

EARTH. CUCKOO IN THE PHOENIX NEST

Earth

Cuckoo in the Phoenix Nest

A story from around the year 200,000



Acapulco Jones



2nd edition

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Dramatis personae

Ar – a boy of twelve years living in the town of Destordan in Fualst

Azard – Ar's Derjalla father

Shania – Ar's Zarducthan mother

Shanaturtaz – Ar's grandfather and Shania's father

Zarduc – the legendary founding father of the Zarducthan people

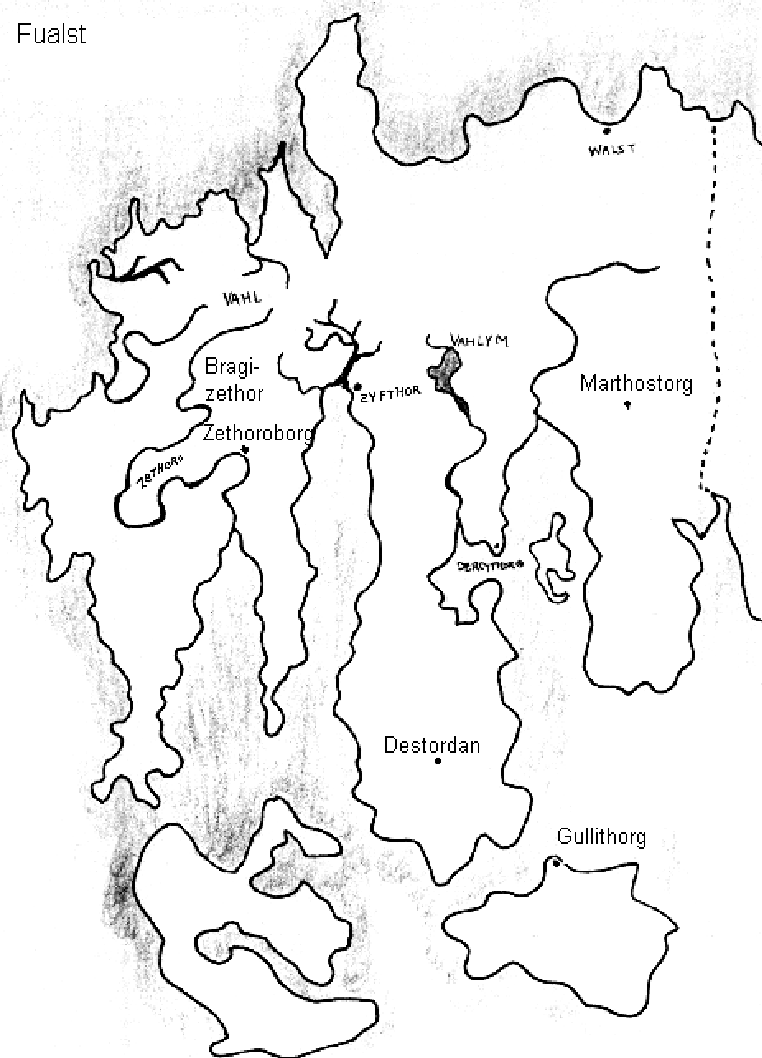
Derjalla – the conquering people who subjected the Zarducthan

Faj Rehdown – a Derjalla friend of Azard

Garhee, Verat do Soum, Dragorath, Kennet Gullithan – various Derjalla

Gtal Sandior – located on a distant planet

Fualst



Dedicated to Paul Harland (1960-2003).
A most remarkable and endearing person.
His last book was *The hand that takes*, Aeon Press 2003.

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Destordan

Sunset turned the sky crimson. The ring in the sky that circled the world, the Shan-al-Radh, shone in the South, bright as a mighty scimitar in the evening dark. The dusty windows of Destordan reflected the last rays of the sun and the broken tiles on walls and chimneys sparkled. The shabby town shone with an undeserved fervour. In the smoothing glow in the settling dark even the big fence around the town seemed to fade in non-existence.

Some thousand people were assembled on the town square, tawny dark-haired men and women, with withered looks and clothed in rags. They stood gathered around a huge pile of dry wood. A single spark would set that in a blazing fire. On a small platform next to the pile an old man spoke. The towners listened in utter concentration, the men clenching their fists and the women pressing their nails into their palms. The voice of Shanaturtaz the Eldest cut through the evening silence and crackled, sounding as if the pile already burned. The sun turned his white hair into a red halo, gave his weathered face a young and strong look while his grubby coat got the smooth crimson of the expanse. Gesturing with the shiny objects in his hands, he drew fiery arcs in the air and gave the appearance of a flame himself.



On another planet at a distant star the board of Notso Ltd. Company convened. Its directors looked with brooding eyes at Gtal Sandior who had called the meeting and who had disrupted their daily routine. The outrage ! But what had caused him to do so ?



The sun set lower and the narrow alleys filled rapidly with shadows. Men on the roofs caught the last rays and mirrored those towards the old Shanaturtaz. His long en stirring speech came to a close. He appealed to the legendary ancestor of his people and cried: "By Zarduc, our slavery has lasted too long ! We demand our freedom ! Demand ? No, we will take it !" Shanaturtaz took a deep breath and then shouted: "Revolution ! That means revolution !" His people took the cue and the alleys vibrated with their yell. The thought of suffering and insult was sharp and burning in their minds and their whole being cried out for revenge. "Revolution !" they cried massively, "Revolution ! Revolution !" The ground shook under their pounding and the air cracked. Men climbed on the platform and lifted the Eldest on their shoulders where he kept swinging wildly with the symbols of the revolution. The mass was euphoric and many could not hold back their tears.

The evening wind grew stronger and carried the yell across the fields towards the Derjalla guards who forgot their discipline. They smiled.

"Spread !" Shanaturtaz commanded hoarsely. Obeying instantly, the mass filed from the square as fast as the alleys allowed. The sun had set so that the town now lay in darkness. Observers whose eyes were used to some light would not notice the departure.

In the crowd, twelve years old Ar was led by his notorious parents. His mother Shania was lithe and dark-haired, the youngest daughter of Shanaturtaz. His father Azard was the tall and blond Derjalla officer who had joined their captivity only to marry her. Ar was still frail and boney like his grandfather but he had Azard's proud flush of hair and one day he would be as tall and powerful. The speech of his grandfather, the thrill of the crowd and the cry for revolution had heightened the boy's spirits so that his bright grey eyes sparkled. He was overjoyed to be old enough to join in the revolution and terribly proud about the role he was going to have himself. But in his youthful passion he did not fail to notice the calm that he parents showed in this wild crowd. Their coolness also affected him since he knew that he had caused it.

It felt almost as a relief when they arrived home at their Dendoike.¹ Hurriedly and panting, they entered and went to the table where everything lay prepared. The clothes that lay there had the revolutionary colour, the colour of blood and battle. Azard put on red pants and a shirt and he stuck a wooden hammer under his belt. Shania put on a red burnuz and she tied her hair with a red ribbon. Ar proudly put on his tunic with the complex patterns in all shades of red but with the yellow marks of the Shanat clan. His mother nervously inspected him and then ran her fingers fleetingly through his hair. It was a forgiving gesture as well and Ar was glad that the darkness hid his blush. They picked up the food parcels and then were ready. Azard positioned himself at the door and they waited in silence for the signal. Their fast breathing could barely be heard. A minute passed and suddenly Azard hissed: "Remember Eloya !" Ar was seized with shock. Azard broke the silence ! Staring at his father's dark face and fearing to make a sound he managed to nod.

A shrill flute sounded softly from afar. His father moved fast. While he was still opening the door Ar jumped through it, clutching the parcel tightly under his arm. "Run !" cried his mother with sudden hysteria and her cry resounded in his ears when he turned the corner. Shania wanted to follow him but Azard quickly stepped in her way. Their bodies crashed into each other. The physical impact released the tensions of the last months. The final moment had come, it actually had passed, with Ar gone now. Shania's worries of these months, the loneliness and the anger about her helplessness overcame her. Her despair had been long and painfully restrained, and it finally took possession of her. Her anger towards Azard surged and in their collision her hands mauled madly at

¹ Dendoike, the home of a Denion, the Zarducthan name for a boy of twelve years of age.

him. He was keenly aware of her however and he caught her in time. She tried to shake herself free but with all her hysterical force she failed against his unmoving strength. Exhausted, she leaned against his breast and wept, her face distorted from grief. Azard let go, not noticing his cramped hands, embracing her with pain in his heart. He tried to comfort her, but was too occupied with his own thoughts and feelings. He could only whisper her name, and kept doing so.

Neighbours had left their houses, some came to congratulate them, and they were surprised to see them standing in the door like that. "Has Ar tripped?" somebody asked. Someone else answered: "Not in this alley for sure, he is long gone." Aware that the couple wanted to be alone the voices moved away. When the gathering stream of people had passed and dwindled again, Azard regained control of himself, gave his wife a last kiss and pushed her forward in the trail of the crowd. They didn't have much time and he could not afford to miss the coming events. Shania let herself be pushed along and they overtook others. Getting closer to the square, torches were lighted and one could see how everyone was dressed in red, while many had decorated themselves with the symbols of the revolution. All were chatting gaily and the fanaticism of moments ago was releasing itself in exhilaration. Groups joined arms, acquaintances greeted each other cheerfully and congratulations were abundant. The smell of toasted bread and roasted meat grew stronger and one could hear the stately music of the *Interasteral*. Arriving at the square, they saw large tables being put in front of each clan house. Azard led Shania towards the yellow table. Some clan members greeted them with special attention, for tonight their son represented the clan. Shania's mother however accepted Shania's parcels with a stoic face and did her best not to look at the cakes that her daughter had baked with such care. Unintentionally outclassing her, Shania didn't even notice. Azard led her onwards. As parents of a Denion they had the privilege of a place up front and Azard had no intention to give that up, though Shania would have preferred a place far in the back. He found a spot close to the platform, illuminated by torches now, where he had a good view. On the platform, Shanaturtaz sat with the council of elders. When the old man spotted them his expression sobered visibly.



Light as a shadow he ran through the dark, his breath like a whisper, his feet touching the rock in a fleeting cadence. His lean and supple body craved for the exercise and his mind was so open that he felt like being absorbed in the surroundings and merging with nature. The path was ancient, its surface smoothed by the steps of millions and the running of thousands like him. In some places, the wind had blown patches of sand that rain would soon wash away again. Behind him, a small section of the sky still lighted by the sun was fading into darkness. Soon only Shan-al-Radh would illuminate the world. In the East the night

already had fallen and the wind from sea brought a tight deck of clouds that would eventually cover the sky in total darkness. He grew aware of conflicting feelings. Like the wind in his hair, he felt strong and tireless, and like the grains of sand under his feet he felt paltry and defenceless. The unreal sensation slowly passed and he was himself again, running on the path along the town fence.

That conflict between powerlessness and resistance had taken root in his mind though. His thoughts closed on the fence. It towered above him thirty meters high and ten meters deep into the hard rock, of incorruptible steel of enormous strength, and its poles and lattices broke the enchantment of the Shan-al-Radh. He stared intensely at it. It had endured more than two millennia, imprisoning the town of Destordan, ages and ages it would endure and it remained undisturbed by his angry look. He spat at it and a shower of sparks fell towards the ground. The fence would always dominate his life, but he could choose between surrender and resistance. He grinned grimly. That decision he had made already long ago. He noticed he had been slowing down and picked up his pace again, for he'd better not be late.



A man worked his way through the crowd towards Azard. His red tunic and cap marked his distinction, though his flabby contours and weak features pointed to anything but revolutionary zeal. He gripped Azard by his shoulder, used his considerable weight to force him to bend over and hissed conspiratorially: "Now we shall see what that lad of yours can do!" Azard stepped back impulsively from the smell of booze hitting his senses and the sight of that fat and sweaty face so close to him. "Now, don't get impolite with me !" the man accused in a high voice. He put his hands on Azard's shoulders again and said: "We are partners, now, or have you forgotten ?"

Azard was surprised to note how meekly he could tolerate that fat touch. It would not be smart to ignore the man. If Old Fatty entertained a grudge towards you, you could count on some nasty surprises. "Well, actually I didn't even know we were partners," he confessed as politely as possible. "Don't think that I am stupid !" the man exploded. He regained control immediately and added in a low mean voice: "If I lose my money you will pay for it !" His expression relaxed and he hushed conspiratorially, actually padding Azard's shoulder: "Come on, you can't fool me. I saw with my own eyes how he let others win. Man, what a dandy trick to make some money ! I put half my fortune on him !" His face seemed to glow for a moment but then he quickly sobered. "Just one question, chap. Can you tell me why you didn't bet yourself ? Only the minimum, but that's a trifle ! It's making me nervous, you know ? Now then, what is your trick ?"

It had been clear to Azard long before why Old Fatty had been sweating so much and had been boozing more than was common even for him. It was a welcome change to see him doing the worrying for

once. But Azard kept his guard and responded matter-of-factly: "I really don't know, mister. It just isn't my business. Ar is old enough now to make his own decisions. The whole thing is his own idea. He doesn't even know that I noticed. Or that you noticed. I haven't said a word and I haven't pushed him. If he wants to lose, let him go ahead and my wallet can carry that minimum loss. So, you see, I don't know more than you do." He succeeded in not pushing the fat man's hands aside and turning his back to him, and kept a blank gaze.

"Zarduc !" the man hissed in shock. The thought of a foul set-up entered his mind for a second, but then he realized that he was talking to that honest Derjalla fool. "Bloody damn !" The lad had made it up all himself ! He was hit hard and low. There was no way he could have foreseen this. "Damn Derjalla !" he hissed furiously and he waved his fist in front of the blond face above him. "Just let him win ! If I lose my money you will pay for it, you stupid renegade ! Oh man, you will regret that !" He stared in anger in Azard's unmoving blue eyes, turned around brusquely and walked away in frantic madness. He had easy passage since many owed him and didn't want to jeopardize their repayment conditions.

That instant, Azard was pulled at his other arm. Shania looked at him with large eyes. "*On purpose ? He does it on purpose ?*" she cried, back on the verge of hysteria. Disbelief and stupefaction battled within her. "Yes, honey," Azard confessed meekly and with great relief, blessing repulsive Old Fatty for his intervention. He took his wife's hands and met her eyes. "I wish I could have told you sooner but Ar didn't tell you so I couldn't either. He must have a good reason otherwise he would have told us, don't you think so ? Honey, he can win if he wants to. If he doesn't, we will have Old Fatty as a new household word." Her eyes bored at him, large and questioning, but understanding dawned. She knew their son and he saw from the softening of her look that she understood, finally. And started hoping.

There had been a shadow over their small family for the good part of the year. Their once invincible son had suddenly turned a big loser, complaining about tiredness and pain. Shania's high expectations at the beginning of the Dendoikaya had become a bitter disappointment and her mood had turned likewise. Azard had noted that there was more to the matter than Ar had cared to explain. But he saw himself powerless. If he told Shania then she would undoubtedly question their son, but Ar apparently thought that it would be better if she didn't know. Azard just couldn't destroy Ar's set-up by telling her. Even if he convinced her that she should not show anything, then she still would be Shania and be unable to hide it. It was better that Ar had to stand up to Shania as she was. It was too important for the boy's self-esteem and too valuable a lesson, to give it away and let Shania spoil it. So the outcome of Azard's deliberations was that Shania continued to press her son to do his utmost best, to think of the honour of the clan, and Ar continued to promise to do so, while nothing changed. Then Azard had become the target of her complaints. Not only didn't he do enough in her opinion to

stimulate the boy, but she could really express her mind to him too, as she couldn't to the boy. The situation had become unbearable in the last few weeks. The betting had started and it had been a big shame to the clan that Azard had only been willing to put up the minimum amount. Other parents had put up five times as much to keep up their honour and to stimulate their sons to save their family a large financial loss. Worst for Shania was that the old Shanaturtaz had taken his time to lecture her and then had told her to keep out of his sight "until everything is settled". This had shocked her self-esteem. The final blow had been the gloating and giggling of the women almost wherever she showed up. She had barely dared outside, this last week, and the atmosphere at home had turned icy and stifling. Azard had put up with it as best as he could. It was just too understandable that she wanted her son to shine while she still could see it. But it had been a miserable time nevertheless and he felt immensely relieved now. For the first time in ages she leaned in his embrace again. Heretic though he had become, he thanked the gods.

The crowd was impatient and the chatter drowned the music, when a horn piped. Silence fell. Torches were dimmed so that the middle of the square got dark. Suddenly someone yelled: "There they are !"



The fathers of the expected winners, standing up front as well, started yelling. People strained their necks to see. The Race of the Twelve Years Olds was always exciting. The boys first ran along the fence, each his own separate lone run, then at the alley gates they traded their food parcels for torches and then they joined up in the town alleys. The first leg demanded much discipline, the second leg required strength and cunning to stay afoot in the push and pull. There the run was for the pile on the town square, for the honour to lit its revolutionary fire. It was also a run to avoid burns, for who lit the pile could still jump away but the throng who followed closely would meet a blazing fire. And, not the least, it was also a run for money because of the bets.

A torch flamed in the dark main alley. "Yeah !" people yelled. The torch flew ahead. It took a moment but then the crowd recognised the runner and stood in shock. The torch lit blond hair and a tunic with the yellow symbol of the Shanat clan. As he darted from the alley and ran over the square another shocking fact was observed: Ar was all by himself !

He had completed a third of the distance towards the pile when four other boys entered the square, close together, only fearing their own competition and expecting that Ar would collapse any moment. Azard could no longer contain his rejoice and trumpeted with his hands: "Run, Ar, *run* !" His father's confident encouragement ignited Ar and he exploded into full speed. His followers noted this with horror and engaged in an angry and desperate response. The group broke apart, two gave all they had, advanced on Ar, but were soon outwinded and collapsed. A third tripped over them. Disbelieving yells resounded

through the town crowd and above all Shania's cheers sounded. Most people were dumbstruck and watched the scene with uncomprehending eyes. Old Shanaturtaz rose from his seat and stared in disbelief at the lad who stormed over the town square.

A flash and a roar attacked their senses. The stupefaction had lasted only a few seconds. The pile flamed high, sounded like a wounded bull, engulfed the square in heat. The fourth boy had plenty of time to stop, did so and threw his torch in the flames with a helpless gesture. The other boys got back on their feet, looked about them sheepishly, but collected their torches from the ground and followed his example. The other boys entered the square, oblivious of what had happened. They ran as fast as they could to avoid being last. For a moment it seemed like a normal Race.

Shania embraced her panting son, crying from happiness. The two of them became the object of questioning stares. Four men started pushing their way towards them and one cried: "There he is, the fraud !" Others joined them and women started to yell, repeating: "Fraud, he's a fraud !" Azard didn't hesitate. He stepped up to Ar, freed him from Shania's embrace, lifted him up and set him on the platform. He turned around just in time to face one of the angry fathers. "You will not get away with this, Derjalla !" the man cried. Behind him moved others, a bit less angry but more dangerous for that reason, and behind them more angry fathers pressed forward. Azard had no illusions. Even though he had lived here for more than thirteen years and even though the Shanat clan had adopted him officially, he still was a foreigner and likely enemy to many. Unsure about Ar's actual plans, he had only dared to warn some of his friends in vague terms and they were too surprised to be of much help. He faced this mad pack all by himself.

Azard jumped on the platform, drew his hammer and lifted it threateningly. "Back, all of you ! There are arbiters ! Let them speak and let the boy explain himself, before we kill each other !" he thundered with all the authority of a Derjalla commander. He had calculated right. The first father tried to attack him, blind and deaf from rage, but the two behind him restrained him, alarmed by the killing reference, sensing that Azard had a point and that he would really use that hammer to defend his son. The others were stopped for a crucial second. Azard thundered on: "The arbiters have closely watched the Race, they can tell what happened ! Nobody touches my son, remember the rule of law !" The crowd fell silent and a few seconds more were gained. Azard dropped his hand with the hammer, held it proudly to his side and proclaimed loudly and reasonably: "The boy will first answer to his father if he has cheated. The Shanat clan maintains its own discipline."

That last statement was keenly directed to Shanaturtaz. The Eldest recovered from his shock, looked about and gestured the town guard into action. They similarly remembered their duties and moved to the still struggling fathers up front. A brawl could not be avoided, however. Some of the other fathers cried their distrust of authority and it took a while before they were overpowered and could be detained.

The arbiters were rather neglected normally but now their report appeared of utmost importance. They themselves decided that every possible witness should be questioned and that every statement should be evaluated with scrutiny. Shanaturtaz granted them an hour to do so and the townspeople spent that hour in argument, eating and drinking, all the while staring at Ar and his parents who were guarded next to the platform. When that long hour had passed, the arbiters returned to the square. The town teacher Vaalbi headed the group, carried himself with authority, clothed in a red garb, and dutifully presented himself to the council of elders. Shanaturtaz had been brooding in his seat and had a growing irritation from the questioning stares, so that the food and drinks hadn't had any taste to him. He uttered some strong words and started the proceedings. He didn't have to call for order.

Now lit by the dwindling fire of a much lower pile, he faced the town and spoke sternly: "A Shanat has caused questions and I regret this. Tonight should have been festive, not reduced to a brawl and a judicial inquiry. We have seen something highly irregular. Nobody ever won with such a lead, certainly not someone who has lost all practice runs ! Master Vaalbi will now enlighten us whether these events derive from fraud or not." He gestured Ar curtly to get onto the platform so that he could face justice. The boy did so with a blush and Shanaturtaz didn't appreciate this timidity. *Derjalla*, his thought flashed and he felt the old pain again.

In a ceremonious gesture, Vaalbi tapped the platform three times with his staff and in this manner he succeeded in transferring his authority for this special occasion. The scientist coughed and then spoke clearly and dryly: "Speaking on behalf of all arbiters, I can report that all participants of the Race have obeyed all rules of the Race." His words hung in the air for a measurable amount of time. The general proposition had to be translated and then met disbelief. Someone cried: "Then what about Ar Azardson ?" Vaalbi nodded patiently, expecting this question, and replied: "Concerning him, he does not differ from the other participants. Like the others, he left his Dendoike at the correct moment when the signal was given and he did not take a shorter route. The Race thus was fair. If I am allowed to venture my opinion," and he paused as if permission was required, "then Ar has fooled all of us by losing the practice runs. Why he did so, I don't know, but there is no rule against fooling us. I thus congratulate him with his impressive victory."

The crowd hesitated, murmured its disbelief. Vaalbi had been a respected teacher for years, few had not been taught by him. His verdict sounded fair. The arbiters had a good system to check on possible cheating and who was caught was removed from the Race immediately. Some still had an objection and shouted: "The betting ! Don't forget the betting ! That lad must have gained a fortune ! This wasn't a fair race, this is theft !"

The protest gained volume. Whether it was theft or not, many had lost what had seemed a certain gain. Something like that does not seem fair in itself. Or, where people had hoped to reduce their obligations to Old Fatty, now they were deeper in debt. When Vaalbi motioned for silence it took a while before he got everyone's attention again. He continued with reproof: "Everybody knows, don't you, that the betting is not an official part of the Race ? City council only administers those bets to warrant proper proceedings, but the commonwealth cannot be held accountable for the outcomes. Suppose that you asked us to control for those outcomes too ? What freedom would remain to bet as you like ? Who joins the betting has only himself or herself to hold accountable, win or lose. Yes, to satisfy my own meagre curiosity, I queried the cashier how much Ar Azardson or any of the Shanat clan have actually gained today ..." Now he had everyone's undivided attention and the gambling types wondered how much they themselves could have made had they pulled such a trick. "One hundred urls !" exclaimed Vaalbi with some glee. "The lad has fooled his father and his clan as much as he has fooled all of us ! They only put in the minimum amount. Have they not been derogated for doing so ? No, this doesn't amount to much of a fortune. Hence, money was not a motive. What his true motive was we can only guess at. Or ask him. Actually, as a teacher," and Vaalbi never tired of reminding people of his profession, "I have often seen Ar Azardson doing curious things, but they always met a reasonable explanation after the fact. I suggest we ask that explanation now."

The stately Vaalbi could no longer hide his own curiosity. All eyes were fixed on Ar, who blushed vehemently and held his head down as if studying the platform floor. Shanaturtaz broke the silence and urged him. "Come on, lad. Given this verdict of the court of arbiters, all claims of fraud are void. Hence, I declare you this year's Winner of the Revolution. The laurels are yours ! But I cannot congratulate you yet. You owe us an explanation. A good explanation as well, for otherwise you will be the subject of hearsay for the rest of your life. For example, did you intend to gain that fortune originally, but then you lost the courage to actually do so ?" This suggestion caused a murmur amongst those who had not thought of this possibility before. Ar blushed even stronger, but found himself unable to speak. The situation deteriorated for him quickly.

Azard climbed the platform, less hurried than before. He took position behind his son and put his hands on his shoulders. "Allow me to speak for him," he addressed the town calmly. "I think I can read his motives and I may be able to explain them better than he can, with all this fighting tonight." He squeezed Ar's shoulders in encouragement. "Suppose that Ar had won all practice runs ? For the whole last year ? Suppose that he had done his best, as tonight, so that he had won always with a lead of thirty or thirty-five yards ? Everyone present tonight knows that this would have been the case. What would have been the consequence ? I can imagine only one thing: For that whole year, the other boys would have been made fun of. They would have been called

lazy snails, not even good enough for a second place with burns by the fire. These boys would be marked for life ! Every man in this square recalls his own Revolutionary Race, the first claim on adulthood. Every man in this square is proud of his achievement. What woman however would want a man filled with shame ? These boys would have no life !”

The town was shocked. Azard saw Ar’s head drop even lower and continued merrily: “This is something that my son wanted to prevent. I don’t know whether he did it in the right way, but he achieved his purpose. These boys have competed fiercely and they have competed with the best runner that Destordan has ever known. They have nothing to be ashamed of. That some boys lost the Race, well, that happens all the time and we quickly forget. This day will be remembered as the Revolution of the Surprising Winner and not as the Revolution of the Lazy Snails. Today will be remembered as the day we were all made fools of, which is something to remember anyway. Well, Ar, do I guess correctly ?”

He squeezed his son’s shoulders now painfully and the boy finally found the power of speech. “Yes, Azard,” he said with relief, in the dead silence of the town square.

“Excellent !” Shanaturtaz cut in with decision. Elaborating the issue would do no good, he sensed, the town had had plenty. “May I see all revolutionary runners on the platform !” he commanded. He sent Azard away and motioned the other fathers to send their sons. Still dazed, the boys did as he said. The crowd exploded in chatter. When one of the boys passed Ar, he hesitantly extended his hand in congratulations and soon the other boys followed suit. This caused the first cheers in the crowd. Motioned by Shanaturtaz, the music band picked up their instruments and soon the tunes of the *Interasteral* resounded. The boys remembered their role and lined up on the platform. The crowd started the lyrics of the song. Not much was left of the burning pile, but in its light the small town of Destordan finally paid respect to the boys who symbolised the never dwindling revolutionary fire of their people.



The music stopped and people fell silent, remembering the ceremony. Shanaturtaz turned to the boys and spoke, now less grubby and irritated: “I observe that it is time for my speech, unless someone among you thinks that there is a reason why I should wait again.” He glanced at Ar, who turned red and dropped his head. “Alright then. My speech can be short, given all these lessons we have had tonight. I need to say one thing, still. This night, you had a lone run. In the early dark of the night, you ran along the fence that separates us from the world and you were alone with the stars high above. Your thoughts were with winning the Race and perhaps only a little bit with the true Revolution. But now your childhood is past and you are men. As you grow older, you will realize that this night really is about the Revolution after all, about the free fields and the far stars. You may have noted too that running by yourself in the