

DARK TIMES

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THE RESIDENT

I apologise, my prince, that my friendly nature is so opposed to the cautious distrust amongst kindred that you seem so fond of advocating. It is probably the first time that anybody has disliked me so intensely with so little interaction. I confess to being surprised, I would have thought myself beneath your notice.

Words change meaning, not just year to year but person to person, and while I respect your definition of a harpy, I do not share it – and perhaps I am not the only one, when so many seem happy to agree with the appointment. I do not choose who is harpy, and neither do you. The people who do choose, have chosen, and they appear to have chosen me.

I could pretend, if it would please you, that I am underhanded, merely enacting a façade, and I could drop dark hints that my motives are sinister; a game that would unsettle most would perhaps appease your precise definitions. It would, however, only be pretence. I do not claim to be perfect, sweet and innocent, I do claim to be happy, to enjoy the company of others and the stories they tell wherever I can, and I do not know why you so object to that.

Perhaps you would prefer that I admit to wishing harm on my fellow kindred, but I do not. I will not socially destroy someone simply to prove to you that I can, no one has yet proved themselves

deserving of the wrath that, I assure you, I am capable of. Harpies are creatures of vengeance, employed by the Gods to punish crimes.



The Opinion of our local press officer.

One day, perhaps, a member of this court will commit such crime, they will mark themselves as deserving, and on that day you will see my fury, and all will know that it is just.

Until that time, I prefer to smile and be happy, and not engender fear for fear's sake, because if you cannot enjoy this life we have been given, why bother with it at all?

I am sorry I do not fit your definition, I am sorry I am simply a curious journalist with a passion for people's stories, I am sorry I am not inherently distrustful of the world – I am even sorry to express all of this in such a public forum, but unfortunately it was you who chose that.

Only, I am not sorry for anything but that last point. I am happy with the person I am. I wonder how many others can say the same?

Niklas Takala
Dark Times Staff Writer

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FROM THE PRINCE'S DESK

Dear subjects,

our enemies have once more infiltrated the domain of Glasgow. Instead of sending hordes of brutes they this time have decided to instead send in their stead a corporate power, Akiton Incorporated. Whilst usually a company could hardly cause problems for us it would appear the powers behind Akiton Incorporated are out to ruffle the feathers of all of our potential enemies and focus their attention onto the city.

Having glanced behind the scenes one has to assume the powers that be have access to some form of persuasive powers. The mere speed with which they have arrived and integrated themselves to the political and corporate landscape of the domain and their ability to cut through the existing structures and achieve their goals.

Therefore I urge you to spend some of your attention in the coming months to aid us in the attempts to drive them out. Between us we should be able to persuade management to relocate the business, we should be able to have their premisses shut down or condemned, we should be able to have the criminal element target them and remove the resources they require to function, we should be able to have them tied up in expensive court cases, to have key people poached by other businesses, to have them crucified in the media.

No matter where you influence lies, there is something you can do to aid in this endeavor. I want to see their empire crumble and certainly be removed from the domain. If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact my Seneschal.

Simon Haile
Prince of Glasgow

ELYSIUM

Our Modern Artists

Please allow me to welcome you to the Second Exhibition on our Elysium Calendar, here at the Gallery of Modern Art. Burgeoning talent at the Glasgow School of Art have pulled together to create some intriguing and thought provoking pieces displaying the theme of 'The Modern World'. I encourage you all to take in the delights of these fascinating works of art.

For those of a more scientific inclination I do hope to see you all at the next Exhibition at the Glasgow Science Centre where there will be many experts in the field of Science displaying their technology and providing talks on the advancements being made.

The Subject of Debate?

Elysium provides us with the opportunity to converse and debate with each other in a safe and protected environment. We may voice our opinions and thoughts regarding sensitive topics without fear of retribution (well at least in that space).

We have, on occasion, been invited to take part in debates, and with the political landscape changing so rapidly in our world as well as the mortal world, perhaps it is time that we have the opportunity to discuss these things together. Of course, not everyone has political interests, I myself would much rather a debate on the subject of who the greater composer might be, there are others that would instead wish to discuss perhaps a more philosophical question.

And so, should there be adequate interest, I will be arranging monthly gatherings at each of the Elysia to discuss,

well, whatever is the current topic of the moment, provided by those that wish to attend! Should you have an interest in taking part or even a topic for the first series of debates please do not hesitate to speak with me at the next court or indeed at any of the Elysia.

A Thank You

You may note that in the centre of this gallery there is on display a most unusual and delightful work of art, a baby grand Piano made seemingly out of driftwood and other such materials that most would throw away or consider rubbish. To those of you who know me well, finding a piano in the Elysium is no surprise, but to find one that looks like this, well that is perhaps a little unusual. However I urge you to play a few notes, or should you not have the skill, I shall play for you, and you will understand why this worn and battered instrument is worthy of such adulation. And so, my deepest and most heartfelt thanks for your exquisite gift Elder Cosimo. Such a beautiful work of art, and a reminder that one cannot judge something purely by looks alone, for it seems that even something so misshapen can still provide the sweetest, wondrous and soulful music.

Amadeus Edelstein

Acting – Seneschal and Keeper of Elysium

STORY TIME, THE THREE PRINCES OF THE ROSE

Once upon a time a great evil descended upon the land. It buried in deep and threatened to take over the entire country, destroying everything in its path. However, within this land, there were three Princes of the Rose who swore to rid the country of this threat.

The First Prince was strong and charismatic, a true leader, a force to be reckoned with and ruler of the most beautiful and vibrant domain in the country. The Second Prince was intelligent and observant, made of the same strong materials as the dark grey domain he governed. The Third Prince was young and handsome, what he lacked in leadership and intelligence he made up for in beauty, truly he had a smile that could melt the coldest of hearts. Together, with their combined skills the Princes of the Rose destroyed the evil. After much celebrating (and the sorting of some 'ownership' issues) the Princes returned to their cities as heroes.

However, as time passed and there was no greater evil to occupy their minds the Princes looked around at each other.

The First Prince looked to his neighbour, the Second Prince, his closest and dearest ally, and thought that his land, a normally desolate and barren area, now looked just that little bit brighter. He wondered, was it beginning look brighter than his own lands?

The Second Prince, who had indebted himself to so many people in order to rally the troops required for the war, looked at his neighbours and saw that they who had not contributed as much to the war as he seemed to be reaping more of the benefits.

(At which point the Second Prince complained that he was only the 'Second' Prince, why couldn't he be the First Prince? He was just as pretty and just as intelligent as the First Prince so really, he should be first, right?)

The Third Prince, who everyone was aware was

just the puppet prince of the First Prince sat blissfully unaware of the whispered words and snide remarks of those around him, the 'conquering hero', thinking himself an equal to the First and Second Prince.

Rumours flew around the land as the Princes watch each other.

Did the First Prince wish to make himself a King? Was that really such a bad thing? The Princes had already shown that they are stronger together, surely they would be stronger still with one man's vision? Perhaps his?

Did the Second Prince look tired? Glasgow had always been a tiresome domain, a difficult petulant child, was it wearing him down? Did his debts weigh on his mind? Did he eagerly await the return of his Sheriff or did he dread his imminent arrival, knowing that he had one more debt to repay?

Did the Third Prince care what the others say? Did he hear them but choose not to care? Did he even want the lands that he had received? Some called him 'puppet', 'straw man' and 'fool', perhaps those brains were made of more than just straw? Perhaps it was better to be thought a fool than a threat?

The Lords and Peasants of these lands become restless, they felt the tension in the air. There were the beginnings of a storm, just the faint rumbles that heralded its arrival. With the winds picking up, more rumours flew, carried by the lords, the peasants, and the mangy birds that chirruped their disapproval.

The First Prince became confident in his superiority over the other two, and why not, for he was surely the greater man was he not? They would fall into line like they always do, right? He has no reason to be concerned about his little poppet in the north, or his dear friend in the West, no, surely they would do

STORY TIME, CONT...

nothing to hinder his claim to further power. Or would they?

The Second Prince could do no wrong in the eyes of the city in the east, a hero, the Iron Prince, surely anyone wishing to live in his land should be grateful to have such an intelligent and wonderful leader. However, it seemed the southern lands disapproved of his bid to arrange his own chirpy bird, not to mention the dull grey of his attire. However their opinion matters little these days, right? And good looks and fancy clothes don't win wars, right?

The Third Prince bobbed along gracefully still unaware of the snide comments that followed him everywhere. And yet, in his apparent 'foolishness' it seemed that the Third Prince was making all the friends, his land was a land of opportunity, of advancement, where all those things that had been

snatched up in the east and the west were up for grabs. It seems there has been something of a surge towards the new domain, each member vying for the favour of the up and coming Prince.

The Princes continue as they always have as the chirping around them grows louder, as the rumours spread and the whispers are carried from land to land.

Meanwhile, the forgotten Fourth Prince, sits and waits, sharpening his claws.

Anonymous

A POEM

Come thou, thou last one, whom I recognize,
unbearable pain throughout this body's fabric:

as I in my spirit burned, see, I now burn in thee:
the wood that long resisted the advancing flames
which thou kept flaring, I now am nourishing
and burn in thee.

My gentle and mild being through thy ruthless fury
has turned into a raging hell that is not from here.
Quite pure, quite free of future planning,
I mounted
the tangled funeral pyre built for my suffering,
so sure of nothing more to buy for future

needs,
while in my heart the stored reserves kept silent.

Is it still I, who there past all recognition burn?
Memories I do not seize and bring inside.
O life! O living! O to be outside!
And I in flames. And no one here who knows me.

Anonymous

THE TREATY OF DURHAM, THE GREATER FOOL THEORY

Definition; *"The greater fool theory states that the price of an object is determined not by its intrinsic value, but rather by irrational beliefs and expectations of market participants. A price can be justified by a rational buyer under the belief that another party is willing to pay an even higher price. Or one may rationally have the expectation that the item can be resold to a 'greater fool' later."*

It seems that all anyone can talk about these days is the Treaty of Durham and whether or not the age old decision should perhaps be reviewed if not entirely overturned. First raised at the Caledonia Nocturnis event back in November 2013 at Doune Castle, hosted by the most venerable Justicar Madam Guile herself, it has since reared its head at a recent event in London hosted by Lady Sailsbury. What do you think? What is your opinion? Be you Toreador or Ventrue, if you are attending an event just now guaranteed the question will be put to you.

Of course, to say that this is only a matter for those two clans would be remiss of me, as should a change be made it would surely affect other clans as well. This most likely explains the avid interest of others such as the Nosferatu and the Tremere as to which side the major players fall.

In short, what is the value for the price of freedom?

For when one looks at the treaty that is, at a glance, what it is all about. Toreadors do not have the freedom in the south as they do in the north, and although to a lesser extent, the Ventrue do not have the freedom in the north as they do in the south. However, one can look at it another way, through the treaty, the interests of the Ventrue are protected in the south, whereas in the north the interests of the Toreador are protected (albeit not as much as in the south), so, who is buying, who is selling and who is the fool?

As defined above the Greater Fool Theory is based on the fact that the value of a thing does not matter, only the possibility of selling it on to a 'Greater Fool'. It is a term most commonly used within the financial world (and so many Ventrue's I am sure will be familiar with this theory although that could be horribly stereotypical of me), however the theory itself can be applied in many situations, including this one.

However, before we can form an idea of the future we first have to look at the past and the current

climate. Unfortunately my knowledge in regards to history is not as extensive as I would wish it to be, however after extensive discussions with those who know much better I feel I am able to summarise how we came to this moment.

There was a war. We lost. The Winner wrote the terms. Suck it up. The End.

Now on to the present day!

Let us start in London. One only needs to look at Lady Sailsbury's Valentines Ball to see that London is quite obviously affected by the Treaty. Lady Sailsbury, a wonderful and intriguing woman, and very obviously a respected Toreador within the London Camarilla would, in any other domain, most likely hold a domain title, but not in London due to this treaty. Perhaps this was one of the reasons it was such a 'hot topic' at her ball, either that or the all too noticeable fact that the only domain official that attended was the remarkable Sheriff Helmut, to mention the very noticeable absence of many of the respected Ventrue (although Henry Newbolt and Anne Jaques were, as always, in the very centre of it all and looking wonderful). A more sensitive individual might have regarded this as a most grievous snub however Lady Sailsbury, the epitome of class, would not have dreamed of allowing such a trivial thing to rain on her parade.

Of course, the other answer is that many in the domain of London have come to expect this and so when it happens it is hardly noteworthy. Now there are many that would counter 'if you don't like it, don't stay there', which is for many a valid point, however it does beg the question, 'why should I have too?'. 'Because you lost the war, winners write the history books'.

And yet, many Toreador still choose to stay in dear old London town. I would ask the question why but it is obvious, it is a hub for whatever artistic desire you may have, Toreadors are drawn there like a moth (or should that be beautiful butterflies?) to a flame, and that is what London is, a flame. Hot, dangerous and consuming, which despite the language used is not always a bad thing.

Now let's take the train from Kings Cross up to

GREATER FOOL, CONT.

the Scottish capital, the train itself passing through that fateful town where the treaty was made, and look at things from the other perspective.

Edinburgh, a vibrant and beautiful city so obviously Toreador controlled one only needs to head there in August during the Fringe Festival to see just how tight a hold the Rose clan has on these glorious streets. Here we see a city in reverse to the one we just left, however is it to the same extent? Are the Ventrue so obviously snubbed here? Obviously the treaty does not hold as much power in the south, as in Glasgow, before the illustrious Prince Haile, there were two Ventrue Prince's beforehand. This however is the nature of the game and another by product of the Ventrues 'Win' all those years ago.

However the times are certainly changing, slowly, but surely. Wheels are being set in motion, minds are changing, voices are growing louder. Scotland has achieved independence and not one but Three Toreadors hold domain in the north. A new (ish) Prince sits in London with a fresh look on the way things are done. Who knows what Prince Houblon will do, there are certainly enough murmurings about the treaty, soon enough a decision will have to be made. It is certain most Toreadors residing in the south will be in favour of dissolving the treaty entirely, people like Lady Rose Salsbury who perhaps under different circumstances would be making even greater waves than she already is. On the other hand, the Ventrue in these areas would be understandably concerned for what that would mean for their own interests.

But what about the North? What about the Toreador who benefit in the city of Edinburgh? What about the Ventrue that see no difference? And what about those clans who would undoubtedly be affected but are ascribed much less of an opinion? What does that mean for them?

Who is the greater fool?

The sellers are obvious, the noble Kindred of Clan Ventrue, selling us the high price of losing a war against them. However at the same time (as these clever kindred are want to do) they made the price just high enough that it was still attractive to those that could pay it, the Toreador in the North. The Buyers. The buyers who only bought it because they felt they could sell it to the greater fool. So who is the Greater Fool?

The answer is simple; us.

All of us.

On this, the 1st April, we are all the fools. The Ventrues sold it, the Toreadors bought it, but they sold it on to the rest of us. We believe that the Toreadors are subjugated, we believe that this treaty is merely the act of the tyrants of war, because we bought it at a higher price from other Toreadors whose interests it protected.

We are the Greater Fools.
Samuel Dickens

Primogen of Manchester

ADVICE TO A NEONATE

With so many fresh young faces gracing the court these days I thought it might be beneficial to impart a little wisdom to those looking to make a good impression.

Do enjoy your new freedom responsibly

Being an unreleased child can be a rather stifling experience and so when released most young neonates rush away from the apron strings of the sire in a bid to experience everything they can, and this is a good thing. For years you have been subjected to the taste and opinions of your sire, for most it can appear that you have not been able to make a single decision on your own since the night you were embraced. However now, now all the choices are yours to make. However, although one should experience as much as they can they should also keep in mind that their sires advice and opinions might have been imparted to you for a reason. It is all very well if you want to attend a Brujah Training Ground just to see what it's like but you might want to think about what your sire told you about rushing in to things that are maybe above your punching weight, literally.

Do find and occupation

You might have already been doing work for your sire before, you might still choose to do work for your sire, but remember they are no longer responsible for that. You must find a sustainable way in which to provide for yourself. It is all very well to jump from one thing to the other but it is always advisable to have a steady income, if only to fund all those things you wish to do now that you are free.

Do make yourself useful, if you are lucky, invaluable

When you strike out on your own and attend a new court the first thing you want to do is make sure the Prince knows why he should keep you there. You are just

another mouth to feed in his domain so you better make sure you have some talent that will be useful to the domain or indeed, if you can, to the Prince.

However it does not end there, jump at every opportunity to assist your elders, network, trade boons, make yourself important to someone, you never know when you might be in need of their assistance.

Do respect the Prince and the Elders of the domain

I am sure your sires have already warned you about the drawbacks of disrespecting such venerable people, so let me instead focus on the benefits. It is important to be respected in our society and a lot of weight can be added to that should you have the commendation of an Elder or even a Prince. It is not such an easy thing to acquire and does require a lot of work on your part but once achieved it is most certainly a great advantage. You find that many more opportunities are open to you, doors that had once been shut swung open so you might further enjoy your freedom.

Do be careful who you ally yourself with

Not everyone is as trustworthy as you think, be careful who you choose to go into business with, who you sit with, who you spend time out of court with. To many you will appear to be a naïve new member of the court that they might just be able to twist to their own ends. Don't swap the recently released shackles for a new set. However that does not mean you cannot be civil or even friendly with others indeed there are many interesting people out there; you should speak with as many of them as you can.

Do dress sensibly and appropriately for court

It is important that when attending the court to always look your best. That means different things to different people of course but let me give a bit of advice. Don't turn up in worn old jeans, battered trainers and a shirt that has yesterday's blood down the front. No one is going to be impressed by that. At the very least wear a clean t-shirt and your best leather jacket. Remember, you can still look like an 'individual' and be smart.

Do be impressive

With all these new fresh faces standing out from the crowd will be a difficult thing to do; you have to make sure that you shine brighter than all the others.

Should any of you delightful little darlings still feel lost or still feel in need of a little guidance I am, as always, happy to help.

As for some bonus advice for the unreleased childe;

Do bide your time

Listen. Learn. Wait. Your time is coming.

Amadeus Edelestein

HARPY HOUR

I do remember quite distinctly that when Simon Haile was harpy of Glasgow it was not because the Viscount or Prince Trenchard said he was by royal command. No. And I am sure in all reality he would not have sought it that way. A Prince can not hire and fire a harpy. They would be foolish to try. Harpy is the one position that exists outwith the prerogative of princely power. This one accolade alone is attained by the agreement and word of mouth of the kindred of that domain and outwith. From everything I have heard, both from other kindred within Glasgow and from others around the country, it is now a vacuum in Glasgow of long standing that has now been filled by Niklas Takala.

Henry Newbolt

Harpy of Birmingham



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The newsletter should only be made available to other Kindred, and all care should be taken to ensure that it cannot breach the Masquerade.

The Dark Times accepts submissions, and any Kindred should forward their contribution to the address to the left. We look forward to your efforts.

Yours,

Editor in Chief of the Dark Times

DARK TIMES - BRINGING LIGHT TO
THE SHADOWS