



The Gavyn Kyle FILES

BY JOSH COLÓN • ART BY JOHNNAN GRENIER, ANDREA UDERZO, AND NÉSTOR OSSANDÓN

TANITH THE FERAL SONG

As with any previous contracts involving the membership of the enigmatic order of the Circle Orboros, my first instinct was to refuse this assignment and save myself the headache. Upon further reflection, however, I decided to use this opportunity to widen my network of contacts and create reliable inroads into this organization, as well as to increase my connections among the more rural places of western Immoren as a whole. Gathering information about the mysterious order of blackclad druids is a difficult proposition, but due to my persistence and considerable talents, by the end of this case I was successful both in the assigned task as well as in my aforementioned personal goals.

Though I've made several direct contacts within the self-styled Circle Orboros during the execution of previous assignments, upon receiving this task I found myself initially at a loss. Under normal circumstances I'm asked to find information about the higher-ranking and more notorious members of such an order, not an individual whom I could generously describe as an "up-and-comer." And though, as I was to learn, this young woman has acquitted herself admirably as a member of the order, an up-and-comer is what I still believe her to be.

Despite these initial difficulties, I was ultimately able to assemble what I believe is as comprehensive a dossier as anyone could hope to produce on the individual in question. With the dossier complete, I must confess my initial quote was based entirely upon speculation—you will find an updated quote attached. You may expect a similar fee for any other assignments of this nature in the future.

Thanks to prior assignments investigating the far-flung and mysterious organization calling itself the Circle Orboros, I had established a rudimentary network of connections with former blackclad affiliates. As is often the case when researching a group that so highly values its secrecy, and finding



myself at a loss for any biting point from which to chew away at this puzzle, I corresponded with a disillusioned former member I've contacted before, Gaspar Madracav. Once a member of the so-called Wolves of Orboros, Gaspar now lives in Umbrey and serves in the Kovosk Irregulars. For a fee, he has been willing to help me with assignments related to the blackclads. The following is a transcription of his verbal report.

I saw her once. Must have been six or seven years ago.

We had been ordered to patrol an area just north of the Blackroot. The lot of us standing there, freezing in the bitter winter chill for days, our hunt master not saying a word about why we were there or what we were guarding against. Finally, after four days, the pair arrived at camp. Our hunt master referred to the older one as the Nightbringer, speaking to him with a fear and respect above what she'd ever showed to any other blackclads we'd served. But the real mystery was the girl. She couldn't have seen more than

TANITH SUMMARY

Aliases: Though she is best known as the Feral Song, there are reports of druids matching her description and disposition referred to as the Blood Howler, the Rootcaller, and in a notable instance, Crugh-ai-Kraiac, a Tharn construction for "Cruel Wolf Sister."

Born: Unknown. The evident longevity of members of the blackclad order, coupled with the lack of verifiable records about their membership, makes identifying Tanith's age difficult. I suspect she is approximately twenty-four years old, but the nature of the evidence prevents me from being certain. Visibly, she appears to be a woman in her mid-to-late twenties.

Family Status: Unknown. Though I have no evidence to suggest it, I believe Tanith emerged from a large clan of Ruscar in northern Khador. This dossier provides support for this claim.

Mentored: Blackclads utilize a formal student/mentor relationship in order to train members. Interviews and reports heavily suggest an individual named Vernor the Nightbringer, a rather notorious northern blackclad, mentored Tanith.

Training Period: It is known that the Circle Orboros secures new members most often when they are very

young children. These children generally undergo a lengthy apprenticeship period, sometimes ten years or more. This makes establishing the exact timeframe of Tanith's training under Vernor problematic, though it can be assumed she began learning at a young age. As for her tutelage's end, my research suggests Tanith began undertaking higher-profile assignments by mid-609 AR.

Territories: Reports indicate a blackclad matching the physical description of Tanith has been seen in the Shadoweald forest, the Gallowswood, the Rimeshaws, and in mountain ranges in both Cygnar and Khador.

Authority: Sources suggest Tanith, as an overseer, has oversight over a number of lower-ranking members of the Circle Orboros, but is herself beholden to multiple superiors.

Notable Achievements: While demonstrating considerable command over the forces of nature as well as a singular drive to complete her missions, Tanith's most notable trait is her possession of the dangerous artifact known as the Staff of Fate. As noted below, no other pupil of Vernor the Nightbringer has been able to harness the staff's power.

sixteen winters, and with her braided hair she reminded me of my sister. Still, she walked with the confidence and strength of someone who had seen more death and fighting than warriors twice her age. There was something in her eyes, something I couldn't put my finger on at first.

Eventually we had our prey, a small caravan guarded by mercenaries. When we attacked, our movements were obscured by heavy mist and shadow brought on by the Nightbringer. The mercenaries put up a fight, and despite our ambush it looked like we might have to retreat. Then the girl strode into battle. And I literally mean she just walked in, calm as a leisurely stroll. Whether directing one of her beasts to maul enemies or breaking their necks with her heavy wooden cudgel, this girl ended the lives of her opponents without a thought.

At one point, one of the mercenaries tried to flee. The girl extended her hand, like to cast a spell, but she just turned and stared at the Nightbringer. I saw him give her the slightest nod. That was enough. The girl unleashed her power, and the poor sod died ugly, blood pouring out of his skin. After the battle, she went back to silently standing by her master, and it was then I realized what I had seen earlier in her eyes. . . not the light of youth you'd see in a normal girl her age, but the sheen of a weapon ready to be wielded in battle.

After he provided this anecdote, I asked Gaspar if he wouldn't mind asking around for more information on Tanith, but he refused, apparently afraid of any potential consequences. I gathered he feared Vernor more than Tanith herself, but Gaspar still gave me the names and locations of former associates who might be persuaded to talk. Some of these contacts provided information found later in this document.

I met an argus breeder from Kos Volozk named Petrov, who had a tense encounter with a young blackclad matching Tanith's description. Normally, members of this organization avoid much contact with outsiders, but as this account demonstrates, the circumstances of this meeting seemed unusual in several respects.

My family has been breeding argus for over eight generations, our farm renowned throughout Kos for the size and fierceness of our beasts. One night, my cousin Mishka and I heard a commotion by the kennels. No sane person would ever try to rob a farm housing nearly a dozen fully grown argus, so I thought the scent of a passing buck might have roused the hounds from their sleep. Mishka wanted to check anyway. We gathered our weapons and went out into the winter night.

It was dark, but even in the faint glow of our lanterns we could see spots of blood on the snow.

We followed the trail to one of the far kennels, where we saw a figure in dark robes kneeling amidst six of our largest argus. We shouted for the intruder to stand and turn slowly, and we saw she was a young woman, maybe seventeen or eighteen at most. I do not know if it was the adornments she wore or how our fiercest and most temperamental hounds seemed to submit to this odd girl, but Mishka recognized her at once for what she was: a blackclad. Before I could raise my hand to stop him, Mishka pointed his rifle and fired. In his panic, he only grazed her shoulder, but it was enough to seal his fate. The girl raised her hand and used her magic, and poor Mishka died there in the snow.

I wish I could say I raised my own weapon to avenge my kin, but fear overtook me and I cowered. The blackclad limped toward me, and I could see she was indeed wounded even before Mishka's attack. Seeing I was no threat, she turned back to the argus. She extended her hand to one of the older hounds, and instantly the poor beast whined and collapsed on the snow, cuts and wounds opening on its body. The girl still seemed exhausted, but her own wounds stopped bleeding. She looked at me and told me if I acted quickly, I could still save the argus.

As she began to leave with the remaining five argus in tow, I heard myself ask her why she hadn't killed me, and without stopping her stride or turning to regard me I heard her calmly respond, "Because I wasn't ordered to."

As odd as this story seemed, it did provide enough clues that I began researching any notable conflicts involving blackclads in the area. My hunch paid off, and I discovered the village of Starovic, just four leagues away from Petrov's farm. When I inquired about sightings of a young blackclad girl, everyone in the town told the same tale.

Apparently, the people of Starovic had seen a rash of deaths from Tharn inhabiting the nearby Wolveswood region of the Scarsfell. Reports indicate that one tribe in particular had been engaging in violent raids against small towns around the region, and it seemed like Starovic was next. The town militia was ill prepared to defend against such savage berserkers, and the Winter Guard garrison in Ohk was stretched too thin across the region to respond to all of the attacks in time. Based on the following account from a young town guard who survived the ordeal, I believe Tanith was involved in the final assault on Starovic, but not in a way I would expect. I contacted Milav Bergayev, one of the locals, who took the time to write me the following letter.

We had sent word to the nearest Winter Guard outpost for assistance. We did not want to meet the same fate as Gubinyo, Holskograv, or any of the neighboring towns, where men had their hearts ripped out while their wives clutched their children to their chests. We were told help was coming in a matter of days. We thought we had time. But on that night it was not just the wind that howled, and we knew our time had run out.

They came like something out of the old stories, where ancient heroes like Khardovic and Nadya battled the Molgur. They had the strength and speed of beasts, but they swung their axes and shot their giant arrows with the cunning of veteran warriors. We held on as long as we could, hiding our families while we fought with everything we had. It was not enough.

My friends and I used our spears against one of the Tharn. He laughed as he cleaved Ivan's head from his shoulders in one swing. I thrust at him with everything I had, and for my trouble he took my left arm at the elbow. As I lay there, praying to the Creator for a painless death, I saw an argus pounce on the Tharn and maul him to death where he stood. In my daze, I looked around to see several of the large, two-headed beasts tearing into the unprepared Tharn. Even when the savages figured out they were under attack and regrouped, the argus had the advantage, for they battled as one coordinated pack as if guided by a unified will.

Then I saw the blackclad. She seemed so young, but as she let loose her raw magic her power was undeniable. A pair of Tharn archers charged at the young druid, only to have the earth explode under their feet and rip them to shreds. I got a closer look at her, with her small face and braided hair, and she seemed exhausted, perhaps even injured. Eventually she came face to face with the Tharn who led the attack on my village, the two exchanging words in some guttural tongue.

In my stupor, I tried to warn the girl, tried to tell her to run before the monster gutted her, but there was no need. After a few moments, the Tharn leader backed down, gathered his surviving allies, and left our ruined town. I just kept staring in disbelief at this young girl who saved our village. Even as I was carried off to have my wounds tended, I watched the young blackclad as she stood vigil in our town square, surrounded by her argus. She just stood there, her eyes on the nearby Wolveswood, watching the Tharn slink away like whipped dogs.

Milav Bergayev

Although I initially attributed Milav's awed tone to the trauma he suffered, after corroborating his story with other townspeople, I found most of Starovic shared Milav's opinion of the young

blackclad girl who saved them from the Tharn. Having done several reports on the druids in the past and being aware of their general alliance with the Tharn, I was perplexed by Tanith's actions. Why would she attack one of the traditional allies of her order in favor of a relatively obscure town with no obvious ties to the blackclads? While I hate leaving a good mystery unsolved, I had another lead to follow, as one of Gaspar's contacts put me on the trail of a possible connection to Tanith's origins.

Through myriad rumors and hearsay, I was eventually led to the remote village of Rimeskoy, a Ruscar township nominally part of Khador's northernmost regions. Having to travel this far up north was unpleasant to say the least, but it proved to be necessary, as most of these rural backwater tribes lack rudimentary reading and writing abilities. The Ruscar are typically an insular folk, wary of outsiders, but after convincing

the village elders I was a fur trader, I found myself able to conduct my interviews relatively undisturbed.

After a few days, I was alerted to the fact that several children had been given up to visiting blackclads over the years. These children had exhibited signs of the wilding—behavior suggesting a connection to the Devourer Wurm—required of those who become members of the Circle. After speaking to several women of the tribe who had lost sisters or daughters in this manner, I met Britsenya, whose account I found to be potentially relevant to my investigation. I have transcribed her words below.

When my little Hertha began singing her wild song, I wept. I knew tradition demanded the village elders hand her over to a prophet of the Wurm, but she was my heart and soul. My husband Ulfrick had to pry her from my hands, and I felt a little of me die that day. I don't know what became of my sweet Hertha, with her bright



green eyes and golden braids shining in the sun. I feared she had been sacrificed, her death bringing blessings to our village or temporarily sating the hunger of the Devourer.

Then one day, many seasons after I lost my daughter, a young woman arrived at our village. She had come to gather the Wolf Sworn, so they might fulfill their oaths to the servants of the Beast of All Shapes. As those of us who would be left behind said our farewells to our siblings and neighbors, I recognized the young druid for who she was. No amount of time can cloud a mother's instincts. I ran to her, calling out for my Hertha to recognize me, begging her to know me as her mother. The young druid ordered the Wolf Sworn to silence me and make ready for battle. But as I was carried off, I locked eyes with the blackclad, and I swear that just as I had recognized my daughter in that girl's green eyes, she recognized her mother in mine.

While I must admit the above account is far from concrete proof of Tanith's parentage, it does provide insight into the kind of upbringing Tanith would have had as a Ruscar before being brought into the Circle Orboros. Given their religious leanings, such a child would be raised with a reverence for the Devourer and the druids—whom they see as prophets of that power. This would no doubt facilitate the obedience of such a child.

Just when I thought I had spent enough time in the bitter cold of Khador's far northern winters, one of Gaspar's contacts led me even farther north to the home of the Frostbone trollkin kriel. These hardy Northkin warriors had seen their fair share of battles against Circle forces, seemingly following a recent upheaval between their two cultures, culminating in the near annihilation of the Frostbone's village. I have a transcribed account from an interview with Jungmar Frostbone, a former champion of the kriel and one of the last survivors of his village.

Note: I have done my best to excise the parts of Jungmar's story that could be considered drunken rants or incoherent grumbling.

Here's the thing you need to understand. Sure, maybe some of our younger kin were too brazen. Maybe they were too eager to hear the words of Borka Kegslayer when he decried the blackclads, and they were too swift to take action. But they were Frostbone, and they were our kith. Yes, they made a mistake when they stumbled upon the druid's sacred stones and took axe and hammer to them, but that was brave action brought on by too much drink. When the blackclads sent the girl, and she demanded we turn over those youths for punishment, we felt compelled to

protect them, as any kriel should do.

Well, when that young druid, Tanith by name, returned with her wolf skin-clad friends and her beasts of flesh and stone, we knew we were in for a real fight. Our warriors swung axe and sword until the snows melted with the heat of human blood while our shamans hurled spells of cold and ice.

Mulgrim led our forces, and by Dhunia was he magnificent! He could command kin and troll with ease, and he tested the strength of his axe and the might of his magic against Tanith herself. They battled fiercely, winter troll and warwolf tearing each other to pieces as the two warlocks crossed weapon and traded spells. I swear by the frozen stone that it was the girl's staff that won her the day.

It was a curved and knotted thing, with wickedly sharp blades of stone embedded at both ends. I've seen weapons of power before, but this one was different. I swear to you it seemed alive, connected to some black will other than the girl's. Believe me or don't, I don't care, but in the end of their battle I saw the young blackclad summon power she had not shown until then. Just as Mulgrim butchered her last warwolf, that wretched druid pointed her cursed staff, and I saw roots and vines burst from the frozen ground and snap Mulgrim in half like he had been caught in the jaws of a great beast. The battle did not last long after his death, and while our kriel perished due to the foolishness of youth, I still mourn those fools just the same.

Jungmar, forever of the Frostbone

As I began to wonder about this weapon Tanith carried, I hit a breakthrough in my investigation. Through diligent and persistent efforts I finally managed to convince Gaspar to aid me in making direct contact with a blackclad, a recently promoted potent of the Circle Orboros (a rank of great esteem, just below their highest leaders) known as Vaskis the Knotkeeper. I met with Vaskis in the northern portion of the Widower's Wood a few miles outside of Corvis. Not only was I excited to be speaking with someone possessing insider knowledge of this order, I was also grateful to finally get away from the Khadoran cold.

Vaskis was cagey at first, speaking vaguely and mysteriously. I've run into this so often, I knew just what to do. The Circle Orboros values information as much as any secretive order, and that was a commodity I had in abundance. After a bit of negotiation, which I'll return to soon enough, I was able to arrive at a sufficiently useful mutual exchange. I suspect there was plenty he withheld despite appearing to be surprisingly candid.

Vaskis began our discussion by telling me he once had Tanith serve under him while she was still at the rank of warder, and he had assigned her the task of temporarily patrolling a region of the western Widower's Wood. Tanith allegedly already possessed considerable martial talent and the ability to command warbeasts for someone of her relative youth. As the following account illustrates, Tanith seemed to have been reared as more than a mere initiate of their order.

Vernor the Nightbringer represents certain essential facets of our order. He is a plotter and a schemer, weaving webs of useful alliances and arranging events to serve his needs. That members of my order are dangerous and not to be crossed goes without saying, but even my own fellowship walks softly around Vernor.

He's had several pupils over the years, each shaped to meet exacting requirements. The most common of these requirements was to become a weapon, and that was clearly his intent with Tanith. It is not that she lacked intelligence. Far from it in fact, as she possesses a sharp mind and cunning instincts. No, what she lacked was a will of her own.

All who are initiated into the Circle work for the order, but the power we wield naturally brings with it a willfulness, a desire for each of us to carve our own way. It is not unheard of for agendas to come at cross-purposes, even between master and student. This is healthy and expected and can generally be managed to the benefit of all. It was clear in the short time I spent with her that Tanith had been stripped of excess ambition to an unnatural degree for our kind. This allowed Vernor to place his trust in her. It is no coincidence that she wields the Staff of Fate, an instrument Vernor does not pass on lightly.

To unravel the history of the Staff of Fate and its connection to the Tree of Fate is more than I am willing to share with an outsider, but suffice it to say it is ancient and represents certain promises and obligations sealed with blood. Vernor does not employ the weapon himself for good reason; it is a burden and it can destroy its wielder as well as his enemies. Twice before, Vernor has tested wilders with the staff and found them wanting. First was Kolar, who had his body withered and atrophied within moments of trying to use its power. He still serves the order, carving runes in stone, but his health was forever shattered. Then poor Aranya, who went mad from a silent voice whispering secrets on the wind. She too serves us in her own way, though not as a blackclad. Yet it was clear Vernor hoped the weapon might find a hand capable of holding its power, and I believe he went to great lengths to shape Tanith into just such a being.

Tanith could still fall to disaster in her attempts to unleash its power, though as yet she seems up to the task. I shudder to think what Vernor intends for them. These are powers mortals were not intended to wield.

The insight I gained into Tanith's teacher, Vernor the Nightbringer, and her new weapon, the Staff of Fate, allowed for a better view of two large components that shaped Tanith into who she is today. It is clear that whatever conditioning Vernor subjected his pupil to fostered intense loyalty, and as the second part of my interview with Vaskis illustrates, Tanith is deeply committed to serving the interests of her master.

I have previously investigated the entity called Wurmwood, and I have included an abbreviated dossier on the same for you to read at your leisure. Suffice it to say, it appears to be an entity of vast, perhaps even terrifying, power. Certainly in the aggregate this seems to suggest some sort of long-term plan for Tanith, one with potentially frightening ramifications.

Soon after receiving the Staff of Fate, Tanith was given unusual orders by her mentor. I am willing to share some of these particulars now since the involved parties are no longer in a position to be affected by an outsider knowing them. Certain extenuating circumstances had caused a growing rift within our order, straining loyalties on a larger than normal scale. Two of Vernor's overseers, Morna the Greenstone and Shahad the Webspinner, had apparently chosen to abandon their teacher to side with an ambitious and driven potent who was trying to forge his own alliances. Vernor sent Tanith to find the errant pair and show them the consequences of betrayal.

It is rumored that during her early years under Vernor, Tanith had grown to know Morna and Shahad, the trio developing something akin to friendship. I recall the three of them working together to achieve difficult tasks. Once, Vernor had them subdue a ravenous tribe of Tharn who had been raiding northern villages without the Nightbringer's consent. The chieftain of these Tharn sought to glorify himself in the eyes of the Wurm, and his mindless raids threatened the Nightbringer's greater work in the region, so the Nightbringer sent his subordinates to remind the chieftain of his obligations.

The story goes that the Tharn chieftain, enraged at being commanded by three young druids, lashed out and slew their warbeasts and gravely wounded the three wilders. In the end, it was Tanith who managed to not only bring the bloodthirsty Tharn to heel but to find the aid to save her friends' lives as well.

Nevertheless, whatever past they shared did not change Morna and Shahad's fates. After weeks of

searching, a pack of Wolf Sworn stumbled upon their bodies in a devastated clearing near the Olgunholt. Their corpses had been bound to dead trees by thick vines that reached from the earth, their bones picked clean by the crows. Shortly after, Vernor successfully petitioned for Tanith to rise to the rank of overseer, earning her the epithet "The Feral Song" and granting her supervision of a wider portion of the Circle's territories. It is clear that Morna and Shahad's deaths, along with Tanith's ascension to new authority, were meant to send a clear message to any who would betray Vernor or his interests.

That Tanith has served as his enforcer and executioner against members of their own order shows the lengths the Nightbringer is willing to go to preserve his own standing. I have gathered this is not entirely uncommon within the order, though the fear others have of Vernor suggests he may be more brutally effective at enforcing his agenda than are his rivals. Vaskis would not speculate on Vernor's goals, and I quickly realized that pushing might not be beneficial to any future dealings with this individual. Given the information I had already attained, I was eager to preserve him as a source.

As I alluded to earlier, in order to learn these details I had to perform what I would call a "friendly exchange of information." Professional courtesy inclines me to warn you to remove all of your assets and key personnel from the town of Dorshep within the next few weeks.

While waiting for one final contact's reply, I came across this Khadoran action report that stood out as interesting. Recently, several Khadoran mining camps near the Kovosk Hills have been rendered inoperable by what are being officially described as "bands of disorganized hill savages." Once you read the official classified report, you will see why I have elected to include it.

To: Kapitan Marovan Ulchick.

Kapitan, efforts to refortify mine U-46 are still underway. We have completed debriefing and interrogating all surviving mining support staff. Their stories are all supported by physical evidence as well as our investigative efforts. Our initial suspicions are correct; this attack was carried out by a blackclad spellcaster leading a group of beasts and supported by at least two dozen tribal men and women. Of note, the blackclad is described as a young woman capable of, among other things, summoning roots and vines from the earth strong enough to tear a laborjack into scrap. The bodies of our fallen soldiers will be sent back to their families after we receive clearance from Section 3.

Sergeant Mikala Gruva

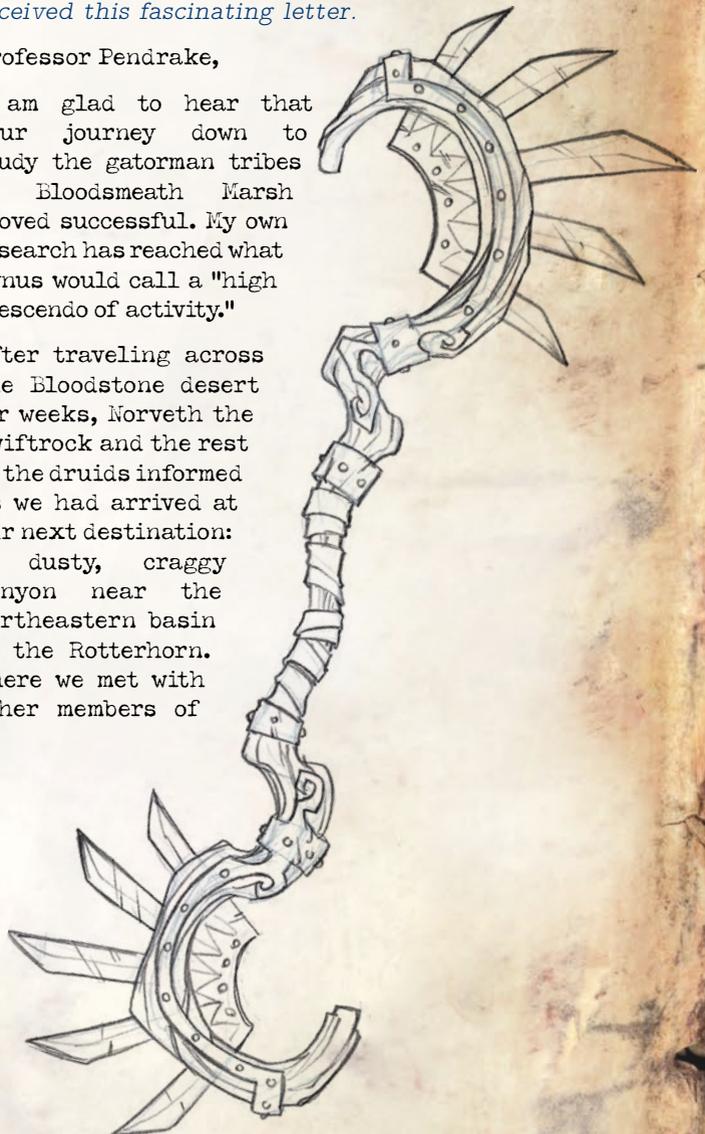
My final entry into this dossier is a correspondence with Edrea Lloryrr, associate professor of anthropology at Corvis University and a favored assistant to the respected Viktor Pendrake. In recent months I have been kept apprised of Edrea's excursions into the wild; she has long been researching the magical practices of various wilderness cultures. This work has periodically put her in close contact with the Circle Orboros, and her papers suggest she has her own sources in that organization.

To facilitate an exchange of information, I decided to interact with her under the guise of Professor Pendrake himself. Mimicking his authorial voice and diction was relatively simple, given the ample correspondence I've had with him in the past. It was not too much trouble to secure an official Corvis University faculty wax seal to ensure my ruse went undiscovered. My hunch paid off, and I was able to exchange letters related to a group of blackclads she was accompanying and they headed deep into the Bloodstone Marches. After several weeks of communicating about her experiences, I received this fascinating letter.

Professor Pendrake,

I am glad to hear that your journey down to study the gatorman tribes of Bloodsmeath Marsh proved successful. My own research has reached what Lynus would call a "high crescendo of activity."

After traveling across the Bloodstone desert for weeks, Norveth the Swiftrock and the rest of the druids informed us we had arrived at our next destination: a dusty, craggy canyon near the northeastern basin of the Rotterhorn. There we met with other members of



the Circle Orboros, and the two groups converged to share news and pass along instructions from mutual superiors. After a few hours, Lynus and I began to notice more intense discussions in hushed tones, the blackclads appearing to become both more secretive than usual and uncharacteristically concerned by some new development. I could tell that Lynus' curiosity would soon get the best of him, so before his enthusiasm got us in trouble, and to avoid a repeat of the incident with the pygmy troll tribe outside of the Gnarls, I thought it would be best if I made all the appropriate inquiries.

It took quite a bit of prodding, but eventually I was able to coax some details from Norveth. He told me how all of the overseers and potents in this region answer to an omnipotent named Mohsar the Desertwalker. Recently, Mohsar had met with an overseer from the northern dominion. This specific meeting was apparently unusual and worthy of note, but I do not grasp what about it had Norveth and the others so nervous.

Norveth described the overseer as quite young, though remember that due to the vitality their connection to Orboros provides, trying to determine a druid's age by appearance alone is a mistake. The manner of dress he described definitely marks her as hailing from the north. She apparently carried an unusual staff that radiated power. Her meeting with the Desertwalker lasted a full afternoon and afterward it seemed like the young druid, whom Norveth called the Feral Song, would stay in the area for some unknown purpose.

She was known to some in the order as an enforcer serving an infamous potent, and several of the junior druids feared she had met with Mohsar as a formality before attempting to eliminate druids under his command. Norveth confided in me that he suspected some dual purpose in her visit. The Swiftrock told me he had overheard a brief exchange between Mohsar and his guest. He asked her if the Nightbringer knew of this meeting, to which the Feral Song replied she was there of her own will. I do not know what any of this means, but the insight I am gathering about the Circle Orboros and its internal politics will definitely prove useful in future expeditions. I will have more for you before our return to the university next month.

With regards,

Edrea Lloryrr,

Associate Professor, Corvis University

While I do not know what this final development means for Tanith's relationship with her mentor, I will take the liberty of speculating based on observation combined with what I already learned before. It is clear to me that there are two possible motivations for Tanith's meeting with Mohsar. Either she is plotting to betray Vernor and ally herself with a figure possessing broader political clout within the order, or she is still acting under orders from the Nightbringer for some purpose of his. Given the level of loyalty Tanith has demonstrated to Vernor thus far, I feel the latter is more plausible. The level of secrecy of the Circle Orboros limits my insight into the specific agendas of higher-ranking members, but it is clear that Tanith is an important piece in their games.

Despite the fact that she clearly works for another, I believe it would be a mistake to dismiss Tanith the Feral Song out of hand as a mere puppet. For a druid of her relative youth to prove herself and become so invaluable a weapon is notable. That she has earned possession of the Staff of Fate despite its perils suggests she occupies a special status. If she is indeed acting under secret orders from her mentor, I would wager whoever is the target of those orders is about to be removed from the board.

There is the possibility that Tanith is acting of her own volition, and it is not outside the realm of believability that Vernor has pushed his pupil too far, perhaps even by the elimination of Morna and Shahad. There is also the matter of her weapon and its connection to the Tree of Fate. Whatever her current goals, in my opinion Tanith is someone to watch in the order—we may have gained a glimpse of a major player on the rise.