



Dignity Freedom Prosperity

3 Rings

The Oathwright

SUMMER SOLSTICE 381 YE

The People's Voice

FIFTH ISSUE

JOTUN ESCAPE

The Empire's use of ritual magic that killed thousands of Marcher civilians failed in its objective when a counter-attack permitted weakened Jotun units to escape the Mournewold killing grounds.

Popular disgust at the brutal tactics proposed and backed by General Jack Flint leant weight to arguments in the Military Council favoring an immediate effort to liberate the Mournewold instead of cutting off the enemy in Liathaven and leaving Mournewold in the hands of the Jotun.

CASUALTIES

Jack's plan used rituals that prevent healing and worsen wounds and disease. The Jotun's Spring assault that took the Mournewold suffered massive casualties. At the Spring Festival he then proposed to move the Imperial Armies to Liathaven to cut off the Jotun's retreat out of Mournewold towards the Jotun-held territory of Hordalant.

When the Marcher camp heard this news they organised a demonstration of rough music.

CONFRONT

Chanting "Marchers on strike" they went to confront Jack on the Saturday. The demand they delivered outside the Military Council was simple – liberate Mournewold immediately. Jack said, "If we don't do this then everything we fought for is for naught because they can go back to Jotun lands in Hordalant and resupply. Every Jotun army is

weak, we must force them to battle and destroy them. If we push into the Mourne now they will escape."

SLAUGHTERED

General Talbot, also addressed the crowd, "I'm a Marcher and the Jotun are in our lands. Our folk fought and died for the land. I won't give it up. No way. I disagree with Jack on this. We are going right back in, we can't give up our land. The Greensward Abbey was burned, its priests slaughtered. We have a choice. Look into your hearts."

PRAGMATISM

Jack then appealed to "Cold-hard pragmatism" but Talbot cut him off, "it is cold-hard pragmatism that got so many people killed." Marcher General Flowers, an ardent campaigner for the liberation of Mournewold, was questioned about rift between Talbot and Jack over strategy. She said, "No comment."

REARGUARD

In Summer, the Imperial armies marched straight back into Mournewold, where a token force of Jotun fought a rearguard action ensuring the escape of all the damaged armies. Among the advancing armies were the Iron Helms from Varushka and the Quiet Step from Navarr. They used poison and torture and desecrated Jotun graves.

The civilians of the Mourne who lost many of their children and elders under the murderous rituals did not welcome their liberators.



Woodcut from an original by Tom Garnett

THRONE CONDEMS GENERAL

General Jack Flint, who devised and advocated the strategy to use ritual magic to spread death throughout the Mournewold, was singled out and criticised by the Empress. Declining to name Jack, the Throne said, "I do not agree with the Marcher general who is the author of this strategy. I can do nothing to stop him, but I will help anyone who can."

MESSAGE

In a message to the Empire she derided such plans as without virtue and said, "Not a single one of the Paragons' or Exemplars' signs is so grim and bleak in nature." In several clashes at the Spring

Festival, Marcher General Talbot, often overcome with grief and anger, argued with General Jack. Talbot called for a minute's silence at the Military Council to commemorate the dead of the Mournewold. An unrepentant General Jack said, "We are here to make hard choices." Talbot was asked to drink to the dead he said, "I will shed a tear. But I will not raise a glass."

STRATEGY

General Nicassia said, "I do believe that, with the Empress' guidance, the Military Council will attempt to use every other strategy at its disposal before considering such a ritual again."

DAWNGUARD FALLS, URIZEN INVADED, IN DRUJ BETRAYAL

Breaking a peace treaty negotiated just months previously the Druj defeated the light Dawnish garrison holding The Dawnguard fortresses and completed a lightning conquest of the parts of the Barrens held by the Empire. A second large Druj force attacked the territory of Zenith in Urizen

and captured most of it. The Empire now faces barbarian enemies on three fronts.

DIPLOMACY

Bloodcrow Ergot, who warned against peace with the Druj, said, "Our diplomacy is in tatters. The Empire has become a laughing stock."

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SORCERORS HIDE STARS

By Cormack Dun

Dawnish sorcerers from House Vexille hid the stars across the entire Empire with help from enemy Eternals the Whisper Gallery according to Archmage of Day Gancius della Notte di Sarvos from the League.

The illegal magic effect that left night skies black apart from the Moon also affected the war effort by preventing scrying.

Gancius said, "The shrouds made by house Vexille hid the stars and prevented scrying. It was especially annoying for the Empire that we couldn't scry on Liathaven and Mournewold."

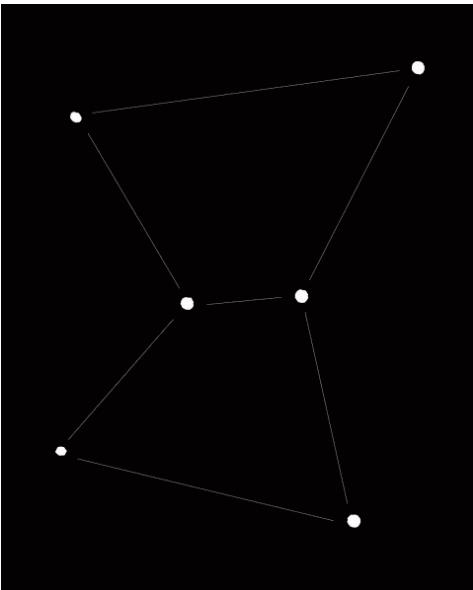
PIERCED

The stars are now visible again in Urizen and Skarsind. Gancius described work by Conclave members to remove the shrouds, "We were able to destroy two or three of the shrouds and we pierced them in some places." However, the work was difficult with each ritual costing 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ crystal manas.

INTERLOCKED

The shroud is similar to the one created by the ritual Drawing the Penumbral Veil. However because it was applied to the entire Empire the shrouds have interlocked forming a stronger shroud that has been seen before. The Penumbral Veil wraps the appearance of the stars in the night sky; it does not remove them.

First seen in Holberg, in the League and Skarsind, homeland of the Imperial Orcs, in Spring of 380YE by Summer the stars were also invisible in Necropolis, Bregasland, and Segura. More regions followed in Autumn and by



The constellation of the Chalice, also called the Cup of choices, is now only visible from Urizen and Imperial Orc Homeland Skarsind.

Winter 380YE the stars were invisible across the entire Empire.

HIT-LIST

Archmage of Day Gancius is the Empire's official source for information about the Eternals of Day, and he said, "Roshanwe has put out a hit-list of people who deal with the Whisper Gallery — it includes House Vexille. Roshanwe will give a gift of day magic to anyone who curses these individuals. Kimus, another Eternal of Day, was also angered by the shrouds because he is blind and uses scrying to see the mortal world.

BANNED

Grandmaster of the Order of the Unfettered Mind, Kyra of Halcyon Spire, named five members of House Vexille sorcerors at the Winter Festival. Sorcerers are banned from using magic or holding crystal mana. The five were Guiniveve, Gui Fletcher, Arlen Weaver, Ancel Steward, Guisart. In Urizen and Skarsind where the stars are visible the constellations are twisted with the Wanderer star appearing next to the constellation of the Chalice.

THE OATHWRIGHT SPEAKS ON DEAF EARS

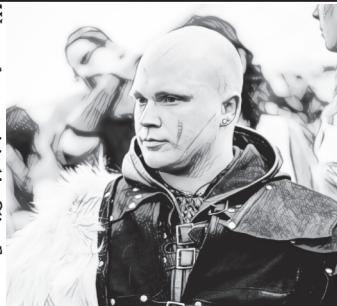
I decided to stand down as Advisor of Orc Affairs because I was largely ignored by those beguiled by ruthless pragmatism. I spoke against offering the Druj peace. I wrote to the Empress. I quit the delegation that finally offered peace to the Druj. I listened to our Senators vote for a peace treaty while admitting that it would not end if the Druj betrayed it when the Druj betrayed it. Everyone fully expecting a betrayal, albeit not so soon, and yet still we handed them Murderdale and Carmine fields... the keys to Dawnguard! The powers be have been outwitted by the Druj.

BLOODCROW ERGOT

PRIESTS PLEDGE DOGRI PROBE

By Cormack Dun

Woccur from an original by Oliver Facey



The Military Council's decision to assault the home of Dogri Thulebane and kill hundreds of Wintermark soldiers will be examined by the Synod and could be subject to Inquisition, after two Wintermark priests swore an oath to find the truth. Wintermark Stormcrow Hawkfrost said, "We need to know how and why this decision was taken. I support an inquisition into the Military Council for this decision."

Mishka, also a Stormcrow, said, "Rest assured, we will fight to know the truth. We will continue researching. It is not over."

INVESTIGATION

The call for investigation came at the same time as *The Oathwright* learned more about the decisions which was taken at the Winter Festival just minutes before the last Military Council session ended and apparently featured little discussion and did not hear of the express instructions from the Wintermark Thane's Council or its National Assembly of the Synod.

General Nicassia said, "I believe the rationale behind sending the Iron Helms was one of simple pragmatism. They were closer. I do not remember it being discussed as a separate issue, nor do I recall being told there was any strong opposition from any other Imperial or National body."

Dogri Thulebane refused to surrender his home in Skarsind to the orcs when that territory of Wintermark was gifted to the Imperial Orcs. He was arrested and executed for resisting arrest.

(See Page 9 for the story of his trial and execution.)

HOLE ENGULFS HALL

By Godric Dun

A sinkhole opened under the Dunning's Hall and swallowed most of the town of Arnburh in Hahnmark, Wintermark, leaving thousands homeless. Lands in Upwold in the Marches, Miaren in Navarr and Temeschwar of the League were also destroyed by the hole.

Reports from tunnels exposed by

the hole which grew to several miles across over three days indicate large quantities of weltsilver and violent monstrous insects called trogoni.

Hahnmark Senator Hengist Dun of Dunhearth said, "The opportunity to fight for the weltsilver should go to those who lost their lands in the disaster."

The Oathwright's office was one of the buildings destroyed.

SCRYING DIRECTS ARMY TO VICTORY IN SPIRAL

By Cormack Dun

A force of heroes led through the Sentinel gate on Sunday by Urien Field Marshall Nicassia of the Citadel Guard rescued the workers at Damakan's Forge in Spiral before going on to inflict a crushing defeat on the Grendel. General Nicassia's plans made use of ritual magic which, she said, was "researched by Skywise Gralka and performed by the coven of the Auric Horizon. It informed us of differences between the War Scout's report and the actual deployment of Grendel troops. This contributed greatly to our success."

CAPTIVES

The objective of the battle was to rescue the captives being held at the Damakan Bladeworks and prevent their work being looted by the Grendel. A secondary objective was to hunt for Grendel sappers and ritualists in the woods. All objectives were attained.

Nicassia said, "Our soldiers are a credit to the Empire. This battle shows how we have learned to ex-

cute effective battlefield tactics." Nicassia took the novel step of writing a list of commendations, which *The Oathwright* is Proud to publish (see Pg).

Empress Lisabetta was among the combatants using her powers as a battle mage to fight alongside the League. Syrus Skybreaker of Wintermark said, "The Empress told me that she never felt safer on the field of battle than when she was standing with Wintermark."

HEAT

Nicassia described the battle, which was fought in the heat of a southern summer, "The plan was to save the captives first, get them off the field as soon as possible, then tackle the other two objective, sweeping through the forest. There were two full sweeps in total, with forces first of all spreading out and moving in lines through the trees, then out from a central point to the edges and back. We know, from the first reports, that this action disrupted the Grendel's plans this season."

CASH CRISIS CLOBBERS CAPTAINS

By Cormack Dun

At the spring festival the Senate cut the guerdon by half, in the face of a massive budget shortage.

LOWEST

Total cash paid to commanders of military units who obey the Quartermaster General's orders will be 150 thrones, down from its previous level of 275 thrones – and its lowest level for years.

Gant Archama Senator for League city Temeschwar said, "It is now time to ask our soldiers to serve out of Loyalty."

It is now less than certain that individual commanders will earn as much as a throne for support-



ing imperial armies. Hengist Dun, Wintermark's Steinr senator cautiously welcomed the move, "This can change. If we see an unintended effect we can increase the guerdon or decrease it."

WEALTHY

The Empress asked wealthy imperials to consider funding military action out of their own pocket and said that she had used the House of Seven Mirrors' money to fund a spy network.



ANVIL HEROES FREE FOREST

Liathaven is back in Imperial hands after a substantial force of Navarr, Imperial Orcs, Marchers, Dawn and Highguard took back West Ranging on mission through the Sentinel Gate on the Saturday of the Spring Festival.

Led by General Vincent Vexille of the Eastern Sky, who was named field marshal of the battle, the army was completely successful and inflicted massive casualties

on the Jotun.

Marches General Jack Flint said, "Field Marshall Vexille was really good."

The battle was fought in sweltering heat. Imperial Orc General Irontide Skar of the Winter Sun praised their banner-bearer Yargol who worked hard to provide the orcs with water. Skar said, "Water let us fight with maximum efficiency in the great heat."

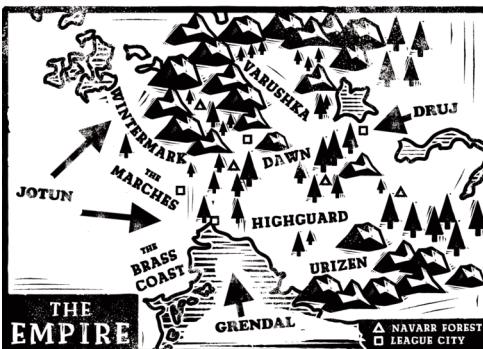


KRAFTINAR

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DISPATCHES

REDOUBT: Admiral Edgardo i Ruiloba i Guerra of the Freeborn Storm supported by many independent captains landed at Naris, Redoubt, Urizen and crushed the Grendel forces there. The Evenstar hospital was liberated despite being defended by giant heralds of the Eternal Siakha.

WEIRWATER: The army of the dead which has lingered in the forests of Weirwater attacked Dawn in full force. The dead rose from their graves to help. But the knights of Dawn's Golden Sun army were able to resist the attack

— Brass Coast halt a large assault by the Grendel in Cinion and Osuary in Spiral.

HORDALANT: General Ulric Y'Basden launched a daring raid into the Jotun territory of Hordalant. The Blackthorns of Navarr disrupted Jotun resupply efforts and raided several farms.

PERILOUS

Enraged Jotun armies counter-attacked but the Blackthorns were able to slip away in West Ranging, where they discovered a much larger force of five Jotun armies. They will need to use all their woodcraft to escape a perilous situation.

and keep the walking corpses from capturing significant territory.

SPIRAL: Rapid redeployment of three armies: Towerjacks — League, Green Shields — Wintermark and Fire of the South

CONCLAVE REJECTS GRUESOME REQUEST

Two eternals visited Anvil to ask for permission to take the bodies of imperial citizens in Mournwolde and render them into an alchemical broth that will make a new body for the two eternals which combine to form one eternal, called the Asothoth, every 500 years.

DISEASE

Although the process would have cleared the region of disease and plague, the Conclave voted to deny their request after Marches priests noted that the hearth magic

of the region needs the bodies to be buried to nourish the land.

According to Archmage of Night, Elyssiathain of Endsmeet, the two eternals warned that if the Empire refused they would create their new form using only Jotun bodies and if that happened the new eternal would be more inclined to help the Jotun than the Empire.

HOSPITAL

While at Anvil the eternals who will combine visited the hospital, where they asked staff if it would be possible to watch people die.

IN BRIEF

A freeborn egregore has appealed for ships to evacuate the Zemress islands, where thousands of heretical castaways are at risk from Grendel pirates. The apostates, descendants of the crew of the Kraken's Bane, have been gradually accepting the work missionaries of The Way but were recently discovered by the Salt Lords and are set to be enslaved unless dozens of ships are sent.

Yael called for people to believe her claim that she is the

reincarnation of the first Empress and that there is a place beyond The Labyrinth — or to execute her as a heretic. Soldiers of Dawn and Highguard have declared their faith in Yael and brawling between them and soldiers of other nations are now common.

At the Spring Festival the Dawnish national assembly passed a statement of principle declaring the Empress an "ultimate authority" who should be obeyed without question.

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FIELD MARSHAL NICASSIA'S COMMENDATIONS FROM THE BATTLE IN SPIRAL, SUNDAY, SPRING FESTIVAL 38IYE

Commended for enhanced battle preparation:

First Legion Skywise Gralka, Imperial Ores — Magical, used an arcane projection to discover the deployment of the enemy in Spiral.

The Coven of the Auric Horizon, Urizen — Magical, executed the ritual, obtained vital intelligence.

Commended as excellent runners: Eudaemon of Hleyon Spire, Urizen Lucian of Phoenix Reach, Urizen

Javin Endsmeet, Urizen
Lishka Grimhold, Varushka
Axtris Gigulys, Varushka
Milonis, Wintermark
Foalan, Wintermark
Egregore Glass, Brasscoast

Eduardo i Cesa i Guerra, Brasscoast
Commended for loyal action as the Field Marshal's guard:

Rada Layethra, Varushka
Kazamir Timurov, Varushka
Natalia Reznikov, Varushka
Belikov Prochno, Varushka

Further commendations:

General Nikolai, Varushka — Military, Second to the Field Marshal.
Was able to resume command of his nation at a difficult point in the battle and keep in contact with Field Marshal Nicassia.

General Axehind, Wintermark — Command, commended for command of his soldiers

Captain Faustus of the Scarlet Guard, Urizen — Command, decisive observation and orientation.

Xanthe of the Scarlet Guard, Urizen — Magical, used Inescapable Chains of Bitter Glassv at a tactical moment.
Rhiosiart Ankarian, Urizen — Pride, having recently joined Urizen, showed great poise.

Bron di Tassato, The League Flame of the Coast, Brasscoast — Courage, their first battle, hunted skirmishers and saved many lives.

Niston Elerison, Wintermark — Courage, Bannerman to his unit Bayerdon, Wintermark

John of Wintermark, Wintermark

CHILD-SLAVES TAKEN BY GRENDEL TO BE FREED



Grendel raiding parties such as the one picture in this captured woodcut often take slaves from the coasts of southern Imperial nations

Some of the Empire's children kept as slaves by the Grendel are set to be freed as part of a prisoner's exchange negotiation. Brass Coast Admiral of the Free Born Storm Edgardi I Ruiloba I Guerra the Grendel offered to re-

turn the Grendel one of their naval officers currently held prisoner by the Empire. The Grendel offered slaves to "the value of 8 thrones", which in the Grendel slave markets is the price of a single "skilled Imperial slave or two

ANNOUNCING MR AND MRS SULICH'S OFFICIAL WEDDING

CALF'S HEAD

The Calf's Head is proud to announce the official wedding of Proprietary Mrs Sulich to her common-law husband General Sulich.

The Calf's Head pub is attending the wedding but will return to Anvil in Winter

mine workers" or several child-slaves. The Military Council voted to free children.

Despite the Grendel's supposition that the prisoner's exchange is a commercial deal, the Admiral stressed that the Empire sees this

as an exchange of prisoners in order to remain free of the taint of the slave trade.

Imperial citizens are currently held as slaves by the Grendel and the Thule barbarian tribes. The exact numbers are unknown.

KRAKEN KILLED EIGHTH EMPEROR

By Cormack Dun

The Emperor Barabbas, who ruled from 180YE to 190YE was killed by a Kraken, according to heroes of the Empire who spoke to the ghosts of his crew.

DRAKE

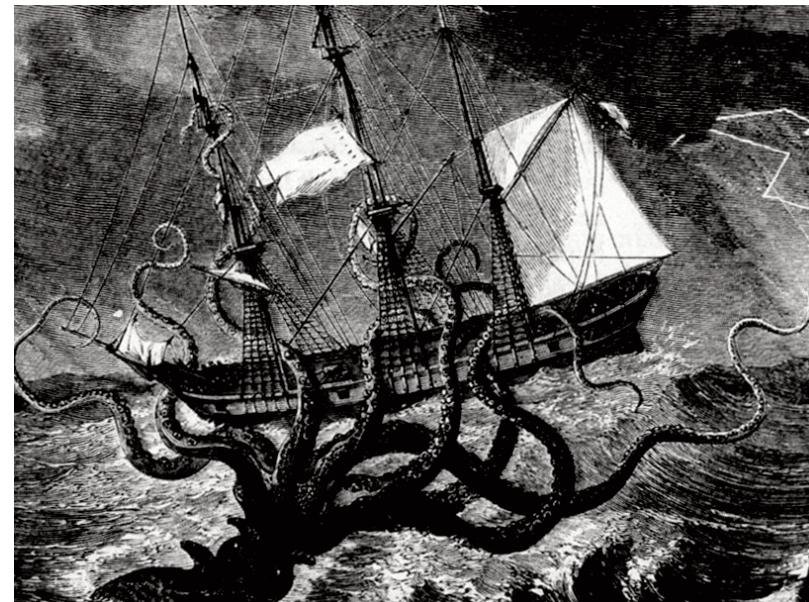
A mission through the Sentinel gate fought a Drake and overcame an ancient curse before recovering a sunstone last used by the Emperor Barabbas, known as the mariner, that will permit ships to go on magical voyages.

Vukomir Maryankovich Zverokaz told *The Oathwright* about the mission to recover the figurehead of the Emperor Barabbas's flagship, which was shipwrecked 182 years ago.

SKULLS

Navarr, Urien and Varushka sent heroes through the gate to a Summer Regio that had been discovered on an island in the Bay of Catazar. Vukomir described arriving on the island which was strewn with bleached bones and skulls. He said, "first we were attacked by a Black Drake that was six metres long with white horns and claws." The drake was killed in vicious fighting.

Despite the passage of almost 200 years Barabbas' crew were still present as ghosts or husks. Fortu-



nately, the undead sailors were not aggressive and Vukomir's brother Christophe was able to use magic to speak with their souls. They described how the ship was destroyed by a Kraken and the Emperor was killed.

MYSTERIOUS

The final challenge almost cost Vukomir his life after he lunged forward to grab the sunstone from a pedestal bathed in a mysterious orange light, which turned out to be a magical force field. His feet were trapped in rocks by a curse.

Christophe was able to reach through with his staff and cast purify and give Vukomir the strength to escape. Overcoming the magical curse

Vukomir announced, "I am a brave changeling and my story will not end here!"

ADVENTURE

Analysis revealed that when attached to a ship the sunstone will lead the vessel on a magical voyage of adventure, with rich rewards and very real risks — quite different from rituals such as Lure of the distant shore.

AUCTION

Vukomir put the sunstone in the private auction where it is sold for eight thrones. He said, "I will give two thrones to the Navarr, two to the Varushkans

and two to the Urien. The remaining two I will keep for myself. As my cousin said, 'he who takes the curse gets the purse!'"

ANTLER RUNE JEWELLERY

INFUSED

WITH WINTERMARK

HEARTH MAGIC

HADAND DUNWULF, DUNHEARTH HALL
LARGE RANGE IN STOCK EACH SEASON

JUST 10R PER PIECE



TWO RINGS WORTH

Expert opinion on finance by economist, priest of Prosperity and Urizen senator for Zenith Edmundo of Endsmeet



THE SENATE NEEDS TO LEARN FROM CITIZEN'S INVESTMENTS

In times of crisis it is telling how people react and the recent economic crash is no different. While the Senate has been slow to act, individuals have stepped up and self-funded useful projects to develop the Empire's Prosperity.

DEFICIT

We are in desperate need of reducing our deficit and increasing income to the Senate. One huge step forward would be the creation of new positions – Imperial bourse positions. This will give our Senate the money it needs to operate fully. It will increase resources which we need and give those with less money a fighting chance of getting a sinecure in their lifetime. For years, the Senate has had money and not invested in its economic future. Rather it has

pushed almost everything into the war effort. Things have been changing in the past nine months, but there are still hang-ups from this outdated way of thinking. One big step towards this was the reduction of the guerdon by 100 thrones. But if sources are to be believed, Dawnish senators have been conspiring to reduce military uptake to force the Senate to raise it again.

OPPOSITION

There has been moves towards buildings which will benefit the Empire, however every step seems to have strong opposition. To bring in 24 white granite, a dock had to go through a second Senate session to get even 100 thrones, which is unlikely to even pay for half the construction. A second

dock was fully funded by the Concordium of Pallas in Urizen last season which allows trade with Jarm for 21 wains of weirwood. This was auctioned as an Imperial title and as such will also increase the funds of the Senate. The Concordium are now in talks about helping with the first dock as well.

HARBOUR

Members of the League have self-funded the repair of the cargo harbour at Caricomare which will help the city, but will also likely increase the tax revenue of the Senate. It is hard to believe that Senators debated whether to pass this obviously beneficial motion.

Three incredible individuals named Archilies of Damakan's Forge, Thomas of Upwold and Asael of Cantiarach's Hold made an even larger project. Between them they fully funded a runeforge, which will cost roughly 1,000 thrones

to create. They also paid four years of upkeep (80 thrones) up front and are willing to consider continuing to pay its upkeep. They chose to have it assigned through the Imperial bourse auction. So the runeforge will add wealth to the Senate's budget. In addition citizens had completed there were several great works and a fortress with two years of upkeep paid to the Senate.

Whilst the Senate has extremely low funds at this time in the future it must shoulder the burden of pushing for the advancement of the economy rather than growing dependent on its citizens.



A crash in bourse receipts (See *Oathwright 4*) has seen the Senate budget for 381YE fall by 2,000 thrones compared to 380YE.

VAGABONDS ABANDON PRIDE AND BEG ON ANVIL STREETS

By Cormack Dun

Beggars have been seen asking for alms on the streets of Anvil at the Spring festival.

Bloocrow Ergot said "Beggars are fraudsters or lack anything of worth about them. They to claim to be without any personal income or resource to speak of but even the least Prosperous citizen of the

Empire can command 2 crowns to start a business."

One mendicant, Robert Bran Van Holberg, sought out *The Oathwright* to explain his sorry tale that led him to compromise his Pride by seeking charity from more Prosperous citizens.

Robert said, "Most call me Bob

the Beggar, but I don't want that title. I was wounded defending Holberg some seven years ago, when I took a poisoned Druj arrow to the leg. Although the healers did all they could for me I was left lame. After that I tried to return to my farm. I wanted to turn my sword to a plough-share but the land is flooded and has mostly been abandoned. In such hard times there is competition for the little good land and there isn't room for a lame farmer to even keep a vegetable patch. So I was forced onto the streets to beg or starve."

AMBITION

Robert is not content with his lot, he has lost all Prosperity and Pride but he still has Ambition. And he came to Anvil to share his plan to build a hospice that will take care of veterans of the siege of Holberg. "I want to find support to

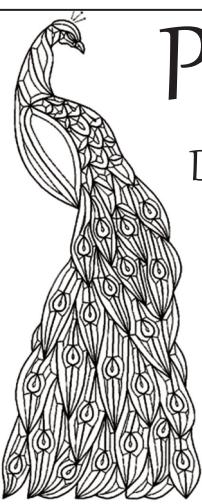
build a retirement home for the veterans of Holberg and of other wars too if we can build it big enough.

We would need about 30

thrones for something small."

While some wealthy burghers from the League offered support, it seems most of the citizens of attending the Spring festival did not feel motivated to help a beggar – even if he had been wounded in war. Robert said, "John of Meade told me to fuck off."

The region Rebeshof which was once rich farmland flooded during the previous war with the Druj. The morass now threatens Ennerlund too.



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ENCOUNTER WITH A DEAD EMPEROR

By Iona Dun

Mad Emperor" Nicovar was summoned through the door of death by Navarri Yianai Pathfinder on Saturday evening at the Spring festival. While citizens gathered in awe, the troubled Emperor, who died in 209 YE and was branded "one of the most infamous figures in the history of the Empire" by our social service, appeared in the Regio and answered Yianai's questions.

When quizzed about the artefact used in the ritual to summon him and that once belonged to him, Nicovar seemed genuinely interested and asked a few questions:

- What does this artefact look like?
- It is a wand with a small hand at one end. What was its purpose?
- Can I see it?
- No, it was destroyed in the ritual.
- Was it made of wood?
- Yes.
- (holds his hands apart a foot apart) About this long?
- Yes.
- With a curved hand on one end?
- Yes.
- It was a back-scratcher."

PARANOIA

MAD OR MISUNDERSTOOD?

Librarian at the Anvil Public Library Enchantress Geniveve D'Tensiel muses on the motivations of her antithesis Emperor Nicovar.

Emperor Nicovar is not remembered for his early years as a brilliant administrator, or the academies he founded, or for his years spent improving the running of the Civil Service.

TRAGEDY

He ordered thousands of volumes of history, philosophy, magic and science to be burned - in many cases scholars who fought desperately to protect them were burned too. I do not wish this great tragedy to be repeated, but I do seek to understand why it occurred. Some citizens I have spoken to think it fitting that his

To the disappointment of the Assembly of Vigilance, who had asked Yianai to perform this ritual, the rest of Nicovar's answers were tainted with the same madness and paranoia the Emperor had developed at the end of his life, "I had to be very careful about the people around me. Especially towards the end, when so many people were lying. I had to take precautions against their lies. I was surrounded by lies."

UNPOPULAR

Initially a reformist who expanded the role of the civil service, Emperor Nicovar became increasingly unstable and paranoid over the years. His unpopular policies not only divided the Senate and the Synod; they also divided the entire society. Nicovar blamed others for this division, "If Highguard said $2+2=5$, not only did they all immediately believe it, it was sent across the land and everyone began to believe it."

BURN

In 209 YE Nicovar decided to send his troops to burn down the Empire's libraries. Revolt ensued and the mad emperor was executed by the captain of his own guard,



ambitious projects were ended by fire (the symbol of ambition). It is a fiction that Highguard rewrite history to make it more virtuous. What has been lost from Nicovar's story? Has it merely become a cautionary tale that mages must temper their actions. Or is it a more malicious attempt to prevent Lineaged individuals from assuming positions of power?

DESCENT

What really happened? Many say that it was his attempt to manage and gather information which triggered his descent.

He was a Day mage, whose life's

Navarr Thorn Isaella. Despite the resistance, thousands of books and scrolls were lost. A tragic destruction that Nicovar explained in his own troubled words as "trying to protect the knowledge." Before Yianai Pathfinder closed

the Black Gate and its whispers, he had one more question for Nicovar: did he know anything about the Hand of Glory? Nicovar's answer came out of the smoke: "The Hand of Glory? Don't know anything about it".

work was to improve the working of the Empire. Would he willingly seek to destroy all that? I myself am Lineaged. A Cambion. While his priorities and how he endowed and supported these institutions, I cannot understand it. Even in my nightmares I cannot comprehend his actions - so I have begun to wonder, did he have another purpose?

SECRETS

My hypothesis is that Nicovar was protecting someone from the Eternals of the Whisper Gallery. I have met many people who live in fear of the Whisper Gallery. This organisation is well-known to Day mages. Its members obsessed with secrets. They collect them. They want to ensure that they remain secrets. Even now they hunt the reincarnated souls of a single

coven. (No more details here for their safety.) One of these reincarnated souls has only recently passed the labyrinth. The Gallery hunt and kill children.

Could it be that the Whisper Gallery threatened the entire Empire? And what would you do to protect an entire Empire of people? Rather than their destruction by the Whisper Gallery, would you burn books instead?

LIBRARY

Be warned. If you enter my Library with the intent to harm its books, or its staff, I will do all in my power to protect it. If you would like to share your knowledge and enjoy debate. Do visit. And if you have any knowledge about Nicovar's staff of the Magi that would be very welcome too. I'd like to write a song about it.

AVOIDING MATTERS MAGICAL WHY I DON'T GO TO THE CONCLAVE

Librarian at the Anvil Public Library Enchantress
Geniveve D'Tensiel on the failings of Conclave



The Hall of Worlds is an exclusive, mysterious and magical place. It is the site of the Conclave of the most powerful magicians in the Empire, a meeting place of realms and home to the most boring meetings anyone has ever attended.

ARCANE

While I delight in the magic I work, I am a busy woman – an Earl – and librarian of the Central Library. I am a passionate reader of all matters arcane, keeping up to date with any literature I can get my hands on. But I do not enjoy the Conclave meetings. During my last visit, I brought a chair and my dinner as I badly needed to eat. I did not realise that eating would be the most productive thing I would do that evening.

Take one example. During one

visit there was a conversation about assigning some crystal mana to a coven for a ritual. A member of the coven stood and spoke eloquently. All were of a mind to give him the mana. I thought we would move swiftly to the next point, but no, instead another mage stood and spoke at length at why this ritual was a good idea, the theory behind the decision, and that they should be given the mana. When we got to a vote, all still voted to give the mage the mana, but the general mood was of great disinterest.

LIMIT

While we do limit who can speak with the spending of crystal mana, any mage who feels they have something worth saying can spend a mana crystal to talk about it. I would dearly love to talk to other autumn mages and discuss



The Empire's magic parliament is called Conclave. Held in a realm called the Hall of Worlds, it is open to those who can create portals.

ritual technique. Instead, we discuss who deserves resources over another, or to allow or disallow experimental magic. Instead of sharing knowledge between covens of different nations we squabble over crystal mana.

REALM

Most of the issues in the Conclave are simply products of having too many people meeting at once. Why do we not meet by order and realm – in a similar way to priests – and appoint the most eloquent speakers from among our numbers? The Senate doesn't involve everyone who is politically con-

cerned – just senators. Everyone else is able to listen. Even the Military Council doesn't allow just anyone to talk, and increasingly limits the roles of adjutant. So why do we wizards even attempt such a gathering?

This is not to say that I do not enjoy visiting the Hall of Worlds itself, for there are always interesting goings on – and it is a magical place. Unfortunately I realise that any change to the running of the Conclave would require yet another vote. I doubt I will be there for that vote. Although if it passes I might return.

GENERAL ASKS FOR MANA TO FIGHT WAR

Urizen General Nicassia appealed for greater supplies of mana to be given to covens who support the Imperial war effort. “The Military Council can do better by having the best and most current intelligence on the fronts on which we are fighting, and by having the support of the other Imperial Houses and the nations.” Nicassia has made shrewd use of ritual magic to support the Empire’s heroes when they go through the Sentinel Gate (see *Dispatches P.2*).

“I am Proud of the covens who have been supplying the Military

Council with what we need, both massive effect rituals for battles and enchantments and curses on our armies and territories. However, I know that these covens are not being recompensed. The Military Council is not able to do this. Those who have the power to give mana to those who use it for the good of the Empire ought to do so, for the sake of Loyalty and Prosperity.”

Every season hundreds of mana are expended by private citizens to build fortresses and strengthen armies to keep the barbarians at bay.

ERRATA

Everyone makes mistakes. At *The Oathwright* we care about the accuracy of our reporting. Thank you to all the readers who pointed out the following oversights in the previous edition:

P.10 “In a land of Revelation” we should have referred to the Land without Tears, not Vale of Tears

P.11 It is the Colossus of Sarvos not Temeschwar.

The year is 381YE not 380YE as we said at the foot of most pages.

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THRONE CHOOSES PRAGMATISM OVER VIRTUE

The Throne published a guide to foreign policy in Winter 380YE, "The Druj, negotiation provides insight to what our enemies want. A treaty should be brought to the Senate's floor. We need a clever negotiating team, who do not hate. Hate undermines Wisdom."

MENACE

This suggestive language is heavy with the menace of heresy. The phrase 'free of hate' is another way of saying that any who disobey the Empress's doomed plan to make peace with the Druj are hate cultists.

The same tactic was used to dis-



HERESY AND ANARCHY: OUR NEW FRIENDS

The Throne and Theruinin have offered Great Forest freedom heretics a region of which could see up to 30 thrones or more slashed off the treasury budget each season.

Not to mention that many citizens have seen their resources raided by these law-breakers and

suade the Synod from opposing slavery and promoting The Way in the Iron Confederacy, because that would be promoting anarchy — while promoting instability in Asavea is fine, because of a new 'virtue' "pragmatism". The policy guide said, "the Synod is wielding a disproportional amount of influence upon foreign policy. Constitutionally this is the job of the Senate. Flip flopping and vacillation weakens the Empire"

RESPONSIBILITY

The constitution agrees, "the Senate will assume responsibility for relations with other na-

"The written word is the currency of worth"

Bloodcrow Ergot



tions..." In law this translates as the power of authority, "an ambassador may agree a ceasefire with a barbarian nation - but they cannot legally prohibit an Imperial general from submitting an order to attack the barbarians. That requires a declaration of peace - which must be passed by the Imperial Senate."

TARIFFS

However spreading The Way is not a negotiation on behalf of the Empire. One caveat being that negotiating an inquisition by a foreign state requires the "authority" of the Ambassador or their Proxy. Perhaps the

Throne has misunderstood the Constitution especially given the suggestion of tariffs applied to slaver nations... which is constitutionally impossible, though such misunderstandings are understandable given the constitutions arcane wording. Wisdom tells us we can only know so much after all.

TAXATION

The Constitutional provision guaranteeing citizens' prosperity prevents new taxes being imposed on the people to raise revenue for the Empire or to try and control behaviour. In any case a tariff on slavers' goods would be nothing more than a tax on slavery.

WAR OF THE WAY



The war of culture and faith rages across the continents and seas but the Empire only reacts, it does not lead. Foreign nations will not end slavery while the Empire creates demand for their products. Slave wains undermine the value of Imperial wains, weakening the Senate.

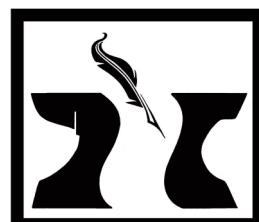
Whether relations have improved

is irrelevant, a grovelling attitude and lowering of Virtues and Values (dignity, freedom, Prosperity) leads not only to a damned human soul but also sends the wrong message. If our Virtues and values are not held up under test then what is the point? Where is the Loyalty?

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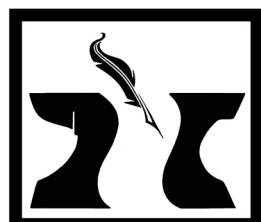
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SPEAKING TO THE SPEAKER

By Cormack Dun

John of Meade is an institution: the famously grumpy Marcher farmer-turned civil servant who tells Senators to shut up and chooses when the Empress gets to speak.

Never very talkative at the best of times, when interviewed by the press he takes taciturn to new heights. In answer to my questions John said, "Do you really expect me to reply to that?" And, more than once, "No comment." And, "If you say that about me I will turn Anvil upside down to find you and express my disapproval in the strongest way possible."

RESPECTED

John of Meade is widely respected. Lorenzo of the Butcher's Bank named him "one of the most important people in Anvil." Asking around I've heard others describe him as "really good," or "brilliant", and "a credit to the Em-



Woodcut from an original by Charlie Moss

pire." And, of course, "John of Meade told me to 'fuck off.'" I found John at the Hub with the civil service, surrounded by busy senators eager to ask him questions. He diligently answered each question with a curt "yes", "no" or, if the question was particularly facetious, with a few more fairly gentle words to help the questioner reconsider.

TOLD

I got less far with some of my questions, "Dogri Thulebane is in camp, what do you think about how he was treated?"

John, "I have no eyes to see, no ears to hear. Except as the Senate

orders."

John is the speaker of the Senate – "one of the speakers" he sharply corrects me. John was trained for the civil service but had taken little interest in that career path until five years ago when the Empress Britta died with the flower of the Empire and all of the senior civil servants. At that time John was "minding a herb garden in Meade. Then I was selected by the Constitutional Court, well, appointed... Told. I was told by the Constitutional Court to serve as Speaker of the Senate."

FIERCE

As speaker he has considerable power to silence, exclude or expel anyone from the Senate. I ask him about these powers and he has to look them up, "I have never used any of my powers." Anyone who has observed his fierce efficiency in the Senate will know why: he doesn't need legal powers to enforce his authority.

Abraham, head of the Constitutional Court, criticised senators

but said they are getting better, and I ask John of Meade about his superior's opinion.

He rolls his eyes, "Oh, well if Abraham said that, I'm not saying anything." So I ask, have the senators got better? John, "No. What happened is that the civil service got better at helping. Since the great damage done in Skarsind. The processes applied by the civil service have bedded in and improved and now the Empire is working more smoothly."

BILLHOOKS

Pleased to have him talking, I turn the conversation back to his Herb garden in Meade. "I don't have that anymore. I told the farmers to turn their billhooks into bills and march to war against the Druj. Now they are in the Mourne fighting the Jotun." Now we are getting somewhere! "What do you think about the recent use of magical curses in the Mourne that killed so many Marchers?"

"No comment."

FAITH FADING IN GENERAL ESTANA — DOES HE SEEK TRIUMPH OR TREASURE?

By Lady Ranae Ygraine de Rondell
He may have lead the armies of the Brass Coast for many seasons but increasingly less than hushed voices are beginning to claim that General Estana's dedication to the Empire is fading, and his loyalty to his own troops is considerably less than his love of his purse.

THIEF

One of the scions of Estana's house was involved with the impersonation of a Herald, which lead to 500 thrones being stolen from the Butcher's Bank. Estana's kinsman has not been seen in Anvil again, but a whisper on the wind tells me that whilst the thief

may be missed, General Estana himself paid off significant debts to the Urizeni the next day. His possible ties to the Laughing Cambion — a group of poisonous repute, who have taken credit for the trickery that claimed the thrones of the Butcher's Bank — also go unaddressed.

As one former senator of Kharman has said, "the man is as honest as the Druj and has more in common with Grendel morality than that of the Brass Coast." His allies claim that these scurrilous rumours are nothing but the verbal flatulence of tavern room drunks, but they fall silent on the matter of his military leadership in recent years. Even his closest friends have to acknowledge that General Estana has not been seen on the battlefield in several seasons, and outside of the Brass Coast, criticism is rising.

LAZINESS

"While it is understandable to send an adjutant to act instead of a general it seems like either an attempt at politically sabotaging a rival or sheer laziness not to back

them up in any of the meetings they attend in the way an adjutant backs up their general," was the comment of Tancred of Dawn, a stalwart of the military council.

AGENDA

General Gabriel Barossa of the League commented, more damningly, "Estana has a record of choosing tactics which suit his own agenda, trying to seek plunder when other armies are focussing on defending territory at the least cost of Imperial lives." The coin counters of the Imperial Armies, furthermore, murmur that the General's accountancy in the Sermersuaq campaign was particularly notable; he took resources obtained from the

Quartermaster to assist with resupply, then later claimed he had used them to fund the creation of the Navy. Yet the self-same General has been seen in the Senate, to claim repayment for the cost of funding that very Navy. This kind of financial chicanery is a matter of concern to the whole Empire, for none wish to see their brethren die on the field in order

to ensure one man can fill his pockets.

Should he compensate for his greed by using his troops with skill and cunning, perhaps the man could make a defence. After all, what matters is that the Empire is victorious. Am I right? Yet General Barossa cuts aside this defence with all the legendary sharpness of the League.

SPITE

"Estana's habit," he told me, "of placing winning wealth above the lives of his troops has avoided getting his army wiped out by luck rather than judgement. The battle in the Mourne he led was won in spite of his leadership, not because of it."

In the Battle of the Mourne, it is openly admitted by the other commanders that the only order received from him during the battle was one calling for all generals to attend upon him for a conference. While this was going on, Dawnish and League forces captured the objective.

The General's flag flies brightly. But his virtue shines more dully.

LISSÁ'S MASSAGE

Sigehold Hall
Wintermark

1 crown for
20 minutes



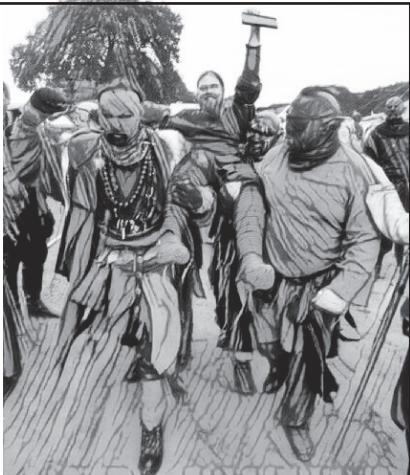
LAST WORDS

Dogri Thulebane was tried and sentenced to death at the Spring Festival in Anvil for the murder of 200 Varushkan soldiers when he resisted arrest at his home of Crow's Keep in Skarsind. Speaking exclusively to *The Oathwright* before his trial Dogri said, "I don't regret standing for what I believe in. I do regret the deaths. It could have been avoided. The decision to send the Iron Helms was rushed and ham-fisted and unpopular – as was shown by my support."

BITTER

Dogri was bitter about the death of his son and had had no news of his other three children and his wife, one member of his hall, Eska and one of the many Wintermarkers who went to defend

Skarsind Senator Hrafnar carried aloft by Irontide Vio and others in Spring 379YE, after Hrafnar offered Skarsind to the orcs. In Winter 380, Vio, now Senator of Skarsind said, "The Imperial Orcs are happy to let Dogri keep Crow's Keep." Hrafnar was the only Wintermarker to send soldiers to help the Iron Helms arrest Dogri and kill his sons.



A BLOODY GREAT OPENING NIGHT

By Darius Popa Von Temeschwar

The opulent polished white granite portico and façade of The Bloody Great Theatre that dominates the Butcher's Block Square gives way to a dazzling hall dressed with floor-to-ceiling weirwood-framed mithril mirrors. In this writer's opinion it is quite the most beautiful of the Great Works which The Bloody Butcher's Guild have recently funded for the Empire to demonstrate their Pride and Prosperity. The building itself is just part of a magnificent display of what makes Temeschwar, The League and The Empire so great. The clear sound of harps cuts through the excited babble of the audience as they make their way through

him from the Iron Helms were tried – both were acquitted.

The lord of Crow's Keep bore particular ill will for former Senator of Skarsind Thanmir Hrafna (or Hrafnar) who chose to send soldiers to support the Iron Helms and whose forces may have been enough to tip the balance in favour of the attackers. In Spring 379YE Thanmir proposed the motion that saw Skarsind given to the orcs. At the time he called it a "courageous step."

Dogri said, "people visited me because their lives were turned upside down by our loss. All because Senator Hrafnar wanted to be remem-

bered as a hero. I didn't want my home taken by orcs."

Dogri admitted that he knew he could not resist arrest forever, but he hoped he could hold out long enough to negotiate a peaceful resolution, "Ideally – Skarsind returned to Wintermark or else Crow's Reach left in lands of Wintermark."

OATH

The war hero of many battles with the Thule said he doubted the honesty of sworn members of the civil service, "my people told me the magistrate was out for blood. It was hard to tell if he was true to his oath." The civil service take magical oaths to maintain fairness. A representative said, "like all civil servants magistrates are compelled to remain honest and impartial by the magical power of the oaths they have sworn."

Eloquently defended by Jorma Steelhail of Wintermark, Dogri was sentenced to death and Wintermark was charged to carry out the sentence.

CHARGE

In front of a crowd in the Artisan's Arms, Mother Thane of Kraftinar, Egrogore Sesi of the Suaq the and Leofric Dunning argued fiercely about who should kill Dogri and how – in single combat or by execution. It was decided that Dogri would be sent to fight the Grendel – and if he returned before sundown he would be put to the sword. Once through the gate into Urizen Dogri fought bravely, twice charging the barbarians single handed. On his second charge he was killed.



ships sails across the colossal stage under a brilliant display of fireworks and pyrotechnics to the hushed silence as the final curtain falls followed by the rapturous applause as the whole audience stand to demand encore upon encore. A truly outstanding play. Do not miss!

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ACADEMY ADVENTURES

"Train Hard and with Spirit"

By Sagua i'Ezmara

INFUSIONS AND INVESTMENTS

The heat this past summit was stifling to the plans of many citizens, including the smaller ones, and the Academy was unable to go as far afield as they usually do. With that in mind they decided to take an adventure in their minds and obtained a large batch of goosewhisper infusion, a potion that allows those who drink it to obtain visions of the future in a similar manner to the signs and portents ritual.

They filled a whole wall with pictures drawn of their visions, but perhaps more interesting was the side effects mentioned. It was not only the Academy that suffered from these. Those who sought the future during the Spring Equinox found themselves with lingering symptoms, hallucinations of music, visions, sensations which slowly faded as their hold on reality reasserted itself. It was quite a curious effect and I wonder if it will reoccur in the future.

The cadets are made of sterner stuff than most, and managed to head out on a skirmish despite the weather. It was intended to be a reconnaissance mission but they happened to come across an orc general and his bodyguards and swiftly sprang into action.

FIGHTING

As they have now been fighting together for some time they reacted quickly to the surprise,

more quickly than the similarly surprised enemy, and they ploughed through them with a startling efficiency. When these cadets are old enough to take the main battlefield I wonder if there'll be any enemies of the Empire out there brave enough to face them after a few examples of their skills!

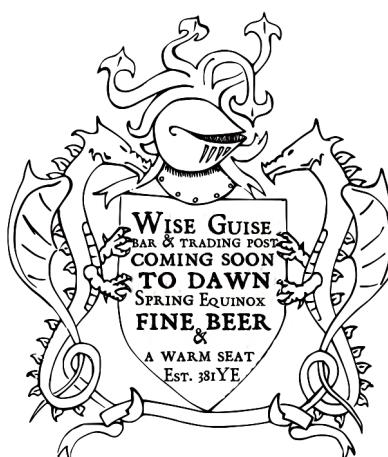
COMPETITION

It's not all adventures at the Academy, there are some very important lessons to learn and competitions to help those lessons stick. All the virtues are celebrated and embraced there, but sometimes the Academy can use a little help with Prosperity, it takes a lot of funds to supply all the materials and training. I would heavily recommend anyone with a mind to share their Prosperity, excess sweets, supplies or the like to visit and invest in the future of the Empire. Loyalty is a virtue after all.

However the Academy is Wiser than to rely on such gifts, the children are encouraged to seek out Prosperity themselves and in the spirit of competition and ambition strive to be the best at it. This season there was a contest to see who could gain the most return on a 4 crown investment, each of the children taking the money and returning their results at the end of the time allowed.

HAGGLED

The winner was Serena of the League, who haggled keenly for herbs, used her skills to turn them into potions and sold them at a profit, resulting in being able to double her investment! She received the prize of an Oakenheart shield and the knowledge that her prowess was able to help the Academy. This challenge actually reminds me of a tradition



in the Brass Coast that you might like to try for yourselves. Children are given a ring, one ring, and then challenged to see what they can do with it, what they can achieve. If you have the time I heartily recommend seeking out the Del Toro family and asking about the story of how they came to be, all about what can be achieved with just one ring and the Ambition to seek Prosperity with it.

Potions, teas and fine real coffee brewed at the hearth

LUMI'S
Sussuvanni Hall
Wintermark



Colour this money pig with your crayons or pencils

THE FORGE



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