

The Travance Chronicle

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REPORT ON THE INVERTED TOWER

BY BRUNNER RUBICON

Our fighters and healers marched on the inverted tower. Chemical ooze stained the walls and the floor of the tower. Upon our entrance, the witch-hunters identified a number of undead which attacked us. One healer claimed she saw the figure of a spirit. We started inside, whipping vines pulling heroes into the open to be slain, and a number of our friends turned to enemies as the chemical ooze claimed them. Slowly we pushed the undead back, encroaching into a larger chamber.

Finally we reached a tree, underneath which was a strongbox, and a grave. The tree seemed to be the source of the ooze. Our wizard identified black strands in the weave of the tree, and the witchhunters attempted to purify the grave using our positive energies, but to no avail. One of our blades hung in the air, slowly spinning. We are attempting research on whose grave is in this area, and how to purge this negative energy. If you wish any more detail or have any more questions, send a private missive.

MYTH AND RUMOR

ANONYMOUS

Where does one become the other? Who is to say that they are so very different? When young, we're told stories - sometimes, somewhere in their past, these stories were truth. If more recent, they are merely stories, but if they bear the weight of age, these stories are myths. Legends. The outline that so many heroes of our Barony try to follow on their path the heroism and glory.

Why, then, is it so difficult to be a living myth? To act out the feats and impossible events held within the world of the past? The hyperbole of these stories lends to them an air of mystery, making us want to involve ourselves in some manner. We all wish to be part of a myth.

Yet, unbeknownst to many of us, quite often, we're part of myths in the making. Whether through heroic deeds or foolish mistakes, the stories told - nay,

the rumors - are the precursor to the myth. If a rumor is spread about a certain member of town, and no one puts end to it, that rumor could become a part of their larger story. It could become part of our Barony's myth, in fact. A rumor is the foundation for the impossible, improbable, unlikely, or uncertain. If these go untended and left to spread as they will, the reputations of individuals, groups, or the town itself could be affected.

Often, this is good. The myth of Travance based on the rumors of our actions has spread far enough that many seeking refuge have come to our doorstep and found aid, food, and friends. The myths told of our actions may be spoken loudly and with zeal, a testimony to enduring strength, loyalty, and will-power. There is, however, the other side of every coin. The way that claims and rumors can twist or alter a person's reputation, the way that hearing things, even those we know could not be true, can give us pause, and shake our faith in the things we know. It is these secondary ramifications of rumors that may lead us down ever-winding paths. These are the rumors that can lead to executions without trial, that lead to dissent within a land, that turn friend against friend. As a beacon of hope, and the builders of myths, I ask that each person consider the words they pass from one mouth to another's ear. This game was called "Rumor Vine" when I was a child - we are no longer children, and games such as this can ruin lives. I caution all of us to be wary of the things they say, and what myths may be altered or grown from our words.

There is something about hearing people complain
About the falling of an afternoon rain
With their tabards and tunics covered in blood
And their well-worn boots all spattered with mud

-Nalick

ONE HAND CLAPPING: THE HEART OF IRON

BY IMRAHIL

Hello again brothers and sisters. I would like to speak to you today about a legend carried through the ages by my forebears. I have seen many in Travance that bear the trait it references, and yet more who misunderstand those that bear it. The name of the man in question has been lost to the flow of eternity, but the story bears its continuing relevance.

In the time before men forged steel and their horses remained bare-backed, there was a widowed father of eleven. He toiled all his days, yet remained without riches. He remained happy to have his livelihood and family. When a typhoon took his modest stone home, he relocated his family to a flimsy yurt constructed of the sinew, pelts and bones of his perished camels. He remained happy to have his livelihood and family, but let the loss of his sturdy home bear no mind.

As the meat ran out, he dug a channel to irrigate a modest crop. When the sandstorm scoured his crop clean and drought dried his channel, he trained his eight sons to hunt, and his three daughters to forage. He remained happy to have his livelihood and family, but let the loss of his home and stock bear no mind.

When the war with the northern Barbarian Horsemen came, and the Emperor claimed his sons as soldiers and daughters as concubines, he retreated to a cliffside cave. Here he lived on locusts cooked over a

guano fire, and water squeezed from cave lichen. While he was pained to not know the fate of his family, he remained happy to have his livelihood.

When the continued smoke drove the bats and locusts to other caves, the man wandered, gathering his sustenance from the occasional tuber and cactus. He missed his home. His stock. His crops. His children. He wondered whether he was a grandfather. Still he continued on. He was half buried in sand; gaunt and withered when he was found by a long ago acolyte of the very monastery in which I was made a man. This acolyte carried him many miles, and put water between his parched lips enough to tell his tale.

The acolyte was in tears before long, but the wizened man continued undeterred. The acolyte implored "What kind of aberration must you be, to remain unmoved by these tragedies?" The old man's response gave the acolyte pause: "Is it an aberration to know when one has no power to change what has transpired? Make no mistake, my heart is broken, but my will is retained." The acolyte, stunned into silence, contained his sorrow and meditated on the mantras as the man died.

I have seen many in Travance mistake stoicism for being cold and unfeeling. This could not be further from the truth. To be stoic is to feel deeply, but to understand when something is beyond one's control. Be not so fast to condemn another, brothers and sisters, for you know not what another has endured, as they most certainly do not know what you have endured.



DIRE BEAR BY CYNDRA STAGSBLOOD

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Interested in writing for the Chronicle? Contact the editor at the Feast or send a message to the Chronicle offices in Pendarvin.

BURDEN

BY CANDLE OF SHADOW

This is a legend that was told to me when I was young. Many generations ago, in the days of the third generation of Bedouins, there was a man. This man had spent every waking moment of his life dedicated to the study of heat and fire magics. He would spend days, even weeks, just laying out in the sun to feel closer to the great heat. He surrounded himself with fire at all times. He was left to his own workings because nobody, not even his family, could get him off the trail he had set for himself. Everyone thought this path would kill him. However, he kept at his routine of meditation surrounded by fire at night and meditating in the hot sun by day.

After three years during which he did not move from that one spot, he finally passed out from the heat, but he did not die. When he awoke that night he found his skin to be aglow like a roaring fire, and the brightest of flames to be nothing to him. In his quest to understand fire magic he had become a being of pure fire in a coat of human flesh. However, when he returned to his wife he found she was gone, taken from the world while he was meditating. He had no heir to his blood and dared not find a new wife. It was only too late he realized his quest for power had taken away the only woman he loved. He by far had the strongest fire magic in his generation and there was not a soul alive who would dare challenge him, but without his love there was little point in it.

Stricken with grief he wandered the deserts until he finally discovered a red gem of perfect quality. To punish himself, he shed his blood upon the gem and entrapped within it all of his fire, destroying himself in the process. To this day that gem remains, containing an eternal flame of a man's devotion to his work, but also the pain and sorrow of the sacrifice he could not bare.

THE WOLF OF DEATH

BY GRIMKJELL EIRSON

This is the story of the first ulfhednar and Morkai, the wolf of death. Long ago, in the north, it was said that the sons of men first walked the crows' road, fighting on fields of white turned red with copper and iron, before they understood steel. With them was the wolf that walks, Morkai. He tasted blood and hatred in the air, and he found it good.

The men of the north are hard men, and blades will often serve us when words do not, so

Morkai grew fat on the battles that we fought. One day, he decided he had eaten enough, and in his gratitude for the meals he had been fed he called the warchiefs of the north to him.

And the wolf that walks said, "Hja, you Thanes and Carls that have come before me, I have a gift for you. As you have fed me with your blood and rage, now I shall return it to you. Drink from this cup, and understand the fury of battle in a way that you have not before. Put on the skins of my sons, and bring your claws of iron with you, and you will be the greatest beast of all when the war-hymns sound from the throats of the skalds."

The warchiefs of the north looked upon this black wolf, crimson-muzzled and huge from years of walking with war, and knew his strength. They looked to the cup, brimming with blood, and nodded. Some went forward, others did not, but those that did drank deeply of the rages, and took up the wolfskins, and became the first ulfhednar. These blood-drinking sons of Morkai spread out amongst the north, reaving and fighting as they went, fighting individually or more commonly in packs of rage driven murder-makes. They spread across the land like a tide of red and black and left behind them only shattered war-ice and burning longhouses. Thus the red road was for the first time fully realized, and our rage ignited.

And Morkai smiled. To the Deathwolf, this was good. In time men learned to channel their rages and let the red dream fall on them without the help of wolfskins and his blood, and taught each other this trick. His legacy continues even now, far after the great Deathwolf has decided to walk the path of the spirits.

Morkai watches us still, in various guises, calling his own out of every generation. Those with the greatest anger, those that can enter the red dream. They are mighty heroes, or fell destroyers, or simply men who are troubled by the rage that they cannot stave off. We have been forever marked by his blood, and his teachings. It can be a gift from Morkai, or a curse. It is entirely up to man how he walks the red road. It is the essence of wyrd, which I have mentioned before, for the threads of the fates are strained and snapped in battle, and stories come to their end in such a place. If you walk with Morkai, if you are ulfhednar, if your boots find the red road, ask yourself this, and this alone: "How will I face the red dream? Will I use it for good or ill?" Morkai cares not. But you may, so I suggest that you choose carefully, for his blessing and curse are a mighty weight.

THE TRUTH WITHIN MYTHS

BY JACK DIMMS

I have heard more than my share of myths in my time
Ones that bring solace and ones of true horrors and
crime
Ones of valor, ones of change
I have even heard myths that use my name
Myths can be dark, sad, even funny
Like the one of Jack Dimms dying to a horde of
bunnies
But within myths lies few words of truth
And the Skalds up north rarely find these of use
The truth is a much stronger tool
It could even bring respect to others who were once
called fools
Though myths are brilliant shining lights
Made to give inspiration to those who lack the will to
fight
To those who are downtrodden and feel the sting of
time
Creeping on them like how the stars align
Find time to enjoy myths, but in your mind know truth
For the ability to see what is real will always ring true



THE DREAM SERPENT

BY BRUNNER RUBICON

This is a far-away tale of the creation of the world my mother told me a long, long time ago. In the beginning, a great serpent rose from the depths of Arawyn with scales the colors of the rainbow. Her name was the dream serpent. She crept through the caves and crags of Arawyn, creating the rivers and the lakes, the oasis and the valleys and reservoirs. She summoned a huge number of Nyads, who she tickled with her tail, and they laughed, filling the rivers and lakes with water.

She came across two primeval elementals, which she swallowed. Their energies merged inside her, and upset her tummy. She began vomiting out all the races of the world: the Satyrs, the Barbarians and Celts, the Kormyrians and the Jaxuarrians. Even the goblins and ogres came from her. She also vomited out the insects and animals. After that almighty purge, Valos granted her pity, and set her in the sky as three bright stars in a row, with her giant coils turning around them.

Thus was created the world of Arawyn, and her occupants.

Call for Assistance

Due to unfortunate circumstances, I have a need to replace many of my items. I am seeking the following in particular: please contact me if you can provide any of these items and we'll discuss pricing, particularly for commissions.

- Elemental or alchemical essences (water, earth, fire, air, plant, and bestial)
- Greater Weave essences
- Socketed items—I am willing to buy premade or speak with someone about commissioning these
- Runes—those that allow additional uses of a skill and those allow one to better soak damage done to them
- Units of wutchwood—enough to craft a staff
- Units of crystal
- Units of fire drake scales

I will be in Travance Proper through early Sunday, around 6 in the morning, if anyone wishes to approach me about a sale. I am also happy to trade alchemical items.

Many thanks to all of my kind friends in the Proper!

-Meander Correlis, Londwyn Ambassador

DON KELLARD BY CYNDRA STAGSBLOOD