

# **Lochac Hero Cloak**

Created by: St Florian de la Riviere

Written by: Baroness Lovet Dangerous (feat, The 8<sup>th</sup> Labour: The Man From Far Olympus by Baron William Montrose).

## **The Ballad of Hercules and the 12 Labours of Lochac.**

Once upon a time, King Thibault and King Jayne, the rulers of the most glorious nation of Lochac, came across Our Hero, Hercules.

Hercules was a man of great strength. He was well known across the known world for his clever tricks during tournaments and his great courage on the war field. Hercules had grown up noble and loved, unfortunately, he had been sent to the lands under a false pretence! Hera (his evil Stepmother, the Queen of a neighbouring nation) had cursed him into a fit of madness and decided to wage war on Lochac using him as her puppet.

While under her spell, Hera had instructed Hercules to sail over the seas, and invade Lochac (she was jealous of its beauty and the peace of the land). Upon landing on the shores and meeting with the grace of the noble sovereigns and their loyal army however, Hercules was overcome with remorse, and his madness cleared and he saw that he had been wrong in trying to wage war on such respected and well-loved rulers.

In desperation, he pleaded to the Kings, and asked for their forgiveness. They understood that Hercules had been under a curse, but being the just and understanding rulers that they were, they also knew that Hercules would never forgive himself unless first he was punished. They told Hercules exactly what he needed to do to atone to them and their lands, and conveniently it would rid them of several problematic monsters and kingdom issues in the process. There was a lot of admin that went into running a kingdom, and the Kings were running the nation from opposite sides of the lands, just to try to keep everything running! Once all 12 tasks were completed, they explained, Hercules would be forgiven.

"Are you sure that such simple tasks will help me atone for my mistake?" Hercules asked.

King Jayne answered, "Yes, if you complete these 12 labours, you can leave our lands and return to your home as a Hero and with our blessing". King Thibault thought this was an exceptionally clever plan, knowing that Hercules would have to face some of the worst foes the land had ever seen.

Hercules immediately accepted the challenge and left for Innilgard.

The Innilgard Beast was known to wield great strength on the battlefield. Some said it resembled a lion, while others argued it was stealthy as a squirrel. Some said it had razor sharp nails, while others stated that it was the beast's wit that was razor sharp! It had a glossy mane and a coat that could not be pierced by arrows! The Beast was wily and quick and it could not be caught in traps!

Everyone in Innilgard had come to respect the Beast, however many hunters had tried to kill it over time.

Hercules happened upon the Beast stalking amongst the town square. He drew his weapons and called out, "Hark, Beast! Submit to me!"

The Beast roared and rose to attack, it did not submit to anyone! Immediately the townspeople ran to try to assist. The Beast will surely kill this wayfarer, they thought, and that's a lot of paperwork.. The Beast was strong, but Hercules was stronger. They struggled and fought until eventually Hercules subdued the beast by clubbing it over the head.

"Woe is me!" cried the Beast, "can I not just go for a coffee in peace?"

Startled, Our Hero jumped back! The Beast was intelligent too! Hercules, being the quick thinker that he was, changed tactics. He managed to convince the Beast of the mercy of the Kings, and apologised that he had also thought them a dumb creature. The beast was so overcome with emotion (and had managed to have their latte during the discussion) that they were suddenly inspired to meet these Kings for themselves. Perhaps even to serve these rulers for the betterment of the kingdom.

With the cheers and farewells of the grateful people of Innilgard ringing in their ears, the Beast headed off to find the court and Our Hero headed along the coastline for his second task.

Hercules arrived in Politarchopolis ready to tackle the pre eminent monster in the town, the nine headed, slick talking politician who had been cursed to resemble a hydra. The hydra loomed over Hercules, all nine heads snapping and snarling vitriol at him. Hercules wasn't fazed. He looked the hydra dead in the eye and said, "You'll make a nice pair of period appropriate boots".

Hercules slashed and slashed, each of the monsters heads snapping at him. Becoming tired, he enlisted the help of the Gryphon of Politarchopolis. By flying on the Gyphons back, Hercules was able to swoop the Hydra and ultimately defeat the monster in a deathly fell, decapitating all nine heads at once. The curse lifted, the politician was able to return to his Baron and Baroness, Ysambart and Tigre, and beg their forgiveness for the harm he had caused.

With two labours down, Hercules decided to catch a ride with his new gryphon friend over to Krae Glas to capture their beautiful hind. There were many stags across the land, but Krae Glas had raised their hinds to reflect the youthfulness of their barony (no one asked what happened once the hinds reached a certain age). Their incredible beauty, their golden features, their remarkable speed – and that's just talking about their populace!

Hercules tried to catch a hind for a very long time, but the hinds, like their warriors, were just too fast for him. Hercules went then to Baron Jon Dai and Baroness Margie and pleaded with them for help. They, being fearsome fighters themselves and now resigned to a peaceful life, promised to help, but only if Hercules didn't injure the beautiful hind. They lent Hercules the heraldic golden shield of their Barony. With this, Hercules was able to dazzle and confuse the hind, just enough that he could momentarily capture it. He made the Baron and Baroness promise to tell the Kings of his exploits and that he had *technically* captured the hind, even though he could not present it to them. The nobles, being infinitely wise, advised the Kings of Hercules' exploits, and invited the Crown to visit Krae Glas to see the hinds in person instead.

Already exhausted having travelled across the country (because he hadn't logistically optimised this trip at all), Hercules set forth to Ynys Fawr, where he was to capture the wild Boar, affectionately

known to the townspeople as Oz, and bring him back to see the Kings. Boars can be smart, imposing and tough. The Ynys Fawr Boar was all these things, and that made him exceptionally dangerous. Hercules was forced to chase him up and over the mountains for almost a week before the creature stopped to have a salmon snack and Hercules was able to capture him. He was very happy he didn't have to kill the Boar, the tricky fellow had really made Herc quite fond of him.

By the time Our Hero had returned to the Kings, the boar was quite recovered, he snorted angrily and the Kings gave him a good telling off for trampling all over the countryside.

Hercules was thoroughly amused by this, and set off to River Haven in a happy mood. His mood however turned sour when he approached the River Haven castle. You see, River Haven was home to many sea horses, and the local Baron, Dimitrii Borodinskii, had taken to letting them take up residence in his castle stables. This might sound nice, but the Baron had not found anyone willing to help him clean the stables in many years. It was absolutely filthy. His wonderful wife, Baroness Josseline, bemoaned to Hercules that the most horrible smell permeated the whole Barony and their populace were leaving for the neighbouring peaceful barony of St Florian de la Riviere.

Hercules could tell that it would take a great deal of water to clean the stables. He used his mighty strength to reconfigure a branch of the local river that separated both River Haven and St Florian and use this water to rush through the stables and clean them out! It was a clever solution and he was done in just a few hours. The seahorses were washed back to sea, and the Baroness of River Haven was ecstatic at how sparkling and clean everything was.

The Baron of St Florian however, was fuming. He raged that water had been diverted from his mercantile barony. "How will our great Masters create our famous peach cider?" he ranted. And unfortunately, it was this incident that led to the rivalry between the two baronies, and the Great Northern War.

Hercules thought the whole incident was quite unfortunate, and with a cask of famous peach cider under his arm, he began the long trek to Aneala, just to put some distance between himself and the warring barons.

The Anealan birds were just plain nasty and the stuff of nightmares. The people in the Barony spent days and nights taking cover from the birds, and had been impacted by them for so long that they had even put the birds on their heraldry as a warning to those wanting to visit the area! The birds were huge, and when they soared across the barony, it was almost as if they experienced multiple eclipses each day when they blocked out the sun. They had pointed beaks and even sharper claws and they loved to look for anything and anyone they could attack.

By this time though, Hercules was in dire need of a nap, and all he could think of was how good those giant feathers would be for pillows. Enlisting the help of the College of St Basil, he set about in creating an archery range and using explosive arrows to shoot down each bird as they soared over head. Boom! Boom! When the last bird had fallen, the collegians and the townspeople rejoiced! There was much revelry and after a few ales, Hercules settled in for a nice nap, knowing that he had accomplished half his tasks and would soon be able to return home.

After a good, long rest, Hercules headed to Ildhafn where he had been entrusted to kill the Ildhafn Bull. Ildhafn, as we all know, means "fire harbour", It sparkled with sunshine and lovely people and having seen this beautiful harbour the bull had wandered out of the sea and intended to make his home there. The people of Ildhafn had initially celebrated the bull, admiring its silvery horns, its

snow white skin and its large soulful eyes. With time though, the bull was not content to just be admired, and had begun to cause havoc across the barony.

It wrecked destruction from one harbour to another, trampling across crops and houses. The people of Ildhafn were too polite to ask the bull to leave, so they were very happy to see Hercules arrive and entrusted the capture of the bull to him on the instruction that he shouldn't hurt it.

Hercules followed the bull across the land, eventually cornering it. The bull snorted and pawed at the earth and seeing his opportunity while the bull's head was down, Hercules quickly lassoed him in a very sensitive area.

The bull was so startled he didn't know what to do! Hercules was swift in tying his legs together and was able to carry the bull back to the harbour without further incident. The Ildhafn people were able to farewell the bull who travelled abroad, never to be seen in the lands again.

There was movement among Stormhold, for the word had passed around

That the Baron's finest colt had got away,

And had joined Diomedes mares – he was worth in gold 1000 pound,

So all the knights had gathered to the fray.

And Herc was there, mounted on a strong and sturdy beast,

He was something like a Clydesdale oversized,

With a touch of pure dragon - a thoroughbred at least,

And such are the horses of Stormhold prized.

So they went – they found the mares by the border of Krae Glas,

They raced away towards the mountain's brow,

And The Stormlord gave his orders, "Herc, go at them from the pass,

No use for fancy riding now".

When they reached the mountain's summit, even Hanbal took a pull,

It might well make the boldest hold their breath,

The wild hop scrub grew thickly, and the hidden ground was full,

Of hidden holes and any slip was death.

But the man from Far Olympus let the pony have his head,

And he swung his great-sword round and gave a cheer,

And he raced them down the mountain like a torrent down its bed,

While the others stood and watched in very fear.

He was right among the horses as they ate the Baron's men,  
And the knights upon the mountain standing mute,  
Saw him ply the great-sword fiercely, he was calm and he was zen,  
As he raced across the clearing in pursuit.

And he ran them single-handed till their sides were white with foam.  
Herc followed like a bloodhound on their track,  
Till they halted cowed and beaten, then he turned their heads for home,  
And alone and unassisted brought them back.

And where around the Stormhold the reed beds sweep and sway  
To the breezes, and the rolling plains are wide,  
The man from far Olympus is a household word today,  
And the knights all tell the tale of his ride.  
(my sincerest apologies to Lord Banjo of Patterson)

For his 9<sup>th</sup> labour, Hercules had to travel north again, thinking there had been enough time since the River Haven...incident.

The Barony of St Florian de la Riviere was known to be a peaceful and mercantile barony, creating wonderous clothing made from the very best textiles. They were also exceptionally adept at war. Their warriors travelled the kingdom, setting injustice right, rescuing gentles in distress and they were just generally really good citizens of Lochac who always paid their taxes on time.

Having visited St Florian in the past, the Kings had decided that it just wasn't fair to have so much creativeness, uniqueness, nerve and talent in the one Barony, and surmised that the Barony must be imbuing its clothing with magic and power. The Kings decreed that all of the warriors of Lochac should be able to access the clothing of the Barony and be as strong as the St Florian army. To prove that the Barony was using witchcraft, the Kings set Hercules the mission to return with a specific item of clothing – the girdle of the Baroness of St Florian de la Riviere!

The Baroness however was ambitious and wise. She knew that the warriors of her Barony just happened to be better than everyone else! She also knew that Hercules would be a handy ally in the next Great Northern War, so in the spirit of friendship, she willingly gave her girdle to Hercules to take back to the Kings! Being the tricky Baroness that she was though, she invited Hercules to a sparring practice with her best warriors (several of whom were already declared Heroes of Lochac!).

Hercules learnt many new skills from them and counted himself very lucky that he was able to leave the Barony unscathed.

With his new battle skills, Hercules travelled to Mordenvale, where he was to battle the three headed Grog giant. The Grog had three bodies and three heads. He was very mean and very strong, and each body wielded a different weapon.

The Grog had stolen a herd of cattle that was intended to feed the populace through winter and the Baron Thomas and Baroness Mildryth were determined to get it back. Hercules had to fight the Grog for hours! Finally, when the monster was exhausted, Hercules was able to herd the cattle and return them to their rightful owners.

The people of Mordenvale celebrated Hercules' victory and the nobility wished Hercules well as he set off for his 11<sup>th</sup> labour in Rowany.

The Golden Berries of Rowany were known throughout the kingdom, however no visitor to the Barony had ever seen them in person, leading some to believe that they didn't exist! Some thought that the Tree that Rowany had depicted on their heraldry was just a cruel joke to entice wayfarers to the Rowany festival where they would be plied with good drink and good food and generally bring tourism dollars to the fair barony.

Hercules searched for months for the berry tree. Every time he thought of giving up, he was told it was only "two weeks until festival" by a local. 'Surely they celebrate the Golden Berries at this wondrous Festival!' He thought. And so he stayed for weeks longer than he should have finding things to entertain himself as the days passed. He was so confused as to how time worked in the Barony as it was always "two weeks 'til festival!"

One day, as he pondered giving up on his mighty task, and having completed six chemises, three new outfits and repaired the hole in his tent, he realised that he was finally ready for the Rowany Festival.

As if by magic, right before him appeared a garden! This must be the place! Upon entering, Hercules sighted the famed Golden Berries! The Baron and Baroness of Rowany were there, and Baroness Juliana explained that the berry tree created a time loop for all those who visited the Barony. Only those who were truly ready for the festival would be able to find the legendary fruit!

Shaykh ibn Jelal gifted Hercules three of the fruit with his blessing to give them to the Kings, and Hercules was able to return to the court to be given his last labour. The Kings however, promptly returned the berries to Rowany – claiming that no mortal should be able to wield the power that they held and they were much better locked away.

Finally, Hercules embarked on his 12<sup>th</sup> and final labour. Cerberus, the three headed dog of the Underworld had gotten away from Hades! After a joyful romp through Lochac and the Known World, the unfortunate pup had realised that he was very far from home and it was almost time for dinner.

The naughty doggo had set off in generally the direction that he thought home was, ending up in one of the southern most baronies before deciding to settle in for a nap.

The people of Southron Gaard were exhausted when Hercules arrived! They had been working in shifts around the clock to ensure that Cerberus had been adequately patted, fed and walked and quite frankly, they had to get back to guarding the seas against foreign invaders which was a much easier job.

Hercules knew he had his work cut out for him in luring Cerberus home, however at this time, he came across Prince Radbot and Princess Katherine. Both of these noble leaders knew that they had a calling to serve, and they assisted Hercules in luring Cerberus with some of the region's tasty crayfish into a transportable crate.

Upon capturing Cerberus, Hercules realised that he wasn't able to transport the lumbering mutt back to the Underworld himself, so he invited his new friends along for the adventure. After finishing this final task, Hercules, Prince Radbot, and Princess Katherine headed to the mainland, where they regaled the court with stories of their visit to the Underworld. The Prince and Princess became so beloved by the people that the Kings in their wisdom asked them to stay awhile.

King Thibault and King Jayne, having ruled the kingdom for many years, were overjoyed to have solved so many of their outstanding issues so easily and with such little bloodshed. They knew that they were now in a position where they could pass along a secure and happy kingdom, and as they watched the Prince and Princess speaking with the populace, they knew that they had found some worthy candidates to serve the Kingdom in their stead.

With their blessing, Hercules was able to return to his home, having atoned for his earlier attack on the Kings. The Crown finalised their business with him by declaring him a Hero of Lochac, and decreed that his labours should be immortalised in a tale told to all citizens, young and old.

The mercantile Barony of St Florian de la Riviere, upon hearing this tale, took it upon themselves to embroider a great cloak, depicting the heroic deeds of Our Hero. The mighty warriors and talented artisans of the Barony imbued the cloak with creativity, strength, and wisdom. The humble Baron William and Baroness Lovet, along with their dedicated and talented populace then relaxed with a refreshing drink in their beautiful barony, knowing that they had tricked Hercules and kept any would-be invaders at bay from stealing their magic textiles and armour!

The End.

## **Hero Cloak Background:**

The recipient of the cloak is the warrior recognised as the bravest and most chivalric on the field of war as reported by the fighters and the archers to the Crown. This year the artisans of the mercantile Barony of St Florian have designed a cloak with a hero narrative on it, telling the story of Hercules and his 12 labours.

The story boards and cloak have been designed by Kathelyne Berghart and tell the epic tale of Hercules travelling the 12 baronies of Lochac to complete his tasks. Each piece was created and sewn individually and then appliqued onto the final piece.

The Latin quote on the collar, "Veni ut me pugnare quia heros sum" translates to "Come to fight me for I am a hero".

Kathelyne Berghart project managed the team and the main cloak was constructed and embroidered by Nicola de Coventre. Please see below of full list of contributors to the project.

## **Materials used:**

The wool fabric for the cloak has been kindly donated by Nicola de Coventre.

The embroidery threads were kindly donated by Acacia de Navarra, Master Drake Morgan, Baron William Montrose, Baronness Lovet Dangerus, Nesta verch Wyn and Nicola de Coventre.

## **Technique and Design:**

The original inspiration for the design came from the Malterer Hanging, produced in the Germanic states in 1310-1320. It was constructed on a linen ground, and embroidered using coloured wools, worked in Kloster stitch.

There are a series of panels telling the story of earthy love. We were especially interested in the panel depicting Samson fighting the Lion. The main stitch used on the rondels and heraldic shields is Klosterstich/Convent stitch. Each of these was worked on separately by individual embroiderers and then appliqued onto the main cloak. Some of the rondels were also passed around at fighter practices and arts and science classes so that many hands had sewn a stitch and embedded the fibres with courage, valor and spirit.

The design of the cloak took inspiration from period embroidery of 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century style figures.

Additional stitches used were stem stitch, split stitch, satin stitch and Bayeaux stitch.

## **Labours of Hercules and the Baronies depicted (Summary):**

1. Slay the Nemean Lion – Innilgard
2. Slay the nine headed Leraean Hydra – Polit
3. Capture the Ceryneian hind – Krae Glas
4. Capture the Erymanthian boar – Ynys Fawr



5. Clean the Augean stables in a single day – Riverhaven
6. Slay the Stymphalian birds – Aneala
7. Capture the Cretan Bull – Ildhafn
8. Steal the mares of Diomedes – Stormhold
9. Obtain the girdle of Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazon – St Florian de la Riviere
10. Obtain the cattle of the three bodied giant Geryon – Mordenvale
11. Steal three of the golden apples of the Hesperides – Rowany
12. Capture and bring back Cerberus – Southron Gaard

## **Artisans who worked on the project:**

### **Main cloak including vines, tree and wording.**

Nicola de Coventre (Nicola Boyd)

Nicola was also assisted by Acacia de Navarra (Chris D'Aquino) and others on the rondel borders during working bees.

### **Rondels:**

Innilgard Lion – Zofiya Rawina (Mariangela Osiecki Unitt)

Politarichopolis Hydra – Marget die Goldschmiedin (Anna- Margot Collins)

Krae Glas Hind – Kathelyne Berghart (Katie Babkoff)

Ynys Fawr Boar – Lilya bint Hizir (Rachel Hanwright)

Riverhaven Stables – Margarete Clare Engelhardt (Liza Leibbrant)

Anealan birds – Kathelyne Berghart (Katie Babkoff)

Ildhafn Bull – William Montrose and Lovet Dangerus (Luke and Victoria Davidson-Black)

Stormhold Mares – Yaroslava Solovei (Nadya Nekioudova)

St Florian de la Riviere – Acacia de Navarra (Chris D'Aquino)

Mordenvale Giant – Gregorius Thorvaldson (Golgol Digby)

Rowany Berries – Karen of Lewis and Nicola de Coventre (Karen Lewis and Nicola Boyd)

Southron Gaard Doggo Problem – Kamara Skleraina and Lilya bint Hizir (Stephanie Booth and Rachel Hanwright)

### **Shields**

Lochac – Acacia de Navarra (Chris D'Aquino)

Rowany - Kathelyne Berghart (Katie Babkoff)

Innilgard – Kathelyne Berghart (Katie Babkoff)

River Haven - Acacia de Navarra (Chris D'Aquino)

Aneala – Kathelyne Berghart and Lilya bint Hizir (Karen Lewis, Katie Babkoff and Rachel Hanwright)

Stormhold – Nesta verch Wyn (Tina Swindells)

Ynys Fawr – Kathelyne Berghart (Katie Babkoff)

Politarchopolis – Kathelyne Berghart (Katie Babkoff)

Southron Gaard – Kathelyne Berghart (Katie Babkoff)

St Florian de la Riviere - Nicola de Coventre and Acacia de Navarra (Nicola Boyd and Chris D'Aquino)

Ildhafn – Karen of Lewis (Karen Lewis)

Mordenvale - Nicola de Coventre and Acacia de Navarra (Nicola Boyd and Chris D'Aquino)

Krae Glas – Karen of Lewis and Acacia de Navarra (Karen Lewis and Chris D'Aquino)

**Additional Artisans Who imbued the Cloak with Power and Prowess:**

Barra Burnhardson (Steve Walsh)

Ianto van Diemen (Ian Vowles)

Jyoti Campbell

Ismena Gamel (Alison Carr)

Valentine Selbie (Jo Alley)

Leofric Willoughby's de Broke (Lee Laver)

Priya Naidu

King Jayne Hunter (Tashi Roberts)

Bain of St Florian (Jamie Baggaley)

Huguette de Saint Germain (Leisel Thomas)

Safiya bint 'Abd al-Shahid (Lauren Plant)

Gustaf Rikardsson (Brendon Neal)

## Appendix:

### Period Inspirations



Image (left): Extract from the Malterer Hanging, produced in 1310-1320, linen with wool thread. The hanging depicts the story of earthy love, taking inspiration from Samson and Delilah, Aristotle and Phyllis, Iwein and Laudine amongst others.

Image (left): Another example of Kloster stitch.

Image (below): The Malterer Hanging, 1310-1320. Inspiration panel for the Lochac Hero Cloak, "Samson and the Lion".





## Images of Cloak Creation



Top Left: The Cloak design by Kathelyne Berghart is drawn.

Top Right: The Rondels begin to be imbued with prowess from the warriors of the barony.

Below Left: Cloak Project Management in action at Arts and Sciences weekend.







## Images of Rondels Depicting the Labours Of Hercules



Top Left: The Nemean Lion



Top Right: The Poliochopolis Hydra

Bottom Left: The Hind of Kree Glas



Bottom Right: The Boar of Ynnys Fawr







Top Left: The stables of Riverhaven

Top Right: The birds of Aneala

Bottom Left: the bull of Ildhafn

Bottom Right: The mares of Stormhold







Top Left: The girdle of St Florian

Top Right: The Grog of Mordenvale

Bottom Left: The apples of Rowany

Bottom Right: The doggo dilemma of Southron Gaard

