

The Travance Chronicle

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CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP

BY AMBASSADOR MEANDER CORRELIS

In a startling turn of events, Sir Ardin Silverbow and Sir Gideon Weaveforger gave up their power as mages during the July Baronial Feast to acquire the missing piece needed for the ritual that brought the world out of its accursed time loop. Sir Silverbow subsequently resigned as Guildmaster of the Mage's Guild. Afterwards, Count Everest announced that Sir Weaveforger would be leaving Pendarvin as Knight Protector to become Knight Protector of Kaladonia; Sir Silverbow would be taking Sir Weaveforger's place as Knight Protector of Pendarvin. Both appointments were made with the intent that both Knight Protectors would, in time, become lords of their respective lands.

Sir Silverbow admitted to being surprised by the Count's offer, expecting to "become a regular subject" after stepping down as Guildmaster. However, Sir Silverbow seems ready to take on the "mantle of leadership." His current priorities are ensuring that Pendarvin makes a full recovery from the ravages of the demon war, including seeing that the sick have proper care, and that the settlements are kept in good repair. In the long term, Pendarvin's Knight Protector intends to see the land become more productive, and has continued the work started by Sir Weaveforger of defense of the land and increased education amongst the settlements. On a more personal note, Sir Silverbow wishes to learn more about the cultures of the people of the land, mainly Pendarvin's large Northermen and Dwarven populations, so that he can "rule in their best interests."

Sir Gideon Weaveforger believes that the switch in positions is a good one. The new Knight Protector of Kaladonia stated, "In the end, the personalities of each Knight Protector is best suited for their respective lands," citing his close relationship with many of those in Kaladonia as well as Sir Silverbow's long-standing alliance with Edwin Haroldson, current Viceroy of Pendarvin. Former Knight Protector of Kaladonia, Sir Anhil Shadesar, expressed his excitement to have Sir Weaveforger as the new Knight Protector, sure that he will be a great asset in helping to settle the large numbers of elven refugees in Kaladonia since the end of the demon war.

DEMONIC POSSESSION IN THE INVERTED TOWER

BY DR. TOBIAS ARMITAGE

I have never been so terrified of a shimmer in the air. It was a fundamental wrongness, a logical impossibility, that made me think someone was walking where nothing appeared to be. I screamed out to my comrades, "He's here! Here!" The figure shifted and took a step toward me, and then another, and I was certain that contained there was the necromancer we had come to stop.

This was my experience upon the July expedition to the Inverted Tower. Upon our arrival, we could not reach the entrance, and were instead greeted by necromantic horror: walls dripping with poison and foulness, and a man working his dark magics upon a skeletal construct of some kind. Some of our party seemed distracted, as if they were hearing voices in the air. But the true horror did not manifest until we confronted the man, and his true nature became apparent. In addition to practicing necromancy, by the horns on his head he seemed at least unaware and at most eager to be possessed by a demon. A battle ensued, and I was appalled by some of the rotting wounds I had to deal with. Late in the battle I had my 'close encounter', as described above. Shortly thereafter, the Necromancer became visible again and appeared to grapple with something immaterial. He was promptly struck a dozen times before vanishing in a burst of light.

I cannot be certain this was the end of this threat. However, I am adamant that all should be warned. There can be no doubt that demonic malevolence is foremost among the blights upon Travance. While this issue of The Chronicle may speak of the difference between choices and fate, there are those who are possessed by demonic influence that have had this choice taken from them - we saw some of them in town this past Feast. Far fouler than they are those who fall willingly, whose appetites match that of demons: endlessly cruel, indiscriminate, and impossible to sate. If you encounter those who appear to be within the grips of demonic madness, I urge you turn to the guard and, if it is possible, subdue and capture them. For those who have willingly given up their humanity, show no restraint. I fear in those sorts there is nothing left to be healed.

LORE OF THE NORTHMEN: WYRD

BY GRIMKJELL EIRSON

The question of Fate, or Wyrd, for a Northman is one of particular weight to us. A godi casts the stones when we are born, and determines to some extent what our wyrd will be. We can choose to accept it, defy it, or simply question it. Since the gods provide it, I choose to embrace wyrd, where others may choose to defy it to save lives, or for more selfish reasons. To defy Fate most often means taking the burden of their fate on your own, and that is a heavy burden indeed. There are some in the north who regard defying fate as heresy against the gods themselves, for they are the ones that decree a man's paths, including how his thread will run out.

I knew such a man, once. He defied fate to save the life of another, and paid a heavy price for it. I cannot steal his story, for only he or a skald will tell it, but I if any in Travance speaks in the future as a Herald of the Fates, you should listen, for the wyrds they speak of are true. I will say only that his thread runs still, and he protects many others with his actions to this day.

But even for a Northman, sometimes wyrd must change. We were fated to die to the wrath of Xualla and Balfurous, and yet through our own bonds, our strength, and by pleading with the Fates themselves, we managed to forestall the end-winter for another year, and perhaps more. Our world was withered and harrowed but it endures still, a testament to our ability to change fate, if we sacrifice enough.

And yet for some of us our fate is to sacrifice, and to rise above what we were, to become something more. So it was with the Baroness. The Heargen will remember her, and honor her, as long as those who have witnessed her deeds and benefited from the wisdom of her rule draw breath, this I swear on my honor. She followed her wyrd to the very end, and accepted it. I was proud to hear her final song, and to see that it was in her name that we triumphed in the battle against the Hollow Song.

It is the right and place of every person in the world to question their fate, and their wyrd. Though some of us know more of ours than others, even the most elaborate rune-casting at the birth of a child can mean many things, and we will never truly know our wyrd until it comes upon us in the fullness of time, until our thread is cut, or we become something more, or sometimes even both happen at the same time. I counsel only that once you know your fate, that you embrace it as best you can. Follow your road to the end, become it, and transcend it. The only way that wyrd will

change is when you have been changed by it first.

Fate is hope, in a way. A destination for our tired bones to move towards, a camp-fire in the cold night on the ice. Pursue your wyrd, pursue your fate, and become what you should be, and then, if you can, become what you want to be.

ONE HAND CLAPPING: TRUTH OF THE NOW

BY IMRAHIL

The past is an illusion
The future a lie
Both obscure the truth of now

While both certainly exist
They do so not here
And lead us only astray

To move past this quandary
We must observe truth
Now is what we are given

The dark Hollow Song knew well
The failure of time
Fooled us with a month-long-day

But they shall be those bereft
When we rise above
And seize the now as our own

FATE VS. DESTINY; FACT VS. FICTION

BY ALEXANDER SILVERS

During some of the philosophical discussions held during my free time it has been stated that the terms fate and destiny are interchangeable. This is untrue. Observe the following example taken from one of my statements during the war:

"Let me tell you something about destiny, Captain. Destiny is waking up one morning to voices in your head and realizing one day you might go crazy. There is no might here, sir. There are less than five of us left, we are lost in the northern mountains, and its starting to snow: you will die, it's fate."

Although difficult destiny, once ascertained, can be changed to a degree without repercussions, in the case of fate not only do all elements of a situation direct said situation toward a certain outcome, but the repercussions of a forced alteration of fate leads to temporal instability which will inevitably force the dictated outcome.

How a case is deemed fate or destiny, who is to say. Personally I like to think there is a council of monkeys hiding among the clouds with case files on their desks debating the allocation of each case every time there is a thunderstorm, and mages who make use of lightning are really harnessing the power of angry monkeys. Then I realize that it's just the work of the voices in my head giving me strange ideas and demonstrate my sanity by loudly arguing with myself.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

The King of Kormyre has instituted a new system of writs to be issued to those followers of the Dark arts who will be allowed to continue practicing them. Count Winterdark had stated that he would hand the Writs out on Sunday morning of this past Feast, and "not five minutes later, while it was still Saturday night, someone claimed to have one. The forgery was blatant and the Count himself acknowledged it was not his writing. He showed leniency by allowing the bearers to walk away with their lives, and did not charge them with an act of Forgery. A reminder to any who try to forge such a thing that not only is such an act a crime, but you are drawing the attention of Count Winterdark by doing so, and he is not likely to be as lenient next time." -Sir Gideon Weaveforger

THE DAWN

BY SWYFT GLITTERLEAF

There is power in intention; most especially intention for Good.

Even though Evil tends to be very persistent, Goodness has incomprehensible endurance. It can stand, unaffected, like a rock amidst the swirling chaos of a storm. Being of this nature, Goodness has the fortitude to reach into that storm if it chooses; to withstand and endure for the sake of the retrieval of its Light that may have become lost and confused within.

This is because the Light inside of us can never be extinguished. Not even in the darkest of hearts, where the Light flickers still, but the raging storm dims and silences it.

It is cruelty, misfortune and abandonment of hope that birth these storms. When one loses hope, one turns away from the Light within themselves, for they lose their faith in its power. It is too easy to become engulfed in a cycle of fear, pain and distrust. These are unfortunate variables of life and some of us are tested more severely than others.

It is for this reason that we must choose to shine our Light against the encroaching darkness, so that it may not devour those whose Light shines less brightly than our own. We must shine so that it may act as a beacon for those who think they have fallen too far into the darkness to ever see Light again. We must act as a reminder that no one is beyond hope. After all, is it not said that the night is darkest before the dawn?

They call us "heroes" in Travance. These accolades should be accepted with responsibility. We must remember not to strike in hatred or anger for then we, too, have allowed our Light to be dimmed. We must exhibit patience and honesty. We must seek to bring laughter before anger and joy before fear. Levity in spirit is delightfully contagious to all creatures, no matter their godly alignment.

We must BE the dawn, rising faithfully each day to shine our Light upon those we encounter.

THE THREADS OF LIFE AND THEIR CONNECTIONS

BY AMBASSADOR MEANDER CORRELIS

What draws us to the people that we meet?
Are friendships more coincidence than fact?
Is there some pow'r that waits and lies discreet,
That makes our personalities attract?

Could I have wrought such magic on my own;
Could something else have brought me to this place?
Are my decisions made by me alone
Or was it fate, who leaves no ling'ring trace?

Perhaps the influence of fate was in
My forceful urge to leave my town and roam.
Like some great cosmic weaver, pulling strings,
Fate pulled the ones that led to a new home,

To those who love me and have helped me learn,
As I have loved and helped them in return.

FIRE IN THE INN; FEAST DELAYED

BY T. HEWITT EVERETT KIDD

Three young fire imps attempted to set fire to the Dragon's Claw Inn while Aella was preparing lunch during the June Baronial Feast. It was the good fortune of Jonas Kane and the bad luck of the imps that Master Haroldson happened to be at the rear door of the Kitchen at the time they manifested in the grill.

Exactly what Haroldson did is unclear, but wit-

nesses say he spoke some words and gestured with his hands, from which a gust of cold air came, instantly enveloping the imps which were seen to explode and disappear in a cloud of noxious dust. The dust was determined to be poisonous. The Baronial Feast was late and made on the fly, but was still delicious.

GILES

BY A.C. GOGGINS

Whilst poking around in the Reliquary a few weeks ago, I had the good fortune to stumble across something really rather extraordinary. Indeed, not "something", but "someone" - a hulking stone figure, the shape of a man, but larger, and in possession of a profile altogether more rectilinear than the average Crownhurst gentleman. Its movements were deliberate and measured, and as it swung its weighty fist into my jaw, I couldn't help but marvel at the precision with which each of its gestures was accomplished: there was character in its motions, and yet nothing was wasted.

Efficient, yet artful, and truly a thing to behold. Once it had been bludgeoned into submission, it took no fewer than four of us (and one of Miss Correlis' extra-potency strength tonics) to drag it back to the Armoury, after which I remember having to sit down for a good few minutes while the buzzing subsided from my hearing.

The dim glow of the Armoury forge revealed the figure to be a construction known locally as a "golem": a mechanical representation of a humanoid, normally constructed for defensive purposes. Babinsky's "Mechanical Studies in the Ancient World" (Crownurst Press, 1195) will inform us that a number were constructed for other miscellaneous tasks, including (but not limited to) the preparation of meals, garden maintenance, "evening companionship", and one notable example whose sole purpose appears to have been to remind its owner's husband to put down the lavatory seat. The heavy armour plating and fearsome glaive-like protrusions seemed to indicate that the example slumped before us was intended for martial purposes: over the past few weeks, I have taken to calling him Giles, and have developed quite a liking for the fellow.

Being witness to an ancient mechanical marvel is thought-provoking on a number of levels, but one that may be of particular interest to you, reader: what is it that sets us apart from Giles here? We'd like to say that we differ from he, for where he has only one prescribed goal, we have many, and can do as we will - but, on reflection, are we not the same as he, but simply possessing a more elaborate set of motivations and goals? Where Giles is constructed to maim and dismember unwelcome visitors to the Reliquary, we are constructed to eat when

we are low on fuel, to sleep when we are in need of maintenance, to flee when we are presented with the possibility of being maimed and dismembered by a hulking artificial man. Our function is much larger and more sophisticated than that of Giles, but no less prescriptive.

The Kornyrian interpretation of Fate appears to maintain at its core the axiom that a person can exist for a fixed, defined reason - such as to help protect the Prime Material Plane, or defend the Weave, or similar. One has to wonder whether this is nothing more than a primitive expression of the same concepts we have discussed here: an attempt to grasp at the intuitive notion that we are not perhaps as autonomous as we'd like to think.

And yet, even if we accept all this, and conclude that we ourselves are merely smaller versions of Giles equipped with softer extremities and more elaborate plumbing, we do still maintain one key difference: at some point in his inception, someone was tasked with giving Giles his function. Who then, dear reader, was tasked with giving us ours?

TIME LOOP MENDED

BY LOIS MAXWELL

Many of us in Travance noticed that after the June Feast, our days repeated the events of the prior Saturday over and over.

This was caused by a curse placed upon the world when Cymoril, the fallen Lorestri and first member of the Hollow Song, perished in the events of Saturday night.

The Lorestri are time-travelling bards who guard the timestream from interference. Our own Baroness, Mixolydia Hartwoode, joined their ranks that fateful night.

In order to reverse the curse, Travance needed the assistance of a traveler from beneath the deserts: Seraver of the Visraki, a race of people with a connection to the Weave even stronger than that of Quinarians. Mystical components were gathered, and a ritual performed that allowed time to catch up as normal.

This was not without great loss and sacrifice, however. Eralynn, one of the last remaining Lorestri, had to give her own life in trade to bring back another with the knowledge to set Travance on the right path. Sir Weave-forgers and Sir Silverbow gave up their connection to the Weave in order to gain one of the items needed for the ritual.

The timestream has been corrected, and most of the world is unaware that anything even happened. It falls to us to remember what was given to set the world right again. Without them, we would be trapped in that endless Saturday until time itself was no more.