

Echoes of the Labyrinth

Volume 7a-d: Winter Solstice 382 YE -
Autumn Equinox 383 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 Council of Nine.

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Winter Solstice 382 YE to Autumn Equinox 383 YE accounts taken by Livia Cascade, Rodric Worldscribe and Alcuin; 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, particularly for the information returned to visionaries by the Civil Service as a result of their inquiries.

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

Winter Solstice, 382 YE

Introduction

Two visionaries experienced visions induced by Pure Liao at the Solstice.

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.

- * **Atte Arrowtongue** (Wintermark), accompanied by Bridget Talbot (the Marches)
- * **Ulric Y'Basden** (Navarr), accompanied by Jonah Yakovitch (the League)

Atte Arrowtongue (Wintermark)
Accompanied by Bridget Talbot (Marches)

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

The visionary awoke holding a sword, and standing in a small marketplace between two people.

The marketplace stalls held herbs and spices, vegetables (mainly root vegetables), masks, and pots and silverware.

The guide heard clapping noises like clogs outside in the marketplace, which might have been horses.

The two people next to the visionary were talking about someone called Meralgio or Milvego di Regario di Tassato. They spoke of how Meralgio had signed a contract to supply his military unit, who were called the Silver Spears and were a mercenary unit of thousands of soldiers, to a larger cause.

The other two referred to the visionary as Lady Olivia, and spoke of how the visionary's people were forming what they called the Western Alliance with the visionary's city as part of it, and that there had been talks with the Marcher lords.

One of the two people was a bravo, a woman with long dark hair wearing red, who was shorter than the visionary. The other was a priest, a tall man wearing a chinstrap hat.

The three of them were going to negotiate with Meralgio, to try to get him to break his current contract and sign up with them. They spoke about how what might be their biggest success could be their biggest defeat, and that surely Meralgio had a break clause in his contract.

The bravo said she wasn't a negotiator and that the priest wouldn't be able to convince Meralgio, so that was why the visionary was there. She gave a character breakdown of Meralgio, describing him as big and bombastic and someone who cared about Virtue.

Then Meralgio arrived, and they went quiet. Meralgio was a big man in a breastplate, with gingerish hair and small white-furred antlers. There was another bravo accompanying him, and the woman with the visionary said, "Oh, Merito, funny to see you here!", to which Merito replied, "I thought you were dead".

Meralgio explained that he'd signed his military unit up with the cause he'd chosen because he wanted to be remembered for being Ambitious - he had chosen a side, and was going to fight for them and be remembered.

The priest and Merito started talking about what makes a just war, and talking of the virtue of Ambition. Merito said, "you know nothing about Justice, you know nothing about Purity" and the priest replied, "Purity is just Hatred by another name". From further context of the conversation, it appeared that Merito was a representative of the cause that Meralgio had signed up with.

Meanwhile, the visionary asked Meralgio to tell them about their contract's break clause. Meralgio said, "I'm a man of my word", and the visionary replied, "Yeah, but you're not stupid." Merito chimed in to say, "Of course there's a break clause", at which Meralgio seemed unimpressed and said, "You might as well tell them all about it."

They explained that the break clause was payment of ten tons of mithril, and the visionary said, "Forget about the money, I'll cover the cost". Meralgio replied, "It's not about the money", and the visionary said, "Exactly, take it off the table". Meralgio then clarified, "But I do need the money". He asked the visionary to argue for their cause, and the visionary told their priest to explain it in virtuous terms, which the priest did.

Meralgio and the visionary spoke further. Meralgio said that he wanted to be responsible for the rise and fall of nations, and wanted to have statues made of him. The visionary asked him, "Do you want to be a footnote in history, or do you want to be a big player?", trying to persuade him that if he joined the visionary's side, "we'll write plays in your honour, bards will sing". Meralgio said that he didn't want anyone to lie about what he did, and the visionary said that he'd just praise and talk about what Meralgio had done.

After more discussion, and persuasion from the visionary, Meralgio turned to Merito and said, "You know what, Merito, fuck off", seeming to indicate he'd decided against Merito's cause.

Merito retorted, "You haven't heard the last of this", and the vision ended.

Atte had his soul examined by the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, his soul was clear of any marks.

Bridget 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 Pride with the strength of a single priest.

Ulric Y'Basden (Navarr)
Accompanied by Jonah Yakovitch (League)

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 in a low-roofed tent, in what appeared to be a meeting of Navarri Brands. The others called the visionary Rowan, and spoke to them as if they were also a Brand. They were discussing what to do now that one of the Navarri - a Thorn - had assassinated Emperor Nicovar. (The visionary did not catch the Thorn's name exactly, but when I prompted whether it had been Isaella, the visionary agreed.)

The Brands were worried about what to do because they felt that Nicovar had been good to them, and an asset in the fight against the Vallorn. Some of them did not seem concerned about the burning of libraries that Nicovar had been doing. One Brand mentioned a threat that the trods would be torn up - possibly a threat from Highguard now that Nicovar was dead.

There was a schism within Navarr about whether to take Isaella to the magistrates, or deal with her strictly within Navarr. Apparently, some were worried that going to the magistrates would mean Navarri leaders would be executed too.

Isaella came into the meeting, and the visionary spoke to her. The visionary asked why she'd done it, and whether it had been for any particular virtuous reason, and Isaella said she had done what needed to be done, not for any virtuous reason, and that Nicovar was going to destroy the Empire otherwise. She refused clemency.

The visionary argued to the other Brands that the appropriate course of action was to take Isaella to the magistrates, but to have Navarr be the ones to execute her, and to execute her horribly. They gave an example of punishment (possibly involving flaying).

The visionary also said to Isaella that she should find a virtuous reason for her actions - not for herself, but for other Navarri in future facing similar decisions, and that to ignore virtue was to cheapen their actions.

The Brands in the meeting voted on what to do. The visionary's argument won the vote, at four votes to three, and the vision ended.

Ulric had his soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, his soul was free of any marks.

After the vision, his soul had a dedication to Courage with the strength of seven priests.

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 three testimonies. One was "Prosperous Citizen", with the strength of three priests, and the others were "Always Learning" and "Slightly Virtuous", both with the strength of a single priest.

Spring Equinox, 383 YE

Introduction

Three visionaries experienced visions induced by Pure Liao at the Equinox.

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.

- * **Estella Krazentia Callabrese von Holberg** (the League), accompanied by Serrusto of the Gilded Horn Carta, Tassato (the League)
- * **Trystan Brackensong** (Navarr), accompanied by Dan Brackensong (Navarr)
- * **Veikko Bondforger** (Wintermark), accompanied by Rane Sherarding (Wintermark)

Estella Krazentia Callabrese von Holber (the League)

Accompanied by Serrusto of the Guided Horn Carta, Tassato (the League)

The account was given by the visionary and then by their guide.

The visionary awoke in a bed in a room with others, who appeared to be students of a university in Temeschwar. One of them, a naga, spoke to the visionary as though they were close friends. The two of them had been writing a presentation to get funding for an expedition to Mount Bredavoi, and were going through their presentation before giving it, though they occasionally got distracted and the naga - and the visionary - had both been drinking. The expedition's financier, Donna Vito, had been put to bed. Another funder, Donna Kasper was the person they were preparing a speech to.

The expedition had many planned parts. These included finding a path over Mount Bredavoi from the side that was not in Volodmartz, investigating a tempest jade deposit at the top of the mountain, mapping the area (including Coldmere), and following up rumours about a Varushkan weltsilver lantern that had protective hearth magic.

The naga spoke about how the Thule were retreating from the area, so were less likely to be a threat - it seemed like Miekarova wasn't part of the Empire, or was too out of the way to notice. One of the items they would use in their presentation was a picture of the mountain as seen by the Iron Helms in Autumn 167.

While they worked through the presentation, there was a mention of "Frederick's posters for his little campaign" being torn down, possibly by the visionary.

The naga's part of the presentation ended with, "here is Bethany with the technical details" handing over to the visionary who would then discuss those details. They included expedition safety and precautions, funding, and finance,

and also a section on the possible presence of dark spirits.

Once they had finished going through the presentation, a priest there offered them an anointing of Courage before the speech. Both the visionary and the naga took it.

After the anointing, people started getting ready to leave, and the naga asked the others to leave so the two of them could get ready in private. At this point, the vision ended.

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

After the vision, she also had the anointing of the Proof of Courage with the strength of a single priest, along with a hangover.

Serrusto 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 Ambition and the testimony "Blinded Seeker", each with the strength of a single priest.

The Frederick whose "little campaign" was mentioned was likely the soon-to-be Emperor Frederick.

Trystan Brackensong (Navarr)
Accompanied by Dan Brackensong (Navarr)

The visionary gave his permission for this vision to be shared. The account was given by the visionary with some help from their guide.

When the visionary awoke they were in what appeared to be a hospital in an Urizen spire. There were three others there - a healer, and two others who were injured, and apparently had just come back from a vision. The healer referred to the two others as Gaius and Cassandra, and to the visionary as Arbiter.

Cassandra had apparently been taken over by a spirit from the labyrinth, and her body seemed to be flickering between being controlled by her and by the spirit. She had blood around her mouth, and her eyes seemed hollow. While the spirit appeared to be in control, at one point she addressed the visionary saying, "I'll dance on the ashes of your empire", and at other points she looked at the guide. The visionary attempted to exorcise the spirit from Cassandra, but on their own they were not strong enough to do so.

Gaius, meanwhile, seemed happy and was saying, "It worked, it worked". He and Cassandra had apparently taken a preparation of some sort and had planned to go into the Labyrinth (presumably in a past life vision) and capture a spirit made of pure Labyrinth. He said they had captured it, but that Cassandra was in a bad way. Gaius was pleased that it had succeeded, although not in the way they had expected, and said, "Sorry, Cassandra, your sacrifice".

The healer said that they had done all they could, and that "you've got to make a choice, Arbiter". Both Gaius and Cassandra were apparently gravely injured, and there was a potion - a panacea of some sort - that could heal the injuries of one of them, but only one.

The visionary and guide discussed which of them to cure, or whether to not give the cure to either of them, but after that discussion, the visionary chose to give

the cure to Gaius. The visionary told Gaius to write down all that he had done, so that there would be records. The healer began to pour out the potion for Gaius, and the vision ended. As the vision ended, Cassandra - presumably possessed by the spirit - was peering at the visionary.

Trystan had his soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, his soul had a testimony of "Proud Brother", with the strength of a single priest.

Dan also had his soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, his soul had a dedication to Courage with the strength of a single priest, along with the testimonies "Resourceful Thorn", "Broceliande Broker", "Masterful Broker", "Indefatigable Quartermaster" and "Indignant Bastard".

Significant additional information about the events around this vision have since come to light, a contemporary document by Gaius and the arbiter named "A Shark on a Tuna Line", reprints of which are available.

Veikko Bondforger (Wintermark)
Accompanied by Rane Sherarding (Wintermark)

The account was given by the visionary with some help from the guide.

The visionary awoke with a book in his hand, which contained an unsigned and incomplete confession from Emet, daughter of Zachary. Following the confession in the book were eyewitness reports and testimonies of her crimes - sedition, spying, and being part of a cult of Anarchy called the Firestarters.

As the visionary was reading the book, someone came in at the door. Another person brought a pen to the new arrival, who then handed the pen to the visionary. The new arrival's name was Piotr, and he addressed the visionary as Alexander.

The visionary stood and turned, and saw a Highborn woman - presumably Emet - slouched in a chair in front of him. The room was covered in chains, and there were many torture implements, none of which were clean. These included surgical tools, with a bottle of liao included among them.

Piotr encouraged the visionary to get more information from Emet about co-conspirators, and was asking on behalf of Ratibor, the then boyar of Temeschwar. From conversation, the visionary was apparently an Inquisitor of Loyalty.

The visionary asked Emet for names of her co-conspirators, and she refused. The visionary then asked which hand he should begin the torture on, and Emet said her right was her writing hand, so the visionary began on the left. They began pulling fingernails from Emet, one for each name. The first was someone called Rowan from Navarr. The second was what sounded like a Highborn archbishop named Michael or Mikkael. When asking for a third name, the visionary cut the end of Emet's finger off, but she couldn't name a third, only that there was another archbishop. The visionary wrote both the names down, and Piotr said that the boyar would want more information.

Part way through the torture, Piotr offered wine to the visionary.

Then the visionary asked Emet the agency she was working on behalf of. They threatened to cut off one of her ears, and said the next thing out of her mouth should be a confession. Emet asked for a pen, and in the "enemies of the boyar" section of the confession they wrote, "Highborn Assembly", and signed it. Her blood was on the documents, as was the visionary's, whose hands were slick with blood.

The boyar came in, and congratulated the visionary, saying, "Once again, Alexander, you have done well. I know you find this distasteful but this is virtuous work." He took a cursory look at Emet's confession, and sentenced her to death. As the vision ended, the visionary heard the sound of a blade being plunged into a neck.

After the vision, immediately as they came out, Veikko's hands were covered in blood.

Veikko had his soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, his soul had a dedication to Loyalty and a testimony of "Bondforger", each with the strength of a single priest, and a testimony of "Oathsworn Loyalty" with the strength of four priests.

After the vision, as well as the dedication and testimonies from before, his soul also had a testimony of "Clean" with the strength of three priests.

The divination rituals Eyes of the Soul's Past and Secrets of the Soul's Desire were performed on Veikko after the vision to gain information about her past life and corroborate what the vision indicated.

The Day ritual indicated that Veikko's past self was High Inquisitor Alexander Peresh von Temeschwar, called "the Clean", and that the vision occurred in the pre-Imperial period.

The Night ritual told a story:

"A rat's in the wall. It gives way to the wolf at the door. And the shadow of the wolf is twenty, fifty, one hundred times greater than the wolf. And bit by bit, the rat is eaten."

Summer Solstice, 383 YE

Introduction

Three visionaries experienced visions induced by Pure Liao at the Solstice.

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.

- * **Ianthe of the Suns of Couros** (Highguard), accompanied by Ehud of Reumah's Redoubt (Highguard)
- * **Eska Crowspeaker** (Wintermark), accompanied by Orphelia Sanguineo Retzia di Tassato (the League)
- * **Valentin Orzel** (Dawn), accompanied by Starac Sijed Orzel (Dawn)

Ianthe of the Suns of Couros (Highguard)

Accompanied by Ehud of Reumah's Redoubt (Highguard)

The visionary gave their permission for this account to be published. The account was given by the visionary with additions by their guide.

The visionary awoke as the dhomirol of a Brass Coast house, with two people arguing over the details of a trade of weapons and food to enable orcs to free themselves from chains. A male naga with red and black scales, named Feruk, argued in favour of charging the orcs market rates to ensure the Prosperity of the house, whilst an curly-haired unlineaged woman, named Carmen, in a blue turban with gold edging argued in favour of selling at cost to the orcs to aid the rebellion.

The visionary was sat in a throne with a white fur-mantled cloak draped over it, with a desk with paper, seals and sealing wax before them. To their right was a long table with baskets, and across the room were a barrel and drum. Carmen was at the visionary's right hand, and Feruk was lying on a chaise longue further to the right. There was a full weapon rack at Feruk's feet.

The papers on the table itemised what was being sold. There was mention of food, weapons and other materials. The food was 4 crowns, at cost, not including transport costs. The arms and armour included a Vorpal blade, Harnmark mithril and Temeschwari items, and came to a little over twelve thrones.

During the argument, the freedom of the orcs was paralleled to Brass Coast history, with "This is why we left Highguard". When asked for their reasoning by the visionary, Feruk mentions that the Virtue assemblies were against the sale of weapons to the orcs, but that providing the food and weapons was the virtuous thing to do. At one point Carmen invokes Riqueza as an oath. One of them also mentioned that the house had to work hard for their prosperity after leaving Highguard, and that they could do so again.

An orc with a goatee and topknot entered, carrying an axe and wearing hemp hand wraps with a rusty chain and a vibrant red neckscarf. They made a point of having come alone. They wanted to buy weapons to free more orcs and feed them, but it had cost a lot of lives to get the five thrones they had in their pouch.

The arguing continued until the visionary made the decision to sell at cost, and that the orcs could pay the rest in the future. They entered into a contract with the orc, with the visionary attempting to invoke the 'blood of a cambion' to make the contract stronger, although the people in the vision seemed confused by this. Once the contract had been entered into, the vision ended.

Ianthe had their soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, their soul bore a dedication to Ambition with the strength of one priest and the testimony "Shacklebreaker" with the strength of two priests. Afterwards they also bore the testimonies "Broken Wheel" (strength 6) and "Broken Chain" (strength 7).

Ehud also had their soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, their soul bore a dedication to Loyalty with the strength of one priest.

The divination rituals "Eyes of the Soul's Past" (a Day ritual) and "Secrets of the Soul's Desire" (a Night ritual) were performed on Ianthe after the vision to gain information about their past life.

The Day ritual indicated that the visionary's past life was Sejia i Marat i Riqueza, the Dhomiro of their house.

The Night ritual asked the following:

"What price freedom?

What virtue is found by a soul in chains?

What, to a slave, is the broken wheel?

But what else is broken in the breaking of chains?

At least they came away with enough money to get them home."

Eska Crowspeaker (Wintermark)

Accompanied by Orphelia Sanguineo Retzia di Tassato (League)

The visionary gave their permission for these notes to be made public.

The visionary awoke in a narrow wood-panelled ship, crewed exclusively by Freeborn sailors. It was plushly decorated with furs and coils of rope nearby.

At the visionary's left was their sister who was lying down and seemed concerned and agitated, speaking passionately about how the Winterfolk had found the contract the family (which included the visionary and herself) had made. The sister had ringlets and black curls.

The visionary and their sister were being transported to a trial for treason, which the contract was evidence of. At the start of the orc rebellion, the family had sold weapons at a fifth of their market price (selling at seven and a half thrones) to rebel orcs, and had also sold the orcs food.

With them was a priest, who was forming a clemency plea for the trial. The priest agreed with the visionary and their sister that the family's actions were "good, right and moral", but was not sure which virtue they would claim in their defence.

The three of them considered Prosperity, but rejected it as they'd sold at a low price, to the detriment of their own wealth. Then they considered Courage, and rejected that too. They agreed, then, that they'd been moved to act out of Loyalty, but still had to determine who or what the loyalty was to.

One of them suggested that it was loyalty to the orcs, saying that they were beings with souls, and that "we are Freeborn people, and others should also be free". The sister asked, "The Orcs had approached them, how could we turn them away from our door?"

The three of them then discussed the idea of loyalty to the future. The sister was initially sceptical, but seemed to warm to the idea.

The vision then faded for a moment.

When the vision returned, the visionary was before two thrones. The left throne was empty, and the right occupied by a male magistrate. Further to the right, a young Winterfolk militia member was standing, holding a spear and the offending contract. They were in a Wintermark hall, lit with candles but still cold and heavy and dark, and dressed with Steirn shields.

The sister was sitting on the visionary's left, and the priest was also with them.

The magistrate announced that they were on trial for treason against the Empire, and asked the militia to bring forth the evidence -- the contract the family had formed with the orcs. It was read in full: it was not very long, perhaps more like a receipt. It described how the house of Marat i Riqueza was to sell weapons to the orcs. The militia claimed those weapons had then been used by the orcs to liberate orcs at the mine at Gildenheim, and many Imperial citizens had been killed.

During this the visionary's name was given as Sahria i Marat i Riqueza, and was described as "the brains of the operation". At some point the names of other members of the family were mentioned. Two members of the family were still at large: "Esmeria", the visionary's wife and Dhomiro of the family, and "Asegio", another family member.

The priest gave their clemency speech. They said that the facts of the crime cannot be denied, and that they claimed Loyalty as a defence; that the family are Freeborn and could not let other sentient beings suffer.

The visionary said that they were loyal to the future of the Empire, to which the magistrate replied, "That's an interesting phrase." Their sister agreed, saying, "The future of the Empire includes orcs."

The magistrate asked whether they claim they acted out of loyalty to the Freeborn, and the visionary and their sister restated their loyalty to the orcs and the future that includes them. The magistrate asked again, with three options - loyalty to the Freeborn, the orcs, or the future - and the visionary and their sister chose the future.

The magistrate then turned and said, "I'm not here to comment on orc freedom, that's a senate matter. Or orc souls, that's a synod matter. What you have done has caused many Winterfolk to die."

The visionary interjected, "I'm sorry that Winterfolk and Imperials have died: but the rebellion was right."

The magistrate said, "You've armed and encouraged this rebellion. That is treason and I sentence you to death."

The sister then added, "We did it out of Loyalty, and we did the right thing", and the vision faded.

Eska had her soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, her soul bore a dedication to Loyalty with the strength of one priest and the testimony "Shacklebreaker" with the strength of two priests.

After the vision, as well as the previous dedication and testimony, her soul also bore the testimonies "Broken Wheel" (strength 6) and "Broken Chain" (strength 7), identical to the testimonies gained by Ianthe.

Ophelia also had her soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, her soul bore a dedication to Prosperity and a testimony of "Passionate Exultant", each with the strength of one priest.

The divination rituals "Eyes of the Soul's Past" (a Day ritual) and "Secrets of the Soul's Desire" (a Night ritual) were performed on Ianthe after the vision to gain information about their past life.

The Day ritual gave the following: "I am Sahria i Marat i Riqueza. I am, and have always been, the brains of the operation."

The Night ritual asked a question:
"What, to a slave, the broken wheel?"

They laid a chisel to the chains of the slaves they struck -- and when the hammer broke, they used all they were. To break the chains, the family was broken.

Clemency, they say, is when virtue allows no other path. And there was no other path. And for it they died.

And for it, the future they dreamed has come to pass."

The visionary exclaimed upon returning to Anvil that "it's the same as Ianthe's vision". The events of this vision appear to continue on from the events in Ianthe's vision, and the description of the sister matches the description of Carmen from Ianthe's vision.

Valentin Orzel (Dawn)
Accompanied by Starac Sijed Orzel (Dawn)

The visionary and the guide had a short conversation after the vision, but before they shared their account, which they gave permission to be published. The account was given by the visionary and the guide together.

The visionary awoke sitting on a bench close to a campfire, with three others also seated at other benches around the fire. From discussion, they were on campaign in the army of General Mieren. The war was between the Patricians, and the Highborn who were following Purity.

The others referred to the visionary as Noah, the general's cavalry commander, who was apparently in charge of half the cavalry. The others at the campfire were also officers. One of them, seated to the right of the visionary, said that they were sickened by the slaughter by the forces of Purity, and the salting of the fields, calling the latter an "insult against Prosperity". Another, seated across from the visionary, argued that they needed to bring the war to its conclusion, and that it was just war and their cause was right, so they had to get it done, and destroy the patricians. None of the people at the campfire appeared to be lineaged.

From the discussion, the economy of Highguard at that point was built on slaves, and one of them mentioned the importance of slaving. The officer who had argued for Purity went to check on the slaves that had been taken in action, and to look in on the horses, and the other two asked the visionary what should be done.

The visionary stared into the embers of the campfire, and asked the others how long Highguard had had Purity. One of the others replied, "Since the beginning of time." The officer who had argued against Purity spoke of how they wanted to go north to join the humans there.

The officer who had argued against Purity then suggested rebelling against the

general, and asked if they should take the field against the general tomorrow. The visionary agreed with this, but said that it might not be enough, and that they should also free the slaves and fight alongside them as equals against the general. The officer seated to the left of the visionary called this a radical plan, but also said that it might just work. The three of them resolved together to take the field against the general, and end the slaughter done in the name of Purity, and they swore an oath: they wouldn't salt the fields, they wouldn't take Purity's side, and they would overthrow General Mieren. After this, the vision faded.

Valentin had his soul examined with the rite of Insight. Our notes record a devotion to Loyalty with the strength of seven priests, but not whether this was before or after the vision.

Starac also had his soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, his soul bore a dedication to Wisdom with the strength of one priest.

The divination rituals "Eyes of the Soul's Past" (a Day ritual) and "Secrets of the Soul's Desire" (a Night ritual) were performed on Valentin after the vision to gain information about his past life.

The Day ritual indicated that his past life was Noah, son of Jacob of the Five Gates, officer of the Thundering Tide, rider of the great steed Drumbeat.

The Night ritual told a story:

"Know always what commands your heart's devotion.

The strong had gone too far. All the wine in the world will not wash away the blood of men and women or slain horses. The defender of the innocent had slain the unarmed, the surrendered, the slave, the beast. They would make a desert and call it peace.

Know: enough was enough. The oath of the moment was sworn. And bloody to the elbows they did what was right.”

The general’s name given above might be a mishearing of ”Miriam”, a much more common Highborn name. That, along with the phrase ”The strong had gone too far” from the Night ritual, calls to mind Miriam the Strong, known as a Highborn hero of the Patrician War whose tomb carvings show her gaining strength from her glowing shield after striking down her enemies. The shield was known as ”War’s Reward” and was an artefact Champion’s Bastion, displaying a unicorn and a pegasus rampant.

However, there is very little in Imperial history about Miriam the Strong beyond what is known from her tomb, and Miriam is a common Highborn name, so this connection is tenuous.

Autumn Equinox, 383 YE

Introduction

One visionary experienced visions induced by Pure Liao at the Equinox.

Following the vision, the visionary and accompanying guide priest were questioned by the authors. The story is recorded in the following pages.

* **Lilith of the Chantry of the Silver Skull (Highguard)**, accompanied by Kerem of the Chantry of the Silver Skull (Highguard)

Lilith of the Chantry of the Silver Skull (Highguard)

Accompanied by Kerem of the Chantry of the Silver Skull (Highguard)

Lilith 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 in a room lit with cold, white light. They seemed to feel old. They were seated on a throne, and in their right hand was a tall spear with a leaf-shaped blade.

The room was sparsely decorated with symbols of horses. There was a suit of armour in one corner, along with a shortsword and a mace. To the right was a long table that held carvings of horses and another mace. The visionary could hear the neighing of horses close by, outside the room.

To the visionary's left stood an advisor, a man with dark hair and beard. He spoke with the visionary about how they were fighting orcs in the forest, and that if they did well they could keep the cataphracts fed, but it was on a knife edge. His tone with the visionary seemed informal but courteous, as if he was used to speaking his mind with them. He did not seem to be old.

The advisor said that the visionary's next appointment was here. Two people entered, looking frightened as they did so, as if they were worried that they might be cut down. Their names were given as Nefer and Geb, and they addressed the visionary as Menefer, a Navigator.

The two petitioners spoke of someone whose name sounded like Kotec, who had inspired them, and they wanted to follow Kotec to the east beyond the people of the spires. It would be a season's travel, and they asked for horses and for provisions for a season. The visionary said that they would give the petitioners their lives.

Nefer asked, "Is that all?", and the visionary said they wouldn't take food out of the mouths of their soldiers. The advisor also said that if they went with provisions, the only way those provisions would be recovered would be off their corpses. Nefer said, "Well, do it, then," and the advisor said that would cost lives.

As Nefer and Geb left disappointed, the vision ended.

Lilith had her soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, her soul had a dedication to Prosperity and a testimony of "Faithful Pilgrim", each with the strength of a single priest.

Kerem also had her soul examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, her soul had a dedication to Prosperity and a testimony of "Faithful Pilgrim", each with the strength of a single priest.

The divination rituals "Eyes of the Soul's Past" (a Day ritual) and "Secrets of the Soul's Desire" (a Night ritual) were performed on Lilith after the vision to gain information about her past life.

The Day ritual indicated the visionary was Menefer, son of Aaron, and that it was their honour and duty to be the Navigator of the eighth vessel. The year of the vision was the second year after the landfall of the Exiles.

The Night ritual told a story:

"What does the heart owe to the hand that would cut itself free from the body and learn to walk upon its fingers?

What do those who stay owe to those who go? To the black sheep, to prodigal kin they will never see again.

They took a piece of his heart with them, but what else did they take with them on the Labyrinth's path? And what did Virtue demand? The answer is Loyalty, not a drop more.

To a path of starvation and storm, the prodigal children walked. Walked they did, and never did they return. That journey's end was in peace and harmony for better than one in ten of them."