

Echoes of the Labyrinth

Volume 8a-d: Winter Solstice 383 YE -
Autumn Equinox 384 YE

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

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by the direction and authority of the Assembly of Nine
given to the Seer of the Gateway,

Livia of the Celestial Cascade of Urizen

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Winter Solstice 383 YE and Spring and Autumn Equinox 384 YE accounts and writeup by Alcuin, with one exception; the vision of Viviane de Coeurdefer is told in her own words.

Summer Solstice 384 YE accounts (that we have) by the visionaries, as neither Alcuin nor Livia was at that summit; writeup by Livia.

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.

In particular, we are missing vision accounts from Summer Solstice 384 YE. If you were a visionary or guide at that summit, or you took notes, please let us know so we can add them.

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

Winter Solstice, 383 YE

Introduction

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

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

- * **Silvio di Tassato** (the League), accompanied by Jonah Yakovitch (the League)
- * **Tarquinius Ankarien** (Urizen), accompanied by Eleri Bronwen's Rest (Navarr)
- * **Viviane de Courdefer** (Dawn), accompanied by Leonora van Holberg (League)
- * **Asher Holt** (the Marches), accompanied by Chrysogenes, son of Cassandra (Maykop, Axos)

Silvio di Tassato (the League)
Accompanied by Jonah Yakovitch (the League)

The visionary found himself sat in a private room in a bar in the Leaguish style, with tables with food, drink, dice and cards available to use - a mediocre winning hand was visible. A sign said "Booked for Inigo di Guiera, 9pm".

A person in Freeborn clothing presented a ring to the visionary from a box on the table (there were other trinkets near the box, including liao). The Freeborn mentioned that the visionary's mother was a Patrician, and that the visionary had been empowered to conclude the negotiations vital to the success of 'the endeavour'.

"What's the endeavour?" asked the visionary. They were told it was to take the city of Trevenos (now a part of Sarvos), but that to do that, they needed to secure the service of three thousand mercenaries.

The Freeborn they spoke to did not have coin with which to hire the mercenaries, and whilst they would acquire a fleet, the coin was needed to ensure that the slaves were able to escape and be free; this felt very important to the visionary, but they weren't certain why.

Shortly after, the mercenary captain arrived. He was unmistakably a bravo, with "the hat. The style. The swagger." It was established that whilst he and the visionary were not friends, everyone here knew each other by reputation. The captain talked about the deal, and how he was the "greatest mercenary captain in the world", but showed no evidence for that claim. The visionary viewed the bravo as not being a decision maker in this plan, but simply an asset.

Conversation established that the visionary was present as the representative of his past life's mother, who was acting as a lynch pin for the operation. Patrician Benedict was mentioned as an adversary in the plan.

When the deal was nearly done, and there were just a few more points that needed to be agreed on, each of the parties haggled to make their side of the bargain a little more pleasant. The captain talked in half sentences, fishing for offers. The Freeborn interjected that they had no coin, which displeased the captain; he said that the people in the Northern lands had done well for themselves taking slaves, and he wanted the freedom of the city to allow them to take slaves. He said that he needed spoils of war to finance the operation; other captains typically got to take slaves, and he'd been expecting to be able to take them himself.

The Freeborn shouted at the captain, "We'll never let you take slaves, everyone should be free!"

The bravo leapt up to defend themselves in this verbal sparring with much pointing, to which the visionary got up and stood between them, shouting "Sit the fuck down!", which the Freeborn did; the bravo calmed down a little. The visionary pointed out that the Freeborn didn't get to have a say in this agreement.

That said, taking slaves was not on the table, the visionary added. The visionary felt this very strongly, possibly as if it was externally imposed rather than a strong personal belief. (The editor suspects that the ring the visionary was given earlier in the vision might have been hallowed to Freedom.)

The visionary talked of how the city had rich people, and all their goods and ill-gotten gains were for the taking by the mercenaries, and how the visionary and Freeborn wanted to free the slaves and to be able to sail them away to the west. The primary military objective provided by storming the city was gaining the fleet – the slaves weren't the reason for the attack – but they felt that they couldn't not free them whilst they were there.

The visionary reassured the Freeborn that there would be no slaving, and they would get the fleet they needed, and the visionary shook hands with the bravo.

The Freeborn picked up some liao as purple crystalline dust and snorted it, to recognise the bonding of the agreement, referring to the "one true religion" and the vision ended.

In this life, Silvio is Captain of the Raptors, and was part of a mission to recover a statue of Permion (who was clearly a Cambion from the horns)

Silvio had a testimony of "Slightly Virtuous" before the vision, and gained a dedication to Freedom after the vision.

Both before and after the vision, Jonah had a dedication to Vigilance and the testimonies "Prosperous Citizen" with the strength of three priests, and both "Always Learning" and "Slightly Virtuous" had the strength of one priest.

Silvio said the following in response to the day ritual Eyes of the Soul's Past. How much of this was in response to the ritual and how much was the effect of the Anarchy

ritual performed in the vision is unclear; the response is usually very short and precise, giving details of name, role and an idea of when in history the vision was of.

I am Inigo i Guerra, I speak with my mother's voice
Parent of my virtue, to deal with Sarcossian Mercenaries

Free those takers of slaves, speak with Sarcossian __

The Highborn ___ patrician.

They wish to take slaves as payment. This is not our way.

We must form our nation, and be free from shackles, free to live their lives
free and unchained.

This is unacceptable but we had to do the deal

... no slaves

those slavers are rich, sarcosans rich,
sail to the west and truly be the Freeborn

The night ritual, Secrets of the Soul's Desire, was responded to with:

Speak ... for mother

In the wake of my presence, can still see virtue, so it is not overwhelming

Chains broken, so chains can be voluntarily forged, chains of office in Sarvos.

The shark of Sarvos.

Tarquinius Ankarien (Urizen)

Accompanied by Eleri Bronwen's Rest (Navarr)

The visionary gave permission for this account to be made public.

When the vision began, the visionary was seated, and was greeted by a Highborn inquisitor with a raised hood who announced themselves with, "You're early."

It was established that the visionary was the Archmage of Summer, and they were thanked for helping with a matter involving a Senator to whom something bad had clearly happened. As a result, the Archmage of Night was going to voluntarily step down, and excommunication was still not off the table for them. This was interpreted as a thinly veiled threat by the visionary, given their position and the priest's tone.

The inquisitor was ready for the meeting. They said to act as if they weren't there; their role was to see how much the Empire was fighting the Summer realm's battles for them. The meeting was to be with a herald of Jaheris, judging from the blue and silver colour scheme, and unicorn motif, in what the visionary presumed to be a Summer chamber with grapes, blue-green light, monoliths, wine decanters and goblets. No auras were apparent.

(The visionary suggests a Jaheris flavoured Knights of Glory might have been cast: such a thing was once known to be possible with boons from Jaheris, but Eleonaris stated that she had "taken back control" of the ritual in 383YE, and such feats are no longer possible)

The herald they met with was a changeling with white hair, antlers, black and white clothing (but everything else blue). The herald indicated that there had been a military conflict in which the knights of the Summer realm had been assisting, with summer eternal supporting both sides. A Dawnish individual named Vitrix had killed the lover of the general of the knights. All further questions were rebuffed.

The herald announced that their Eternal would withdraw aid and give it to Faraden unless there was recompense for the lover of the deceased. Faraden were not explicitly referred to as enemies.

The inquisitor commented that they needed to tell Summer what to do, not to be their minions.

The herald continued to issue demands. Each time, whether the demand was agreed to or not, another would be added.

The first demand was the head of the murderer or of ten Dawnish knights, later revised to ten specific Dawnish knights.

The visionary agreed a trial would occur and the head provided if Vitrix were found guilty. The herald seemed to assume that of course they would be found guilty.

The second demand was a statue to the general's dead lover. No specifics were given. The visionary asked for stories of the lover and was rebuffed with, "oh, there are plenty of those"; no stories or details were given by the herald.

The third demand was a feast in order to overcome bad feelings, which was then elevated to a festival, and then both a feast and a festival.

The fourth demand was poems to commemorate the general's dead lover.

The fifth demand was that the ten knights who would be spared by the death of the murderer should meet the general whose lover had been killed, with that meeting carrying an implied threat of death.

There was discussion. It was put to the visionary that there would be a trial, a statue, a feast, a festival and poetry, and the visionary agreed, at which point the vision ended.

Tarquinius sees similarities in this vision to his current role as Ambassador to Axos; similarly dealing with binary choices by looking for a third option: he states that often "the two worst answers are yes and no."

Both before and after the vision, Tarquinius had a devotion to Loyalty, and Eleri had a devotion to Prosperity and the enchantment *Verdant Bounty of the Twilight Bayou*.

The Day ritual *Eyes of the Soul's Past* yielded:

I am Rowain de Faucinult, Archmage of Summer, during the reign of Empress Teleri.

The Night ritual *Secrets of the Soul's Desire* yielded:

There is one person stitching together two pieces of cloth. The balance is important, but the Mortal half is favoured.

The conclave was protected, but the knight was only mollified until the next offence.

The wanderer passing through was convinced of the value of diplomacy.

Viviane de Courdefer (Dawn)

Accompanied by Leonora van Holberg (League)

The visionary wrote this writeup herself: it agrees broadly with the contemporaneous notes she wrote at the time, printed in earlier editions of this volume.

Morwen Bitterroot, from a Striding in Elerael, brought only the essentials with her into the Day chamber. The Pauper's Key to let her through, a few scrapings of copper ink in a vial, a clay bottle with the word 'mahu' embossed into it, a Hallowed knife – what's a Thorn without a knife, after all – and nothing else.

The Chamber was clean, faded and open; a table to her left as she came through the Regio, with an urn holding something glowing softly purple centred on it, and in front of her, a circle maybe three metres across, chalked in white and marked around with a dozen or so candles flickering in the non-existent breeze. Some of them were unlit, but the pattern it made was meaningless to her compared to the steady, fast-paced beat the creature on the far side of the circle drummed out, and the flailing, frantic dancer twirling within the circle, near exhaustion and crying out for help.

“Please, have you come to take my place? Help me – I don't know how long I can carry on...”

The Hallowing pulsed gently under her fingers. Do what's necessary, no matter how hard it is. The creature opposite – Merrow-like, in white robes and a blue tagelmust – spoke almost disinterestedly. “She bears different brands to yours.”

Morwen was a stranger to the lass in front of her; and Enfys Cariad's Eye choked out her story in pieces as she whirled and struggled through her dance. Cariad, she explained, was a contemporary of Navarr and Thorn. She'd disagreed with the Nation's founders, and thought of a different way to protect those of Terunael. She set up this ritual, dancing alone and calling one of her Steading to follow after her when it was too much – and Ylenrith had accepted. The Pure Swan had held back the Vallorn, creating an eye of the storm as one of each generation of Cariad's Eye danced for her; creating an oasis of peace and unchanging safety. And the cost, beyond the dancer: only that all the energy the Vallorn would have spent on Cariad's Eye was thrown outwards, twisting the rest of Terunael into greater chaos and corruption.

None of the people in the Chamber knew why the next dancer from Cariad's Eye had failed to come yet; but Morwen was here, and Enfys was exhausted. All she'd have to

do to protect the Steading was brand herself with new tattoos. All she'd have to do is give up the Great Dance for this little one; give up the greater goal for a tiny pocket of stillness.

She didn't need a knife for this ending. She promised Enfys to remember the story, and tell the tale; and snuffed out the candles.

Asher Holt (Marches)

Accompanied by Chrysogenes, son of Cassandra (Maykop, Axos)

The visionary awoke sitting in a clearing with five-foot high dolmen with red and green painted symbols; swirls and circles with dots.

A marcher beater (Carr) with an ironshod cudgel was forcing a Navarri man (Evita) with a very simple thorn tattoo before him.

Carr had caught the Navarri trespassing, trampling crops. The beater was being violent, so the visionary told him to back off.

The guide priest interpreted this sight very differently to the Imperial belief that these visions are factual accounts of history: he saw it as a metaphor, that a malign spirit of the labyrinth tormented the soul of the dead Navarri, musing that the Creator gets the wicked to torment the less wicked, and reacted as they had been taught, to drive off the malign labyrinthine spirit.

The guide priest prepared to react to drive off the malign spirit, but the visionary instructed the guide priest to stop. The beater interpreted this somewhat out-of-context statement as a question to the Navarri, but didn't let the Navarri speak. The visionary told the beater to shut up, who agreed and referred to the visionary as Steward.

The Navarri said they had been walking to market, and had not been in the field, but on the footpath. To this, the beater reacted aggressively, as if they expected the visionary to have a negative response to the Navarri.

The beater's sister was engaged to a Marcher woman who had run off and joined a Navarri striding. The beater continued to suggest extremely violent things: threatening the Navarri that he'd "string you up in the trees" and "crack open your skull", whilst waving his weapon around.

The visionary pointed out to him that he was just upset at his sister! She didn't say she was going to leave, and his anger wasn't aimed at this Navarri, but at the Navarri in general. Maybe his sister was scared of him, and worried that there'd be this sort of violent behaviour if she'd told her brother. The beater swore that he'd never hurt family, but the visionary pointed out that raised voices are scary enough.

The beater demanded judgement from the visionary. "A beater's place is to put other people in their place."

The visionary agrees. "And they were in their place, on the footpath."

The guide priest commented that the visionary was "so wise"; considering the labyrinthine spirit (the beater) to have been prevented from harming the spirit of the deceased Navarri, by the actions of the visionary.

After the vision, Ashe had a dedication of "Wise Words". Both before and after the dedication, Chrysogenes had a dedication to Peace.

The day ritual, *Eyes of the Soul's Past*, yielded:

They call me Old Morgan, Steward of Brockheath, in pre-imperial times.

The night ritual, *Secrets of the Soul's Desire*, yielded:

Wise words softly spoken

They save a week of shoving

The traveller, he didn't make it to the market.

No one would blame them for it.

The next one made it, and the next one wasn't ripped off.

Prosperity was maintained.

He was a boisterous one.

You can't choose your family.

On Sung – an editorial (by Alcuin)

During the Spring 384 summit, the Night Eternal Sung met with Elyssiathain, the Archmage of Night, and Livia Cascade was invited too. Whilst neither Livia nor the editor Alcuin could attend that meeting, a message was relayed: my notes are: "[Sung considers] the way Livia goes about presenting information in Past Life Visions is wrong. It is presented in a very factual way with a very obvious lesson. We aren't delving deep into the mysteries. Until Livia can prove she can ponder the mysteries, consider Sung your mortal enemy."

Firstly, I'd like to apologise for missing that meeting as Livia's proxy – ironically I was chasing an opportunity to delve deeper into the mysteries of "A Shark on a Tuna Line" at that time. I had dearly hoped to meet you and tell you the story of the journey I am undergoing and the paths before me, and understand your interest in our publications and works, but I returned to the Hall of Worlds too late to seek admission.

I'm unapologetic about the factual nature of the visions. We scribble away furiously whilst people recount what they saw, what they heard – and we write down what they say they felt too. We turn those notes into the records we publish, with a light editorial touch; but it requires a quite different skillset to turn them into works of art. Allow me to commend to you – and all who read Echoes – the excellent work of Sir Ozren de Orzel in his beautifully illuminated "Glorious Tales From the Labyrinth", who weaves wonderful tales and poems upon the foundations that we have laid. The last poem in particular holds a surprising number of mysteries. Perhaps we have left a task half-done: but any elevate our simply retold facts into great stories, or use these clues to piece together the puzzles of the nature of our eternal spirits.

Sir Ozren's retelling and your interjection inspire me to take time to put what some of the past life visions mean to me into words. If others have been similarly inspired, shorter works would be welcome in these pages.

I find the idea that these visions teach an "obvious lesson" fascinating. Livia suggests that it is frankly unsurprising that visionaries who are chosen for their exceptional virtue, who then talk to priests about the vision, talk about how virtue relates to it. Whereas I would ask: If the visionaries aren't lying about what they see (which I believe in almost all cases) and if we are not endeavouring to write our own opinions into the retellings, who is it that teaches this lesson that you see so clearly? What directs which hour the visionary sees from multiple decades of a life, and that life from a dozen or more? Do we, in the totality of all our lives, reflect on those moments that changed the skein of our many lives forever? Or does some other being attempt to communicate to

us via the medium of these visions? We know that at least a modicum of control can be applied by the visionary via the Potion of Guiding Light...

Such mysteries are better discussed around a roaring fire with friends where the tattered tapestry of truth can be synthesised from people with different expertise and understandings, than handed down from one author to a hundred mute readers who might send a letter back three months later.

It's a shame you feel we should consider you our enemy. The seeking of the mysteries of the human spirit and the nature of the Labyrinth is at the core of why I record these testimonies. Our disagreement with the Whisper Gallery is, I feel, fundamental and irrevocable. But I am saddened that we have fallen short of the expectations of someone who I would have hoped could be a patron, not an enemy.

I don't know how we demonstrate we ponder the mysteries we uncover. But I believe we do, and that we can meet with your approval.

Spring Equinox, 384 YE

Introduction

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

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

- * **Hazelponi of the Shattered Tower** (Highguard), accompanied by Lev Unbound (Highguard)
- * **Cormac Dun** (Wintermark), accompanied by Burnlin Drumheart (Wintermark)
- * **Locke Beason** (Marches), accompanied by Chezerey Enzo di Trizento (League)
- * **Lord Ancel Vexille** (Dawn)

Hazelponi of the Shattered Tower, (Highguard)

Accompanied by Lev Unbound (Highguard)

The visionary awoke with a letter in hand in a cold camp on a trod in the forest. According to the letter from Rhiadwen of Treji; the Navarr had discovered the Vallorn had a new way to attack: spores that would get into lungs and cause problems. The letter was to Caedryn Redmarsh Striding, the visionary.

Caedryn was headed to Treji with a Navarri briar, Mabon Redmarsh Striding, to deal with this new problem which we now recognise as Green Lung, but news had arrived from a woman in the livery of a white raven on a crossfield of black and green. The heraldry was recognised as a precursor to the Scions of Ravensfeld, who have attended Anvil recently. She brought news of a Druj attack on Casinea, which had left a great number of people poisoned.

The situation was further complicated by the emotional connections between Caedryn, the Scion and Mabon; the visionary was unsure whether Mabon and the Scion were in a relationship together, but Caedryn was in a relationship with both of the other parties and was torn as to which of Caedryn's loves' homes should be protected from disease and poison.

The visionary was given a toastie to eat (a great challenge when in a visionary's veil) and

chose to return to Casinea. Mabon was upset at the decision, and decided to go to bed.

The visionary hugged the Scion, who mentioned that whatever foulness the Druj had cooked up in Cassinea, it wasn't affecting briars (implying that Caedryn was a briar).

The visionary and Mabon lay together on a bed, Mabon mentioning that the visionary had "made their choice" and that "we will lose the Empire if we lose Casinea", accepting the state of affairs but unhappy about it.

The visionary asked Mabon to stall for time, and told them about the (now) well-understood precautions that can be taken against Green Lung: masks and washing hands. Mabon agreed, saying that they understood why they were needed in Casinea, and "we are partners in the Great Dance", and "I love you."

Mabon sang an elegy for Terunael, a sad song for a lost world, with lyrics containing "we leave this shining city", "Liathaven" and "walls falling". When the song was sung, it was as if multiple voices were singing, with a curious resonance, like a chorus of every Navaari who remembered what was lost in the Fall.

After the song ended, the visionary said that they'd see each other again, and that they would both laugh when the visionary somehow cures both problems.

Whilst the vision ended here, Hazelponi mentioned that they had met Mabon Redmarsh in this life, at the steading of Return.

Mabon had been in a mirror to the Dreamscape, and had managed to escape. Mabon was a heretic who had committed some terrible crimes to stop someone from dying (by subverting human destiny) and had been put into the Dreamscape as a punishment, and they wanted to bring back the person they had lost. Hazelponi met him and talked to him about his hatred of briars. His true age was catching up with him now that he was out of the Dreamscape, and Hazel encouraged him to understand the error of his ways and to embrace the True Virtues that will aid his passage through the labyrinth. With his last words, Mabon said that, "Hazel, I will come back to you."

Hazelponi has a notebook from the encounter at Return but had not brought it with them to Anvil.

Both before and after the visions, Hazelponi had a testimony of "Best Briar", and a devotion to Pride with the strength of four priests.

Both before and after the visions, Lev Unbound had a testimony of "Cool Headed", and a devotion to Pride with the strength of one priest, and a curse which we were correctly assured would not affect matters.

The Day ritual, *Eyes of the Soul's Past*, confirmed that the visionary was Cariad of Redmarsh, during the Age of Turmoil.

The Night ritual, *Secrets of the Soul's Desire*, revealed that they were an apothecary who travelled where they were needed, and kept the people they loved near them.

Cormac Dun (Wintermark)

Accompanied by Burnlin Drumheart (Wintermark)

When the visionary and guide priest came out of the vision they were freezing cold and exceptionally distracted by seeing a great many figures wandering around Anvil which were not visible to others. The guide priest reported feelings of being observed and reported a pounding headache and being very cold on a spring heatwave in Anvil. No lingering effects were visible to Insight or Detect Magic, and these effects appeared to abate somewhat over the course of the interview.

The visionary opened their eyes to find themselves by a fire in the middle of nowhere in the depths of frozen icy wastes and sat next to a tattooed Navarri, holding a letter. The visionary was a messenger who was reading a letter from Oswald to Anja that they had been carrying (which the visionary though oddly rude) which stated that assassins were gathering to assassinate Empress Varkula, and that Anja must warn the guards of the threat to catch the assassins.

The Navarri mentioned the visionary's name was Guileta Fox-something (later clarified as Gelert Foxtread Striding by the Day ritual).

The visionary knew they'd spoken to Oswald before, and that they were scared of him, and that he was not a good person.

Before the visionary finished reading the letter, two men approached. One was tall, aged 25 to 30, in a dark cloak, and talked quickly. The other was a big stocky red-bearded Suaq with a sword who looked menacing, with his hand never leaving the hilt.

The visionary's companion seemed threatened but they did nothing.

One of the men, Dunstan, explained that Varkula was a threat to the Empire, serving only Varuskha and her own Ambition and wanting to capture Miekarova for herself. "Therefore, it's important you don't... stop people..." (implied: from killing Varkula) and asked the visionary to throw the letter into the fire, and to speak of it no more. The visionary asked that the others repeat their names and explain about Varkula's desire for Miekarova.

The visionary said that Varkula was cold and evil, but the companion had doubts, saying that this was a big decision but that they did need to protect the Empire.

At some point during the conversation it was mentioned that "This conversation doesn't have to go anywhere, no-one's listening." and "You're asking us to conspire to kill the throne by not sending the message." The visionary asked a lot of questions, but typically did not get responses.

The visionary said that Varkula only looked out for her own, and Dunstan agreed. The companion retorted that "This is treason!" to which the visionary stated the role of Empress was being abused, and that Varkula was the one being treasonous.

"This is what we'll do", said the visionary, casting the letter into the fire. And it was done. He asked for further details about the people's names, and the hall they were from, and a bell was heard, and the vision ended.

The guide priest's recollection – given first – differs from the account given by the visionary in their interpretation of the letter: the guide believed that the letter was bringing the assassins together, and that the authors of the letter wanted to stop the Empress thinking only for themselves. The visionary's testimony was clearer and more extensive, so I suspect the visionary – who was able to read the letter – is more correct.

Walt Scriber of the Civil Service theorised (in a personal capacity) that the relentless questioning of the people in the vision may not have been a part of the skein, and that the hallowed item that was identified during the Civil Service's pre-vision questioning (which lead the visionary to question received wisdom) caused the visionary to ask a great many questions, which perhaps acted as an external influence which caused the line of conversation to stray from the possibilities open to the historical figure. When the visionary and guide priest returned, they were freezing cold and unsure of themselves ~ perhaps they had brought the truth of their past with them as a result of the vision ending abruptly. No spiritual or magical influences were detected.

The tradition of ringing bells to ward off spirits, most common to Highguard, feels

relevant here: were the visionary and guide priest somehow warded off in a similar manner? Is this ringing encountered by labyrinthine spirits, and is that perhaps why bells in the waking world affect them similarly?

Walt was commended by the pilgrims for his service in guiding them back to themselves and their senses whilst cold and confused after the vision; stating that "Walt is an anchor in the storm".

The Day ritual *Eyes of the Soul's Past* revealed the visionary was Gelert of Foxtread Striding, during the Expansionist Period.

The Night ritual *Secrets of the Soul's Desire* gave:

Amid flames and smoke and poison blades,
Draughir fingers are sunk deep into the throne, dead.
She is gone.

In a distant land cheers and tankards are raised.
Two pairs of weary feet walk on through the snow.

This was interpreted to mean that the assassinations were successful, that Varkula died, and Wintermark celebrated.

Locke Beason (Marches)

Accompanied by Chezerey Enzo di Trizento (League)

This visionary was the recipient of the dose provided for the Summer Children by the Seers of the Barren Tree.

When the vision started, the visionary stood amid the debris of a good party, including bread and cake, as the first light of dawn became apparent. There were brightly coloured decorations, and bread rolls had been thrown and breadsticks used to duel with; playing cards had been abandoned on tables.

Two people were in a red and blue tent: a woman on the ground in green and silver clothing, and a man in red and gold searching for wine. These two and the visionary seemed to be good friends.

The visionary was greeted as Ser Galat, who had recently defeated a monster to pass their Test of Mettle and become a Dawnish lord, and had been granted land by the King of Dawn. The story of that defeat was retold and became more embellished at each passing, with the slaying of the monster taking twenty hacks in the first telling and

only a single mighty swing in the last one.

After a brief discussion of the cannibals of Terunael who skulked about the trees and woods, talk turned to the Marchers, described as untrained Yeofolk who plan in the coming weeks to march out of Dawn.

The yeofolk and a few nobles had demanded goods (presumably for the March) at a royal feast with "King whatshisface" and embarrassed themselves ~ the noble was too drunk to elaborate.

The drunk man in red and gold tried to recruit the visionary to be in an order who were going to go with the Marchers and protect them from the Terunael or Navarr (the names were used interchangeably) and the other monsters of the woods. The Order of the Wanderers was mentioned as a potential name. Also mentioned was that whilst they could get raw numbers of people, they'd get almost no trained fighters.

The woman in green and silver was opposed to that plan, and pointed out that the visionary's new lands were in the perfect place to stop the Marchers as they tried to pass through: they could block the path and turn them back.

The man in red and gold was in love with someone who was leaving, and their family was leaving too, and he asked the visionary to let that family through. The woman offered the visionary an Earldom if the Marchers were blocked.

The virtue of Glory was mentioned at length; the visionary suggested "would it not be glorious to create a new nation and defeat the monsters that beset them?" The man agreed. The woman argued their actions blurred the lines between glory and idiocy.

The visionary agreed that if the man could get enough people in a week, they'd be given free passage and the visionary would join the force of protectors; they shook hands in agreement. The woman complains "well, that's torn it", and the vision ended.

The visionary provided a description of the red-and-gold tunic. The lower half of the tunic was gold, save for a red stripe up the middle of the chest. The upper half of the tunic was red, save for a gold top-right quadrant and a gold stripe on the left.

They also mentioned a yellow-green tent with yellow-green drapings, noted for being the colours of King's Stoke (the village of the visionary).

After some discussion of the location of the lands of the visionary: it was suggested that they are probably in Astolat.

The Day ritual *Eyes of the Soul's Past* revealed the visionary was Renaud de Courtie (pronounced rain-ord day court-ee-ay), a changeling from around the time of the Marches.

The Night ritual *Secrets of the Soul's Desire* provided a vision of the visionary leaving friends and family behind, and Love and Glory turning a baguette into a sword. The red and gold man is his sworn friend and brother; and they "marched through the gate in their territory that should have been closed".

Lord Ancel Vexille (Dawn)

The testimony of Lord Ancel Vexille has been recorded, but permission to publish has not been granted, save for this statement from him:

"The secrets of Lord Ancel's soul have been gifted to me.
They will not be gifted to those who have not earned them."

Summer Solstice, 384 YE

Neither Alcuin nor Livia were at Anvil for the Summer Solstice, so our notes and therefore our accounts for the visions at that summit are incomplete, as is our list of who had visions. If you were a visionary or guide at that summit, or someone who took notes of what they saw, please let us know and we will include your vision in future volumes.

The visionaries we have accounts from are as follows:

* **Aracelis i Erigo (Brass Coast)**, accompanied by Constanza i Kalamar i Guerra (Brass Coast)

Aracelis i Erigo (Brass Coast)

Accompanied by Constanza i Kalamar i Guerra (Brass Coast)

The original notes were taken by the visionary, who provided them to us later.

When the vision started, the visionary was kneeling down in a boat with two other

people. They were very near the front of the boat, just behind the figurehead. The figurehead was of a person with their hands tied, with a blindfold around their eyes and something on their head.

The visionary learned that their name was Finore i Riqueza, and that they and another one of the people with them - Serah i Riqueza - were hakima who were inducting the third person into the kohan. The third person was Janah, who had lost his family to the Patricians two days earlier, and had decided to join the kohan.

Once the contract was signed, another kohan came up and joined them. They had red and yellow flame patterns on their face, and blue on their forehead and chin. They told the others that they had information about a ship carrying mithril to the Patricians; this ship was one that the visionary and the others had fought two days earlier, when Janah lost his family.

The others asked the visionary to decide - do we go after that ship, or not? The kohan wanted to go after the ship, to stop the Patricians from using the mithril. The visionary told them to act, but to act with virtue, and not spend their lives needlessly. Soon after, the vision faded.

After the vision, Aracelis had the rituals Eyes of the Soul's Past and Secrets of the Soul's Desire cast to find out more information.

The Day ritual indicated they were an elderly man with a tagelmust and a purple coat with silver stars, along with an elegant staff. Their name was Finore i Riqueza, and the vision took place before the founding of the Empire.

The Night ritual gave the following:

"Splintering wood at sea in the Patricians' boat. When their family was killed, they wanted revenge, and that's why they joined. The Patrician was gloating - they managed to injure the kohan - but the kohan also managed to injure the Patrician.

Autumn Equinox, 384 YE

Introduction

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

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

* **Ranae Coeurdefer** (Dawn), accompanied by a member of the Gilded Horn Carta (League)

* **Ser Fabienne de Miel** (Dawn), accompanied by Idanach Listing Beacon (Navarr)

Ranae Coeurdefer (Dawn)

Accompanied by a member of the Gilded Horn Carta (League)

The visionary has not given permission for the vision to be made public.

Ser Fabienne de Miel (Dawn)

Accompanied by Idanach Listing Beacon (Navarr)

As the visionary re-entered Anvil, small snatches of conversation were heard with the guide priest, lamenting how the coronation was very ad-hoc, under-rehearsed, a small thing rather than the grandeur expected of the First Empress, and how a ceremonial horse would be very heavy indeed. We returned to Dawn's camp and checked upon the visionary's soul – a rank 4 dedication to Ambition and an anointing giving them no sense of shame nor guilt – whilst we were offered wine.

In the vision, two people and the guide priest knelt before a Throne, in which the Visionary was sat, wearing a crown. The veils obscured any who might be observing this Imperious occasion from the visionary's view. (A terrible choice, the visionary confided; such momentous occasions should be seen by all who can attend.)

“Look upon the Star of Glory! of Virtue!” declaimed a red-headed woman, presenting the throned visionary with a shield-sized star of what appears to be Orichalcum, who received it with a grace unfitting its enormous weight.

The adoration of the kneeling participants was clear to the Visionary, who considered their fawning behaviour reminiscent of how some reacted to Yael, who claimed to be the First Empress reborn.

“Take up the sweet Rewards of Prosperity!” the declamation continued, as a poor-quality cake, presumed by the visionary to be marred by the difficult economics of the

Early Imperial era, was presented to the Visionary, and balanced on the Star of Glory.

A number of other Objects of Virtue were presented, and added to the tottering tower of gifts bestowed upon the Visionary, including a candle.

“Taste the bitter Vinegars of Courage!” as vials were presented, whose tartness was presumably reminiscent of the choices Courage may drive one to. “Pour them out before me!” instructed the visionary, as there was no more space to receive them, and the visionary could barely see over the towering pile of gifts.

As more gifts fit for an Empress threaten to arrive, the visionary understood precisely who their past life was, and attracted the attention of an attendant.

There is a further announcement: “And here is the Horse you’ll lead into Battle” to which the visionary requested in their most theatrical tone, “Darling, I can’t possibly work like this, please get me a side table.”

“Meria, Meria, you forgot your lines, and it’s nearly the big day!”, scolded the play’s director, a bearded Leaguish player, who stepped out behind the throne.

During the presentation of the gifts, it had become clear to the Visionary that a number of things strongly suggested they were not, in fact, the First Empress Reborn, witnessing their own Coronation. Everyone was dressed in classic Leaguish fashion, including masks for the Players; the set was the shabby fakery of the cheap seats of Regario. The fact that the props didn’t work and that the candle wouldn’t light helped give this away. This was the dress rehearsal, and opening night was tomorrow.

The director was stressed out – the playhouse was in debt; the Tassato-Regario senator was mentioned. The play explored the interplay of masculine and feminine in the context of the First Empress; the director’s research into the first Empresses coronation was meticulous, but their ability as a director was lacking.

There was discussion about how to improve the scene; the visionary saw it as being too cluttered, the historical details were unimportant, the play had to be something people wanted to see. Suggestions were made that it could be tied into the current Throne (Barabbas) and that they needed to make a bunch of boat jokes. (Barabbas the Mariner really, really liked boats.)

The visionary felt a surge of Ambition. He needed to get Barabbas as a patron of the troupe and aspired to handle his public relations, and they all became excited at the

idea that Barabas might enjoy the play. Plays about Nicovar had been done to death; something new might be a success.

There was some discussion of fleeing the debts, fleeing to the Brass Coast, maybe joining the navy.

The ritual *Eyes of the Soul's Past* revealed that the past life was Meria Hortensio di Tassato; who was highly attractive, very fickle, and did what was needed. His life before and after was apparently unimportant, and he was aged in his 20's during the events in question, during the Expansion era. The visionary was also at pains to announce quite how 'fit' his past life was.

The ritual *Secrets of the Soul's Desire* revealed that the past life's greatest patron was Barabbas, for whom he handled public relations. The play the visionary helped write was an extraordinary success, and made him incredibly famous throughout the Empire.

In addition the Auric Horizon asked Leviathan: "Why did the Empire go along with Barabas' plan to gather a great fleet and engage in a punitive war against the Grendel?" My recollection is that Leviathan said the plan was tactically sound but known to be a risky stratagem. The great storm, by happenstance or enemy action, was unforeseen by prognosticators, and destroyed any chances of the plan succeeding. It is the essential nature of taking risks that some do not pay off.

The visionary required that the story be told in the style he told it in, which was how he experienced it, being led fully up the garden path to believing that Ser Fabienne might be the reincarnation of the First Empress, before the revelation. The original telling was a true joy to behold, and I hope I have done it justice.