

Character Example

This character profile was used to describe NPCs in a format that could easily and quickly be implemented in-engine; this particular NPC was part of a quest, shown next.

Name: Gold Heart

Age: Adult

Race: Pegasus

Gender: Male

Location: Cloudsdale

Coat Color: White 255 255 255

Hair Color: Gold 204 164 063

Eye Color: Dark Brown 176 126 000

Mane/Tail Style: Long, messy.

Cutie Mark: A golden heart

Accessories: Dark green flatcap

Occupation: Beggar

Cutie Mark Story: It's pretty obvious, isn't it? I have a heart of gold—or at least, that's what I assume it means. I've always tried my best to be a good pony, because my family never has been. They're that type of rich pony that just sits in a mansion while the poorer ponies suffer. I've always hated that, and I try to make sure they know it.

Who knows—maybe I can make a difference some day?

Bio: Gold Heart is not who he appears to be. On the surface, he is a beggar, but in fact he's involved with the Cloudsdale Mafia.

Dialogue:

“Do you need something? I'm kinda busy.”

“If you see anypony suspicious hanging around, let me know, alright?”

“You're quite persistent, aren't you?”

“My customers just can't refuse the offers I give them!”

“As far back as I can remember I always wanted to be a gang-...business-pony.”

“Welcome to Cloudsdale. This town stinks like rainbows all the time.”

“Whoa, too close. Back up a little.”

“How's it going, my little friend?”

“It's pretty late. Not many customers at this hour.”

“Hey. I'm watching you.”

Related Quests:

Charity Pony

Name: Charity Pony

Tier: Low-Tier

Location: Cloudsdale

Prerequisites: None

Key Points:

- You are approached by a beggar
- Depending on your choices, the beggar gives you rewards
- The beggar claims not to be a beggar

Quest Dialogue:

[Start]

* aliasname <Gold> <Gold Heart>

At any point during their exploration of Cloudsdale, the player may be approached by a beggar.

Gold Heart: Hey there - my name's Gold Heart. I uh...I was wondering if you could spare a couple bits?

> Of course – here you are (Give 2 bits) :Nice

> I can give you more than that. (Give 20 bits) :Nicer

> I can spare...say, two hundred? (Give 200 bits) :Nicest

> Sorry, I can't spare anything at the moment. :Nop

> How much does it cost to get you out of my face? :Nop

> Buzz off; I'm not giving you any of my hard-earned bits. :Nop

[Nice]

Gold Heart: Thank you, kind \$PLAYERGENDER! I'll spend it well. I'm afraid I can't offer you much in return...how about a proverb?

> Sure :Proverb

> No thanks :Nah

[Proverb]

If this option is selected, Gold Heart will give one of the following lines:

Gold Heart: Never look a gift horse in the mouth.

Gold Heart: How about a foreign one? Ce n'est pas la mort du petit cheval.

Gold Heart: You can take your friend to a bar but you can't make them drink.

Gold Heart: No hour of life is wasted that is spent wearing a saddle.

Gold Heart: A pony is worth more than riches.

Gold Heart: The wagon rests in winter, the sleigh in summer, the pony never.

Gold Heart: The wind of the skies is that which blows between pegasus ears.

Gold Heart: Good ponies get cheated, just as good trains get ridden.

* goto END

{{Charity Pony} I gave a beggar some money and he rewarded me with words! How nice.}

[Nah]

Gold Heart: Ah, fair enough. Words aren't exactly worth much are they? Thank you for your kindness anyway, friend.

* goto END

{{Charity Pony} I gave a beggar some money. Aren't I nice.}

[Nicer]

Gold Heart: Gosh, you are generous. This'll keep me going for days! You have my eternal gratitude, \$PLAYERGENDER.

* goto END

In return for 20 bits, Gold Heart will reward the player with a random junk item of very low value.

{{Charity Pony} I gave a beggar some money and...he rewarded me with some random junk. Yay.}

[Nicest]

Gold Heart: Two hundred! Two hundred? Are you serious?

> Of course :BillGates

> No, I was just pulling your hoof. Hah. :Vader

> Actually, sorry – I don't have that kind of money right now. Maybe later :OhWait

[BillGates]

Gold Heart: Wow, thank you so much. Thank you! Thank you! You really are a...a paragon of charity.

{{Charity Pony} I gave a beggar some money and he rewarded me with words!}

* goto END

[Vader]

Gold Heart: Oh, thanks. Way to go, you just made me feel real stupid.

{{Charity Pony} I think I made a beggar cry today. Shucks.}

* goto END

[OhWait]

Gold Heart: Aww, shucks. Well, I better be on my way. Thanks anyway.

* goto END

{{Charity Pony} It's a shame I disappointed that beggar, maybe I should go back and cheer him up.}

[Nop]

Gold Heart: Alright, alright. I'm sorry. Please don't mind me.

* goto END

[Give_Money]

After the player has, in any combination, given Gold Heart 400 bits, the following dialogue will take place:

Gold Heart: Hey, actually, I have something to tell you. I...don't really know how to put this but...I'm not a beggar.

> What? :wut

> Clearly you are, Gold Heart. Just look at yourself. :wut

[wut]

Gold Heart: My name is really Gold Heart. Prince Goldheart.

> Wait, what? Why didn't you tell me before? :Believe

> You're Mad :NotMad

> Really? :Believe

[Believe]

Gold Heart: I have been...posing as a beggar for months. I've been looking for a charitable pony. A pony like you: someone with a...heh, heart of gold.

> So you're like...a millionaire, right? :DevPatel

> Why did you want my money? :MahMoneh

> Yeah, no, you're crazy. :CrayCray

[DevPatel]

Gold Heart: Yes, I suppose I am a millionaire. I only did this because I thought it'd be fun.

> Fun? :FunFunFunFun
> Yeah, no, you're crazy. :CrayCray

[FunFunFunFun]

Gold Heart: Why yes. My lifestyle is rather...stuffy. I felt like I needed a change.

> I still don't get the point. Why did you want my money? :MahMoneh
> Yeah, no, you're crazy. :CrayCray

[MahMoneh]

Gold Heart: Well actually I was planning to donate it to my fellow...ahem, bums. You can have it back if you want, though.

> No, you go ahead and give it to them. :LetEmEat
> Actually yeah, I will. :LetEmStarve

[LetEmEat]

Gold Heart: Of course! Oh and here's a little reward for being such a kind-hearted pony.

* goto END

[LetEmStarve]

Gold Heart: Oh...right. Okay then. Hope you enjoy your money.

If the money is donated to the beggars, the player receives a medium amount of XP and a unique item - Gold Heart's flatcap. If they do not donate the money, they receive a lower amount of XP.

{[Charity Pony] Holy moly. That guy was no beggar. He gave me all my money back plus this cool hat. Awesome.}

* goto END

[Clearly]

Gold Heart: No. No I'm not, actually.

> Well you have me convinced. :wut
> Right! Yeah. You keep thinking that. :NotMad

[NotMad]

Gold Heart: No, wait! I'm not mad, I swear.

> You're clearly mad :CrayCray
> Alright, alright. I believe you. :Believe

[CrayCray]

Gold Heart: I prefer the term 'eccentric'. But if you're going to be that way, fine.

{[Charity Pony] I told Gold Heart he was crazy. I think he got offended...maybe I should apologize.}

* goto END

If the player ends the dialogue chain by calling Gold Heart crazy, the quest will stay open until the player returns and the following conversation takes place:

Gold Heart: Oh, hello again. Am I not crazy now?

> I'm sorry, I should have been more considerate. :Considerate

> No, I believe you. I'm sorry - why are you dressed like that if you're not a beggar? :Believe

[Considerate]

Gold Heart: Are you offering me an apology?

> Yes. I'm sorry. Can you explain what you meant? :Believe

> No. :Nu

[Nu]

Gold Heart: Fine.

* goto END

[J7]

Reward: However much money the player gave Gold Heart, plus his hat.

In-Game Lore

I wrote a handful of documents which the player could find and read in-game; this account of a softened-up Cthulhu-like being was meant to expand on the culture of visitable locations and provide background intrigue as the player explored the world.

Matching Truth and Fiction

The Legend of the Great Cloothoo

Prof. R. Qwillington

A Brief Introduction

Welcome, reader, to the first in a series of books concerned with the analysis of mythological tales from our nation's chequered, often mysterious past.

In this series, I will examine all available evidence in order to piece together what I believe is the most convincing historical narrative for each legend. My aim, however, is not to confirm nor deny the myths - merely to present well-reasoned, fair breakdowns. To do so, I will analyse folk tales, contemporary literature and testimonials accessed from the Royal Canterlot Archives. In addition, I will also make an attempt to locate new sources and conduct primary research where possible.

A Note on the History of Baltimare

Historically, the south-west region of Equestria - around what is today known as the Baltimare - has been a much troubled area. The city itself is of course not without previous glory; the proud city has borne a long tradition of heroes, but it also harbours a mysterious and troubled past.

The city is perhaps best known for its instrumental role in the defence of Equestria during the First Contact War, when Pony and Griffon forces met each other for the first time. Baltimare was one of the first Equestrian cities to be affected during the incursion. Mere days into the conflict, the griffon chief Halyca laid siege to the city; and in a surprising turn of events, the local garrison was able to stave off their attackers for a number of weeks. Since Baltimare was of great strategic importance to the Griffon advance towards Canterlot due to its railway connections, their invasion of Equestria was dramatically stalled. This move forced the griffon generals to reassess their battle plan, but also allowed Canterlot to organize the necessary diplomatic missions in order to avert further conflict.

Centuries earlier - in ancient times - the city that rested upon the crest of Horseshoe Bay was known as Belkuili; during the time that it bore this name, the city was heavily involved in dark magic. The then city-state was placed under official sanctions by the Royal Equestrian Council following a suspicious outbreak of the Cutie Pox, which wrought untold damage to the local ecosystems. For some time after the sanctions were imposed, Horseshoe Bay and its surrounding coastline returned to relative normality for the first time in a number of decades. This state of affairs continued until a full five-hundred and twenty-two years after the Royal sanctions were first instituted. During the winter of that year, so it is said, the legend of The Great Cloothoo began.

An Analysis of the Legend

Disclaimer: At this point, I - Prof. R. Qwillington, the author of this text - feel that I must remind the reader that henceforth the majority of my documentation will be dependent on dubious hypotheses, conjecture, unsubstantiated third-party accounts and an array of other unreliable evidence. Here, I will examine the popular version of the legend and attempt to match contemporary evidence and modern research with the existing mythos (as will be the format of this series of books).

The period during which the Cloothoo legend began was a characteristically chaotic period; a number of our popular folk tales have roots in this period, including the Lock Lake Beast and the Lizard Ponies. The atmosphere of the times was certainly a veritable breeding ground for wild tales. The Cloothoolian mythos, however, is much more substantial than a simple folk tale.

The myth sounds grand and mysterious at first - but under scrutiny, many details fall away to reveal a more tangible, yet equally endearing story. For example: the name 'Cloothoo' is described in the mythos as being the pronounceable equivalent of a word from some ancient, unworldly language - a language forgotten by time. But in all likelihood, the name was formulated in order to give the story more credibility, says Silver Seller, professor of Linguistics at Manehattan University.

The legend that is nowadays told to frighten little foals on Nightmare Night goes something like this: the story begins one stormy, dreary night when a ship arrived in Belkuili's port. The only member of the crew - the captain of the ship - claimed to have returned from a most peculiar journey into the Empty Sea (now known as the Griffon Sea). The elderly stallion was said to have galloped from his boat and drowned his sorrows in Apple Family cider (most likely an anachronistic fictitious detail, since Ponyville records show that the Apple family did not start producing their famous beverage until many years later). Later that night, he stood in the town square and shouted about tall tales of sea monsters out beyond the bay. In any other part of Equestria, a pony claiming to have sighted such a thing would likely have been quickly dismissed - or so would say the historian. But for the superstitious Belkuili citizens it was a serious concern. Though there had been scarce reports of monsters, during that period in history it was widely believed that the 'Empty Sea', which had not yet been explored, was an

unfathomably large and unnatural place (much like the Everfree Forest south-west of Canterlot is still perceived). Over the course of the next few weeks, fear began to spread amongst the townsfolk, who perceived the old stallion's warning as an omen.

The stallion was reportedly arrested for drunken-ness and was never heard from again. There are some versions of the conventional tale which imply that the captain simply disappeared - vanished without a trace - when the guard came to release him the morning following his arrest. However, since the pony was never named, the truth of this element of the story is dubious. His identity and even his existence are still hotly debated in certain circles even today. It is interesting to note, however, that there are numerous historical documents that claim to represent real logs from the port and town guard on the supposed date of his arrival (and subsequent arrest). However, none of the documents have yet been authenticated by any respectable historical body.

Regardless, the port-town descended into a panicked state. Based upon the evidence, it is very clear that *something* happened during this time period - perhaps something that drove the town into a sort of mass delusion. There is, however, a surprisingly large amount of evidence that points towards the existence of some sort of creature. The following extract from the doom-laden speech of a town crier, as presented by Dr. Scarlet Autumn of the University of Fillydelphia in her book *Tales From Beyond Equestria*, illustrates how fear was instilled into the towns-ponies during this period:

"Hear ye, hear ye, there is a monster that stalks the Empty. His dark presence is a blight upon the ocean - a grotesque combination of serpent, dragon and sea-pony of gigantic proportions. Surely you have seen his wretched shape move beneath the water? We did not heed the old pony's warning! Now he is gone, and we shall all follow him into the Empty!"

There are numerous reports around that time of what a contemporary poet (popularly believed to be the famous Lavender Oath) described as 'shadows beneath the bay-water'. It is said that at the height of the city's frenzy, a young colt claimed to have seen a 'glimmer of scaly, green hide disappear beneath the surface of the water in the dawn sun' (a contemporary quote identified by Periwinkle Potts in *Mythical Creatures of Yester-Equestria*).

Even the most skeptical minds became convinced that something malevolent lurked in the Empty Sea when one morning the central pier was discovered to have been completely destroyed. We know from the Seaponies' records that tidal forces were substantial during that month, and the traditional tale is that Belkuili's pier was destroyed weeks later during a tsunami, but the story suggests that it was destroyed slightly earlier.

In response to the destroyed pier, the captain of the guard supposedly organized a force with the intent of capturing the beast. The captain of the guard's name is popularly given as 'Oulixeus Tyrhoof' (though several regional variations exist - residents of Fillydelphia would call her 'Lixeus Tirhof', for example) - a name reminiscent of a recurring character in *Filly's and*

Foal's Tales - the popular collection of folklore written by the Grave Brothers and published some years later. Some historians have speculated that the Brothers took the name from this tale, but the generally accepted theory is that the name of the captain was changed after *Filly's and Foal's Tales* was released.

Tyrhoof's orders were implemented: vast fishing nets of incredible size were drawn across the bay in an attempt to snare it and watch-posts were erected around the coast. Evidence of the nets' existence endured the centuries according to the townsfolk of Fillymare - a small fishing village between Fillydelphia and Baltimore - who claim to hold scraps and threads of one such net in their town museum. However, the veracity of their claim is unknown, since they do not allow their samples to be tested.

For a number of months, this status quo was maintained, giving the residents a sense of safety - ponies resumed their normal routines and work began on reconstructing the mysteriously destroyed pier. The nets were retracted and the watch detail was progressively disassembled.

We can be sure that some months after the events in Baltimore began, a large wave hit Equestria's eastern seaboard - this fact is thoroughly documented in historical documents and modern surveyance of the area. Numerous towns and cities were affected by flooding, including Baltimore. However, the legend claims that it was not the tsunami that damaged the city, but rather the monster emerging from the deep to destroy the city.

The tsunami was the largest recorded in Equestrian history - a recent albeit controversial report by the Canterlot Museum of Geology suggested that debris from the flood reached as far as Dodge City and the western Hayseed Swamps; they also reported that the levels of salinity in that area were markedly higher than control samples. This would certainly account for the widespread destruction - without the aid of a sea monster.

Regardless, the legend claims that the guard had little-to-no warning and were unable to react quickly enough; downtown Baltimore was destroyed in a matter of moments. All seemed lost.

Here, we must depart from the territory of the easily-verifiable; at this point in the traditional story, the creature is interacted with physically. Therefore, we must temporarily presume the existence of the Great Cloothoo in order to continue. There is very little evidence at this point that we can rely on for analysis, but for the sake of completeness, I will promptly conclude the tale.

Oulixeus Tyrhoof and the remaining guards, who were finally convinced of the beast's existence, charged the Great Cloothoo in a last ditch effort to thwart his destruction of the city. Rising from the sodden, broken city, they bore weapons - seeking to kill the leviathan. Amongst the spray and the debris and the carnage, the small group of soldiers faced the most disgusting creature they had ever laid eyes upon. As with many details of the legend, the description of the creature varies; some darker retellings of the story, however, omit the description, claiming that the fiend

was too terrible to be described. These versions suppose that it was beyond the ability of Equestrian language, beyond the imagination of even the most creative ponies. The versions that do not omit a delineation characterize it as a “simultaneous picture of an octopus, a dragon, and a pony caricature” (Amour Art, *Cry of Cloothoo*) - a “freakish combination of a number of known and unknown animals, resulting in a hellish visage” (C.H. Sarma, *The Written Legends*).

At once, the guardstallions turned and ran in fright from the horror of what they saw. There was nothing that could possibly justify their facing such a monster - supposedly, not even the city they were employed to defend was worth fighting for. The Great Cloothoo, now unchallenged, emerged from the water, using powerful, dragon-like wings to propel himself into the skies above Belkuili. As he did, the beast revealed his colossal size - so large that he blocked out the light of the sun. A darkness fell over the ruined city.

But one more survivor was to emerge from the flooded, rubble-ridden streets. A lone shape ascended - almost unnoticeable against the blackness. The outline was that of a small pegasus foal. No-one ever knew his/her name, or what the young pony said, but after a few moments, the Great Cloothoo stopped and withdrew - slipping back into the water and disappearing evermore.

Speculated identities for Belkuili’s saviour are numerous: some say the foal was the daughter of Oulixeus Tyrhoof, others suggest that the foal was a colt and the son of a fisherman; it is also theorized that the colt that first saw the monster months previously. What the foal said is also undefined and is usually left open to the imagination of the listener.

Conclusions

The notorious historian Periwinkle Potts wrote a number of highly-recommended essays concerning the existence of The Great Cloothoo. At the end of his study, he concluded that The Great Cloothoo is no legend; not a mythical beast but an actual creature that potentially still stalks the seas. As a hypothesis, this claim is supported by at best anecdotal evidence.

Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, the folk tale itself does not stand up to scrutiny. By its nature, the Cloothoolian legend is perfect for creative liberty at the behest of any of the many storytellers who have passed down this folktale over the centuries. The conventional tale is not a reliable account: it is not the personal record of a pony who lived during those times, nor is it supported by evidence. All the story does is able to do is combine a large number of interconnected and coincidental events

It could well be that there is some element of truth to the legend of Cloothoo, but it is this researcher’s conviction that based on the current evidence, we cannot conclude that the popular story is true.