

DARK TIMES

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FROM THE SENESCHAL

Dear readers,
since Eleanor's death I have reflected upon our society and the status quo. I have considered the strings which unbeknownst to me pull me in various directions and the strings I hold in my hands puppeteering and directing those beneath me. How can I trust the evidence of her murder I find when I know that there are those who could fabricate this very evidence with the powers of their blood. How can I trust the memories of witnesses when I know that others can change these memories.

In the end it would be too easy to declare everything pointless and to doubt my abilities to achieve anything of my own but then I would no longer be a functioning member of the system. I would become surplus to requirement, like so many other elders who have retreated from the world. No instead I must with renewed rigor go out and hunt down every lead I can. Whilst there might a dozen or so active kindred in Britain who could entirely pull the wool over my eyes I will not make it easy for them and all I need is one loose thread to unravel the entire conspiracy.

It is necessarily that we all play our parts in this grand society for everything to function correctly. As a former Prince I find myself in a unique position where I can examine reactions to myself and my actions without the respect of my former office. I see how it is necessary for hungry ancilla to test

their elders and attempt to force themselves up to elder status, for neonates to act out and be taught a lesson or two. It is necessary for elders to stand together as the elite and make sure only those who are worthy progress up the ranks, to sift out the wheat from the chaff and ensure that our society remains strong.

I am glad to see that there are neonates and ancilla who understand this and ensure that matters progress as they are meant to and I would like to express my gratitude to Levi Tius and especially Professor John Pettitt who went up and beyond the call of duty. It shows that Clan Tremere in Glasgow has come a long way from the troubles that were plaguing them when I first arrived in Glasgow.

Simon Haile
Seneschal to Prince Angus McDonald

ELYSIUM

I do hope you will enjoy the delights of the Gallery of Modern Art this evening. The Gallery that always has some strange new innovative exhibition for us to 'appreciate'. You are, as always, very welcome to take a wander through all the studios and the main exhibition hall, but if possible could I ask that you refrain from attempting to bin any of the exhibits. I understand that there can be confusion sometimes between what is art and what is in all actuality garbage, but should you be in any doubt I will be on hand to do my best to explain which is which.

Even I sometimes fail to see the difference in this particular gallery.

Nevertheless, I am sure many of you will find these pieces thought provoking and if nothing else an incentive to 'do better'. Although I am sure that will not be difficult.

What I can promise is that hopefully by the time the next court rolls around I will have procured some truly astonishing exhibits from my travels. As I traverse the UK with my little band of musicians I have been making a point of visiting all the great Elysia these cities have to offer which has sparked inspiration. It is without a doubt that I will be able to negotiate a new exhibition for this fine building from one of our dear neighbours down south where we too can surround ourselves with such beauty without ever having to leave the domain.

That's all folks! Enjoy your evening!

Amadeus Edelstein
Keeper of Elysium

FROM THE SCOURGE

The kindred going by the name of "The Prophet" is due to return to this domain. Precautions are being taken so that we may be proactive rather than reactive. If I should appear to you and call upon your talents at a moment's notice, do not be alarmed. It just means I think you are handy. What is the Camerilla if not mutual defence and the crushing of false prophets?

Feel free to say no but I have no idea why anyone would want to.

Ethan

FROM THE ASHES

It is official! No longer is Glasgow the butt of all the jokes, the last one in line, the cesspit of danger where, and I quote “there is a new bloody Prince every year”.

Some may put this down to the strong leadership of Prince Angus, the firm and decisive victories he has incurred since taking the reins of such a tumultuous place. Others would say it began before that with Glasgow rising up to meet the challenge that was the Battle of Dundee. Some might even say it's just that we are getting better at playing nice with other domains. Whatever the cause, whoever is responsible, Glasgow is no longer a joke.

Which isn't to say it hasn't completely lost its sense of humour. Glasgow still has a long way to go before it can shake off its dark past, but no one can deny that Glasgow is taking its first few strides into a much brighter future. There are those that will tell you that the only reason that Glasgow has lost its crown as the number one clown of the British Isles is because a new fool has taken the stage, but on that I couldn't possibly comment.

Virgil

FROM ETHAN

I have spoken at length about how your senses can and do lie to you. We are too proud of our honed eyes and ears. They are so much better than what we used to have but the flaws are deep in the grain. You had a bicycle, now you have settled for a jet but stopped chasing the dream of a step carrying you across a continent.

always that part of you that made it's mind up before seeing anything of reality and won't let what's real change it's mind. Big voice ignores your rational faculties and hijacks your emotions for the ride. Think of that when you next consider trusting your gut instinct.

Ethan Fletcher

The same is true of our instincts. We see the grass rustle and your imagination gets to work. You assign it agency. The small reasonable voice telling you that it is the wind is drowned out by the paranoid maniac with a megaphone yelling about a hidden Lion. Everyone who listened to little voice was usually right and saved a lot of energy but every now and then, big voice was right in the same manner as a broken clock. The voterries of little voice stopped lasting very long and paying heed to big voice became the norm. Big voice is trying to help you too but can lead to some very bad choices. Every clatter you hear on the street at night behind you could be anything. Sometimes it is perfectly easy to figure out but there is

GANGREL PRIDE

I am old. I am the Unloved. I guard the deeds of Ennoia's get... Cruithne and his seven sons holding Faitlar's Gap against the Roman scourge... Their fall to the Golden King... The Descent of Oisín into the Spiral Pit... The Three Lessons of Aisling... And I was there. I was there the night the Old Bear and the Young Wolf fought.

The Thing was ramping up to a fever pitch. The blood mead flowed. The tales were told. The deeds of the young and the old were boasted to all who would listen. Rivalries were made and settled and remade again in challenge after challenge, as is our way. Old friendships were renewed and new ones were forged. And suddenly the world grew still...

Without active attempt, a space cleared amidst the throng. Laughter and shouted insults quietly dried up. All eyes turned inward as the scene of revelry was subtly revealed to have become an arena. For at opposing ends of the recently formed circle stood Prince Alexander Leslie, the Wolf's Bane, and Prince Angus McDonald, the Hammer of Shadows. The moment was upon us. A duel for honour, for status, for the sheer fun of it! Both worthies, firm friends for centuries, turned to face the other, broad grins on their faces.

"I will go easy on you, young pup! I don't want to embarrass you too much in front of our cousins here." Smirked the Old Bear. Angus laughed "Don't worry you slow, old man. I don't believe you could ever bring yourself to hit such a handsome face on such a good friend!" At that, Alexander's face lights up with genuine affection, plain for everyone to see. But only for a moment! Quick as a flash, the Young Wolf sprints towards the smiling Old Bear, a rapid transformation into a crow at the height of his leap sends him arrowing at great speed across the intervening distance before a last

minute switch back to human form. The look of confusion on Leslie's face quickly replaced by a look of betrayal as young Angus plants a mighty two-footed kick to the Old Bears chest, blasting him backwards to sprawl on the ground.

The enchantment broken, Leslie climbs to his feet in time to hear McDonald's laughter. "The look on your face!" And to receive a stunningly fast combination of punches and kicks to the head and body, the sharp report of Leslie's ribs snapping drowning out the sounds of Angus' knuckles shattering with the force of the blows. Angus confidently dishes out his punishment as Leslie reels on the back foot... until Prince Leslie's head shockingly turns to mist for a fraction of a second, coalescing again as Angus' heavy punch, meeting no resistance, leaves him flailing and over balanced. It is now Prince McDonald's turn to weather the storm. Leslie's fists smash and crash against Angus' head and arms as he desperately struggles to escape the barrage. The Old Bear roars: "You sneaky little bastard! Hahaha! I'm going to gggaakkhhhh!" From out of the night, a thick unnatural mass of oozing black shadow smashes into Leslie's face, blinding him and filling his mouth and nose with suffocating filth. Angus wastes no time in turning the tables on the distracted Leslie. Quicker than the eye can follow, a tirade of blows to the body is followed by a swipe to the legs, putting Leslie on his back. A couple of crushing stamps to Leslie's head only ends when Leslie disappears down into the earth!

Angus prowls around looking at the assembled crowd, little daring to be-

lieve he has actually beaten Prince Leslie, the sickening sound of bone grinding on bone broadcast to the assembled throng as his fractured skull and shattered facial bones reknit after the Old Bear's devastating assault.

He walks, laughing, around the circle, shaking his head in disbelief, the crowd roaring and howling their approbation and their shock. He is right to be skeptical however... The Old Bear suddenly explodes from the earth in a shower of dirt directly in front of the startled Young Wolf, a murderous uppercut smashing into his chin and propelling Angus up and away to land at the other end of the arena in a stunned heap.

The crowd erupt into good-natured laughter as Prince Leslie stalks forward to finish the young challenger. Everything is right in the world again. "You were surprisingly good, young Angus! You put up quite a decent fight. Unfortunately, your night is coming to an end. Hahahahaha!"

Leslie's gloating, and the crowds laughter, abruptly come to an end as a mass of midnight-black tentacles erupt from the deep shadows between the spectators. Bound hand and foot, Leslie struggles valiantly to free himself as Angus buys the time to recover and awkwardly climbs to his feet, painfully clacking his jaw back into place. "Don't count me out just yet, old man! I've learned a few things since I left your Domain." Angus' face distorts into a terrifying, bestial, visage as he stalks closer towards Leslie. Leslie is visibly shaken but Angus doesn't relent. Again and again he pours his primal nature across the intervening distance as Leslie struggles to flee. Out of nowhere, a dense murder of crows swoops down upon Angus, pecking, cawing, and buffeting him in a swirling melee. Concentration broken, the abyssal tentacles disperse and Prince Leslie visibly composes

himself until a steely determination passes over his features again. The crows finally escape into the darkness, leaving a score of their kin scattered and broken across the ground. A blood covered Angus finishes draining the last one before casually discarding it. "Thanks for the meal. Very generous of you."

Both noble Princes laugh as they charge back into the fray. Leslie compels Angus at the height of the charge: "Duck!" A surprised looking Angus drops to his knees just in time for Leslie to knee him full in the face. A second hefty blow is defeated as Angus dissolves into a pool of shadow before swiftly reforming behind the Old Bear, his arms wrapped around Leslie's neck in a crushing embrace, snapping his spine. A finishing move that is defeated swiftly as Leslie bursts into a cloud of mist and reforms a short distance away from Angus, his lolling head snapping back into its rightful position after a few seconds of frantic healing.

"I've not had such a challenge in a hundred years young pup! It's time to end this now however."

Angus laughs: "The fight was over for you the minute you stepped in the circle, my friend. I will pour you a drink when you wake up!" Both warriors laugh with the sheer joy of the fight before sprinting at each other to decide the contest at last. Prince Leslie changes form to a massive black wolf, red eyes gleaming, white fangs a beacon in the night. Prince McDonald takes on a more unwholesome aspect, he grows and blackens. Parts of his body morphing into patches of roiling shadow, red eyes gleaming from an insubstantial, featureless face, amor-



Are you keen to
preform?

phous tentacles erupting from within his very body. Both combatants crash together, a flurry of blows traded between them in an insane display of power and raw might. The assembled throng of Gangrel and other worthies spellbound by the mesmerizing display until at last the epic battle ends... A badly hurt Old Bear stands above an unconscious Young Wolf, fangs clasped to the Young Wolf's throat.

The assembly howl and roar with savage joy at the fight and sheer pride that they count two such great personalities in their Clan. The good nature of the

brawl revealed to all as Prince Leslie painfully drags Angus over to the nearest barrel of blood mead before dumping him in headfirst and waist deep to wake him up... "Next time, you tough old bastard! Hahahahahahaha!"

I was there. I was there the night the Old Bear and the Young Wolf fought. And I have never been prouder to be Gangrel.

T



SIGHT BEYOND SIGHT

I have seen the blazing glare, heard the ticking of the geiger counter and the smelled the burning.

A line of lorries with the vain hope that a little paint will imitate the chlorophyll and blend into nature's cloak. Sticking to the paths in a glen. Deep and suspect.

The third of threes. Be mindful of the

rocks. Hard places are all around.

Keep your eyes high and low. An obscure figure will take to the leather wing. It may not be malevolent, but knowing our luck, it will be.

I've been wrong before. Fingers crossed.

Ethan Fletcher

THE PARIAH

The smiles are hiding laughter at your expense. The adulation you are receiving, you fail to see the mocking. Your secret is out and all those friends you claimed you had appear to be fading into darkness. Or perhaps you have made friends with the darkness? Perhaps the rumours are true? Perhaps you have turned?

It's true you are gaining weight in this world and your tongue is quite silver, but even the charming butterfly can have its wings clipped. Thorns can cut deep Mr Butterfly and you're flapping very close to my stem. There won't be a flower in this island that will shelter you once I am finished with you, no old ally who will trust you. You

will be the wilted one that we will all turn from because of darker allegiances you have made. Because of the poison that dripped from that silver tongue. Because of the little buds you pruned too soon. You will be nothing. One little oversight, one little name forgotten off a list. Such a simple thing, such a simple action, the loss of one little card through your letterbox will bring the world down on you, and it will be empty.

ORGANISED CRIME IN GLASGOW FALLING

This month saw major arrests of Glasgow's serious organised crime groups. After intensive media scrutiny in the past weeks and prolonged bouts of gang violence Strathclyde Police in conjunction with the UK Border Agency and Coastguard have resulted in dozens of arrests and seizures of million of pounds worth of contraband and illegal arms.

Dawn raids on drug suppliers and interceptions of contraband shipments have all risen significantly following crippling exposes of major players in the underworld. Mortal media is trumpeting these events as major victories for law and order in a city that has long been regarded as a particularly dangerous wasps nest of organised crime.

A NEW ARRIVAL

Last night I dreamt I went to Glasgow...

Only eye didn't dream it. Eye went to Glasgow, or am eye hear in Glasgow? Tenses are so difficult, I never did get the hang of them, eye left all of that to Max you sea. No. See. The words are all wrong again, perhaps I should eat the thesaurus again, it does keep looking at me in a funny way, mocking me. I am not a poet you damned beast of a book! I have no need of you!

There was something I was supposed to say. A warning, no, a saying. No, a message. Yes a message.

Snow, big lumps of snow!

It is just a feeling.

So many words and she speaks them all before I do. I can never get a word in before she does. One step ahead she is, she always has been. I will never be free of her. Not my words, I stole those ones. Time to stick a head in the oven. That's the wrong story.

Daddy pulls me up to the cold depths.
Full fathom five my father lies.

Stolen words. Sssssshhhhhhhh.

Heh.

I look forward to meeting you all.

Xxx

Dark Times

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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

Articles over 750 words may not be printed in full in the main publication

HARPY HOUR

York is a great and powerful city that rejoices in one of the strongest princes in the country. We have much to be thankful for in him and in this domain for its stability. But it was greatly added to by the sterling performance of Adam Edelstein. So wonderful it is when real culture is not only appreciated but also enriched. Much as my counterpart in Edinburgh stated last month—Bravissimo!

Anne-Jaques, Harpy of York

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A monthly summary of
British Camarilla news,
politics, gossip and rumour,
straight from the Harpy's
mouth.