

The Travance Chronicle

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Discovering Strength

FEBRUARY 1216

Events of Last Feast

By Dr. Ilana Darkwood

The return to Travance was an uphill battle, both figuratively and literally. Warlord Emeline and Knight Captain Magnus led two groups that swept through the Proper, slowly eliminating Husk threats and returning lost townsmembers to us. Currently, all Travancian Husks have been returned, the only known Husk threat remaining being Emperor Argentblade of Terrafess.

Upon his return, Lord Aleister Tartaros quickly explained that the town needed to help him regain access to his reliquary to retrieve Corsair's heart. For those in town who do not know, Corsair was obliterated by the Null of Magic and his heart, being the source of the Weave's power but separate from him, began to overload, with the Weave beginning to unravel as a result. Many of us have noticed the changes in magic as a result and I believe all scholars have been properly informed to help explain this in detail. We are currently recording what new magic has emerged and what magic has been lost. Any submissions or requests of knowledge may be sent to the Chronicle (or myself if you do not know another scholar).

Throughout the feast the town went on several missions gathering resources to help with the task. Two I would like to personally highlight: A meeting with the exquisite Eden and her guide Belberith, who graciously allowed us to acquire needed materials from an old alchemist's laboratory and a meeting with the Sea Witch Antoinette that I missed and would love a telling of.

Many assisted in the creation of Aurelius' Weavesafe,

the vessel which eventually secured Corsair's heart to help stabilize it and prevent the Weave from completely decaying. The battle had been a harrowing event: Fractures of the Weave, elementals, and chaotic manifestations flung around the room as the heart's energy fluxed. Fortunately, the townsmembers of Travance stood their ground and eventually coordinated efforts to maintain and defeat the fractures and free the heart from its self destruction.

Last, but certainly not least, is my thanks to the town as a whole for working together to repair the damage done to Travance Proper. A list was given, a task was set, and everyone pooled through time, energy, and resources into maintaining the center of our barony.

Though refugees trickled in with their own plights, people opened their arms and offered help to those in need.

The next few months will be the most challenging for Travance. Though the Nulls turn northward towards Hibernia, Valeria, and possibly New Gaaldaron, they are still out there and a threat to this world. Husks, while not as numerous, still lurk. This is not a time for rest, but a time for preparation. We are still not ready to take on the Null, but we will not be consumed by the fate the Anastazi tried to give us. We will forge our survival through our ingenuity.

Discovering Strength

By Grimkjell Eirson

To discover strength in the north is simple enough.

And so I will not waste words on it, but rather, I will exhort you to find strength of conviction, strength of morals. It is a one thing indeed to be a man-slayer walking the crow's road, going from steel storm to

steel storm. It is another thing entirely to know when something is not right, and to tell your chief or leader "No, this is wrong, and it cannot be."

And yet that strength can be the most important of all. The moment we discover this core of moral strength is most often when we must make desperate decisions. Where we stand beyond expediency, be it in the light, or elsewhere.

But this strength must be leavened with wisdom. Adherence to your code, if you have one, is of little value if you do not examine your code, and what each part of it means. Every action, for good or for ill, with selfish or selfless intent, has ripples beyond the immediate situation. A life spared in battle may become a friend, or they may come back for revenge against you. You must carry the weight of the responsibility for the repercussions your actions will have in years to come. So, to the best that you can, be aware of them as you act. And remember, no act is more final than cutting the life-thread of someone else. If you must act in this manner, be absolutely sure of the necessity before you undertake it.

In the end, I shall relate a story of someone in whom I discovered strength. When I saw Magnus cut down a foul follower of the darkness, who had murdered several of Kaladonia's vassals, I was pleased. There was a certain finality to it which seemed right to me. But Corporal Nalick said that it should be questioned, that must understand why the Captain had done what he had done. And so Nalick questioned Magnus, at my prompting, for he quoted my own words back at me, and stood against my disapproval. In so doing, I grew more proud of him, for he had learned the lesson I had tried to teach, and thus kept me from straying from my own path. While Magnus was able to answer each

question to our satisfaction, it was our duty to ask them, and I salute and laud Nalick for reminding me of that duty. Hjolda, Nalick Demontforte. Your bravery may not be sung of by skalds, but I shall remember it.

Do Something

By Dato Guo Chenjing

Nothing.

The ones we fight seem so wholly alien. Those who oppose us are far beyond what any of us have imagined facing before. This is far beyond anything we could have ever expected. We, who are trained to fight what is, stand at the precipice filled with what is not. In this, what we can do is something. Anything. To do nothing is to let our foes win. To do something is to rebel.

We must all band together - Galladelians beside Glommites, Valosians beside Malycites, Aguarans beside Andorrans, Gaians beside Galmachians - to fight this. We have no time for petty squabbles. The time we have is the rest of time - and it's up to us to ensure there is such a thing. Idle hands serve the Null.

So I call the Brazenites to create our arms. The Valosians to dispense justice upon our foes. The Galladelians to purify our cause. The Gaians to give us life. The Andorrans to soothe the weary until they may rejoin. The Chroniclerites to scour the tomes and record our struggles. The Galmachians to kill the nothing. The Aguarans to crush them wholesale. The Glommites to corrupt nothing - which is done by doing something. The Malycites to sow such intense discord among the Anastazi that they realize that they chose the wrong experiment to close. The Visagaliens to balance us all together. The Enaxians will challenge this wrongful authority and see that order is regained. The dragon-blooded will seek to be freed of our ancestors' masters - and to seek vengeance for their attack upon

our ancestral father.

There is no room for error or for strife. There is room only for we heroes - and all those that join in this fight, regardless of capacity or alignments, are heroes.

When you find yourself in the depths of despair, speak to yourself, and say "I am." This simple act is rebellion.

I end with the words of an old skald from the North.

"...Seasons change, but we are still the same

Even though the cold winds blow, the fire burns inside."

"Beacon"

By Nalick DeMonteforte

Your beacon shone and my anxieties sheathed,
And I suddenly forgot and remembered to breathe.
The quickening pace of my blood as you spoke,
Matched by the blaze that your longing gaze stoked
Both deep in my heart and beneath my feet
But such is life when angel and fool meet.
I now needed ways to better myself,
To dust myself off, to leap off the shelf,
Where I'd survived life for many a year
Except now giving up would only mean fear.
Now gone are the days where I would stand down
Or hang my head low with a knee to the ground.
Nay, my lungs shall pour out every morsel of air,
But 'tis thanks to you, darling dove, that I dare.

Suffering and Forgiveness

By Ikari Shizen

I remember my first moon in Travance. A new world, far different from my own, with new people, strange customs, and strong drink. The night of the feast, I was attacked by what I believed to be Agaurans, and I could do nothing but scream as they offered my skin as a sacrifice. Since then, I have harbored hatred towards their kind.

Then during the November feast, when the Venier came with malice in their hearts, I chose to fight them and show them the pain that their fellows had given me. Though I found no joy or relief in these actions, in causing pain only for the sake of it. And it struck me harder when I learned of their true intention. That a mother, who had lost her son and husband, attacked Travance out of rage, hoping to show us the pain we made her feel.

As it stands, killing her could have been the best option. But maybe all she needed was someone to talk to, someone to inspire hope so that she would not feel as much pain as she did. The past has come and gone, but maybe we could change the future. Maybe we could try to come to some agreement to end hostilities. Killing all of our enemies isn't the only option. Sometimes we have to fight, we have no choice but to defend ourselves. However, words can come before steel.

Fortis Fuga

By Unknown Author

Consider the sparrow...
As it soars through the powdered winter sky.
Ever vigilant,
It flies towards the warm embrace
Which waits to take up the tiny creature
And keep it safe 'til its
last whimpering breath.

Spearhead flocks of sparrows shoot overhead
toward their goal,
Few, if any, stay.
With their dreams of joy,
Passion for their goal surges through their swift-pulsing hearts.
Adrenaline-driven wings, beating repeatedly, eternally,
Push them onward.

In the eyes of those watching from below,
held safe by granite,
by craggy sediment worn by the ages,
their frail bones are only held
aloft by hopes and dreams.
Hopes and dreams,
pregnant with strength.

Accents of Water

By Viktor Zalost

Between the mountains of Calasvorin sit the bogs of the Brumderhum Ogres. Lacking in precious or workable stone, these bogs hold nothing of value to the neighboring Dwarves, but the abundance of flora and fauna keep the Ogres complacent with a rich diet and a vanguard of diseases to ward off invaders.

Cut off from demonic and imperial influence, the Brumderhum have grown a culture all their own. Portraits are carved into surrounding trees, bearing rough, squared faces in mimicry of Chrimbrazen murals. Tribesfolk on the outskirts of foreign encampments have been known to build rafts and ferry outsiders for goods and protection. Most curious, though, are their names and their rituals of naming.

Though the Brumderhum value strength and brutality, it does not define them as it does other ogres. The common ogre takes on names depicting violence and martial prowess to impress recruiting war bands. For a tribe sheltered from war, such names are not necessary, so when a child is born to the Brumderhum, their shamans look to the water for insight.

Until it is named, a babe is not a person, good only for meat and bait. To find a name, it must first be boiled from the bones and sweat through the skin before the hide thickens. To do this, the shamans produce the

Naming Cauldron, and prepare the Naming Broth.

First, the shamans gather meat and carrion lying around the ritual site to be rendered for blood and fat. Bile is then collected from worthy tribemates, many of whom resist collection to prove their good stock. The bile and entrails are mixed in the pot with water or water substitute, as well as bones of ancestors whose qualities the babe will inherit.

For days, the broth is left to simmer, during which the parents are tested, as kin vie to kidnap the babe for food and sport. If the couple does not hold favor with the tribe, the shamans extend the boiling time. Should the babe survive the vigil, it is delivered to the ritual site, where the shamans wait, drunk on confections drawn from the bog. They hold listening horns to the cauldron, and cup their ears above the broth. Silence grips the bog. The mother turns her back on the pot, and like a duelist marches forward, counts twenty paces, and with a flick of her wrist, throws her infant to the piping broth.

From moment of the plunge until the babe is pulled mewling from the cauldron, there is total concentration. These sounds are the water spirits pulling pure name from bone and skin, sounds so fleeting to our fickle ears that all recitations fail. So shamans bid silence with shows of force and tune their senses to the cant of water with meditation and draughts of slowing time.

It takes the same practice to understand a Brumderhum name as it does to invent one. Take for instance the reliable "Nn`lungk". The name begins with the hum in the ear as it hovers inside the cauldron, just above the rocking broth, and ends with a firm dunk, prompt but not fleeting. It promises a studious servitor, there the moment he is needed and gone soon after his task is done. Contrast

"Goung`shurashhh", the sound of the infant midthrown against the cauldron's brim, its contents spilled in a long and crashing wave. It implies disorder,

dethronement. A babe so named would be devoured in prospect of treason, or coveted as a tool against a cruel regime. Worst of all is "Hwaaa", the sound of air, reserved for runts who made not the slightest ripple as they hit the surface.

The art of the utterance and its rituals vary across the region, for what rules and systems exist, the tribesfolk twist to their benefit. Older women instruct young mother in broth-reading and baby-throwing techniques in order to produce desirable sounds. Fathers with secular, cynical leanings may bribe shamans to mishear the water, resulting in names implying floods, roils tides, grand prophecy.

Despite pressures, shamans practice the naming rites in earnest. Annually, they convene to read names like bones on a fire. Outsiders are seldom permitted, though one Enaxian pilgrim claims to have been a welcome guest. In her journal, she recounts a dialogue with one shaman:

"Sh-shum coward, Gim-ploink strong, anywhere, any-when, they say. But many water tribe, like many ogre tribe. 'Sh-shum coward' say pot, 'shaman' say sea. 'Gim-ploink tiny' say sea, 'strong' say pot. Many water, many tongue."

So again do ogres and their warty kind mystify; amidst grotesquerie they wrought grace.

Relationships in Old Travance

By Birgitta Drexel

The term relationship is one that often sends fear into the hearts of the brave and throws the wrench of an inventor into the plans of the hero. Please note the lack of a capitalization of the word hero. When people journeyed to Travance for their second start or their adventure of life the idea of forming any kind of bond or relationship with others is far from the glory the mind imagines. It's a frightening thought to have to

rely on others as we do every day especially if we are trying to put together a long history of great deeds.

Remember the Travance of today with its many Lords, Ladies, Knights, Squires, and experts in certain fields did not exist. The Guilds that flourish and items and lores did not exist, and market fair with its many luxuries did not exist. Even then Travance had internal and external relationships.

These relationships were often based on the same need for companionship as it was for family, and Travance had some seriously unusual families. Race often didn't matter in the creation of these houses based on family ties - the need to survive and to fulfill certain needs in life forced some very unlikely bedfellows. Paladins married, Drow became loved ones, Goblins became trusted companions and the world turned regardless of what others in the world thought of such things.

Travance was different than the rest of the world and was often looked at like the red-headed stepchild of legend. They accepted the conditions that created it were different, thus expecting it to conform to any particular type or culture was ridiculous. That is not to say that it was easy or that it went smoothly with many races intermingled and working together. Travance was a Kormyrian outpost in the midst of the world.

Here races never seen before appeared; the Purple skinned elves called Moon Elves were discovered along with the Lizardkin and the wild animals and creatures we take for granted came into the firelight and fought against the incursion that was Travance. Every moon or so it seemed this side of the rift was bent on destroying every single person in the town from the highest Lord to the lowest farmer coming over to plow the ground for food.

The term Household came into the vernacular and those who found like mind built relationships and called each other family. One such sported a loving relationship with a Drowess as a matronly head called Ardis Dar Hanna and Solomon Darkheart who lived with 15 or so others in Darkheart manor and defended

their home and the town in everything they did. You could always find help, arms, armor repair, food and water at House Darkheart gifted to those new to Travance. You could always find a ready smile in Solomon and serious discussion with Ardis who traveled one of the rockiest roads of any who came to Travance based on her blood and ancestry.

Some of the names of the House Darkheart remain in the heart of Travance today, beloved by many who know them. Sir Aleister Darkheart then is Lord Aleister Tartaros today. Sir Magnus Dearkheart Zero Von Ritter the knight of Travance and Captain of the Guard joined this House. If I mentioned Aleric or Joselyn Darkheart who among you would have memories of them and how they were? These were brothers and sisters who made their way through the history of Travance and walk still among us. If you want the history of Travance speak with a Darkheart but be ready for the answers you get when you ask them, "What was it like back, then?"

Heroes are not born they are created. Great fighters come from lucky mistakes and the support of those that came before them and trained them. Some were shy retiring people who never sought the limelight of the world and were forced into it by necessity. Others come seeking it and found their brash nature used against them and they slipped into the darkness.

Who here would willingly thrust themselves into Honors Peak, an active volcano to retrieve an artifact or to place within its maw an evil thing? Turn and you will find Kellindell Starsong, Paladin and beloved of Archbishop Faith Starsong, who was one of the first of the winged ones to visit with us. Their marriage was one of great beauty and surrounded by great darkness.

Remembering the deaths that stole them and others from us hurts my heart to this day. Nothing is brighter than memories of those who have fallen and the relationships lost in the changes today brings. We often

forget where we have come from and how we got where we are in the hustle and bustle of the daily lives we have here where the place still attempts to kill us on a regular basis.

The Archbishop and the church's defenders counted many brave souls who worked from land to land in the forms of Father Devirr, Morcant, and Palin who later kept the light strong in the darkness. Demore little Faun and brash, loving Elawyn laughed in the sunshine and strove to rid the lands of the corrupted druidics that turned ill the world around us. Everyone had a place and everyone had a goal and in those goals were the commonality of making this land livable for those who have come since. That sense of community was one striven for daily. It may seem that all who sought Travance and each other were of the light, but please know that there were darker relationships equally strong. Other names known to many would be Vardemus Worthington, Mythrein, Faith Moondancer, Garrison, Rosie, Caedea, Aldina.

Then there are entire families that came at one time or another through the pass to Travance. Some are long remembered while others were but whispers in passing. If I spoke the name Tellinghast the reactions are wide and varied. Aradiel, Celestine, Teriel, Barak, Angelica, Gabriel, Carlotta, Sabatheus and Yngwie all formed the family of the devout and often times called zealot Tellinghasts. Many came to Travance to help carve out the place for the great God Valos and others among them stayed to help Travance become the place it is today. Heretics walked softly on boots made of shadow around the Tellinghasts but great was the gift of their largesse for those in great need who were honest.

Other families in blood were also known to adopt others under unusual circumstances. The Romani who came to us came in family groups adopted accordingly and do so today. The great gifts of their families often misunderstood in other places found a different foot-

hold here among the people of Travance. They were allowed by enough of the Travancians open-minded enough to listen, to settle here and wander the strange new world with a place to begin from and end within for safety when needed.

The most unusual became friends and were adopted or brought into families by marriage. There were not great family lists to be tended or arranged marriages based on wealth or standing in Travance. These were functioning families reflected in many ways, like the witch hunters in the old world on the other side of the rift. These self-forged relationships became the great families of Travance echoed in some of the survivors of today.

While they walk among us talk to them to learn much more.

And remember...

The faith that was strong in Galladel met the faith and strength of Valos and there was from it a shift in Travance as people worked on survival. This was turned to create something more and Travance's darkness took to the shadows only to re-emerge time and time again from within and from without with startling patterns. Spring was those who came from the north in New Gaaldaron to ravage the leftover stores and destroy the newly-planted crops after the harsh winter. The winter brought evil spirits and creatures that roved the snow lands from the north and Barbarian hoardes, while the autumn was the reaping from Lord Fallow.

Among those evil things were others with well-known names that hunted among us and turned our own against us. But that is another story altogether... Next the Enemies of Travance long ago and today.

We apologize for the condition of the Chronicle in recent months, and appreciate your understanding. If you would like to help, our printing press is still missing the letter blocks for "u" and "f", and needs some alignment adjustments. Contact our offices to assist.

The Adventures of Young Haroldson, Part 1

By Corvin Ralenfolly

The Exploits of Young Edwin Haroldson from the Barony on Fenwick!

Did you know in his youth Father Edwin Haroldson was one of the most eligible bachelors in the Barony of Fenwick? That he was a knight of some renown? I didn't think so!

You'd never know that our local Father was anything more than the doddering old sweetheart that he is today, but that was not always true. The Ralenfollys came from Fenwick, and we grew up the with tales of Sir Haroldson. We even had a bust of him in our foyer as boys; that was something to see.

Oh, you didn't have a foyer as a child? That's a shame. Every child should have a foyer.

In our time of need, I would like to share some of these stories of my youth. When the world itself is ending, let this stories guide us into the new order of things, or if we fail, let us wrap ourselves in these words as chaos engulfs us.

Let us start so as to not keep your eager eyes waiting. It begins in the year 980. This is the year of Edwin's Majority.

When Edwin came of age, he immediately went out to the streets of Fenwick and decided to try his luck with a few ladies of the local nobles. Wearing the latest fashion, and bearing gifts of gold and wine, he spoke to them with all the politeness a man should speak to a women.

This went poorly for him.

The next day, he went out and tried his luck with the ladies of the countryside. Bringing gifts of seeds and a few of his father's oxen to help with the fields, he spoke to them with all the politeness a man should

speaking to strong farmer women.

This too went poorly.

The third day, this man was nothing if not persistent as he tried seeking out the bandits of the area, and perhaps, seeing if any maidens or princesses were in any need. He spoke to them with all the politeness a man should speak to bandit women.

This went spectacularly! Well, spectacularly poorly.

Turns out that the bandits of the area didn't have any such ladies, as the Barony of Fenwick's women were more than capable of handling the occasional starving bandit. However, they were interested in acquiring a noble's son.

He was divested of his gifts and tied up in their bandit stronghold, left for the return of their leader, the Lady Kar-Ren. The bandits had stumbled upon a problem that Sir Haroldson was uniquely fitted to fix for them. Assuming he lived through it, that is.

The next day, Lady Kar-Ren returned and was not pleased at these developments. How could she sustain her bandit group when surely the news of a captured noble would spread far and wide in this land very shortly? She came upon an idea, it was as if Chronicler personally placed in between her ears. She needed to turn her group of bandits in to a ragtag band of heroes. What barony doesn't love a story of bandits turned heroes? They all do! But the Barony of Fenwick wasn't under any threat. They'd been living quite happily for some time, and nearly all their citizens had foyers to relax in and enjoy. She would have to create a threat big enough to scare the Baron, but small enough that her band could defeat it. She knew exactly what she would have to do next.

Sir Haroldson had never been looked at by a woman like this before. He felt something new deep down inside, something was stirring in his heart and his loins, a feeling he now knows intimately. This feeling was the

first he had ever felt something like this, he thought he had before, but now he knows truly the feeling that he felt that day was that his day was about to go poorly.

Corpse Snakes

By Mercy

Alright, so, there I was, hunting. In the trees, so I could get a good look at the ground below. Lots of stuff there to eat, good cover from the husks, right? Most of those things don't climb. Hell, most don't even look up. Jackasses. Anyhow, like I said, there I am. And there's all these husks starting to surround my treestand, and I'm all like, damn, I'm gonna get shredded. Then I hear this sound from the woods. It's like a hissing, and rattling, like a snake. Okay, so what's a snake gonna do? Stupid damn thing's gonna be torn apart. Maybe if I don't die, I'll eat it. Nice. But. Then. There's this noise, right? It's unreal. I mean it. It's not like any real noise I've heard. Then, there's dust, and like a fight or something, and when it settles, there's husk parts everywhere. All over the f-ing place! Feet, hands, torsos, gods know what else. And finally, I see a glimpse of the thing that did it all. Okay, yeah, so I was scared to hell and all, but I know what I f-ing saw. It was a giant snake made of, I sh-t you not, corpses. It was a corpse snake.

F that. Holy hell, I did not sign up for evil, creepy snakes made of corpses. And anything strong enough to do that to all those husks is above my f-ing pay grade. If you need me, I'll be guarding things on the run. Good luck! Hope you don't get eaten by snakes made of corpses!

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