



THE PRATHAMAJA NANDANA

E. B. Smith

PATERNUS: WAR OF GODS -
KUMARI KANDAM CONCERT

MISSING SCENE OUTLINE

DYRK ASHTON

OUTLINE FOR A DELETED SCENE

WARNING: SPOILERS

This would have gone between chapters thirty-nine and forty in *Paternus: War of Gods*, Book 3 in *The Paternus Trilogy*

The outline and notes for *War of Gods* contained a chapter in which the Firstborn perform an Armed Forces Entertainment/USO-style concert for the troops shortly before they are all shipped to Erset La Tari for the final battle. It's something I'd been wanting to do and planning since way back when writing book one. I loved the idea, and still do, but when it came down to it, the scene just didn't fit the pacing – and my editors and beta readers agreed. Below are some of the ideas I had for that chapter, some in the form of a rough outline and playlist. This is not complete, doesn't include everyone or everything I would have liked to include, and would have been re-written and reorganized a number of times before reaching publication. I hope you enjoy it, nonetheless.

* * *

Mac Gallus and The Twins have convinced everyone they need to have a concert for the troops prior to going to war on Erset La Tari. There have been rehearsals, mostly in secret, and playlists have been compiled. Peter

and the colonel decide to have it two days before they leave so there is a day to recover. Using listening devices and tablet computers provided by Mac Gallus, the Deva choose the songs they wish to perform. Asterion builds a large and sturdy stage in the training arena with the help of Myrddin Wyllt, the habilis, and the monks from the Temple of The Bull. Speakers, lighting and sound equipment are positioned, instruments gathered and arranged, and final rehearsals are held in secret. Being Firstborn or very close to it, they've learned the songs and dance steps very quickly.

Firstborn who have chosen to participate, alone or with others, perform one to four songs. Great fun is had and madness ensues. Some sets are raucous, others touching, some just plain disturbing, as one can imagine, and all of it is bizarre.

Quon Kiang and Kabir act as stage managers, with them and The Twins using a massive hook carved from a tree to occasionally yank performers offstage (Myrddin Wyllt most of all).

Myrddin streaks across stage naked more than once. Munin zooms down to grab his shoulder at one point and they vanish, followed by Myrddin screeching as he falls from the sky and lands with a loud thump behind the stage.

* * *

Throughout the afternoon and early evening, Firstborn as well as others in their entourages, including soldiers representing various countries, have performed songs and dances from cultures around the world, old and new. Peter played a perfect and beautiful rendition of *Moonlight Sonata* on the piano. Mrs. Mirskaya sang Russian folk tunes while playing a bayan. Pratha performed several traditional Hindu dances. Etcetera. Large and small crowds came and went.

Now the sun has set and the moon has risen to take its place among the stars. It's time for the main event.

While everyone crowds in, a group of habilis perform a variety of songs from all corners of the globe on drums. Mixed drinks and beer flow freely from the bar, mixed and handed out by Léon, one of the centaurs,

and volunteers from the human forces. Some of the audience sits in the stands, while most pack the arena floor in front of the stage.

Having throughout the day paid homage to the music from many cultures and times, the main event is dedicated to popular entertainment (and laughs).

The lights go down and the drumming stops. A mighty crowing rises from the dark stage, silencing the crowd. A spotlight highlights Mac Gallus standing in front of the curtain, who welcomes everyone and says, "For our first performance this evening, may I present to you the last in the line of Antediluvian Kings and our own resident Elemental, Zeke Prisco!" The crowd cheers. Fi claps and whistles with enthusiasm.

Mac flaps from the stage to his combination DJ station and mixing booth, where he dons a set of headphones and poises his pudgy fingers over the turntables and controls. The back curtain rustles but no one comes out. Hushed arguing is heard, then Cain and Abel shove through carrying Zeke under the arms and set him on stage. Abel hands him an electric guitar and pats him on the back. Cain musses Zeke's hair and The Twins exit.

Zeke waves a nervous hello. The crowd cheers more loudly, some shouting words of support. Zeke takes a deep breath and begins to play:

- *Give a Little Bit* by Supertramp. After a nervous start, Zeke finds his voice, and his talent for guitar shines. To his surprise, the back curtain opens again to reveal an orchestra of human soldiers and monks playing violins, cellos and horns. Then they are joined by a chorus of human soldiers and habilis, clapping and singing. Soon the whole crowd is clapping and singing along, much to the glee of Abel and Cain, who coerced Zeke into playing the song in the first place and have organized the back-up without Zeke knowing. The song ends and Zeke says there's no following that up so he's done. Hoots and jeers and calls for an encore ensue. Refusing to let him quit now, Cain brings him a stool and an acoustic guitar and he plays:
- *Beloved One* by Ben Harper. He glances at Fi, who grins and blushes. Zeke waves to the crowd as the curtain closes.

Prathamaja Nandana:

- *Cannonball* by The Breeders. Begins in darkness with the voices of male Firstborn chanting, “Oh-ee-oh. Oh-ee-oh,” backstage, including the earth-shaking baritones of Quon Kiang and Naga: Lights come up and Pratha, in a ridiculously sexy outfit, begins to sing. Mrs. Mirskaya, Sekhmet and Ptesan-Wi play guitars, while Akhu pounds away at the drums.
- *Would You Go to Bed with Me* by Touch and Go.
- *She Comes in Colours*, which Mac mixes into *Paint it Black*, both by The Rolling Stones. At the end of the song Pratha turns into four-armed Kali in a flash of light and roars into the crowd, to the delight and horror of all. She changes back to human form in her sexy outfit and blows kisses to the crowd as they exit the stage.

Myrddin Wyllt:

- *I'm Too Sexy* by Right Said Fred. Myrddin capers onto the stage, grinning wide. Most cheer, but some of the Firstborn groan. He jabs a finger at Mac and says, “Hit it!” The song does not go on long, however, before the hook comes out, which Myrddin ducks. “Next!” he shouts to Mac.
- *Swingin’* by John Anderson. This time the hook comes under the back curtain. Myrddin scampers out of its way and says, “Next!”
- *Spirit in the Sky* by Norman Greenbaum. The familiar opening notes prove this to be a winner. Chiron and the other centaurs file on to the stage behind Myrddin and provide back-up, while also doing a perfectly timed and executed dance, their hoofs clapping out percussion.
- *Come on Eileen* by Dexy's Midnight Runners. The pace picks up as Mac helps transition into the song. Myrddin and the centaurs perform a lively Riverdance style stepdance. Cain and Abel drag Fi on stage and the three of them join in as well.
- *I Would Walk 500 Miles* by The Proclaimers. Cain, Abel and Fi

bow and leave the stage. The centaurs step back to sing along. Myrddin dedicates the song to Freyja and sings to her the whole time.

Chiron and the Centaurs:

- *Pop Goes the World* by Men Without Hats. Chiron and the other centaurs remain on stage and are each given a handheld electronic keyboard. Chiron sings while the others play and sing back-up. All perform a choreographed dance throughout. Zeke later says to Fi, "You haven't lived until you've seen a dozen centaurs singing *Pop Goes the World*. Am I right, or am I right?"

Anubis:

- *Alive*, by Pearl Jam. Anubis takes the stage to roars of approval, which only grow louder when he begins to sing. He sounds so much like Eddie Vedder it's creepy. Peter plays lead guitar, backed up by Cain on rhythm and Lam-ang on bass. Peter shreds the lead in the instrumental, and to everyone's surprise, Edgar wails on the drums, with Mol at his side, bobbing his head to the beat.

Sekhmet:

- *Killing Me Softly* - Fugees version. As Anubis finishes his song, a spotlight rises on Sekhmet at the other side of the stage and she begins to sing. Ganesh plays sitar. Anubis joins them to sing the rap parts.

Sekhmet, Anubis, and Lam-Ang:

- *Shout Away* by The Rolling Stones. Mac mixes *Killing Me Softly*

into *Shout Away*. Lam-Ang hops back onto the stage with an electric guitar and sings and plays along with them.

Fi:

- *I Want You* by Savage Garden. Mrs. Mirskaya shoves Fi onto the stage. She takes a microphone, red-faced and sheepish, but when the music starts and she begins to sing, her reservations quickly fade. She grins at Zeke as she sings.
- *Can't Help Falling in Love with You* by Elvis Presley. Fi says she's pretty sure everybody has guessed who that song was for, but she's going to go ahead and dictate this next one to a certain boy who can turn to stone and fire and wind, and turn her heart to water. She begins the song traditionally, but when the hook creeps out and is just about to nab her, the song suddenly changes to a screaming metal version. Peter, Cain, and Lam-Ang emerge from backstage wailing on guitars. Fi dives off stage and crowd surfs.
- *Moon Shadow* by Cat Stevens. Fi returns to the stage and the stage is reset. Fi sings the song, with Zeke on acoustic guitar and Peter on keyboards.

Mac Gallus:

- *Jitterbug* by Wham. It's Mac's turn to take the stage, and Abel and Cain take his place at the console. Mac crows and thanks everyone, but when the song starts, he scowls and says, "That's not my song!" Cain and Abel giggle and scratch it to a stop, only to start playing:
- *Yummy Yummy Yummy* by Arthur Resnick and Joey Levine. Mac says, "That's not on my list either, you wankers!" Then he reconsiders. "I do like it, though." He only gets a few words out, however, before being hooked swiftly off stage. "You bastards!" The mic flies out of his hand and Skadi catches it. Shouts rise, "Sing it!" She leaps on stage and sings, then is yanked off as well.

One after the other Firstborn snatch the mic and sing and are hooked, to roars of laughter by all. Quon Kiang gets the mic and stomps on the hook as it comes for him, wielded by a half dozen Firstborn, breaking it. They fall over backward in a pile. Leshy reaches through the back curtain and jerks him away, then takes the stage himself. He can't pick the mic up, so he sings into it on the floor and fends off all comers until Naga coils around him and rolls him away. Peter picks up the mic and they all put their hands up in surrender, allowing him to finish the song.

Peter:

Back in his control booth, Mac introduces none other than the Father of all life on the planet, the Pater!

- *Superstition* by Stevie Wonder. Abel and a group of soldiers and habilis play horns.
- *Purple Rain*, by Prince.
- *On the Road to Find Out* by Cat Stevens. Peter plays guitar, with Zeke as back-up. Habilis doing chorus and drums. The longer the song goes on, the more musicians and singers join in.
- *Bird on a Wire* by Hank Williams. Peter says, "I wish I could say I had something to do with this song, but it was all Hank. I dedicate this to all of you." Asterion joins softly with a cello, and Zeke with guitar.

Edgar:

As surprised as everyone was to see Edgar play the drums earlier, no one expected him to perform himself. He takes the stage in a black suit. The colonel comes with him, carrying a tall stool. She straightens Edgar's bolo tie with a Templar Cross clasp, whispers in his ear, pats him on the chest, and exits stage. Zeke and Peter take seats in the shadows behind him with acoustic guitars.

Edgar takes a deep breath, obviously nervous. When the music starts, however, the crowd roars.

- *Ain't No Grave* by Claude Ely. Edgar sings in Johnny Cash-style.
- *The Man Comes Around*. He continues with two more of Cash's hits. During this one, Templars join in on the chorus.
- *God's Gonna Cut You Down*. The crowd stomps, claps, and sings along. Cut to Tanuki toiling and Baphomet plotting in Kur-gal, then back to the stage for the finish.

Freyja:

Freyja sang some amazing opera songs earlier in the day, and the expectation is she will do more this evening. Everyone is confused when she brings Myrddin Wyllt on stage with her, and jaws hang open when Myrddin starts to rap and she begins:

- **Hey Mama** by Nicki Minaj. Not only that, she transforms into a gorgeous blonde version of herself and dances as well. Quon grins, itching to hook her, but The Twins plead with him not to. "She will never forgive us." "And you do not want to be spanked by Freyja of the Black Sword Hand, believe us." Quon relents.

Mrs. Mirskaya:

- *Million Scarlet Roses* by Alla Pugacheva. After Freyja and Myrddin do just the one song, Freyja shouts, "Now, let's give it up for Mokosh!" Lights go down on them and rise on Mrs. Mirskaya holding a bayan. She sings and plays beautifully, and the Russians in the group in particular cheer and sing along. The hook comes out anyway, but when Leshy pokes his head through the back curtain and glares, it backs away slowly and leaves Mrs. Mirskaya be.
- *Little Bit of Lovin'* by Elle King. Everybody enjoys this one.

The Twins:

Not to be out done, Abel and Cain put on a show of light, fireworks, and a whole lot of brilliant as well as ridiculous dancing. They start with a song in honor of Léon, the resident barkeep.

- *The Lion Sleeps Tonight* by The Tokens. Mac transitions this to:
- *Somebody to Love* by Queen, and then a massively over-produced rendition of:
- *Stayin' Alive* by the Bee Gees, where they are joined on stage by Fi, dragging Pruor and other of the Aesir with her, as well as members of their human military allies. All perform a dance number that no one gets exactly right.
- *Dream On* by Aerosmith comes next. Then, for an encore, they do a song in honor of Mac Gallus, who made the entire event possible:
- *Ride Captain Ride* by Blues Image. The stage becomes packed, and everyone in the crowd sings along.

Kabir:

- *The Letter* by The Box Tops. After everyone clears the stage, settles down and refills their drinks, Kabir captivates them all with a terrific and powerful rendition that out-Cockers Joe Cocker's version.
- *Papa was a Rolling Stone* by The Temptations. Asterion joins Kabir to sing this one. Peter shouts from the crowd, mimicking a line from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, "I'm not dead!" Quon Kiang and Léon leave their stations backstage and at the bar to sing along. Anubis joins as well.
- *Love Train* by The O'Jays. The group continues with Love Train, performing choreographed dance moves, and are joined by more male Firstborn.
- *Lean on Me* by Bill Withers. Even more male Deva take the stage with them, including Peter, Zeke, Edgar and El Cid, until nearly all of them crowd the stage and steps at both sides. Even Azh squawks and trumpets along.

Deva Women:

As soon as the song ends, a white glowing wind whips through the stadium and the next song begins:

- *Knock on Wood* by Amii Stewart. Pratha floats down from the sky, Mrs. Mirskaya draws lightning from above, and Freyja glows bright white, driving the men, who screech and laugh, from the stage. The song is punctuated throughout with a grand show of lightning and thunder, and at the end Pratha transforms into Kali and roars into the crowd, to the horror and ultimate delight of the troops.
- *We are Family* by Sister Sledge. All of the Deva women, as well as the colonel and many of the woman soldiers, take the stage.

Final Song:

All the Deva pack the stage for the last song, including to the front and the sides, and Mac dedicates it to their Asura brothers and sisters.

- *Na Na Hey Hey* by Steam. The entire crowd joins in, arms over shoulders, swaying in unison, spilling their drinks, and singing at the top of their lungs. While the final chorus goes on and on, Fi and Zeke sneak away to be together. Cut to Khagan looking out over his thousands upon thousands of camped troops and the immense plain on Erset La Tari. The song fades away behind a shot of the moon.