

Jezebel's Revenge, AKA Alterfest 9000

The story began in the 9th century BC, in the rough pasturelands of Gilead. For ages, this kingdom had flourished agriculturally, providing for its neighbours through trade and filling the pantries of all its citizens. Gilead was truly the breadbasket, neigh, the overflowing cheezy breadsticks of the old world. But a great and depressing drought had besotted the land, slowly drying up the economy and with it evaporating the quality of life of the simple pastoral communities therein. Where once erupted the sounds of crude cat gut string instruments and deer hide drums, banging around the mighty bon fires and weekly line dancing competitions, now there was only the percussion of passing tumbleweeds and vaguely xenophobic rhetoric ehcoing out of every pawnshop and brothel - these businesses having understandably thrived in these times of strife. Why would their benevolent and just God do this to them? Church attendance had hit an all time low, nation wide.

Ahab, King of Gilead, had recently introduced his loyal subjects to their new Queen, an enchanting Pagan pop idol by the name of Jezebel. She was a little out of Ahab's league, in most regards, but her last single had bombed pretty heavily and she was ready to hedge her bets. The grovelling peasants of Gilead had initially welcomed Jezebel's influence into political discourse, envisioning her as a conduit through which to advance their rural tendencies into a more progressive future. But, wafflers at heart, many citizens were suddenly beginning to question the effectiveness of the Queen's publicly-funded goat helmets and sex rituals as realistic means to bringing about the much needed rain.

For the first time in anyone's memory, people were starving to death. Ahab had been loved by his people in the last public census and annual Hearing of Opinions (leading, of course, to a subsequent boost to the beheading industry), promising a ten year plan to secure twice as many hectares of hemp fields for every land owning peasant. The King had been forced, however, to reel in many of his promises in response to the cruel whim of nature, the dramatic climate shift slowly rendering destitute the hard working citizens of Gilead.

Finally, sick and tired of distilling their own piss and drinking it, the people of Gilead had formed a bloodthirsty mob and stormed Ahab and Jezebel's palace

gates.

The castle guards were overrun and trampled by the belligerent, dehydrated and manic farm people. Jezebel raised her talon like hands and began muttering in ancient tongues, the mob fell silent. Strange singing projected from the walls, echoing, increasing in intensity. the smell of brimstone filled the room. Ahab trembled in fear.

"Wait!" came the cry from a ragged stinking hippy, heaving himself from among the horrible circus of goons now halted just outside the throne room. It was he, the Prophet Elijah, keeper of the hackie sac, borrower of coins, he who lived in an abandoned caravan down by the river, Elijah, bass player of Counting Crows / Talking Heads "mash-up" cover band, The Talking Crows. Elijah who sold the wicked mushrooms behind the mall. He entered hastily and threw himself at the feet of King Ahab. "This is madness!" Wailed the Hippy..

"Calm down, boy," sneered Jezebel, "You're hysterical." She dropped her arms to her sides. The floor stopped shaking.

Ahab and Elijah turned to look at the fearsome queen.

"Didn't we have you arrested on eco terrorism charges?" demanded Jezebel.

"Yes," spoke Ahab, slowly, "we're not looking to make any more donations at this time, son..."

"Clearly, you have angered The One True Christian God!" announced Elijah, "You have turned your back on the Truth and the Light of Our Lord and made yourselves to honour the Demon, Balaal!" He was always yelling shit like that at people, "And now we all must starve for following the flock of a false idol!"

"Alright, get on with it," said Ahab, "I'm all ears. What is it this time?"

Zezebel had no type of time for this shit. 'I'll have you insulent tongue cut fro your weed- huffing jaws, you worm!" she shrieked.

"I have been to the Woods to the West!" continued Elijah, "And our Lord hath instructed me. He sent ravens to me who sang me a song of time and memory, and they spoke onto me as if they were the teeth in God's mouth, and -"

A spark lit in Jezebel's left eye. The mob trembled in terror. Many had bailed already.

"-brought me morsels of food to sustain me as I lay on the shored of the Mighty River for two fortnight and let me tell you, Brothers and Sisters, while you were driven mad by starvation and poverty, I saw from afar the smoke and the flames travelling from the inner city, outwards to the pastures... I have seen first hand the symptoms of your desperation. Storefronts of local merchants plowed over by farmers who fancied themselves wealthy in this life, their children scattered this way and that as hay seeds on the wind, clutching looted Nike sandals and flat screen sun dials! Searching for answers that only the Good Lord might provide in his Mercy!" and so on.

No one was really buying it. The crowd had thinned out a little.

"Enough!" interrupted Ahab, "There is only one fair and objective way known to modern science to settle this dispute."

"But we can't afford to drown any more horses!" Came the protest from among the remaining, still agitated farmers and farm hands.

"Neigh, you fools!" chuckled Ahab.

And so it came to be that Alter Mania 9000 would be held at the peak of scenic Mount Carmel.

All of Jezebel's most relevant priests and priestesses were gathered around a mighty alter which Elijah constructed to serve a plump and bleating goat to the Heavens above. Like a giant barbecue pit grill arching over a gaping chasm full of mysterious smokes and colours, it was truly a thing to see, and feel, and smell. The faint screams of bewildered lost souls could be heard emanating from somewhere deep inside the pit.

"Alright, Balaal, what have you done for me lately?" muttered Ahab, nervously eyeing the shimmering points of pitchforks, rakes, sickles and sythes weilded by angry, hungry farmers and their often burlier wives.

Jezebel's hooded entourage danced and banged their drums and stripped in a tasteful burlesque act. They announced all kinds of ancient spells and incantations, but not a flame was produced to lick at the deliciously pre-jerked goat.

The villagers were restless. Ahab wondered if this was the end of his glorious reign.

Elijah, laughing, brushed insect infested dreadlocks out of his face and fell to his knees in silent prayer.

An awkward silence of many moments passed through the course filter of the anxious mob's perceptions. Nothing happened.

"Who is this hippie?" someone eventually asked. This was indeed a good

question.

Elijah was then dragged into a screaming frenzy of rednecks and beaten savagely.

And the goat remained un-sacrificed.

Elijah dragged his broken body to safety as the crowd shifted its attention back to Jezebel and her mystical squad. The hippie reached in his hip satchel and grabbed a handful of his Holy Mushrooms. The ravens appeared, right on schedule, and they spoke onto Elijah "Cackaaa! Skwawskwawskwaaaack!"

"Why have you fooled me, messengers of my Lord?" pleaded Elijah, "What is happening here, man?! I thought we were pretty clear on how this was going to go down."

And the largest Raven of the lot replied, "Because people are idiots. We can't stand you guys." and flew up and over the crowd, over the alter, and disappeared into the thick smoke over head. The sky turned red. Black clouds encircled above. A deep and evil laugh bellowed out from the Pit of Mysteries.

Just as the furious crowd was about to cut the King and Queen into pieces and eat them, the screaming goat just burst into flames. The whole vibe totally changed. And the witches and wizards danced their terrible dances. Jezebel smiled. She was fully prepared to pretend that she knew what was going on then, what cold and benevolent beast older than the human concept of time would bother to fiddle in the lives of puny mortals.

Everyone passed that poor devil of a goat around, still alive, and tore its flaming body into bits and bones licked clean of any trace of dignity. The dark clouds overhead swole and burst and the rain came forth and fell for days and nights on end. The people were content again. Everyone finally figured out how to use their

Green Bins properly.

And Queen Zezebel ruled over Gilead for a hundred years, long after Ahab mysteriously disappeared on that fishing trip in 8972.