

**Stratesus' Journal**  
*(written in Druidic)*

The journal, which is written in Stratesus' own hand, is his personal account of his life as a member of the Fellowship of the Boot. It starts with him writing about how he grew up (but not where). He writes that his mother abandoned him and his father, Trym, soon after Stratesus was born. As per the stories Aeron told Caerth, he was born in an old tower. (He doesn't say where it was located).

His mother, Katherine, was a labourer. She hated her life, which is why she left. His father worked as a soldier and did his best to raise him. However, war was a constant in those times, so his father was away for long periods of time. He and his father had a great relationship, so when Trym disappeared one summer when Stratesus was 12, the young boy believed his father had been killed. Stratesus notes that he believes he was born in 391 N.C. (The current year is 759 N.C.)

Stratesus was forced to grow up fast and he took to the wild, as he wasn't well thought of in his father's hometown (which he doesn't name). There are clues to where the town might have been located. Stratesus describes it as being west of the Kul Moren Mountains, but he says how far west. That would put The Hermit's birthplace well beyond the Thunder Lands.

He grew up without any sort of mentor but took to nature easily. He found his one true love in The Goddess, a nameless deity who he believed epitomized the natural world. He would have gone completely wild if he hadn't found and rescued Avital Stannard when he was 17. Avital was only two years old at the time. Stratesus is vague about her origins other to say he found her while travelling through Pretensa towards the Strandlands.

He was forced to take care of the child until he was 10 years old, but she never took to druidism. Eventually, he was forced to leave her at an orphanage in the city of Yuln. However, he kept coming back to see her until she turned 18. By then, their relationship changed from estranged father and anger daughter to more like begrudging brother and sister. Stratesus was 28 years old at this point.

The journal goes on to how Avital chose to become a paladin and that the two 'adopted kin' went their separate ways for a many years, but they soon came back together to fight against an evil mountain giant that was rampaging through the region of the Strandlands known as The Wrathful Territory. (This is a region of scrub plains and hills and dead forests near the city of Blackwater, which was only a small town at the time.) It was that adventure where they first met and fought alongside both Arixon and Beornheard.

This was the beginning of the Fellowship of the Boot. The group was officially formed in 430 N.C. Stratesus was 39 years old, Avital was 29, and Beornheard was 80. Arixon didn't know when he was born, but it is believed he was in his early twenties at this time. Two years later, while adventuring in the central desert of Harqual known as the Great Expanse, they met and befriended Grigrion. He was always mysterious and also didn't understand the concept of 'birth year'. In 442 N.C., Stratesus came upon a very young Jorziza raiding a farm near Blackwater. He took the young desert-kin lizardfolk under his wing.

These were the first six core members of the Fellowship of the Boot, although Stratesus wouldn't let Jorziza adventure with them until the lizard-kin was old enough to stand among the Boots as an equal.

Other members of the Boots came and went over the years, but after Grigrion died in 445 N.C., the extended membership of Fellowship of Boots began to fall apart. (He was very popular.) It was also around this time that Stratesus discovered he had a younger half brother, Alekos, as well as an older half-sister, Ida. He met Alekos first, as Dustchaser, and the two of them became great friends without knowing they were brothers. It was only when the Boots visited Alekos' home in a small town on the Chara Coast that they discovered the truth.

It turns out that Trym had been a slave in his youth and escaped his bondage and fled north. There he became the father that Stratesus grew up loving. Trym was drawn back home only after learning that he had another child by a fellow slave. He tries to find and free the girl, but his secret was discovered and he was re-chained and forced to fight in the arenas throughout the Chara Coast. Eventually, he won his freedom and the freedom of his daughter. He tried to find Stratesus, but the people of his home village told him the boy died.

He went back to being a soldier but was crippled soon after.

(Trym becomes the patron of the Boots after he and Stratesus reconciled.)

The journal doesn't talk much about Alekos' mother (and not by name) and there is no mention of Ida's mother other than she was also a slave. Ida Sauzac tries to become a paladin, but she falls from grace and becomes a blackguard. She becomes one of the Boots greatest enemies. (Aeron never mentioned her in any of his stories, so he likely didn't know about her.) Eventually, the Boots defeat Ida along the shores of the Strandlands, but as the blackguard dies, falling off a cliff into the sea, she drags Avital to her death as well. Ida's body is smashed and

ripped to pieces on the rocks, but Avital's body is never found. The paladin dies at the age of 74. Stratesus is 84. Beornheard is 125. Jorziza is over 30 summers old. Arixon appears to be in his late 80s.

The year is 475 N.C.

After Avital's death, the journal becomes a lot more vague. It is more about The Hermit's personal life and his and Dustchaser's plan to rebuild the old Temple to Bogphin and dedicate it to Stratesus' unnamed Goddess of Nature. He begins to write down the previously unknown connections that he and Dustchaser discovered that bound the Boots together. They discover that Dustchaser (or their father) knew many of the members of the Boots before they joined (not including Avital and Jorziza, however). This puts their family at the centre of the Boots.

It was almost as if Fate brought them together. But, it isn't enough to save them from death, time, and even each other. Jorziza died four years after Avital. Beornheard died three years later. Both died fighting. That is all Stratesus writes about their deaths, but there is great sadness in how he writes about them. Dustchaser disappears back to the western lands soon after Beornheard's death. He returns a few times to check in on Stratesus (and to try to get him to come with him), but in 488 N.C., he visits for the last time. Arixon continues to visit The Hermit who still has a handful of followers, but by 492 N.C., his pupils have either gone their own way or have died, tragically. It is the official end of the Boots.

(Aeron's tales were never sad... just full of mystery and wonder.)

The rest of the journal is about Stratesus' personal life at the ruins, and his and Arixon's desire to protect the old temple from the evils of the Grave Shores. He mentions The Wicked Hill, in passing, but does note, in one page corner, that one of his books goes into greater details about the shrine, or the Shrine of Utter Evil, as it is named in the book. Stratesus doesn't mention the title of the book, however.