

PATRICK SCALISI'S EARLY WORK

“Untitled”

This story may have been called “Fire in the Sky,” and I suspect I may have written it sometime between sixth and eight grade (1994-97). I like the fact that it was an original concept — a desert tribe under attack by “marauders” — even if spelling errors and plot holes abound, not to mention the fact that it was written in the present tense. There’s a nice *Star Wars* reference (Admiral Ackbar’s line from *Return of the Jedi*: “We can’t repel firepower of that magnitude!”) and some other cringe-worthy dialog. I was also attending Catholic school at the time, which accounts for the three hymns that are referenced and the fact that one of the characters is named Jeremiah.

A man on horseback rides through the swirling winds of the Emperor desert, his weathered, wind burnt face bowed downward. Suddenly he stops his horse, and removes a pair of ^{binoculars} from the leather saddle bag. Through the sandstorm he can see a small caravan of tents, and barracks. The man continues onward.

"Who goes there?" An armed soldier is alerted.

"My name is Aaron. I bring news of the marauders."

"Do you have a pass?"

"Does this qualify?" Aaron answers. He holds up a bronze scarab.

"Open the gates," says the soldier now talking to a doorman. The doorman pulls a lever and the door begins to move upward. Aaron enters.

The camp is merely a set of tents under a giant caravan that shelters it from the desert. Fires burn in glass domes as not to set the camp aflame. Families sit near holes in the domes as to warm their ~~unusable~~ fingers. ~~It~~ Everyone seems to be dressed in brown leather.

"There." The doorman points to a large tent

in the center of the caravan. Aaron is brought out of his trance.

"Thank you." Aaron dismounts. He is ~~also~~ dressed in a brown robe with a black cape. An old unpolished sword hangs at his side.

The inhabitants ^{of the tent city} stare at the newcomer.

Aaron continues to walk toward the giant tent.

He pulls the tent flap aside and walks inside.

The tent is well lighted. Lamps are set at each corner (of the tent). The smell of incense flows into Aaron's nostrils. A man with a long grey beard sits at a table. He looks up at his guest.

"Hello. My name is Jeremiah. You have news of the Marauders?" Jeremiah is softspoken and seems very wise. He goes back to his work.

"Yes. My name is Aaron. I was a spy for regiment 172 assigned to the Marauders weapons plant. If my understanding is correct, the land attacks in forty-eight hours."

"What?" Jeremiah's eyes widen.

"Do you have your army ready?"

"Barely. We are ill equipped and our supplies are running short. Even ~~as~~ being a mystic myself I -"

"Wait, you're a Mystic?" Aaron is very surprised

"Yes, why?"

"I ~~met~~^{know} a merchant named Marco. He can get here in a day if you can make a transmitting bubble."

"I'll get started right away."

A man in nearly full armor dress walks down a corridor in an underground base about forty miles from the cavern. From the look of the wall markings, one can tell that it is of Manderu origin.

The man continues onward. He has black hair and a war hard face. He opens the next door on the right. A whole committee awaits him. Finally, he speaks,

"Are the weapons ready?"

"Yes. And a regiment of 150 men. We will crush them."

"Who goes there?" We are once again in the swirling winds of the Emperor Desert.

"I bring news to sell to this Mercurial Tribe." The familiar sound of the gate opening enters the air. Aaron is at the door to

greet the merchant.

"Marco. Hurry there is little time." Aaron leads Marco to the lead tent and introduces him to Jeremiah.

"When I got your message I got my best stuff and headed down."

"How much do we owe you for the whole thing? We want everything." Jeremiah takes out his purse.
"Let me tell you some thing. When I was young, someone helped me out. I never got to repay the favor. Now is my chance. Just take it. You owe nothing."

"Thank you Marco." Aaron puts his hand on his shoulder. "Let's start distributing these weapons and armor."

"Sergeant Wilcoch!" A young cadet rushes to the main mercenary tent.

"Excuse me." The man we saw before greets the cadet.

"Pardon my stupidity... Reporting for duty Sergeant Wilcoch."

"That's better. Are the troops ready? We will arrive in ~~ten~~ hours. Get your weapons ready."

"Yes sir." The cadet runs off.

Arnon is awakened at midnight by the alarm. He jolts to consciousness as the siren rings through the air. He jumps out of his cot in a small tent on the east side of the caravan. He takes his blue, now polished sword, from the wall. He exits the tent. Soldiers are running about in an attempt to strengthen the front lines.

"Grahmiah, what's going on?"

"The manaunder. This is it. This can be the biggest disaster in all of Mercenial history."

"Well, I believe that this will be our finest hour." Arnon runs off to join the soldiers. A hound sight awaits him.

The manaunder have broken through the front wall. Two giant catapults have broken holes in the canvas. The front line has collapsed.

"We can't hold out. Strengthen ~~the~~ regiment 105." Commander Ellis is frantic. "We can't repel fire power of that magnitude." He points to the catapults.

"No, but we can fight fire with fire." Arnon comes up behind the commander.

"What do you mean?"

"If I'm not mistaken, the safe is in the back

line holds a supply of crossbows. "

"But still - " One is cut off

"Equip the crossbows with the bomb canisters.
At least we'll hurt them. "

"Alright. Lieutenant. " Hand out the crossbows
and bomb canisters. "

"Yes sir. " In moments, cadets, commanders,
lieutenants, and Aaron are all equipped with
their new weapons. .

"On my mark, fire. " All archers aim
upward. One cadet sings, "On Eagle's
Wings. " "Mark. "

All the marauders look up to see a
bombardment of bomb canisters.

"Hold fire from the sky. " Hundreds of soldiers
begin to run from this new threat.

"Stand your ground. The marauders must
triumph. Noo. " Sergeant Welcock begins to
run, but the bombardment is too thick.
Welcock is lost.

Grant Bonfire blaze in the caravanserai. A minstrel
plump, ~~How great~~ ^{How} great than Aaron his pump. Everyone
rejoices. Aaron talks to Jeremiah.
^ Alleluia! The Strife is O'er

"We've won a great victory."

"Yes, but when will they return?"