

# Echoes of the Labyrinth

Volume 4a: Winter Solstice 379 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.

Edition 1 of Spider's Vantage printing, produced after Winter Solstice 380 YE

Winter Solstice 379 YE accounts taken by Livia Cascade; 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, 379 YE

## Introduction

Five visionaries experienced visions induced by Pure Liao at the Solstice. Of these, four were selected by the Council of Gatekeepers, and one provided their own dose of Pure Liao found in a hidden cache, and then prepared for the vision by the Civil Service.

Due to the stormy weather at the summit, the winner of the Bourse auction for Pure Liao at the Autumn Equinox 379 YE elected to have their vision at the Spring Equinox 380 YE summit instead.

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.

- \* **Corvus of Auric Horizon** (Urizen), accompanied by Mina of the Howling Pines (Varushka)
- \* **Aquillian of Endsmeet** (Urizen), accompanied by Tarquinius of Endsmeet
- \* **Edward Watcher of King's Stoke** (the Marches), accompanied by Agnetha de Rondell (Dawn)
- \* **Father Drakov of the Vor'azi** (Varushka), accompanied by Vanya Petrovich Straskovich (Varushka)
- \* **Kahendrin Wordsmith** (Dawn), accompanied by Eleanor de Rondell (Dawn)

## **Corvus of Auric Horizon (Urizen)**

Accompanied by Mina of the Howling Pines (Varushka)

Corvus provided his own dose of Pure Liao, obtained in a hidden cache from the Eye of Morrow at the Winter Solstice 378 YE, and refined by the Civil Service into a form suitable for a vision.

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 came to in a room decorated in the Freeborn style with rich colourful upholstery, sitting on a bench at a table. There were sounds of seagulls and water outside, indicating that they were somewhere coastal, either on land or on a moored sea vessel.

There were three men at the table with the visionary; two of them were dressed like Freeborn, and the visionary could not tell the clothing of the third. The first was apparently the visionary's brother, a changeling by the name of Domingo, and he called the visionary either Carlo or Carlos. The other man who looked Freeborn was unlineaged, and called Valentin. The third man, whose clothing the visionary could not identify, was a briar, half of whose face appeared to be covered in bark.

From conversation, it emerged that Domingo had brought the visionary there because he and the others wanted the visionary to join them in their group of pirates called the Crimson Corsairs.

The visionary had apparently been smuggling under the guise of a Way missionary, and the others named Asavea, mountains and a wasteland as places that the smuggling had taken place in. However, they indicated that the smuggling was small in nature compared to the Crimson Corsairs, and asked if the visionary was willing to murder (both humans and orcs) as part of the Crimson Corsairs. They spoke of all the virtues, of the making of lots of money, and also of people who they were unhappy that the Empire had abandoned and that the Crimson Corsairs were helping.

The others' attitudes towards the visionary joining them differed. The briar was enthusiastic about the visionary joining them, while Valentin (the unlineaged Freeborn) was more reticent and wanted the visionary to prove himself. Domingo was speaking for the visionary and making it clear what joining would involve. He spoke of it as joining a new family, and mentioned that their grandmother was involved in the Crimson Corsairs and was pleased that the visionary might be coming back to them.

The others then handed the visionary a piece of paper with an oath written on it, and told them that this was it: if they were in, they were in, and they should read the oath without stumbling or hesitating. While the visionary was reading the oath, Valentin said that Domingo had made good for a boy from the mountains.

The oath on the paper started similar to "I forswear the Empire and egegore bond, I give my life and soul to the Crimson Corsairs to receive the rewards I am rightfully due", and then included some sort of piratical phrase about joining the others. Once the visionary read the oath, the other three stood up, cheered and clapped the visionary on the back. Domingo said "Bravo!", and the vision ended.

Corvus had his soul examined by the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, his soul bore a dedication to Prosperity and a testimony of "Vigilant Mage", each with the strength of a single priest behind them.

After the vision, as well as his dedication and testimony, his soul was quivering and flinching away. Exorcism did not appear to be sufficient to treat this injury, but an excommunication with the strength of seven priests was sufficient to isolate whatever was causing the injury (with the side effect of removing his dedication). An exorcism with the strength of seven priests cleared the excommunication's effect from his soul.

Mina also had her soul examined before and after the vision. Before the vision, her soul bore a dedication to Prosperity with the strength of a single priest.

After the vision, as well as her dedication, her soul was tensed and coiled, ready to strike, making her feel fearful. An exorcism with the strength of seven priests was sufficient to shock her soul and settle it back into place.

### **Aquillian of Endsmeet (Urizen)**

Accompanied by Tarquinius of Endsmeet

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

The visionary gave his permission for these notes to be made public. The testimony was presented by the guide initially, then separately by the visionary once the injury to his soul had been treated.

The visionary came to in darkness (the guide reported not being able to move at all).

Two pairs of glowing eyes appeared in the darkness, and the beings whose eyes they were addressed the visionary as Nayas, and in conversation identified themselves as Murit and Soghter.

(Both visionary and guide heard Murit's name, but the guide suggested Soghter while the visionary suggested Surut. Despite the visionary being trained as a magician and the guide not, the guide's suggestion is more likely here as both Murit and Soghter are Night eternal, frequently encountered together, whereas Surut is a Winter eternal and highly unlikely to appear in the same place as a Night eternal.)

Soghter was on the visionary's left, and Murit on their right, both quite close in proximity. Soghter appeared to have vertical lines from the bottom of its eyes, with a reddish-orange light and more illumination than was on Murit, and the Eternals' features were illuminated below their eyes but neither visionary nor guide could see them clearly. Soghter and Murit spoke in sentence fragments across each other, making the conversation somewhat hard to follow.

According to Soghter and Murit, the visionary had been put under some sort of curse (the guide heard it was a Day curse) by their enemy, who held a powerful position, that of a king, an emperor or a prince. Soghter and Murit acknowledged that a change was needed, and offered the visionary a choice. Murit offered the gift of knowledge, of understanding the curse, while Soghter offered the gift of power, of wreaking change through the world using the curse.

There was a mention at some point of what the visionary heard as the "Gift of Azot" or "Azoz", which is probably "Azoth", an epithet that both Soghter and Murit are referred to after a theoretical alchemical compound that can make miraculous transformations.

The visionary chose knowledge, and Murit started to refer to them as "loyal son" and "favoured son", while Soghter seemed to be annoyed but not enraged by this choice, and shortly afterwards the vision ended.

Aquillian's soul was examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, he had a testimony on his soul of "Virtue's Explorer", with the strength of one priest behind it.

After the vision, he had this testimony, along with another of "Son of Murit", with the strength of seven priests behind it. His soul was also injured and straining against its confined, with the effect of making it harder than usual for him to concentrate, and even more difficult than usual to keep his thoughts in line for any length of time to give

an account of his vision. An exorcism with the strength of seven priests shocked his soul back into place.

A possible identification for Aquillian's past self comes from a document written in Old Asavean, found in the Castle of Thorns shortly before the Winter 377 YE summit, and brought to a symposium at the Spire of the Celestial Cascade. The name given in the document is Gnaeus Mercurius, and Gnaeus can indeed be pronounced in the way that the visionary and guide heard.

The document was translated at the symposium by Iulian Shatterspire, Alcuin Shatterspire, Livia Cascade and Theodosia Canterspire (host to the Egregore Menos) of Urizen, Eleri Bronwen's Rest of Navarr, and Barak of Haros of Highguard. It was written up for publication and submission to the Celestial Library by Eleri Bronwen's Rest, and is reproduced below in original and translated form.

*Verum, sine mendacio, certum et verissimum.*

(This is the genuine and certified truth, containing no lie.)

*Quod est inferius est sicut quod est superbus, et quod est superbus est sicut quod est inferius, at perpetranda miracular rei unius.*

(As above, so below. And as below, so above. And so will be accomplished the wonders of this one thing.)

*Et sicut res omnest fuerunt ab uno, mediatione unius, sic omnes res natae ab hac una re, adaptatione.*

(Thus all things are brought about by one person, by the contemplation of this one person, thus all things are born of this one work, by my experiment.)

*Pater eius est Murit, mater eius est Evroma, fabricit illud ventus fornactis astrarum in ventre sua, nutrix eius nocturnem est.*

(Its father is Murit, its mother is Evrom. The wind made it in its belly in the arch of the skies, and the night is its nurse.)

*Pater omnis alchimiis totius mundi est hic.*

(The father of all alchemy of the whole world is here.)

*Si virtus eius integra est, versa fuerit in ilium.*

(Its structure is whole, if it is turned into ilium.)

*Separabis terram ab igne, subtile ab spisso, suaviter, magno cum ingenio.*

(You must separate the earth from the fire, the delicate from the coarse, gently and with great skill.)

*Ascendit a terra in coelum, iterumque descendit in terram et recepit vim superiorum et inferiorum.*

(It will ascend from the earth to the heavens, and then again descend to earth and receive the strength of the Above and the Below.)

*Sic habebis gloriam totium mundi.*

(Thus you will hold the glory of the whole of the world.)

*Ideo fugiest a te omnis obscuritas.*

(Therefore all obscurity will flee from you.)

*Haec est totius fortitudinis fortitudo fortis, quia vincent omnem rem subtilem, omnemque soldam penetrabit.*

(This is the strongest of strong might, for it conquers every delicate thing and penetrates into all matter.)

*Hoc forti, sic mundus creatus est, et corpora omnia comparationes degeneres.*

(With this power, thus the world is created, and all forms of inferior materials.)

*Hinc erunt adaptationes mirabiles, quarum modus est hic. Itaque vocatus sum Gnaeus Mercurius Filiomuritis, quod*

*ego generis draconis sum, et in manu mea possit conformare.*

(And hence come miraculous adaptations whose methods are [written] here. And so I am called Gnaeus Mercurius the Son of Murit, because I am of the line of the Wyrms, and let it be shaped in my hand.)

*Completum est quod dixi de operatione Muritis.*

(Thus is finished what i have said of the works of Murit.)

## **Edward Watcher of King's Stoke (the Marches)**

Accompanied by Agnetha de Rondell (Dawn)

Ed Watcher was selected as a visionary by the Council of Gatekeepers.

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

The visionary came to sat at a bench at a table. They were sat with four other people, all of whom were gambling, for sums up to hundreds of Thrones. Orc slaves were waiting on them. The others at the table referred to the visionary by name, as either Luca, Lukas or Lucan. During conversation, one of them mentioned that Unitarians were currently infesting the Synod.

One of the other players, a changeling, was low on funds to put in, and bid first coins, then necklaces, then his mask. At one point during the game he got angry with the visionary and told them "fuck you Holbergers with your Dawnish ways". The changeling continued to lose, and finally bid what he claimed was a scroll of Abraxus that had been in his family for a while, and that he had been planning to sell for thirty Thrones on the Bourse. The visionary offered to buy it outright, and there was discussion but the changeling said that they would have to win it outright instead.

A messenger entered, and she asked the visionary to come because the portal was about to open and they were needed to address the armies. The visionary asked the messenger how soon they would be needed, and the messenger said that the cardinals were only needed twenty minutes beforehand. The others at the table persuaded the visionary to play one more round of their game first.

One of the orcs was polishing a small brass or bronze statue of a dog off to one side, and the visionary suggested it as a possible wager at one point.

Another player, a cambion, made a joke following the mention of the Abraxus scroll about how "I'll consult my guide priest", and the others also made joking references to pure liao visions.



They played the final round, and the visionary won and obtained the scroll. They commented "Let's see what the great Abraxus has to say", and went to a part of the room with more light in order to read it.

The scroll was a historical report from Ankarien, dated to the second century YE, that was marked as a restricted document. It mentioned the "Paragon's Mask", also called the "lost mask of Abraxus", that was alleged to have been used by Abraxus in his final vision. The mask in question was apparently held somewhere called the Black Library, and had a third eye on its forehead and cracks on it.

The visionary told another player to put the scroll with the rest of the visionary's belongings, turned to the orc slaves to prepare to leave, and the vision ended.

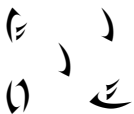
Ed's soul was examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, his soul bore a dedication to Wisdom with the strength of a single priest. After the vision, it bore no dedication and no other marks or wounds.

Agnetha's soul was also examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, her soul bore a dedication to Wisdom with the strength of seven priests (she was rededicated by seven of them, led by Ed, after her own vision the previous year). After the vision, it bore no dedication and no other marks or wounds.

Ed and Agnetha had agreed to take part in a theological experiment that incorporated the Guardian and Destiny runes from Abraxus Whitespire's research, known as the Metempsychotic Anointing. This involved painting runes on their foreheads and the palms of their hands three months before the vision, at the Autumn 379 YE summit.

Two earlier experiments with these runes had involved the runes being applied at the same summit as the vision, but a re-examination of the Corsair's Fragment (a document apparently written by Abraxus Whitespire) indicates that these were intended to be applied three months in advance.

The Guardian runes painted on the visionary's forehead were:



☞: Cavul (the Swan, rune of Purity)

☞: Irremais (the Blade, rune of Wisdom)

☞: Irremais (representing the virtue of Wisdom that the visionary was dedicated to)

☞: Diras (the Shuttered Lantern, rune of Secrets)

☞: Wyr (the Serpent, rune of Mystery)

On the guide's forehead:



- ☪: Sular (the Ship, rune of Discovery)
- ☩: Evrom (the Sapling, rune of Beginning)
- ☪: Irremais (representing the virtue of Wisdom that the guide was also dedicated to)
- ☪: Ophis (the Bright Lantern, rune of Revelation)
- ☪: Yoorn (the Shears, rune of Ending)

The central runes should be changed depending on the dedication of the visionary and guide. Gralm is used for the undedicated, and the standard virtue-to-rune correspondences are:

- Ambition -> Naeve (the Fang, rune of Hunger)
- Courage -> Jotra (the Swords, rune of Battle)
- Loyalty -> Lann (the Hound, rune of Bargains)
- Pride -> Feresh (the Eagle, rune of Majesty)
- Prosperity -> Pallas (the Apple Tree, rune of Wealth)
- Vigilance -> Ophis (rune of Revelation)
- Wisdom -> Irremais (rune of Wisdom)

The Destiny runes used, painted on the hands, were as follows:

Visionary:

- ☪: Feresh (rune of Majesty) on palm of sword or writing hand
- ☪: Gralm (the Crossroads, rune of Destiny) on palm of other hand

Guide:

- ☪: Irremais (rune of Wisdom) on palm of sword or writing hand
- ☪: Gralm (rune of Destiny) on palm of other hand

Unlike previous experiments, the visionary and guide suffered no ill effects. However, it seems likely that the Metempsychotic Anointing is what caused their souls to be clean of any marks afterwards, including the dedications that they had when they went in.

My suggestion to future visionaries is that, given the safety of the Pure Liao process as it is currently done, the Metempsychotic Anointing is unlikely to be necessary. It protects the soul from harm, but also stops the soul being affected by any positive or neutral effects from the vision, such as testimonies or dedications relating to the past life.

**Father Drakov of the Vor'azi (Varushka)**  
Accompanied by Vanya Petrovich Straskovich (Varushka)

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

The visionary came to in a chamber with several people discussing what to do about an orc invasion of their land. The people were two generals (one either a changeling or a cambion, one apparently unlineaged), a draughir artisan, and a mage (of whose lineage the visionary was not certain).

They referred to the visionary as a magister, and talked of plans to use Spring magic to wash away what they described as the filth of the invading orcs. They were planning rituals that they wished to make permanent in effect, and had already sent another general with an army into Urizen, where she had raided for ilium.

The plan with using Spring magic was to effectively open the doors to the Spring realm and let its magic flow through the woods, killing all the invading orcs.

The others presented a choice to the visionary of whether to have the rituals performed now, or wait a little longer. If they performed them now, the rituals would work but they might not have full control over their effects; whereas if they waited, they would lose one of their cities (whose name started something like Bel Am), leaving thousands of refugees, and possibly allowing their entire civilisation to be destroyed. The visionary chose to wait and see, and the vision ended.

Drakov and Vanya both had their souls examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, both had a dedication to Vigilance with the strength of a single priest behind it, and Drakov also had a testimony of "Wise Counsellor" with the strength of a single priest.

After the vision, Drakov still had his dedication and testimony, but his soul was injured such that the echoes remaining of his past life felt more real to him than the present; he had to be persuaded to give an account of his vision by asking him to give a briefing as if he were his past self. An excommunication with the strength of a single priest was sufficient to seal the injury (along with his dedication), and an exorcism from a single priest removed the excommunication.

Vanya's soul appeared after the vision to look faded and weak, and Vanya himself seemed to be weak and confused as well. An exorcism with the strength of seven priests was sufficient to heal his soul.

There are no details in the vision of names, dates, or locations. However, the context of invading orcs and a civilisation dealing with them by flooding the surrounding area with Spring magic on such a large scale suggests that this could have occurred in one of the cities of Terunael. If this were the case the name "Bel Am" could have been a mishearing of "Beantal Dol", one of the Terun cities.

**Kahendrin Wordsmith (Dawn)**

Accompanied by Eleanor de Rondell (Dawn)

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

The visionary has not yet given his permission for these notes we took on the content of his vision to be made public. If you wish to find out about his vision, please speak to Kahendrin.

Kahendrin and Eleanor had their souls examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, their souls bore dedications to Courage with the strength of a single priest behind them.