

The Travance Chronicle

VOL. 6 NO. 3

"Hidden Depths"

MARCH 1217

EVENTS OF LAST FEAST

In the days leading up to the Feast, it became evident that the people of Travance were forgetting more than usual. This escalated on Friday, with several prominent members of town forgetting positions they held, the names of people they associated with, and even major events of their life. Through research led by Starling of the Winged Victory, and the assistance of a visitor by the name of Kassim Sharazad, it was discovered a blood mage named Zharima was attempting to collect Travance's memories as a gift for her king in order to become his next consort.

Zharima and her two daughters used the blood that has seeped into every corner of the Proper over its long and brutal history to power her ritual. She also made use of golems to collect the memories, as well as taking advantage of the memory loss of several small bands of tribal goblins to guard the golems. Going near the golems resulted in more memory loss as they absorbed what was ours.

Fortunately, this coincided with the the holiday of Keryth'rena, the elven holiday of remembrance, and a counter-ritual to the memory loss was developed based on a remembrance mass and performed by Father Belegchand. Members of town were able to write down what was most important to them to be preserved, which left us with enough wherewithal to counter Zharima's magic. The Chronicle would like to thank Mantel Warrane for choosing not to preserve the memories of his own life, but rather the information needed to restore everyone else's, and the mages who led the ritual. Unfortunately, though the ritual to summon the three blood mages and restore our memories was successful, Zharima was able to escape.

On Sunday morning, people who entered the Adventurer's Guild to collect the papers on which their memories were written found instead a book. Through the book, they saw the words of Chronicler, who promised to preserve these memories for all time so that they could never be taken again.

We mourn the loss of Kassim and his family - Anahita, Yiska, and Shadi - who were unable to escape Zharima's machinations. Your names will not be forgotten.

HELLO

By Cinnamon Dahl

My name is Cinnamon Dahl, daughter of Laurel and Fennel Dahl, and I was once a proud young halfling that lived in Kaladonia. Now, I am training to be a hero like many in Travance.

When I first met the great heroes in Travance Proper, I was no longer a halfling, but I did not know that. There were several of us who weren't what we thought we were: Reggie, Vera, Heather, Sig, Godrik, Xav, and Greer. But, at the time, it did not matter, we were simply people trying to understand a very strange situation. Not brought back to life through the focus but 'brought back' through science. A monster called 'Father'. who was once a man named Heimdell, made us into a game of chance: he declared some of us were 'human' and some of us were 'Homunculi'. We would not be allowed to know who and a phrase would cause us to become murderers instead. (None of us were 'human' though)

We met other Homunculi, True and Perfect, that he helped form. I wouldn't say create. He didn't create who they are: their personalities and lives are unique and I am proud to say I have spent time with them all. Some of them realized something that feast: that what their Father was doing to us was wrong. Maybe not all of them felt like 'flesh beings' were much, but they understood that he had taken a step he should not have.

I spent half of the feast waiting to be saved and then what part of the feast I remained I realized that most of the proper were afraid of us. I decided we needed to help ourselves. Sadly none of our ideas worked, we weren't great researchers or anything like that. But, I would like to say our ideas weren't the worst considering. I remember though there was a terrifying realization. A feeling like old, cold, stale coffee in one's stomach: They weren't trying to save us, they were trying to activate us.

I do not have much more in this tale as I was the first to be activated. I was surrounded by people trying to piece together the phrase: I was terrified and I felt myself inching towards Belberith. Maybe I should have

left like Greer, but maybe it was the part of me that wanted to believe the heroes knew what they were doing, that I wasn't just a test, but I was wrong.

After, it was strange realizing the Perfects had actually tried doing something for us. Despite all the restrictions placed on them, some of them still cared. You may not call them real and I wonder, would you not call me real? Though my body is that of a Homunculus, I am Cinnamon. I am just as real as your Seneschal is and Father cannot control me. I am whatever I want to be. But, I can't tell you how I got better. That's a story for another time.

I have been flitting about the Proper since then, a different face and a different smile every time. I may blame some heroes for me briefly becoming a killer but I never actually killed anyone and I plan on sticking to that. My life has been pretty amazing since then and it's worked out for the best (I can cook anything I like and learn whatever I want as long as I have the time so thanks for that). My second family wants you safe and I will help protect you, probably with a different face every time. So please treat my family as well as they treat you. I know you don't like all of them, but do not let a few bad apples ruin the whole batch! Would be such a waste of wonderful apples. I mean, maybe you shouldn't trust strangers, but maybe you should treat them kindly when you have the chance because you never know when one may be willing to watch your back.

The Baronial Guard's Monthly Advisory to the Populace

by Corporal Arradir Go-Dringol

Honorable Populace of the Barony of Travance, the following article was written with the intent of furthering your knowledge on the criminal element at large and updates regarding matters of the Law.

∴ Important Notices for the Barony ∴

By order of the Baronial Guard, all townsmen should bring any and all information related to the following threats to the Barony to active Guardsmen:

- *The Arcane Sons: A cult of active necromancers. Members are to be captured for interrogation by an active guardsmen at the jail.*
- *The Denman Siblings: A pair of young, Kormyrians necromancers of serious power. They go by the names Cecani & Simon and are fugitives of Alisandria.*

- *The Lanii Outbreak: Highly dangerous outbreak of nocturnal, predatory vine-like creatures in the forests of Ostcliff. They should be approached with caution and do not take kindly to natural fire sources.*

- *Conspirators Against the Railway: Any information leading directly to the arrest of any conspiring to preform illegal actions against the "Railway" project will be rewarded at the normal rate.*

∴ Announcing the Annual Baronial Guard Bachelor Auction ∴

It's that time of year again! St. Astrid's Day is fast approaching and with it, the annual date auction featuring your very own Baronial Guard. After last year's fantastic turn out, we are glad to offer the populace with yet another chance to spend a wonderful afternoon with a bachelor of your winning while simultaneously supporting their financial burdens. We will be holding the auction on the 22nd of April and will be releasing more information regarding how to participate very soon!

∴ Alert to Openings within the Baronial Guard ∴

It should be publicly known that the Baronial Guard is always looking for new recruits to join the ranks. If you are of able body & mind and have not become a Land's vassal, please consider asking the nearest guardsmen for information regarding meeting and training times. The current salary for recruits is **10 gold per Feast** with additional paid work available between feasts and coverage of certain equipment costs.

If you wish to aid the Guard but must honor your given word to your Lord and Lady, you may be deputized. Please speak to any of the Lieutenants regarding this if you plan on lending your hand regularly.

∴ Wanted Fugitive of the Law ∴

By order of the Barony, the man going by the name of *Radu Dragovic* is to report to either the Magistrate *Robert Tzaareth* or Captain *Oren Tenderson* regarding the standing charges of assault, attempted murder and evasion of the Law. Anyone found attempting to conceal his whereabouts will be charged with a Standard Punishment. Compensation in gold will be made for information leading directly to his capture.

ON: GOBLINS AND GOBLINOIDS

The term "goblinoid" covers a wide range of beings, and there are as many variations within these races as you would expect to find in any other. There are goblins, hobgoblins, orcs, and ogres, each with their own distinct forms, strengths, and weaknesses.

One of the first distinctions is between "Imperial" and "tribal". Imperials goblinoids primarily hail from Gaaldron and New Gaaldron. Though Kormyre and Gaaldron have warred for hundreds of years, with neither kingdom gaining more than a short-lived advantage, we are currently in a truce, and Gaaldron has even sent an ambassador to stay in Travance to help ensure this truce. Tribal goblinoids live in clans, typically with a chieftain (who is often decided by a bloody battle), and do not follow a more central authority. This is particularly true of ogres, who are often found alone or in small groups in the wild.

Goblins are short lived, even more so in the wilds. They have a knack for tricking people into thinking they are not a threat, before returning later to steal from and murder the people they have lulled into this false sense of security. This is where the myth of the "shiny" goblin comes from - goblins are far more intelligent than to be motivated solely by sparkly things, so be wary of any who approach and seem easily taken advantage of, for they can be quite savage. Imperial goblins follow the rule of their hobgoblin masters without question, for they believe that through this they might become hobgoblins themselves one day.

Due to their quick breeding, goblins are often used as "disposable" troops by Gaaldron. The orcs, larger and more brutal but still possessing great intelligence, are used for more savage and swift strikes. When they need nothing but brute strength, they send in the ogres.

This is not to say all goblinoids are inherently terrible. We have many within the town who are neither enemy soldiers nor savage and wild, and encourage Travancians to treat any of these who walk among us as what they are: Kormyrian subjects.

[OOG Note: The above article counts as the Monster Lore: Goblinoid. If you have the prerequisite of a single build to spend, you may learn "Lore: Goblinoid" on your card and spend your build. The teacher should be noted as "Chronicle March 17".]



Artist's Rendition of an Orc

PASCAL

By Nalick Underhill

Shoulders drop and eyebrows raise;
Sweet and lilting music plays;
Breathing slows, my eyes o'er glaze;
A scene drifts into view.

Fuschia cheeks to match your dress;
Mine own reddened too, no less;
At once giddy but too a mess,
At the thought to start anew.

"Be happy," for the new year's come.
Two lunar spins, a hefty sum.
A heartbeat racing like a drum
Whene'er I think of you.

The Gods don't know what moons may bring;
A reunion and a wedding ring
Or fresh blooms at the start of spring.
Whatever shall I do?

Editor-in-Chief: Lois Maxwell

Assistant Editors: Meander Correlis, Thalys Burdorn
Questions, comments? Contact our offices in Honor's Peak!

HIDDEN DEPTHS

BY LIEUTENANT GRIMKJELL EIRSON

Hidden depths can be found often within Travance. Warriors that live by blade and fury can be poets; dangerous, hard men can be romantic or even fatherly; tricksters and men of caprice can hold deep and good convictions. The key to finding these hidden depths is to listen and watch others.

Most people, even the most reserved ones, want to tell their story if they like you, and even include you in it. We aren't meant to walk every path alone. Even Klarington Everest has loved, and so have men like Verrill. We want to be remembered, or at least understood by someone. So open yourself to the idea that even the monsters stalking at the edge of the firelight, protecting Travance but doing little else, are full of thought. Some hide ambition, others affection, still others a sort of alienation from other people. But if you listen, and offer help where you can, you can get some true understanding of your fellow subjects.

This isn't to say that everyone's depths are worth knowing, or indeed even that they should be known. There are enough out there who are depraved, and hide secrets about tasks they undertake that you may not want to know about. So be careful who you listen to, and who you speak to.

Sometimes a King can be a smith, and conceal a great treasure in a simple gift to the town, as the monarch of the dwarves once did. Sometimes foes can walk amongst us in the guise of merchants, even as they prepare a cruel game to be played with the lives of the town, as the investors and killers did when they had a contest to see which of their hired slayers could murder the most Travancians. Watch for those who are unexpectedly generous, and ask little in return. There is often a hook in the gift. This is not to say that you should reject a magnanimous offer, but simply that you should look thoughtfully upon generosity towards you. Are they simply giving something to you as a genuine act of kindness, or will it tie or make you indebted to the giver?

There is a practical side to hidden depths as well: deception and outmaneuvering of a foe in warfare. A ruse of warfare is honorable where a ruse in conversation may not be. Concealing forces behind a ridge away from the siege-engines of your foe is good tactics, as is ambushing them from the woods. A man can never have too many knives. Never presume your enemy is showing all he will actually be doing with his maneuvers on the field, for you may well be surprised. When we marched out to fight Telligrim, we hadn't

considered something even stronger than him was out there. When preparing to face a foe, we should also be ready to face what that foe fears.

I do not recommend the use of betrayal as a practical tool in battle. While it is unquestionably devastating, you will have stained your own honor in the eyes of both your own people and the enemy. You will likely be the victor, but maintaining your victory after it is won through treachery is a much harder walk, as every sword and tongue will be turned against you. It is one thing to sneak a force of yours onto the flank of your foes. It is another thing entirely to suborn part of an enemy's army only to have them stab your foe in the back on the field of crows.

Several times Travance has been deceived by enemy armies. Once, we fought demon-tainted goblin-kin who had been subverted by Xualla and Balfurous, and they had the strength not only of your average greenskin but that of abyss spawn as well. Once, we faced an army of greenskins that had somehow had very early homunculi built into them, and they burst out and attacked beside the others. It was, in fact, our first encounter with the Father. General Ravik led them, and those shambling imperfect and basic homunculi obeyed him and died in pitiable droves. We should watch even familiar foes for new tricks. Never assume that because your enemy is lining up in the same old style, that we should meet them in the same old style. The dance of blades is a thing of centuries, but there is always room for improvisation and improvement.

It is my hope my advice will help you look deeper to both friend, foe, and just the random person at the bar in the Inn.

THE CHRONICLE IS LOOKING FOR NEW STAFF!

The Travance Chronicle is currently looking for a new Editor-in-Chief, as well as staff reporters.

The Editor-in-Chief is not just responsible for checking spelling errors, but choosing the direction of the Chronicle, soliciting work to be published, and managing the staff. This is a Baronial Office position, though you may remain vassal to a land.

Staff reporters are expected to seek out information on occurrences each Feast to keep the public informed.

If you are interested, please seek out Lois Maxwell, or send her a letter.

A Moment Set Aside For Us

Yule is a time known for the giving of gifts and not the taking. Yet two moons ago the town lost a subject. Two moons ago, I lost a friend. Arabeth Chance. She would always admonish me not to use her Church title and I certainly won't break with that now, but let this not be a sad occasion. A few months prior we sat down in the tavern and she told me she was leaving Travance. I couldn't help but get choked up, her being a person who'd saved me literally and politically. Representing the Church at the council meeting, surrounded by all the usual suspects and way out of my league, I sat. All of a sudden I felt a hand at my shoulder. When I turned around, there she stood, smiling. Arabeth always showed up at just the right moment.

And so I sat at the bar, eyes watery, but she told me not to cry. Before she left, she made sure to make me laugh and with that smile still on my face, we hugged and she hurried out the door.

Now, I have cried a lot since then and she may be there right now shaking her fist, but the lesson to draw from all this, is to be there when it counts. Not just physically standing in a room but mentally and emotionally there for yourself and those around you when it matters--like she was.

Thank you, Arabeth.

-Nalick