

Stani Bowin

You have spent your whole life working your way up through the ranks of the great god Porel. Over one hundred years ago, the empire came to Hound's Teeth, and brought a mostly tranquil rule, some wonderful changes in government and the worship of the great god Porel. Not wishing to anger any of the lesser gods or foment revolution, they of course allowed the other gods of the city to continue to be worshipped, but you feel eternally grateful to them for bringing the city the light of Porel. Now you only wish that the rest of the city would see the light and follow more closely in his paths. You know that there are other good gods, and don't begrudge them their worshippers, but too many people stray from the good light that the gods provide.

When you were a child, you had a vision of Porel calling to you. His light glowed brighter than the sun, and his glory shone hotter than magical fire, and yet it did not hurt you. From that moment on, you knew that you were forever pledged to his service. You came to your mother bathed in such radiance that when you asked to be taken to Porel's priests and given to them as an apprentice she could not turn you down, even though you were so young.

The priests took you in, as such children are a fairly common occurrence with so good a god as Porel. You were lucky to come from a good family. Some of the children came from families so terrible you occasionally wondered if the vision was the only action Porel could take to rescue the child. The priests ran a school for the children, educating them in history, basic math and magic they would need in the priesthood and the tenets and rituals of Porel.

You excelled in school and always worked hard and did your best. When you were fourteen, you left the school and became an acolyte in the church. You loved Moril, the priest who you worked under. She was a middle aged woman who could have long ago advanced in the church, but she loved the town. She was working as a supervisory priest helping an old head priest. She made some wonderful advances for the town, and introduced quite a few programs you still run today.

At 17 you were ordained as a priest. This was somewhat younger than normal, but not so young as to be shocking. You had done well, and truly had the light of Porel in you, which was clear to Moril, a true servant of the great god. You spent many years happily working under her, serving Porel and the community and learning the ways and secrets of the great god.

It was a few years after your ordination that Liria Morellis came into your life. You were tending the door and seeing to the petitioners and the sick who came in. Liria walked in with a basket full of fruits and flowers. She said that she was bringing them out of gratitude for the healthy birth of her nephew. She was sweet, young and pious. While she was not the most beautiful girl you had seen at your post, her sweet devotion and clear blue eyes won you over at once.

That summer was the only time you have disregarded your temple duties. You spent every spare minute you could talking to Liria, walking with her, taking her to dinner. She was studying under a city scribe to get work in the city bureaucracy or under a wealthy merchant. Her family was fairly poor, but of good breeding and some education.

Six months to the day after you met, you asked her parents for her hand. They gave her to you with joy, because an up and coming priest of Poral was a blessing to have in the family. You took her to Moril, for her blessing. Moril met with Liria, and chatted with her for a long time. She told you that you had duties to attend, and sent you to watch the door, while they sat in a sanctuary room and talked. Nearly two hours later, Liria came up and kissed you. You walked her out, but she never said anything of what Moril had said to her that day. Moril took you aside and said, "she will be your trial. Remember that, but take her if you will." At the time, you assumed that she meant that anyone a priest loved must be balanced against his love of his god. Now, you're not so sure.

The first year was pure bliss. She continued her studies, you worked as hard as ever, and went home to be rejuvenated by your darling wife every night. She took a position as a scribe for the clothing merchants' guild, and you lived together quite happily. You hoped for children, but they were slow in coming. Still, you were happy.

The aging high priest died a few years after you were married, and Moril took over, leaving

her position open, which was taken by the head of the school. You volunteered to run the school. You began a program to take in children who were being beaten or who were without food, even if they hadn't had visions. They couldn't be priests unless they were chosen, but they could serve in the temple, and escape bad situations. You know that not everyone has the inner strength for the life of a priest, so the best you can do for those people is to teach them all the morality and learning they can take and prepare them for the best positions in life they can take.

After you and Liria had been married for five years, you began to wish for children. You talked with her, and while she didn't quite share your enthusiasm, she agreed to help you petition Porel for a child. You took a sacrifice of fine incense and flowers appropriate to the birth of a child, and spent the next day in prayer. At the end of the day, the great god gave you the promise of a child. Nine months later, your daughter Porta was born.

You were ecstatic, and began putting all your free time into helping care for her. Porta was your pride and joy. However, you and Liria were drifting apart. You quickly came to realize that she had only agreed to have the child because you wanted one so much. She became bitter at seeing so much of your attention put into your daughter. You tried to draw her in, but she only pulled further away. She raised the child, but only out of fear of Porel. Three years after the birth of your daughter, she demanded that you set her free.

Porel is a forgiving god and knows that even the most devoted of his followers don't have his perfection. Unlike some deities, he grants his priests the right to divorce and the right to remarry. You unhappily released her from your marriage and went on, but never had the desire to marry again. You raised Porta, and placed her in the school at the temple. When she came of age to work in the temple, you reluctantly sent her to another town, because you were afraid you would give your beloved daughter an unfair advantage in your temple.

After that, you continued to rise through the ranks of the temple, and, in fact began to rise more quickly now that less of your time was taken from your work. In your late thirties, Moril left to take a position high in the leadership of the cult of Porel, and you became the high priest of the temple of Porel in Hound's Teeth. This gave you the seat on the council you currently occupy.

Soon after you rose to this position, Liria began coming back to haunt you. She has become bitter and tortuous. She may think that she can get something from you, or she may have genuinely deluded herself into thinking that you abandoned her. You would happily supply her with housing, or help, if she asked you, but instead, she comes into public meetings or public services and accuses you of abandonment, adultery and everything else she can think of. You feel sorry for the poor woman, but this cannot go on.

On the council, you try to do your best for the people of the city. You try to focus money into projects that will genuinely help people. You have become concerned lately about the rise in vice and crime in this city. There has been a welling up of drugs, gamblers and theft. You realize that not everyone can live up to your standards, and that many people have their vices, but you worry about the city's changes and what influence this will have on the children. You have nothing but pity for the prostitutes who work the streets, but there has arisen another class of women who are living proudly as mistresses and high class madams, who could be doing worthy work. It is a waste of the gifts that the gods gave them. Of course the men who help to support this behavior are more at fault than these women. The women couldn't do it if no one was paying. One of the greatest gifts of the empire was the equality of women, and these women who advertise themselves as merchandise are squandering that gift.

People You Know:

The Council:

Lerin Lopel: The mayor of this town, unfortunately. Last time a new mayor was needed, there was such a fight over all the candidates that no decent candidate could be agreed upon. Hence came Lerin. Lerin is not bright enough to cause any trouble but being a disgrace to the council. For Lerin

you feel only pity: it is not his fault that he is a halfwit. However, having him around, leching, drinking and causing trouble on the council's tab is just dumb.

Koric Maltin: Koric is the head of the mage's guild. He pines for the days of his childhood before the coming of the empire. His goals seem to be good overall: he wants to bring more order to the city. Many of his goals overlap with yours, but you are concerned that he might surrender his immediate goals in order to try to separate the city from the Empire. Despite his beliefs, you are convinced that the Empire under the divine leadership of Porel has brought much good to the city. The disorder in the city is the disorder that comes of a city that is otherwise well-fed and well-cared for. It is a disorder you hope to try to quell, but by education and gentle guidance, not by leaving the empire.

Serian Winter: The hereditary council member who is a descendant of the line of king's that once ruled Hound's Teeth. He is a little too convinced of his own worth sometimes, but overall, he has a good heart. He does not want to see the empire leave Hound's Teeth, which is a comfort to you. He can be a bit rambunctious, but he is young, and you think that as he grows into his power he will use it better, especially if you are there to guide him.

Mortak Vonis: The head of the guards. Mortak does a very good job in his post. He is a devoted policeman and a gifted leader of troops. You have heard, however, that he is given to gambling and to forgiving gamblers and shysters in return for release from debts. He also has been known to drink, but that has yet to interfere with his duties. He has never taken bribes for major crimes, but you are becoming concerned about his behavior. Because he has a good heart, you would hate to see him lose so heavily for behaviors that obviously have deep-seated issues at their heart. You know what Serian's father died under mysterious circumstances, and wonder if Mortak blames himself.

Tofen Sarish: The head of the merchant guild. You feel sorry for this poor woman. Despite all her riches, there isn't enough gold in the world to satisfy her. She never does a good deed unless she thinks it will bring her more in return someday than it costs her now. She is very good at what she does, and may be the richest person in the town. You only wish that she used all her mighty wealth to bring joy to others, as it seems to bring little to her.

Others:

Liria: Your ex-wife. She will certainly show up to this meeting. She shows up to every open meeting that the council holds. She will come to rant, rave and cause trouble.

Special Powers:

Cleric of Porel: Porel has granted you certain powers. You can heal the wounded and the sick, and provide food for the poor. You can tell the future when Porel chooses to give you foreknowledge, and when you have truly needed something, and gone and begged the great god, he has always provided for you. You can not heal the sick in the council chamber, as the very sensible precautions taken by Koric prevent your magic also.