



Imperial Civil Service Report

Subject: *The Coven of the Burning Star*.....

Report:*The good news is that it was comparatively easy to identify the Coven that the Minister has asked us to research.*

Unfortunately, that is about all the good news I have to report....

.....*The Coven of the Burning Star most notably operated in the period after Emperor Nicovar, where records, whilst still imperfect, are somewhat easier to come by.*

.....*The Coven of the Burning Star, with particular reference to Surut, is evidenced in Senate, Conclave and Synod records in the period of 234-239, between the reigns of Empress Mariika and Emperor Guntherm.*

.....*The Coven of the Burning Star hailed from Apulus in Urizen and, anecdotally, were composed of human and draughir mages with a primary interest in Winter magic. One of their number, Sephirus Brightstar, served as Archmage of Winter in the Conclave during 237 to 238 YE.*

..... *This period was a dark one for the Empire. Although Empress Mariika's reforms were, from history's perspective, necessary, the*



reductions in Imperial military power did create a perception of weakness, which was only enhanced with the Empress' death, and resulted in various threats arising to the Empire.

..... One of the more dire threats appears to have come from a creature from the Realm of Spring that appears to have been called Yannah or potentially Mer'yannah.

..... The accounts from nearly a century and a half ago are not detailed. In addition to not being able to agree on the creature's name, there was also some dispute as to whether it was a Herald, or not.

..... What is not disputed is the threat that it represented to the Empire. It appears, by force of will, personality or possibly magic, to have taken control of a minor Orc tribe and proceeded to warp their warriors, hunters and shamen into twisted abominations that spilled out across the Empire causing untold chaos and destruction. The base of Yannah's power was rendered utterly unassailable by conventional means as a result of extraordinarily potent Spring magics. We need to allow for a century of exaggeration, but there is one story of armies being consumed wholesale by carnivorous plants and insects. Again, it could be hyperbole, or the unvarnished truth, but the Dark Heart of Spring,



located somewhere in Dawn, was regarded as a poison that could potentially spread and kill the Empire.....

..... We have record of Archmage Sephirus being invited to speak to the Senate regarding the Dark Heart. If accounts are accurate, then the gist was regarding needing a magical solution for a magical problem, and warning the Senate that the cost of doing so would be high.

..... This record is subsequently supported by Archmage Sephirus requesting ilium and other resources with which to make a deal with Surut of the Thrice-Cursed Court. The incidentals are disputed, but one quote remains consistent across all accounts. In an address to the Conclave, Archmage Sephirus is reported to have said to the Conclave, "The ilium is amongst the smallest part of the price that Surut has demanded in order that we would have the power to destroy the Dark Heart. The coven that wields this power must also swear a binding oath that their first born children be delivered to Surut where they shall live out their lives in eternal pain."

..... The Gambit was, by all accounts, approved and the Coven of the Burning Star completed the deal with Surut, completed the ritual, and brought about the destruction of the Dark Heart in Dawn.



.....The story concludes with the twist that not one of the Coven of the Burning Star had any children. Following the destruction and the completion of their pact, the Coven – as one – took their own lives and entered the Labyrinth of Ages, thus denying Surut the price he demanded.

.....The Synod recognised the virtue of their self-sacrifice through statements of principle and rewardings to their Spires. There was, apparently, discussion around having the Archmage Sephirus recognised as an Exemplar of Vigilance, but this did not come to pass for reasons that are not a matter of any record we can uncover.

.....What is known is that a Herald of Surut subsequently made its presence known in the Hall of Worlds and vowed that the Coven of the Burning Star would not escape their bargain and that Surut would find them and have what is his.

..... What is believed is that Yannah, the creature of Spring, was destroyed in the ritual that destroyed the Orc Tribe and the Dark Heart. However, like other elements from this event, this cannot be entirely verified.

.....I hope that this report satisfies the key information that the Minister was seeking with reference to the Coven of the Burning Star.



Signed by:..... *Isabelle De Alicer*.....

Date: *Spring Equinox, 378 Y.E.*.....