



Raor with traveling companions Dramna, Rosaylyn, Koss, and Viper... two of whom were actually assigned to kill him.

BREAKING NEWS • YLÉCIUM

Raor Survives Latest Attempt to Kill Him

By Goldie, Senior Correspondent, Glitter Paper Staff
(and only qualified journalist available)

Witness describes events as an "Epic Journey." Authorities question why he keeps rescuing his assassins.

Bane of Dark Gods has officially escaped into the world, despite what reliable sources describe as an unreasonable number of assassins, dark gods, magical catastrophes, and one author's apparent inability to write anything simple.

Early reports are troubling.

One reader described the book as an "Epic Journey," praised its unlikely friendships, and reported being on the edge of her seat. More concerningly, she confirmed what this newspaper has long suspected: people keep being sent to kill Raor, and he keeps saving them.

This is clearly inefficient.

The same witness also filed an unsolicited complaint regarding Koss's personal hygiene. Representatives for the Ember Dwarf declined to comment, although several nearby travelers reportedly agreed with the assessment.

Other readers have remained suspiciously quiet.

Whether this is due to emotional devastation, recovery from excessive late-night reading, or simply forgetting that authors survive largely on tea and reviews remains unknown.

The Goldie Glitter Paper intends to investigate.

CORRECTION: Issue 001 reported that Bane of Dark Gods had been "tamed." It has since escaped. We regret the error.

TEA BREAK

New Household Resident Almost Certainly Not a Dog

Goldie investigates troubling reports concerning the creature known as Faelin

Readers may recall that Issue 001 reported the expected arrival of a small Cairn Terrier named Faelin, meaning Little Wolf.

The Glitter Paper would like to issue a correction. Faelin is almost certainly not a dog.

His exact classification remains under investigation.

Early theories included wolf-blood fae, swamp hobgoblin, unusually hairy toad troll, and something the author keeps calling a "Water Wolf."

Evidence for the last theory is mounting.

After initially refusing to get his feet wet, Faelin has discovered that water can be splashed.

He has further determined that all splashes must be destroyed.

Researchers attempting to photograph the resulting transformation captured an alarming creature rising from the water with wild eyes, enormous teeth, and absolutely no regrets.

Goldie has reviewed the photograph. Water elemental remains a possibility.

Faelin has also demonstrated a deep distrust of motorized objects and recently identified the household heat pump as a dragon that periodically breathes hot air into the room.

Attempts to explain modern heating technology have been unsuccessful.

The dragon remains under surveillance.



Luna and Faelin in his "dog" phase.



Faelin with water added.

BREAKING NEWS

Water Mage Causes Unexplained Stampede

More than 5,000 humans acquired copies of Born of Water during a single weekend, briefly propelling the book to #26 in the entire Kindle Free Store and #1 in multiple fantasy categories.

Authorities remain uncertain what the humans intend to do with them.

Goldie recommends caution.

"That is far too many water mages in one place."



Born of Water showing how ranking is done.

Goldie's Tiny Wisdom

- "One more chapter" is not a measurement of time.
- If something beautiful offers you a drink on Samhain, ask what it is. Then ask again.
- If the water moves and there is no wind, reconsider your itinerary.

Meanwhile, Luna continues to demonstrate the composed dignity expected of a respectable murderfloo and would like everyone to know she has absolutely nothing to do with this.

GOLDIE'S CURRENT CLASSIFICATION

Name: Faelin
Species: Undetermined
Possible Ancestry: Wolf-blood fae / swamp hobgoblin / water elemental
Natural Habitat: Wherever the splashing is
Known Enemies: Motors, suspicious machinery, heat-pump dragons
Special Ability: Instantaneous transformation when wet
Threat Level: Enthusiastic
Relationship with Luna: Under diplomatic negotiation

Goldie's Official Conclusion:

The Little Wolf has arrived.

We may have underestimated the wolf part.



EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS

Goldie Questions
Raor Gaillard

Former mage, scholar, reluctant adventurer, and frequent target of assassination agrees to an interview.

Goldie would like it noted that “agrees” may be a generous description.

GOLDIE: Our readers chose the first question. Exactly how many rules have you broken at the Atheneum?

RAOR: Which time?

GOLDIE: Which... time?

RAOR: There were several incidents.

GOLDIE: How many?

RAOR: I don't know.

GOLDIE: You don't know how many rules you broke?

RAOR: I didn't agree that I broke them. The masters did.

GOLDIE: Were you punished?

RAOR: Yes.

GOLDIE: What happened?

RAOR: Usually I peeled potatoes.

GOLDIE: I see.

Goldie's Note: *I do not see.*

GOLDIE: You've now been attacked by several assassins and subsequently rescued several of them. Is this intentional, or are you simply very bad at having enemies?

RAOR: What was I supposed to do? Let them die?

GOLDIE: They were trying to kill you.

RAOR: Not all of them.

GOLDIE: Some of them?

RAOR: Yes.

GOLDIE: I feel this supports my question.

GOLDIE: If you could have stayed at Atheneum with your books and research instead of getting involved in all of this, would you?

MYTHICAL CREATURE WATCH

Marsh Strangler
Sightings Increase

Travelers advised that ripples in the water may not, in fact, be fish.

Creature: Marsh Strangler

Known Habitat: Midnight Marsh and other wetlands of Solenum

Appearance: Enormous pale-scaled serpent

Diet: Travelers who aren't paying attention

Hunting Method: Ambush, constriction, swallowing victims whole

Temperament: Hungry

Recommended Viewing Distance: Another kingdom

Marsh Stranglers are among the less welcoming inhabitants of Solenum's wetlands.

Recent eyewitness reports from the Midnight Marsh describe a serpent large enough to wrap an adult traveler completely within its coils. Once captured, prey is squeezed until resistance becomes difficult, at which point the Strangler opens its jaws and attempts to swallow its meal whole.

This newspaper considers that excessive.

Travelers should also note that hiding from a Marsh Strangler may not be sufficient. The creatures have been observed searching for prey by repeatedly flicking their tongues through the air, suggesting that simply being

Raor is quiet for a moment.

RAOR: Before?

GOLDIE: Before.

RAOR: Yes.

GOLDIE: And now?

RAOR: No.

GOLDIE: Why?

RAOR: Next question.

Goldie's Note: *Interesting.*

GOLDIE: Every successful expedition requires emergency provisions. Which of your companions would you trust to pack the snacks?

RAOR: Dramna.

GOLDIE: Cassandra agrees!

RAOR: Who?

GOLDIE: Never mind. Why Dramna?

RAOR: Viper would pack weapons. Koss would eat everything before we left.

GOLDIE: And Rosaylyn?

RAOR: She'd remember the tea.

GOLDIE: You said that very quickly.

RAOR: Next question.

GOLDIE: You crossed Ylécium and risked your life repeatedly to save Rosaylyn. Is there anything you wouldn't do for her?

...

RAOR: Are we finished?

GOLDIE: You didn't answer the question.

RAOR: I know.

GOLDIE: Raor?

RAOR: We're finished.

GOLDIE'S INTERVIEW NOTES

Subject departed before follow-up questions could be asked. Became noticeably impatient whenever Rosaylyn was mentioned.

Has apparently violated enough Atheneum rules that an exact count is unavailable. Does not consider this the same thing as breaking them.

Further investigation required.

difficult to see does not make one difficult to find.

Their weaknesses appear to include strong irritants, confusion, and having their breakfast repeatedly stolen.

GOLDIE'S FIELD NOTES

- Do not investigate mysterious splashing.
- Do not approach suspicious coils.
- Do not attempt to determine how far one's arm fits inside its nostril.

Editor's Note: *Nobody suggested this.*

I was being thorough.



Marsh Stranglers are not nice friends.

WATER WOLF COMPARISON

Following recent developments involving Faelin, the Glitter Paper has conducted a preliminary comparison.

Water Wolf: Attacks splashes.

Marsh Strangler: Attacks whatever made the splashes.

Further research indicates these species should not be introduced.



Your Forecasts

ADVENTURE FORECAST

Samhain Outlook

Magic: Unusually active

Veils: Questionably thin

Fae activity: Increasing

Witches: Busy

Mortal interference: Strongly discouraged

Chance of accidentally accepting an enchanted beverage: 72%

Samhain approaches, bringing the usual increase in magical activity throughout the Hidden Realm. Travelers are advised to respect old traditions, avoid unexplained lights in the forest, and ask what is in the cup before drinking it.

Goldie would also like to clarify that Samhain and Halloween are not the same holiday.

One involves ancient traditions, thinning boundaries, and respecting things older than you.

The other involves putting candles inside vegetables.

Both apparently involve snacks.

Goldie understands the confusion.

Goldie's Official Forecast

Overall Outlook: Cozy with scattered danger.

Expect falling leaves, strange lights, thinning veils, dangerous wetlands, active witches, hungry plants, enormous snakes, and at least one creature currently pretending to be a household dog.

Meanwhile, an unidentified disturbance has been detected near the Author's Writing Cave. Approximately twelve chapters of visibility remain.

Further developments expected.

Regional Forecast

Ylécium

Conditions remain unsettled following recent disturbances involving dark gods, assassins, forbidden magic, and Raor Gaillard.

Hidden Realm

Increasing chance of fae activity as Samhain approaches. Mortal travelers should avoid bargains, mysterious paths, unattended mushroom circles, and anyone who says, “It's perfectly safe.”

Reading Outlook

Autumn conditions are expected to produce excellent reading throughout the season.

Longer nights will increase opportunities for fantasy, dangerous magic, haunted forests, witches, fae, ancient curses, impossible quests, and books containing maps that immediately make you want to go somewhere inadvisable.

Readers are advised to prepare.

Considering Relocation?

The Unified Realms welcomes responsible citizens from all nations. Magical preferred!

Benefits include:

- improved trade
- safer roads
- considerably fewer wars

Applications currently under review.
Contact the coven where you'd like to move!

PUBLIC NOTICE

Mortals Reminded
that Some Futures are
Chosen

The Glitter Paper has recently reviewed reports from the world of Friends of My Enemy, where humans have apparently managed to create catastrophic political upheaval without the assistance of dark gods, cursed runes, imprisoned fae, or even one improperly supervised witch.

This is concerning.

With elections approaching in the United States, eligible readers are reminded that voting is one of the ways mortals participate in deciding what happens next.

Goldie's Advice: Learn what is on your ballot. Make your own choices. Vote if you can.

The future, apparently, does not require prophecy.

Sometimes it requires paperwork.

FIELD REPORT

The Search for Riasg

Progress Report Filed by Bramble
Goldie has been asked not to interfere.

Objective: Find Riasg.

Status: Alive.

Location: Complicated.

We have followed a feather through more worlds than I care to count. The feather does not know where it is going.

October says this is not its fault. It is a feather.

We have encountered several creatures that attempted to eat us, trees that attempted to eat us, and other things that October insists were "pretty before that."

They were trying to eat us.

We have stopped following the feather.

Goldie's Note: This seems unfair to the feather.

Bramble's Note: Stay out of this

We tried the runes. They worked.
Riasg is alive. We found his trail.
Unfortunately, it leads beyond the Cailite Ré.
There should be no way through.
Riasg found one. So will we.
FIELD REPORT STATUS: Search continues.
Goldie's Official Assessment: Encouraging!
Bramble's Official Assessment: Stop writing on my report.

THE WANDERING CAULDRON
AUTUMN SPECIAL

Mulled cider • Spiced tea •
Pumpkin cakes
Dragonfire stew available
after sundown
Familiars welcome.
No prophecy readings after 9.

GOLDIE'S CURIOSITY CABINET

The Carnivorous Pond Plant of the Black Marsh

Pretty leaves. Hooked vines. Enormous mouth. Botanical classification remains unnecessarily complicated.
Habitat: Bogs and wetlands of the Black Marsh, Myrrah
Appearance: Large floating leaves surrounding a cavernous central structure
Feeding Strategy: Snare first. Drown second. Presumably digest later.
Notable Features: Grasping vines, hooked thorns, appetite
Method of Observation: Scrying
Distance from Specimen: Several worlds
Goldie's Assessment: Could be farther.
At first glance, these enormous aquatic plants resemble unusually large water lilies.
This is apparently how they get you.
When prey comes within reach, vines lash

GOLDIE'S HALLOWEEN SPECIAL

Humans Dress Like Witches. Goldie Consults Actual Ones.

Results are currently under review.
I have recently learned that humans celebrate something called Halloween.
Apparently this involves dressing as witches, ghosts, fae, and other perfectly ordinary beings before wandering from house to house demanding sweets. I approve of the sweets. The rest requires investigation.
Fortunately, I know two witches.
Unfortunately, they have both specifically asked me not to touch their spellbooks.
Fortunately, neither is currently here, so I borrowed one or a dozen.

Editor's Note: "Borrowed" is being used very generously.

Amanda & Celeste's Spell for Finding Something Lost

You will need:
• Three drops of morning dew collected from a fairy ring
• One silver thread
• A pinch of dried moonflower
• One feather willingly given by a raven
• A candle burned for exactly thirteen minutes
• One properly inscribed Finding rune

Except I continued reading. It isn't meant to find lost earrings. Or keys. Or that jar of honey I KNOW I left somewhere.

It finds broken runes... Broken runes? Runes don't break. I checked.

Apparently these did. Worse, the spell doesn't bring them back. It merely points toward one so someone can go find it.

This seems like a lot of unnecessary walking.

Goldie Improves the Spell

Obviously, instead of finding the broken runes... we should make the broken runes find us. For this, I recommend a Protection rune.

Yes, Protection. Stay with me.

outward like snares, dragging the unfortunate traveler from solid ground and into the surrounding water. Once captured, the victim is pulled toward the plant's center, where its leaves peel apart to reveal what eyewitnesses have rather distressingly described as a hungry mouth.

Additional tendrils may contain hooked thorns.

I have several botanical questions. I will not be asking them in person.



Carnivorous plant in a magic blocking marsh. Just nope.

Normally, this rune means:
You are safe, or making someone else safe.
Your light is a shield.
Very useful. But we don't want to keep something safely inside.
We want all those scattered pieces safely back where they belong.
So... turn it upside down.

Editor's Note: This is not how rune magic works.

It might be. Magic listens to intention. Probably.

Goldie's Improved Broken-Runes Magnet

Place the Protection rune upside down beside the tracking charm. Think very firmly about all the lost pieces coming home. Add glitter.

Wait.

IMPORTANT: I have not tested this yet.
Amanda says I am not allowed to test this. Celeste has taken away the silver dagger.
Further research is temporarily delayed.

RUNE OF THE MONTH: PROTECTION

Upright: You are safe, or making someone else safe.
Your light is a shield.

Reversed: Overprotection becomes a prison.
Trust must bloom.

Merkstave: Your defense invites attack. A false sense of safety clouds judgment.

Goldie's Interpretation: Excellent rune. Very versatile. Apparently not a magnet.

Probably.

Which Rune Matches Your Soul?

Protection is only one of the Light and Dark Fae runes.

Perhaps yours is waiting to find you.

→ Discover Your Rune

WHY GOLDIE IS SCRYING THIS ONE

The Black Marsh contains stones capable of blocking magical abilities.

I am magical. My wings are magical. My continued existence is one of my favorite things. Therefore, unlike previous Curiosity Cabinet investigations, I have elected to study this specimen remotely.

SURVIVAL ADVICE

If traveling through the Black Marsh:

- Avoid vines.
- Avoid water.
- Avoid unusually large lily pads.
- Avoid using magic where it returns, because apparently that causes other problems.

Actually, perhaps avoid the Black Marsh.

Curiosity Rating: ★★★★★
Likelihood Goldie Will Collect a Specimen: ☆☆☆☆☆

Some curiosities belong in the cabinet.

This one can stay in the marsh.

Editor's Note: This may be the first sensible research decision Goldie has made.



M21 Maple Butter Tart Tea—Elphame in tea form!

GOLDIE'S TEA REVIEW

Maple Butter Tart Tea

Origin: Grand-Pré, Nova Scotia
Tea: Black
Flavor: Maple, caramelized brown sugar, warm vanilla
Best Accompaniment: Carrot cake scones
Goldie's Rating: ★★★★★ + unauthorized extra glitter

Autumn brought this tea back from Grand-Pré and told me absolutely not to touch it.

Apparently she liked it so much that she drove across Nova Scotia to buy a second tin. Naturally, I took this as an invitation.

Readers, I have made a discovery. This is Elphame honey in tea form.

Rich and sweet and maple-y and buttery and somehow tasting exactly like autumn ought to taste if autumn were brewed in a teapot.

It is even better with carrot cake scones. Unfortunately, I believe I just ate the last one. I hope Autumn makes more soon.

Editor's Note: There were two left.

There was one left.

Editor's Note: Goldie!

Further investigation is required.

Goldie's Tea Wisdom

"Tea should be shared.
Unless it is the last cup.
Then friendship has limits."

TRAVEL ADVISORY

Current destinations requiring reconsideration:

Midnight Marsh: Giant serpents
Black Marsh: Carnivorous plants, unreliable magic
Cailite Ré: Impassable
Hidden Realm at Samhain: Complicated
Canada: Apparently where the Author is going

Safest current destination: Reading chair

Goldie recommends remaining there with tea until conditions improve.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Goldie,

In your previous issue, you stated that *Bane of Dark Gods* had finally been “tamed.”

It has not.

It is more than 120,000 words, contains multiple assassins, several ancient gods, forbidden magic, and at least one character who continues to make decisions I specifically advised against.

Plus, I am still working on the sequel.

Please issue a correction.

Autumn M. Birt
Author

Dear Autumn,

In my defense, it looked tired.

—Goldie

CORRECTION: Bane of Dark Gods has escaped into the world and remains untamed.

THE WHISPER HEARD...

Rumors, Gossip, and Absolutely the Truth

In Maine...

Rumors have reached the newsroom that the Author may be migrating north.

Sources report that Adam has acquired citizenship in a distant northern kingdom called Canada, apparently through ancestral magic.

Goldie is investigating whether this makes him a Canadian by bloodline, spell, or administrative prophecy.

More concerningly, the Author appears interested in following him.

Goldie has questions about newsroom relocation... and wardrobe requirements...

Primary concern: tea availability. Snow.

Hidden Realm...

Reports continue that Bramble has been asking increasingly pointed questions about the Cailite Ré. Sources describe his mood as “bitey.” This newspaper considers that normal.

Ylécium...

Unconfirmed reports suggest Raor Gaillard may have agreed to yet another extremely dangerous undertaking. Nobody consulted Raor's better judgment, including Raor.

Myrrah...

Travelers report unusually aggressive vegetation in the Black Marsh. Local vegetation declined to comment.

THE WHISPER HEARD EXCLUSIVE

Rumors from the Hidden Realm suggest that some endings are considerably less final than advertised. Broken runes may be involved.

Reports suggest *The End of Time* may not have been the end.

The Author declined to comment.

Dear Editor,

Atheneum's current collection contains several references to pixies, most notably *Guardians of the Sylpham Forest: Pixie Militants and Defensive Architecture*.

However, meeting you during your visit, I find that your behavior bears remarkably little resemblance to the creatures described in our existing texts. I have reason to believe our collection may be incomplete.

Could you recommend a more current scholarly work concerning pixie society, behavior, and customs?

I would particularly appreciate one addressing their apparent interest in journalism.

Head Librarian
Atheneum

Finally! Someone interested in accurate pixie scholarship.

I recommend Goldie's Glitter Paper. I'll send two issues—and an invoice.

—Goldie

IS THAT ACTUALLY A WEREWOLF?

Not every creature with sharp teeth, suspicious behavior, and an interest in howling is the same.

Fortunately, there is a guide! Pick up:

GOLDIE'S OFFICIAL GLOSSARY OF FAE
Volume 2: Wolf-Blood Fae and Other Changelings

Learn to identify the different types of wolf-blood fae, their peculiarities, and what you should do if you encounter one.

Essential reading for travelers, adventurers, and anyone who has recently acquired something claiming to be a dog.

GET THE FREE GUIDE →

Goldie's Note: Faelin's classification remains under investigation.

WANTED

Rune recovery specialists. Experience with broken magic preferred. Must be willing to travel. Ability to cross impossible barriers considered an asset.

FOR SALE

One slightly used tracking charm. Finds broken runes eventually. Instructions included. Pixie modifications void warranty.

LOST

Several broken runes. Last seen scattered through time and reality. If found, DO NOT ACTIVATE.

SEEKING

Professional botanist for Black Marsh expedition. Must provide own weapons. Magic users discouraged. Life insurance strongly recommended.

WANTED

Atheneum kitchen assistant. Potato-peeling experience preferred. Certain former students need not apply.

TRAVEL COMPANION NEEDED

Midnight Marsh. Must run quickly. Absolutely no splashing.

FOR HIRE

Water Wolf. Specializes in splash removal, motor surveillance, and heat-pump dragon containment. Payment in blueberries.

HEROES WANTED

Small kingdom currently experiencing dragon-related difficulties. Sword provided. Armor negotiable. Princess has specifically requested that applicants understand she does not require rescuing. Dragon situation remains unresolved.

SEEKING

Experienced curse breaker for remote castle. Symptoms include eternal sleep, aggressive roses, unusually judgmental furniture, and one tower no one remembers building. References required.

WANTED

Apprentice wizard. Must possess curiosity, discretion, and eyebrows that can withstand occasional magical discharge. Previous apprentices need not apply.

FOR SALE

Prophecy, unused. Mentions lost heir, gathering darkness, ancient power and “when the final star falls.” Could suit several kingdoms. Minor alterations available.

SEEKING

Three adventurers for simple retrieval mission. Dungeon believed abandoned. Absolutely no dragons reported in the last six months. Payment upon return.

ROOMMATE WANTED

Spacious tower, excellent views, minimal stairs if capable of flight. No knights. No princes. No hair-related access arrangements.

FOR SALE

One invisibility cloak. Excellent condition.

PERSONAL

Lonely dragon seeks companion for long flights, philosophical discussions, and sitting quietly on enormous quantities of gold. Must not be interested in “adventuring.”

FOUND

Breadcrumb trail in enchanted forest. Poorly maintained. Appears to lead directly toward danger. Owners may collect at ranger station.