

Notice of Secession

Author(s): Iago III Maerinian, Damore Diamantus, Cyril Pyraxis, Harold Dumis, Takashi Varlo, Johan Avimoor, Ravenna Thavix

Source: Hall of The Lex. Originally signed Phorsday, 3rd of Temperance, EP 267.

Notes: The original copy of this document was delivered to, and presumably destroyed by, Cyrano Verallion; the highest ranking member of the Drocasian Imperial Settlement Administration present on the island during the occupation. Fifteen surviving copies are known to have been created in EP 267, with eleven residing with private collectors and galleries, and the remaining four housed in the vaults below the Hall of The Lex.

Hereby and forever more, we - the people of the City-State of Sarosa - declare our emancipation. We exercise our will through the undersigned in this declaration, and invoke through them our right to sovereignty, equity and independence from the exploitation of our oppressors.

We hold that the yoke of unjust masters must be cast aside, as must all shackles.

We hold that the land and ocean we live on is ours, as are all the derived bounties.

We hold that our inventions, discoveries and works are our own, as are all the derived wonders.

As Sarosans we hold these tenets to be true from this moment forth until such a time as existence reaches its end.

This decision is not one taken lightly, nor one made without forethought or precedent. It is a choice made out of necessity, and for the good of those who reside here. The Drocasian Empire has shown itself, repeatedly, and with great fervour, to be an incompetent, belligerent and uncompromising master. Its troops walk our streets as this very document is penned, uninvited, unwanted, and without the leave of our administration. Its nobility bleeds our people of their labour, pay and lives. Its warships menace our waters.

These indignities cannot be allowed to stand. They will not be allowed to stand. The proper courses of action for each of our grievances has been followed, without avail. All options short of that which is thus proclaimed have been exhausted, and met with rebuke or mockery.

Furthermore, we abjure the faith of the Imperial House: were its scions truly the instruments of The Will upon this world, such a situation as this would not be required to come to pass. All fiefs and properties it once retained are released from their servitude to the care of the state, and its instruments will be permitted to leave in peace if their faith does not waver, or to stay if they wish to embrace a state unafraid of the Truth.

It is for these reasons, and with the assent of the people of Sarosa, that we, the undersigned, in our roles as the elected guardians of the multiform colonies, districts and boroughs of this newborn nation, declare it independent of all foreign empires, polities, nations and states, with the rights and freedoms of such states to declare and resolve war, ally, trade and build in the manner of all sovereign states that have come before. We further declare that Sarosa shall never again fall under the hold of a king, or singular ruler, and that it shall be governed by its own people, for the good of its own people.

Signed:

Iago III Maerinian - *Greystone*

Damore Diamantus - *Aldervale*

Cyril Pyraxis - *Calderrock*

Harold Dumis - *Farport*

Takashi Varlo - *Glassgarden*

Johan Avimoor - *Hollymount*

Ravenna Thavix - *Gulltower*

Witnessed:

Hala Morgenstern

Oliver Karos

Amara Zvartold

Omar Akehurst

Shane Wicker

Pollyanna Scarlett

Victor Paryle Sr

Duncan Byss

Emile Falconer-Dredge

Visions Of Utopia (Extract)

Author(s): Mazov Coir

Source: Oculos Verita Library, Hadrás. Original text published Wesanday, 2nd of Grace, EP 213.

Notes: *Visions of Utopia* has never been officially published in Sarosa. Hadrasi copies were translated and distributed by independent Coirist printmakers such as the Fullstone Street Club, Inkdrake Society, and Ibraman & Co. The text is currently considered a threat to public good by officials of the Lex.

I can see the shining citadel upon the hill. Its great defensive walls are long gone, replaced by parkland, canals and housing. Its austere cathedrals echo with debate and lecture, transformed from centers of control to forums and public halls. It has shed its militia-houses and checkpoints like vestigial limbs, and nought remains of them but historical plaques set into the walls of galleries and museums.

The citadel has no true heart, it has no need for such a thing, as it only exists by the will and cooperation of the people within. These people are happy, healthy, and well-fed, they exercise their rights without fear, and work together for the common good. At this point, so far into the future that I can scarce speculate on what marvels of technology and society we may have rendered, there is no longer even a need for the Union, that powerful source of cohesion, because the once traumatic evils of industrial capital have long since faded to a bad dream, and a footnote of the history of our age.

This utopia is not one that we today will live to see, but it is one we can imagine. One we can work towards creating. We can conceive of a better world, and if we do so, it will come into being. Not by the vast works of an individual, but the rising tide of the masses - unshackled by notions of profit, greed, and vengeful gods. Only through the deconstruction of these false edifices will equity be achieved.

There are those who will resist this tide. The Industrialists, the kings, emperors and prophets. They will arm themselves. They will cloak their corruption in the language of the oppressed. They will convince their lackeys of the threat this citadel poses to their positions, and they will not let go of their power lightly.

The citadel is beautiful, but it will not be built without the shedding of blood.

The Hammer Lane Incident

Author(s): Unknown.

Source: Castorbridge Archive, Aldervale. Original text published Norsday, 17th of Cheer, EE 30.

Note: While this flyer credits its own publication to the “Halderman Institute”, no such institution is known to exist, nor has such an institution ever been registered within the city. Assuming the name is derived from a founder’s surname, it is possible that Institute is a lost endeavor of the Haldermans of Barrowgate, but the tragic collapse and subsequent funding of the family’s sole property within the city in EE 6 likely precludes this possibility, as no members of the family are known to have survived. Additionally, the crimes mentioned in the flyer’s text (and the Civic regulation to which they are related) are not present in any archive or document collection to which we have access. I can therefore only conclude that the document below details a hoax or prank, intended to harmlessly disrupt foot traffic in Hammer Lane.

Attention!

Hammer Lane has been declared unsafe by the Aldervale City Watch.

Citizens are advised to use alternate routes while this warning is in effect. See below for details.

On Alesday the 7th of Cheer, the City Watch received word that a Mr Otly Graves of Hollowhill Road had not returned home from work the previous night. His employer had no knowledge of his location, and once it was determined that he had not paid the usual toll at Grover’s Pass (the route he usually travelled to return home) the Watch began proceedings to locate him. Mr Graves’ was eventually traced by a series of witnesses to the intersection of Lower Hallville and Hammer Lane, the latter street having only recently been opened following the demolition of the warehouse that formerly stood in its place. Consultation amongst local people, however, revealed that none remembered the warehouse, or the opening of the street as it was recorded in Civic records. Investigators later determined that the business records linked to the former warehouse were, in fact, fraudulent. Following this discovery, Mr Graves’ case was made a joint operation between the City Watch, and researchers from the Halderman Institute’s “Trap Street” division, a specialised operational force tasked with such investigations. This joint force quickly identified a number of other missing persons reports in the area whose subjects could have conceivably used Hammer Lane as a shortcut at the time of their disappearance. Several of these cases have since been concretely linked to the location.

Mr Otly’s remains were discovered in the gutter running along the western edge of Hammer Lane several days later. He was identified from photographs provided to the City Watch by his widow, and was subsequently interred in a closed casket at the Helio-Altar Cemetery

according to his wishes. Photographic evidence of the scene is not permitted to be shared with the public at this time, due to the sensitive nature of the crime.

Due to the confirmedly malicious turn of events, citizens are forbidden from passing the point demarcated by this notice, and failure to heed this warning is likely to result in grievous bodily harm, death, and potentially worse fates as yet unknown.

This notice has been produced by the Aldervale City Watch at the behest of the Halderman Institute's "Trap Street" Division. Hammer Lane is hereby classified as unsafe for public use. In line with Civic Regulation 5994-C-C-1, the affected area is to be quarantined, public awareness raised, and travel halted until a more thorough assessment of the nature of the malefactor or malefactors present can be determined. The completion of this assessment will be published in local bulletins, and replace this notice once it has been carried out.

Published by order of the Halderman Institute.

When The City Is Dark, We Shall Arrive.

The Thunder King

Author(s): Unknown

Source: Hall of The Lex, Originally delivered Firsdlay, 7th of Spare Time, EP306

Note: The original copy of this document was delivered by courier to Taliesin Thavix on the above-stated date. The original designer has never been uncovered, though no Lex-sanctioned investigation has ever been undertaken. Following the document's delivery, the Thunder King Electrical Company was founded as a profit-making arm of the Lex. It remains the largest manufacturer of electrical components and generation equipment in the city to this day.

The present document relates to a new innovation in the nascent field of electrical engineering, specifically the subfield of the generation of electricity - often referred to by the term "artificial lightning" in related literature. Prior art in this field is woefully expensive, inefficient, prohibitively complex and impractically large. The invention detailed below is intended to remedy these issues, and allow for the rapid generation of electrical power in facilities ranging from existing experimental infrastructure to smaller, more specialised premises. Beyond this, the creator intends to utilise production of the present invention to provide electrical power to homes and civic infrastructure as proposed by Dr Vitka in his recently published material.

[Diagram]

The "Thunder King" operates via the rotation of large magnetic blocks to stimulate the production of lightning within tightly coiled wire, itself mechanically powered by a finely balanced winding mechanism. This electricity can then be routed through external wiring for use in experimental or infrastructure-power roles.

The creator requests legal protection of his intellectual and practical rights to the benefits and proceeds of the above invention, through official filing of his rights with the Office of Patents and Records of the Lex Council of Sarosa. The creator requests the right to official recognition, the right to suit in defence of intellectual and practical property relating to the above invention, and the right to construct, sell and otherwise monetise the above invention for the benefit of individuals and organisations at the discretion of the creator.

Vital Force (Extract)

Author(s): Unknown, written under the alias "A. Supplicant"

Source: Castorbridge Archive, Aldervale. Original text publishing date unknown.

Note: A. Supplicant is an alias used by a number of Resurrectionist theologians, and the overlapping active periods of each make determining specific dates of writing and publication impossible. The lack of proper accreditation and documentation of publication editions makes unpicking the web of revisions and additions to such texts essentially impossible.

This is the Principle of Motion: Entropy cannot wither what it cannot catch. Vitality is a force of motion residing within each of us: a Great Humor for greater men, presiding over the Lesser Humors that govern the actions of lesser men. We must feed such a Great Humor and encourage it to flourish, lest Entropy rise, or the Lesser Humors stake their claim in illness, old age, and death. If the Principle of Motion dictates our relationship to the entropic, so must Vitality define our relationship to life. And what, pray tell, is the purest form of Vital force?

It is lightning, dear supplicant. Lightning.

Investigations by such esteemed individuals as doctors Messier and Cole have shown that the application of electricity (Distilled Lightning, as Dr Cole names it) to the human body is the surest way to refresh one's vitality, whether the devoted anti-entropic prefers to gather their electricity from a source such as a Capacited Lightning Rod or by artificial generation such as that provided by Lady Felicity Artemisia's revolutionary Hand-Operated Electrostatic Generator.

The stimulation of Vitality must of course be accompanied by appropriate offerings to its patron. The Thunder King himself is our greatest benefactor in this area, and his appeasement is assurance that the dedicated vitalist will continue to receive the benefits he or she desires from the processes detailed in this text. To do so is simple, and provides one with a wonderful vector to start conversations with those who have yet to understand the faults of modern medical science, and the power of the Great Humours to heal, rejuvenate and extend life.

In his great canticle, the King describes a number of methods by which to please the angels of the storm. The most commonly utilised of these is, of course, the Capacited Lightning

Rod, but the devoted Resurrectionist understands that the King's gifts must be utilised, and not simply hoarded or wasted on the earth below.

A well-established shrine should contain a number of Prayeral Automata, periodically sprung to life by the gifts of the King whensoever one is blessed with a strike. These can be purchased from a number of bespoke vendors, or constructed by oneself or one's Reverend Engineer to form the basis of many fabulous arrangements. While the canticle does not prescribe quantities or natures of each type of Prayeral Automata, common practice dictates that the faithful house at least one of each major variety, unless the shrine is focused around the channelling or a specific Minor Humour or aspect of the King.

Votive or Choral, Scriptural, Representational and Proximal Automata each invoke a specific Minor Humour that - when activated in combination - encourages the flourishing of the Major Humours and Vitality in particular. The arrangement of such Automata is a matter of some personal taste, and services in designing such aspects of one's shrine are available from-

Rats In The Walls

Author(s): Major Armaun Brecht, Lieutenant Casper Aspero, Magos Hisdar "Midnight" Akellon.

Source: Sarosan Marine Corps Archive, Hall of The Lex, Alesday 8th of Cheer, EP273

Note: The following is a collection of transcripts of internal telegraph communication between members of the Sarosan Marine Corps during the Tidal Revolution. I have attempted to identify the precise nature of the work carried out by operatives of the Thavix Spire, but have been politely and firmly rebuffed by Lex officials. Folk wisdom holds that the operative contacted in this exchange is responsible for the scouring of the Cilston Commune.

Port of Carriel Telegraph Service

Praise The Patron of The Wires

The following communication is intended for the eyes of the listed recipient only, viewing this message without authorisation from the sender or recipient is a civic offence that may result in dismissal of duty or prosecution.

Sender: Lt C. Aspero

Recipient: Mjr A. Brecht

Location: Cilston Forward Command

Location: Central Command, Spiretop

Latest assault unsuccessful.

Insurrectionists detonated a series of bridges during the assault.

Cilston now entirely cut off from other districts at the surface level.

Forward team casualties high but within tolerance.

Enemy strength unknown, distinction between militants and civilians no longer clear.

Enemy utilising scavenged weapons, improvised explosives, hit and run.

Perimeter holds, but I suspect supplies entering operation zone by unknown tunnel system.

Request advice for next course of action.

Port of Carriel Telegraph Service

Praise The Patron of The Wires

The following communication is intended for the eyes of the listed recipient only, viewing this message without authorisation from the sender or recipient is a civic offence that may result in dismissal of duty or prosecution.

Sender: Mjr A. Brecht

Recipient: Lt C. Aspero

Location: Central Command, Spiretop

Location: Cilston Forward Command

Delays are unacceptable, Lieutenant.

Prepare the next assault immediately.

A special asset has been dispatched, and will reach you within the day, he is operating with my authority.

Follow his orders no matter how esoteric they seem.

Port of Carriel Telegraph Service

Praise The Patron of The Wires

The following communication is intended for the eyes of the listed recipient only, viewing this message without authorisation from the sender or recipient is a civic offence that may result in dismissal of duty or prosecution.

Sender: Mjr A. Brecht

Recipient: Midnight

Location: Central Command, Spiretop

Location: Thavix Spire, Oldstone

Prepare for dispatch to Cilstone Commune.

Coirist terrorists continue to persist, and have cut off their warren from the wider city.

You are authorised to utilise all methods at your disposal to break their line, and allow our marines to enter to clear them out.

Contact Lieutenant Casper Aspero at Cilston Forward Command, he will organise supporting operations.

Flush these rats out of their walls with all the guile of your order, Midnight.

Thavix Telegraph Service

Music in The Depths

The message below has been marked and sealed for viewing only by its recipient. Attempting to do so without their express consent will result in this message's sorcerous self-destruction, and notification of the Central Exchange regarding your location and survival of the aforementioned countermeasure.

Sender: Midnight

Recipient: Mjr A. Brecht

Location: Thavix Spire, Oldstone

Location: Central Command, Spiretop

Received.

It shall be so.

Port of Carriel Telegraph Service

Praise The Patron of The Wires

The following communication is intended for the eyes of the listed recipient only, viewing this message without authorisation from the sender or recipient is a civic offence that may result in dismissal of duty or prosecution.

Sender: Lt C. Aspero

Recipient: Mjr A. Brecht

Location: Cilston Forward Command

Location: Central Command, Spiretop

Agent has arrived.

Have requisitioned his requested supplies to greatest possible extent.

No men are willing to volunteer.

I do not blame them.

Will proceed with lottery with your permission.

With utmost respect, is this agent truly necessary?

Fear his methods' effect on troop morale.

Port of Carriel Telegraph Service

Praise The Patron of The Wires

The following communication is intended for the eyes of the listed recipient only, viewing this message without authorisation from the sender or recipient is a civic offence that may result in dismissal of duty or prosecution.

Sender: Mjr A. Brecht

Recipient: Lt C. Aspero

Location: Central Command, Spiretop

Location: Cilston Forward Command

Those who volunteer and survive will receive triple pay.

Draw your lottery if you must.

Everything is secondary to digging those rats out of the walls.

Protect The Right To Assembly

Author(s): *The Fullstone Club*

Source: *Castorbridge Archive, Aldervale. Original date unknown.*

Note: *Individual writers within the Fullstone Club collective traditionally forgo their personal names in favour of speaking under the name of the Club itself. I have been unable to identify which - if any - known member is responsible for the following text.*

Workers of the Eternal City! Do you not see what is to become of you? The Industrialists, long fattened on the fruits of your toil, now seek to undermine your ability to demand even the basic necessities required to live!

Agents of The Fullstone Club have uncovered plans put forward by Lex representatives of House Varlo to outlaw the assembly of unionised workers in the hydroponic farms of Glassgarden, and prohibit the formation of new organisations that follow the proven union structure, under the seemingly noble title of the “Edict Against Disorder”. This is tantamount to warfare against the worker, proposed in the pursuit of perfidious profit!

We hereby urge all who can to contact their union representatives, join if they have not already, and organise to show that such unjust law will not stand. March in solidarity with our sibling farmers and engineers, for the passing of such legislation as that proposed can lead to nothing but the precedent for wider suppression.

This Lex, this government through which we supposedly “exercise our will” has stooped now to levels of depravity comparable to the hated Empire they were installed to overthrow. Let us not be led into darkness by those who claim to hold the torch, let us look, for ourselves, and see that the light instead stems from our collective bargaining, our rights and freedoms, and the community that no false flame can oppose.

Our greatest hope for salvation from this dark fate is obvious, and has long been derided by those who now seek its dismantling. The Union. Not simply an instrument to allow laziness, to destroy business or to cause conflict in the workplace, as those who seek to destroy them claim, the union is our salvation! And the first step to a brighter future! As the great Mazov Coir states, the enemies of utopia will cloak themselves in the language of the oppressed. So it is whenever an Industrialist complains to the Lex of being “coerced” by the demands of their unionised workforce.

Rise! Brothers, sisters, unite! The Fullstone Club is happy to provide information and resources to unionise your workplace, and support in doing so!

You know where to find us.

Anti-Civic Agitators Foment Disaster!

Author(s): *Sevastaeo Fulcher*

Source: *First published in the Sulsdag, 18th of Grace, EP270 edition of The Spiretop Herald. Clipping sourced from the Spiretop Herald Main Office, Spiretop.*

Note: *We are mandated to preserve editions of the Spiretop Herald by the Lex Council's "Edict For Historical Recordkeeping". On occasion I wish more issues of it had been destroyed in the flood.*

Anti-Civic Agitators Foment Disaster!

Our wondrous city was rocked yesterday by the continuing aftershocks of the events of the Riot of Wayfarer Square three days ago, as yet more heinous dissidents involved in the fatal melee have been identified and removed from our streets for the collective safety of all. This latest round of agitators have been identified to the Spiretop Herald as the ringleaders of the anti-civic "Zeshepi Freedom Militia" whose acts of terror and vandalism predate even the torrid drivel of contemporary Coirist subversives. Their arrests bring the total number of violent extremists apprehended by our brave Greycloaks to thirty-eight, with the vast majority hailing from the so-called Cilston Commune - a hot-bed of anarchist and coirist degeneracy that now finds itself firmly in the sights of Greycloak Commissioner Hastur Levit's operation Broken Hammer.

Further details have emerged in the days since the initial outbreak of violence in Wayfarer Square, allowing this reporter to piece together a complete timeline of the events and individuals involved.

The tragic events were set in motion by known Coirist and anti-business union executive Aston Buchanon, when, in response to a poorly understood reading of proposed legislation to curb the open organisation of anti-civic radical groups, his union, the "Dockworker's Front" issued a slew of unreasonable demands publicly outside the Hall of the Lex, despite being invited into the council chamber for private and reasonable discussion. Failing to heed reasonable counter offers from the council, Dockworker's Front and other aligned groups declared an unlawful and highly disruptive work stoppage. The immediate fallout of this strangulation of trade has continued to ripple across the city's economy, resulting in the consolidation or dissolution of a number of venerable and long-running institutions integral to the smooth operation of financial and trade services in the area. Far from their nebulous goal of "democratising the workplace" these union actions have simply created more work

for their members, ruined the productivity of thriving industries, and invoked the righteous retribution of our brave Greycloak protectors.

So it was that when the union rabble began to vandalise state property, and smash windows of local small businesses, Greycloaks were deployed in force with the support of the Marine Corps to disperse the crowd. Failing again to heed reasonable warnings, and without considering the safety of bystanders or local residents, the Coirist unionists began to clash with the forces of law and civility.

In the ensuing confusion, several officers of the watch were injured, and three killed by protestors. This necessitated retaliatory use of force to break up the protestors, resulting in the deaths of many as the rabble trampled their own to escape the consequences of their actions. In an ironic twist of Fate's hand, the dead include lead agitator Aston Buchanon, and several other figureheads of the mob.

Following the clash, a fourth officer succumbed to his wounds in Greenvale Hospital, bringing the casualties to a total of forty-one.

In a statement regarding the events at Wayfarer Square, Speaker of the Lex Harold Dumis told this reporter that the events were "a regrettable tragedy, and a deeply human disaster fomented by a radical and violently inclined ideological group."

After the events of Wayfarer Square, a large number of the more dedicated radicals have returned to Cilston, expelling what Greycloak presence remained, barring the gates to officials and agents of the city, and declaring it an independent commune under the Coirist model. This reporter attempted to contact officials from Hadrass for comment on the spread of their dangerous ideology to the city, but received no reply at this time.

The future of the so-called Cilston Commune is uncertain, Speaker Dumis has vowed that the Lex will bring the full weight of the law down on those who resist the lawful authority of the civic government, especially as they have already been responsible for one heinous and tragic event tarnishing our glorious city's reputation.

Manufacturing Excuses: The Tragedy of Wayfarer Square

Author: Nathaniel Highcaller

Source: First published in the *Stersday 7th of Grace* edition of *Genius Loci*. Clipping sourced from a public donation..

Note: To my knowledge this archive is the only one to also preserve editions of *Genius Loci*.

Manufacturing Excuses: The Tragedy of Wayfarer Square

Genius Loci is saddened to announce that the official death toll of Greycloak violence against citizens involved in the protests at Wayfarer's Square has now risen to twenty-seven, as three labourers in Cilston loosely connected to the Dockworker's Front and the Buchanan Twelve have succumbed to injuries inflicted in the riot.

Readers may remember our initial reporting on the events of the protests on the day they occurred, but greater clarity of information - and anonymously provided internal Greycloak and Marine Corp documentation - has since shed greater light on the nature of events.

The protests at Wayfarer Square began as many others do; with a Union strike vote. Members of the Dockworker's Front (the largest labour union in the city, whose council was chaired by the now-martyred Aston Buchanan) voted in an almost 90% majority to engage in work stoppage and organised resistance of scab workers in protest of the Edict Against Disorder brought to the Lex by House Varlo on the previous Firsdays. In a statement read by courier at the front gates of the Hall of The Lex, Buchanan declared that "not a single gilder will pass through our ports until the labourer has earned due respect, and the rights of unions are enshrined in law."

Speaker for the Hall Harold Dumis called the union's demands "anti-civic, anti-business, and antithetical to established notions of common sense" in a written response delivered to Dockworker's Front leadership. Following a total absence of communication or counter offer from the Lex council, Dockworker's Front and several associated farming and engineering unions across Glassgarden, as well as the newly formed Civil Employee's Alliance carried out their duly flagged work stoppages, disrupting trade, food production and transport services in a final ditch effort to elicit a response from an uncommunicative governing body.

When no such replies were issued in the ensuing two days, union leadership from across each participating organisation met in congress to declare the first super-organisational work stoppage and General Strike the city has ever seen. Accompanied by fiery speeches from noted theorists and authors including poet Maria Betrel, whose speech concluded with a phrase that would soon become iconic across the movement; “A rising tide lifts all ships.”

Once organised, the alliance of workers returned to their base of operations in Cilston, which has become a hub of anti-industrialist artists and thinkers, as well as providing housing for many dockworkers. Peaceful protests were held there around local Cloakhouses, calling on the supposed fraternity of the workers and the police force formed of citizen militias during the War of Liberation. No response was received, and the protesters were ordered to disperse shortly before the bulk of Greycloak presence withdrew from the district.

Seeing this as a sign of the righteousness of their cause, or at least the tacit admission by the city militia of their rights to protest, the labourers began a march towards the Hall of The Lex, and Wayfarer Square, gathering additional support as they travelled. Upon reaching the Square, the protestors spread out almost to fill it, and began to call upon legislators in the Hall to cast down the Edict Against Disorder.

It is unclear precisely what initiated the events that followed. The Genius Loci has attempted to verify a number of possibilities, but due to the recency of the conflict and the nature of some of the accusations contained within common rumours, official sources have been uncooperative. The theories have solidified into three archetypical explanations.

Firstly: the official narrative. Publications close to the Lex have strongly pushed this version of events: the riot at Wayfarer Square was precipitated by the protestors, who killed several Greycloaks and then failed to disperse until met with violence in return. During the flight from the site of the riot, a number of individuals within the protest group were trampled to death, and others injured. Genius Loci can attest from first-hand experience that the protest ended in violence, and a highly disorganised route of protesters from the square, though the convenience of those being trampled disproportionately being involved in the organisation of the protest is highly suspect, and has been downplayed by official reporting.

Secondly: the narrative put forward by the Cilstone Commune. Through means that will not be disclosed in this report, Genius Loci was able to gather the series of events put forth by the strike leaders themselves. According to surviving leadership of Dockworker’s Front, an

agent or agents were deployed by Lex-aligned forces to infiltrate the protest and initiate violence, as a method to excuse retaliatory violence on the part of Greycloaks and Marine Corps forces.

Finally: a narrative that, while outlandish sounding, emerges from a number of eyewitness accounts of the events in question. This narrative is broadly similar to that of the Cilstone Commune narrative, but states that not only were union leadership targeted for death during the chaos of the protest, but that they were targeted by an agent using sorcerous means. Every teller of this tale has their own theories as to which power - foreign or domestic - would be capable of such a feat, and why they would want the Eternal City cast into chaos, but the fact remains that many who witnessed the death of Aston Buchanon witnessed him swallowed by the very pavingstones below his feet, and spat back out in pieces a moment later.

The situation continues to develop in the Cilston commune, with protesters expelling all Greycloaks from the district and closing its gates to the civic authorities. Observers believe the success or failure of this strike action - which some are beginning to call a rebellion - will hinge on whether the Commune can persist long enough for the denial of their labour to force the hand of the Lex.

The Miracle Of The Pass

Author(s): Marissa Hilgaard

Source: Hall of The Lex. First performance date unknown.

Note: Debate rages as to whether Hilgaard should be credited with the writing of this song, as it has long been contested that she adapted it from a number of folk pieces created organically in the aftermath of the final battle of the War of Liberation by Zeshepi Zhaeduk (a cultural role at the intersection of priest and musician), though she is officially recognised and venerated as its writer by the Lex in its official histories, with no mention of the Zeshepi contribution.

Come, o brave sailor,
Ride the ocean waves.
Ascend, o vaunted saviour,
Canons soon to blaze.

Far on the horizon,
A coward's flag I see.
How I hope my sailor,
Will sail home to me.

My arms they are a-straining,
The sails snapping taught.
The soldiers are a-saying,
There's destruction to be wrought.

I stand upon the dockside,
My sailor soon to see,
As wind and spray surround me,
The tears of the sea.

We call out to the ocean,
To Civic gods and more.
Oh how I miss my pretty lass,
A-waiting on the shore.

As flags bloom to thousands,
I feel dread in my heart.

I fear that my sailor's soul,
Is soon to depart.

I hear a song of anger,
Tearing from the shore,
A thousand thousand voices,
Calling something more.

The ocean rears around us,
The clouds begin to race.
As lightning cracks above me,
Rain falls on my face.

The winds are in our favour,
The storm it passes by,
And we call out in wonder,
As lightning starts to fly.

I cannot see the battle,
The distance is too far.
I hear no roar of canons,
As the sky is lightning scarred.

The storm descends upon them,
All hope for them is lost.
As they fail and burn and flounder,
A thousand ships, capsized, storm-tossed.

We call out to our loved ones,
As the crowds amass,
To give thanks to our fortune,
The Miracle of The Pass.

The Society For The Settlement Of Unrest

Author(s): Unknown.

Source: Unknown.

Note: *This document was discovered in a hidden pocket sewn into the lining of a copy of the Canticles of The Thunder King that was delivered to the archive following the death of Major Hox Bracken of the Sarosan Marine corps. The contract appears to be written in Contramantic Ink of the highest quality. I have yet to fully research the society it seems to show membership of, but their rituals appear to resemble those of older Drocasian secret societies.*

This Indenture, made the sixteenth day of Prudence, [year], between the presenting representative of The Society For The Settlement Of Unrest and Mr Hox Bracken of Glassgarden, witnessed by the undersigned and the Civic Trinity, authorises and compels Mr Bracken to pursue to the goals of the Society unto their completion or the end of his ability to pursue, up to and beyond the dissolution of his mortal life.

He is entitled to receive any and all reasonable access, resources and personnel necessary to the carrying out of his duties as discussed between him and the presenting representative. These duties may include but are not bound to the following: utilising his existing position to gather or obscure information for the Society, carrying out extraction, neutralisation or guardian tasks for the Society, or supporting others in the completion of such tasks. He is also expected to make himself available to superior members of the Society at times and places convenient to them, regardless of other tasks he is performing. As a sign of his willingness to complete these tasks, he is expected to make all haste to receive the brand of the Society as directed by the presenting representative.

For such duties and services he is additionally entitled to receive, paid to himself or a designated representative thereof, 2200 Guilders on a monthly basis for the duration of this agreement. Should the course of duty result in his passing, the signatory is entitled to designate a beneficiary who shall receive such payment for a period no greater or lesser than three years (measured by Drocasian Standard Time) marked from the date of his passing.

Mr Bracken, by providing his signature to this contract, understands that he is to be bound to its terms and that failure to fulfill them to the best of his ability will result, by the inexorable will of Benthic Sorcery, in the complete and total erasure of his memory in relation to the Society For The Settlement Of Unrest, this contract, its signing, and all other aspects of his life relating in any way to the duties laid out within, alongside other

consequences and penalties determined by the severity of his failure, which may but will not necessarily extend to his excoriation, death, or Enthrallment. Failure to comply with the terms of this indenture that do not arise from or could not have reasonably been prevented by the actions of the signatory will not result in these penalties by default, but may at the determination of the signatory's superiors convey some form of retaliation.

Issued and Witnessed:

Samuel Hallinger

Signed, Sworn and Sealed:

Hox Bracken

A Lament For Cilston

Author(s): *Unknown*

Source: *Fullstone Club Archive, first performance date unknown.*

Note: *The performance of this poem is banned under the [DATE] Edict Against Obscenity. I have preserved it here for the purpose of historical accuracy and reference only.*

Hear ye, hear ye, high upon the walls!
It's only a matter of time until the Commune falls!
So cried the sailor as they dragged him away,
If only they knew what would happen that dark day.

Hear ye, Hear ye, in the darkened cell!
When death falls upon us it will find us here as well!
So screamed the sailor as they threw him inside,
A coward, a traitor, the other prisoners cried.

Far beyond the stout stone wall,
The sky began to wail,
A rumble came from deep below,
And our resolve began to fail.

Recorded In Brin's Tavern

Author(s): *Names*

Source: *Unknown*

Note: This recording was delivered to the archive anonymously, alongside a small note. It purports to be a recording of the formation of the Zeshepi criminal syndicate known as the New Zhenyun, made in the infamous Brin's Tavern which members are known to frequent. I cannot verify its authenticity, but if this truly is the voice of Gairajun "The Stonecarrier", it is a very dangerous recording to possess.

They speak of liberation as though this land is theirs. They speak of equity as though their grandparents did not hunt us for sport, back when this land was unpaved, and still the domain of our Zhenyun. Now I find nothing of the old world remaining. Only perversions and reflections wandering the streets and preying upon my countrymen and those of the invader deemed too unwanted to even profit from their conquests.

The elders speak of endurance, they invoke the Parable of the Squall: this storm will settle, and things will be as they once were. I do not see how. The Zhaeduk, our conduit to the divine, are slain. Our people turn to the sorceries of the invader, our Inkmothers whored out to cartel and mafia. We who once bore the flame and the knife. We who once sailed these waters. We who were the only ones who could.

We are diminished.

My family once carried the statues of the Seven Great Zhenyun from mountaintop to seashore at the apex of every tide, so they might rise from the ocean with us and grant us favour. It was I who saved those stones from the harbour the invaders cast them into. It was I who dived for a quarter tide on but one breathe. It was I who brought each of you here with the strength of my legend. And it is I who shall propose our way forward.

If we are to be branded as criminals for the shade of our skin and set of our jaws, for the family marks that scar the base of our spines, then so be it. We who have no other place to go reject the rules of a society we wanted no part of, of a foreign occupier who threw off their chains and let them tumble down onto us. We shall be the bane of them. We shall be the things they fear in the night. No pale spectre of a dying Zhenyun or "Denizen" as they call our gods, instead we will be Death. We will be Fear itself. We will know no master and no law but our own.

My name is Gairajun Avenashogal and I am the third to bear it. For my mother and her mother I shall stride out and make good on the promise of my blood. Sisters and brothers of the sacred waters, will you let the city consume you? Or will you carve your fate from this barren rock with your own hands?

A case for preservation.

Author(s): Tavalin Whittaker

Source: Castorbridge Archive, Aldervale. Thesday 19th of Eloquence, 338

Note: This text was originally written as part of a funding request to the Appropriations Committee For The Historical Preservation Of The Eternal City (ACFTHPOTEC). But was rejected on the basis of the Castorbridge Archive's specialisation in the preservation and contextual presentation of plural sources. Had we decided to instead follow committee-recommended practices, most - if not all - of the texts presented in this collection would have been destroyed.

From:

Tavalin Whittaker

Senior Archivist

Castorbridge Archive

Castorbridge Archive

223A Henderson Lane

Aldervale

To:

Appropriations Committee For The

Historical Preservation Of The Eternal

City (ACFTHPOTEC)

Appropriations Office

Hall of The Lex

Spiretop

Dear sirs,

I am writing to you today in support of Application 73-41 on behalf of the Castorbridge Archive in Aldervale. We submitted our funding proposal on 17/4/38 and were told that we would likely hear back from you within the week.

It has now been several weeks, and I am writing to reiterate the main points of our proposal, in case it was misplaced in the shuffle (spirits know I understand) or otherwise delayed.

We are seeking a grant of 25,000 Guilders to allow the archive to renovate its premises. We were recently informed by City Surveyors that there is likely a large hollow below the area, and it is now at increasing risk of collapse due to subterranean flooding. This poses an existential risk to the archive as it stands, not to mention surrounding privately owned buildings whose occupants are unable to raise the funds for this vital maintenance work.

I will not reiterate every point of the arguments laid out in our initial request, suffice to say that we are a highly regarded local resource, frequented by students from Avimoor Academy and a number of more local institutions alongside. We are also a small and largely

independent team, which allows us to preserve documents relating to the finer points of history and our wonderful, multifaceted city. This is a service that pays dividends already, and will do so to an ever greater extent as time passes, and historians yet to be born wish to look back not just on the way one group or person told their history, but how many people did, from all walks of life.

I await your response with bated breath, and hope in my heart for the future.

Tavalin Whittaker.

Scraps

Author(s): Various and unknown

Source: Castorbridge Archive, Aldervale. Dates various and unknown.

Note: *The following collection of scraps were recovered in the wake of the flood that necessitated this archive reorganisation. They form part of a much larger collection of text fragments that have yet to be fully processed, replaced or reunited to form the texts they were once a part of. Many of them seem to stem from the archive's collection of historical documents relating to the Zeshepi people, which were not prioritised during the transfer of texts to temporary storage during the flood. I believe this to be a great shame, and a black mark on our books.*

-appear to have great reverence for the natural forces of the world. They offer veneration to these “Zhenyun” through the rites of their priesthood. The “Zhaeduk” are in equal parts actor, musician, storyteller and community leader. The duties appear to be dictated by the tides, and the lunar calendar, with regular rites performed every-

-so it was that great Nokke rose from the depths to strike down the interloper with storm and sky-fire. With her final breath rattling in her chest, the Far Traveller looked her grandfather in the eye and spoke a single word, etching thunder into the stone around her. She said, with a strength she thought had left her-

-dust. I know not by what method the natives were able to achieve this, sir, as they have previously demonstrated only rudimentary technology in the arts of warfare. Translators in our groups say local villages credit the killings to their people's potent magics, but we have not seen them demonstrate any aptitude with Alchemical arts either. Lieutenant Broyle informs me that certain outlying garrisons have seen natives leaving these villages at night to travel into the mountains, returning only after a patrol or off-duty soldier has gone missing. We intend to follow a group the next time one is located, and will report back as to what we find in those bleak hills. Regarding supplies, we require additional rations for the excursion, and have used a significant quantity of our ammunition attempting to hunt a number of local fauna the likes of which the men and I have never before seen. Again our translators have ascribed the physical resistance of these creatures to their nature as spirits, but I believe that if we were able to devise a consistent method of hunting them, they could provide an unprecedented leap forward in our armour, given that they appear able to shrug off volleys of musket-shot with little to no damage. With your permission, I would requisition one of the fellows of the Alchemical Society to conduct this research alongside our other-

-teeth marks in the stone. I have never seen a place once so vibrant with life rendered so empty. What few drifters and fortune-seekers do move through this district tell stories of hearing the chittering from below in the dark of night. Several of the men swear they've heard it too, though I suspect rum may have been involved in their encounters. I have advised Mr Yilber that we move on quickly, though I could not give a ration answer as to why-

-intend to propose in the old way. With a circlet of sea-carved amber. In return for an evening's cleaning service every week, I have engaged a local blacksmith to create the base for the crown, as well as a pair of matching rings so our union can be recognised by the Guivayun as well. I hope this message finds you well, father-

-Gods save me. Forgive me for what I've done. I can't ever take it back. Those men... those boys. They were trained for war, not... that. Gods. Forgive me, please. Forgive me. I see them when I close-

- 'S MARVELOUS MAGOTHAUMIC MAGNIFIER

Ho there citizen! Do you suspect witchcraft is afoot in your local neighbourhood? Perform your civic duty in style with the latest in Sorcery-Detection Technology from the reliable and Lex-recommended engineers of Holdana Technical! The Magothaumic Magnifier is the latest invention in the field, capable of detecting and highlighting even the smallest traces of Benthic Ink on any surface! Whether you suspect your neighbour of cursing your roses, or that a cunning Zesh might be trying to charm you or break into your home, the Magothaumic Magnifier is the answer! Results derived from this simple handheld device are even admissible evidence in a Civic Court (Only official Holdana Technical products meet this quality standard!).

Place your order with your local vendor, or send us a telegram to Holdana Technical Headquarters. We'll even discount the price of your message from your order!

What are you waiting for? Place your order-

-so I awake each morning to the sleeping face of my lover, as dawn breaks through the smog, and I see as she opens those bright eyes, just for a moment, the green and brown of a garden unending. And the blue of a sky untouched by smoke, flecked with golden sun.

Yours with my eternal love, and an aching impatience that we may be reunited,

Emily.

Strataberg

Author(s): Eyayun Grace

Source: Recovered during an expedition into the ruins of Cilston, post Tidal Revolution, as part of a larger collection of personal musings by the author. Original date of writing unknown.

Note: I have included this document as it details what life was like inside the Cilston Commune in the last days of the Revolution. While we cannot specify the date at which it was written for certain, it is evidently after the massacre of Kessledown House, and the loss of Maria Betrel. This puts the date of its writing between the establishment of the commune, and the dark day when it was finally retaken. Eyayun Grace remains one of our best insights into the latter days of the commune, working as she did with a network of Zeshepi smugglers and urban archaeologists to find ways to bring supplies into the commune under the Industrialist siege. She was also one of the last Zeshepi Benthic Sorcerers trained by the final Arc-Zhaeduk, Nyshenurzun Avengashogol. Her ultimate fate in the scouring of Cilston is unknown, but she is presumed dead. The documents themselves were discovered tucked into a gap between two pieces of masonry under a roof-spar, explaining how they were saved from the rats and the elements.

Your resupply was late, Mist.

I'm not mad (I am a little; we're counting on you.) but you need to just admit if you're late and let us know so we can account for it! Did you lose your map again? I've included a spare just in case. You know the drill; it's oil-soaked to resist the damp, and so you can burn it faster if you're going to get caught.

Your last note was... interesting. I'm glad your sister's arm is healing, and congratulations on the anniversary. You should tell me more about the tunnel opening you found, though. If it leads to a Strataberg we could use it as a cache, or to evacuate people when things fall apart here. They are going to fall apart here. Maria's gone, Aston's been dead for ages and even though we're all on the same side, there's always a few racists around to blame all the bad news on us. I mean really, how the hell can't they see that's just playing into the hands of the oppressor? I don't give a damn if their grandparents got injured clearing forest for the city. Mine got killed by foresters.

Sorry, not the chirpy snark you know me for.

Can you tack on a few more vials of Benthic Ink to the next shipment? There's a few people who need an actual reason to be afraid of a Zeshepi witch. I'm joking. Mostly. Gregory could benefit from having the fear of the gods put into him though. I actually need it so I can keep expanding the tunnel network. Darksight and heightened instincts being as useful as they are underground in a partially collapsed warren, of course.

My last sweep of the tunnels was clear, so you shouldn't run into anything if you need to take an alternate route. Rumours are that the Marines are starting to suspect this is how we're staying supplied, so you should still be extra careful. Let me know in your reply if you need me to make any more caches or rig any more routes to collapse.

I know you don't like it when I divine about you, but I've been worried. You're going to be okay, I think. Just don't eat any seafood for the next few days, trust me.

Speaking of seafood, would you also get some treats for Micha? She likes fresh fish. Salmon if possible. I will write you another love poem for your wife if you do. I assume she liked the last one as much as the first twelve? You've got to introduce us when all of this is over, I know more about her eyes and her lovely brown hair than I do her life story.

Hope you're well. And say hello to your mother for me. I miss her beetroot muffins.

- Eyayun.

The Squid, The Storm and The Sailor

Author(s): Ayvanar Shaedjhiv, recorded by Nyshenurzun Vashan

Source: Distributed by The Last Zhaeduk. Original recording date unknown.

Note: Nyshenurzun Vashan remains wanted by the authorities in connection with the death of a Greycloak officer during an operation to break up an unlawful gathering at the Rising Moon Meeting Hall in Tarot Hill. I studied with him at Avimoor Academy, and do not believe him capable of what he is accused of. That said, the incident also resulted in the death of his aunt, Ayvanar, and I do not wish to speculate as to what such a tragedy would make someone capable of.

Static, fading to the sounds of dripping water and faint, echoey breathing.

Nyshenurzun (Gravely): This is Nyshenurzun Vashan¹. The Last Zhaeduk², recording the history of my people in the face of near-total erasure. I am recording this for distribution by my allies to those who wish to learn. I apologise in advance for any degradation to the copy of this that you receive, as it will likely be a copy of a copy at the very least. Feel free to make and distribute your own copies of the osci-cyl, and distribute them however you wish.

A pause, shifting fabric and a creak as Nyshenurzun sits down, and steadies his breathing.

Nyshenurzun: Today's tale is that of the Great Hero, the lord of a hundred ships, bearer of many titles. It will tell it as my aunt told it to me when I was a child, with all its fear and fury. As this is part of a series of recordings pertaining to the Zeshep'Ira³ language, I will produce an accompanying transcript of the text in Sarosana, with footnotes detailing the meaning of Zeshep'Ira terms I use. My hope is to gradually produce texts more and more in my native tongue as people begin to learn and use it more again.

Another pause, followed by the shuffling of papers.

Nyshenurzun: Many years ago, before the Guivaeyun⁴ came to our shores, a boy was born at sea. His mother, who led her family's fishing trips out into the marshlands, gave birth to him in the old way. In the water itself. The first sight his eyes ever saw was the moon rising over the shadow of his family, watching as he broke the surface. From the moment of his birth, it

¹ Nyshenurzun: "One Who Gives Stars To The Sea". Vashan: "Cat-like".

² Zhaeduk: "Inkmother", a traditional Zeshepi priest.

³ Zeshep'Ira: "Speech of The Sea / People of The Water". The Zeshepi word for the language, and the people who speak it.

⁴ Guivaeyun: "Outsider" (derogatory term used to refer to settlers and their descendants in the city)

was clear that he had been touched by the Zhenyun⁵. As his mother lifted him back into the canoe, a great creature parted the water below them, and a wake rocked him to this first sleep in his mother's arms.

As he grew, the boy was always drawn back to the sea. A born sailor, he took to fishing with his family in his fifth summer, and earnt his hooks by his eighth. He spent many days sailing alone in the pass, learning her every route and breath. He appeared to possess an unusual amount of Akhaej,⁶ but showed no interest in becoming a Zhaeduk.

It was on one of his solo trips that he first encountered the Kyshek.⁷ Tendrilous arms emerged from the water to the side of his canoe, grasping and bending a marsh oak, as the great Squid hauled itself over a small island and on into the depths beyond.

Upon his return to Sarosa, the boy recounted his tale, and earnt his name. The village Zhaeduk named him Kyshenurzun.⁸

Kyshenurzun came of age, and chose his mother's family name, becoming Kyshenurzun Orayjhiv.⁹

For many years more, he saw nor heard any more of the Great Zhenyun of his youth, and eventually came to believe that the entire encounter was nothing more than a flight of childish fantasy. He was still a prodigious sailor, a master of the coracle and canoe.

Every trip into the marshlands, Kyshenurzun and his fellow sailors would bring back a good quantity of fish. But they were the only fishers who were able to. The marshlands were growing barren. The fish were drawn to deeper waters, where the village's slow, flat-bottomed canoes could not follow.

Starvation loomed. Ritual failed. The Zhaeduk met in conclave and could find no answer from the Zhenyun.

In their hour of need, the village turned to Kyshenurzun. In the years since he earned his name, the Zhaeduk of his village had grown old. But she still remembered his story. Still remembered why she had named him so.

⁵ Zhenyun: "Spirits"

⁶ Akhaej: A form of traditional spiritual magic, a combination of intuition, inherent knowledge of the natural world, and a penchant for luck to intervene on one's behalf. All people are believed to possess a small amount of Akhaej, from which instincts and gut feelings derive. But in our mythology, there are those with the ability to grasp and shape their own Akhaej, often in a subconscious manner.

⁷ Kyshek: One of the Seven Great Zhenyun, a principle deity of traditional Zeshepi religion.

⁸ Kyshenurzun: One of the Seven Holy Names, meaning "favoured of Kyshek". My own name, Nyshenurzun, is another of the seven, meaning "favoured of Nyshen".

⁹ Orayjhiv: Surname, meaning "Songbird". Later adopted as the ceremonial surname given to some Zhaeduk from the northern pre-settlement tribes. This tradition has now been largely lost, with the name being given to Greycloaks to avoid being identified to the authorities.

“You must find your Arheyun,¹⁰ boy. And find out what we have done wrong. You must find out what we have done. And offer our apologies. Offer our prayers directly.”

And so he set sail. Kyshenurzun packed his possessions into the coracle he had first met the great Zhenyun in and paddled out into the mist. His family and friends called to him from the shoreline, with blessings and prayers and well-wishes. But he did not look back. He knew if he saw home at that moment, he would not have the strength to go.

The marshes were dark. Cool and quiet. They bubbled gently in the mist. Kyshenurzun closed his eyes as he paddled, guided by his Akhaej in the hope that it would lead him to his namesake.

He was not sure how long he had been travelling when he heard a voice.

“Aren’t you *tired*, traveller?”

“I am not tired.” replied Kyshenurzun.

“But you have been on the water so long. You must be *tired*.”

As the voice spoke, Kyshenurzun suddenly felt fatigue hit him. He must have been paddling for a long time. Perhaps he did deserve to rest.

“Where are you, stranger? And what is your name?” He called to the mist.

“I am a short way to your left, traveller. My name does not matter. You simply must come here and *rest*.”

Kyshenurzun shook his head to fend off the creeping sleep. There was something wrong here.

“What is your name, stranger? I must know.”

“Come and *rest*, traveller. *Rest* with me.”

A tale the village Zhaeduk had told him returned to Kyshenurzun. A tale of an evil Zhenyun, one that lured travellers into the water with the promise of rest and companionship.

“I cannot rest here, stranger. My journey takes me elsewhere.”

And the mists fell silent once more.

Static. A voice barely peaks through the noise, singing a song in Zeshep’Ira.

Nyshenurzun: Apologies for the abrupt cut, I was forced to relocate to avoid some... unwanted guests. Where were we? Ah. Yes.

Kyshenurzun sailed on into the true black of night, trusting in his Akhaej to guide him around the islands, trees and rock-spires that loomed from the darkness. As dawn began to tint the horizon with pink, he saw something swoop down from the sky to perch on a marsh oak ahead of him.

¹⁰ Arheyun: “Guardian Spirit”

“Where are you heading?” Croaked the creature, and began to preen its wings.

“To find the Kyshek and beg for the fish to return so my village may live.” Replied Kyshenurzun.

“That is a worthy cause, sojourner. I have seen the Kyshek not far from here, in fact.” The creature shook its wings, and Kyshenurzun saw at last what it was: A Hyvekir.¹¹

“Where did you see the Kyshek, Hyvekir? Will you show me?” Kyshenurzun paddled closer.

“Why do you think you are worthy to know, sojourner?”

“My name is Kyshenurzun Orayjhiv. The Kyshek will know me. I was blessed as a child.”

The Hyvekir fell silent for a moment before replying.

“Very well. We shall see. Keep up.”

The bird launched itself into the air, and Kyshenurzun gave chase as fast as his coracle would carry him. It was not fast enough. The bird began to recede into the distance. Kyshenurzun threw himself into the water, and swam as fast as he could, barely keeping up. The water grew colder. The marshplants became less dense. The islands became less frequent.

Kyshenurzun realised he was swimming into deeper and deeper water. His arms burnt, his breath became ragged, and he began to struggle, losing sight of the Hyvekir.

Something brushed against him from below, lifting him from the water as his head was about to dip below the waves.

“Why have you sought me, child?” the Kyshek’s voice rumbled..

“For my village, great one. The fish have left us. I beg you, return them.”

“I cannot.”

“Why not, great one? What have we done wrong?”

“Nothing. I do not control them as you think.”

“What must we do then, great one?”

“Travel further, child. Build greater ships. You will learn.”

A moment of silence passes.

Nyshen (voice breaking: That is all for this recording.

Static.

¹¹ Hyvekir: Also known as a Hyverbird. A creature common to Zeshepi myths, acting either as a friendly guide and companion, or a trickster to take the hero off their intended path.

A Study of Denizens

Author(s): Aksaryun Kharjhiv

Source: Kharjhiv Collection, donated to the Archive following the declaration of his death in EP337.

Note: *Despite the bias implied by my friendship with Mr Kharjhiv, I have chosen to include this text in the collection for its insights into the field of Cryptozoology, the scientific arm of the generally far less rigorous Occultic movement that our fine city seems so wrapped up in. I have also chosen to include it on the off chance that a reader or readers of this collection may be able to provide some insight into the events of his disappearance. Please contact the Archive if this is the case.*

A Contextual Note

I hereby present to the Society my collated notes regarding the nightfolk of Sarosa, the so-called Denizens of our fair city that appear to escape the notice of many within the traditional academic and scientific institutions and which - as a result - fall to us to study.

While it is a matter of some contention within our circles, I believe these observations provide incontrovertible proof of my personal thesis regarding the genesis of Denizens. Certain colleagues have provocatively referred to this theory as Universal Animism, and while I enjoy the theatricality of such a name, it is inaccurate in its implications. I do not posit that the entire world or universe itself is animate, simply that the collective humanity of this city and the weight of its history - not to mention its saturation with sorcerous works - may render it a level of primordial unconscious will. I would politely request that colleagues use the name I propose for this theory - Civic Vitality - in all conversations and writings relating to it from this point onwards.

A Study Of Denizens In All Of Their Multitudinous Forms, And A Theorem Thereof Relating To Their Origins

It is common knowledge amongst those with the eyes to see that our great city has within it an ecosystem of shadows. These are no ordinary creatures, such as the rats, birds and insects that follow mankind across the world in whatever it endeavours to do, but beings unique to - and as this paper will lay out - arising from the City itself.

My proposal is fundamentally simple, and exists to answer a question that has puzzled our forebears since our arrival on this island: why do we see so many reported encounters with

creatures from our folklore previously presumed to be fictional, and why are records predating our arrival only related to the folklore of native people?

In answer to this, I have on many occasions presented the theory of Civic Vitality. In order to fully understand it and the ramifications thereof, one must have a basic grounding in the well-accepted facts and quirks of the so called Denizens of the city.

Denizens are, broadly, the name given to a varied collection of creatures encountered by citizens and occultists of the city, but not officially recognised to exist by, or whose nature would seem to violate, the principle sciences.

Our recent efforts to unify our personal classification systems into something more official have borne fruit. Depending on their nature and relationship to the humans of the city, a Denizen can be classified into one of three categories, corresponding to a deity of the Civic Trinity.

Note: *My dear friend Aksaryun is not the most prone to brevity. I have summarised the following five pages as follows:*

- *Denizens arising from technology and progress are referred to as Nokken*
- *Denizens arising from ideas and ideals are referred to as Miemyran*
- *Denizens arising from human fears or emotions are referred to as Ligaeen*

The text continues below:

Given that we have now achieved a basic grounding in classification, we can move on to explanation.

Older theoretical models for the origins of Denizen creatures posit that were either naturally occurring on the isle before colonisation, or were unknowingly introduced by colonists and subsequent migrants. This is, as we shall soon see, incorrect.

My studies have revealed startling and rapidly progressing changes in Denizen populations, and a shift in the nature of beings reported to those who document them. Upon initial

settlement of the island, reports focused on the appearance and intervention of creatures derived from Zeshepi mythology, Zhenyun of many varieties acting in accordance with their legends. As time has gone on, these reports have grown fewer and further between, instead being replaced by reports of sightings of creatures from settler folklore. Old Drocasian myths like the Vampire, Stryga and Aethercat became common. Today, however, we see a decline in even these sightings, with creatures new and strange taking their place.

Nokken Denizens, once taking the form of spirits of the bow and spear, becoming spirits of gunsmoke and metal, now appear most commonly as dancing sprites along electrical wires, factory automata awakening with their own intelligences, and even sentient buildings.

Miemyran Denizens, formerly spirits of honour and vengeance now appear in inexplicable political flyers, advertising mascots that whisper as you walk by, and strange grey-cloaked figures on street corners, vanishing a moment after being observed.

And finally, arguably the most interesting of all, Ligaeon entities. Fear, Anger, Love, Happiness and such emotions have obviously existed in complete continuance throughout all historical occupation of the island, but in recent times have been solidified into a new range of manifestations. The infamous Man In Black, living trees sighted in Glassgarden, or the vicious affairs of the Hammer Lane Entity are all proof of this.

Given this evidence, I propose that the collective and aggregate proclivities of the island's population are what drive the evolution of such creatures, and that we should focus our efforts on tracking their shifts and changes not only to better understand their nature, but our own, and that of the society of which we form but a small part.

Conducive to this goal, myself and a number of likeminded associates have produced the following series of documents for perusal and reference. Each details the nature and proposed evolution of a singular type of denizen, and more will be produced as we gather additional data.

Missing, Presumed Sacrificed

Author(s): Tarot Hill Cloakhouse

Source: Tarot Hill Cloakhouse Records Department, Wesanday 13th of Prudence, EP338.

Note: *This call for information demonstrates the dangers of our current unrestricted religious freedom, according to Civicist Canons. I believe it instead reflects a critical stage of an investigation that led to the only arrest of a sitting member of the Lex Council, and - in my opinion - one of the few moments of genuine justice meted out by our incompetent police force to individuals of such status.*

MISSING

Presumed Sacrificed

Arthur Handstrom of Kesselwick, last seen [DATE].

Arthur Handstrom is 6' 2", with greying hair close cropped, and a large beard of the same quality. He walks with a mild limp at the right knee, compensated for by a worn black-painted wooden cane that he is reportedly never without.

Mr Handstrom was last seen leaving the Oyster and Bed at 11:15pm on [DATE] and was reported missing by his wife after failing to return home even to the following evening.

A monocle belonging to Mr Handstrom was found on [DATE] in a back alley leading away from Ironhorn Street, alongside evidence of a Sorcerous Ritual performed at the scene. Burnt sage, remnants of illegally sourced Atramantic Tattooing Ink and a number of bleached rat skulls were found arranged in a loose circle around the monocle.

Citizens are warned that these actions mirror those of the extremist religious organisation known as the Children of The Deep, whose radical and subversive proclamations have been a scourge on Kesselwick and surrounding districts in past months. Residents of the area are advised to travel only in groups at night, and to report any and all suspicious activities to local Greycloaks, whose patrols in the area have been expanded and made more frequent.

As no direct witnesses of events in the alley have come forward, but residents of a nearby tenement reported hearing a scream that was cut off, and the sounds of several sets of footsteps carrying something heavy - presumably Mr Handstrom in whatever state the ritual had left him - from the alley.

Information regarding these individuals is of the highest interest to the Kesselwick Greycloaks, if you have seen Mr Handstrom or have any other information that could be pertinent to the case, please contact the front desk of the Kesselwick Cloakhouse, or inform the nearest Greycloak officer if you notice events in progress.

Through Rigour, Safety. Through Information, Security.
