

ARBROTH SOULSBLOOD

ARBROTH SOULSBLOOD is a *Stormbringer Story Seed* and *Non-Player Character* written by Richard Watts (©1994, 2004)

Stormbringer Story Seeds are developed to spark a Gamemasters imagination and help to create an interesting and diverse world in which their players adventure.

It is dusk, and the adventurers are making camp. The fire is hatching, small flames pecking hungrily at the wood; around the campfire shadows grow. And then it seems like one such shadow takes form, and steps forward. From the growing darkness steps a young man. He has a warrior's build, muscular yet wiry. The folds of a kilt swirl around his oaken thighs. A heavy broadsword hangs at his hip. His jet-black dreadlocks fall to his shoulders, framing a broad face, his dark skin made darker by the intricate tattoos that twine across his features. His grim eyes survey the adventurers...

ARBROTH WAETURO

This young warrior hails from Pikarayd, as the tattoos covering most of his body will inform anyone versed in Young Kingdoms lore. The eldest son of a highland chieftain, Tieraed Waeturo, Arbroth was taken captive in a skirmish with a neighbouring clan, the Wakarua. He was made the slave of, and fell in love with, a young lord, Loklen Wakarua (Physickians can deduce his slave status from the scars of his slave-collar about Arbroth's thick neck). The illicit nature of their passion made it all the more desperate (Pikarayd's Hierophant has outlawed love between men, claiming it weakens them, making them poor warriors).

When Arbroth's clan attacked in a midnight raid, intending to free Arbroth, tragedy struck. Tieraed Waeturo burst into the bedchamber where his son lay entwined in Loklen's arms. Arbroth cannot remember the details; he recalls his lover's cry of alarm, and the cold touch of steel in his hand, and no more. When the madness of battle passed, he found his father and lover lying dead at his feet. Arbroth does not know if his father slew his lover and he killed his father in return, or if the reverse is true. All he knows is that his five brawny brothers found him screaming, bloody sword in one hand, over his father's corpse. They blamed Arbroth for the murder, and have been hunting him ever since.

ARBROTH WAETURO, HORROR-HAUNTED HERO, AGED 22

Chaos 31, Balance 15, Law 22

STR 17 CON 18 SIZ 15 INT 12 POW 13 DEX 14 APP 13 HP 17

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: Broadsword 115% 1d8+1+db, Dirk 87% 1d4+2+db, Brawl 70% 1d3+db

Armour: Leather and Rings (no helm) 1d6

Skills: Art (Pleasure) 45%, Climb 81%, Dodge 46%, Hide 55%, Insight 78%, Listen 60%, Move Quietly 55%, Natural World 45%, Navigate 70%, Ride 45%, Track 65%

Spells: None

SCENARIO POSSIBILITIES

The following are just three suggestions on how to use this Story Seed in your adventures. Gamemasters are encourage to develop their own

- Arbroth Soulsblood ("because I have the blood of too many souls on my hands, and all were souls that were dear to me") has just escaped an ambush set by his brothers. Badly wounded, he collapses at the adventurers' feet, unconscious. His brothers soon arrive, and demand that the adventurers hand over "the kin-slayer", or be slain themselves. The brothers are weak from battle. If driven off, they return a week later, fully recovered and intent on murder (for their statistics, use the Barbarian Warrior from the Y.K. Digest). The adventurers gain a Balance check for helping someone in need, but Arbroth's vengeful brothers dog them thereafter until some peace can be engineered between them all.
- The burly young Pikaraydian travels with the adventurers for a time, and falls in love with one of them (preferably the man who most closely resembles the late Loklen Wakarua). His love is doomed, however; Arbroth Soulsblood is cursed to cause the deaths of those he holds dear. If his brothers don't get the adventurers, Arbroth will. More than once he wakes screaming in the night, drawing his sword in his sleep and attacking the first person who speaks to him or moves. Arbroth is tormented by the blood on his hands, and re-enacts his father's murder every night in his dreams. Can the adventurers find a dream-thief to cure Arbroth of his nightmares, before the nightmares (and Arbroth's somnambulistic activities) claim their lives?
- Arbroth Soulsblood is haunted by the ghost of his lover, Loklen Wakarua. The spirit appears before him every month on the night of its death. The night Arbroth meets the adventures is, coincidentally, the bloody anniversary. The ghost pleads silently, its face a mask of gore, before vanishing. Necromancers among the adventurers may be able to question the ghost. It says that it cannot rest until Arbroth has forged a lasting peace between the feuding Wakarua and Waeturo clans. If the adventurers assist Arbroth with this geas, they arrive in Pikarayd's highlands on the eve of battle between the clans.

Passionate role-playing, or inspired dice rolls, may be enough to stop the bloodshed. Among the assembled warriors of the Wakarua is a grizzled ex-slave who remembers seeing Arbroth's father Tieraed, and Loklen Wakarua, kill one another from the arras behind which he hid. The story told, Arbroth is free of his geas, and his guilt also. If he visits his lover's grave, the bare thorn-bush that grows there blossoms, and does so every year on the anniversary of the murders thereafter. By participating in *this* story, the adventurers gain an automatic 1d6+1 Balance points, and an additional Balance check besides. They can also be guaranteed aid from the Waeturo clan in a time of need.