

Excerpts From The Personal Journal of Speaks With Wind

Rose Moon – 10th day

I escorted Dawn Flower to one of the markets in the outer city today. She was appalled at the conditions in some of the dwellings we passed and began muttering about "doing something to help". I wisely kept silent on the matter.

I did make some purchases of rare gemstones and herbs for some enchantments. I also managed to order a beaded belt from a clothier while Dawn Flower was otherwise occupied.

When I returned, I began the ensorcelments on my Medicine Bundle.

Rose Moon – 14th day

I picked up the belt today, and began the enchantments I had planned. When finished, Dawn Flower should no longer be burdened by carrying her armor and weapons.

Rose Moon – 19th day

Today was Dawn Flower's 17th birthday. Amazingly, she had not realized it. I arranged for a private dinner and gave her the belt, which was very well received. She told me that my skills have gift-giving have improved radically.

She still hasn't forgotten about the frog¹.

Rose Moon – 27th day

Late evening, my quarters at the agency

Official Imperial parties are unusual affairs. Certainly they are different from what celebrations back home are like. There we will have good food, drink, music, dancing and storytelling. Imperial celebrations have the same, but they include convoluted conspiracies, assassination attempts and murder.

If this is civilization, I prefer barbarism.

Grognar, Caylx, Tesh, and I arrived at the party, escorted by Senator Belarius. The Senator had told us that there were three consuls. One is very much against the agency, while another one is an ardent supporter. The third, Consul Galerius was fairly neutral,

¹ He gave her a frog on her fourth birthday.

I believe saving one's life counts as making a favorable impression.

although he did support the initial formation of the agency. Consul Galerius would be the only one in attendance at the party and we were to make as favorable impression on him as possible.

I was introduced to Consul Galerius by Inspector General Antonius Montanos. The consul and I exchanged pleasantries and briefly discussed my proposed trade mission. Grogmar spoke to the consul and managed to get the consul to endorse the trade mission. In addition, Grogmar managed to get Master Armorer Darven Oakenshield, a dwarf, to participate in it. Grogmar showed an uncanny diplomatic skill – I didn't think he had it in him.

There were some unusual individuals at the party. One "gentleman" named Farmer Jonas brought a pig to the party. Or perhaps they invited the pig, and he brought the farmer; certainly the pig appeared to be smarter of the two. Grogmar managed to get the farmer to give him directions to his farm. It was clear to me that Grogmar plans to have Scratch pick up the occasional snack at Farmer Jonas's expense.

There were also nine senators attending the celebration. I met a couple of junior senators as well as the Senator of the Army and the Senator of Emigration. I made sure to praise Lieutenant Braddock to Senator of the Army. My attempts were useless. While the Senator was well disposed towards the Lieutenant, the Senator did not survive the night.

After about a candlemark, one of the guests near the Consul drew a knife and shouted "Death to tyrants" or something to that effect. Before he could attack anyone, he was tripped by the Inspector General. The Inspector General and Inquisitor Palin then disarmed him and restrained him. They then took him out of the room for questioning. Later we found out that the would-be assassin is named Oswald.

The party resumed but shortly thereafter Grogmar spotted a servant tampering with one of the torches. Before he could warn anyone, several of the torches spewed out a thick smoke. I recognized it as a short-term alchemical agent that induces confusion and hallucinations in those who breathe it.

While all of the special agents were in the area of effect of the smoke, none of us was affected by it. Well over half of the guests, however, appeared to succumb to the drug and began acting erratically.

Immediately after the smoke burst from the torches, four of the servants tossed off their cloaks, revealing tunics embroidered with the symbol of Drachnar. They each wielded a pair of daggers

and contained flasks to their chests. We found out later that the flasks contained alchemical fire.

Two of the assassins were next to Consul Galerius, one was near Senator Belarius and the fourth was the one spotted by Grogmar. I was the first to react. I shouted to Caylx (who was nearest to the Consul) to "protect the Consul" and then I charged the assassin near to our own patron. I struck the assassin a grievous blow² with my greatsword, but he shrugged it off as if it were a mere scratch.

The two Praetorian Guards next to the the Consul attempted to defend him. One was clearheaded but his blows failed to land. The other appeared to be befuddled by the smoke but vicious in attacking the assassin near to him. While I have my issues with Caylx, I must admit that he acquitted himself superbly. He moved to the north of the Consul and stunned the two assassins with an enchantment of colored lights³.

Senator Belarius showed that he was a quite skilled skald. Despite my warnings to run, he moved to engage the assassin I was battling, while simultaneously beginning a song that I felt was inherently magical - just hearing it sharpened my aim and strengthened my blows. He is much more talented than Sizzlezap was⁴.

I struck the assassin next to me another strong blow⁵ while he stabbed Senator Belarius with his dagger⁶. Enraged by this, I cut off the head of my foe with my next strike⁷. He fell to the ground, breaking the flasks on his chest and splashing the Senator and myself with alchemical fire⁸, but those were only minor wounds.

I saw that between Caylx, Tesh and Grogmar, with some notable aid from Lieutenant Braddock, the other three assassins had been felled. I asked the Senator to fetch Dawn Flower, as it was clear we needed a healer. Two Senators were dead, including the Senator of the Army, but overall I count it as a great victory.

Senator Belarius brought Dawn Flower quickly and she channeled the energy of the Life World to heal many of the fallen and wounded - the consul had been badly injured. Caylx

2 Critical hit for 24 points of damage.

3 Color Spray

4 We received +2 to hit and damage, so he is a 5th-11th level Bard.

5 15 hit points of damage

6 For 6 points of damage.

7 Another critical hit for 30 points of damage.

8 For two more points of damage.

traveled with the consul to a safe room, while the rest of us were escorted to the interrogation chamber by a Constable Munch and his partner Constable Cassidy.

We were planning to see what the Inspector General and Inquisitor Palin had discovered from the first assassin. However, when we arrived there we found out that Inspector Palin was dead – his throat had been slit. There were no other signs of violence so it is unlikely the Inspector put up a struggle. Either he was taken unawares or he did not feel threatened by his attacker.

We found another body in the closet, but it had been badly burned by acid so it was not identifiable. There was no sign of either the assassin or the Inspector General.

Constable Munch checked the the local precinct house files to see if there was any information on the first assassin. To my surprise, there was. The assassin was (is?) a noted trouble maker named Oswald. Based upon this information, Constable Munch led our group to Oswald's home.

His home was actually that of a little old lady named Lee, who reads fortunes for a living and is the mother of Oswald. While Oswald was not there, his brother Harvey was. It turns out that Harvey had been arrested for witchcraft about 2 months ago. Oswald told Lee that he would "take care of it" and disappeared about a month later. A few days later Harvey was released with a full pardon from Inspector General Antonius Montanos.

Naturally, we investigated the Inspector General's house next. There were a couple of guards there, but we managed to talk our way into the house. There was evidence that the house had recently been abandoned. We found 5 lead lined chests, with a faint magic aura inside them. Apparently the Inspector General had been hiding magic items.

We went to the nearest stables and found that the Inspector General had given the stable hand a bottle of liquor in order to let him (the Inspector General) clean the stables. The Inspector General then apparently stole the whole load of the manure from the stables. I have no idea why he would do this, but we were able to follow his trail to a locked sewer gate.

We were unable to get through the gate, so went to Constable Cassidy's house to get the keys to the grate, only to find that his house had been burnt to the ground. No sign of the keys or Constable Cassidy could be found.

Constable Munch says it will take a day or two to get a backup key, so it looks like the

Inspector General will get away.

Clearly there was a conspiracy to assassinate the Consul, however the motivations and who was really involved are murky. I see several possibilities:

Possibility 1 -

This was just an internal Imperial political maneuver. Inspector General Antonius Montanos was behind it all or was part of the faction behind it. The symbols of Drachnar were simply meant as a diversion - the goal was to discredit the agency. By assassinating the Consul and blaming it upon the Temple of Drachnar, the agency could be blamed for failing to really deal with the problem in Castle Valley. I lean towards this explanation.

Possibility 2 -

Supporters of Drachnar really were behind it and the Inspector General worked for them. I don't find this that credible. The Castle Valley problem didn't seem to show a vast organization, but merely an old temple. Also, the Temple of Drachnar should have access to magical resources, but no such were used in the assassination attempt.

Note: In either case, it is possible that it might not have been Antonius Montanos at all. There are spells that can be used to disguise people and there are legends of creatures that will kill people and take over their identities.

It also possible that someone else was behind it. I begin to feel that the meteor showers themselves were not accidental. They could be an attempt to destabilize the empire, in order to open it to invasion. Possible instigators of the meteor shower:

- Hsifan Khanate - They are definitely enemies of the empire, but I don't know what magical resources are available to them.
- Temple of Drachnar - Insufficient data. They seem more like catspaws than anything else.
- An Imperial faction - Madness if this is the case. Still, many in the Empire seem insane to me.
- Power(s) from beyond this world - Farfetched, but the meteors themselves are farfetched.

This and my other game recaps may be found at www.launchpadzero.net.
Revised on 03/27/11 to adjust dates as Flower Moon was switched to 30 days.