

Bal-Sagoth, When Rides The Scion Of The Storm

"Dover, England: September 1594 (the recollections of a war-weary mariner)"

Hearken boy; for I would tell thee a tale before we set sail for the Bay of Biscay on the morrow. I was not always called by this name, you know... To you, I am Caleb Blackthorne, battle-scarred master of an English galleon, survivor of a score of sea-fights, cheater of the notched blades of many an over ambitious Spanish pirate... the Scourge of Medina Sedonia! But to many others over the countless centuries since my first birth, I have been known by a host of other names... so many that even I begin to forget all but the ones distinguished by the most vivid deeds... for I hide a wondrous secret, boy... a secret some would call a blessing, but which others would deem a grim curse. Aye, it all began a very long time ago...

"Memories of death and life..."

For countless thousands of centuries I have walked the earth...
I have seen endless battle,
And untold centuries of slaughter.

I am reborn once more!
The same grim spirit once again given flesh...
O' to be ravished by the seductress death...

"The Scion of the Storms:"

Dethroned 'ere Atlantis fell, haunted by a dark queen's curse,
My son's soul shackled by this spell of endless death and grim rebirth.
Fly, o' skyborne steed of Lyonesse, ride the tempest's wings,
I am the scion of the vengeful skies, a god to warriors and kings!

"Reflections on lifetimes of carnage:"

I have been slain by Roman gladius,
And by Norman spear dealt a mortal wound,
The threads of my ensorcelled destiny
Endlessly woven on some unknown cosmic loom.
I have lost my life to longbow shafts
Fighting for the English crown,
And mayhap I'll end this mariner's life
A good three score fathoms down!

I marched with vast armies 'ere gleaming Atlantis sank beneath the waves...
I reddened my blade against Caesar's legions long ago...
I stood beside Boudicca at Colchester...
I dealt honed steel death from the ranks of Arthur Pendragon...
I slew and looted gloriously at Lindisfarne...
I slaked my scramasax at Maldon...
I crossed blades with Brian Boru at Clontarf...
I slaughtered left and right with Harold at Hastings...
I dispatched Norman swordsmen with Robin of Loxley...
I wielded a Claymore at Stirling Bridge...
I was in the thick of the fray beside Henry at Agincourt...
I spilled blood for the White Rose at Bosworth Field...
I captained a galleon against the great Armada of Philip II...

I have witnessed the rise of corrupt religions, but my heathen blade was red
countless centuries before their flaccid laws were ever carved in stone.

They call me the Scourge of Medina Sedonia... my ship sails at dawn, and may
our English steel ring gloriously against the cutlasses of the outlander
pirates!

Aye boy, it is a strange tale indeed. I know not why I am destined to live and
die in this way, my soul moving from life to life, ever dying and being again
reborn, with every memory of my past incarnations intact. A whim of the gods?

An ancient sorcerous spell? Some cruel machination of fate, mayhap? Or is it all for some mysterious, greater purpose? Sometimes I feel the gaze of inhuman eyes upon me, and fragments of some past existence which I cannot wholly recall flash before my mind's eye. And time and time again I know precisely when I am to die in the fray, for always 'ere the fatal blow is struck, I see him... grim and noble astride his great winged steed, gleaming spear crackling in his grasp, beckoning me onwards to the next life... to ever more slaughter and carnage... Yes, adour and brooding spirit he is, and in his burning eyes I see a great secret which I must discover, a powerful mystery I alone must solve. I cannot speculate as to what strange destiny the fate! s ! have written for me in the stars... but the gods have decreed that this is the path I must follow, and I am sure that my adventures are far from over...