

Aventurian Herald

Aventurian Herald 179

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Grangor's Uthuria Fleet Returning Soon

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Two Masters' Duel in Vinsalt

During the last moon, the capital of the Horasian Empire witnessed one of the greatest duels in history. Even though I have seen quite a few duels in my time, I cannot recall a greater display of combat pleasing unto Rondra since the legendary duel between the Sword King Raidir Conchobair and the great hero Melcher Dragondeath.



Aventurian Herald, Perraine 1040 FB



Murder in the Court!

Judge of the Realm found dead in Elenvina –
Disciple of the Nameless One hangs himself After Being Unmasked

Elenvina. There seems to be no end of drama in the administration of the Middenrealm these days. The usually quiet Realm Court, which works behind the scenes, is caught in the center of a scandal that might run deeper than many dare to imagine. The Imperial Throne seemed very concerned about the state of affairs in this residential city of the Northmarchan dukes.

When Her Highborn Junivera of Rightgorge did not appear at breakfast, Falk Gerion of Bregelsaum started to worry. The two realm judges of the Chamber of Nobles began every Rohalsday with an informal meeting to discuss business in the Realm Court, which lies in the new chancery quarter of Elenvina. When Bregelsaum visited his colleague's city residence, the front door was unlocked and open. The chambermaid lay unconscious on the floor near the stairs, victim of a sleep-inducing poison. He found Rightgorge in her boudoir, brutally strangled, and immediately sounded the alarm.

A group of investigators assigned by the Northmarchan duke has since shed light on the Realm judge's involvement in dubious practices. Apparently, Judge Junivera of Rightgorge used her position to forge records in the Armorial of the Realm and embezzle large sums.

The evidence for this was hard to piece together due to the destruction of the Armorial during the Year of Fire. Heralds of the Realm have been working diligently in the chancery quarter of Elenvina to reconstruct the missing records. Since the sheer number of registered coats of arms exceeds the limited processing capacity of the heralds, the Realm Administration recently ordered the Realm Judges

from the Chamber of Nobles to assist in this effort.

Judge of the Realm Rightgorge apparently created a number of false identities and entered them into the Armorial as successors for Esquires of the Realm who perished during the Mendena campaign. The investigators have so far found five such estates in the Middenrealm. They also discovered on whose order the Realm's judge committed these forgeries: Praiodan of Luring, a provincial governor from a venerable Garethian lineage of counts. (Not to be mistaken with Praiodan of Luring, the Blessed One of Praios and First Councillor of Garethia, who perished during the Year of Fire. —Editor)

Praiodan of Luring is related to Count Drego of Luring from the Realmwood, whose father Danos died during the military campaign against Haffax. The provincial governor returned from the siege of Mendena with grievous injuries, among others having lost an eye.

In a number of letters found hidden beneath loose floorboards and addressed to Realm's Judge Rightgorge, the Garethian aristocrat wrote of the "disgusting and subversive machinations of the new nobility," adding that they "must be stopped by any means necessary." One must not shy away from using the sword to protect aristocratic

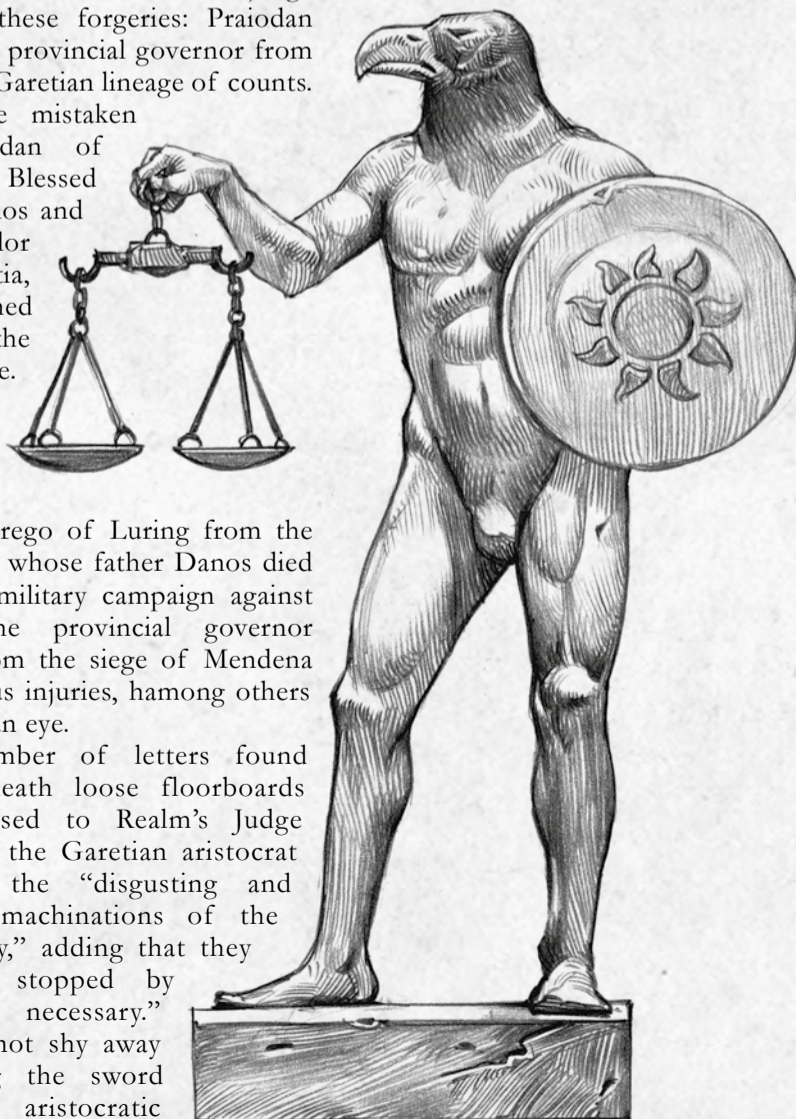
blood from the lowly quality of the common plebs. The aristocracy is an unshakable and holy unity, blessed by the indivisible Twelve.

Duke Hagrobald of the Great River did not hesitate for a moment to inform the Imperial Crown of this discovery. The Grand Privy Councillor of the Realm, Rondrigan Paligan, ordered the provincial governor

arrested and charged with conspiracy, forgery of official seals, and shaking the foundations of the Realm, Dere, and Alveran. Praiodan was taken to the Imperial Prison on Efferd's Tears, near Perricum. A search of his residence uncovered incriminating material and cult objects of the Nameless One. During his initial interrogation, the accused seemed unrepentant and protested his innocence multiple times, saying he was ready to swear an oath before a Blessed One of Praios. On the day he was to be formally questioned, the provincial governor was discovered in his cell, dead by his own hand. He had fashioned his bed sheet into a noose, thrown it over a ceiling beam, and hanged himself.

The Chamber of Aristocrats of the Realm Court views his suicide as an unmitigated admission of guilt.

The family of the deceased refuses to claim the body, so Praiodan of Luring will not be buried in his family crypt with his ancestors and predecessors in office. Instead, his ashes will be scattered to the four winds. The Imperial Throne announced that it intends to fill the vacancy created by the death of Realm Judge Junivera of Rightgorge with a worthy and meritorious successor.



Hesindiago Wagonserve
(Jürgen Suberg,

with thanks to Björn Berghausen, Heiko Brendel, and Tina Hagner)

Aventurian Herald, Efferd 1040 FB

Jubilation in Brabak

King Mizirion III celebrates his 60th anniversary on the throne and names a successor.

The kingdom on the cape honored its king, who is often derided throughout the rest of Aventuria, with a grand ceremony to mark a truly impressive achievement. For sixty god's courses the aged king has governed his land and one must admit that Brabak is better off today than it was at the time of his coronation in 980 FB. When he was crowned, Emperor Reto ruled in Gareth and Bal Honak ruled Al'Anfa. Both of those rulers are now departed, making Mizirion the longest ruling monarch in Aventuria.

His sixty-year rule has not always been easy, and malicious tongues mocked the great debts incurred by the kingdom and the royal house. Many perceived that true power lay in the hands of the influential Audienza, but nobody can deny that the years under Mizirion have been peaceful. While almost every region of Aventuria endured wars during the past 60 years, Brabak enjoyed peace under its king. His wise decisions and farsighted planning quickly paid off. By 1000 FB, Brabak had already taken its first steps toward exploring the Southern Seas. The legendary journey of the *Korisande* charted the way, and today the kingdom's sphere of influence extends via its colonies as far as Myranor and Uthuria.

The Brabakers will always cherish their monarch's leadership and they thanked him by decorating the city in gold and red, the colors of the kingdom, and holding a great feast and a festive parade. The lines of attendees stretched all the way from the gates to the royal palace, where Mizirion, his son Peleiston at his side, addressed



his people. Also in attendance were many guests who traveled from far-away lands to show their respect. Representatives of the Golden Alliance, of which Mizirion is considered the driving force, were also in attendance.

The king's speech was short but moving. He thanked the gods for his long rule and the favor they have shown to Brabak. More than one eye shed a tear when the aged monarch admitted he felt he could proudly stand before Boron's Scales. He then introduced his heir, Peleiston, who had begun training for official duties. The de Sylphur family was the first to swear their allegiance to the designated heir, and the rest of the Audienza followed suit.

Publicly naming an heir is just the latest smart move by a king who wishes to avoid the succession conflicts that plague the Horasian Empire and the Middenrealm.

Cordovan Munter (Philipp Neitzel)

Eberhardt Fireroot! Me and my lads will be your seconds. You have our word of honor. Just tell us where to go, and when to be there. Nobody seriously believes Joborn will agree to live under Nostrian rule again. That Roachbrook fellow just wants to weasel out of this whole affair! Joborn belongs to Andergast, just like the stone oak trees. Well, I digress, but when you punch Roachbrook right in his fishy face, we'll be there. We're on your side, Eberhardt.

Borondil Blackacre, on behalf of the Choral Society of the Frontier Woodcutters

Aventurian Herald, Peraine 1040 FB

Let's Have a Word

Count Growin of Ferdok Speaks with the Aventurian Herald

his humble reporter spoke with the First Chamber Judge of the Realm about the work and history of the Realm Court.

Aventurian Herald (AH): Let me begin with a provocative question: why should the *Herald's* readers be interested in the work of the Realm Court?

Count Growin (CG): Readers who only care about the unbelievable adventures of the crazed Festuman lizard researcher or the latest gossip about the Brabakan king will hardly find this topic interesting. But those who seek to understand the politics of the Middenrealm can gain quite a few insights from the work of the Realm Court.

AH: For example?

CG: The Realm Court has always mirrored the balance of power within the Realm. The court's decisions carry as much authority as the word of the Emperor in certain affairs, and in some cases can even overrule him. Thus, even the appointment of a Realm's Judge is a highly politicized matter. This is most clearly visible in the power struggle between the aristocracy and the monarchy, which Randolph of Ravenmouth describes in his book, *The Ringing Lord*. In the Middenrealm, this phenomena manifests in the old noble houses' ongoing attempts to gain more independence from the Imperial Throne.

AH: And how is this mirrored in the Realm Court, exactly?

CG: The Realm Court owes its current composition to reforms implemented after the Answin Uprising. During the Great Court Council of 1014 FB, Protector of the Realm Brin dismissed the entire Realm Court and appointed new judges. His appointees included a conspicuous number of aristocrats from the so-called Haalian New Nobility, which was a clear sign of opposition to the old noble houses that had supported Answin. On the other hand, he appointed an unexpectedly large and disproportionate number of Koshan nobles to the court in what could only be seen as a reward for Kosh's proverbial loyalty to the Emperor and the Koshan sovereign's support for Brin.

AH: What effect did this have on Empress Rohaja's authority?

CG: When the former Crown Advocate of the Realm died during the Year of Fire,

the empress relegated the appointment of her successor to the Imperial Estate. During the Court Council of 1031 FB, Jast Gorsam, an unpopular candidate for Seneschal of the Realm, stood for election against the Burgrave of Ridgerock, Alrik Custodias-Greifax, who was the Imperial Throne's favored candidate. In a clear sign of the old families' discontent, the decision narrowly went to Alrik. He now represents the Imperial Throne at the Realm Court and helps speed up the often-sluggish trials.

AH: How does the court conduct its trials? Does the accused stand at the bar while the prosecutor delivers a fiery summation?

CG: The kingdom's "written record guideline" requires that both parties submit written copies of their cases to the court records. Trials allow for audiences, particularly when the court feels it advantageous to instruct the public about the institution of legal proceedings and the passing of sentences, but ideally, audiences do not influence the judge's decisions. Both sides must adhere to strict time limits when presenting their cases, so that the arguments of one party can't overly influence the judges. Trials conducted by the Chamber of Nobles occur in the Realm Court in the chancery quarter of Elenvina, while the Chamber of Aristocrats meets only during Court Councils or Imperial Assemblies. Sentences tend to lean more towards political than judicial ends, something that is tied to the fact that the Realm Court has no means to execute its sentences. This task falls to the plaintiffs.

AH: It does not sound like judicial aptitude is a criterion for appointment as a Realm's Judge.

CG: I would not go so far as to say that my honored colleagues are uneducated in matters of the law, even in the one or two cases where a corrupt Judge of the Realm was also found to be illiterate. Some judges attended the Beilunker Law Institute and many are well versed in the *Codex Raulis* and its interpretation.

Hesindiago Wagonserve (Jürgen Suberg, with thanks to Oliver Baeck, Stefano Monachesi, and Stephan Schulze)

Aventurian Herald, Ronda 1038 FB

Grangor's Uthuria Fleet Returning Soon

Music filled the streets of the city and colorful lanterns dotted the canals in Efferd, 1037, when Grangor celebrated the daring exploits of a man who rose from obscurity to lead a life of adventure: Sumudan de Vries. The bold merchant gambled his entire fortune on a single sailing ship.

At first, few believed his assurances that he had retained a captain who knew a route through the dangerous Southern Seas. Fewer were willing to entrust him with their savings, but Sumudan rushed from one burgher to the next to gain the funding necessary to equip his expedition, and Phex rewarded his bravery. After almost six months at sea, his ship returned at the end of Ronda

carrying a premium cargo of coffee and peanuts, which are found only on the southern continent. His investment earned many times its initial value, and Sumudan de Vries and his shareholders became incredibly wealthy.

Since then, the name of de Vries has been on everyone's lips, and many people predict that this old but no less courageous merchant will once again earn a fabulous profit. After his previous success, there was no shortage of investors this time, and his new fleet set sail immediately after the storms of winter had passed.

Tadeo Agtstone, spokesperson for the de Vries merchant house, assures us that Grangor's second Uthuria fleet, as

it is called, should return any day. The city expects the fleet's cargo holds to be stuffed with coffee beans, peanuts, and other prizes from Uthuria that will reap generous rewards for the investors. However, a certain kind of nervousness is felt at the Grangoran Stock Exchange, as some malicious tongues claim that the fleet should have returned long ago. Stocks from House de Vries have experienced strong price fluctuations as a result, but as we all know, investing has never been a vocation for the faint of heart.

Terya di Casibelli (Marco Findeisen)

Navigate your money into safe waters!

Do you wish to invest your money in a lucrative venture? Buy shares in the de Vries Merchant House today and increase your wealth overnight. The share certificate you purchase gives you a stake in the upcoming expedition to Uthuria. Sit back and relax while your money works for you, and then watch the profits roll in when the fleet returns. Highest returns guaranteed!

Don't miss out on the chance of a lifetime! Sign today in the House of the Traveling Salesman, the Temple of Phex you trust!

Kosh-Courier, Travia 1039 FB

With the Northmarchers Came the Mice The Prince Celebrates His Birthday

Dear Tsalind,
As you know, Kosh recently held its festival in honor of the Tsa's Day of the prince, which coincided with the celebration of the thousandth year of Kosh's beer purity law. Many guests, some foreign and some from remote regions of Kosh, flocked to Angbar for the festivities, "even though they don't know how to celebrate," as my late nuncle Whitereed used to say.

No sooner had they arrived, however, than the city was overrun by legions of mice that nibbled cheese and bread, devoured the sausages that the prince gives away on his Tsa's Day, and even tainted the good barley, spoiling this season's brewing! Good Prince Blasius of Eberstamm even discovered the noses of mice peeking out of his Tsa's Day presents!

The Hinterkoshans insisted that they had nothing to do with these furry creatures, and they did all they could to help chase the mice away, but it was not easy! We soon learned that all these mice were only here because of Luch, the King of Mice! It seems a falling star landed on his castle, and his subjects couldn't live there while it remained there. We pride ourselves

on our hospitality here in Angbar, but "enough is enough," like my nuncle always used to say. We don't need mice eating all of our provisions!

In the spirit of the Tsa's Day of the Prince, we set out to recover the star from the castle. We were not the only ones, though, as others—especially the nefarious Charissia of Salmingen—also wanted to claim it. I always say the Salmingers are up to no good! We eventually secured the star and thereby restored the mice's home. Now they are back where they belong, not devouring our brewing barley. Our good Prince is very generous, as you know. He sliced up the star-stone and distributed the pieces to all the guests in commemoration of his 71st Tsa's Day and the beer festival. My little girl, Heidrun, would have preferred a sausage, but she did get something to eat in the end. I was only glad that the mice had gone, and that our foreign guests left soon after.

Yours truly,
Bosper

*Letter from pannier merchant Bosper Rattelway, to his sister, Tsalind, Angbar, Travia, 1039 FB
(Tina Hagner)*

Havena-Fanfare, Rahja 1040 FB

"Successful Strike Against Smugglers!"

Havena. It happened at the break of dawn. The brave members of the Customs and Harbor Guards hid for hours in the dark at the edge of the Muhrsape until the smuggler's ship arrived. A cog drew near and launched a rowboat, which made its way to shore under cover of night, but they did not meet the people they expected. Instead, we captured a boat of smugglers, thanks to the support of upstanding Havenan captains.

The next day, customs officers proudly presented the goods they seized to the inhabitants of the harbor town, including ivory carvings, barrels of Prem Fire, and valuable pelts.

Smugglers never cease trying to circumvent Havena's harbor dues. Our capital city trades with many ports. Ships traveling from the north stop to sell only a small portion of their cargo in Albernia before continuing on to the Horasian Empire. Grangor and the trading company of the Horas-Imperial Privileged North Sea Company are important trade partners for ivory, pelts, distillates, and stone oak timber. These products sell for high prices in the Horasian Empire, and naturally, Havena has the right to charge customs fees for the transfer of cargo. After all, they use Havenan freighters, berths, and pilots!

To deceive customs officers, smugglers commonly hide crates of premium goods containers of lesser goods, but the truly bold ones avoid the harbor of Havena altogether. Instead, they meet their contacts outside the city, frequently on the edge of the Muhrsape, deliver their goods, take aboard potable water and provisions, and then set sail again for the Horasian Empire.

This is pretty much what happened here, only in this case, a lengthy investigation led to the apprehension of the scoundrels, and their precious cargo fell into the hands of the city.

The market reeve, the Council of Elders, and the Council of Captains all praised the brave efforts of the customs officials. The smugglers will receive a harsh but just punishment for their criminal deeds. Here's to another successful strike against the villainous deeds of smugglers!

*Alain ni Rionn
(Marie Mönkemeyer)*

Esteemed Lord Roachbrook, I, Travian Alderstone, agree to be your second and shall stand at your side if you enter into a duel with the Anderghastly Father Fireroot. For details, please contact me under the code: "Old long swords never rust."

Aventurian Herald, Travia 1040 FB

Luria's Recipe Corner

Hello, dear friends of Travia-pleasing cuisine! Today, I present a small but excellent dish that originated in Maraskan but spread as far as the Svellt Valley where it is now considered a sort of national dish. It always reminds me of the story of Farilinda. I often heard the story in southern Garetia, though I can't speak to its veracity.

The Wedding Feast

- 1 pound mixed ground meat
- 1 small amount* of peeled tomatoes, drained
- 1 small amount* of kidney beans, drained
- 1 small amount* of kidney beans in chili-sauce
- 1 medium-sized onion
- 1 medium-sized bell pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tea spoon oregano, ground
- 3 gloves of garlic
- 4 tablespoons of oil
- Maraskani pepper** to taste
- Dash of hot sauce***
- Salt

The Sagacious Merchant's Daughter

Heat the oil in a large pot. Chop the onion and cook gently with the ground meat. Cut the bell pepper into strips or dice them and add them to the ground

meat along with the tomatoes, oregano, and bay leaf. Bring to a boil, add salt, reduce the heat, and simmer over a low flame for about half an hour. Add the beans and the chopped garlic and bring to a boil again. Season with hot sauce and Maraskani pepper, remove from flame, and serve with white bread.

I became acquainted with this local variant of the famous Maraskani dish when I stopped at an inn called "The Hearty Wild Boar" while traveling through the Svellt Valley. The innkeeper shared his version of the story of this dish.

"Once upon a time," he said, "a rich merchant named Thorgerd lived nearby. He had a beautiful wife and a beautiful daughter. Now, Thorgerd wasn't just rich, he was an incredibly greedy man who felt he could never have enough. When it came time for his daughter to marry, though, Thorgerd wanted her to choose one of the sons from the other wealthy merchant families in town. Such a union would have made him more powerful.

But his daughter Farilinda had other plans. She would never marry a man she didn't love just to make her father wealthier. Besides, she had already given her heart to somebody else. Thorgerd was furious when he found out, and he began to devise a plan.

"You know that I want you to marry one of the merchant's sons," he told his daughter. "That would be good for business, but I don't want to force you. I suggest we make a deal. I'll invite three of your admirers to dinner, and you cook the meal. The first to say he likes your food will have your hand in marriage. If none of them like your cooking, you are

free to marry whomever you wish."

Farilinda knew that she could not cook. The few dishes she had attempted were all inedible. But she was wise and quickly spotted her father's plan. She met with her love, Rondolf, whose grandfather hailed from Maraskan, and together they devised a cunning plan that would end with her father agreeing to let the two marry.

Naturally, Thorgerd didn't want to leave anything to chance, so he consulted with Reimulf, the richest merchant of the three families. No matter how disgusting Farilinda's meal might taste, Vormir, Reimulf's son, would praise it above all other food after just one bite and swear that he had never tasted anything so divine.

The three merchants' sons met in Thorgerd's home on the agreed upon day and sat down at a large, beautifully decorated table. Farilinda had prepared a traditional Maraskan Wedding Feast with beans and ground meat. Servants brought in the plates and Vormir prepared to be the first to proclaim how much he liked the food. Nobody suspected, however, that Farilinda had spiked the dishes with Dragonfire—a rare and incredibly hot spice. Thorgerd gave the signal and all three suitors put spoons to their mouths. After the first bite, the tasters' eyes went wide, their faces turned red, and they began gasping and struggling for breath.

Vormir felt like he was burning up from the inside and could barely breathe, let alone speak. All three suitors hastily drank whole pitchers of water in huge gulps, but it did nothing to quench the burning. Vinegar would have been a better choice. Sweat poured down their faces, and their eyes bulged in their sockets. Realizing that he had been duped, Reimulf angrily dragged his wheezing son from the house. Not one of the suitors had spoken a single word about Farilinda's cooking—good or bad. The sagacious merchant's daughter had outsmarted her father, and he was forced to hold up his end of the bargain and allow his daughter to marry the one she loved."

*Your Luria
(Claudia Dill)*



*) A small amount means a small tin.

**) cayenne pepper

***) Tabasco sauce works well

Two Masters Duel in Vinsalt

Vinsalt. During the last moon, the capital of the Horasian Empire witnessed one of the greatest duels in history. Even though I have seen quite a few duels in my time, I cannot recall a greater display of combat pleasing unto Ronda since the legendary duel between the Sword King Raidir Conchobair and the great hero Melcher Dragondeath.

A few weeks ago, Vito ya Sterano, student of swordmaster Dom Essalio ya Fedorino, visited Almada's capital, Punin. The esquirio desired to study the skills and techniques of caballeros while traveling through the province.

Vito stopped at the wine tavern Mada's Luck, an establishment not far from Punin, to celebrate his study tour. Domna Metessa Golara, Punin's best fencer and mistress of the rapier, was also present in the establishment. According to the innkeeper and other witnesses, Vito was somewhat inebriated when he made advances toward the Domna. She rejected him in a friendly but firm manner, but tempers flared, unpleasant words were exchanged, and soon a challenge to a duel had been issued. In the ensuing fight, the establishment was almost destroyed. Vito lost not only the duel but also his good reputation and he wound up in the horse trough. To make matters worse, the master fencer claimed his signet ring, which marked his status as a wandering sword.

Unexpected consequences arose after the humiliated esquirio returned home and told his master of the duel in Punin. Even though Dom ya Fedorino punished his arrogant student, he also wrote a letter to Metessa Golara, asking her to return Vito's signet ring. The caballera and the swordmaster exchanged several letters and eventually

agreed to a duel to settle the matter, with the signet ring going to the victor. Vinsalt was their chosen dueling ground. Vito ya Sterano was visibly uncomfortable letting his master fight a duel that he felt responsible for, and he insulted Domna Golara when the combatants met on Baliiri Field.

Domna Golara began the duel with an elegant feint. Dom Essalio, whose Vinsaltan cavalier's style made good use of cover, initially limited himself to defensive moves. It was obvious that the fight against Golara took all of the old master's concentration. At first he remained on the defensive, but then he tried to bind his opponent's sword and surprise her within a flurry of ripostes. The Almadaness' skill proved up to the challenge, but the swordmaster's attacks still pushed her back. ya Fedorino was more experienced, but Domna Golara benefitted from the quickness of youth.

The non-stop exchange of blows was not limited to the field and soon attracted a huge audience. First blood went to Essalio, who injured Metessa Golara's left shoulder. Only a few moments later, her sword found its way to his right leg. The duel lasted half an hour, until the winded opponents agreed to a draw, praising each other's techniques. The audience applauded their honor and skill.

Lady Golara returned the signet ring to the swordmaster in recognition of his skill. Essalio apologized to Domna Golara for the misunderstanding and then turned to hand the proof his training to his student, but Vito had already left the city, filled with rage. The people of Vinsalt celebrated the duel of the masters all day and well into the night.

*Derio Mantago
(Alex Spohr)*

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"High Artistic Standard"

Hannik of Houndshoof and Reijkad Cartwright in Conversation at the Bard's Convention in Norbury, the Red Choir, and the Value of Friendship

Norbury. On the eve of the Great Bard Convention in Norbury, the *Aventurian Herald* took the opportunity to interview two of the artists scheduled to perform. Hannik of Houndshoof, widely famed for "Ode to the Homeland," and also the composer and choirmaster, Reijkad Cartwright.

AH: Master Hannik, this is not your first time at the bard's convention in Norbury, correct? In your opinion, how has the event changed over the years?

HoH: It gets better every year. Many bards from other lands find Norbury a rather inconvenient location, but a rather large Horasian delegation still made the trip—or, as we artists say, the *tour*—a sign of the event's high artistic standards.

AH: Master Cartwright, you received great praise eight years ago for your choir's performance, wherein an elf and a Nivese sang the solos. Do you still find time to compose, and are you working on anything now?

RC: Indeed, I am. I live in Festum for part of the year and my friends in Hesinde Village put me in touch with the local goblins, whose music is simple but has an interesting tonality.

AH: So those aren't merely rumors? You have actually assembled a choir of goblins who demonstrate acceptable singing skills?

RC: Yes, we have been practicing for several months now. It was hard work until the goblins and humans realized they shared a common language in the form of song. Human and goblin artists have major differences but they also have different temperaments. I see it as a good omen that we finally convinced Hannik to take part. (laughs)

AH: Master Houndshoof, what is your position on this?

HoH: Well, I was skeptical when Reijkad first approached me. I mean, mixing goblins and the lyrical work of a Bornish patriot like myself? I couldn't imagine it until I heard one of his goblins sing. I mean, it certainly remains a curiosity, but music appeals to all people.

AH: Will we hear a performance of the Red Choir at this Bard's Convention?

RC: Alas, no. The choir is simply too large and most of its members cannot afford to make the journey.

HoH: But I think I won't be giving away too much if I say that we are currently planning a major project for Festum and are in discussions with the city council.

AH: Let's talk a bit more about your performances here in the beautiful Market Hotel. It seems you have just signed an exclusive contract. Is this a well-earned privilege, or are you just

afraid of the competition?

HoH: I've been friends with the innkeeper for many decades and it was time to pay him back for his many years of hospitality. I really appreciate our personal relationship with the organizers, especially in these times, when everyone is interested only in how much money they can earn.

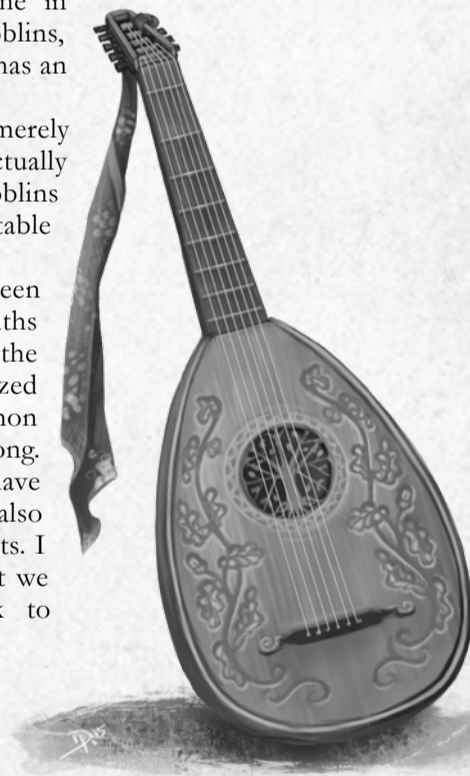
AH: As you know, the Noble Marshal has already arrived in Norbury. Which performance should she (and all the other visitors to the Bard's Convention) definitely not miss?

RC: I recommend the compositions of Tyrael ya Trequona. His innovative and elegant music is rarely heard in these parts.

HoH: Besides the music, the city is hosting a ceremony of the Order of the Hunt, from the County of Ask. A chance to see such a mighty and beloved hero as Count Wahnfried of Ask is not to be missed.

AH: I thank you for the interview.

*The interviewer was Alriksej Gerberon
(Niklas Forreiter,
Daniel Heßler)*



A New Gazette for the Northmarches

After reading insolent remarks and insults directed at the duke, His Majesty Hagrobald of the Great River swiftly prohibited any further publication of the *Northmarchan News*. In its place, the *Northmarcher Griffon Mirror* will resume publication after its short hiatus, with the amicable support and favor of the Elenviner Church of Praios, king of the gods.

*Alara Togelstein-Horning
(Tina Hagner)*