

The Travance Chronicle

December 1213

Report from the Winterdark Ball by Meander Correlis

On the 9th of November, this historic year of 1213, the citizens and friends of Travance gathered to find joy in the midst of sorrow, triumph in the face of overwhelming odds, and laughter, even when evil lurks right on our doorstep. Practically nothing out of the ordinary for the good citizens of Travance, but they still made it a night that will be remembered for years to come.

Pair by pair, Count Sebastian Everest and the Court of Winterdark welcomed us into their hall. Everyone came decked out in their finest and, as per tradition, all wore a mask. A mask makes a statement about the person wearing it, and it was quite the show to see another side to the people we see so differently outside of the ball.

After introductions, the feasting began! The banquet tables were laden with food, and gallons of mulled cider quenched the thirst of the crowd as they engaged in various activities. Baroness Mixolydia Hartwoode led a number of rousing dances and our Master of Ceremonies organised contests of poetry, singing, and storytelling. Leif moved the judges with a tale of Barbarians and Goblins at war. Grimbjell Eirson took first place in the poetry contest, with simple but moving verse of the blood cost of war. And Grim's cousin, Burkhart Jarlson, won the singing contest with a gregarious piece about a knight and his squire. At last, the Count gathered everyone together to announce best costumes and deliver a few final words.

Darkness has overtaken our world. But we would not be Travance if we did not stand for what is ours. The Ball was a night of celebration of all that we have: friends, family, joy and love. And perhaps it was even a preemptive celebration of what we will still have when the darkness has fled.

The Rite of Remembrance by The Mockingbird

Do not rise
And do not love.

For in death thou wilt understand
That those who have left this World
Shalt not want dedication, shalt not want
Our ease of agony,
And if we were to remember,
Or cherish those who have sacrificed
Then it is sin to cry? Is it sin to love?
And thou may chooseth denial with sewed up lips or bloody
knuckles,
But in choosing the rite of thine open eyes--
Thou chooseth the iron Will.

And so, fellow Travancians, fellow
Sheep afloat on Death's glorious bay,
Answer me this:

"Is not the rite of man, in the right to remember?"

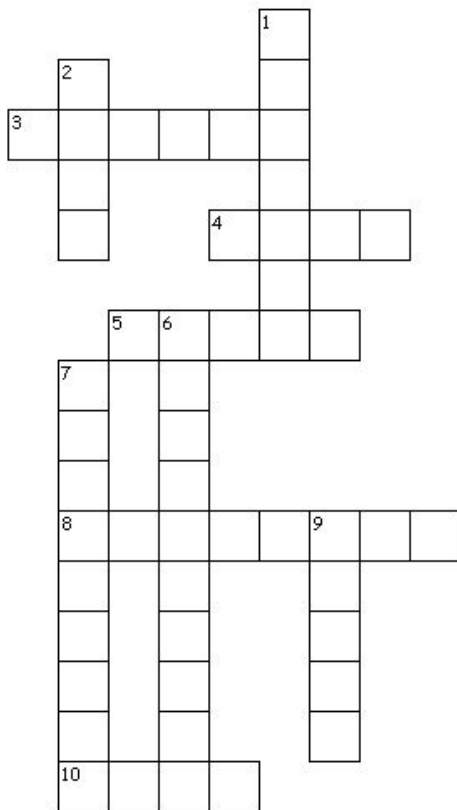
Virtue Series by Bat Cooper

Article 2: Compassion

Compassion is traditionally considered to be the domain of Andorra. It is defined as feeling empathy with the suffering of others. It is considered to be the precursor for generosity, sacrifice, mercy, and forgiveness. It has been said in the past that compassion is a form of weakness, that it makes you soft. Nothing could be further from the truth. At the end of the day, compassion is a form of understanding of the consequences and realities in the world in which we live.

When one has compassion they have the understanding of the sufferings of others. This can be extremely helpful in that it allows you to make decisions that are more fully reasoned. Let us say that you are a wise noble that must get wood. If you have compassion you will realize that gathering wood from the wrong location could cause the creatures that live there great suffering. Therefore you will make sure to choose a location that will cause the least amount of harm, thereby preserving harmony and making sure you do not have a very angry group of creatures.

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Crossword Puzzle

by Gwynedd

The Winterdark Ball was the pinnacle of high society for the kingdom. The following answers all pertain to the Winterdark Ball of 1213.

Down

1. The Baroness led the _____
2. Alander, the strong, Dwarven Smith, drank from his _____
6. We were honored by the Selendrian _____
7. Royal Family and Court of Kormyre have been safely relocated to The _____ (2 words)
9. The guests wore festive _____

Across

3. The feast included a steaming tray of _____ balls
4. We met a sweet young Goblin named _____, who had arrived in Travance just in time for the Ball
5. Croi made Orias _____
8. The guests wore festive _____
10. Sign on buffet table: "Ham (contains _____)"

Romani Tales

by Dame Zafrin Matzi

Esmeralda had a daughter who she loved very much. She was sometimes called the apple of her eye and was her greatest creation. Esmeralda was the greatest physician that ever lived, but did not see the plague coming, and soon was utterly wrapped up in her newest work, trying to save life after life and painfully watching each patient die slowly. She didn't notice as her daughter grew sick herself, she loved her so much and didn't want to add worry to her already laden plate. See discovered too late that her beloved daughter was dying, and it broke her heart and almost her spirit. She did the best she could for her, making her comfortable, stroking her hair, whispering vows of salvation, no matter the cost. Hers was a love that was deep and true and should be treasured as not every child is loved as much as Esmeralda's.

Esmeralda knew years before that this was the moment that would be her undoing. She furrowed her brow and marched on though. The deed must be done, the story needed to have its ending. She was well trained, well equipped and surrounded by friends and allies. The night dark, the moon barely peeking through the clouds, and yet, she marched on. Tonight would be the night that her great enemy would be defeated, no matter the cost. Even as her soul was ripped from her body, the spirit would persevere and she would enter the fight focused, the goal would be attained. One by one, her friends around her dropped, some to never walk again, still she marched on. Fate is a fickle mistress and would not make this easy, especially as the evil eye bore down on her with a vengeance. Hit after hit, foe after foe dropped before her, until she and her greatest adversary locked eyes. It was then that she knew how this story would end, as many stories like these do; the hero dies, the villain dies and a good amount of grief is left behind. Grief be damned though, she would not let doubt sway her and as her enemy came crashing down on her, aiming for total corruption of her spirit, she took her last breath and dealt the final blow that would kill them both. We will bury the past in the rich soil of tomorrow and dwell on this no longer.