

**The Glorious Adventures of Captain El Picante Rojas, Mercenary Hire** from  
**Hyatt Gallia**

**By**

***Captain El Picante Rojas, Mercenary for Hire (from Hyatt Gallia)***

It was the spring of year PC3 although the weather hadn't apparently been informed and the land was covered in snow and Ice. I, El Picante Rojas, had been engaged for a daring mission to penetrate the heart of a scheming villain's lair but, gentle reader, that will have to wait for the scene to be properly set.

To begin I was employed by an elemental Lord of some standing by the name of Cyclonus (although he would repeat on numerous occasions that it was just supposed to be Cyclone, I think one of his minions felt the "us" added gravitas) and his brother Lord Hurricane. They were, along with a group of their Airbender minions and some Barbarian flunkies, intending to enter a place called "The Garden of All Elements" to retrieve a man called Malcolm Middleton who was required to face justice for his actions some moons ago and who was believed to be either hiding or held prisoner by the forces of a group call the Wizards Concillium.

Given that the Valley had a problem, and no-one else could help, they called on . . . The Girth Busters (we ain't afraid of no roast) and the following roster of heroes (and hangers on) responded;

· Lord Cyclonus, Elemental Lord of Air. Co-Party Leader

- Lord Hurricane, Sorcerer Supreme. Co-Party Leader
  
- Captain El Picante Rojas, Lover, Fighter, Hero. Heart and Soul of the team.
  
- Airbender L, Sneaky bastard
  
- Airbender K, Satorial Elegance personified
  
- Airbender D, Not someone to accept a drink from
  
- Airbender C, Not at all a sneaky bastard. . . . or is he?
  
- Barbarian V, Not really in his element (no pun intended. . . ok there was)
  
- Airbender Double-D, Not dressed for undercover work
  
- Airbender J, Tunnel fighting specialist
  
- Barbarian M, Appreciated the appearance but should be home getting well
  
- Barbarian VV, Arriving tomorrow morning, maybe afternoon, early evening at the latest. .

We arrived, cold and hungry, at the Garden of All Elements where we were met by our

infiltration specialist Airbender JJ. He was the first to give us the skinny on what we were really there for. It turns out that the Wizards Concillium had a secret prison connected in some way with the garden of all elements and that in order to accomplish our mission we would need to thrust deeply into their secret places and secure that we desired.

To that end we were instructed to proceed the next morning in a scouting mission to secure the essences of a number of powerful elemental spirits which Lord Cyclonus would allow to enter him briefly which would then be used to power up a pair of bracelets which would allow us to travel to the Prison.

We set off in good spirits and immediately tripped over some pesky elementals. We danced among them protected from their petty magic's by our innate talent and unparalleled skill and destroyed them with a panache they frankly didn't deserve. As the final blow was landed on the greatest of them a probing tentacle of flame linked its evaporating form to Lord Cyclonus eager, waiting body.

Heartend by our success we pushed on deeper into Gardens seeking the second greater elemental that would be sacrificed to our noble goals.

What we did find however were some Kalid. Shabby stinking individuals covered in furs and an overwhelming sense of snivelling misery. They seemed to take offence at our presence bemoaning the Valley's involvement in their nation being destroyed (why they chose to vent their frustrations on a group of interplanar mission specialists like ourselves still eludes me). Needless to say we showed them the error of their ways and left their shattered forms scattered around the garden like fallen blossoms in the autumn.

Next up in our annals of antagonists were a group of Xenos drones. They tediously used their superior range and firepower to batter our beleaguered forms until we reach optimal range for us to deploy our percussive counterpunch. After some liberal application of heavy objects the gold faced one decided that it might be worth mentioning that the Xenos were trying to locate one of their number, an Enchanter, who was being held by the Wizards Concillium they believed. Curiouser and curiouser we thought how many victims were the wicked wizards stashing in their perfidious prison?

After a bit more wandering and a few libations of an alcoholic variety we eventually located a significant force of elements and went about the necessary violent action until once again Lord Cyclonus was filled with the life giving seed of the greater elemental.

Now positively engorged with elemental exuberance Lord Cyclonus with a bit of direction from Airbender JJ activated the bracelets that would transport us close to the location we believe our target was being held. With a woosh of expellend elemental energy we arrived in a somewhat shambolic state on the edge of a short expanse of field leading to what appeared to be a large building. However arrayed before us were a terrifying troupe of villainous vampires!

These fangtastic fellows claimed to be from a place called the Fortress of Pentar and they too claimed to be looking for a blood brother of theirs who was, it shall come as no surprise by now I am sure, held prisoner somewhere nearby. They also exhibited extreme irritation at our apparent flaunting of similar laws by the accusation that the Valley (we really need to check our attire what with these constant cases of mistaken identity) have been holding their 'Marthter' (lisp inserted out out pure spite, they were actually rather well cultured fellows) Zachariah in the temple of the Humacti for some time. This sparked a spirited speculation concerning the nature of consciousness and status holding in relation to the laws.

Lord Hurricane and Lord Cyclonus decided to seal some sort of deal by meeting the toothy trio and their minions on the field of battle for reasons that still somewhat elude my way of thinking but still it worked the muscles free and frankly the only disappointment in the whole thing was the entire lack of an archvillian monologue or even a simple 'Mwuahahaha I shall be back feeble mortals' as the final vampire final bit (get it?) the dust.

So we cracked on heading for the prison and the waiting beverages that had been calling to us from afar for so many cold, tiring hours.

When we got their the plan was to present ourselves as being auditors from Chancellor Mariaus there to check on the prison and make sure everything was above board and functioning properly. This pleased me greatly as everyone knows there is no sexier and heroic role than an auditor with a clipboard right?

So anyway we made our way inside and found a bunch of off duty guards (handily identifiable by the tags with "guard" written on them around their necks) talking about having to go on shift shortly. So we had some dinner while I executed Lord Cyclonus genius plan of playing the role of a hermaphrodite prostitute with the ability to modify the size of all my orifices in order to entice the guards into conversation.

Meanwhile the rest of the team discovered that the prison was built in three layers. There was an anchor layer below buried in the earth combined with a barracks in the centre to manage the generic stuff and a final windy airy watery layer above where the prisoners were held. We also turned up some information that there was a back door into the prison proper built for maintenance which we could access with the right equipment.

With that in mind a foray was sent into the tunnels beneath the barracks to recover a number of elemental stones of air (yeah I was puzzled too). So while Airbender J, L and K spearheaded the tunnel delving (with support from others) those in the barracks spent their time fighting off repeated waves of brown elementals which required smashing apart with heavy objects much to the frustration of Lord Cyclonus but it's OK they were also immune to his attempts to bolt them so that mollified the situation perfectly.

When our filthy companions returned from the depths below we had a trio of massive crystals and a bunch of ritual casting kit provided by Airbender JJ. Our plan now was to use these to cast a greater teleport of some sort to get us into the prison above and execute our mission (which was to rescue a chap not execute him although Lord Hurricane might have had other ideas).

With that we turned in for the night.

We awoke to snow on the ground and an impending sense of doom. Not wishing to be trapped by the inclement weather we had a leisurely breakfast and proceeded to the lawn for a few hours of casting.

Airbending JJ and the Lordly brothers set themselves up for an extended period of magical manipulation while the rest of us were beset on all sides by the inequity of the elementals and the tyranny of weird drone things.

After fighting off a number of waves of dastardly drones draped in damson dresses with white faces and an uncanny attitude of finding the foe that couldn't hurt them the three casters began to climax simultaneously engorged with their magical manifestations. With an enormous pop we were all sucked off the ground and ended up perched on a perilous patio peering panicked over a precipitous plunge.

There was a gate before us with some runs sketched about it which were quickly deciphered followed by Airbender L being gently ushered through. As soon as we passed the threshold a number of purple creatures akin to elementals but far more potent appeared before us. The elements of our sorcery withered before them and they laid about themselves with puissant pugilistic punishment. The Girthbusters were well up to the task however and with a final push and a bit of persuasion (or alternatively heavy objects and a boot to the nethers) the final one was banished to whatever mana ridden hellhole it came from.

Before us now was a small building full of clerks. You know the type. Bustling around looking as busy as possible while probably not really accomplishing much. Some of them were probably project managers running reports on how much the others were bustling, bureaucracy (not the celestial kind just regular paperwork) will be the death of us all.

In the corner of the room was a desk and what is probably best described as "The Guv'na" or more properly "The Warden". As a lady of some important standing no doubt I kept my distance. I didn't want our mission being compromised by the distraction of her newly ignited love for me should she get too good a look at the dashing captain (not a euphemism for my knob!) or my magnificent sabre (that was). Lord Cyclone began work on the next phase of the plan continuing with the ruse that we were employed by The Arch chancellor to test the security of the prison.

I lost interest at this point. While it was all going swimmingly I had found a comfy chair and was playing my role as the disinterested hired help in order to reinforce the idea that this was just a routine job and definitely not a daring daybreak. It's tougher than you might think this gig.

Eventually though we got a password (after perhaps the most casual poisoning I have ever seen, good work Airbender D) and made to pass through a ward into the prison proper in order to identify which cell Malcolm was held in. We had also resolved to free anyone else we happened to find as being locked in a cell sucks (or so I am told, no cell can hold Capitan

El Picante Rojas!).

As we broke the ward line a group of pretty nails purple guard popped in out of nowhere and beat the ever-loving crap out of their own warden and then started in on us. We casually manoeuvred back to a very familiar feeling sofa and chair arrangement which anchored our fighting line nicely and things soon turned.

With the guards down we pushed out into our hard won reward. After hours of toil and fighting we had finally made our way into . . . a small corridor with more wards. Filled with jubilation I sat back down again.

It didn't take long though to penetrate the wards on the first cell where we found a number of enchanted objects that each held a prisoner. We freed each one in turn (being attacked by elementals each time) and found the following;

- The ex-Dean of the white college. Originally from Halmaddons heights. She has dirt on The Wizards so we agreed to bring her with us.

- A Vampire. 'Brother' to the ones that met us outside the prison. He put the mental whammy on Airbender D and was generally a dick. Agreed to give testimony against the Wizards should it be required and as we'd already agreed to let him out we did so.

- Some Drow bloke with skull on his chest (not a Dymwan Airbender C). Had been held captive quite a long time by the sounds of things. Certainly longer than we thought this particular prison had existed.

Bored of elementals we decided to kick the next door down and see if we could sort out the nagging odd drone problem which we had discovered were being created by some mad old buggler they had locked up but gave certain "freedoms" to in exchange for . . . well creating weird ass drones I guess.

We booted down the door to his cell and found him (surprise surprise) fiddling with some drones. Luckily we had a door so I shoved myself into that while the sorcerers blew the crap out of things while I parried (it's still a parry if you use your face provided you intended to to!) and blocked. After this drones were whittled away (some of them doing the job themselves running up and exploding in a most inconvenient manner) we gave the giggling nutter who was building them a nice slow murdering (Airbender J had made a deal apparently) and nicked his stuff.

One of the things he was carrying included an Enchanter from the Labyrinthe who we agreed to free in exchange for a bit of help. She pointed us in the right direction for the "high security cells" where we located the pyramid of glass that held Malcolm Middleton. As soon as Airbender L touched it however alarms began screaming all over the building and a purple guard captain nearly as dashing, although not even half as handsome, as me leading a large impressive group of his finest men came pounding down the corridor.

Fight became flight as we realised we'd actually got everything we needed so we might as well just get the feck out of their before they worked out we were in a prison and they could just slam the door shut!

We bugged out through the portal we used to get in but as we were sucked off the platform we were whirled around and dropped unceremoniously on the ground in front of a grinning captain and his men. So the fight began again in earnest as we made our way back to teleports for the final exit.

As the captain fell and the last of his men (including a couple of properly dodgy assassin types I wouldn't have expected to meet with the purple guard, I blame this Maraius chap he's clearly a bad 'un) fled or died we pulled back together as a group alert for further reprisals. None came and we found the sweet relief of a teleport back to the vicinity of the Garden of All Elements waystation. . . erm wait that sounds like a terrible plan? Why would we do that? Who returns to the scene of the crime like that?

It turned out it was all part of someone's master plan though as we were greeted by a Pathfinder who informed us the waystation was clear as the various Wizards Concillium chaps had been sent off on errands or given more important things to think about so we were free and clear for a few hours.



With the weather growing inclement and our primary mission complete I took my leave to venture out into the world again seeking wealth, excitement, love, happiness and beer.

*El Picante Rojas,*