

BRANDON SANDERSON

#1 *New York Times* Bestselling Author



The Lost Metal

A MISTBORN Novel

M. Grant '22



BRANDON SANDERSON



A TOM DOHERTY ASSOCIATES BOOK
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FOR ETHAN SKARSTEDT

Who is a man of Honor.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sixteen years ago, sitting in a dim booth at a local steakhouse, I first pitched to my wife an audacious idea I'd been developing: taking an epic fantasy world, and then expanding it through different eras into the future. I'd seen mashups of fantasy and science fiction before, and I'd seen epic fantasy inch toward industrial technology. But I'd never seen an author develop a world in quite this way—giving an expansive view of a planet moving into the future, using the lore of earlier book series as the foundation of religion and myth.

It was a gamble. Readers tend to like their genres well delineated. Here, I was pitching something that broke apart those genre lines in ways that historically did not sell well. Yet I was convinced that the larger-scale project (the vision of a planet and its magic throughout various eras) was worth the risk. That brings us here, to the final book of Era Two of *Mistborn* and my grand experiment with genre.

Whether I've been successful or not so far is up to you, the reader. But I can say this: I certainly wouldn't have gotten where I am without the help of a large number of people. I know these acknowledgments are a bit of a blur of names, but I'm so grateful to each and every one of them. These are the people who, when I come up with some new audacious plan, don't roll their eyes—they instead roll up their sleeves and make it happen.

For this book, Joshua Bilmes did his usual excellent job as my agent. On his team, Susan Velazquez and Christina Zobel were also a great deal of help, managing all the different overseas contracts and subagents.

Speaking of across the pond, I had some extra-special help from Gillian Redfearn on this book—she's my UK editor, and took the lead on this book performing the line edit work that often is shouldered by the US publisher. She did a fantastic job, and I'm lucky to have her help. In addition, I'd like to thank Emad Akhtar and Brendan Durkin at Gollancz in the UK, as well as my UK agents, John Berlyne and Stevie Finegan at the Zeno Agency.

Over in the US, Devi Pillai was the lead editor on this project, offering her excellent editorial eye for story and character as she always does. Also

at Tor, I'd like to thank Molly McGhee, Tessa Villanueva, Lucille Rettino, Eileen Lawrence, Alexis Saarela, Heather Saunders, Rafal Gibek, Felipe Cruz, Amelie Littell, and Hayley Jozwiak. The copyeditor was our longtime collaborator in that field, Terry McGarry.

As for the audiobook, the irreplaceable Michael Kramer is once again giving voice to my characters and making me sound good. I appreciate you, Michael. Thank you for all you do. At Macmillian Audio, I'd like to thank Steve Wagner, Samantha Edelson, and Drew Kilman.

Increasingly these days, my books take a ton of extra work in the art department. So we'll give these gunslingers their own section—even though some of them could overlap with other sections. For instance, Peter Lutjen is Tor's art director, and deserves a hearty thanks. Chris McGrath did our jacket illustration. My internal art director at Dragonsteel is IY<—the artist formerly known as Isaac Stewart. He did the maps, symbols, and a lot of the work (including the writing) on the broadsheets. Keep an eye out for books by IY< in the future. (Yes, I did just make up that whole symbol thing. I can do that. I have a literary license.) Our good friend and longtime collaborator Ben McSweeney did most of the art you find in the broadsheets. Rachael Lynn Buchanan was our art assistant, and Jennifer Neal provided some additional help in creating the broadsheets.

In my company, Dragonsteel, our in-house Editorial department is headed by the Insatiable Peter Ahlstrom, with Karen Ahlstrom running continuity and various additional editorial help being provided by Betsey Ahlstrom. And Kristy S. Gilbert has just come on as our Production Editor.

Dragonsteel's Fulfillment and Events team is headed by Kara Stewart, and that team includes Christi Jacobsen, Lex Willhite, Kellyn Neumann, Mem Grange, Michael Bateman, Joy Allen, Katy Ives, Richard Rubert, Sean VanBuskirk, Isabel Chrisman, Tori Mecham, Ally Reep, Jacob Chrisman, Alex Lyon, and Owen Knowlton.

Our in-house Publicity and Marketing team is headed by Adam Horne, with Jeremy Palmer as our marketing director. Our Operations team is headed by Mat "My name is actually Matt with two T's" Hatch, with Jane Horne, Emma Tan-Stoker, Kathleen Dorsey Sanderson, Makena Saluone, and Hazel Cummings.

And, of course, my wonderful wife, Emily Sanderson, is our COO at Dragonsteel. And is the cutest person on this list.

Less cute, but still very helpful, are the members of the writing group.

On this book they include: Kaylynn ZoBell, Peter Ahlstrom, Karen Ahlstrom, Alan Layton, Eric James Stone, Darci Stone, Kathleen Dorsey Sanderson, Emily Sanderson, and Ben “Rick Stranger” Olsen. Also, of course, there is Ethan Skarstedt—to whom this book is dedicated. The real-life inspiration for Skar from Bridge Four, Ethan has been helping me get my soldiering and gunplay right for some twenty years now. Many thanks, Ethan, for helping me pretend I know what I’m talking about.

Mi’chelle Walker created our beta reader feedback database, which was super useful. The beta readers included Trae Cooper, Tim Challener, Ted Herman, Suzanne Musin, Sumejja Muratagić-Tadić, Paige Phillips, Shannon Nelson, Sean VanBuskirk, Ross Newberry, Rosemary Williams, Richard Fife, Rahul Pantula, Poonam Desai, Philip Vorwaller, Paige Vest, Mi’chelle Walker, Megan Kanne, Matt Wiens, Mark Axies Lindberg, Marnie Peterson, Lyndsey Luther, Linnea Lindstrom, Lauren McCaffrey, Kendra Wilson, Kendra Alexander, Kellyn Neumann, Kalyani Poluri, Joy Allen, Joshua Harkey, Jory “Chief Chicken Head Scratcher” Phillips, Jessie Lake, Jessica Ashcraft, Jennifer Neal, Ian McNatt, Chris “Gunner” McGrath, Gary Singer, Frankie Jerome, Evgeni “Argent” Kirilov, Erika Kuta Marler, Eric Lake, Drew McCaffrey, Deana Covell Whitney, David Fallon, David Behrens, Darci Cole, Craig Hanks, Christina Goodman, Christopher Cottingham, Chana Oshira Block, Brian T. Hill, Brandon Cole, Lingting “Botanica” Xu, Bob Kluttz, Ben Marrow, Becca Reppert, Bao Pham, Anthony Acker, Alyx Hoge, Alice Arneson, Alexis Horizon, Aaron Biggs, Joe Deardeuff, Rob West, and Jayden King.

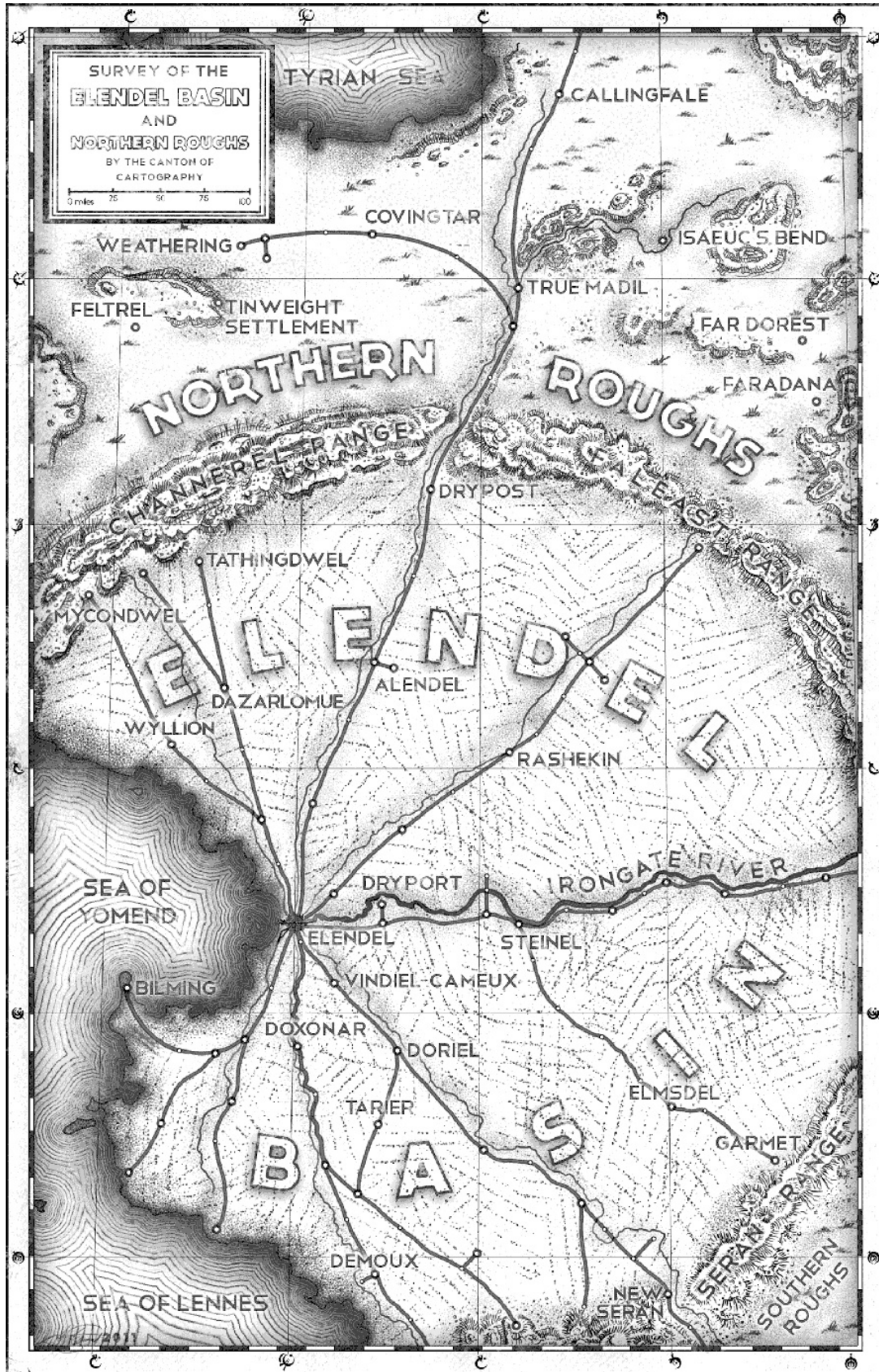
Gamma readers included many of the above, plus Sam Baskin, Glen Vogelaar, Dale Wiens, Billy Todd, Ari Kufer, Matthew Sorensen, Ram Shoham, Eliyahu Berelowitz Levin, and Aaron Ford.

We got some detailed help from a particular group on this book, people who I have asked to keep an eye on my magic systems and offer feedback on where I might need more explanations or might be in danger of contradicting myself. We’re calling them our Magic System Continuity team, but I’m officially dubbing them Arcanists going forward. They are Joshua Harkey, Eric Lake, Evgeni Kirilov, David Behrens, Ian McNatt, and Ben Marrow.

I would like to extend a special thanks to my good friends Kalyani and Rahul, longtime beta readers, who have been encouraging me for years to look into Indian mythology and lore for inspiration for fantasy storytelling. They provided excellent consultation in this book on a certain character

who the three of us worked on together to try to expand the Cosmere a little bit in this direction.

Thank you to everyone on this list. And, of course, to the readers. Mistborn has been a strange journey these last sixteen years, and I feel it's about to get even stranger—as well as (with a little luck) even more incredible.



SURVEY OF THE
ELENDEL BASIN
AND
NORTHERN ROUGHS
BY THE CANTON OF
CARTOGRAPHY

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BASIN

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TRUE MADIL

FELTREL

TINWEIGHT SETTLEMENT

FAR DOREST

FARADANA

DRYPOST

TATHINGDWEL

MYCONDWEL

DAZARLOMUE

ALENDEL

RASHEKIN

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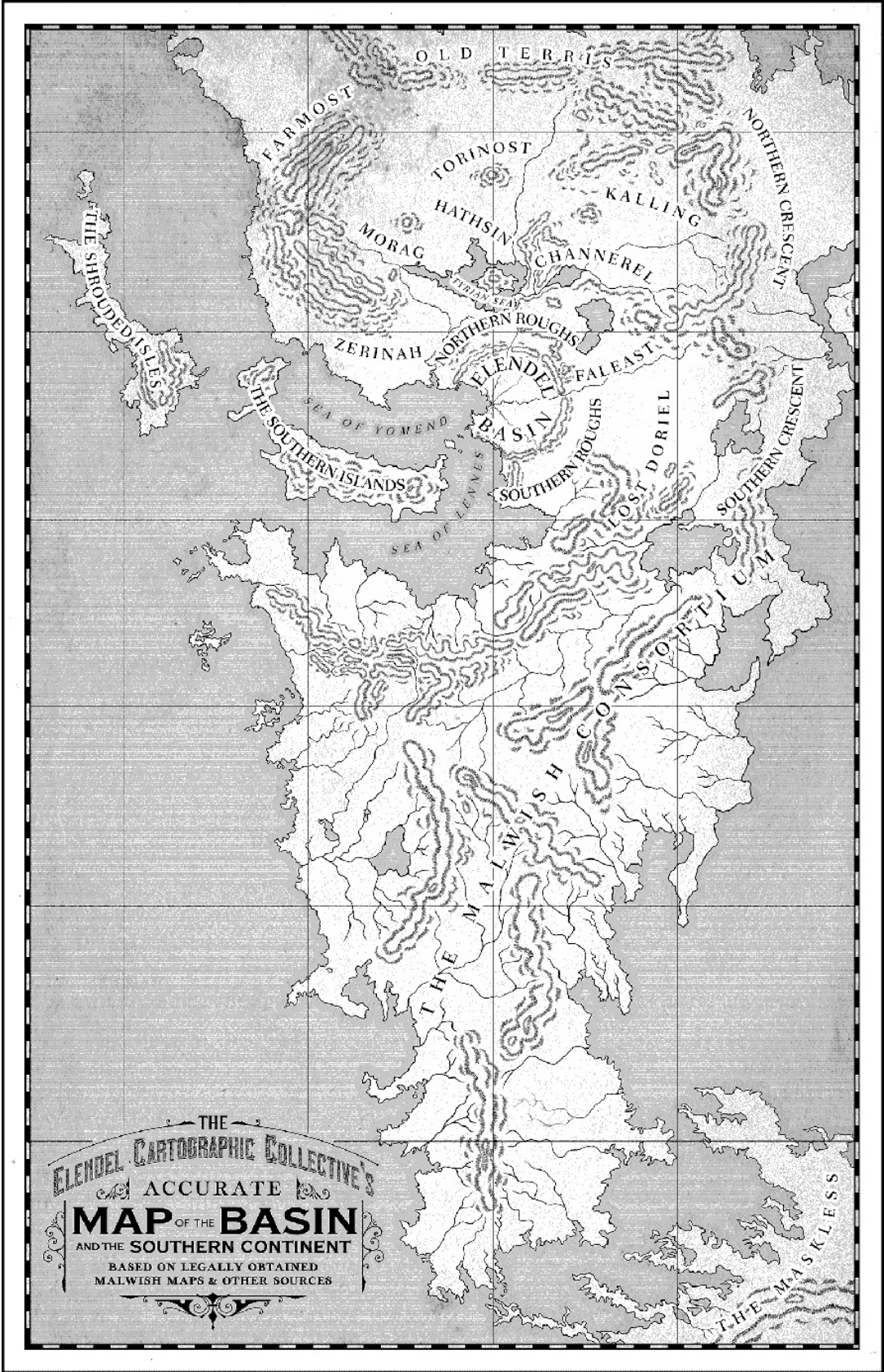
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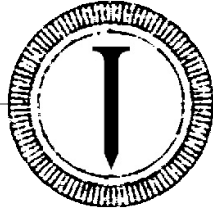
TARIER

DEMOUX

NEW SERAN



PROLOGUE



Wayne knew about beds. Other kids in Tinweight Settlement had them. A bed sounded much better than a mat on the ground—especially one he had to share with his ma when the nights were cold, because they didn't have any coal.

Plus there were monsters under beds.

Yeah, he'd heard stories of mistwraiths. They'd hide unner your bed and steal the faces of people you knew. Which made beds soft and squishy on top, with someone underneath you could talk to. Sounded like rustin' heaven.

Other kids were scared of mistwraiths, but Wayne figured they just didn't know how to negotiate properly. He could make friends with something what lived unner a bed. You just had to give it something it wanted, like someone else to eat.

Anyway, no bed for him. And no proper chairs. They had a table, built by Uncle Gregr. Back before he got crushed by a billion rocks in a landslide and mushed into a pulp what couldn't hit people no more. Wayne kicked the table sometimes, in case Gregr's spirit was watching and was fond of it. Rusts knew there was nothing else in this one-window home Uncle Gregr had cared about.

Best Wayne had was a stool, so he sat on that and played with his cards—dealing hands and hiding cards up his sleeve—as he waited. This was a nervous time of day. Every evening he feared she wouldn't come home. Not because she didn't love him. Ma was a burst of sweet spring flowers in a sewage pit of a world. But because one day Pa hadn't come home. One day Uncle Gregr—Wayne kicked the table—hadn't come home. So Ma ...

Don't think about it, Wayne thought, bungling his shuffle and spilling cards over the table and floor. *And don't look. Not until you see the light.*

He could feel the mine out there; nobody wanted to live nexta it, so Wayne and his ma did.

He thought of something else, on purpose. The pile of laundry by the wall that he'd finished washing earlier. That had been Ma's old job what didn't pay well enough. Now he did it while she pushed minecarts.

Wayne didn't mind the work. Got to try on all the different clothes—whether they were from old gramps or young women—and pretend to be them. His ma had caught him a few times and grown angry. Her exasperation still baffled him. Why *wouldn't* you try them all on? That's what clothes was for. It wasn't nothing weird.

Besides, sometimes folks left stuff in their pockets. Like decks of cards.

He fumbled the shuffle again, and as he gathered the cards up he did *not* look out the window, even though he could feel the mine. That gaping artery, like the hole in someone's neck, red from the inside and spurting out light like blood and fire. His ma had to go dig at the beast's insides, searchin' for metals, then escape its anger. You could only get lucky so many times.

Then he spotted it. Light. With relief, he glanced out the window and saw someone walking along the path, holding up a lantern to illuminate her way. Wayne scrambled to hide the cards under the mat, then lay on top, feigning sleep when the door opened. She'd have seen his light go out of course, but she appreciated the effort he put into pretending.

She settled on the stool, and Wayne cracked an eye. His ma wore trousers and a buttoned shirt, her hair up, her clothing and face smudged. She sat staring at the flame in the lantern, watching it flicker and dance, and her face seemed more hollow than it had been before. Like someone was taking a pickaxe to her cheeks.

That mine's eatin' her away, he thought. *It hasn't gobbled her up like it did Pa, but it's gnawing on her.*

Ma blinked, then fixated on something else. A card he'd left on the table. Aw, hell.

She picked it up, then looked right at him. He didn't pretend to be asleep no more. She'd dump water on him.

"Wayne," she said, "where did you get these cards?"

"Don't remember."

"Wayne..."

"Found 'em," he said.

She held out her hand, and he reluctantly pulled the deck out and handed it over. She tucked the card she'd found into the box. Damn. She'd spend a day searching Tinweight for whoever had "lost" them. Well, he wouldn't have her losing more sleep on account of him.

"Tark Vestingdow," Wayne mumbled. "They was inna pocket of his overalls."

"Thank you," she said softly.

"Ma, I've *gotta* learn cards. That way I can earn a good livin' and care for us."

"A good living?" she asked. "With cards?"

"Don't worry," he said quickly. "I'll cheat! Can't make a livin' if you don't win, see."

She sighed, rubbing her temples.

Wayne glanced at the cards in their stack. "Tark," he said. "He's Terris. Like Pa was."

"Yes."

"Terris people always do what they're told. So what's wrong with me?"

"Nothing's wrong with you, love," she said. "You just haven't got a good parent to guide you."

"Ma," he said, scrambling off the mat to take her arm. "Don't talk like that. You're a *great* ma."

She hugged him to her side, but he could feel her tension. "Wayne," she asked, "did you take Demmy's pocketknife?"

"He talked?" Wayne said. "Rust that rustin' bastard!"

"Wayne! Don't swear like that."

"Rust that rusting bastard!" he said in a railworker's accent instead.

He grinned at her innocently, and was rewarded with a smile she couldn't hide. Silly voices always made her happy. Pa had been good at them, but Wayne was better. Particularly now that Pa was dead and couldn't say them no more.

But then her smile faded. "You can't take things what don't belong to you, Wayne. That's somethin' thieves do."

"I don't wanna be a thief," Wayne said softly, putting the pocketknife on the table beside the cards. "I want to be a good boy. It just ... happens."

She hugged him closer. "You *are* a good boy. You've *always* been a good boy."

When she said it, he believed it.

“Do you want a story, love?” she asked.

“I’m too old for stories,” he lied, desperately wishing she’d tell one anyway. “I’m *eleven*. One more year and I can drink at the tavern.”

“What? Who told you that!”

“Dug.”

“Dug is *nine*.”

“Dug knows stuff.”

“*Dug is nine*.”

“So you’re sayin’ I’ll have to snitch booze for him next year, ’cuz he can’t get it himself yet?” He met her eyes, then started snickering.

He helped her get dinner—cold oatmeal with some beans in it. At least it wasn’t *only* beans. Then he snuggled into his blankets on the mat, pretending he was a child again to listen. It was easy to feign that. He still had the clothes after all.

“This is the tale,” she said, “of Blatant Barm, the Unwashed Bandit.”

“Oooh...” Wayne said. “A *new* one?”

His mother leaned forward, wagging her spoon toward him as she spoke. “He was the worst of them all, Wayne. Baddest, meanest, *stinkiest* bandit. He never bathed.”

“’Cuz it takes too much work to get properly dirty?”

“No, because he ... Wait, it’s *work* to get dirty?”

“Gotta roll around in it, you see.”

“Why in Harmony’s name would you do that?”

“To think like the ground,” Wayne said.

“To...” She smiled. “Oh, Wayne. You’re so precious.”

“Thanks,” he said. “Why ain’t you told me of this Blatant Barm before? If he was so bad wouldn’t he be the first one you told stories about?”

“You were too young,” she said, sitting back. “And the story too frightening.”

Oooh ... This was going to be a *good* one. Wayne bounced up and down. “Who got ’im? Was it a lawman?”

“It was Allomancer Jak.”

“Him?” Wayne said with a groan.

“I thought you liked him.”

Well, all the kids did. Jak was new and interesting, and had been solving all kinds of tough crimes this last year. Least according to Dug.

“But Jak always brings the bad guys in,” Wayne complained. “He

never shoots a single one.”

“Not this time,” Ma said, digging into her oatmeal. “He knew Blatant Barm was the worst. Killer to the core. Even Barm’s sidekicks—Gud the Killer and Noways Joe—were *ten* times worse than any other bandit that ever walked the Roughs.”

“Ten *times*?” Wayne said.

“Yup.”

“That’s a lot! Almost double!”

His ma frowned for a moment, but then leaned forward again. “They’d robbed the payroll. Taking not just the money from the fat men in Elendel, but the wages of the common folk.”

“Bastards!” Wayne said.

“Wayne!”

“Fine! Regular old turds then!”

Again she hesitated. “Do you ... know what the word ‘bastard’ means?”

“It’s a bad turd, the kind you get when you’ve *really* got to go, but you hold it in too long.”

“You know that because...”

“Dug told me.”

“Of course he did. Well, Jak, he wouldn’t stand for stealing from the common folk of the Roughs. Being a bandit is one thing, but everyone knows you take the money what goes *toward* the city.

“Unfortunately, Blatant Barm, he knew the area real well. So he rode off into the most difficult land in the Roughs—and he left one of his two sidekicks to guard each of the key spots along the way. Fortunately, Jak was the bravest of men. And the strongest.”

“If he was the bravest and strongest,” Wayne said, “why was he a lawman? He could be a bandit, and nobody could stop him!”

“What’s harder, love?” she asked. “Doing what’s right or doing what’s wrong?”

“Doing what’s right.”

“So who gets stronger?” Ma asked. “The fellow what does the easy thing, or what does the hard thing?”

Huh. He nodded. Yeah. Yeah, he could see that.

She moved the lantern closer to her face, making it shine as she spoke. “Jak’s first test was the River Human, the vast waterway marking the border with what had once been koloss lands. The waters moved at the

speed of a train; it was the fastest river in the whole world—and it was full of rocks. Gud the Killer had set up there, across the river, to watch for lawmen. He had such a good eye and steady hand that he could shoot a fly off a man at three hundred paces.”

“Why’d you want to do that?” Wayne asked. “Better to shoot ’im right *in* the fly. That’s gotta hurt something bad.”

“Not that kind of fly, love,” Ma said.

“So what did Jak do?” Wayne asked. “Did he sneak up? Not very lawman-like to sneak. I don’t think they do that. I’ll bet he didn’t sneak.”

“Well...” Ma said.

Wayne clutched his blanket, waiting.

“Jak was a *better* shot,” she whispered. “When Gud the Killer sighted on him, Jak shot him first—clean across the river.”

“How’d Gud die?” Wayne whispered.

“By bullet, love.”

“Through the eye?” Wayne said.

“Suppose.”

“And so Gud lined up a shot and Jak did likewise—but Jak shot first, hitting Gud *straight* through the sights into the eye! Right, Ma!”

“Yup.”

“And his head exploded,” Wayne said, “like a fruit—the crunchy kind, the shell all *tough* but it’s gooey inside. Is that how it happened?”

“Absolutely.”

“Dang, Ma,” Wayne said. “That’s gruesome. You sure you should be tellin’ me this story?”

“Should I stop?”

“Hell no! How’d Jak get across the water?”

“He flew,” Ma said. She set her bowl aside, oatmeal finished, and gave a flourish with both hands. “Using his Allomantic powers. Jak can fly, and talk to birds, and eat rocks.”

“Wow. Eat *rocks*?”

“Yup. And so he flew over that river. But the next challenge was even worse. The Canyon of Death.”

“Ooooh...” Wayne said. “Bet that place was pretty.”

“Why do you say that?”

“’Cuz nobody’s going to visit a place called ‘Canyon of Death’ unless it’s pretty. But somebody visited it, ’cuz we know the name. So it must be pretty.”

“Beautiful,” Ma said. “A canyon carved through the middle of a bunch of crumbling rock spires—the broken peaks streaked with colors, like they was painted that way. But the place was as deadly as it was beautiful.”

“Yeah,” Wayne said. “Figures.”

“Jak couldn’t fly over this one, for the second of the bandits hid in the canyon. Noways Joe. He was a master of pistols, and could also fly, and turn into a dragon, and eat rocks. If Jak tried to sneak past, Joe would shoot him from behind.”

“That’s the smart way to shoot someone,” Wayne said. “On account of them not bein’ able to shoot back.”

“True,” Ma said. “So Jak didn’t let that happen. He had to go into the canyon—but it was *filled* with *snakes*.”

“Bloody hell!”

“Wayne...”

“Regular old boring hell, then! How many snakes?”

“A million snakes.”

“Bloody hell!”

“But Jak, he was smart,” Ma said. “So he’d thought to bring some snake food.”

“A million bits of snake food?”

“Nah, only one,” she said. “But he got the snakes to fight over it, so they mostly killed each other. And the one what was left was the strongest, naturally.”

“Naturally.”

“So Jak talked it into biting Noways Joe.”

“And so Joe turned purple!” Wayne said. “And bled out his ears! And his bones melted, so the melty bone juice leaked out of his nose! And he collapsed into a puddle of deflated skin, all while hissing and blubbing ’cuz his teeth was melting!”

“Exactly.”

“Dang, Ma. You tell the *best* stories.”

“It gets better,” she said softly, leaning down on the stool, their lantern burning low. “Because the ending has a surprise.”

“What surprise?”

“Once Jak was through the canyon—what now smelled like dead snakes and melted bones—he spotted the final challenge: the Lone Mesa. A giant plateau in the center of an otherwise flat plain.”

“That’s not much of a challenge,” Wayne said. “He could fly to the

top.”

“Well he tried to,” she whispered. “But the mesa *was* Blatant Barm.”

“WHAT?”

“That’s right,” Ma said. “Barm had joined up with the koloss—the ones that change into big monsters, not the normal ones like old Mrs. Nock. And *they* showed him how to turn into a monster of humongous size. So when Jak tried to land on it, the mesa done gobbled him up.”

Wayne gasped. “And then,” he said, “it mashed him beneath its teeth, crushing his bones like—”

“No,” Ma said. “It tried to swallow him. But Jak, he wasn’t only smart and a good shot. He was something else.”

“What?”

“A big damn pain in the ass.”

“Ma! That’s swearin’.”

“It’s okay in stories,” Ma said. “Listen, Jak was a pain. He was always going about doing good. Helping people. Making life tough for bad people. Asking questions. He knew exactly how to ruin a bandit’s day.

“So as he was swallowed, Jak stretched out his arms and legs, then pushed—making himself a *lump* in Blatant Barm’s throat, so the monster couldn’t breathe. Monsters like that needs lotsa air, you know. And so, Allomancer Jak done *choked* Barm from the inside. Then, when the monster was dead on the ground, Jak sauntered out down its tongue—like it was some fancy mat set outside a carriage for a rich man.”

Whoa. “That’s a *good* story, Ma.”

She smiled.

“Ma,” he said. “Is the story ... about the mine?”

“Well,” she said, “I suppose we all gotta walk into the beast’s mouth now and then. So ... maybe, I guess.”

“You’re like the lawman then.”

“Anyone can be,” she said, blowing out the lantern.

“Even me?”

“Especially you.” She kissed him on the forehead. “You are whatever you want to be, Wayne. You’re the wind. You’re the stars. You are all endless things.”

It was a poem she liked. He liked it too. Because when she said it, he *believed* her. How could he not? Ma didn’t lie. So, he snuggled deeper into his blankets and let himself drift off. A lot was wrong in the world, but a few things were right. And as long as she was around, stories meant