

# Aventurian Herald

Aventurian Herald 181

## The Dragon's Eye Closes

**Kuslik.** Any respected astronomer could see the terrifying changes in the firmament, even without equipment. The star that forms the eye of the Dragon constellation has been dark for several nights now. The *Xeledon Mirror* provides scientific background for this strange occurrence.

## Village Population in the Winhall Hinterlands Goes Missing Without a Trace!

**Winhall.** Something strange happened recently at the edge of Farindel Forest, only two days' journey from Winhall—a tragedy initially unnoticed by authorities or the public. It seems an entire hamlet, including man and mouse, simply vanished! This is said to have occurred in the month of Phex, 1040 FB. The *Fanfare* investigated at the scene and reports exclusively from the dark woods of Winhall.

## A Terrible Farce

**Mendena.** Nearly one year has passed since Empress Rohaja's triumph. The region slowly grows safer as patrols destroy unholy creatures, but dangers still lurk everywhere. A lone survivor returned from a border patrol with gruesome tales to tell. For example, what is behind the so-called Bloody Mummer's Dance?



Aventurian Herald, Travia, 1040 FB

# Empress Summons the Aristocracy to the Court Council

**Beilunk.** Twenty-five gods' courses have passed since Borbarad, the Desecrator of Spheres, brought calamity over the land. Now, with the recent victory over the traitor, Helme Haffax, the last of Borbarad's self-proclaimed heirs has received his punishment. While Gareth proved to be the bulwark against demon worshippers once again, an army spearheaded by the Empress herself liberated Mendena! Through all the years of struggle, Beilunk remained a symbol for the resistance and the power of faith itself. Is it any wonder the Empress called for the Imperial Court Council in this city?

The surprise was great when the Empress herself did not open the Court Council on the 4<sup>th</sup> of Travia, the Day of Heroes. Instead, the Seneschal of the Realm, His Majesty Hagrobald of the Great River, stepped before the aristocracy. Meanwhile, the Empress attended the new Sword of Swords' inauguration in Perricum, much to the irritation and vexation of some who had traveled far or been away from home for months. But, before these embers could become a fire, the Court Council went to view a memorial hall, built at the Empress' order, to commemorate those who had fallen during the past 25 years.

The names in the hall are numerous and include all the fallen, whether they are of high or low blood. In their midst are the names of the noblest among the dead: members of the imperial family, as well as the heroic Bearers of the Seven Signs. It was none less than His Eminence Aedin of Naris, Speaker of the Silent Circle (the Church of Boron's Council), who consecrated this place of remembrance with a divine service. Quite a few seasoned champions were overcome with grief. However, rumblings began when a servant of Rondra stepped forward and laid down the symbols of his order in this place. He said Rondra no longer heard his prayers and, in these days of change, he would be turning to Kor.

Finally, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Travia, the Empress and her retinue arrived in Beilunk, to much rejoicing. The guards

had a tough time controlling the people. Just like her ancestor, Raul, the victorious sovereign stood before the aristocracy. And just as he had done while standing on the burning battlements of Bosparan, she demanded an oath of allegiance from her provincial lords. Despite the ceremony of the moment, in the days that followed, I heard murmurs of discontent from some of the aristocrats. Had they not already proven their loyalty with the high price they paid in blood during the campaign?

As the assembled lords and ladies were calling the Court Council to order, the Empress' former squire, Jarlak of Ehrenstein, stepped forth unannounced

and addressed the aristocracy. Having proven his worth during the campaign and received his accolade, he now felt empowered to speak of a united Tobrien, in which the Margravates of Warunk and Beilunk rejoined the Tobrien Duchy. In response, the Princess-Illuminated rebuked him strongly and the Duke of the Northmarches told him to sit down and learn his place.

The Empress then named the topics on which she wished to hear the aristocracy's counsel. She expressed her concern for the people's spiritual salvation. What could she do, she asked, to cleanse the lands and the people from

foul influences, and how should she deal with the increasing number of new cults appearing everywhere? But the aristocracy wanted to first clarify the distribution of temple tithes from imperial lands.

For the first time in centuries, the College of the Twelvegods, those dignified Blessed Ones who aid our Empress with their advice, could not agree on any suggestion. They first discussed the future of Tobrien and the other liberated lands. Should the Empire encourage repatriation of Tobrien subjects who fled the destruction, even though it would mean tearing them from their new homes and new families after so many years, or should the provinces that sheltered them from Borbarad and Helme offer them payments to remain where they are? Who would claim abandoned fiefdoms, and what role should the Realm play in the reconstruction? What resources should the Realm devote to rooting out the remnants of Haffax' troops that still roamed free in the heart of the Realm? And finally, who would take up the Realm's administration?

The Empress then demanded advice on the question of troops and fleets. Which armies should she reconstitute, and which fleets should she strengthen?

Continued on Page 2



The Empress' Blessing touched our city.

Now, you may receive it in your own home. Buy reliquaries of Her Imperial Majesty.

Bedsheets with traces of her perspiration, cobblestones ennobled by her feet, and locks of her golden hair (while supplies last).

Lechminen & Daughter  
Memorabilia

Beilunk, Undercity

Aventurian Herald, Travia, 1039 FB

## Empress Summons the Aristocracy to the Court Council

(continued from Page 1)

Also noteworthy was the Empress' desire to name a successor to the late Councilor of the Realm for Affairs of the Realm, Pelion Eorcaidos, who had kept faith with the Realm even after his Aranian homeland gained its independence. For those who don't recall, he fell victim to a cowardly ambush just a few weeks before the Battle at Gareth. Considering the plenitude of power in the Northmarches and Garetia, Her Imperial Majesty said she would not consider candidates from either of those provinces.

Several envoys then stepped before the Empress. Three of them became the topic of conversation for days. A delegation conveyed the Horasian Empire's greetings and invited the Empress to attend the combined coming-of-age celebration and Travia Bond of the Horas. Master Stoerrebrandt also came forth, demanding the roads and routes on land and water be secured. However, the most impressive request for audience involved a Tulamyde who revealed himself as an envoy of Khunchom, the Caliphate, and specifically of the legendary wizard sultan, Hasrabal. He informed the Empress the changes to the starry sky challenged the validity of old treaties between the Realm of Raul, the Middenrealm, and the Horasian Empire. Thus did one question suddenly gain foremost importance.

A Court Council turns any place it convenes into a boiling cauldron. Its resolutions may be sealed and are usually well-known as imperial law, but the journey to that point is usually quite arduous.

Duke Hagrobald presented his heir, Godehard, to the council with a loud voice. Nobles from The Garetian, Griffonsfordish, and Perrican aristocracies promoted the idea of paying compensation for every Tobrien refugee—even the serfs—to keep them from returning, but they could not win the Empress' ear. Tobrien paid a high price for this rejection, as the spurned provinces offered Warunk, Raven, and Sunmarches (who, together with the Rommilysiian Marches and Perricum, form the Pact of Al'Zul) a collection of donations for reconstruction. This was certainly also the price for the hereditary prince's brisk speech.

The council found a wise solution for the matter of temple tithes, considering that the Order of the Three Sisters now

receive a sizable percentage with the expectation they use it in accordance with their mission and redevelop the liberated lands. Master Stoerrebrandt also did his part and plans to print a new edition of the *Breviary of the Twelvegods* for the College of the Twelvegods. Perhaps this was the price to strengthen the Sea of Pearls fleet?

The experienced Albernian, Gwydian ui Bennain, former Armorial Master of Albernia, now holds the office of the Councilor of the Realm for Affairs of the Realm, in the Chancellery of the Realm in Elenvina. The previously inconspicuous Northmarcher, Egtor of Ibenburg, is his deputy. This is a demonstration of the duchy's power and an interesting situation in the chancellery that could lead to future tensions.

Negotiations with the Tulamydes were an impressive sight to see; but, the Realm of Raul could not come to an agreement with them, reportedly due to their audacious demands in terms of the recognition of Anchopal. Such an agreement would have placed a Twelvegodly sanctum and important segments of Arania into the hands of the Novadi.

However, the Empress and key provinces offered no support for those who demanded new military campaigns, be it against the orcs or for the liberation of Maraskan. Also, Tobrien's wish that the Realm take up arms against the traitor, Arng Grimm, fell on deaf ears. Without military support, the suggested plans would not succeed. No sole efforts are to be expected—at least, not until the country and its people recuperate from the long years of war.

Thus, what remains from the Court Council after the great victory? Rohaja of Gareth has reached the zenith of her power and can depend upon the loyalty of the aristocracy and the people. It remains to be seen whether she wields the peoples' loyalty wisely or—as the Court Council showed in a few cases—she uses it to snub the aristocracy. At the close of the proceedings, one question remained on everyone's lips, especially after the Northmarches presented an heir: what is the situation regarding an Imperial family heir?

*Elida Oldmayor (David Lukassen, with thanks to the participants of the All-Aventurian Convention 2016)*

Aventurian Herald, Hesinde, 1039 FB

## The Beast of Hazelford

**Warunk.** A number of travelers and villagers were brutally murdered these past two months near the recently repopulated hamlet of Hazelford, south of Warunk. The victims were always found covered in blood, sometimes with limbs missing. Investigation revealed a malicious, blood-sucking beast behind these crimes in Hazelford and vicinity. The beast was formerly known as Avesandra Willowcradle, daughter of the local Blessed One of Travia. It seems she touched a meteorite that fell close to the village, and something cursed her. This tragedy also plunged the young

woman's loved ones into misfortune. In desperation, her parents took their own lives. Her lover—a scholar named Perval of Sevenreeds—lured victims to their doom so he could quench her unnatural thirst for blood.

A band of brave adventurers defeated the beast with the help of Mother Traviane Agatha of Baliho, thus restoring the peace of the hearth fire that is pleasing unto Travia.

*Dettmar Westfar  
(Julian Härtl)*

Tobrienan Wolf's Horn, Ingerimm, 1040 FB

## A Terrible Farce

**Mendena.** Nearly a year has passed since Empress Rohaja's triumph. The region slowly becomes safer as patrols destroy the unholy creatures that remain, but dangers still lurk everywhere. Kunigunde is the lone survivor of a patrol of seven experienced mercenaries and guards sent to watch the northern border with Yol-Ghurmak. She recently returned with gruesome tales to tell.

According to Kunigunde, the patrol slew two unholy creatures—a white harrier, and a werewolf—during their first three days on the border. Then, as they were establishing camp in some ruins on Windday to prepare for nightfall, a young woman approached them from the forest. She wore black-and-white checkered pants and a frilly shirt with red lace. Red lips, dark eyes, and teardrops applied with makeup stood out on her white-painted face. She asked the men if they wanted to have a bit of fun, and they assumed she was looking to earn some coin.

She seemed harmless enough, so one of the mercenaries took her up on her offer and walked off with her. She reappeared before the others realized what was happening and one of the guards started to levitate, as if Sumu's grasp had lost its effect on him.

One by one, the guards burst into red, blue, or green flames and died. The sergeant ordered the group to attack, and a

quick-thinking mercenary quickly wrestled the woman to the ground, but she smashed his head in with a rock. As she stood, she made a gesture, and something forced all the air out of the sergeant's lungs. He fell to the ground, dead. This unholy power then turned on Kunigunde, who sobbed as she felt her lungs begin to empty.

The last uninjured mercenary slashed at the stranger with her saber, but the woman harmlessly deflected this attack with her bare arm, taking no damage. She then tore out the brave warrior's throat with her fingers. Only Kunigunde and the levitating guard remained. With a snap of her fingers, the strange woman slammed the guard into the ground with a sickening thud.

The tear-drop makeup on the strange woman's face then turned black. She looked Kunigunde in the eye and said, "Run, you coward! You are unworthy to face the master!" The mercenary was released from the spell and ran all the way to Eslamsbridge without looking back.

Whom the strange woman was referring to remains unclear. All that is clear is the fate of the patrol, whose members were burned, suffocated, or crushed. Their bodies have been recovered, and the city guard handed Kunigunde into to the care of the Noionites, to speed her recovery from the horror.

*Egidius Peatcutter  
(Anni Dürr)*

Xelodon Mirror, Tsa, 1039 FB

## From the Astronomy Desk:

### The Dragon's Eye Closes

**Ruslik.** Any respected astronomer could see the terrifying changes in the firmament, even without equipment. The star that forms the eye of the Dragon constellation has been dark for several nights now, after an increase in the number of shooting stars around the constellation in the last few nights. According to Hesinden sources, scholars believe that this phenomenon will only become more common in this era of the Starfall. The shooting stars were concentrated around the Dragon's Eye, and did not affect any of the other 33 major stars of the constellation. When the eye closed during the early nights of Firun, the number of shooting stars seen issuing from around the Dragon reverted to a normal level. This implies a connection between the phenomena.

As of this time, we have not received any reports connecting this phenomenon to

any events of note in the Horasian Empire. However, do not think this means we can return to complacency. Let all Aventurians conduct research on this matter. The Starfall affects everyone, and we must allow Hesinden science to study it lest something horrible happen without warning.

The Dragon is considered a highly portentous constellation; every minor change to it carries nearly as much weight as that given to the extinguished Sarstar in the Sword constellation. The Dragon represents conflict as well as changes in the world order. The Dragon's four years of visibility during its slow, seven-year-long rotation in the skies above Aventuria is typically regarded as a time of upheaval, but what meaning can we ascribe to the closing of its eye now? Could this be related to the Turning of the Ages theory that has been gaining acceptance ever since the appearance of the Bearers of the Seven Signs? Nearly every culture views dragons as monsters, while the old scriptures say the constellation represents the first dragon, whose shattered carbuncle formed the stars.

The Hesinden community must attempt to answer numerous questions, even if doing so unravels only a fraction of the mysteries surrounding the Starfall.

*Sanya Serpolet  
(Philipp Neitzel)*





## Special Supplement

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Aventurian Herald, Travia 1040 FB

Aventurian Herald, Boron 1040 FB

### Where is the Imperial Family's Heir?

**G**areth. Where is the imperial family's heir? This question, heard several times at the most recent Court Council, can also be heard in the fine salons of Gareth and other cities. Now that the heretic Haffax, the last great adversary, is defeated, the realm must be rebuilt and restored to its former strength.

The hereditary provincial lords of the Middenrealm have all entered into Travia Bonds, except for His Excellency Gwain of Harmamund, Lord of Almada—who is already more than 70 gods' courses old and has only a niece to follow him. Therefore, the hereditary lines of the duchies of Northmarches, Weiden, and Tobrien, as well as the principalities of Albertain and Kosh, all are secure. The Marches, with a few exceptions, can also present children in line for the leadership.

While we wish the Empress a long and fulfilled life, we still wonder who will follow her, should she step before Boron? Her sister has not yet formed a Travia Bond and, as a mage, she cannot wear the crown. Next in line of succession would be Barnhelm of Ravenmouth, the Mark Reeve of the imperial province of Gareth. But he is more than 60 gods' courses old. Moreover, many worry the aristocracy would refuse to swear fealty to Answin of Ravenmouth's son after Answin's betrayal. Several legal scholars hold the opinion that Answin's line lost its claim to the House of Gareth's

line of succession. If so, would young Swantje of Ravenmouth, Lady of the Rommilsian Marches Margravate be next? We may need to consider branch lines of the House of Gareth for the throne, especially because His Imperial Majesty, Storko of Gareth, never took the Covenant of Travia. But, if several branch lines stake claims to the throne, we can expect turmoil, or even open battle.

Besides prayers that our Empress and her husband may have a child, we hear increasing reports about another aspiration, these days. If the Empress desires to keep her line alive, then her sister must take the Travia Bond. If Yppolita of Gareth's children are free from Mada's Curse, they would be legitimate and recognized imperial family heirs. It is no wonder, then, that the major Houses are already searching for suitable candidates. Still, many pitfalls must be avoided, here. Which House will be chosen and thus elevated in power?

Once again, we recognize that when a Realm must quickly unite to win a war, questions of high-level politics get set aside. Afterwards, however, those questions return with even greater consequences once the enemy is defeated.

*Baltram of Liepenberg  
(David Lukassen)*

Tobrienan Wolf's Horn, Travia, 1040 FB

### Tobrien's Shining Future

**B**eilunk. After years of difficult battle and resistance, large parts of our beloved homeland were finally liberated. The price we paid in blood was immense, and our land suffered much. The people of Tobrien are thankful—we know it is thanks to our loyal friends and allies, who fought at our side, that we are free once more.

Now Tobrien looks toward a shining future! It is up to every one of us to heal our land, build anew what was destroyed, and lead Tobrien to new heights. Thus, our wise Duke decided to bestow the Ducal Mark Tobimora to a new lord. Who else but our beloved hereditary prince Jarlak of Ehrenstein could henceforth lead the county's men and women and protect them from all evil?

Shortly after receiving accolades from his Swordmother—Her Imperial Majesty herself—the Duke, his vassals, and friends of the duchy left Beilunk to travel to an ancient grove. There, a druid—Lord Firun's servant—performed time-honored rituals. Jarlak promised with his blood, as was the custom since the days

of his house's progenitor, and swore to honor the union with the land. He vowed to defend the land with his blood and to cleanse it of all corrupted terrors. After he had done so, Duke and Count—father and son—took the holy oath of fealty and sealed it with their blood. Firun's servant also reminded our hereditary prince that Saint Jarlak would serve as his guide during his rule.

Truly, Tobrien is fortunate to have Jarlak as a hereditary prince and count: a knight who earned his spurs during the military campaign against Haffax. With our Duke as head and Jarlak at his side, we shall also defeat the traitorous Arngimm and take back our beloved Ysilial!

The Empress has decreed it so, and so it shall be. Tobrienan blades alone will liberate our Tobrien homeland!

*Egidius Peatcutter  
(David Lukassen, with thanks to the  
participants of the All-Aventurian  
Convention 2016)*

### From the Windy Margins into the Realm's Golden Heart

The Duke of the West's Successful Politics Show First Results

**D**uke can extend his power in many ways. Some wage wars and conquer lands; others strengthen their influence through strategic marriages and far-branching families. Cusimo Garlischgrötz, Margrave of the Windhag and Duke of Grangor, serves two realms and follows a different strategy: he makes a targeted effort to place his relatives and vassals into influential positions in both realms.

Two of his most recent initiatives are attention worthy. First, there is Gwydeon Garlischgrötz, a relative of the Horasian Empire's Duke. The former Reeve of Westend became a victim of the Galahan faction's intrigue on the eve of the Horasian war of succession. He was forced to leave the Horasian Empire, and could not take an aristocratic office after the peace accord. For a while, he minded the affairs of House Garlischgrötz in the Windhag and Northmarches for his distant cousin in Grangor; but, he did not try to hide the fact he was destined for greater things. At talks on the periphery of the Court Council in Beilunk, it was suggested that perhaps he should be named provincial governor of the Garetian county, Hartsteen. Though Gwydeon was not granted the fiefdom, the discussion alone is a sign of Cusimo's

influence. It remains to be seen how Gwydeon will act in the future, after being snubbed by both realms.

The second noteworthy strategy—a major success—was Udilbert of Hardt's appointment as Count Palatine of Randersburg, a wealthy imperial palace along the Realm Road between Stagford and Gareth in Realmwood County. The former Reeve of Comital Griffongorge in the Windhag succeeds Ungolf of Stagford in office after his death in 1039 FB. Stagford was a Steward of the Realm and a member of one of the oldest noble houses of Gareth. The Garetian Kingdom's noble families, who think highly of their privileges and birthrights, showed much discontent at the ennoblement of what they call a mannerless Windhag provincial, thus, it is a remarkable success for the Windhager Margrave to outdo his rivals and place his vassal in the very Heart of the Realm.

There are an increasing number of rumors in the Horasian Empire that the Duke of the West makes every effort to place his confidants in vacant (and lucrative) crown offices.

*Hesindiago Wagonserve (Jürgen Suberg  
with thanks to Björn Berghausen, Maik  
Lafrenz, and Torben Stretz)*

#### Wulffarth Bakery

*Wheat, kissed by Praios' sun,  
milk from Warunker Brown  
cows,  
baked into delicacies using an  
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Beilunker recipe.*

*Enjoyed at court, made fresh,  
daily.  
Favored by the Empress.*

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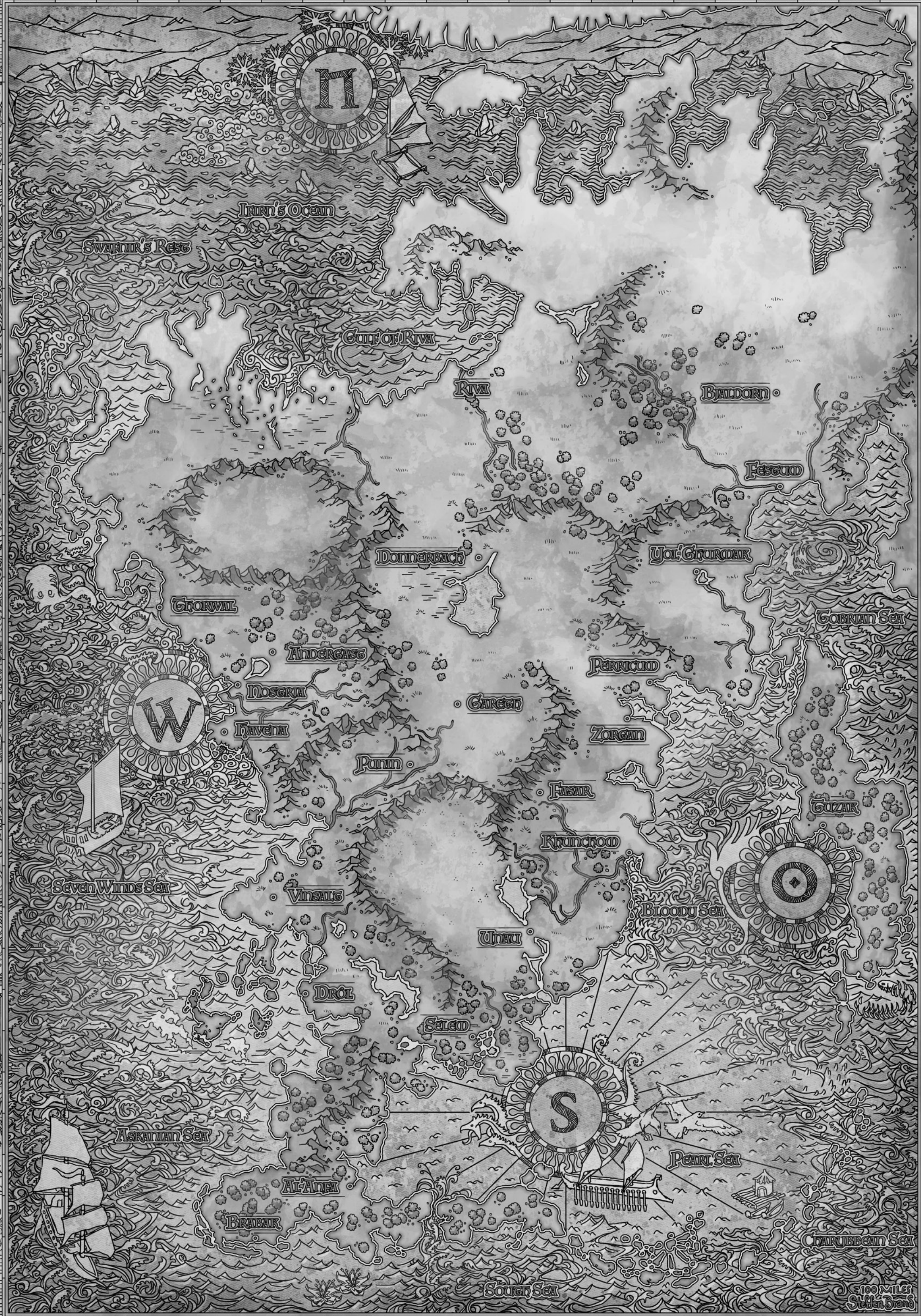
*Tired of paying exorbitant prices in Havena? Is Grangor too far away?*

*Visit Hyndoch, and buy at Rodasher.*

*Rodasher: the shop with the blue wax seal!*

*Rodasher: on the waterfront.*

*Rodasher: Ingerimm worthy quality; Phex worthy prices.*



Northmarcher Griffon Mirror, Praios 1040 FB

## Fire in Elvenhus

**E**lvenhus. The conflict between the Countesses Palatine of Weidleth and Elvencounty, Yolande of Mersingen and Niam Fairywaters—brooding for more than two decades—once again claims victims. A farmstead, in which alleged cattle thieves Mersinger guards were thought to be hiding, went up in flames. Ironically, the farmstead was the Countess of Elvenhus, Calderine of Hardenfels' property. She refused to even entertain the thought that her farmstead could have any connection to cattle thieves.

According to rumors, the current dispute is about some bulls the Lady of Elvencounty's men took from a meadow belonging to Mersingen. From Her Excellency Fairywaters vicinity, we heard these bulls were the collateral for a loan

of three breeding stallions to the Lady of Weidleth, which she had not returned. However, the Countess Palatine claims she does not know anything about such an agreement and stated she purchased the horses, herself.

Observers at the Elvenhus court stated the Countess finally had enough and ordered both Countesses Palatine to Elvenhus—with the threat to sue them at the Realm Court if both imperial arriere vassals did not comply with her summons.

Whether or not the parley in the county seat has any effect on the countesses' dispute remains to be seen.

*Hesindiago Wagonserve  
(Tina Hagner)*

Festumer's Flag, Travia 1040 FB

## The Peasant Leader's Legacy

**Research Report: Rumors about Documents Found in Firun Indicate a Paradigm Shift for the Historic Treatment of Arannja of Rucken**

**D**ocuments attributed to Arannja of Rucken, the peasant leader, were found at the Firunen temple of Rondra during investigations motivated by church politics. An anonymous source said the documents mention a "sun-blinded slave driver" and "undeserved hereditary nobility," among other things. Once the findings were made known to the public, there were widespread rumors in the Festumer Hesinde Village that no serfdom existed in the Bornland before the occupation period from 338 FB onward. Upon enquiry, both churches involved, as well as the chancellor

of the Noble Marshal, denied the rumors. The Mercury Hall utterly condemned the rumors. Only Hesinde's Temple of Knowledge has provided hints that a closer investigation could be necessary.

Arannja of Rucken lead a peasant revolt against the Emperor Priests' occupation of the Bornland in 422-423 FB and conquered the cities of Neersand and Sirmgalvis, among others. Since her death at the stake, she is revered as martyr by some Kor worshippers.

*Jannek Britzke  
(Niklas Forreiter, Daniel Heßler)*

Salamander, Praios, 1039 FB

## Astronomers in an Uproar

**I**nsult. The priests of the temple of Hesinde in the Horasian capital, named for its star tower and the observatory in the Golden Cliffs, called for a record of the changes in the starry sky after increased shooting star sightings and unexpected constellation movements.

Worrisome news also came from the Land of the First Sun, from various sources: the temple of Hesinde in Khunchom, the Order of the Gray Staves, and the temple of Mada in Palmyrabad. Niobara's Folio is said to be increasingly incorrect, and even adventurers are said to have found new records written by the legendary astronomer.

In the meantime, house Stoorrebrandt has announced their plan to employ a Magister of Astronomy at the future academy in Wagonhold. This move is supported by local temples that invoke the legacy of Niobara. Increases in stellar sightings are certainly reason to pay more attention to astronomy in the coming months. As guild mages, we must continue to act as spearheads of science and work together with the Twelvegodly institutions. Each port of call mentioned in this article can conduct research, but this must occur in all guilds' established academies.

*Rhenaya da Coralldo  
(Philipp Neitzel)*

Havena Fanfare, Phex, 1040 FB

## Want to Pay Less? Go to Kyndoch!

**H**avena. Widespread dissatisfaction has risen among customers in the stores and markets of Underacres. The prices for many trade goods from the heart of the Realm have consistently increased in Havena during the last few months, alienating quite a few travelers hoping to find a good deal. Customers now pay steep prices, particularly for high-quality steel weapons from dwarven smiths and alchemical potions from Punin.

Word has long since spread that the same goods are available at a far cheaper price in the trading town of Kyndoch, about two-hundred Middenmiles away. Quite a few adventurers take long detours along the Great River to save valuable ducats.

*Cianna Starfish  
(Jürgen Suberg)*

Havena Fanfare, Ingerimm, 1040 FB

## Village Population in the Winhall Hinterlands Goes Missing Without a Trace!

**W**inhall. Something strange happened recently at the edge of Farindel Forest, only two days' journey from Winhall—a tragedy that initially went unnoticed by authorities and the public. It seems an entire hamlet was emptied of all life, including man and mouse, in the blink of an eye! This is believed to have happened in the month of Phex, 1040 FB. When the rumor reached the offices of the *Fanfare*, I immediately set out toward Winhall to learn more—and to rule out the possibility this was just another of the countless legends people have told about the Farindel Forest since time immemorial.

Upon arriving in Winhall, I learned the small settlement was named Beechground. However, instead of clear directions to the village, the townsfolk gave only warnings: avoid the area of Beechground, for it is cursed! My choice was either to return to Havena empty-handed or else travel through the wilderness on the off-chance I'd find something. Luckily, a brave bard by the name of Larric Redhair agreed to lead me to the hamlet. On our way there, we found trees either uprooted or entirely covered with fungi or strangely-shriveled lichen. The region was unnaturally quiet; even the animals seemed to avoid it.

Eventually, we came across some wooden huts: Beechground. The village seemed intact at first glance, but we soon

noticed that a few structures' roofs were missing. The fields looked as though they had suffered from a hail storm a few weeks ago. As we entered the town, no one came out to greet us. We saw no curious children; not even a hungry cat.

Everything lay still and abandoned before us, as though this was an elaborate joke and the inhabitants might reappear at any moment. Tools lay about, and new-hewn boards lay stacked near the buildings with damaged roofs. Supplies stood on shelves in unlocked houses. We found unfinished handicrafts, a half-empty bowl of soup with a spoon in it, and a cleaning bucket and a toy stick horse lay behind one of the homes.

There was no sign of an attack or a hasty evacuation. It was as if a strange power somehow swept the people away in the middle of their day's work.

This eerie place filled my mind with dark forebodings, but Larric seemed curious—inspired, even, as though composing his next ballad.

He accompanied me back to Winhall with a song on his lips. When we parted, he told me not to worry, because, as he put it, "Not everything is lost." He tipped his hat and stepped past me. When I turned to wave, I found he, too, had vanished without a trace.

*Aidan of Orbavalle  
(Carolina Möbis)*



Northmarcher Griffon Mirror, Phex, 1040 FB

## A Handshake between Havena and Elenvina

A New Era on the Great River

**E**lenvina. Hardly had the snow melt ended and the high waters, which made the Great River impassable, run off, when a singularly unusual ship—among the first vessels to take the passage upstream—docked in Elenvina, where her maiden voyage ended. The streamlined, elegant river galley from the Havener wharf, Saordubh, was a gift from His Serene Highness Finnian ui Bennain, the Prince of Albernia, to his brother in office Duke Hagrobald Guntwin of the Great River, at his Covenant of Travia with the count of Ragath's daughter, Concabella of Ehrenstein-Streitzig.

The Prince named the new ship *Concabella*, as well, in the hope it would arrive safely in Elenvina under Efferd's blessing—and that of his eleven siblings—and serve its new master well for many years. At both courts, this generous gesture represented a handshake between the two provinces and a careful approach by the two sovereigns. Many welcome the symbol

after the recent war, though those who still hold grudges profoundly condemn it.

In Elenvina, His Majesty Hagrobald gladly accepted his brother's gift and announced he would soon test the swift *Concabella's* capability on a cruise toward Havena, where he would personally thank Finnian ui Bennain for the gift.

*Hesindiago Wagonserve  
(Tina Hagner)*

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New, every week:

Gruesome crimes and their victims; only 1 haler.

This week:

The Silver Nightingale

Nostrian War Trumpet, Praios, 1041 FB

## Nostrian Strength: A Clarion Call for the People

**N**ostria. Malicious groups and catastrophes have often targeted our magnificent homeland's glorious regions. Be it the wicked, pillaging Thorwalers; the blue wheeze; or the war-mongering Andergastans, Nostria remains strong and will continue to repel any crises in the years to come.

Just think of the scandalous deeds those Andergastans devised! Most recently, these blackguards embroiled us in a sea battle in our own territory.

But we'll show them; the stag always stands above the aurochs.

Our land witnessed fifteen wars. It weathered those fifteen wars and always emerged strong, its pride intact. Should Andergast dare to take up arms against us again, you must be ready, Nostria. Remember the past, learn from it, and rise again; Nostria, rise. As you have always done.

*Bosper Salterhav  
(Jan Neumann)*

Lowanger Lance, Phex, 1038 FB

## A Commentary

### The Dream Is Over

**L**owangen. Now, nearly ten gods' courses after the Starfall, the rush for Phex's gifts has ended and the wolf follows the awakening. As expected, there is hardly any talk of new findings, now. Blessed are those who can make the Great Wastes arable in the frontier spirit of the Svellt Valley, and those who do not shun honest work on Storrerbrandt's road toward Riva. However, great is the clamor of ill-suited treasure seekers who are worse off now than when they arrived. Their findings were wasted on drink; their provisions, squandered.

*Scribble-Yppa (Phillip Neitzel)*

### New to *The Dark Eye* Core Rules?

Looking for scenarios? Allow us to recommend the HEROIC WORKS Series. These small adventures are big on flavor and ready to run, with little preparation. Look for them in the Ulisses PDF shop, or receive them with your subscription to the *Aventurian Herald*!



## Credits

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Xeledon Mirror, Phex, 1039 FB

## Letter to the Editor

**Y**ou don't need to worry about the Eye of the Dragon anymore; it was me! After a few good pitchers of brew in the tavern, I took out my new Gandrash crossbow to see how far it could shoot. I took aim at the Dragon, fired, and hit! I remember it like it happened yesterday: just one shot, and the eye was gone. A real Grandfather Parax shot! But that's the secret with dragons—you get only one chance to hit its weak spot.

Anyway, the mystery is solved. Strangely, my good friend the Magistra advised me not to write you, even though it was she who made me aware of these news articles in the first place. Well, she's only a human, after all. I wager your readers will know the truth when they hear it.

*Brohom son of Borxas, Shadrok  
(Philipp Neitzel)*

Havena Fanfare, Tsa, 1040 FB

## The Nobles Are Robbing Us Blind!

**D**ear Quill-drivers,

The esquires are attempting to rob us city-dwellers blind! I've known Woldur ter Halg for fifteen years and for fifteen years I've bought cloth from him. Each time we met, we shared some fine beer and settled on a price agreeable to us both. That's over now! No agreement! No cloth! No new clothes for my customers! It isn't Woldur's fault. He was always a

good, reasonable man, but he told me about me the new tolls they're collecting on the roads. Neither of us can make a profit with these levies! He was forced to sell his business to that toad, Ordahn. What is an honest merchant to do? Set her prices as high as the Grangorers? Make her goods from inferior raw materials? This must end! Down with the tariffs!

*Cigna ni Olwen  
(Simon Würth)*

Aventurian Herald, Praios, 1041 FB

## The Jobornan Wedding: Doubters Proven Correct

**J**oborn. It was to be a great feast—the region waited excitedly for Gosthelm Longford of Joborn, the Andergastan Great Baron's son, and Noraletta of Eichenschlag, the Nostrian knight's daughter, to join hands in the Covenant of Travia. The *Herald* reported just as many sceptics and doubters in attendance as those who hoped the region would finally enjoy lasting peace.

The Jobornan people were suspicious of the festival preparations, even though—or probably, precisely because—important individuals from both kingdoms announced their attendance. This included the groom's parents: Baron Ruckus of Joborn and Princess Wenzeslausia, Ruckus' consort and Andergastan King Wendelmir's sister. King Wendelmir himself insisted on attending his nephew's wedding, even though he is a declared Nostrian enemy. It is said he hoped lasting peace would bring him a greater tax income from the region.

The bride's line also had impressive names on the guest list: Forest Count Eilert II Rheideryan of Mirdin, Prince of Nostria and consort of the Nostrian Queen. He and the bride's mother, Esquire Rondrastin Kasmyrai of Eichenschlag, have been friends for many years. Under these circumstances, even far-removed relatives and friends to the bridal couple did their best to travel to Joborn in the summer of 1040 FB.

Due to local customs, the wedding ceremony was to take place at the zenith of the full moon at the second hour of Rahja. As scheduled, the wedding

party met in the evening to begin the celebrations before the ceremony. Everything seemed to indicate those present were willing to give the union their blessing, though many were silently gnashing their teeth.

Tensions escalated quite suddenly when an unknown assailant stabbed a soldier in the crowd. The peaceful, festive mood vanished as wedding guests drew their swords and attacked each other. The number of injured and dead is still unknown; however, eye-witnesses say it was a bloodbath.

Whoever killed the soldier, and whether they did so for political or personal reasons, is still unclear. The festival grounds were complete chaos. Some guests left town hastily; others vowed eternal vengeance toward the opposing side. It remains unclear whether the bridal couple still plans to marry under these circumstances. Neither family gave a clear statement after the tragic turn of events.

We can at least report the aristocracy of both sides are still alive, which may be the only reason a declaration of war was not issued that very night. However, some attendees saw the local Blessed One of Rahja with the Love Light of Joborn, so perhaps we owe the shaky but continuing peace to this miraculous item.

In conclusion, it is business as usual in the Warring Kingdoms. The ancient conflict continues, and we can only wish the best for the poor bridal couple's future, whatever that may be.

*Adriane Mildew  
(Carolina Möbis)*

Sikram Sentinel, Travia, 1040 FB

## Sacrilegious Theft: Has the Silver Nightingale Gone Too Far?

**T**hegün. News of a sacrilegious crime reached us from the Church of Rondra's circles. The saber of Laethanis Lionblow, the local saint, was stolen from the temple of Thegün. Temple officials would like to keep the details under lock and key, but we learned the following information from a trustworthy source.

The known criminal, Emeraldal ya Tolvani, struck again. Already accused of theft, marriage fraud, and non-authorized duels throughout the Horasian Empire, many news gazettes and one or two songs refer to her as "the Silver Nightingale" and celebrate her as a sort of secret

heroine of the people. Now, it would seem she was able to seduce two temple Blessed Ones at the same time, making them fight for her honor. It is said she used the distraction the duel provided to steal the reliquary. Has ya Tolvani taken things too far this time? Has she turned against the church and the gods? Will this cause the people to turn away from her? The *Sentinel* will continue to cover this case as we receive more information.

*Rahjamando Torése  
(Simon Würth)*