

The Travance Chronicle

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"If it bleeds, it leads."

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CONCERNING THE CORRECTION AND PROPER GUIDANCE OF UNRULY TREES AND SHRUBS

BY *CYNDRA STAGSBLOOD*

Many horticulturists, plant enthusiasts, and common gardeners often think it is the application of proper watering, ample sunlight and breeding selection that creates the proper form and shape of our best pageant plants, but is the correct guidance and proper application of pruning that separates the amateur gardener from the skilled artisan.

Common mistakes of the inexperienced grower include (but are not always limited to)

Pruning only the fresh (and seemingly most unruly) ends of the plant:

When in reality, it is the swift and confident control of the larger branches that extend too far, and interfere with the surrounding aesthetics. Leave only the core supporting branch by trimming all others to the trunk, so that you are left with the structure, but no unruly overgrowth to ruin your project.

Allowing trees to determine their own direction of growth:

Which only leads to ragged, unsettling, and possibly intrusive developments. Proper equipment is required for the management of trees of this sort. Stakes made of a sturdy metal, and fine rope can help coax the sapling into a more proper and manageable form. Affix the sturdiest structure of the tree to the stake, binding it with cloth or hempen rope, being careful not to chafe or slice the bark. Gradually tightening the cloth or rope will guide the plant to its more desirable presentation.

In summary, plants of many types are often overlooked for their strength and resilience but with precision, study, and the proper application of amply sharpened sheers, it is possible for the simple hobbyist to cultivate a garden of their own artistic design.

Editor-in-Chief: Amizar Wuzwhir
Assistant Editor: Lois Maxwell
Corner Owls: Cyndra Stagsblood
Maze Artwork: Sarah Strachleigh

PITY THE ROSE

BY *AMBASSADOR MEANDER CORRELIS*

Pity the rose
That bursts in bloom
Before it sprouts its thorns.

The rose that blooms
With sweet perfume
To comfort when it mourns.

For beauty sweet is coveted;
For those who speak of love, it did
Get plucked before its time, now dead.
So here it sits, and warns.

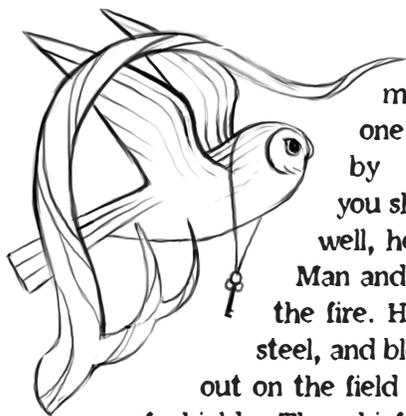
LORE OF THE NORTHMEN: GUIDANCE

BY *GRIMKJELL EIRSON*

Guidance in the North comes from four places. It comes from the land itself, which speaks if you pay attention to it. It comes from your Chief. It comes from your Gothi, who speaks to the spirits and intercedes on your behalf. Last it comes from the Skald, who remembers the tales of times before. I will address each in turn, and how best to learn from them.

The land is the most subtle teacher, and in many ways the one who you must learn from first. The land teaches you to live. Water feeds the plant. Deer eats the plant, you hunt the deer and eat it. It teaches you about connections, how to stay warm and alive. The lessons are the harshest, for while a Chief or a Godi may punish you for not listening, the land itself will kill you dead, and it won't be a death on the red road. It will be simply the slow face of death, starvation or cold out on the ice. In Travance, the land is a gentler teacher, but I recommend you walk the paths alone when times are quiet, and you believe you will be safe. It will help focus your mind, and let you stand closer to the act of living, something forgot so often in the long houses, amongst books, and magic, and the subtle games of words that so many play.

The Chief as teacher and guide is the one who will



make your arm strong, the one who makes you into a Carl by arming and training you. If you shed enough blood and listen well, he will raise you to a named Man and you will sit close to him at the fire. His lessons are those of fire, steel, and blood, and they all are played out on the field of ravens, and in the circle of shields. The chief is by nature the loudest teacher, and least subtle, but in many ways the least dangerous to you. His goal is for your tribe to win, and as such, keep as many of you alive as he can. Even so, a good chief must be ruthless at times, for a man has to be realistic about these things. But the danger will be facing you, and it will be one you face with war-ice in hand: the hot death of a murder make, not the cold death in the night.

The Gothi is often the hardest guide to understand, for his words will be riddles and prophecy, but on his pronouncements your wyrd turns, so listen well. His words are those of the spirits, the gods, and Arawyn itself, depending on the kind of Gothi, but they are often cloaked, for such things are powerful, wise, and their secrets are hard won. As guides, they will be dangerous to you if you misinterpret what they say, which is easy enough. So listen closely, and examine every word well, and you will fulfill your wyrd, no matter what road you walk.

The last teacher is the Skald, the singer of songs in the firelight, the teller of tales, the rememberer. He is the bridge between the past, and the future. His songs will endure after you sleep on the red snow, after you have gone back to the mud, and his songs will allow you see times before even your father's father walked the ice. His lessons are found in the tales of victory and defeat of those who lived before. Their follies and their struggles, their victories and deaths. Though the bards will often drink too much mjod and make the stories more elaborate, the truth that undergirds each story, that chance to recognize the failures of others and correct it, is the lesson you should learn from them. Respect the Skald, and spare them in battle, for even the skald of a foe will sing your songs, and if you treat them ill, the songs will be bad, and you will look a stupid and cruel pig. Be generous, and you will be a hero, and perhaps better than you were in life, by the account of the Skald.

Remember and honor these teachers, and you just might live long enough to have an account worth telling.

GUIDING SOUL

BY HAZEL STORM

A gentle hand, a loving touch guiding you along the way.

They can be harsh but they do know what they are doing.

You do not always agree and you will sometimes walk away.

They always welcome you back with open arms no matter what you have done.

Never forget them and always remember what they have taught you they are always there in the wings

Though they may disappear from these lands they will always be a guiding spirit along the way.

A LESSON IN LESSONS

BY ALEXANDER WILHELM SILVERS IV

As a fairly (or was it barely, it doesn't really matter) qualified instructor, I have deemed that a trainee should receive the following benefits from a proper lesson: acute to minor psychological trauma and the ability to inflict psychological trauma on others (or themselves; the result is usually the same). As such there are two means by which to accomplish this:

1. Be loud and and demeaning in order to break them down in order to build them back up.

2. Demonstrate the technique on the nearest vict... ahem volunteer until they can reproduce the action.

However, being the superior instructor that I am, I have determined a third means to teach my trainees by combining these two methods. The instructor grabs the nearest "willing" volunteer(s) and repeatedly beats down and/or (usually and) psychologically wounds them while verbally abusing them, both in order to induce the greatest amount of psychological trauma possible and beat the lesson into them. After all, I believe all people deserve to be traumatized equally regardless of age, race, or monetary value; be they affluent Kormyrians or inferior.

ONE HAND CLAPPING: TO REMEMBER IMPERMANENCE

BY IMRAHIL

I never got to know our former Baroness, Mixolydia Hartwoode, very well. It is not that she was inaccessible. In fact, she was the very opposite. She made time for any who would ask it of her. It speaks of

great compassion, and represents an embodiment of a trait of honor among my people.

This is not to say I have not met others who follow the example, or lacked for having it shown by other means, but this year has served as a difficult reminder to the importance of this lesson. To recognize that each moment is the only one that matters is to recognize you have only this moment to make time for those of your community.

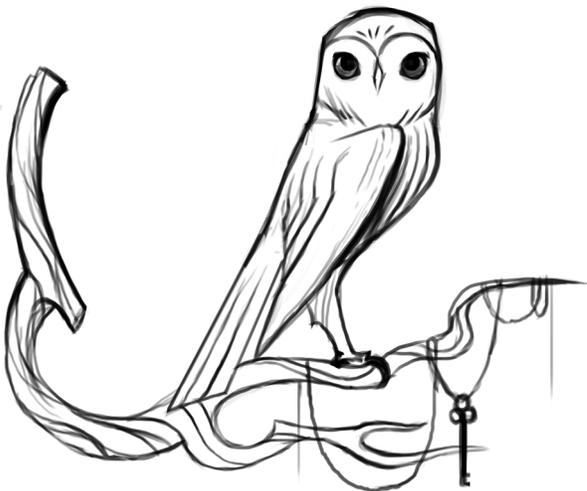
The spark in me honors the spark in you, and if you should seek me I shall make myself found.

Warning: The following is only for those who have the strength to be their own person. If you are content in your trade of personal freedom for security, being able to through life just doing your job, and relying on others for all other aspects of your life, then read no further.

If you are tired of hoping the monsters and bandits of the wilds trying to break down your door do not get the idea to use a window and put a torch to your house before the guard comes - if the guard comes - then travel to Vindhalm. If you find it aggravating to be held back by the shortcomings of others, and have a satisfying pride when you do something for yourself, bring nothing but the clothes on your back. If you wish to be your own person, the master of your own life, and don't mind hard work then find Clove's survival school.

Learn to provide the necessities of life for yourself and your family: food, water, shelter. Learn basic self-defense and predator evasion. Learn to craft your own tools, clothing, and expand on the basics to live more comfortably. Push your limits, improve yourself.

Or, ignore this. The lifestyle and skill-set isn't appealing or useful to lemmings.



TAKE MY HAND

BY NALICK
UNDERHILL

"Take my hand in yours," said he,
"For this part is the worst.
Step whenever you are ready,
Beginning with the first."

"Oh, how late it's getting," she cried,
Pausing with a look.
Forehead sweating, she sighed,
And from head to toe, she shook.

"Up so high on this mountain of yours,
of your insecurity and fear.
Hills and peaks, mere metaphors:
Just remember that I'm here.

I'll be your guide from dawn to night,
Every minute in between,
Warmed by the sun's rays so bright,
And doused by moonlight's sheen.

Cower no more behind perfection
Whose existence is disproved:
High walls of introspection
That ought to be removed."

Incredulous, she shook her head
"You're simply wrong, you see.
My walls keep me from being bled,
So why should I be free?"

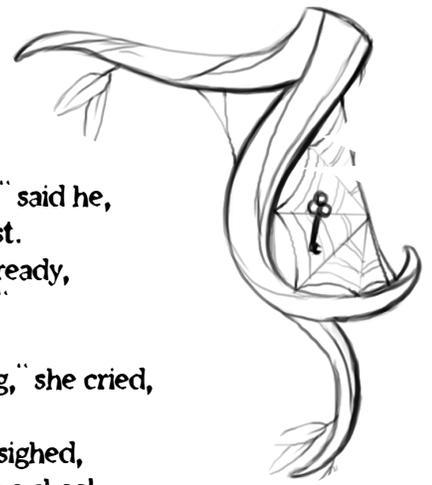
If I'm open to pain, I'll be hurt,
And I'll have no more of this.
Better to dig a hole in the dirt
And hide from the life I won't miss."

His watery eyes gave way.
His knees fell to the floor.
"There's no more that I can say.
I won't try anymore."

WITHOUT WORDS

BY MOTHER REMI SYLVAINÉ

Next month will mark the sixth year that has passed since I first sent foot in Travance. I can remember it so clearly! It was Ming Na's first day in town as well, serving tea to ruffians and royals alike- and I remember



he was scandalized by the fact that my tail wasn't covered.

Unlike most of the people that come to Travance, I was not running from anything. My family was alive and well, and there had been no calamity. I had simply decided that I was old enough for an adventure. My father packed me a small sack- two loaves of bread, three bottles of his own wine, cheese, dried meat. Before I set out, he taught me my first Enchantment spell: "Overlook." He offered me no words of guidance on my journey. For a long time, I wondered about that. I wondered why the man who had taught me to sing and read music and play, the man who had offered me so much guidance growing up, had no parting words for me.

So I came to Travance, my heart set on becoming an accomplished bard, and then perhaps joining the circus, and maybe even opening a casino! The sky was the limit. Sundays mornings weren't complete without Sir Dr Maxwell following me around on "damage control," ready to offer sobriety to anyone I had innocently offered my wine to (with a charming smile).

I was befriended by Mother Rosa, and Father Kwildar. I was raised to revere the Light gods, but it was these two friends who taught me what it meant to walk in the light, and to live my life in service to my faith. This lesson was only deepened by the lessons I learned from Father Keillor and Father Seamus about being a hunter.

Of all those that ever offered me guidance, these four are probably each 25 percent of the reason Travance doesn't have a circus or a casino. Of course, changing my life goal was not their intention. But the lessons that I learned from them, I realized, had nothing to do with any of the skills they taught me, or any of the words of advice they ever gave me.

What I learned from them was what it means to believe

in something. To give your whole life to the actualization of an ideal. I learned that even though the ideal can never be flawlessly realized, that doesn't mean it isn't worth striving for. The guidance they offered me was not in what they taught me. It was in the way they lived. Their courage and compassion, their loyalty and strength, taught me that it was possible for me to have and be those things for others.

So, there is only one way to show the proper reverence to their memories: by walking in their footsteps myself, and passing on the guidance they gave me by the way I live my life. So that maybe, I will inadvertently offer the same chance to some other poor sod. Who will do the same.

And so on.

And that day that my father offered me no words of guidance? I know now it was because he already knew the thing I only just realized: that throughout his life, he had already taught me everything I needed to know. All he had to do was trust that I had learned the lesson.

