

Echoes of the Labyrinth

Volume 5a: Winter Solstice 380 YE

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

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&

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by the direction and authority of the Council of Nine.

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Winter Solstice 380 YE accounts taken by Livia Cascade and Rodric
Worldscribe; 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, 380 YE

Introduction

Six visionaries experienced visions induced by Pure Liao at the Solstice. Of these, four were selected by the Council of Gatekeepers, one was selected by the Throne, and one was chosen by the winner of the Bourse auction at the Autumn Equinox 380 YE.

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.

- * **Landon of Longridge** (the Marches), accompanied by Bedwin of Hay (the Marches)
- * **Kali Keen-Eye** (Wintermark), accompanied by Savik Summerstorm (Wintermark)
- * **Hengest Dun** (Wintermark), accompanied by Jorma Steelhail (Wintermark)
- * **Aubrietta de Gauvain** (Dawn), accompanied by Rolland Chambers (Dawn)
- * **Lisabetta Giacomi von Holberg** (the League), accompanied by Livia of Celestial Cascade (Urizen)
- * **Collwyn de Rondell** (Dawn), accompanied by Astrid Fjellreving Rezia di Tassato (the League)

Landon of Longridge (Marches)
Accompanied by Bedwin of Hay (Marches)

Landon was selected as a visionary by the winner of the Virtuous Auction.

The visionary gave his permission for these notes to be made public. The testimony was presented by the visionary with some assistance from his guide.

The visionary awoke at a wake for the general of the Navarr army, the Black Thorns. The general's name was Padraig or Podraig. The Black Thorns had been fighting the Druj, and had been expecting reinforcements from Urizen, but those reinforcements had not arrived in time, and the general had died in battle.

The people at the wake were sat down, toasting and telling stories about the general. They talked about items he had left behind, including a pendant with many beads, one for each lover he had had, and said that the visionary ought to add more beads to it.

Someone mentioned the general's knives, and told a story about protecting someone from a plaguewulf, and defending one of the women there from their steading from the Druj. There was also a pair of the general's boots, smaller than the visionary's feet.

The people there then read out the general's will. It mentioned two women, Kim and Kira, and when their names were mentioned the person reading the will gestured at the visionary and the woman sitting to their left. (The visionary believed their past self was Kim, and that the other woman was Kira.) It was not clear from context whether the visionary was a close relative of the general, or a lover or spouse.

The will also mentioned another general, Rachel, and orders that she, Padraig and many other generals were uncomfortable with. Rachel had refused the orders, and had been swiftly revoked by the Vigilance assembly.

They finished reading the will, and at the end it said whoever had Padraig's money should share it out, and spend it on drink.

A priest came in. He was wearing simple clothes that looked to be from Wintermark or Varushka. He ordered the room cleared, and most of the others there left; it appeared that they didn't like him. The woman who had been sitting next to the visionary refused to leave until the visionary told her to, and which point she agreed.

The priest had a large scroll with him, about two feet long, with orders on it that he

read out. They were orders to clear out or evacuate the Urizen spire of Helius Tertius, and burn the library there. After the priest had read the orders out, he asked the visionary if they would carry them out.

The visionary said yes, and the priest then showed them the plans to the library, which had been part of the scroll. "Nicovar Ankarien" was at the top of the plans, and the orders contained more reasoning about why the library was to be burned - apparently it was against Nicovar's plan, and he needed to remove it to improve the data. As the priest and the visionary were reviewing the plans, the vision ended.

Landon had his soul examined by the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, his soul was clear of any mark. After the vision, his soul bore a testimony of "Loyal Servant", with the strength of seven priests behind it.

Bedwin also had his soul examined before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, his soul bore a dedication to Courage with the strength of a single priest.

Kali Keen-Eye (Wintermark)

Accompanied by Savik Summerstorm (Wintermark)

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

The visionary has not yet given his permission for these notes to be made public. If you want to find out about his vision, please talk to Kali.

Kali's soul was examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, his soul was clear of any mark, and his soul was unchanged after the vision.

Savik's soul was also examined with the rite of Insight. Both before and after the vision, his soul had a dedication to Wisdom with the strength of a single priest.

Hengest Dun (Wintermark)

Accompanied by Jorma Steelhail (Wintermark)

Hengest 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 woke up at a table. The room around appeared to be a mead hall, but there was no indication of the location or the date.

Also at the table were a Vard, and a Jotun shaman. They spoke to the visionary, telling them that they were to be trained as a shaman. From the conversation, it appeared that the visionary was a young boy, probably one of the Steinr.

Also in the room were others talking, and the guide priest went to listen to their conversation. One of them was a Jotun, part of whose name was Sigurdson, with the heroic name “Wyrmslayer”, and he was apparently the jarl of jarls of the Jotun. He was talking to Utred, apparently the thane of thanes of the Steinr.

According to their conversation, the Steinr and the Jotun had good borders that they agreed on, and were not at war. The Jotun had invited the Steinr to live with them in the year of Utred’s grandfather, and the Jarl of Jarls suggested that the Jotun, Vard and Steinr should join as one. The Vard were apparently led by someone called Katrina, but she was not at their meeting yet.

The Jarl described the Jotun as being in the centre with the Steinr on their right as a shield and the Vard on the left as a sword. He spoke about how the Steinr fell from the sky, speaking of it as a fact rather than a myth to be doubted. Historically, the Jotun had given the Steinr some land to live in, and while some of the Steinr had worried that this would make them vassals of the Jotun, the Jotun believed the Steinr to be equals. The Jarl described the Jotun, Steinr and Vard as “three tears entwined”, and the shaman at the visionary’s table also reiterated this phrase.

Then Katrina, the leader of the Vard, came into the room. She called the Jarl of Jarls weak and a coward, and said that they should be expanding their territory. She then stabbed the Jarl of Jarls, and the Vard at the visionary’s table stabbed the Jotun shaman. The Jotun, and Utred of the Steinr, were horrified by this breaking of hospitality.

The vision then changed, and the visionary was outside, possibly with it snowing around them. Utred asked the visionary for advice, as he said that the visionary was a Stormcrow. He wanted to know whether they should go with the Vard, and what should they do? One of the things said in this conversation was that nobody would believe the Steinr didn’t shiv up the Jotun.

The visionary said that they should not follow the Vard, and should find others to stand with them as three, and the vision ended.

Hengest and Jorma's souls were examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. There were no changes to their souls between the two.

The coven of the Spire of Auric Horizon also performed divination rituals on Hengest after the vision to gain information about his past life and corroborate what the vision indicated.

The Day divination ritual did not give a name or a date, but instead gave a story: "An old story is told to a young child. A story of three children. Generations pass. One child goes east, one child goes west to seek his bountry (sic), one stays to seek the skein."

The Night divination ritual gave a feeling of ancient stories shrouded by oaths, and of three siblings - one looking for greatness, one looking for heroes, one looking for oaths. Chains of blood shatter, and they go separate ways.

For more information about these rituals, please ask Auric Horizon.

Aubrietta de Gauvain (Dawn)

Accompanied by Rolland Chambers (Dawn)

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

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

The visionary awoke in a finely appointed meeting room, with a table and benches. There was a herbalist station in one corner of the room, with bones hanging from the ceiling. The table had tankards and food on it, and there was an axe and shield arranged on the wall in one corner.

There was also a Steinr woman, who was a high-lineaged draughir, in the room. She addressed the visionary as Ilvar or Ilva. She was there to talk about the raids on Mitwold in the Marches, saying that they couldn't go on, but she couldn't be seen to back down, so the visionary had to make the concession. The woman gave her name as something that sounded like Oska or Ushka. The visionary was apparently an artisan.

Then two Marchers came in. One was an unlineaged man in fine clothes, and the other

was a briar woman in a smith's clothing. With them was an orc, who they said the visionary could keep. The Marchers said they had just come from holding off Dawn and the Jotun, and would stand against raids from the visionary's people, but wanted to come to an understanding because the raids were disrupting their trade.

They said that this was also not helping their benefactor Estavus, who was helping them to build a massive forge to create items. It was not clear whether the forge was in Mitwold or not, but they said it would not be easily found by enemies. They showed the visionary a sword that the woman had made, and it appeared to be perfectly weighted. The visionary then gave them an axe that they had made, in return.

Together, the visionary and the Marchers agreed that the visionary would have access to the forge and teach the Marchers' smiths, and likewise the Marchers would teach the visionary's smiths. They also agreed that the raids would stop, and the visionary's people would take Marcher goods and deliver them to better buyers. Part of their agreement was that a fresh start would be made, and that no conciliation would be made for previous raids or previous deaths. When they had struck the agreement, the vision ended.

Aubrietta's soul was examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, there were no marks on her soul.

Rolland's soul was also examined with Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, his soul had a dedication to Ambition with the strength of a single priest.

After the vision, as well as the dedication, his soul appeared tense and coiled, making him fearful of what was going on around him. Talking to him to calm him eased the injury a little, and an exorcism with the strength of six priests behind it shocked his soul back into place.

The coven of the Spire of Auric Horizon also performed divination rituals on Aubrietta after the vision to gain information about her past life and corroborate what the vision indicated.

The Day divination ritual indicated that the vision was 600 to 800 years earlier, and her past self was Ilva of Torsho, a high-lineaged draughir from Wintermark. She was a smith, wearing beautiful furs and an anvil-shaped necklace, and had an axe that she made herself that was important to her.

The Night divination ritual gave the impression of a draughir woman working at a forge

on very fine detail work, and of a briar bursting in but the woman not minding because she knew she would outlive him; the only thing she would not outlive was the tiny men in the hand of the herald, which would live forever, whether they liked it or not. The word or name "Unititan" also appeared to be important.

Lisabetta Giacomi von Holberg (the League)
Accompanied by Livia of Celestial Cascade (Urizen)

Lisabetta was selected as a visionary by the Throne.

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

The visionary awoke standing in front of a mirror, being girded by someone who called them "sister". The room they were in was small, with the mirror taking up most of one of the narrower walls. Underneath the mirror was a table, with three candles on it to the visionary's left. On the other side of the room there was another table, with a bowl of fruit, a small pile of potions or herbs, and a wand with a greenish end. There was also a set of greaves on it.

The visionary's reflection was of a woman of five and a half feet or less, with red hair, and blue scales on her forehead, wearing some sort of black or dark grey surcoat or gambeson, with red and gold tabbed edges at the bottom. The sister was wearing a pale dress and a black hat with a jewel in front, with an orange veil at the back of the hat.

The sister said that Bedevere was waiting, and that he would do whatever the visionary asked. She asked the visionary to hold still and strapped on a breastplate and greaves, asking the visionary to hold the front of the breastplate while she strapped on the back.

While she did this, the sister asked, "Have you come to a decision?" The visionary asked if there was anything they had forgotten, and the sister said she would start from the beginning.

They were in Miaren, waiting to attack Seren in order to deal with the Vallorn. The armies there along with theirs were from the Marches, Highguard, and the League, the last led by Giovanni, who the sister called "the King of Dawn" in a somewhat mocking tone. The visionary had to decide whether they were to attack with the other armies, or hang back and go in when the other armies were exhausted.

Once the visionary had been fully girded in armour, the sister asked if it was comfortable, and the visionary said it was. The sister described it as looking fit for the earl of the house.

There was then a voice from the visionary's right, from behind a curtain, which the visionary assumed was Bedevere as mentioned earlier. They asked what the visionary's orders were for the Golden Sun.

The visionary said that they would fight with the Empire, and were not going to hang back, adding that with the death of the Empress, the Empire was a fragile thing.

Bedevere said that they couldn't transmit those orders to the army, asking how, by the virtue of Pride, could they fight alongside the Marchers? The visionary asked, "Is Dawn part of the Empire?" Bedevere paused and quietly answered, "Yes. Yes." The visionary asked again, saying that Bedevere needed to answer more clearly, and Bedevere said "Yes!".

Then Bedevere asked why would they not, by the virtue of Ambition, go in and take the treasures of Seren for themselves, given that otherwise they would be divided among the armies. Finally, he asked, "What about the highest virtue, the virtue of Glory? People will sing of this hereafter."

There was a little more discussion, and then the visionary said, "These are my orders. You *will* obey." Bedevere said, after a pause, "As my earl commands!" and the vision faded.

Lisabetta's soul was examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, her soul was clear of any marks. After the vision, her soul showed a shade of armour around her, that looked like it would fade by the time she next slept.

Livia's soul was also examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Both before and after the vision, her soul had a dedication to Wisdom with the strength of seven priests, and a testimony of "Teacher" with the strength of seven priests.

The coven of the Spire of Auric Horizon also performed divination rituals on Lisabetta after the vision to gain information about her past life and corroborate what the vision indicated.

The Day divination ritual indicated that the vision happened 300 to 400 years ago, and showed a merrow woman seeing Lisabetta as she is now, reflected in a mirror. She

builds a delicate machine part with a crystal in it. Earl Nimue de Gavim (possibly "de Gauvain") contemplates it.

The Night divination ritual showed a merrow standing on a hill overlooking a forest, with war raging below. If she leads with a shield, she will be stuck behind allowing others to take what is rightfully hers. If she leads with the sword instead, she will betray those who rely on her shield for protection. There is a golden glow in the centre of the forest for the one who first gets there, with a name that sounds like Seren.

Collwyn de Rondell (Dawn)

Accompanied by Astrid Fjellrevening Rezia di Tassato (League)

Collwyn 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 awoke kneeling, in a room shrouded in white linen. In front of them was a figure in white robes with a face that was entirely black apart from silver lips, and a single silver tear on one cheek.

The figure held a knife to the visionary's throat, saying "secrets without witnesses are mysteries", and said it wanted the visionary to witness a deal.

The deal was between the visionary's father, named Genghis, of clan Mogdos of Faraden - known as a magnificent Flame magician - and an Imperial agent, apparently Freeborn. The Freeborn woman was dressed in orange, with a black hat with a spike at the top in the common Faraden style.

The father had a list of six names, which he said he'd got from the Pilgrim of something (the visionary did not hear what "something" was). One was from Tassato, one from Redoubt, one from a carta somewhere, and someone called Taliana or Tahawe from the Empress's Lance Chapter. The visionary's impression was that the list was of allies in the Empire, possibly Justice followers. The father and the Freeborn appeared to be jovial and friendly, and she mocked the father's bad handwriting. In discussion, it was mentioned that the current Emperor was Ahraz.

The robed figure appeared before the two of them, stabbed the Freeborn, and told the father that two had to die. The father said that this was not the deal, and while he did

so, the visionary went to the dead woman and took the letter over to a nearby table. The handwriting on it was indeed very bad.

The robed figure asked the father who should die. When the father said “No, not me”, the figure asked, “If not you, who?”, and the father said “kill Bolivar, she’s not much of a fighter”, indicating the visionary.

The figure handed the visionary the knife, and said the visionary had to choose. The visionary asked their father why he did this, and he said he didn’t know of the Whisper Cult until this happened, and that he was an information broker.

The visionary then asked their father why choose them as a sacrifice. The father said it couldn’t be him, because who would run the house, and added, “Then there’s your idiot brother, and the baby.”

The figure came closer, and the visionary asked the father what he would do next, and whether he’d make deals like this again. The visionary turned the knife on themselves, thrusting it into their chest, and saying to their father, who was now crying, “Do something decent with yourself”. Their chest started to hurt, and the vision ended.

Collwyn's soul was examined with the rite of Insight before and after the vision. Before the vision, his soul had a dedication to Pride and a testimony of "Undauntable Knight", each with the strength of a single priest. After the vision, his soul also showed a shade of the stab wound he had received in his vision, that looked like it would fade the next time he slept.

Astrid's soul was also examined with the rite of Insight. Both before and after the vision, her soul had a dedication to Pride with the strength of a single priest.

The coven of the Spire of Auric Horizon also performed divination rituals on Collwyn after the vision to gain information about his past life and corroborate what the vision indicated.

The Day divination ritual indicated the vision was of around 50 years ago, of Bolomarr of House Mondas in Faraden. She was a teenaged girl with dark hair, wearing a tunic.

The Night divination ritual showed a teenaged girl holding a knife dripping with blood as black as night. It was pulled from her back where her father has planted it. By the whim of the Whisper Gallery she is given a chance to revenge herself.