughter, what does he make of his lich and its plans? Lerrek has always been a favorite of sorts, if a deity has one, and slaughtered many in his early days. His plans to wage an Abysmal war pleases Erythnul, for it will give him influence in areas he never had. Also Lerrek's nascent plans to recruit tanar'ri to his banner means that the Lord of Slaughter can add demons to his foot soldiers. This pleases him and thus he still supports Lerrek and his plans.

What plans does Iuz have for the lich? At the moment he has none, for Lerrek provides a diversion for Furyondy to worry about. If the Old One knew of the items that Lerrek possesses he would not hesitate to attack. But at the moment he is content to let sleeping dogs lie. He has however, allowed no knowledge of Lerrek's existence to leak to his mother Iggwilv. The lich is referred to as the "Dweller of the Vesve," a term that Lerrek had coined for himself when he first established in the forest.

Then there is Iggwilv and what she brings to the equation. Basically free now of Graz'zt influence and a formidable power in her own right, she is a wild card in the mix. She knows what she lost to Lerrek and his departure from her realm. The names of those Balor princes would give her influence over several Abysal Planes. She does still think Lerrek is alive(!) figuring that in the chaos that surrounded the destruction of her empire Lerrek eluded destruction. Drelzna never told her mother that she had made contact with Lerrek, since she did not want to risk her ire. Iggwilv, as mentioned before, still possesses feelings for Lerrek. If contact was made, it might be amicable and the two could join forces. With the magic contained in the tomes, Lerrek could become whole, and the two could once again form another empire. A dire thought for Oerth indeed!!!

Finally, the Knights of the Hart still desire to recover the sword and might mount an expedition to recover it. If that does occur, they probably won't make the same mistake again, and the party would be indeed formidable. But since Lerrek has not been overt in any way, the chances are slim of this occurring at this point.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Some claim that Iggwilv's daughter was actually the child of Iggwilv and the son of the Voorman of the Perrenlands at that time. Iggwilv told him that just to keep him in her grasp.

2. A gem of empathy is a rare magical gem that is aligned to bring a specific creature to settle near it. The creatures have a better sense of home when they are within 5 miles of it.

3. Keak's brooch, that Lerrek gave to him, gives him access to Lerrek's lair and has certain magical properties. One of those properties is mind shielding, along with providing Lerrek a view of the outside world through the possessor's eyes.

CREDITS: The Marklands, Return of the Eight, Lost Caverns of Tsjocanth.