

# Towards a Better World

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*A fan fiction by J. N. Squire*

Daily life was difficult for the wildlife of the tremendous, green, and yet blazing, Salteren's deep desert. Water's scarcity led fangdogs to drink at the only remaining place: the Red Mountain's feet, one of the highest heft in OtherWorld. Obviously, t'silsworms were never afar, injecting lethal eggs in every hot-blood being crossing their way, on condition that they weren't swallowed by sandworms first.

The Red Mountain. Officially, Mul Mar Tag Kullog, "That? It's a mountain, you dork!", literally. This out of the ordinary name came from a linguistic misunderstanding between natives and a so not mouth-watering spellbinder explorer, centuries ago. The sinewy winds at its base made it nearly impossible to find before one got nose to nose with the wall face... Unless one knew in advance where to look at.

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At about three hundred meters from the mountain, an inner circle of beings that had nothing to do with the local fauna materialized: a spellbinder couple and a Salteren one, coming with a way too heavy heap of luggage for themselves.

A woman about thirty with long brawn curly hair reached out her hand to the batch, and called out:

"By Levitus I say, shall our luggage accompany us without any delay!"

A magic ray struck the pile and which arose from a few centimeters above the ground.

"You've made a very bad rime, dear", the chestnut man pointed around the same age.

"If you are not happy with it, Auvertus, help yourself", she answered stiffly.

One of the Salterens, those huge bipedal feline provided with a profuse golden mane, interjected. In this case, a male, even higher than the spellbinders. More athletic, too, his golden-brown mane falling with grace against his back.

"Stop it", he ordained with a gentle but firm authority. "We don't have time for this kind of squabble."

"I doubt it takes very long before the Great Cacha's army discovers the Transmitus' destination. Did you display prominently your necks?"

“Yes”, the female spellbinder confirmed, “our golden t’silsworms scars are conspicuous. But we are also assured to get some sunburn.”

Auvertus looked up skyward.

“Olata, your delicate skin is the least of our worries, today.”

She was going to vivaciously retort when the second Salteren, a gorgeous female (at least from the big felines’ benchmark), spoke.

“Keewish is right”, she worried, “this is really not the time for your couple arguments.”

Husband and wife ducked their head, ashamed, and the company finally moved off.

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The Salteren female was named Itchaya. She was one of the many daughters of the Great Cacha. Even though she was still young, her pretty blonde mane already attracted many pretenders, all forcibly pushed back by his father.

Two days ago, she had finally understood why, when he had announced her shotgun wedding with Vizier Ilpabon. This matrimony was merely politic: Ilpabon secretly desired for the Great Cacha’s place. The latest was not on to, and had find a way to clear things.

Of course, the following night, Itchaya disguised into a male, looped her bed’s sheet to the room’s sundeck balustrade, concealed her smell in order not to get caught by the guards and fled.

She found without any problems a young sorcerer she knew by reputation: Keewish. Even though he was not that much older than Itchaya, he had forced admiration or jealousy from his peers by curing diseases reputed incurable and it was even said that his might was to such an extent that he could annihilate on his own the spell preventing people to fly over the desert without calling out. Quite obviously, the hearsay was called-for, since the spellbinders managed to levitate their luggage just fine. After being arrived at his congeneric and meeting the two human beings, she explained her father’s purpose before she spells out her intention to go into exile far from the country.

“I am planning to go as soon as possible far away from the Salterens land”, he indicated. “Would you like to join us?”

Itchaya jumped instantly on the unexpected opportunity and they concluded the journey details in no time.

“Why, thank you”, Itchaya sighed, relieved. I can see that you are an honest Salt--”

“No”, Keewish cut her. “I am no Salteren.”

Surprised by his statement, she stared at him, speechless as he withdrew from under his clothes a golden medallion mounting a blue precious stone, as if the object was very important.

"I am much more than that", he whispered, putting it back. "Way more than that."

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And now, they had land up in the middle of the deep desert without her understanding why. Certainly, they had run away from the guards who had recovered her tracks in extremis, and the spellbinders had indicated that the sorcerer underwent historical researches on the scene since years, but that didn't get her anywhere.

Keewish stopped Itchaya, diverting her from her confused thoughts.

"Here we are", he pointed. "Don't go any further, I must activate the... Transfer Gate. "

The young female Salteren glared at the green sand. Which Gate? There was no way to practice witchcraft that close from the Red Mountain!

Yet, the wizard kneeled down and rested his hands to the ground.

"OtherWorld Spirit, I beg you! " he called out. "Lend us your flawless treasure!"

And the Salteren's front paws cast a gentle blueish light through the sand. After a minute that could possibly have been an eternity, the ground quivered, the desert wind violently arose and whirled around the block.

"Impossible", Itchaya repeated, shocked. "There is no way to practice magic in such place."

"And what if it wasn't magic?" Auvertus responded. This is not one of the first.

As to confirm those words, the sand transformed into a huge stone monument ahead.

Formed with humongous pillars hewed in an entire block and covered with sculpted patterns, they were placed at fifty meters one from the other in the center of a ringed paved disk. Each paving stone presented a unique glyph with an obscure meaning.

Then, the rings suddenly moved and light shined from between the paving stones. They were so fast, stopping sometimes at a pillar's level, that they were blurred. All of a sudden, they froze, and a growl rose from the depth of the earth.

At the most critical moment, a magnificent and multicolored Dawn broke the air between the two pillars.

With a wide satisfied smile, Keewish stood up and turned toward Itchaya while the spellbinders, keeping their self-control, raced and crossed.

“The passage won’t stay opened much longer. What are you waiting to come with me? ”

The young Salteren’s fears vanished as soon as she understood that her friend came from this unknown world.

“I shall follow you ‘til the edges of the worlds”, she assured, enthusiastic.

With a unique smile created by a new and deep friendship, hand in hand, the couple passed over the luminous barrier. Toward a better life.

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Soon after, when the Salteren soldiers arrived, they only found a vast area of green sand.

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