

NEWS AND VIEWS

THE DECAYING KINGDOM: AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Lance Velmut
Lead Journalist

Many call this settlement the Kingdom of Rot, but the denizens have stated that they prefer the Decaying Kingdom. Though the Decaying Kingdom has shown no aggression, its emissaries are often killed on sight and rarely given an opportunity to speak. While its denizens are not classically attractive, we of the Fracture must remember that we cannot cast judgment on a being simply because they look different. Additionally, there is a plague that has been associated with its denizens. Though a cure has been developed, this has caused further violence in regards to the

denizens of the Decaying Kingdom.

The Decaying Kingdom is located in a settlement formerly tenanted by members of the Four Monarchies within the Fracture. Due to aggression from surrounding settlements, the denizens of the Decaying Kingdom try to remain within its walls. The leader of this settlement claims to have been given the site by members of the Republic of Convergence. He reigns supreme on his bubonic throne as king and invites any who wish to come to join his loyal subjects.

After taking preventative measures to ensure safety, I sat with a diplomatic emissary,

Carbuncle, for an interview. Carbuncle stated that the Decaying Kingdom welcomes all within its walls. When asked about the plague, they stated that the plague was not necessarily undesirable. There are those taken by the plague that have found joy in their new lives within the Kingdom. They do not judge those that have chosen the vaccine over the gift of plague. It mentioned that those of the Republic of Convergence are allies that have slowly become lacking in their agreements, but they declined to elaborate.

I also took the opportunity to interview an upstanding member of



Convergence, Lt. Anne Marie Bastine. She is not only an upstanding member of Convergence but a Lieutenant of the Green Sash Army. She is a grounded and trustworthy person who has had direct dealings with those of the Decaying Kingdom.

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DAY OF UNITY: A REVIEW OF THE RECENT CELEBRATION

by Esperanza Greenview
Freelancer, Review
 edited by Rowena Marchand
Freelance Editor

For those who may have missed the most recent adventures of the citizens of Convergence, chaos broke out amidst Convergence's recent celebration of the Day of Unity. To clarify, the event was not held in the actual town of Convergence, but instead took place in an abandoned and overrun Green Sash Army outpost that is now inhabited by Pyrodeans. Hordes of Desecrated had taken hold of the encampment, and after much push back, the people of Convergence and the surviving members managed to regain control of said outpost. The group then put forth efforts to restore the area, much to the pleasure of local Pyrodeans.

Thankfully, incursions from Desecrated were not enough to ruin the celebration, and the group managed to settle in and host a "wonderful

party", as some in attendance made a point to repeatedly note. Among the highlights of the Celebration was a dessert contest as well as a "fire eating contest." In truth, the latter was a spice tolerance challenge based on my observations. Participants ate food at multiple levels of spice with no water and had to wait between each level of the challenge to make sure they weren't simply rushing through. It seemed that all who participated had a pleasant time and the majority finished with relative ease. Perhaps this can be seen as a testament to the willpower and constitution of the members of Convergence in question? On the sweeter end of things, the dessert contest showcased a wide variety of delicious choices for those in attendance, each with their own unique tastes and presentations. In the end, Ms. Dray



claimed victory with a deconstructed pavlova. The dish was presented with edible flowers that seemed to wow both contest judges and spectators alike.

All in all, the event seemed to be quite successful. This seems to be thanks in large part to the population of Convergence working together to fortify the area and repel the Desecrated so the celebration could continue through the day. I, myself, know little

about the history of the Day of Unity, as I still consider myself relatively new to this land. Amidst the fortification efforts I did not find proper time to ask...yet I can't help if wonder if that fact was a perfect representation of what the event was meant to be about. After all, is acting in ways to help those you barely know and celebrating together with them despite not knowing what you may be celebrating or what may come next not truly reflective of the concept of unity? I personally look forward to the festivities returning next year and encourage others to take part as well. Hopefully next year's celebration will be just as wonderful (with as little trouble as can be managed).



BRINGING SENSITIVITY AND UNDERSTANDING TO THE FRACTURE

By Richie Lowtax
Journalist, Editorial

In the unforgiving realm of the Fracture, where survival is paramount, the Pyrodeans set an inspiring example by showing us the true essence of humanity: compassion. In a world where every day can be a struggle, they gather annually to celebrate the Day of Unity—a testament to the power of understanding, empathy, and coming together despite personal beliefs. Survival, indeed, remains a crucial element in the Fracture. The harsh realities of this realm have taught its inhabitants the value of resilience and tenacity. But as we navigate through the hardships of this fragmented world, it is essential to question whether merely surviving is enough. Shouldn't we, in the depths of our struggles,

remember to extend compassion to our fellow beings?

The Pyrodeans understand this profound concept better than most. Their annual celebration, the Day of Unity, stands as a testament to their commitment to compassion and understanding.

Regardless of their personal beliefs, they come together as one to honor the accomplishments of all those who attend. It is a day when divisions are cast aside, and the common thread of humanity binds them together.

One individual who exemplifies this spirit of compassion is Ash, formerly a member of the Convergence. Today, he stands as the Pillar of Compassion, a beacon of hope and unity for his people. Ash had a remarkable gift—he brought people together

through the power of song. In the face of adversity, he united the disparate peoples of his homeland, fostering a sense of togetherness that transcended boundaries and divisions.

His love and empathy reverberate throughout the Fracture, spreading like ripples in a pond. To feel compassion is to understand the origins of others, to walk in their shoes, and to empathize with the hardships they endure. It is not merely acknowledging their struggles but extending a helping hand to lift them above their past and present circumstances.

In the Fracture, where the challenges are unrelenting, it is easy to lose sight of our shared humanity. The Day of Unity and the actions of individuals like Ash serve as poignant reminders of the importance of compassion. As we traverse the fragmented

lands, we must not let the harshness of our surroundings erode the core values that define us as beings capable of love and empathy.

Compassion knows no boundaries; it is a beacon of light that can pierce through the darkest of times. It reminds us that even amidst the fractures of this world, we can unite and lift each other up. By understanding one another's struggles, we forge bonds that surpass the divisions that threaten to tear us apart. So let the story of the Pyrodeans and their Day of Unity echo in our hearts and guide us in our own journey through the Fracture. Let us strive to remember compassion and remember that survival is more than mere existence—it is about caring for one another and preserving the best of what makes us human.

FOLKSY WISDOM

By Uncle Thibodeaux
Freelance Writer, Op-Ed
edited by Rowena Marchand
Freelance Editor

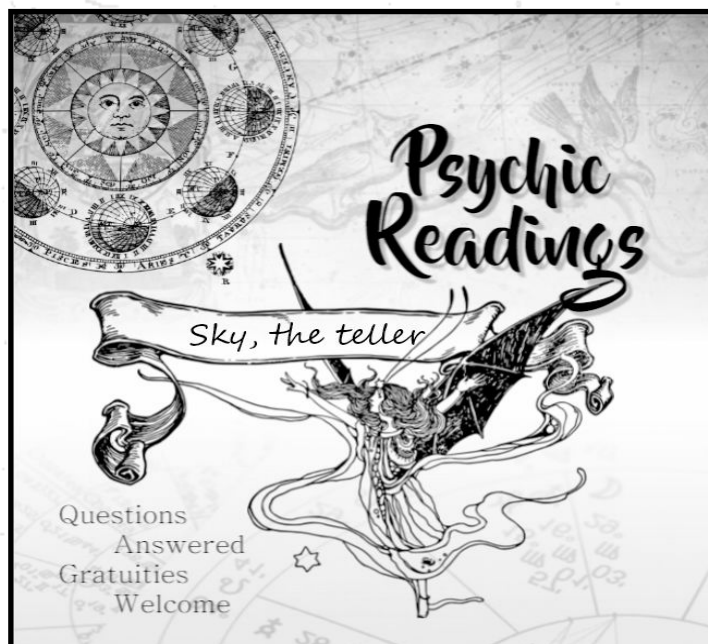
A clever man can make a maze he cannot solve himself, which is to his credit. A simple man cannot, which is to his.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, but twice almost nothing is still almost nothing. Also, birds are not legal tender.

If you can be discouraged, you should be discouraged.

Weakness may be wielded like a blade, but only if we all pretend it is sharp.

A fool was heard to say this: "no wall can be made of bricks, for a brick is not a wall."



LETTER FROM A CONCERNED CITIZEN

Cassius Tinwhistle, Hobo
Freelance Contributor, Op-Ed
 edited by Rowena Marchand
Freelance Editor

The redcap who secretly swindles the patrons of his bar with false-bottomed cups; the Prole who sells his services to renters to cleanse their new property of "old spell residue"; the Cerulean tribeswoman who harvests reeds and nettles near the banks of Spitefield Bay for crafting musical instruments – these are all individuals who have led vastly different lives. Though if you were to speak with all of them at length, one common thread would weave them together: they have had to rely on the generosity of strangers during various times of trial since arriving here in the Fracture. This is something we should recognize in our neighbors and ourselves

– we are all survivors, washed upon this shore by merciless storms. The unique circumstances which brought us here matter little compared to the implacable truths which we can no longer deny: the inherent dangers of this realm force cooperation as an imperative; the strength of each one of us bolsters the strength of the many, and the fortifications that protect us must be impenetrable, so that the places where life thrives may remain open and hospitable. The separate settlements must work in tandem, in harmony, towards this same goal. When one fails to do so...they inevitably become quagmires, prime targets for corruption. Take, for example, the United Monarchies: they were fractious by nature, and were unable to cast off that burden of suspicion and xenophobia. They sealed

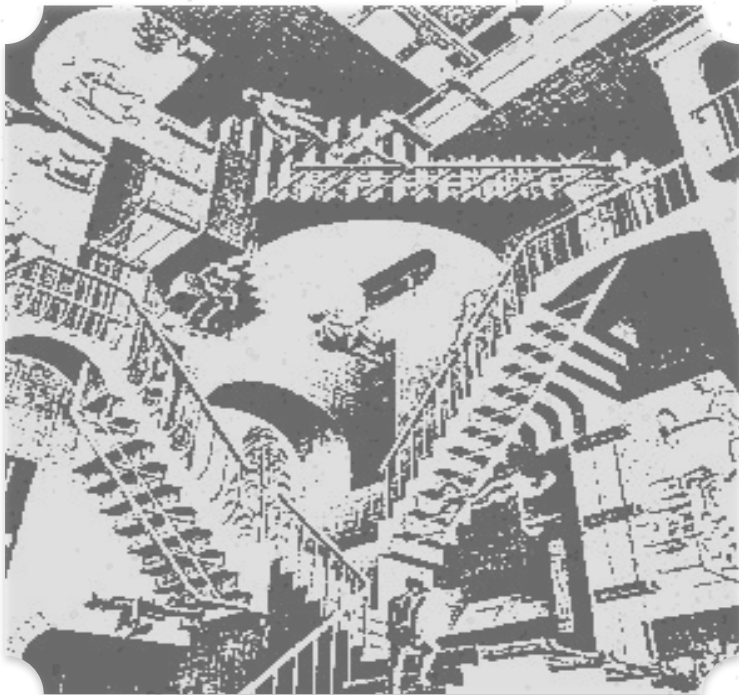


AERF Threat Meter

themselves inside, and within their fortifications, cut off from the aid of the rest of the Fracture, they suffered a fate many would consider worse than death. As of late, some of the established settlements of the Fracture have become haughty, self-absorbed, and calloused to the suffering of ordinary citizens. Still others have disappeared completely from the public discourse. Where is the Burnt Stockade? What news of the Barrio? What are the mysterious forces at work in Haven?

It was reported in the News and Views about the theft of several powerful artifacts during the last Recess social event. In the latest edition of the publication, a 'threat meter', sponsored by the AERF was displayed. There are also rumors of many attempted break-ins. How effective they have been is not an easy thing to determine, as the wizard confederation also maintains a tight lid on any security threats. The AERF has long

maintained a nearly impenetrable bureaucracy, remaining coldly stoic to the needs of many of the other settlements. They open their doors, it seems, only when they see fit to boast of their own superiority. Petty thefts have revealed them to be impotent and clueless as to how best to protect their own investments. They house unknown cosmic powers and world-affecting artifacts with little to no oversight. I would challenge Norman Donovan and anyone else in the AERF who sees fit to leave prophetic metrics in the news and views, warning of impending threat levels, to ensure that they are not in fact contributing to the level of danger inherent to the Fracture. I believe they, with their learned natures and intrinsically superior stores of knowledge, have the ability to provide the Fracture with a real peace, and they can start by ensuring that measures of safety are put in place.



PUZZLE OF THE SEASON PROVIDED BY READER TRE

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- Abyss Apukara Chaos
- Deva Ethereal Gana
- Heavens Impervious Interlopers
- Interrogate Kala Mein
- Naga Pacify Pramadya
- Silence Siren Sunyé
- Torpor Tumultuous Underworld
- Unfathomable Unseen Vidyadhara
- Void Voracious

HEARD AROUND THE WORLD

*Things we've heard about that are not story worthy...yet!
This section does not follow the strict rules for accuracy exemplified in the rest of this publication.*

"Seeking performers for Visvedevas at the Rakshasa camp."

"The smell when you get near the old 4M place is just vile. Don't get too close!"

"I heard some haunting music as I traveled to the Burnt Stockade, but I couldn't find it"

"Who can drink me under the table?"

"I was out hunting shimmer hawks and I thought I saw something blue."

"Please, I cannot sleep. Why do you need a name?!"

"These spiderweb things are pretty annoying. How do they keep getting in?"

"The AERF is secure as it has always been. No one can break in and nothing has gone missing."

"I swear I heard someone crying near there cave, but no one was the...wait is that a doll?"

"Does that tree have a face?!"

"What is with the disgusting animals wandering about? You can't even eat them."

THE DECAYING KINGDOM CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

Lt. Bastine was very thoughtful and orderly in her descriptions. She let her passion through briefly at the end of the interview, but it shows what her incredible abilities as both a diplomat and a leader. Here is another perspective on the origin of the Decaying Kingdom as told by Lt. Anne Marie Bastine: Several years ago, the location of the kingdom of Rot was home to the central settlement of survivors from the world known generally as the Four Monarchies, under the rulership of King Michael. After he led an aggressive campaign - to 'bring his people together' - most of the 4M population within the Fracture resided in the Republic settlement. We do not have witness statements regarding the actual taking of the kingdom by the corruption spirit of pestilence, but after the arrival of the being now known as King Rot into the Fracture, the residents of the Monarchies settlement took ill with a plague that required their immediate isolation to avoid epidemically spreading the infection through the Fracture as a whole. The Green Sash Force worked continuously to seek a cure, but the symptoms progressed too quickly,

and it was soon believed that the residents had perished in their isolation.

Upon further investigation, it was discovered that instead of perishing, all residents had undergone a transformation. While remaining highly contagious with infection, they behaved in a variation of regular behavior. They demonstrated extremely fragmented knowledge of their former selves and seemed to show a greatly lowered mental capacity consistent with prolonged intense high fever and possible brain damage. Some of these residents began to approach towns within the Fracture regarding possible diplomacy. To my knowledge, all known settlements in the Fracture have declined diplomacy with the Kingdom of Rot, due to necessary plague precautions in addition to honoring the memory of the lives lost in this conquering of the Republic by King Rot. While no complete cure has been found, likely due to the spiritual elements of the disease, various wards have been discovered to aid in stopping the progression of the illness and safeguarding an area from infection. At the



League of Free Townships

same time, the Rotplague seems to have progressed with some infected now showing higher thought and martial skill. It has also been confirmed that the infection can be passed to animals and possibly other spirits. At this time, the Green Sash Force reports that the Kingdom of Rot seems to have taken up defensive positions around their settlement with no signs of anyone exiting and sentries were posted to prevent entry. Given this behavior, it is advised to continue to consider any residents of the Kingdom of Rot to be a potential source of the Rotplague disease and to avoid proximity to the settlement directly. On a wholly personal note, while I recognize the many flaws of the Four Monarchies as a homeworld, as well as the nationalist issues with the former Republic and the reign of King Michael, I mourn the loss of its people deeply. I thank the

Green Sash Force and the residents of The Fracture and Convergence that have worked to both contain and treat this disease over the years. Work and research is still needed to approach a cure to this malady, both physically and spiritually, and I call on the residents of the Fracture to lend what resources they can to its eventual eradication. It is my fervent wish that we find a treatment for the Rotplague and that the conquering spirit that ended the lives of my people not be given legitimacy in its reign. The Decaying Kingdom has relatively strict borders. Please pay attention to the GSA patrolling the Fracture and listen to their advice. The League of Free Townships supports the suggestions of the GSA and strongly suggests caution when initiating any dealings with residents of the Decaying Kingdom.

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