Jankan raiders through the screaming streets of mighty Alikornophis; as sure-footed, fearless Graa, I've hunted giant beasts in jungled Kugora; bearing the name of Vorschal I descended into the darkness under the earth and fought with the shambling horror of things that should have been long dead but walked like the living. All these and countless more have I been in my restless dreams.

. . . realities shaped by wild worlds . . .

Raised in the rain-swept cliffs of Ukkerndia, in the hut of an old anchorite woman named Tecuhnma, I spent the first seventeen years of my life among wet, rocky peaks, chasing after the shaggy, long-horned goats that cantered about the summits. Of my origin or parents I had no memory, the only knowledge of them given to me by Tecuhnma herself. She had told me how one day she found my mother, a light-haired Paleasian girl, half starved and delirious, wandering through the mountain passes and near to giving birth. There had been a raid upon one of the towns that lay at the feet of the mountains, and from which my mother had escaped.

My mother never regained her wits, and perished in the strain of bearing me. Thus I—as Gornam—grew like a half-wild beast; for a boy of my prodigious size and adventurous spirit was more than one old woman could fully rear. I hunted antelope with a stone-bladed knife and fished with my bare hands. Traversing the mountain crags at a full run was as simple for me as walking, and the soles of my feet were hard like leather. It was Tecuhnma who had given me the name Gornam, drawn from her own culture of the Balaskites, and it meant "Born of the Mountains", which she felt quite appropriate.

. . . and wild men

I fell in with a band of lawless brawlers, a group of roguish knaves who lived by their fists and their steel. The first day I proved my worth in a tavern fight was enough to win me a place amongst them, and from their leader, Thenno, did I receive my first sword. By Handor! The weight of that blade in my hand! I felt as though I could step out into