

The Brief History of An'ka'tak

as Told by the Humble Me'Shief

East of the plush jungles of Kem'pan'tar and the Sorrowful Plains, a wise and good king ruled the lands of Melnabaraz. His name was An'ka'tak and he was a just ruler of his dominion. An'ka'tak was loved by his people for he taxed them lightly and rewarded them with kindness and riches. At the height of An'ka'tak's reign, the palatial city of Kimpulbanat was the destination of all trade routes of the surrounding kingdoms.

Within the first year of his reign, he was married to El-habad-Ipannesha, the daughter of a distant eastern ruler, the Padishah Filankeshta. For the next eleven years, their life together was said to be magical; their love for each other was true and without flaw. Unfortunately for the king and queen, they were not blessed with children.

In King An'ka'tak's twelfth year of reign, his wife died of the Sand Plague. For years after, the king remained without a wife. Rulers far and wide sent their daughters to Kimpulbanat, hoping to gain the king's favor. Although beautiful and from royal stock, the king rejected these young courtesans.

One day, a beautiful young woman arrived in Kimpulbanat alone and without fanfare. She had wandered the nearby deserts for some time and arrived in the city with no knowledge of her former life - she was without memories. A chance encounter brought the king within sight of this beautiful young woman and he was instantly smitten. Within six months, she was his new queen. Her name was Queen Olivaba and her beauty and cunning were legendary.

The queen blessed her king with four sons. Ankatesh, Olibatnal, Anifalash, and Hefnabul were fine boys and each grew to early manhood in the same manner as their father; just, kind, and loyal. The realm was truly fortunate to have such fine men to help rule the kingdom of Melnabaraz.

For the king's fiftieth birthday Queen Olivaba hired the lands best blacksmiths, jewelers, and wizards to craft a set of armor and weapons fit for her wonderful husband. For months before the event, workers toiled to create five items of superb quality and phenomenal power. The Queen spared no expense on this set of gifts.

Before the items were completed, the Queen was approached by a wandering sorcerer who claimed that he could make the items invincible to damage and the effects of time. She would only have to pay him five thousand pieces of gold but would also have to sacrifice a human soul to his serpent god. At first, the queen seized the sorcerer and placed him in the city dungeons. But eventually, her desire to have the greatest magical items crafted for her husband changed her mind. The sorcerer was freed and was allowed to sacrifice a sickly child from the streets. All was forgotten after the sacrifice was complete...

The weeks leading up to the birthday event had every soul in Kimpulbanat excited; the Queen had announced that the best food and drink in the city would be available to all in every inn and tavern. Every person in the city would partake in the festivities!

On the day of the king's fiftieth year, the Queen presented the following five magical items to her husband:

Armor of An'ka'tak - Beautifully gilded and painstakingly crafted, the suit of steel armor emanated magical energy. When worn, the armor provided a bonus to defense when facing any physical attack. Additionally, the armor weighed half the normal weight of plate mail armor.

Crown of An'ka'tak - A gilded and heavily jeweled crown fit for a ruler's head. This magical headpiece was unbreakable and provided the head with extra protection. It was said to be self repairing.

An'ka'tak's Cape - A red silken cape lined with golden thread. When worn, the cape gave the wearer the ability to fly and glide as a bird. Note that the cape must be flapped like bird's wings to gain lift.

The Sword of Melnabaraz - A one handed blade, straight and thick. It had a golden pommel set with a giant ruby. The blade was razor sharp and was said to be able to cut stone and metal with ease. Its razor edge did devastating damage to flesh and bone.

The Signet Ring of An'ka'tak - The family house crest of An'ka'tak is the white horse jumping the setting sun, with sand dunes across the bottom. This crest is engraved into the solid gold band, additionally set with ten rubies. The ring has magical properties; once per day, the wearer can move from one place to another within 100' instantly. Also, it provides a defensive bonus to any backstab attempt.

When the king received the birthday gifts from his wife, the crowd in the palatial square cheered for him to adorn himself in the five items. The king eagerly agreed and suited up before his people. When the last item, the crown, was placed upon his head, the king collapsed, and fell dead to the marble floor.

The Queen had unknowingly cursed the king with the foul items magically enchanted by the evil wandering sorcerer. In fact, her memories returned that day; she remembered that she was once wed to the very sorcerer that she hired to enchant the king's gifts. Remembering her past pushed her fragile mental state beyond the breaking point; she threw herself upon her own dagger and died mere feet away from her husband.

The king and queen were buried in the royal vaults beneath the palace. With the help of his brothers, the eldest son took over as king and did what he could to continue the prosperity of Melnabaraz. Unfortunately, merchants avoided the city and region, fearing it cursed. The city and lands eventually were abandoned and lost to the sands of time.

It is said that An'ka'tak's gifts are forever tied to his corpse. Although his vaults have been robbed several times throughout the years and the items removed from An'ka'tak's body, one or more of the five items periodically return to the king's burial chamber. [GM Note: When an item is lost or "destroyed", it magically returns to the tomb. Note that one or more set items may be "destroyed" in TSQ1. Also, if an item owner dies while wearing or using the item, it returns to An'ka'tak's corpse.]

It is also said that those who rob the chamber of its wealth are also cursed, losing a loved one within days of plundering the tomb. When three or more of the set items are worn at the same time, the wearer becomes cursed in the above stated manner. When all five items are worn at once, the wearer has a 50% chance of immediate death [TSRS: or a Luck check]. This check occurs only once when the five items are worn for the very first time.