

The Travance Chronicle

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OUT OF THE BLUE

BY DR. ILANA DARKWOOD

The recent victim of Balfurous' rampage in Darkholme, the Morlans are a recently rediscovered race who advanced on Travance. They are easily identified, as they have extremely pale skin, prominent blue veins, and sightless eyes. Their race has a natural talent for psionics, and to communicate easily with other races they flex their palm out towards an individual to 'speak' to them.

Balfurous held their families ransom and they were sent to Travance to locate the gem for which he has been searching the depths of Arawyn during the past year. The Morlans arrived in Travance, somewhat peaceful, though they became progressively offensive as they became more desperate to locate the unknown gem. Balfurous' minions, those with the lightning-shaped blue mark, helped spur attacks; however, Travancians did not help with initial hostilities.

Several townsmembers were manipulated by the Morlan's psionics throughout the feast and were coerced into giving away all of their gems or convincing other townsmembers to do the same.

The Morlans, by Saturday evening of last feast, finally targeted the Phocus and the Visigalians who were completing a ceremony nearby. The town successfully kept the Morlans distracted long enough for the ceremony to be completed and the ritual gem to be utilized before it was taken.

Unfortunately, the Morlans delivered the spent gem to Balfurous, and in his rage he wiped out the captive Nagarep (tribe) of the Morlans at once. The Morlans that remained despaired, and more than one took their own lives on the spot.

A couple of Morlords (Morlan leaders) visited the inn afterwards: a demon-tainted one was defeated, and its body was taken by another Morlord and returned to their home.

Negotiations may be starting between Pendarvin and the remaining Morlans to give them a home in the mountainous region, but only time will tell if the Morlans will return and if an agreement can be made.

If you were a victim of gem theft, contact me.

THE END

BY S

There are some who say that life as it was before the invasion has returned. For the "heroes" of Travance, this may even be true in many cases. Rest assured, it is not so for the rest of the world. This writer has traveled far and long and has seen life outside of Travance. Outside of Kormyre. Outside of the false sense of security provided by walls, guards, the ability to cut a demon in half, or to set them ablaze with arcane power.

For the rest of the world, life after the invasion almost resembles an extension of Travance before the invasion. Bandits prey on supply caravans with little fear of retribution. Demons yet roam the lands. Killing. Torturing. Performing every sick and twisted deed that brings joy to their black little hearts. They haunt the night, like the specters of the thousands upon thousands of those slain during the carnage of Xualla's invasion.

And yet those of the sleepy little town of Travance continue on as if a narrowly avoided apocalypse was just another day. They return to petty infighting and pointless ideological squabbles amongst themselves. All the while, the world continues to burn down around their ears. The civilized world is unraveling thread by thread, and Travance sits amongst the tangled skeins, forming them into a noose around its own neck.

Madmen. Monsters. Murderers. Martyrs. All dancing in the ashes of the world we thought we knew.

The Age of Heroes is over. The Age of Blood has begun.

THE BLACK BIRD: TRAVANCE'S NEWEST BAR

BY AMBASSADOR MEANDER CORRELIS

Last month saw the grand opening of a new bar in town: the Black Bird. Justé "Sébastien" Télus-Noire, manager and head bartender, sought to establish a place for those who like a quieter atmosphere than some of the more robust bars in town, not merely a competing business. I spent a few hours in the Black Bird after August's Baronial Feast had concluded, and

the place was already beginning to thrive. Its laid-back atmosphere was nonetheless filled with a friendly and upbeat energy and attentive service. The Black Bird will continue to be a work in progress over the next few months; Sébastien hopes that the additional construction will be completed by the end of the year.

Sébastien himself will be out for at least the next month, but he has left the running of the bar in the capable hands of Rosette and Zellara, and has also provided me with a list of drinks to whet your appetite. Come into the Black Bird this month and experience one for yourself!

- Two kinds of ale: one imported from Calasvorin and one provided by Charity Grace. Both are rich, bold, and strong.

- Mead from Boryev Solvei's Meadery, a smooth and sweet drink to be enjoyed throughout the night.

- Rum imported from Angst, Coast Haven. Called "The Kraken," shots of this harsh rum "tickle the inside of your throat with a cinnamon flavor," according to Sébastien.

- A delicious, full-bodied "crimson" wine made by Rosette herself.

- Reynolds' Reserve, a brandy provided to the Black Bird by Magistrate Herrister Reynolds, with imported ingredients from Londwyn and distilled locally. Despite its almost delicate fruit flavours, do not take the Reserve lightly. I witnessed many a patron fall (literally, and rather immediately) under its influence.

LORE OF THE NORTHMEN: LIFE

BY GRIMKJELL EIRSON

Life, in the north, is a short affair. We have our threads, and anything can and will cut them. The cold, the smile of a raider's axe, the beasts that walk alone on the ice. Sometimes even starvation will slay a man or woman.

And because it is short, we revel in it. We do not wait for the morrow when we can do things today. You Southrons often say we are impatient, or dynamic, or other such words, but the truth is we simply think in immediate terms. If there is an enemy, destroy him. If you care for someone, you tell them. There is no right or wrong time, there is simply the now.

And it is precious to us. We have many Godi of Gaia in this north for just this reason. While we may seem to draw our blades casually, it is only so that our own threads can continue to run. Every child of a clan is precious, and we will fight harder for them than even for ourselves. And for ourselves, we struggle until the

very end. We greet each other with the northman word which means "Endure". And so we do, for every moment is a chance for another wonder, another sight on the endless white, or even on the red road that so many northmen walk. There is wonder in life, and it is given a special value due to the short time we grasp our threads, compared to the elves, or the other Southrons.

We are as a brilliant flame: brief, and illuminating much. We bring warmth, and sometimes light, and sometimes we simply burn. But then we are gone, and only ash remains. That, in fact, is why ash is important to the burial rites of the north, and why our Godi will sometimes mark those that remember with ash on their face.

It is hard to contain the idea of life in these simple words. To write them seems almost to insult the idea of life, for it is to be lived, not simply learned or observed. If you wish to understand how the northmen view life, you must eat, drink, and stand close to the flames, even in the encroaching, sneaking dark. War and love with equal passion. In the end, you must greet the darkness and the doom that awaits us all with the same intensity that you greet the breaking of day. Only then will you have a glimpse of how the Northmen view life, indeed, how we live it.

PRESERVING LIFE

BY LORIEN BLACKSTONE

Running.

Running was the way of it when the demons attacked. Running from the school knowing we could not get home. Running to the church of Light, finding the priestesses, and being instructed to go into the catacombs to get out of the city as it burned around us and the demons killed the city's defenders.

We were huddled together and told to tap the symbols of the Gods in order to get the doors to open. We heard so many more demons coming and we heard the screams of the dying mixed with the prayers of the clergy.

Panicked, one of us hit the symbol for Valos, and the door opened. We entered and ran as fast as we could go, and heard the door closing behind us as we moved. Each door was touched in turn, seemingly randomly, by those who fled with us, but each door opened and leading us outside.

Once there we scattered across the field hiding as darkness fell across the burning city. The glow was in the distance for miles as we moved. There was truly no

place to go that was safe. Each person that was seen upon the roads had similar stories to tell. The demons were everywhere, killing and stealing and doing horrors unto those they caught.

My pens, papers and paintings seemed to dull to gray in my mind's eye as I heard these stories. The vivid hell around us was far more real and far brighter than anything I could have placed upon the pages.

Capturing the stories while I fled for my life was not something I could do. A part of me still wishes to go back there to delve into the memories and bring back those images, to safely tuck them away for history and for those who died, as a memoir.

Even those who were somewhat friendly still looked at my black skin in fear. There were rumors of Houses of dark elves working with the demons. This made my travel far harder than others and eventually I just hid from everyone. I sought one thing and that was the relative safety of Travance. For word had come that it was the great Heroes of Travance who saved the world from the destruction Xualla brought, so with care I have made my way here.

While walking around the Barony I saw those who beg with weapons in hand, sneak up from behind, strike without warning and fade away, and steal others away for ransom. Safety is as relative here as it is out there. Some things are no different there as here, but here is ever a hope and a prayer and a sword to make changes. That is what is different than anywhere else in the world right now.

I am not a hero. I am a young scholar. I am not settled but I am hopeful. Hopeful that the new world can become something the old world could not. I even realized in Travance that when we fled, the symbols of the Gods of Light were in no order but that which was to include them all. There was no riddle of being in order as we assumed but instead all were needed to open the doors to safety. There is something deeply symbolic about that in the New Church of Light, and perhaps in Travance herself.

NEGATIVE ENERGY CREATURES: INTRODUCTION

***BY HUNTER EHELENATHELASA BLACKTREE
REIGN***

This is the first of a series of articles on this subject. Skeletons. Zombies. Ghouls and ghosts. Werewolves.

Pesmerga. Tanith. True Warlocks. The Undead.

What are they? Who are they? What can you do to

protect yourself against them?

In this series of Chronicle articles, I will help you – not the god-like Travancian Heroes, but You, the Common Man – to understand and avoid these dangerous creatures, and to defend yourself against them if necessary. I will also introduce you to the Witch Hunters, that you may better know us and what it is we do to defend you. Fear, our greatest enemy, is born of ignorance, and an informed man is a prepared man.

NEGATIVE ENERGY CREATURES AND YOU

What is a Negative Energy Creature? While this is a fairly broad term somewhat open to interpretation, NECs are generally defined as any being which draws on Negative Energy as its power source, or is harmed by energy drawn from the Positive Energy Plane. The most usually recognized groups are the Undead (including Vampires, more on those later), Lycanthropes (Werewolves and the like), True Warlocks, and Demons.

The ability to channel Positive Energy is possessed naturally by all Healers, and either inborn or taught to nearly all Witch Hunters. It is one of the greatest tools in our arsenal against NECs. Thus, any Hunter with sufficient training should be competent enough to face most Undead and Lesser Demons. Vampires, Lycanthropes, True Warlocks, and Greater Demons are the exclusive quarry of the Witch Hunter Houses: respectively, VonRitter, Reign, Belmont, and Laurent-Belmont. Any Hunter with enough skill and experience may one day be called a Shadow Hunter, but only those who have obtained the rank of Master Hunter and chosen to devote themselves body, mind, and soul to the pursuit of these creatures are invited to join those ancient Houses and gain access to the training needed to combat them.

This is all well and good for Hunters and Healers, but what about for you, the Alisandrian Farmer whose fields are invaded nightly by the servants of Fallow, for the Kaladonian woodcutter who lives in fear of the were-creatures of the forest?

The first and most important line of defense is, of course, avoidance: don't find yourself in the presence of one of these creatures to begin with! Obviously this is not always feasible given their aggressive nature, but there are steps you can take to minimize contact. Burning or properly consecrating dead bodies to avoid them being Raised for nefarious purposes is an excellent preventative measure.

Additionally, NEC's are, as a rule, active only at night, for the sun's rays are deadly to them (the exception to this is True Warlocks, who retain their

“humanity” and can pass through the day unharmed. More in a later article). If you have reason to believe an NEC is active in your area, **STAY INDOORS AT NIGHT**, and contact a Hunter immediately. If you are unfamiliar with or live in an area unguarded by a Witch Hunter, contact us in the Proper and one will be dispatched to investigate.

The next greatest weapon in the fight against these creatures is Silver. With the exception of Demons, nearly all NECs fear and hate the touch of this pure metal. If you’ve any skill with improvising weapons, even a coin or candlestick will do. It won’t keep them away, true, but now you’ve a means to fight back. I well know that silver and electrum (a prized alloy of silver and gold) may be materials considered beyond the reach of the common man, but fear not: many resources exist for equipping outlying homesteads for defense, and many a smith in the Proper is open to bargaining. Talk to your local Guardsman or Noble representative for more information.

If you find yourself in a confrontation with an NEC, **DON’T PANIC**. While some are quite intelligent, your average zombie or skeleton can easily be led into an ambush, or escaped by simply going into a sturdy house and closing the door. If you live in an area where NEC activity is common, lining your windows and doors with silver may not be a ridiculous notion. One silver-poor village I came across in Vorlorne pooled its resources to line a single large building in which all families took shelter when monsters were sighted. Casualties dropped to almost zero.

Travance is a dangerous place. For the Common Man, even moreso. But being knowledgeable and prepared can go a long way towards making it a little more survivable. Remember always, you are not alone. Whenever you find yourself threatened by danger, seek help from your Guardsmen or Lord. And don’t forget, if you see a Negative Energy Creature, **CONTACT A WITCH HUNTER**.

Questions? Comments? I stand ready to answer.

ONE HAND CLAPPING: THE VIRTUE OF THE SMALL

BY IMRAHIL

With so many examples of grandiosity to aspire toward, ambition is not lacked for in Travance. There is no doubt social mobility and resources abound to a point that few who make residence here would be precluded from attaining these ends. Fame, fortune, honor: sought in earnest each can readily be found

here. The question becomes, should you? With each of these benefits come complications. I have heard many colloquialisms relating to these positions. Heavy is the head that wears the crown. No good deed goes unpunished. These are indications of the potential downfall of such aggrandizements.

The rich are often courted for their resources. Those who bear notoriety are often sought to lend the weight of their name to various endeavors. A warrior of honorable repute is often found by ambitious new warriors seeking to skip a few steps on their own ladder. It is not to say that there is not a place for these, but for many, these are the unforeseen consequences of their own advanced station. To those who have the constitution for such rigors, these consequences might be considered a perverse benefit, but most would consider these nuisance.

On the other hand, one with little business savvy is rarely asked to chair a guild. One with little repute is seldom asked to put their name on the line. One of scarce resources is often passed over in search of financing. It is more regularly observed that when the winds of life grow fierce, these proverbial trees are put to the test of resisting or snapping, while the green sapling beneath them simply sways. The question then becomes would you be a proud, tall tree, or the flexible but overlooked sapling? Calm seas almost never produce skilled sailors, but they do make for pleasant sailing.

LIFE

BY JORIK

It is common to hear one say that life is short. This is true. Even though a lifetime may span many winter cycles, those at the end of their own cycle have said the same. Life is short. Life is even shorter in the North. Whether it be from hunger, the creeping cold of winter, getting your thread cut by a rival warrior’s war ice, or becoming beast food, life is only a horse’s hair away from being cut short.

It would seem that in Travance life is equally short. There are no shortage of foes, beasts, or demons that wish to cut your thread here. All of that being said, life is also precious. Embrace the time that your wyrd has given you. Live every moment as if it is your last. If you do this, when you do breathe your last breath no one will be able to say that you had a bad life. So, go out there and hug your loved ones that much tighter, and enjoy what you have been given. You never know when your wyrd ends.

WHAT IS LIFE

BY JACK DIMMS

Life, what is Life?

Life is that fragile thing given to us

In hopes that we will become stronger than the barricades put before us.

Life is the energy that flows and ebbs with every heartbeat we are granted

Every footstep we take

The friends we meet and the enemies we make.

Our greatest enemy being ourselves

Our ambition is our weakness

Our past a tale of what we could become.

I have lived a thousand life times in my short years,

But these lives all have seen too much darkness.

I harken back to the eyes of the children

Ones who were sent to war to become tools used for killings

Ones that I massacred, ones that I defeated

Ones that plead for mercy but we given the harshest treatment

Like the treatment to myself on a regular basis

I hate this pain inside my heart that makes living life only fleeting

Dreams within my own heart and mind

As I sit to contemplate the way I will die

I am cursed. I am a murderer. I am a soldier

Life has given me nothing but pain

So I'm sorry Travance but to me....

My own life is nothing more than shame.

A CIRCULATORY IMAGE

BY MEANDER CORRELIS

Arterial walls composed of steel and stone

Meander through a city's every part,

Connected by the kingdom's crown and throne:

The government that forms the city's heart.

A vibrant energy steals through the air

In concert with the movement on the street:

The ebb and flow of contact lingers there

Upon the cobbled stones beneath their feet.

On mothers, sons, the capitol relies

To move it swiftly through its pulsing pace.

They breathe out life to what is otherwise

A graveyard full of copper, stone, and space.

The body needs a healthy heart to thrive:

Without its blood, the heart would not survive.

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ASK GOGGINS: ELF AND SAFETY

"Why are elves so much of a pain in my arse? What gives ehhh?"

Wotcher, Chronicle reader.

May I start by expressing my deepest sympathies for your elf-related troubles. Such things were strikingly commonplace back home – indeed, barely a week would pass without one estate owner or another reporting some manner of elf-related injury. However, though I remain sincerely sympathetic to your predicament, the symptoms you describe in your letter are nonetheless difficult to diagnose. Have you recently attempted to sit upon an elf? Attempted to carry one around in your back pocket? Perhaps one of your peers managed to slip an elf onto your chairback while your attention was elsewhere? Elves are perhaps best known for their collections of sharpened bones and twigs, and so – reason forbid – should you have attempted to eat one, I can't imagine that the ordeal would prove anything but trying for your lower digestive tract.

In his 1197 thesis on land economics and estate management, Henry Rutledge wrote "The elves... had a way of finding what was most well-made, and ruining it... they would seek out our digging machinery, our leather-bound manuals, our fine maps and charts, yet entirely circumvent the cash box..." With this in mind, it is entirely possible that the remedy to your posterial trauma lies merely in acquiring and wearing a less ostentatious pair of trousers.

Very good, dear reader. I should hope that the information contained herewith is beneficial to you, and would wish a very happy - and comfortable - future for both yourself and your fundament.

Opus Venare,
A. C. Goggins

PUBLIC SERVICE NOTICE

Dr. Illana Darkwood is searching for subjects who have the blue lightning bolt-shaped mark of Balfurous upon them. These people should be kept alive, as it may still be possible to break Balfurous's influence upon them. If you are able to capture one, please bring them to her.

Additionally, if you experienced any theft of gems as a result of the Morlans last Feast, she may be able to compensate you.

THE DOOR OF LOGIC

This past Feast, some of us went searching for yet another gem, and we were directed through a portal into a room with a strange door. The door could only be opened by solving a puzzle. We had so much fun with the puzzle that we're reprinting it here, along with some work space, for you to enjoy. Good luck!

Grancor, Handrit, Farnot, Perko, and Larxis are well known to only drink one type of drink (whiskey, ale, wine, saki, mead), slay one type of creature (kobolds, stranglevines, giants, lizardkin, elementals), and have been born with their people (Gypsies, Celts, Londwyns, Barbarians, Bedouin). Give the drink, the creature they slay, and the race of each of them from the following facts:

- 1) WIQSHRI UQKDG QOD QSC PG KDIIPFDC
RF GKIQSWODAPSDG QSC SR-RSD PS UPG
FQLPOB UQG JDDS KR ORSCVBS.
- 2) KUD RSD KUQK GOQBG WPQSKG, CIPSTG
VUPGTDB QFKDIVQICG.
- 3) CDGXPKD JDPSW Q JQIQIPQS, KUD RSD
VUR GOQBG OPEQICTPS WDKG GPHT FIRL
VUPGTDB.
- 4) UQSCIPK HQS`K CIPST QSBKUPSW
CPGKPOODC.
- 5) XDITR PG GQPC KR UQAD GDADIQO
WPQSK`G UDQCG RS UPG VQOOG.
- 6) OQIYPG FRNSC UPG FQARIPKD CIPST PS
TUPKQS, FQI FIRL UPG URLD RS KUD VDGK
HRQGK RF XQOLBCPQ.
- 7) KUD RSD VUR GOQBG DODLDSKQOG
VDQIG Q TPOK.

8) FQISRK`G KQGKD PS FDILDSKDC WIQXDG
PG LNHU JDKKDI KUQS UPG KQGKD PS
HORKUPSW.

9) KUD LDQC CIPSTDI GDOOG OPEQICTPS
XDOKG FIRL UPG TPOOG.

10) KUD RSD JRIS PS KUD CDGDIK CIPSTG
CPGKPOODC GXPIPKG.

11) KUD ORSCVBS UQG SDADI GDDS QS
DODLDSKQO, SRI Q GKIQSWODAPSD.

12) KUD WBXGB UQG KUD XRVDI KR JDSC
DODLDSKQOG KR UPG VPOO, QSC VRNOC
SDADI UQIL RSD.