

HAZN

Nomid Lomysz

June 9, 2026



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# Introduction

## Conventions

I am not, by far, a student of linguistics. For this reason, I'm compiling here what I *think* is a good typography for this document, so the reader would not be confused by any misuses of the symbols.

### Quotations

#### Titles

When I want to quote the actual name or title of a work like a movie, book or related, I will use this style:

⟨*Lupin III*⟩

#### Mannerism

When I want to express a mannerism or a peculiar quality, I will use this style:

‘fox-ish’

#### Text

When quoting literal text, unless it comes from a documented source, it will be presented like this:

“Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita”

### Authors

If it is the first time I'm quoting another author which is relevant to the context, it will be presented like this:

*Sir. Arthur Conan Doyle*

### Language

#### Orthography

When writing words in another language, unless the context is already in a prose, I will use this style:

“The actual word would be ⟨hazn⟩ without the final ⟨h⟩”

#### Transliteration

When transliterating another language in Latin characters, the resulting text will be presented like this:

⟨kitsune⟩

## Translation

When providing a translation from another language, I will mark the translated text in this way:

《fox》

Sometimes, both the original word and the translation will be provided inline, like this:

〈狐〉《fox》.

## Phonology

When I want to refer to a vague/acceptable phonology (as in ‘close enough’), I will use this notation:

/no'teɪʃən/

If I want to be more specific to a certain version (like a standardized one), I will use this notation:

[nəu'teɪʃən]

Instead, if I want to be very pedantic about the sounds (maybe because it's either relevant or I want to highlight it for some reason), I will use this:

[[z̥aɪ̯ŋ̚θ̚]]

## Premise

**This work** is an attempt to keep and share an organized documentation about one of my usually ambitious world-building projects, while also being at peace with a consistent version of it. The aim of this book is being fun to read and explore, while not necessarily being as realistic as possible; rather, *familiarity* (or the absence thereof) will be used as a narrative device, or at least I'll try to make it that way.

If I were to cite the most important inspirations that shaped me as an artist and world-builder, *J. R. R. Tolkien* would *not figure at all*. This is not a particular statement against the author, but more of a guide to contextualize my thought process and choices which may be different from Tolkien's.

**My first ever source of inspiration** has been *Tony Wolf* (pseudonym of *Antonio Lupatelli*), an amazing Italian illustrator and story-writer whose main inspirations were artists like *Gustaf Tenggren* and *Arthur Rackham*; you can tell from his works how ‘epic’ they feel especially when describing silly gnome wars with skunk-milk-extract grenades and wooden cork guns against fire-breathing small dragon-like dinosaurs, only to end the conflict with a huge Italian-style <tavolata><sup>1</sup> and a ‘pie-in-the-face’ fight. I would really advice reading these books and enjoy feeling like a child again. In his series <Le storie del bosco><sup>2</sup>, various folks (common animals, dinosaurs, gnomes, giants, ...) and their society exist with their own territory, culture and even language<sup>3</sup>, trying to leave together and sometimes resolving conflicts that end in wars. I was not aware about the existence of <Redwall> back then. Instead, I was obsessed with cartoons, and animals in particular (*thank you Tony*), which might explain the hundreds of <Geronimo Stilton> books I had in my room.

At the time, I was around 12, I watched a movie that would change me forever: <Miss Potter>. I did watch the awesome hand-painted <Peter Rabbit> old cartoon from 1992<sup>4</sup>, and I remember looking at it for the first time and exclaiming: «Yeah! That’s what I say: if you can draw that well, then just make cartoons!». Now, It wasn’t the quality, or the actors’ performances, but more the motivations and feelings that Beatrix showed towards her creations and paintings. That movie inspired me to finally draw my own characters and animals in their daily life in an environment that suited them. I used to watch a lot of ‘shōnen’ anime and western-style cartoons, so it was just obvious for me to try creating worlds similar to those, but less ‘power-driven’ and more ‘poetic’, maybe ‘philosophical’ or ‘symbolic’<sup>5</sup> if you want.

I was also a fan of <Indiana Jones>: mystery, symbolism, philosophy, adventure, all of it resonated with me. So, after many attempts at writing characters, I eventually created the *Hazn*.

<Hazn> is a word that comes from a silly history of research, initially looking for something that would sound **whimsical and mysterious**, just like the works I loved the most. Well, firstly, I had to design them. They actually came out by accident: I was trying to draw a giraffe’s head, but it looked nothing like a giraffe. So instead of throwing it away or erasing it, I actually liked it and created a whole new species just for it. The first name I gave them was a joke on the appearance of their first drawings, calling them <picrone> because they looked like a raccoon (which is <procione> in Italian) or a small weasel or mouse. I didn’t like it very much, so I tried to give those creatures a bit more dignity. They meant a lot for me, because I liked them so much I thought they had changed my destiny in some way. I used to be a very timid and somewhat depressed kid, so I identified with the idea of a small, predator but powerless if compared to others, little animal whose cuteness in appearance would not help them against their predators, the <kitao><sup>6</sup>, which instead were giant, 4 to 5 meters long blue foxes. «That’s just their *destiny*», I set in stone. Since Japanese likes to sound epic, I visited *Google Translate* on my Windows XP SP3 computer, and typed: <Destiny Mouse>. You see, although my mood wasn’t always solar, I liked the idea that even a tiny creature like a mouse<sup>7</sup> could be significant to its context: thanks to works like *John R. Dilworth’s <Courage the Cowardly Dog>*<sup>8</sup>, or *Don Bluth’s <The Secret of NIMH>*<sup>9</sup>, *Disney’s <The Rescuers>*<sup>10</sup>, and even the awesome <The Tale of Despereaux><sup>11</sup>, I understood that it is the environment and context that makes even the tiniest and improbable of creatures<sup>12</sup> relevant and impactful, even if the odds are against them or even if the impact is small, because no action at all would lead to no change at all, which is much worse than at least trying. The problem was that Google Translate gave me this as a translation: <運命のマウス> «unmē no mausu», which I then abbreviated to <unmau>. I didn’t know Japanese. So I couldn’t

<sup>1</sup> A traditional event where people, not necessarily family members, unite to enjoy a large good meal.

<sup>2</sup> Known in English as <The Woodland Folks>, which had even been adapted into anime by Japanese producer *Nippon Animation* (try looking for <ボスコアドベンチャー>).

<sup>3</sup> The appearing of which is customized to that particular culture and context, and even feature a ‘lingua franca’. There are pages in the books which display entire information in such languages.

<sup>4</sup> Just look at how good the drawings and animations were: [[The World of Peter Rabbit & Friends on YouTube](#)]

<sup>5</sup> It wasn’t actually intentional, I just felt it was right that way.

<sup>6</sup> From the contraction of Japanese words <青い狐> «ao kistune»: «blue fox». This is what the translator gave at the time to me, at least.

<sup>7</sup> I sadly didn’t know *Redwall* existed.

<sup>8</sup> Probably one of the best cartoons ever existed: a hero that fails is still a hero, but first of all is a person; the demons he faces do not *need* to be defeated.

<sup>9</sup> I’m aware it comes from *Robert C. O’Brien’s <Mrs. Frisby and the rats of NIMH>*, but I had only watched the movie.

<sup>10</sup> Again, I know it comes from *Margery Sharp’s* novels but I had only watched the movie.

<sup>11</sup> Which I only recently discovered it also comes from a novel, by *Kate DiCamillo*. This movie has been very inspiring to me, especially in the way it manages to play around the roles of ‘hero’ and ‘anti-hero’ while still presenting an intersecting parallel where the protagonists become each other’s ‘mentor’ and also inverting the monomyth for Roscuro (if you think about it, his actual ‘call to adventure’ comes only after *Despereaux*, who by the way, falls into a literal ‘abyss’, like, you can’t be more ‘hero’ in classical terms than that): to me this is genius writing.

<sup>12</sup> Am I right, *Fiver*? I highly recommend reading <Watership Down> by *Richard Adams*. It has been a great source of inspiration for me.

know what <マウス> 《mausu》 meant. Then, years later I would casually discover the truth and laugh very hard about it.

When I was 6, I started growing an interest towards software programming because one day, I noticed my father using *UltraEdit*<sup>13</sup> to write some *Javascript* and *PHP* code. I was so fascinated by the symbols that I took my own old *Toshiba Satellite Pro* laptop<sup>14</sup> with *Windows Millennium*, and tried to open... an *exe* file with *Notepad* to see its code. Of course, it was a mess of symbols and letters, but I was so fascinated by it that I kept trying to open more and more files, attempting to understand how they worked and what they did. By the age of 15 I was already fluent in about 7 different programming languages, that's why I decided to just use the <rot<sub>13</sub>><sup>15</sup> algorithm to *encode* the name of the species and see if it would give me something interesting: <unmau> became <haznh>. The last <h> was silent, so I just dropped it and ended up with <hazn>, pronounced like [ˈhɑːzɒn]. I liked it very much, also because it contained a hidden reference to the silly origins of the name.

When I started writing hazns, the characters were always seemingly ordinary in a world much bigger than them, so that they looked like small, powerless creatures, that had to struggle to survive and find their place in the world. Tragedy was a device I used a lot. So much so, that one of the first stories I wrote was about a hazn who died of fear after meeting a kitao. I called that story, <Gocce di Pioggia> 《Raindrops》. The reason is that I wanted to show that every soul, when the moment comes, is like a raindrop: it falls from the sky, waiting to hit a surface, defining its limits but also its shape. Death was never the point of the story, but more of a device to show how people can change after a traumatic event, and how they can find the strength to keep going even after losing everything<sup>16</sup>.

**The Hazn** characters themselves were not very developed in the beginning, being more of a concept that represented the point of view of a sad kid, but then they evolved into more complex and varied characters as I kept writing and drawing them while growing up. However, I wouldn't have attached any special traits to the species (apart from being mostly overdramatic) until I was a little older, in a time where I decided to take all my stories and give them more structure and polish.

I reworked the characters so that their lore wouldn't sound *too much dramatic* (unless the tragedy or behaviour of the character was actually functional to its development as a person), and found many ways to piece them together. One thing I love to do is to role-play as my character to understand them better, like being an actor and asking myself «would I, *name*, do this?», which by the way works better than «would *name* do this?» to me, because that way I don't just 'become the character': I **route** the plot. That's a subtlety, but I think it makes considerations and thought process more natural and believable, for me at least.

**The world** of the Hazn, <Sertox>, is a planet that was initially created as a host for other stories. I then decided it was well suited for Hazn to live because I didn't want to displace them too far from the other characters (this way I could have 'showcased' them more frequently, that's what I thought).

It went under many heavy modifications during time, as I developed the stories and the result has been carved out to the relevant parts. If you feel like Sertox looks incomplete, it probably is because it actually is. That's why I assigned the Hazn a whole region inside the area I used the most in the story, and linked them to the roots of 'Sertoxian' culture, giving them the privilege of being the very first sentient native species of the planet.

<sup>13</sup>An old software from the 90s for writing code. It was a powerful text editor back then.

<sup>14</sup>Which I still have, but sadly doesn't work anymore; it's one of those old briefcase-sized laptops.

<sup>15</sup>A Caesar's cipher where each letter is shifted in the alphabet by 13 positions, which is the exact middle of the English alphabet: if you shift by 13 positions again, it outputs the original string back.

<sup>16</sup>I was pretty dramatic as a kid.



## Part I

# The Windblowers of Destiny



# Chapter 1

## Geography

### 1.1 A very windy valley

About 3000 years ago, the first civilized Hazn tribes founded a small city in a wide windy valley called <Kuar> «tall-standing»<sup>1</sup>, so much windy in fact, that they had to build safe enclosures to be protected against dust, leaves and sometimes even falling trees. The valley is basin-shaped, surrounded in semi-circle by the Kuar mountains, which amplifies the winds during the season between autumn and winter, called <ćfs> «wind-iness», typical of Sertox's climate cycle.

### 1.2 Society

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<sup>1</sup>In ancient <Bregog>, the common language spoken by the majority of human locals in the region.



## Part II

# A Language for the Hazn



## Chapter 2

### Overview

One difficulty I had while designing the language, is dealing with *credibility*. Do I *need* to prefer **realism** or **fanciness**? I came to the conclusion that you can't 'just' have either, if my goal is to make them adhere to a *concept*, so it meant that I tried to actually have 'both' in a certain percentage.





## Chapter 3

# Phonetics

I am not by far a zoologist or student in any way, so I chose the sounds on the *IPA* table that I thought the Hazn would most likely use, and also added some quirky almost unpronounceable ones which humans cannot not easily produce if not by approximation, which is a nice little device for storywriting and the design of an intermediate language.

Because of that, standard transliteration rules have been created that approximate the actual sounds, which will be indicated by  $\llbracket X \rrbracket$  where ‘X’ will be the sound in question, mapped in Latin characters with conventions as defined in [section 3.1](#).

### 3.1 Conventions

Hazns can produce a wide variety of sounds, from ones similar to human’s, to more unfamiliar noises which need approximations. For instance, because their muzzle is longer than a human’s alveolar ridge, they can move the tongue in different ways and produce more articulated vocalizations.

#### 3.1.1 IPA Extensions for hazn people

Table 3.1: Articulations

| Name   | Notation                             | Description  |
|--------|--------------------------------------|--|
| HISSED | $\overset{\frown}{\text{h}}\text{h}$ | A quick, high-pitched modifier (like a weasel’s cry) that co-articulates with the preceding sound, creating an acute sibilant quality. Applied as: $\llbracket \text{h}^{\text{h}} \rrbracket$ |



## Part III

# Vocabulary and references



## Glossary

ćfs [ˈɟ̥ɸːs] — the windy season of strong winds and tornadoes, typical of the Kuar region in Bregogia, home to the first large Hazn society nearby the ancient city of Rǵb, once their capital. . 3