

AT THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN

by
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ILLUSTRATED BY TOK

T

HE TEMPLE SHONE with the light of welcome.

All was prepared. All was prepared, as it had been decreed.

The granddaughters of Feniz, Goddess of Energy, took their responsibilities seriously, performing them dutifully and well. That which the goddess wished, they made reality.

And a visit from their grandmother-goddess—that was honor and majesty, a gift from above. All must be made clean and new and shining with welcome on such an occasion, and so it had been.

The goddess, not long before, had granted succor to the Great Champion in the wake of his battle with the army of the treacherous bison Seven-Scars, blessing him with food, clothing



and the healing of his wounds. And surely she blessed him with knowledge, as well, for he and his companions found their way to the last Temple of the Sun, which no living creature had seen since before the tribes first arose in the Vernal Lands.

And as obedient granddaughters, the Galitaan had welcomed them as heroes errant and servants of the gods, giving them honor, rest, comfort and

a surcease from danger.

But now it was time to sally forth once more. Now it was time for the Champion and his band to be given their new quest, and the Galitaan the thanks of their father-mother for their eons of faithful service.

The temple shone with welcome...



Could — could he still be alive in there? Could anyone?

█ if I know, Dusty. It doesn't look good, that's for sure.

But hell...



...there's only one way to find out!



INSIDE, IF ANYTHING, THE TEMPLE WAS WORSE.

He said he was goin' in for food an' booze. But if I know Bertie at all, he wouldn't be in the dining hall.

The pillow rooms were down there...

AND AS I WONDERED IF ANY OF US WOULD LIVE TO MAKE IT BACK OUT —



You.



You are not masters. You are deceivers.

Eliza has given the order. You are no longer welcome here. You must leave — or be destroyed.



Yeah?
Try it,
toots.



Um.
Excuse
me.
We'll
be gone
as soon as
we can.



WE PASSED THE DINING HALLS
ALONG THE WAY, AND SURE ENOUGH,
THERE WAS NO SIGN OF BERTIE.

THE GALATEANS HAD BEEN SHOWING US THE
TEMPLE GROUNDS, BUT HE'D GROWN TIRED OF IT,
AND GONE IN WITH A COUPLE OF THEM FOR FOOD.

LEAROYD HAD WARNED HIM NOT TO
MOLEST THEM, BUT I WONDERED -



Always in the
pillow
rooms. I knew
it...

Bertie! You still
breathing?

hnhh...



F-fer...fer now,
but not...much
longer...

This's the end...fer
Dirty Aelbert o' the
Hardkill Clan...lived
free...bowed horns
& no...

Eulogize
yourself later, guy.
What happened?