

The Travance Chronicle

VOL. 5 NO. 10

Finding Common Ground

SEPTEMBER 1216

A letter to the town

Greetings and salutations,

I have spent the past year and a half rescuing commoners whose lives were in danger. I could not save all of them, despite my best efforts. Those that I couldn't save I have made "copies of". These copies will kill heroes of your town if not found out in 24 hours. Mixed amongst them are innocent commoners. It's your job to figure out which is which... or to figure out the activation phrase keeping your self and the commoners safe... Good luck.

P.S. some one asked for a prize if you figure it out.... I have one in mind.

Father of the Homunculi

Creature of the Month: Homunculus

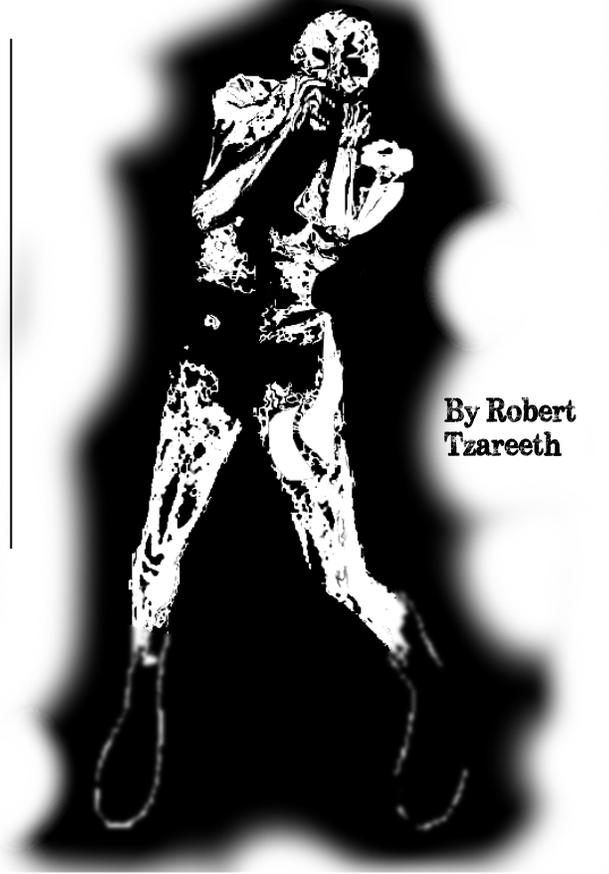
A homunculus, an artificial race created through a number of secret alchemy techniques I have mastered over the ages. The life of a Homunculus is comprised of two main pieces, the blank slate, otherwise known as blank flesh, and the artificial soul.

In general my creations could, if you so chose, be considered a race of their own with their own strengths and their own weaknesses. The most notable of the homunculi's strengths are their ability to regenerate from injuries a limited number of times, as well as the ability to incorporate the abilities of other races if I decide to build these races into them, though this does limit their learning potential. As far as "weaknesses" go, well, you can't heal a wound inflicted from poison until the poison is removed; the same applies to their regeneration. Additionally, recovering from more lethal injuries seem to exhaust them much quicker.

The homunculi fall into 4 categories, which I will lay out before you.

Flawed Homunculi- Although these creatures were initially a mistake in my efforts to create a completely artificial race, I have found them to be quite easy to mass produce. They will appear as pale featureless humanoids devoid of thought, save for the sole purpose they were programmed.

Basic Homunculi - The second stage in the evolution of this "artificial race", these creatures no longer appear as featureless humanoids but rather have some, albeit limited characteristics to them. Advancements to the blank flesh have caused an increase in strength, muscle memory, and endurance. Additionally, the advancements to the artificial soul have caused these creatures to become self aware... though they do not have the mental capacity to form full thoughts they CAN decide for themselves on more basic things such as when they should eat, when it is time to sleep, and other primal urges. The existence of these "Basic" models is a sad one: they have the mental capacity to understand they exist but not enough to understand why... or what existence is to begin with. They are in a constant state of fear and confusion, not knowing how long they have or will exist, nor recognizing what they are.



By Robert
Tzareeth

True Homunculi - The first class of Homunculi that I feel I can honestly call a "unique race". Each individual homunculus of this caliber has a unique personality, physiology, strengths, weaknesses, hopes, dreams, and fears. Advancements to the "Blank Flesh" have caused these individuals to be constantly at the peak state of the mortal races, while the advancements in the artificial soul have caused them to become completely sentient. I have witnessed love, self doubt, hope, rage, and fear in each of them. To see this form from nothing but a few vials of chemicals is astounding. Notable Figures amongst this classification are Vallius, Ludwig, Bartholomew, and Brutus, my "rebellious children".

Perfect Homunculi- I have made a total of twenty-six attempts at creating a perfect homunculus; I have had nine successes. These extend past the possibilities of the mortal races, but what makes them most incredible, is their unlimited capacity to learn. The second one takes interest in something, it takes them only weeks to master it to normal "mortal limits" and more often than not, I see them go beyond. Additionally, unlike their lesser brethren, the perfect homunculi can add pieces of other races to themselves AFTER creation, fully integrating it into their own biology if they so choose. Finally, an important part of what sets a perfect homunculus above the others in combat is their ability to absorb their lesser brethren, breaking down both the artificial soul and the blank flesh to revitalize themselves in combat.

This is the most basic information needed to survive an encounter with a homunculus... assuming it isn't the perfects. Best wishes and good luck.

Father of the Homunculi

[OO4 Note: The above article counts as the Monster Lore: Homunculi . If you have the prerequisites (i.e. a single build to spend and the ability to learn Monster Lore), you may learn "Lore: Homunculi" on your card and spend your build accordingly. The teacher will be "Chronicle September 16". If you see a paper copy of this Chronicle at any time, including at the Scholar's Table, you may choose to learn this lore.]

To the Homunculi,

I hear another experiment is being conducted, and while I do not know the exact details, it sounds like Father is using innocent folk to see if Travance will murder them to be on the safe side or wait and see if they will turn into sleeper agents wanting to hurt everyone. First off, to the Father, that is about as low as you can get. You can harass us all you want but taunting anyone with life and then the chance of "not being who they think they are and killing people" is just wrong. Whoever you lost in your life does not give you the right to mess with others.

But, I am really not interested in talking to you at the moment. This is for the Homunculi who happen on this article. Hello! I apologize if I am not in town currently. If I see you I will attempt a real conversation, if you like. Can always send me a letter too, I am not hard to find.

Many in the town would still be confused as to why anyone would willingly listen to Father and not help them fight him. Whatever your motives or reasoning, that is what I am not here to write about. But, if you feel like you need to, maybe let someone you trust know why. We might be able to help. If you have not noticed yet, we are capable of some ridiculous things when our back is to a wall. This Chronicle theme is meant to talk of 'Common Ground', and that is what I want to make sure occurs.

When I first came up with this letter, it was to explain how, even though I was born, I was a creation as well. However, with the revelations of the past year, I can state that we are all, including Father, a grand experiment that fought against their creators because they no longer wanted us to survive. Similar to the Brothers when Father no longer wanted them to survive.

For someone else to choose if you are allowed to survive or not because you go against them for abusing or using you does not deserve devotion, even if they currently allow you to live. No one has that right. A father is someone who nurtures all their children. Compassion may not be something really understood and it may be considered a flaw by a lot of folk but, from one experiment to another, I will say that it is one of the best things allowed to be understood and is generally what makes us "born" so strong.

For those that think they are better because they were

created rather than born, I suggest choosing a 'person' experience to have for yourself. You are more powerful, more intelligent, and may be able to outlast us all, similar to the Gods, yet you have different advantages and disadvantages than we do. Until you experience the same things we do, you could never say you are honestly better, not even the Gods can do that. I know there's time traveling involved with a few of you, maybe all of you. But, that's not going to get you the whole experience of truly living.

Reading books or observing people does not count. I used to do that and it is not the same. I will admit, a lot of folk are foolish, frustrating, and make you want to silence them but you just accept that and remember there are also folk who don't frustrate you and focus on them instead, even if the former are usually louder about their presence. Maybe pick a person similar to you to follow around for a day and ask questions.

A lot of folk will try and treat you badly because you are different and that makes them foolish. Anyone that wants a chance at living, as long as they're willing to coexist with others willing to live, deserves that chance no matter what they are, and I will help you with that. If anyone has a problem with me saying this, so be it. We all deserve to live and work together to do so. Are you willing to try?

Finally, to those peasants that this 'experiment' is affecting: I really hope that Father is lying and you are all actually okay. Make sure your names are recorded and we will do everything we can to find your loved ones.

Be well Travance, do not push away those who are different. Just try and give them a chance.

Ilana Darkwood

Travancian Masses **Compiled by Datu Guo Chenjing**

All these masses are open to the respectful public.

Friday, September 9, 1216:

Midnight: A Mass to Gaia, Goddess of Life, is to be held by Gothi Caldor Eirson at the Kaladonia Altar Space. Topic: The Rewards of Faith.

Saturday, September 10, 1216

Ten bells in the morning: A Mass to Brazen, God of Creation, is to be held by Father Duncan MacKenzie at the Kaladonia Altar Space.

Three bells past Noon: A generalized Mass is to be held by Templar Aldric of Valos, God of Justice, at the Bar in the Dragon's Claw Inn.

This Mass is for those unfamiliar with faith. Talk and learn about the United Churches of Light with some light refreshments and a drink.

Five bells past Noon: The Mass of Light is to be held by Templar Aldric of Valos, God of Justice, at the Church Annex in the field near the Dragon's Claw Inn.

A Knight in Travance **By Kardin Armister**

Honor. Strength. Restraint. Bravery. Discipline.

In all the world, too few hold these virtues within themselves. Though the scant individuals who exemplify these traits are the paragons that bind the Baronial Lands together.

Our Knights.

They are among the first to answer the call to battle and represent their Land in glory, but what more is a Knight to us? Not solely a weapon to be pointed at foes with impunity. The common folk look up to them for guidance, they are the stories we tell our children to teach them about true humility [sic] , and they are representations of their Lord's character. A Knight is as honorable

and disciplined as the Lord that grants them their station. They are judged to be nobler folk than us all and we always notice their actions on our behalf, acting as the instrument of their Noble's will.

The conduct of a Knight is something we can all declare from memory because their traits are known to us all. They act in defense of the weak, uphold the justice of their Land, and are noble in all actions.

We hold these things to be true, but even the best of us can lose our way.

When I was a little boy I believed that Knights were these infallible bulwarks, never capable of doing anything but the just course of action. Children grow up and learn better, but that doesn't make those the tales of heroic and virtuous Knights any less important. Realism is something we all have to learn. People aren't these perfect champions. We're deeply flawed beings and what we all share is that ability to hold ourselves to a standard we may never reach. We climb and climb to be something we never may fully attain, but that journey makes us into better people. The truths of Knighthood are not unattainable but one must make a constant effort to be the hero that we all dream about. The Knight in Shining Armor.

Coexistence

Coexistence is a lie.

It is a comforting lie people tell each other in order to fool themselves into thinking That the world is not a cruel, tragic, and senseless place.

A place where someone may walk up to you in the street and gut you for a handful of coins.

A place where one's faith, race, or way of life inspires unreasoning hatred and anger.

In reality, the conflict between those who are different is one that shall never end.

For all the lauded intellect of modern thinkers or mewlings of pacifists,

The vast majority of folk still will distrust anything remotely different.

Those without power either seek to supplant the order,

Or cower under their yokes, lashing out at what they cannot or will not understand.

Those with power seek to retain it.

To impose their will upon the world.

And crush beneath their boot heel anyone who would challenge their view.

It is the nature of mortals to do so.

There is no power on this plane or any other that can

change that.

Mere individuals might try to convince themselves otherwise,

But in the end, their efforts end in the same ashes as those who would make war.

Instead of crying out to a cold, uncaring sky,

Perhaps instead let us ask a question far more pertinent:

Why?

Why do we do this?

Why is the different, the unknown, so abhorrent that every instinct,

Every fiber of our beings tells us to destroy it?

Why is it we hate? Why is it we make war?

Why is it we cannot all simply live in peace and harmony together as thinking beings?

Perhaps it is because we are not meant to.

The Grand Experiment may be over, but the natures we have developed

Over the centuries of existence that have so fascinated

Beings so much more powerful than we could comprehend remain the same.

It is native to the very core of our existence as thinking beings to fight, to struggle.

To survive and prove ourselves the stronger.

That our way is better. Our country. Our race. Our faith.

There is no thought behind our prejudice. No rationale.

Merely pure, primitive instinct. And it is unavoidable.

Coexistence is a lie. A comforting lie, perhaps. But nonetheless, still a lie.

-S

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Questions, comments? Contact our offices in Honor's Peak

“ Pawn to H6 ”

By Anonymous

You moved to tempt me, then I took the bait,
And back and forth and back and forth and on,
Until by some sorrow-light chance of fate
I saw us on the same side all along.

Is it still true? I fear I have become
Another of the ones you meant to check.
With confusion and doubt I am overcome:
The board is askew and a bloody wreck.

Whisper to me the way you did before.
Laugh with me, build with me, move within me,
Then we will move on to the problem's core:
Too many kings on this black and white sea.

What now, sweet player, sweet notes in the air?
What music plays for our endless game through?
You should know that I finally do dare
To erect your complex organ anew.

Grand Opening of the Finemann Library & Relique

The Proud Settlement of Stonefall has opened the doors to a public Library and Relique to aid in the spread and retention of all knowledge. We are currently accepting applications for library writs to be used in order to access the varying rankings of subject matter. In addition, we are looking for able minded librarians and scholars to help run the day to day operations of the Library. People of all levels of scholastic achievement may apply. Please contact myself or Lois Maxwell for more information.

The book drive is still very much so active. Lois Maxwell and myself are humbly requesting that any donations of texts regarding ANY/ALL subject matters or historical/religious relics be presented to one of us to be added to the collection. The donation may be made privately or you may ask to be added to the Wall of Benefactors, where your name and a small quote will be inscribed into stone to be preserved for the ages. Other forms of compensation may also be discussed on a case by case basis.

Common Ground

By Grimkjell Eirson

Regarding finding common ground, my brother, Gothi Caldor Eirson, is a good example of how to manage it. Even some of the most vile foes of Travance have been struck by his kindness and good nature. The common ground is often something basic, like a love of drinking strong liquors or food. From what I understand, such things were apparently one of the keys to making friends with homonculi brothers who were sent by Father to visit us about this time last year. Another excellent example is the mighty Ogre which came upon us during the extended feast of last year, which was the first major encounter with the homonculi en masse. He was brought to peace and understanding by Billiam, Caldor, and a Child-bard by the name of Xod, and we understood that his heart was that of an innocent. He merely wanted to play, eat, and experience joy as he could. So he was brought food, played games, and was given a place to stay within Pendarvin, where he still resides.

In the end, all but the most destructive foes such as the Nulls can be worked with, at least short term, as we do not desire non-existence.

As the new perfect homonculi will likely be coming to town soon at the behest of Father and by their own will, pay attention and reach out your hands in kindness where you can. They have personalities. Things they love and revel in. Learn them. Engage them. Treat them as you would any fellow subject. You may find you have turned a foe into an ally.

And not just with them. In fact, treat every subject and even all those who can understand our speech with such kindness. While I am no Andorran, a true warrior knows the first resort is our mind, the second is our tongues, and only the last is our blade. If we can turn aside a battle with kind words, it costs so much less in blood and pain to do so.

So pay attention to newcomers, pay attention to the unfamiliar. Watch how they move, how they fight, how they eat and talk. If you approach with honor and respect, and ask them about what they demonstrate interest in, they are far less likely to shiv you for the fun of it.

Even one of the murderers who was brought into

Travance more than a year ago, a Galladellian who was slaying criminals, Momma cass, could bond with us due to her faith. She may have been wrong, but she was a kind of wrong we could work with, at least for a time. She did, however, escape justice at least for a while as she pursued the society of benefactors. So there may yet be a benefit in that. So seek commonality where you can, but do remember even as you do, not to compromise yourself, your honor, or your soul.

Gods and Legends of the North

By Siegfried Jarlson

In my time in the Southlands, I have heard a great many of your stories. They are rich and vibrant, full of life and color. It is the stories a people tell that give life to their culture, that allows their ancestors to speak even from the Halls of Eodra. And so, I have decided to take it upon myself to share with you the stories of the Land of Ice and Blades. Though it is the custom of the North to pass these stories on with Voice, I write them as a gift in return for your hospitality, and for the gift of your stories. May they be told together around the fire, a horn of mead in hand and a friend by your side.

The Gods

In the Land of Ice and Blades, there are none that deny the Gods. They shape the world in which we eat and drink, hunt and sleep, live and die. They are forces of the land, the truths of life, the strength of the tribe, and the sorrows to shun. Just as wyrd cannot be denied, neither can the Gods.

I shall not endeavor here to speak to the intricacies of each of them, for each is far too grand and complex for me to do them such disservice. I shall, instead, seek to tell you a bit about the gods as a whole and how they are worshipped.

Perhaps the most potent of the gods of our land are called the Gods of the Cycle. They are immutable, inevitable, inescapable. They do not care to guard or guide the tribe, nor do they hold malice for those who dwell within the Northlands. They simply are. The Gods of the Cycle embody the fundamental truths of the world in which we all live. They have few gothi, what you would call priests, for they care nothing for worship. They are no stronger for prayers and offering, nor are they lessened without. All things abide by the Cycle and the harsh truths they impose upon the world.

The Land of Ice and Blades is brutal, savage. Any moment could be a battle; any battle could be your last. Food is oft-times scarce; the cold, bitter; the beasts, dangerous and hungry. No man nor woman, however strong and clever, can stand against it. It is only by standing together that we thrive in such an unforgiving place. This lesson is the most treasured by the Gods of the Tribe. It was these benevolent four who taught the Northlanders to band together, to care for and protect one another, to form bonds of companionship stronger than any war-ice.

And then there are the Gods of Dischord. Unlike the Gods of the Cycle, these malefactors actively seek to destroy the Tribe, to break the strength and spirit of the those that dwell in the north. Their hands guide us towards petty in-fighting, betrayal, madness, and despair. They thwart the Gods of the Tribe that the harsh embrace of the Land of Ice and Blades may do its grim work upon the Northlanders under their care.

One thing that struck me, upon coming to your lands, was that many, even most, Southrons dedicate themselves to only one god. For those of the North, this is akin to only ever eating one meat. We all respect the Gods of the Cycle and their undeniable presence in our land. We all venerate the Gods of the Tribe as teaching the virtues that allow us to survive the Cycle. And we are all wary of the Gods of Dischord, and the vices they seek to infect us with. The only exception to this are our priests, who speak with the voice of a single god. The Priests of the Tribe advise us on how best to live with virtue. The Priests of Dischord do not seek to break the tribe, but rather serve as guides and guardians, warning us when we stray too close to malfeasance.

Our faith is practical; we do not have great temples such as those I have seen in this green land. Our altars often serve a purpose aside from the glory of a god. Our worship is in how we live each day, and so we have little need of great sermons. Our gods are a part of us when we hunt, when we love, when we fight, when we survive.

And thus do those of the North know the gods. Thus do they do them honor, not with cathedrals or riches or even with words, but with each deed, each moment. Thus do the Gods shape each day in the Land of Ice and Blades.
