

# The Travance Chronicle

VOL. 4 NO. 4

*"If it bleeds, it leads."*

APRIL 1215

## ST. ASTRID'S DAY

BY NADYA

Saint Astrid's day is not just about love and marriage, it is also about compassion, and it is a day for remembering the miracles that Saint Astrid herself performed during her lifetime. I have personally met Saint Astrid at the gates of Eodra, October 1212, and I feel that even after death she is still performing miracles. It was that day I had offered a cookie to my late husband Kwildar and he learned to enjoy cookies again. This is not the only miracle she has performed; she performed three great miracles before her death that led to her canonization.

Her first miracle was the pilgrimage from Alliander, the capital of Kormyre in the county of Loez, trekking west through the chaos wastes. Two months later, Astrid's journal records that she arrived in Selendrias, having had no water and no food with her throughout the journey. She also notes several attacks by the mad and wild of the Wastes, which she offers little explanation beyond 'Faith in Andorra' as having seen her through. In Selendrias she found a couple who needed a priest to marry them and she performed the marriage, and was of course invited to the feast afterward. This tired, ragged young lady didn't take any food or drink until after the ceremony but once the food and drink were provided she ate like a beast unlike any of the Selendrians had ever witnessed.

Saint Astrid's second and most memorable miracle was on the road near a small town called Nadrinfall. She came across two people embarking on a journey to a larger town to find a priest to marry them. However, just on the outskirts of town, a company of orcs led by hobgoblins attacked the village and the betrothed. Astrid said to the hobgoblin leader, "This is a joyous day. It is protected, and Andorra watches over this place and these people. Leave." They attacked anyway. Astrid then swung her staff, a bright light illuminated, and she drove the hostile force away from Nadrinfall and performed the ceremony for the couple.

Astrid's third miracle occurred while passing through the city of Faust on Coast Haven's southern coast. Astrid found herself in the middle of a long-

standing trade dispute, known locally as the "Twelve Years War". Two trading (many say pirate) families, the Daviks and the Longhooks, had let contract disputes boil over into outright warfare in the port, the harbor and the open ocean around Faust starting in 341 PA. Many in Faust, when it was heard Astrid had arrived, sought her out and bade her to speak with Tomas Davik and Jonathan Longhooks to try and settle the dispute. Many had tried, but all accounts from the period described both men as 'unshakable' in their determination to have the upper hand. Within twelve hours of her arrival in the city, Astrid had ended the dispute.

If anyone wishes to discuss anything about Saint Astrid, love, marriage, compassion, Andorra or anything at all I will always have an open ear and will make time for you. May you find peace and happiness in your journeys.

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**ANNOUNCING THE WINNER OF THE FIRST CHRONICLE ART CONTEST:** Squire Keavy Lylas Kennyr'renath McKraegar, with her illustration of the battle against Balfurous! Congratulations!

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## FOR YOU, NADIRA

BY ANONYMOUS

Love can be compared to that general metaphor that surrounds a rose: It's real pretty with a bunch of thorns. It's something you like, and want, but it can be dangerous if not handled properly.

For example, there was a brilliant alchemist and his beautiful wife who together had a daughter that they loved very much. Their lives were not simple ones, since while the mother was a healer and loved, the father was a wild mage and a bit eccentric and though his work kept folk in good standing, there was always that pause to suspicion that people have towards the blooded.

Because of this, the family had to be split apart and the girl grew up without her parents, always looking for a family and even changing herself to get the family she wanted. Her parents, however, were able to stay together and though they looked for ways to get back to their daughter, it was never quite that simple, her father's condition making it difficult. In the end, their love was used to another's advantage. This man convinced the parents that they had to do what he wanted to keep their daughter safe and so, they did, completely willingly, because of the love they had for the girl.

Unfortunately, the girl was already working against this man by the time her family found her again. See, even if she acted different and talked different, she still remembered her old family and she wanted them the most. But, the man she fought against was not a man, but a monster, and if she let her parents get what they wanted now, that monster would hurt a lot of people.

But, then her new family did something unexpected: they hurt a lot of people just to defeat that monster. At one point, she was trying to figure out how to work with both sides while defeating the beast. But, she feared, if she did not come to an absolute decision, the lives her new family had taken would have been taken in vain.

So, she hurt her father, to make sure that those lives were not forgotten. Though, it seems they all were except one, and that life was not even taken, it was simply temporarily scarred. To soften the blow to her heart, she was told her family was still alive, and though they were out of her reach, there was still love, even if it had caused all of them great pain.

And though that family rose has too many little thorns to avoid, she can only hope that they agree with her when she says that it's still worth picking if they're willing to look for it again.

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## **A HOSPITAL FOR TRAVANCE**

### ***BY AMBASSADOR MEANDER CORRELLIS***

Over the last year or so, certain individuals have been hard at work to create a center for the healing arts. This is a hospital: a place for the "training and protection of all practitioners of the healing arts," according to one of the founders, Na'ar, as well as a location to offer healing services. The Starsong Memorial Hospital is the name of the Kaladonia branch of the hospital system, located in Auralion. The people of the land were particularly receptive to both the idea

and the construction of the hospital, which has finally had its first uninterrupted month of success, though it has been operating for a few months. Expansions are being planned, but details of location are not yet publicly available.

Currently on administrative staff for the hospital are Na'ar, Dr. Tobias Armitage, and Imrahil, the hospital's original three co-investors, as well as Thalia Burdorn and Hazel Storm. Administrators are trained in public service and take turns managing the hospital between Feasts. Teaching is pursued in tandem with treatment, so novice healers and physicians can train in a practical environment that allows them to examine and treat willing patients under close supervision from experienced and senior practitioners.

The Starsong Memorial Hospital is a business primarily funded through outside programming and community donations. The business offers healing services free of charge, though it does take payment for more expensive preventative care plans, such as inoculations. According to Na'ar, "It's our belief that healthcare is a right to all free races, and to provide that care without prejudice or reliance on their ability to pay. We want to lead the people forward by example, helping people through their struggles, and encourage them to better each other as well as themselves."

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## **WHAT I FIGHT FOR**

### ***BY CECILIA MERCIER***

They say Travance is where the heroes gather. It's a flattering notion at the very least. I think we can all agree that maybe "fighter" is a better word. For without a doubt we are a gathering of people with the determination (or perhaps just the right amount of stubbornness) to keep on fighting. Mind you, not all of us fight with weapon in hand or with a spell on the tip of our tongue. Some fight by lending their strength or doing what they can to grant us the knowledge and tools necessary to succeed. Others still, though they may never grace a battlefield, fight the political battles so that once everything is said and done, our homes are a place we want to return to.

So Travance is a place of fighters. That is easy to say. However, they also say you fight for what you love. And now we come to the harder part, for I have realized all this quite some time ago, and I am still in Travance. And I am still fighting. So I find myself wondering this St. Astrid's day, what am I fighting for? And what - more specifically - do I love?

Is it the Weave? No. I don't believe so. For while I am most certainly devoted to the Weave, currently that devotion stems from a understanding of what it is and my acceptance that it is a necessity in my life. It's not a god - I'm not of the faith though I try to respect those that are as best as I can. Do I love Travance? I've been here only a little over a year, and while I am apparently fond enough of Travance and it's people that I don't go screaming far, far away whenever some evil has decided we stand in it's way...again... love for Travance is not yet what I feel. Same for the land I am vassaled to, for though I have found enough pride in Ostcliff to represent it unashamedly, it is not quite love. Not quite yet.

Well then *clearly*, this has all been one great big dramatic build up to some elaborate display of affection to someone. Except no. I mean, I will admit to a very short lived infatuation with one of my peers, I assure you, that has passed. And of course I have people I care for and would defend as best I can. But I can not comfortably call that love - at least not the kind I'm thinking of.

So I sit here and I wonder, What do I love? Why do I do what I do? After all these months, why am I still in Travance and why am I still fighting? But perhaps in order to answer this question I must first answer another. Why did I start fighting? I was fighting long before I thought to come to Travance and ages before I had heard of it. And thinking it over - truly thinking - I found the answer so simple I could laugh. For my reason for starting to fight - for continuing to fight and near everything else I do has stayed the same.

I am dedicated to the Weave because it is all I have had and all I have known since I was but eight years old. Necessity does not properly explain the role of magic in my life. I follow no god because I've yet to find one who champions their cause so well that I think my life ought to be devoted to them. I came to Travance to make myself stronger. I joined Ostcliff because at the time I felt it was a place I'd be accepted and I have not left because they have yet to prove me wrong. I don't have my heart set on anyone because I've yet to see that someone in my life is worthy of that kind of affection from me.

Now my reasons - *my reason* - undoubtedly comes from a place of arrogance, a place of vanity, clearly a place of pride, but I think that it also very clearly comes from a place of love. And maybe one day, I'll have other reasons for fighting. I certainly think there's a thing or two I've listed that getting there - that with time, my heart will open to these things. But for now,

the thing that I love, is myself. And I reckon that's reason enough to keep on fighting.

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## THE FORMS OF LOVE

### BY ANONYMOUS

My companion's Day may officially be passed,  
But there are those of you who gather in remembrance.

So these words are sent.

Love is welcomed. Love is celebrated. Remember the forms of Love.

Love is a privilege as well as a basic right of sentience. Those who are not Free seldom are able to Love. I know this well.

Above all is the Love of Friends. This is the base from which all community is formed.

Romantic Love is wondrous, but it is often fleeting and tumultuous. Hold on to it while you can, but not so tightly as to hurt the subject of it.

Love for family is important, and is what gives us all our definition of self in the beginning of our lives. Hold on to your families, protect them, as hard as you can.

Love for money drives many, and actually is still a good thing despite what others may tell you. Money may not give fulfillment, but it can enable more lasting forms of Love, by allowing mortals the resources to provide for the people that they also Love.

Mercy is Love. Mercy allows you to acknowledge that despite the failings of others they are still capable of growing beyond what they are, and that what they are now is not final. To not have Mercy is to have emptiness at the End.

Even Hate and Obsession is a form of Love. It is Love corrupted. Try to find ways to purify your hatred into Love, and to come to terms with what it is that keeps you so transfixed on your hated Rivals.

Remember the forms of Love, and know that Love is welcomed, and that we watch and celebrate with you.

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## ON LOVE AND LOVERS

### BY A VAIDEN EARFALAS

Love. What I believed to be an unnecessary emotion was shown to me to have its place when one can remain logical in its embrace. It is no secret that I have had my fair share of husbands over the period of time in Travance, but I have only felt love a few times. I was

once betrayed by love when I was young before coming to Travance and I had willingly lost touch with the emotion since then. It is useless to be in love when one cannot remain logical during it. I found love several times in Travance but my mind was incapable of handling it and in love I lost my true self to my lover. I was weak to love then.

I would not find love that follows all the classic symptoms until I met Orophin Earfalas. He had been the first person I had met since I came to Travance who understood my "insanity". He understood what I couldn't feel and what I had no desire to feel. While you all felt alienated by such a man I found guidance. It didn't take long before I found myself at an impasse. I had resigned myself to no longer seeking love as it didn't suit me or benefit me in any way until now. One night Orophin and myself were sitting in the Inn comparing our symptoms to various emotions it became quite clear to me, and him, that what we were feeling was love. Except this time I was not doing erratic things for it except maybe losing my patience with this man who stands out in the rain catching his death. It was only the next day that an impromptu and original joke proposal became legitimate and we became the married couple that most of you townsfolk can't figure out what to do with.

Love that is worth something isn't the love that involves erratic behaviors and impromptu death because the two of you couldn't be together. Love that is worth something is the love that makes you more yourself. The true self, the true monster that is your being. One that pushes you to do what you need to do and scolds you when you fail your true potential. All of that and having the urge to bring children into this world.

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## **I ONCE**

*BY KETRYN SHIVERTHORN*

I once loved a lemon cake  
warm and tart, golden and round  
I did not anticipate the bellyache  
When I snatched it from the ground

I once received a love declaration  
Rasping and raucous, an off-putting ballad  
I grimaced and winced throughout the duration  
And by the last note the lad was pallid

I once found a token of love  
Cold and creamy, twined through my hair  
I do believe it dropped from a dove  
Careening and cavorting through the air

I once found a love note so sweet, so tender  
Carefully hidden under my bed  
I searched fields a fallow for the sender  
But once discovered, she was already dead

I once stumbled 'pon a loving dance  
Tumbling and laughing, smiling and thrashing  
But after I caught a glance  
The consummate couple took off a dashing

I once found myself loving a bubbly drink  
Fizzy and frothy, a vintage champagne  
I drank and I slurped. I drained the whole sink  
But my love sloshed away when it came up again

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## **CYNICISM**

*BY THE CYNIC*

I love Travance and how its citizens can kill without care...

I love the valiant heroes who sacrifice themselves while wallowing in self-gratification...

I love the stench of poverty permeating over the area like a toxic fog...

I love the less affluent for always understanding their place...

I love the black and white outlook of the church who casually disregard the evil they commit to destroy the evil they perceive...

I love the casual disregard for the law when it becomes inconvenient...

and...

Above all else I love my scribe who now needs to find new work for confusing the words love and loathe.

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## **LOVE IS A POWERFUL THING**

*BY PARKER BLACK*

Love is a powerful thing.

It can uplift and sunder through hardship and blunder.

Love searches and finds, it snares and breaks binds.

Love makes the hardened warrior weep and the vaga-bond sing.

Love is a powerful thing.

## **MINDFUL LOVE**

*BY ANONYMOUS*

Love is something I only understand from a distance, aside from familial love. I can understand the concept of love between lovers, but only from observing others. It has not been my path, nor do I believe that it will be.

Love I would argue can be turned to ends both evil and good, something the Andorrans often ignore. A man or woman will destroy another village out of desire to attain their love, and in so doing increase the suffering of all. Love can manipulate, it can deceive. It can blind us to the faults in others, those we wouldn't otherwise trust.

And yet it can redeem as well. It puzzles me more than anything else. I spend much time contemplating love, even as I distance myself from it. I brood upon it, though I don't ask Andorrans often for answers I find to be a bit too glib. I already know what they'll say.

Hate is understandable, pure, a weapon, and as such easily used. You can depend on how a foe will act when they are motivated by hate. But love can lead people to acts of self-sacrifice or other foolishness that is unpredictable. Since I have entered into Travance I have seen the results of love kill multiple people, and save multiple people as well.

Love is another weapon in the arsenal. It can be a finely forged sword that cuts both you and the enemy, or something that blinds you to your weaknesses. You must always be aware of it, and understand it as another tool, like anything else. You must understand love, if not experience it, else it will wound you before the end of the day, and perhaps onto death.

But love can also provide you with the will to fight for what is right and honorable in this world. Properly directed, it can be righteous indeed, when leavened with honor and self-control. Be mindful about love, and don't use it as a blunt tool to justify yourself, and you may be able to let it push you to be a better man or woman.

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## **A BLESSING**

*BY NALICK UNDERHILL*

Is love a blessing or is love a curse?

Would I rather lack love or lack coin in my purse?

The more I give of love, the more love I will receive:

'Tis far from the case with gold, if you will believe!

Love asks you to be compassionate, warm, and tender,  
And perform the positive form of surrender:

Giving up, giving in, being forthright and fair,  
Being humble, having grace and a willingness to share.  
'That's all when and good,' you say, 'but what happens when

My heart is broken. Well? What happens then?'

If I may interject, if I may be so bold,

Your heart's more resilient than mithril or gold.

Time will heal your wounds and will pass faster with a friend.

And if you ever need one, I've a hearty hand to lend.

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## **BEDTIME STORIES: THE BLANKET**

*BY CROINAMARA ULL UDHIR*

There once was a blanket who wanted to be loved, and for a long, long time it was.

It was bought by a young man and a young woman who kept it close by and always in a little case by the stairs. It was so excited. They carried it everywhere with them. It felt important.

One day, the young man and young woman took the blanket from its case and gave it to a baby. Oh how the blanket loved the baby, and how it loved when the two young people tucked it in. The baby grew into a child, who loved the blanket back. For years and years, the child and the blanket went on many, many adventures. They discovered sand together and rocks and ice cream and boogers but as the child grew older, the blanket was left home more often.

One day, the blanket was folded, and placed in a closet. Years passed, and the blanket saw sheets and towels and gloves and all other things placed and taken from the closet, but it was left alone.

One day, a young man stood at the closet door and looked at the blanket fondly. The blanket's stitched heart leapt as the young man took it from the shelf. The blanket traveled with the young man. He washed it nice and clean, he patched its rips and tears, and he placed it on a chair. Many people sat in that chair. And many people loved the blanket.

One day, a young woman sat in the chair with the blanket. And she came back many, many times.

One day, the young man and the young woman folded the blanket, and kept it close by and always in a little case by the stairs. The blanket was ecstatic. And the day came. And it was given to a baby who grew into a child. But something happened this time.

One day, between the exploration of mud and worms and scraped knees, blanket was left behind. On a park bench in a dark place, blanket sat alone. Until a

young cat came along. She sniffed blanket, and pawed at blanket, and dragged blanket off the bench. And over a fence. And under a tree. And under a deck. And tucked in her kittens, and laid down for the night.

One day, a girl found her way under the deck. She scooped up the young cat and her litter and blanket too. She washed it nice and clean, she patched its rips and tears, she folded blanket, and placed the kittens around it. She carried blanket with its kittens and the box to a place where the kittens would be safe and someone would find them homes to be warm. When all of the kittens were gone, the girl carried blanket herself in her hands.

One day, as they walked down the street, blanket and the girl saw an old man sitting on a corner. He had no shoes, and no cloak, and he looked very cold. So the girl walked over to the man and handed him blanket, and he took blanket, and wrapped it around his shoulders, and blanket loved him. And how he loved the blanket. For weeks and weeks and weeks blanket hugged the man on the corner. The old man would walk places, and ask for love and comfort, and very few people would listen.

One day, a young man did. He sat with the old man and blanket, and they talked for hours. And the young man brought him shoes. One day they sat and ate their lunch. And the young man brought him a cloak.

One day, they traveled the town, and the young man gave the old man a job. And through this all, the old man kept blanket. The young man asked him why. And the old man said it was because it had been given in love and it had loved him dearly. Time passed and the old man worked and lived, with his shoes and his cloak, but his life had been hard and was wearing him down. When the old man died, no one knew, except the young man and blanket. So the young man took the old man to a place where he'd be safe. Before he died, the old man told the young man to take blanket. That the young man should have his one token of love, since that was all he could give in return for the shoes and the job and the cloak. And so he did. The young man brought it home, he washed it nice and clean, he patched its rips and tears, and he placed it on a chair. Many, many people sat in that chair. And many, many people loved the blanket.

One day, an old man and an older woman come to visit this young man.

And here they sit with the blanket placed on a chair.

And the old man says oh my what a lovely blanket.

And the older woman says yes, isn't it.

And the old man says doesn't it remind you

And the older woman says isn't it familiar  
And the young man asks them of what  
And the old man and the older woman simply smile  
and say

Of a blanket they used to have and love, years and years ago, and kept close by, and always in a little case by the stairs.

And the old man would wash it nice and clean, and the older woman would patch its rips and tears, years and years ago.

And they spoke of a blanket that was dearly loved,  
and for a long,  
long time,  
it was.

The end.

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## CONFLICTED

*BY HAZEL STORM*

Conflict can be so many different things

One conflict can be lessons.

Who do you learn from?

Will it cause friction between friends?

Will you make the right choice or the wrong one.

Which way do you turn.

And when you make your decision will it cause a conflict you can never fix.

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## THE THREE MONKEYS

*BY ANONYMOUS*

Out of the three monkeys, Speak-no-Evil reckoned he had got the better end of the deal; words, after all, even the ones with the best intentions, had a tendency of getting out of hand and making trouble. Plus there were other ways to get your point across without them. Nothing said "No, I don't want to deal with you and your particular set of problems at this moment, thank you very much, now please sod off, if you would be so kind," better than a handful of slung excrement.

Hear-no-Evil on the other remarkably clean hand, assumed that he had hit the karmic equivalent of the jackpot given his condition. Sure, it made some things, like listening to the bawdy bards he passed in the morning on his walk to work rather difficult, but it also had its own subtle benefits. For example he couldn't hear the petty and belittling things his coworkers said quite regularly about him during lunch or on breaks and he could pretend that he didn't know about the

surprisingly explicit and suggestive conversations his wife had with the local message courier. After all, life was good and there were the simple pleasures to be enjoyed, like stealing bananas and being able to pee on unsuspecting passersby while hanging from a tree branch.

Unlike his brothers though, See-no-Evil was having none of it. He knew that he'd gotten the short end of the stick as far as anthropomorphized pseudo-socio-religious metaphors went and he was bloody furious about it, so furious in fact he would have liked nothing more than to brain the two of them with the red and white walking cane that he was forced to carry with him wherever he went... provided he could figure out where they were based on the sound of their conversation and inarticulate mumbblings about the relative merits and joys of certain bodily functions and the vague incomprehensible miracle that is life.

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## CLASSIFIEDS

In search of: Little birds that sing bright and pure. Songs as sweet and beautiful as a bloom in spring. Good little birds need no cages. Bad little birds must sing of their loss. Could you be the little bird I seek? Shall we find out together? Worry not about contacting me. I'll find you. Soon. Sing well, my little birds. -J.W.

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To J.W.: You've never come to collect your pay. Why not drop by the office, and maybe we'll sing a duet.

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Trees Have Feelings Too: I had always assumed that once back out in the forests, my forests, I would feel again at peace. But that peace no longer seems to exist. The trees no longer sing, the townships are no longer merry. Instead, everything is deathly silent.

I seek the music to fill the winds of the land. I seek the flutes, guitars, and drums to whisper their sweet songs. I seek a person or persons brave enough to leave their dwellings to make this lonely tree smile once again. I promise to make it forever worth their while.

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To the alchemist with the positive potions: Do come back to town. I'm willing to buy more, and so are my friends.

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