

# Echoes of the Labyrinth

Volume 6a-6d: Winter Solstice 381 YE -  
Autumn Equinox 382 YE

A collection of notes on the experience of  
Pure Liao Visionaries, collected by

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&

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by the direction and authority of the Assembly of Nine.

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Winter Solstice 381 YE to Autumn Equinox 382 YE accounts taken by Livia Cascade, Rodric Worldscribe and Alcuin Shatterspire; writeups and commentary by Livia Cascade.

Information contained here is incomplete; future editions of this pamphlet may contain more information as the authors consult again with the visionaries and their guides.

These notes were taken from verbal testimonies of witnessed events, so spellings and exact pronunciations of names should not be considered definitive.

This pamphlet also contains a copy of a threatening letter Livia was sent related to the publishing of these visions.

# Winter Solstice, 381 YE

## Introduction

Three visionaries experienced visions induced by Pure Liao at the Solstice. Of these, two were selected by the Council of Gatekeepers, and the provenance of the third is not recorded in the notes at the moment.

Following their visions, the visionaries and their accompanying guides were questioned by the authors. Their stories are recorded in the following pages, in the order that the visions were received.

- \* **Asael of Cantiararch's Hold** (Highguard), accompanied by Bartimeus of the Shattered Tower (Highguard)
- \* **Ephron of Adina's Charge** (Highguard), accompanied by Josephine Novarion (Dawn)
- \* **Nessetta Constanta** (the League), accompanied by Jonah Yakovitch (the League)

## **Asael of Cantiararch's Hold (Highguard)**

Accompanied by Bartimeus of the Shattered Tower (Highguard)

The provenance of Asael's dose of pure liao is not currently recorded in these notes.

The visionary gave his permission for these notes to be made public. The testimony was presented by the visionary with some assistance from his guide.

The visionary awoke sitting round a drum with two other people. Others were both men, wearing furs. One of them was holding a spear. There was the sound of wind around them.

The other two were talking about fighting the Jotun, and mentioned that they had stolen the spear there from another tribe. They described the members of that tribe as being "dark inside". The tribe they had stolen the spear from was not named; it was not the Steinr, as they were also mentioned by one of the others as people that they could not trust.

They had only stolen the one spear, and wanted their champion - the one who was holding the spear - to wield it. They asked the visionary if they might also be able to use the spear, and the visionary said they might be able to. When the visionary held the spear, they could feel the power within it.

The others talked about attacking the other tribe, killing them and taking the spears. The visionary suggested that they could go and talk to the other tribe and learn to make spears, to make them stronger, and their children stronger, and their children's children stronger. The two others asked the visionary whether they should fight the other tribe or try to talk to them, and the visionary said that they ought to talk to them. The vision then faded briefly.

When the visionary awoke again, they were sitting in a cave or possibly a tent, with rough walls. The wall nearest the visionary appeared to glitter. With the visionary was the man from before who had not held the spear.

There was a woman only a few feet from the visionary's face, staring at them; she was wearing furs and had a white face with dark paint across her left eye.

Behind the woman was a man who was eating something that sounded juicy. The woman reminded him he was being a bad host and not offering sustenance, and he offered the visionary and their companion food. The man with the visionary was

disgusted by the food; from conversation, and the noise of eating it, it seemed that it was meat and possibly human in origin.

The man who was eating appeared to be in charge. He offered a skull to the visionary and their companion, and said it was a schema for the spear that they wanted to know how to make. The visionary's companion looked at the skull, and pointed out a rune on it, saying "That's Mawrig". The skull also had a hole in it like it had been caved in.

The man with the skull held it up to his head, and said, "I have two skulls. If I give you this, I will have only one. So I would need another."

At this, the visionary's companion said that they should fight the other two. Meanwhile, the man with the skull gave the visionary the choice of who should sacrifice themselves to provide the skull. The visionary said that they would sacrifice themselves, and the vision ended.

During the vision, someone mentioned that the spear was blessed by what sounded to the visionary like 'Sejyana'. This could have been a mishearing of Sydanjaa, the eternal storm to the north of Sermersuaq. The spear itself that the visionary's tribe wanted to learn to craft might also have been Sydanjaa's Call, the shaft of which is traditionally marked with Mawrig.

Spears of a similar sort were also historically used by the Ushkan people, and this along with a possible resemblance of the cave walls to the painted caves of Miekarova suggests that the tribe they learned to make it from might have been the Ushkans.

Asael had his soul examined by the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, his soul had two testimonies on it - "Boursetastic Benefactor" and "Vigilant Bannerman", both with the strength of a single priest.

After the vision, as well as the testimonies, he had a dedication to Prosperity with the strength of three priests behind it. His soul also had an injury that caused severe head pain and appeared to be an echo of an injury from his past life. An exorcism with three priests settled his soul again to remove it.

It is not clear where the dedication came from, since Asael was undedicated before the vision. It might be a result of a combination of the Pure Liao and the ceremony itself, since according to some of the Pure Liao Civil Service members present, Asael attested during the pre-vision ceremony that he followed the Virtue of Prosperity. This is similar to the spontaneous dedication to Loyalty that occurred to Harald Johnson of Upwold,

guide priest to Pete Keeper in Summer 378 YE.

Bartimeus also had his soul examined by the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, his soul had a dedication to Prosperity with the strength of a single priest.

The coven of the Spire of Auric Horizon also performed divination rituals on Asael after the vision to gain information about his past life and corroborate what the vision indicated.

The Day divination - Eyes of the Soul's Past - indicated that the visionary's past life was called Olga Stormstep, an icewalker of the Suaq, known as "golden-tongued".

The Night divination - Secrets of the Soul's Desire - gave a story:

"The call was heard. Then, and again, and again, and again. In large causes and in small, in great works and in mean."

**Ephron of Adina's Charge (Highguard)**  
Accompanied by Josephine Novarion (Dawn)

Ephron was selected as a visionary by the Council of Gatekeepers.

The visionary gave his permission for these notes to be made public. The testimony was presented by the visionary with some assistance from his guide.

The visionary awoke sat against a wall, feeling as if they had received lots of minor wounds.

A tall man with a staff came over and healed the visionary, and said that that was the last of his mana. He helped the visionary up and handed his staff to the visionary so that they could defend themselves. The visionary's polearm had apparently been broken; the staff they were handed had a clean design, with a sphere at the top, possibly orange-coloured.

The man who helped the visionary up was wearing a long pale flowing robe, possibly cream-coloured. He said to the visionary, "they're about to break through", and added that the visionary needed to hold them off while he did a ritual that would call the power of the wasteland into a crystal, "and then they would pay".

There were two other people at the door to the room, dressed like Urizeni, perhaps sentinels. One of them wore greyish spiked medium armour. There was hammering on the door outside, and gruff voices yelling things like "how long are you going to be in there until you starve", "come out, we're getting bored", and "you bastards, we had Spiral before you", as well as the sounds of battle.

The two Urizeni by the door were arguing. One of them wanted to leave and get reinforcements - they indicated a pile of rope in the corner of the room, and suggested that they could use that to leave out of the window. They said that staying was suicide, and suicide was unvirtuous. They seemed young, possibly in their late teens.

The other argued that they should have the courage of their convictions, and that it was virtuous to die for a cause. They said, "This lighthouse has stood for years; that door will hold. Probably."

The name "Hadrian" was mentioned, possibly as that of the ritualist.

The visionary listened to the two by the door, and interjected occasionally as they

argued. They exhorted the other two to have pride in their convictions, and to hold the door, and agreed that there was virtue in dying for a cause.

While the visionary was listening to and interjecting in the argument, the man who had given them the staff had gone into an adjoining room and begun a ritual, which the guide priest listened to.

The ritualist started by calling on the power of the wasteland, and invoked a boon, although the guide did not catch anything that sounded like a name. The general theme of the ritual was about calling down the darkness.

Part-way through, the ritualist said "phase one is complete", then continued with another part. About half way through the second phase, he sounded like he broke down, and said, "I don't think I can do this". Then what sounded like a female voice replied, "Of course you can, you need to."

The ritualist said something short in reply that the guide did not catch, paused, then began speaking again to continue the ritual. He made it to the end without further pauses, and at the end he said, "I must speak the words to end this. I call down the darkness to obscure the light." He added that he'd go down and take those bastards with him, and then said, "It is done", three times. The vision ended once the ritual had finished.

During the vision, there appeared to be a figure in dark hooded robes, speaking over people's shoulders. Most often it was behind the visionary, whispering to them; at their guide's advice, they ignored its whispers. Occasionally it whispered to the others. For example, when one of the people at the door said, "We might die", it whispered, "Yes, you will". Nobody interacted with the figure other than the guide.

It also spoke to the guide priest as it passed them while it circled the room. At one point it said, "just give in, your work won't amount to anything", to which the guide said, "screw you", to which it chuckled. On a later pass, the guide asked, "Can you hear me?" to which it chuckled again and said, "I will see you soon enough". It said the same to the guide immediately before the vision ended.

Ephron had his soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after, his soul had a dedication to Pride with the strength of a single priest.

Josephine also had her soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. In both, her soul had a dedication to Pride with a strength of a single priest.



**Nessetta Constanta (the League)**  
Accompanied by Jonah Yakovitch (the League)

Nessetta was selected as a visionary by the Council of Gatekeepers.

The visionary has not yet given her permission for her account to be made public. If you would like to know about her vision, please speak to Nessetta.

Nessetta had her soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after, her soul had a dedication to Pride with the strength of a single priest.

Jonah also had his soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after, his soul had a dedication to Vigilance with the strength of a single priest, and two testimonies - "Always Learning" and "Slightly Virtuous", both with the strength of a single priest.

# Spring Equinox, 382 YE

## Introduction

Three visionaries experienced visions induced by Pure Liao at the Solstice. Of these, two were selected by the Council of Gatekeepers, and the third was chosen by the winner of the Virtuous Auction.

Following their visions, the visionaries and their accompanying guides were questioned by the authors. Their stories are recorded in the following pages, in the order that the visions were received.

- \* **Sian of the Eternal Family** (Navarr), accompanied by Raewyn of the Eternal Family
- \* **Brendan Brackensong** (Navarr), accompanied by Eleri Bronwen's Rest (Navarr)
- \* **Thomas Smith of Upwold** (the Marches), accompanied by Edwin de Warrene (the Marches)

**Sian of the Eternal Family (Navarr)**  
Accompanied by Raewyn of the Eternal Family

Sian was selected as a visionary by the Council of Gatekeepers.

The visionary gave her permission for these notes to be made public. The testimony was presented by the visionary and her guide together.

The visionary awoke with a piece of paper in their hand. They were in a small room with a desk, a bed, and a small table for refreshments. The desk had paperwork on it, and the table had a stick on it with a note saying "Investigate" and the rune Naeve.

A man came in, carrying more paperwork. He seemed to be quite stressed. From conversation, it appeared that both he and the visionary were from Urizen; he asked the visionary at one point if they had been to somewhere that sounded like "Tabulus" (probably a mishearing of Apulus, a coastal region in the south of Spiral).

The man addressed the visionary as something that sounded like "Dana", possibly with a syllable before it, and spoke about the paperwork.

The paper that the visionary had been holding was one of several pieces of paper that described six potential senate motions, along with lists of senators who could propose and second those motions, which senators got on with which others, and what they wanted in return for proposing or seconding motions.

Of the six motions, the visionary could remember the subjects of five of them afterwards:

- \* Bathhouses in Sarvos;
- \* The Court of the White Fountain (currently a fortification in Optarion, a region in the south-east of Redoubt);
- \* Going into the Barrens and telling the Gryphon's Pride army to back off;
- \* Tax evasion in Zenith;
- \* Sermersuaq.

The visionary and the man tried to match senators and motions together and plan who should propose and second them. One of the senators was Mariika (presumably Mariika Ymmasdottir, later Empress Mariika, who was Senator for Sermersuaq on two occasions during Nicovar's reign), who the man described as a safe pair of hands, with a web of her own; he said that she "could almost be a spider herself".

The senator for Madruga at the time was apparently unpopular, with nobody wanting to join on a motion with them, and had apparently also asked for a limitless imperial favour and a dose of true liao as the price of proposing or seconding a motion. The man commented that they had the money to buy Madruga (possibly to win the senatorial seat), or that alternatively the current senator was going to take the battlefield the next day. Otherwise, if they kept the same senator for Madruga there, he said that "they'd have to work on the First Empress problem, and nobody wants that".

The man spoke of Nicovar as the current Emperor, but also referred to him as "Nicovar Ankarien" more than he did to him as "Emperor".

As well as the senate motions and lists of senators, the paperwork on the desk included people's accounts of pure liao visions. The name on one account was Aurelia Septimus dos Tassatos, and the text made mention of dramaturgical characters, not just for magic but for the Virtues as well. There were annotations on it saying, "True Liao is not magic" and "Can someone translate this into Imperial?"

Other papers were also annotated; the annotations that the visionary remembered afterwards included "Bullshit", "impossible", and "fob this off".

The man asked the visionary if they thought this was what spy training would be like. They talked about the seemingly impossible situation they were in - apparently it was two hours past midnight, and they had been asked to solve the problem of matching senators and motions by the next morning. Then the man said "we know where Nicovar sleeps", to which the visionary replied "Hang on", and tried to convince the man not to do anything violent.

He explained that "we're not going to kill him, we're going to break down his door and have words with him". He picked up the stick that was on the refreshment table, offered it to the visionary and said, "we're doing this then". They got up to leave, and the vision ended.

Sian had her soul examined by the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, his soul had a dedication to Wisdom with the strength of a single priest.

After the vision, as well as the dedication, her soul appeared to be injured, as if it had dragged her past self out a little on its return from the Labyrinth. In a similar way to the injuries to the souls of Abaddon de Rondell and Asher of Felix's Watch some time ago, healing her soul took multiple steps:

\* The rite of Excommunication separated her soul from the echo of her past self (with

the side effect of also removing her dedication).

\* The rite of Exorcism cleansed the now-separated echo from her soul, thus healing her injury fully.

\* As the excommunication had also removed her dedication, she was rededicated to Wisdom.

Raewyn also had her soul examined by the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, her soul had a dedication to Loyalty and a testimony of "Tireless Guide", both with the strength of a single priest.

The coven of the Spire of Auric Horizon also performed divination rituals on Sian after the vision to gain information about his past life and corroborate what the vision indicated.

The rituals indicated that Sian's past self was Yelena Ankarien, proudly of the Arbiter's Hand, the Left Hand of Nicovar and the Key of the Hand. They also indicated that the other spy in training repeatedly mentioned "the knave" as a source of information.

**Brendan Brackensong (Navarr)**  
Accompanied by Eleri Bronwen's Rest (Navarr)

Brendan (usually known as Dan) was selected as a visionary by the Council of Gatekeepers.

The visionary gave his permission for these notes to be made public. The testimony was presented by the visionary and his guide together.

The visionary woke up in what looked like a Navarri wayhouse, although the hangings and clothes around appeared to be Varushkan.

A man entered and introduced himself as a warden named Volkhov. He was tall and broad, with a bushy beard. He said to the visionary, "Look, I know you're a vate, I've asked you to deal with this." The visionary was aware of what they could do magically to some extent, including that they knew the spell to speak with the dead.

Volkhov and the visionary went further into the wayhouse, where there were three dead bodies. One was a man wearing red, slumped over a table, with his throat slit. In a corner was a woman with an axe out as though she had been defending herself, with slashes on her arms and neck. The third was a man holding a suspicious-looking bottle.

According to Volkhov, the two vales near the wayhouse were at each others' throats; they were thirty miles apart, with the wayhouse right in the middle. Their boyars had come together at the wayhouse to try to find a compromise so that they could make it through the winter.

The visionary first cast the spell to speak with the dead on the man in red at the table. He gave his name as Yosef, and said, "My bodyguard slit my throat" and swore at the bodyguard, whose name he didn't seem to remember. He said that he had been trying to get the other boyar, Katerina, to agree to be subjugated to Alderei (presumably Alderei the Fair), as it was "the only way to keep the Ushkan people strong".

From Yosef's comments and Volkhov's reactions, it seemed that this was at a time before Alderei was seen as being monstrous, and was instead seen as a strong leader willing to make hard choices.

Next, the visionary cast the spell to speak with the dead on the woman with the axe. She confirmed her name was Katerina, and said, "That bodyguard fucking stabbed me after he slit that guy's throat!" She said that her vale wasn't very strong, and the

negotiations were important; if the vales fought, her vale would have had little chance against Yosef's.

Katerina's other concern was that both vales would be wiped out because of Anarchists. Volkhov, the warden, mentioned that he'd been tracking a group of Anarchists called Firestarters.

Then the visionary cast the spell to speak with the dead on the man with the suspicious bottle. He laughed maniacally, gave his name as Milosh, and said he was with the "Freedom followers" up in the north. The visionary asked about other such followers, and Milosh said that he had friends but there was no hierarchy, as it was an organisation of Anarchists, and he thought that people didn't need leaders. He'd slit Yosef's throat, killed Katerina, and then taken poison that his friend had given him.

Milosh also said that there were people active in the south; he implied, though did not make it clear, that they were trying to stop the foundation of the Empire. His manner was very smug, and he was being rude to the other dead people, who could also speak and hear him at this point.

The visionary then had a long conversation with warden Volkhov about what their options were. They considered, and dismissed, letting all of either Katerina's smaller vale or Yosef's larger vale die. They also dismissed saying that it was Anarchists who had caused these murders, as that would give the Anarchists the credit for this that they wanted.

They came up with a cover story, claiming that the visionary's lack of Vigilance allowed wolves to attack, and in the scuffle a lantern was knocked over, burning everything. Warden Volkhov would broker peace between the two vales, while the visionary's steading would take the blame and leave; they'd then immediately come back in secret, and start hunting the Anarchists to help Volkhov in the name of Vigilance. The two of them agreed to work together, shook hands, and then the vision ended.

Dan had his soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after, his soul had a dedication to Pride with the strength of a single priest, and a long list of testimonies:

- \* "Resourceful Thorn", strength 1.
- \* "Broceliande Broker", strength 1.
- \* "Broceliande Broker", strength 1. (This was the same as the previous one.)
- \* "Masterful Broker", strength 1.
- \* "Masterful Broker", strength 5.
- \* "Indefatigable Quartermaster", strength 1.
- \* "Indignant Bastard", strength 1.

Eleri also had her soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after, her soul had a dedication to Prosperity with a strength of a single priest.

The coven of the Spire of Auric Horizon also performed divination rituals on Dan after the vision to gain information about his past life and corroborate what the vision indicated.

The rituals indicated that Dan's past life's name was Bran, and gave some more poetic descriptions.

"He came to rest at where the paths meet as brothers, and lights the torch that fights the fire."

"They called them the Heirs of Vardas - blades in the dark - they faded into the night, took out the firestarters, keeping the flame of the Empire safe."



**Thomas Smith of Upwold (the Marches)**  
Accompanied by Edwin de Warrene (the Marches)

Thomas was selected as a visionary by the winner of the Virtuous Auction.

(The visionary's name was recorded as "Thomas of Upwold" by the Civil Service, but it turned out that this was not unique at Anvil; we found at least three. The correct Thomas was originally from Upwold but currently living in Bregasland, and also is called "Smith" sometimes due to his work, thus his name as recorded here.)

The visionary gave his permission for these notes to be made public. The testimony was presented by the visionary with some help from his guide.

The visionary awoke on a ship. There was a woman there, who addressed the visionary as either Josh or Joshua, the captain of the ship and gave her name as Ranowik; she was apparently the ship's first mate and had hired on there. The ship was apparently a cutter, and a fast ship.

There was also another person there, a young cambion woman. She handed the visionary a pouch as payment - apparently the visionary had previously agreed to transport her out of the port they were in, which was on the Bay of Catazar and was either Pharos or Sarvos. The pouch contained orichalcum, weltsilver, gems and mana crystals.

From conversation with the young woman and Ranowik, the visionary had the impression that the young woman was trying to escape persecution, and they and the first mate hid the young woman in the cargo hold in a hessian sack.

Just after they had hidden her, Ranowik saw a customs officer and his troops approaching the gangplank up to their ship. The rest of the people stayed at the end of the gangplank, but the customs officer came aboard. He was wearing blue and black clothing with gold trim, and introduced himself as something that sounded like Captain Kalfang. Ranowik appeared to be nervous about Kalfang coming on board, possibly an indication that they had met before.

Kalfang prodded the ship's mast, kicked some of the boards, and asked to see the cargo manifest. Ranowik produced paperwork from a desk, both the cargo manifest and the transit permit, and Kalfang looked at them and said they were in order.

After looking at the paperwork, Kalfang appeared to be preparing to leave the ship,

then turned back, and said someone he'd spoken to in an inn had seen a cambion come on board. He talked about how he could smell copper, smell autumn on the ship, and about how he hated cambions.

He asked to look in the cargo bay. The visionary put their hand behind them, and Ranowik put three ingots of orichalcum and three of weltsilver into the hand of the visionary, who then gave it to Kalfang. He said, "Oh, I didn't know you were carrying orichalcum" - it had presumably come from the pouch the young woman gave the visionary - and claimed that the visionary's hand was shaking, which it was not. He then said, "That's good for an opening offer" and mentioned how the visionary was a man of good patrician blood.

The visionary put their hand behind them again, and Ranowik put three ingots of something else into their hand. When they handed it to Kalfang, he said, "That's good for an introduction, but I'm taking a look anyway." He also added, "You're not a proud man, are you?" to which the visionary replied, "No, but I have courage."

Then the visionary turned round to Ranowik, who handed over a large mana crystal, which they then gave to Kalfang, who once again called them "a man of good patrician blood". The visionary turned to Ranowik again, who seemed reluctant to hand anything more over but did then hand over gems (which included an emerald and a ruby among others).

Kalfang did not seem interested in the gems, but the visionary said that that was all they had, and that they needed to provision the crew. Kalfang said, "This is the fastest ship, isn't it?" to which the visionary said yes. Kalfang asked how long the voyage would be, and the visionary said about a week or two weeks. In response, Kalfang said that he expected the visionary would do well out of this voyage, so would ask for the same amount when they got back. The visionary agreed, which Kalfang said was a wise decision, and the vision ended.

Thomas had his soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after, her soul had a dedication to Courage and a testimony of "Honest Trader", both with the strength of a single priest.

Edwin also had his soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after, his soul was free of any marks.

# Summer Solstice, 382 YE

## Introduction

Three visionaries experienced visions induced by Pure Liao at the Solstice. Of these, two were selected by the Council of Gatekeepers, and one was selected by the Throne.

Following their visions, the visionaries and their accompanying guides were questioned by the authors. Their stories are recorded in the following pages, in the order that the visions were received.

\* **Lady Danica Vandale** (Dawn), accompanied by Jared of the Suns of Couros (Highguard)

\* **Idwyn Splitroot** (Navarr), accompanied by Constanza I Kalamar I Guerra (Brass Coast)

\* **Sister Meredith Stellamaris** (the Marches), accompanied by Jericho of the Suns of Couros (Highguard)

## Lady Danica Vandale (Dawn)

Accompanied by Jared of the Suns of Couros (Highguard)

Danica was selected as a visionary by the Throne.

The visionary gave her permission for these notes to be made public. The testimony was presented by the visionary and her guide together.

The visionary awoke in a tent, that smelled nice. A Freeborn came over to them. They gave their name, which started with S, and addressed the visionary as Miguel, apparently a magistrate who was on holiday in Siroc.

The Freeborn apologised, and said that there was a bit of an issue - there had been a fight between orcs, and the orc magistrates were still in training, so could the visionary settle the matter for them?

The Freeborn then brought three orcs in. The first was a preacher, who was pleading clemency for the second, who had murdered the husband of the third. (The visionary did not get any of their names.)

The visionary spoke to the plaintiff and defendant orcs, who gave accounts of what had happened. The son of the defendant had got into a fight with the husband of the plaintiff at the docks, and the son had been blinded by a belaying pin. The defendant had gone to the fighting pit against the plaintiff's husband, and had killed him by accident.

After listening to the plaintiff and defendant, the visionary turned to the preacher, and asked by which virtue they were pleading clemency. The preacher looked confused, and the visionary listed the virtues, starting with Loyalty. After the visionary had read a few, the preacher and the defendant said Loyalty.

The visionary decided that the defendant should be fined heavily, but not executed, and they should be made the guardian of the fighting pit to make sure that other people didn't die in a similar way.

The plaintiff objected, saying, "We're just coin to you, aren't we? We were coin when we were slaves and we're coin now." They spoke a little more, and then said, "How is this fair?"

The visionary replied that the Virtues weren't always fair, but this was the virtuous thing, and the vision ended.

Danica had her soul examined by the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, her soul had a dedication to Loyalty with the strength of a single priest.

Jared also had his soul examined by the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, his soul had a dedication to Loyalty with the strength of a single priest, and three testimonies: "Oathsworn Loyalty" with the strength of three priests, "Noble Sacrifice" with the strength of seven priests, and "Constant Guardian" with the strength of one priest.

The coven of the Spire of Auric Horizon also performed divination rituals on Danica after the vision to gain information about her past life and corroborate what the vision indicated.

The Day ritual indicated that Danica's past self was a merrow, between 30 and 50 years of age, named Miguel Taglione di Tassato Mestra, and that they wore a waistcoat that was purple with the Imperial magistrate's symbol. The vision was of events that happened 60 years ago.

The Night ritual gave the following:

"He holds power in his gaze, life and death in his scaled hands.  
He holds truth in his cold lips, and speaks prescience.  
His heart is cold as are his judgements, but only one will echo into the future."

During the vision, Danica and Jared saw something else in the vision with them. It appeared to have wavy brown hair, with scarring down its right side. It was in the vision from the start, and the visionary at first thought it was part of the floor.

The orcs didn't appear to be able to see it, and nor did the Freeborn who spoke to the visionary. It seemed to be feeding from the hatred and anger of the plaintiff orc, and said at various points, "I've seen so many murders", and "blood begets blood".

It also asked the visionary and guide, "Are you Asher? Do you know of Asher?", and it begged the guide to sever the link between the guide and the visionary.

It touched the guide's chest and the visionary's hand during the vision.

When the vision faded, the guide heard a gasp and a collapse.

After the vision, the body parts that it had touched seemed numb; the guide also felt generally weak. Physicking healed the weakness, and an examination of the visionary and guide with Insight indicated that the numbness would pass in a few hours.

### **Idwyn Splitroot (Navarr)**

Accompanied by Constanza I Kalamar I Guerra (Brass Coast)

Idwyn was selected as a visionary by the Council of Gatekeepers.

The visionary gave her permission for these notes to be made public. The testimony was presented by the visionary and her guide together.

The visionary awoke entering a room. They sat down with three other people, in a square. The area was quite dark.

There were artwork and sculpture with them - a pillar, a pot, a small sculpted lion, a sculpted forearm and hand pointed forwards, and a square stone tile with a stylised potted-plant-like design on it. Also near them were bowls and camping implements.

To the visionary's right in the square was a changeling man with spirals on his face, and with antlers. The others referred to him as Cornelius.

Opposite the visionary was a man wearing gauntlets with diamond patterns along them, an orange shirt folded over at the front and tied, and a more open layer on top in blue, tied at the waist. His name was not clear from conversation.

To the visionary's left in the square was a man wearing voluminous beige trousers, possibly decorated with flowers. He was lounging during the conversation, while the others were sat up, and was also drinking as they talked. The others called him Jensen.

A third name that the guide heard mentioned was "Aelfir", but it was not clear if this was the name of the man with gauntlets, or the name of the visionary.

When the visionary came in, the three others there were discussing a decision that needed to be made. They had been walking the trods and fighting the Vallorn, but they were running low on resources, and were considering whether to go to Urizen next, and

what they should do with their resources.

When the visionary asked what the options were, Jensen said that they could either go to Urizen, or they could get together their resources and do with what they had.

Cornelius and Jensen argued that their resources should go to preserving the arts. All the people gathered there were artists of some medium or another. Cornelius was apparently a grower of orchids, with an entire herb garden's resources going towards growing a single perfect orchid, and Jensen grew emotional as he talked about how wonderful Cornelius's flower arrangements were. Jensen himself was a sculptor and architect, and wanted to build things that would last the ages. He said that he could build out of a stump of wood, but it wouldn't last; he'd rather something that would last forever.

The man with gauntlets wanted to focus their resources into making sure that they would stay alive, and argued that it would be dangerous and not a good use of resources to preserve the arts. He suggested that they should simplify what they preserved, for example to campfire songs and songs to teach children - songs that would be learned easily because they were catchy. Cornelius replied, "I know they're just children, but surely everyone can appreciate a four-part harmony." The visionary also said, "Without being able to sing a four-part harmony, you can still appreciate one even if you can't join in."

The man with gauntlets mentioned a political satire that the visionary had written, saying that it was very good, "but who even knows who those four people are". Apparently the visionary was a songwriter and a dramatist at the time.

Cornelius and the man with gauntlets argued more, with Cornelius saying, "I imagine that you would look at a complicated piece of abstract art and claim a four-year-old could do it."

The visionary attempted to find a compromise between the others' positions, where they could put some resources into fighting and survival and some into preserving the arts, but the others indicated that this wasn't likely to be possible. They pushed the visionary to decide clearly, and the visionary said, "if we all die..." to which Jensen replied, unhappily, "I see where this is going".

The visionary continued, "If we all die, there'll be nobody left to preserve this. Art will flourish even in adversity. Art will find a way."

Cornelius said that he understood what the visionary was saying, but would they value art emotionally without putting their resources into it? The visionary replied that they would value what Cornelius did, and would write songs about his talents, his herb gardens and his orchids.

Finally, the visionary said, "We're going to go to Urizen". The others seemed to respond with sadness or acceptance; Cornelius said, "Fine, I'll go to Urizen and I'll wear their silly clothes", and the vision ended.

Idwyn had her soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after, her soul had a dedication to Pride with the strength of a single priest, and two testimonies, "Nation's Voice" and "Gerralt's Pride", each with the strength of a single priest.

Constanza also had her soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after, her soul had a dedication to Pride with a strength of three priests, and a testimony of "Guiding Inspiration" with the strength of seven priests.

The coven of the Spire of Auric Horizon also performed divination rituals on Idwyn after the vision to gain information about her past life and corroborate what the vision indicated.

The Day ritual indicated that she was Althea Urskind of the Therunind Academy, and the Scribe for the Legacy of Therunind Academy. (Therunind was the name of the Terun city in what is now Therunin.)

The Night ritual presented a vision of a wyrm. Its head was severed, but then many more heads grew from its neck.

After the ritual vision was received, Idwyn felt a strong urge to sing about the Fall of Terunael.



**Sister Meredith Stellamaris (the Marches)**  
Accompanied by Jericho of the Suns of Couros (Highguard)

Meredith was selected as a visionary by the Council of Gatekeepers.

The visionary gave her permission for these notes to be made public. The testimony was presented by the visionary and guide together.

The visionary awoke in a glade, seated in a circle with two other people. One of them was a woman with a martial bearing, possibly wearing armour, who referred to herself as a warrior. Her name was given as Nimue. The other was a man, who was apparently a herbalist. Both of them appeared to have blue faces.

There were flickering candles and a fire pit there. The glade was dark and quiet, and the visionary felt an air of sanctity about it.

A little after the vision had started, the other two people brought a third person in. They were an elderly draughir, and Nimue and the herbalist commented that it was "just like the mystic to be late". They had long grey hair and carried a large spear, and the other two treated them with respect.

The others called the visionary "chief" (also by the name Ariane). They also referred to the "grandmother" and the "patron" as they spoke, although it was not clear if these were the same person, or if it was the visionary's grandmother or someone else.

The four of them were part of a tribe of Feni, who had gathered to decide what to do about the fact that their tribe growing in size. They were concerned that if their tribe became too numerous, the farmers around them might make war on them, and they wanted to thin their numbers but still keep their way of life. One of them mentioned that the farmers had "a sickle to their throats", and that if their tribe was found then their secrets would be stolen.

Nimue suggested that half of the tribe could leave to found another tribe.

The herbalist suggested giving a purgative to people to make them sterile, and thin their numbers that way. He seemed dispassionate while making the suggestion, and was eating an apple.

The mystic suggested that they take their strongest and most talented people to be their tribe, and then leave the remaining people to join the farmers. Nimue responded to

this that they couldn't always tell someone's potential. One of the others mentioned to Nimue that "you might have marks on your face, but you're not a draughir".

The visionary heard the suggestions, and then chose Nimue's solution, explaining that they chose it because it didn't involve deception or abandoning some of their tribe, both of which the visionary said would be disloyal. They added that it would be an opportunity to find somewhere new, and that a tribe that stays too long gets stagnant.

The visionary then gave Nimue permission to be the leader of the new tribe made up of those who would leave, and the herbalist and the mystic did not argue. Nimue left at this point, and the mystic said he'd go and inform the tribe, and also left.

The herbalist said that he didn't agree with the visionary, but would go with the decision, and the vision ended.

Meredith had her soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after, her soul had a dedication to Loyalty with the strength of a single priest.

Jericho also had his soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after, his soul had a dedication to Loyalty and the testimonies "Valiant Paladin" and "Exemplary Discipline", each with the strength of a single priest.

The coven of the Spire of Auric Horizon also performed divination rituals on Meredith after the vision to gain information about her past life and corroborate what the vision indicated.

The Day ritual indicated that Meredith's past self was Ariane, a Feni, who was the Chief of Alderley during the Imperial Time of Expansion.

The Night ritual showed ants swarming over a green field, the queen ant giving signals. Part go through the crops searching for a new home, led by an ant with golden antennae.

# Autumn Equinox, 382 YE

## Introduction

One visionary experienced a vision induced by Pure Liao at the Equinox. The visionary was selected by the Council of Gatekeepers.

Following his vision, the visionary and his accompanying guide was questioned by the authors. His story is recorded in the following pages.

\* **General Magnus Anatolyvich Prochnost (Varushka)**, accompanied by Rooslan Stanovich Prochnost

## **General Magnus Anatolyvich Prochnost (Varushka)**

Accompanied by Rooslan Stanovich Prochnost

Magnus was selected as a visionary by the Council of Gatekeepers.

The visionary gave his permission for these notes to be made public. The testimony was presented by the visionary and his guide together.

The visionary awoke in dark woods. They were with a group of people who called the visionary Esteban, and referred to themselves as the Burning Falcon, whose troops were apparently chasing down a Highborn Archivist through the woods. They engaged and defeated them, making sure that none of them were dead right after the battle.

The vision then shifted to a fire. Next to the visionary was the archivist, a small woman who had been restrained.

The leader of the troops that the visionary was with said that their orders were to burn the histories that the archivist had. He said, as he started burning some of the papers on the fire, "It's all lies. Do you know how many different accounts of the coronation of the First Empress we've seen?", and indicated that some of those accounts were among the papers he was burning. He claimed that they had to "burn our past to serve our future".

The visionary objected to the burning of the histories, and argued against it. Others asked if the visionary thought they were wiser than the Emperor, and the visionary replied that wisdom was for all of us, not the province of one man, and that burning the past was madness.

Some of the other Burning Falcon troops also disagreed with the burning, and acknowledged that both sides of this conflict were Imperial, even though they seemed to be treating the archivist and their people as outlaws.

During the arguments, the archivist worked herself free. She said that she could take some documents away, but the visionary would need to protect her. The visionary held out a case of documents - papers tightly packed into a box case with thirty to forty slots, with no indication of what was on them - and told her to go.

As the archivist fled, the visionary fought against the others to stop them from following her, and at this point the vision ended.

Magnus had his soul examined by the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, his soul had a testimony of "Spiral's Terror" with the strength of a single priest.

After the vision, as well as the testimony, his soul appeared to be wounded as if it were remembering the injuries of his past life, with the injuries having a feeling of Courage to them, but also looking like they would fade within a few hours.

Rooslan also had his soul examined by the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, his soul had a dedication to Wisdom with the strength of a single priest.

The coven of the Spire of Auric Horizon also performed divination rituals on Magnus after the vision to gain information about his past life and corroborate what the vision indicated.

The Day ritual indicated that Magnus's past self was a kohan of the Brass Coast, and was part of the Burning Falcon army during the time of Emperor Nicovar.

The Night ritual indicated that the archivist escaped from the fight at Cantiararch's Hold, thanks to the actions of the visionary. A small number of scrolls escaped destruction.

## Postscript

I received a threat by Winged Messenger at the Winter 381 YE summit.

Livia Cascade

What you do is an abomination. You are an abomination. Liao visions are a sacrament, a blessed thing. Two people alone know what occurs within them. They look back into the past and see things that only those who were present ever knew. They stand at the altar of secrets, and of mysteries, and they sip from the waters of truth.

There have been visions in the past where those walking the paths of the labyrinth have seen things only one other person ever knew. These moments are holy and have worth beyond measure. To partake in them is to partake of numinosity undreamed of.

And then you, and the people like you, take those secrets, those sacred moments, and spatter them across the ground like droppings. What was numinous becomes mundane. What were secrets, become nothing.

Imagine. Imagine, for a moment, if you can. A moment in which you experience doubt, pain, fear, uncertainty. You weep, you confess to one you trusted more than any in the world, the two of you taking solace in the words. The gentle advice you are given shapes your path. You are renewed, and bound closer to the one you love by a bond of shared intimacy, shared secrets.

And then three decades later someone writes all about it and publishes it in a book and everyone learns of that moment, of that secret exchange. Your descendents learn of it. Those who looked up to you, learn of it. Ignorant oafs with neither the wit to understand nor the capacity to value it, they learn of it and they drag it down and churn it into mud.

This is what you are doing.

You are an abomination. Stop doing this. Stop destroying the worth of these moments, stop debasing this spiritual act with your words, stop destroying these secrets with the uncaring light of your pen.

Or there will come a reckoning.

It was not signed with a name, but at the bottom of the page was a picture of two masks, both with the face of Tragedy.

I am immensely flattered to receive a threat for writing and publishing Echoes of the Labyrinth. It shows how widely it's read and how many people have found it interesting. It's particularly flattering because it's so well written. I assume that this is from the Whisper Gallery, or one of their agents (mortal or otherwise).

With that in mind, here's how I decide what goes into a copy of Echoes of the Labyrinth.

\* If a visionary wants their vision kept private, it doesn't go in.

\* If a visionary wants their vision made public, it goes in.

They might keep some information from me; I can't stop them doing that. Making your vision public makes it easier for other people who know things about the events to find and talk to you, so you can find out more about who you were, and when and where. So I encourage people to make their visions public if they can.

There is one part of the experience I do not ask about and do not share: the ceremony beforehand. I have been through it twice. I feel it is best experienced without foreknowledge, as part of the solemn sacrament that is a pure liao vision, so I don't talk about it publically. I understand the value of secrecy in situations where speaking of it would make it seem mundane.

But the visions themselves are not secret in the same way, if the visionaries choose to share them.

To the writer of this threat, then:

If you are an Imperial citizen, please consider why you think that secrets in themselves are holy and numinous, and talk to a priest before you lead yourself even further off the Way.

If you are not an Imperial citizen, I do not care what you believe about what's right for other people's knowledge and secrets. You have no power over them, you have no authority to tell them what to do, and this is *their* experience, not yours.

There is worth in people's visions beyond their value as secrets. If you cannot understand that, then we will never agree, and I welcome your reckoning, as flawed and short-sighted as it is.

I have had the first of their reckoning – an assassination attempt at the Summer Solstice 382 YE, by a person who killed themselves with Secrets of the Empty Heart rather than tell the magistrates who they were or who sent them.

I am still alive.

I will not stop.

Livia