

The Travance Chronicle

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"Oaths"

APRIL 1217

A DAY OF LIFE

People of Travance,

Life and death decisions are at hand, and this is no mere cliché. In a time of great need we face a grave threat, one that requires more than prayer, mass, or simple ritual. We need divine intervention.

We must call upon the Gods. Not in prayer, as we often do, but in person. As the Gods walk among us we must do something beyond the normal to draw their attention and bring them to the Proper to aid us in reaching the threat.

As many of you know, while I am a Gothi, the Church has named me the High Priest of Gaia. I seek to perform a devotion on the Saturday of the April Feast that will call to Gaia as we have never done before.

Our plan is to make a day of Life. A day without death in the Proper. From midnight to midnight on Saturday, our goal is to have nothing die. No plant, nor animal, nor person, nor monster. The undead, golems, demons, and similar creatures do not count as alive for this purpose--only those things with life.

What I ask of you all is that you help us reach this goal: do not strike a killing blow or use lethal force during this time. If an opponent can be captured and jailed, do so. If they are downed, and can be stabilized, do so. We would not ask anyone to not defend themselves, but make all efforts to ensure death does not result. Additionally, make extra efforts to watch over our allies, and ensure that none slip into death. We will provide extra patrols of people who can heal, as well as regular stations where they can be found at all hours. We will provide extra healing items, potions, scrolls and devices to enable those who normally cannot heal or help can do so.

I know I am asking a lot but we have to make the extra effort to ensure our success. We have done more, and worse, as a people to save the world. Can we not do good in order to bring forth a greater good? I know many have already agreed to this task, and know that working together we can do great things.

We have spoken with the Lords of the most of the lands, Knights of the Barony, the Seneschal, Leaders of

the Churches of Light, the Druids Conclave, the Mages Guild and multiple private groups, such as the Winged Victory and the Blood Spirits, and while none are ordered to comply or participate these groups are attempting to cooperate to make this task viable.

I will be happy to discuss this further with anyone who needs more information, and hope you will all join us in this great task.

In Gaia's Name
Gothi Caldor

DARING RESCUE ATTEMPT FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH

Travance - A mysterious place, for sure, even to those of the Kormyrian peoples. Least so I am led to believe, as I have yet to reach Travance properly as of the time of writing this letter. What makes it so strange, one might ask? Well plenty of rumors, stories and gossip aside, this letter aims to cover one particular tale I had the... ehm... pleasure to overhear. The story was told by a dwarven fellow, accompanied by a rather robust and motley lot. If memory serves, there must have been at least seven of them in the dwarf's employ. But, I digress.

The story was not a long one, nor was it particularly heroic, or filled with grandiose feats. No, this story was almost unnerving, as you may too feel upon my notes completion. As the dwarf began, he said he and his crew were in the local tavern (as should all great tales begin), when he was approached by two men. One was a priest and the other a traveler of no particular merit or skill. The traveler was seeking people who may be able to help with a seemingly simple task, involving himself and an old man on the road nearby, to handle some petty domestic dispute, I suppose. Initially not terribly concerned with the proposition, the dwarf sprang into action when the term 'compensation' popped up. And, so it was, the dwarf, his seven allies, the nameless priest, and the traveler made their way outside of the tavern and down the road a way towards this old man.

The wind was quiet, yet present, and the cold winter air gave the adventurers cause to walk huddled and hooded to their rendezvous. This old man, hunched upon a long stick, covered in robe and dreadlocks, spoke with uncertainty and yet haste. He was eager to take the party back to his abode where the dispute had, apparently, taken a turn for the worst. This old man, I'm told, was quite the talker- yet had very little to actually say. About halfway back, the weather picked up and began to hide the tracks the old man had left to find his way back home.

Seems strange, to me- to need tracks to find your way back to your own home, but, that is no business of mine.

The party had a Selendrian present, skilled in tracking- and so she did just that and found their way back before long. However, once the group reached the house, they were greeted with no people but rather aggressive wolves. Large ones, as the dwarf would have me believe - though how much is tall and how much is tale I cannot confirm. The party took formation and struck out against these three beasts and though they suffered damages all around, they were victorious. The old man did not seem terribly bothered at the pack of angry animals loitering about his alleged abode - though, again, none of my business, I suppose.

Apparently, roaming animals was somewhat normal around those parts, as there were multiple 'hunting traps' set up about the pathway to the house. By this point in their story I realized I'd have to suspend disbelief and common sense - it reeked of a set-up as I listened on. Once inside the party had to handle some social problem. Two people lay dying on the floor and only one could be given an antidote to save them- the other would surely die, and the clock was ticking.

The dwarf and his lot were preparing to depart from whence we met at about this time so he quickened to tell me the resolution. The party picked up the now dead woman, opposite the one they had saved, and made all haste back to the town with intentions of finding someone to resuscitate her. Along the way, but of course as luck would be, a trio of goblins ambushed the party. Amidst the chaos of battle, the old man who had led them all there vanished into the forest. The party was saved from these rogue goblins by a powerful, local hero who had been awoken from his nap by the commotion. They did get back to town, but the girl could not be helped.

The point, here, is the old man is still at large, so far as I am aware- and the entire point of saving one of

the two seemed for naught. I do not know what sort of happenings occur in Travance, but if the story of this dwarf and his friends are any indication... I can not yet tell if I am excited or concerned for my own future.

With best regards and highest blessings,

~ Selphatos El'Enzar

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.

Homunculus: The teaching of any homunculus skills or magics is strictly forbidden. Anyone found doing so will be charged with High Crimes against the Barony.

The "Gravedigger": Radu Dragovic is wanted for standing charges of assault, attempted murder, and evasion of the Law. Standing reward for his capture or information leading to it.

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.

.: The Second Annual Baronial Guard Date Auction .:

It's that time of year again! With the recent conclusion of St. Astrid's Day celebration, I wish to formally announce 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. Saturday, April 22nd 1217 at 11 Bells in the Morning

.: Baronial Guard Recruitment Alert .:

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.

: Law of the Month :

None shall engage in Racketeering, Blackmail or Extortion. Whomever breaks with this law shall be subject to a Standard Punishment.

OATHS

By Grimkjell Eirson

Oaths are of particular importance to me, one who walks the dual paths of the the honorable blade and the red road. Travance's oaths are among the most diverse in the world. There are traditional oaths of loyalty to the Barony or a Lord, such as the honors recently achieved by Sir Grashugel and Dame Clytie. However, temporal oaths are equally strong compared to oaths of faith, such as those made of marriage and family in churches and families across the land. And it is oaths that people find worth defending: this is why one of the mightiest blades in the history of Travance, borne by a paladin of renown, was known as Oathkeeper, turning people's desire to uphold oaths and defend the promises of others into power for the bearer.

I myself have recently given an oath to protect an ally of Travance, to both her and her father, even unto my own death. It was not an oath made lightly, but out of belief that she deserves a chance to be free and carve her own path in the world. It was not the first oath I have made to her, nor the first I have upheld. When we first met, I swore I would not harm her, should our paths cross and our families be at war. I have upheld this oath, and acted in some small ways to help this woman- ways that are only made possible by my oath.

I made a specific kind of oath to myself that I would find a way to help cure her of a madness that had afflicted her. With the help and kindness of others, and the willpower and courage to make a leap of faith, we were able to make them whole, and do something that was thought impossible even by the oracles. Again, the oath made it possible. But that oath, the blade-oath,

should be explained.

It is a special oath that is often given by the followers of the path of the honorable blade. I have first heard it mentioned by a Coast Havener who followed the path, but it is not a tradition limited to them. I share it here in the hopes that some of you will use it and gain strength from this tradition. A blade-oath can be sworn by any swordsman who values their personal code as much as their skill in battle. The first time I saw this oath, the swordsman I speak of asked the Perfect Homonculus Gilgamesh to swear on his blade that he would not strike down Travancians, if we did not attack them or bar their way further. Gilgamesh made this oath, and kept it- none fell to his blade that day. If you confront someone who is a swordsman of renown and honor, and wish for an honorable end that doesn't involve a conflict, a blade oath from one warrior soul to another may truly avoid bloodshed.

Special weight must be given to the oath-words of a paladin, for they are not able to break them by action or inaction. To do so would go against their very nature. This is why Lord-General Magnus, when chosen to be Knight-Captain of the Guard, chose to swear unique oaths of loyalty that which were dedicated to the protection of the subjects of Travance over all- and he has always honored them. It would be dishonorable to attempt to entrap a paladin in an oath, and I discourage any readers from even considering this course of action, as it would discredit you in the eyes of others even were you to manage it.

There are other kinds of oaths which can be made, such as oaths of vengeance or the oath of the moment. The oath of vengeance is one typically sworn in anger, after you or your family is wronged greatly. Because this is a family oath, it may bind not only you but your bloodline ever afterwards into war. An oath of the moment is another kind of battle oath, often found written on sheets of parchment attached to the armor of a warrior. The oath is a promise to themselves, containing their wish for the fray- be it for bravery before battle, or a way to bring down a particularly mighty foe amongst the enemy host. It is a form of ritual reinforcement of the act of combat, and a reminder that even on the fields of Glory and Crows, honor still holds sway, else it turn into slaughter without meaning.

Be very careful when making oaths from emotion, particularly around faeries, as they have some capacity to enforce even the most capricious promises. In the more commonly seen manner, Valosian priests have some ability to grant mystical weight to an oath, if such

a pledge is in a form of a contract.

Our lives are bound up in oaths, sworn to the gods, our families, our comrades, or ourselves. Draw strength from them, Travance, but break them not, nor make them lightly, for you turn your blade on yourself each time you do.

THE NATURE OF OATHS

By The Good Doctor

A man may take several oaths through the course of his short walk upon this mortal coil. Some swear their lives to serve Queen and Country, only to be lead astray by the atrocities of War. Some pledge themselves to the health of others, but then find their talents perverted under dire conditions. Others vow to protect the ones they love, only to be burned upon the very pier they safeguard. In all of my decades of experience, one thing is constant: the oaths of the common man are brittle and easily shattered.

Such men often wear their bound hearts plainly on their sleeves: vanity swelling within their chests for the utterance of simple words. Yet when put to the test, these lesser minds crumble, their faith faltering due to the discomfort of mere flesh. In the end, words are often hollow.

Yet, on rare occasions, there are the ones for which a single vow cannot be broken: whose very soul is engraved with the truest form of utter commitment. Be they birthed out of an act of divine retribution amongst the corpses of fallen comrades or forged between outcasts leveled against impossible odds, this chain that binds the individual's core only strengthens as it is struck. If its links ever snapped, only a shell would remain.

And so, I leave the reader with this warning: be weary of those who pledge themselves often, for every man has but one life to give.

Oaths. Promises made in the highest degree. Oaths are not made lightly, and are formed only by our greatest desires. Oaths can be made to anyone or anything: from Lords, to friends, and even to memories of those you have lost. Oaths can also be made to do anything, whether it's to protect a person or place, to rescue someone, to perform a certain ritual, or to even to kill, and only the maker of the oath can truly understand the intentions.

-Swamp Fist

SPIDERS

Let's be honest here—spiders are gross. They appear and disappear faster than pie at a halfling holiday. You never know where they are exactly, but they are definitely around. There is probably one (or more!) within ten feet of you RIGHT NOW. They bite. They have more legs than any righteous being should have. And you always see them, inexplicably, crawling across your ceiling when you're trying to sleep, waiting to drop onto your face the moment you drift off.

But did you know spiders can also be helpful? They catch many other insects that can be far more harmful and irritating, such as flies and ticks. The silk from their webs is strong and makes a decent emergency bandage, as the composition of spider-silk contains substances that will help stop a wound from bleeding. The shape of a spider's web can also help you detect airborne aberrations in an area, for the shape of the web will change if the spider has been breathing in something abnormal.

The word "cobweb" comes from an old form of the word for spider: "attercop", or "poison head". The webs were "cop webs", which eventually became "cobweb". We can see another permutation of this in the word "ettercap", a spider-like being that is occasionally spotted around Travance.

Of course, this is Travance, so we must deal with not just the standard painful, venomous bites of typically-sized forest-dwelling arachnids, but impossibly large and considerably more lethal spiders as well. We have spiders whose only difference from the standard variety is size—the Giant Spider—and so becomes dangerous as its venom now exists in enough quantity to harm a human. There are Blade Spiders, who in addition to fangs and venom, have their front legs tipped with razor-sharp extensions that mimic a sword. Harpoon Spiders are an impatient lot, and can shoot a projectile on their silk that will drag their prey towards them (rather than wait like a NORMAL, SENSIBLE SPIDER for its prey to wander into its web). There are also Wraith spiders, which take the whole disappearing act to another level by using magical methods of displacement and hiding. I've even heard tell that there are were-spiders out there—if you see one of these, my suggestion is fire. Lots and lots of fire. Don't assume it's dead until you see the ashes.



[Ed. Note: The Chronicle is looking for artists!]

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