

Little faith

Arawn pointed at the young boy sat near the front with his hand up. There was an audible groan from the other children that Dradan strenuously ignored. They were a good group of kids, but they knew he was wrapping up. Faelan had promised them he was baking biscuits seasoned with Faraden spices. What child would want to sit and listen to a dusty old guide talking about virtue when they could be stuffing their faces with sweet biscuits?

The answer to that question was Logan apparently. "I don't get it." the boy said to the sound of more groans and a few unkind comments about his intellectual faculties. Kids could be so unkind sometimes.

Arawn pondered the challenge for a moment and then discreetly gestured to Olwen that she could go. She lept to her feet, quickly followed by the others and they scarpered. "Save a biscuit for Logan" he called after them. "Now" he said returning his attention to his one remaining student, "what part of the guidance didn't you follow?"

Logan screwed up his face as he tried to marshal his thoughts. "Tha bit 'bout doin stuff because it's all not finished. And tha bit about testin wha ya learn. They dunt make sense. It's got ta be one or t'other."

"Go on..." the old guide encouraged him.

"Well... either you should'na worry about the fact that you don't know nothing and you should just get on with stuff and do t'thing anyway. Or.. you should try an ask questions and find stuff out. It can'na be both at the same time cannit? T'ast to be one or t'other."

Logan's face fell as Arawn broke into a hearty laugh. "Don't worry Logan" he reassured him. "It's not a stupid question.

Quite the opposite, it's the very best question of all."

"How come?" demand his student.

Arawn gathered his robe round his shoulders and turned round so he could sit down next to his pupil. "Well it's like this see. I'm a guide right? So what does a guide do? I help people get where they're going. That's what the Way does you see? It helps you get where you going..." Logan's scrunched his face again clearly unsure of what to make of this.

"Look. You could get to Faelan's house by following the others. Up the hill, straight past the twisted Oak. 'Round Paul's dad's house. Then it's a short walk to Faelan's right? But you don't have to go that way. You could go that way" he pointed off to the left. "Follow the river, down to the bridge, then turn north and walk up the hill to Faelan's house right?"

Logan nodded slowly.

"So the Way can be a little bit like that. It's showing you a bunch of different ways you could go. They'll all take you places - but sometimes the places are different. And sometimes which Way to go is based on where you want to be. There's no one route that's right all the time. That's what being a guide is all about. It's not about telling people where to go - it's about helping them find the Way to where they want to get to."

Logan was clearly not ready for the revelation that the Way wouldn't just tell you what you had to do. To be fair, Arawn had plenty of adults in his congregation who made the same demand. "Think about it." he encouraged. "Go and get a biscuit before they're all gone. But think about it. It might make more sense once you've slept on it."

His young student nodded, then looked around. He seemed to realise for the first time that the others had all left and looked shocked. He leapt to his feet and set off up the hill but he stopped before he'd gone a few paces. He stood for a moment

as if thinking about something. A moment later, his mind made up, he turned left and headed for the river.

Overview

The Assembly of Wisdom has called for a true consecration of the Great Library of Hacynian. Rather than a memorial to an exemplar or paragon they wish to create a sacred site, a location that resonates with virtue. A place can only become a sacred site if it has profound spiritual importance in some way. Fortunately, the Library, the place where the way was found to defeat the vallorn once and for all, more than meets this challenge. It is fast becoming a site of pilgrimage for the Navarr and the grey pilgrims anyway, as people travel from far and wide to study here and read the texts for themselves. It's also a popular destination for scholars who wish to read about Imperial history, as tomes and scrolls collected from many Imperial nations that touch on the vallorn often contain other information of interest to historians.

The revelations unearthed by the Great Library are having a profound impact across the Empire. The changes are slow but deep, as the old rules subside. The Highborn have called their grey pilgrims home, to prepare for the coming war. The League are applying their ingenuity to the problems, while the Varushkans call on dark pacts to fight the enemy (you can read about some of these impacts in the The war of thorns and flowers wind of fortune).

Nobody is more affected than the Navarr though. Fighting the vallorn has become a beacon that has guided the nation for a thousand years. For a millennia, war with the vallorn was an entire way of life for the Navarr. The idea of victory was ephemeral, intangible - it was something for the Navarr's descendants, not something any living individual might hope to see. Now that has all changed. The work of the Great Library that has shown that the vallorn can be defeated in our lifetime has inspired people. Now that the final battle with the vallorn is soon to become a reality, it has created a fierce urgency that is spreading like a wildfire through the Navarr.

It is hard for many Navarr to imagine that the General Assembly might reject the proposal. Instead, the librarians and their allies are focused on how best to take advantage of the consecration. As such, there are a pair of opportunities for the Assembly to contemplate.

The Library of Hacynian stands as a site where our Empire, in pursuit of Wisdom, was able to determine the definitive solutions to the thousand year problem of the vallorn in but a single season of dedicated focus. The Wisdom assembly seeks to consecrate this location as a Sacred Site to inspire future pilgrims and priests as a testament to what we can achieve as an Empire when we pursue virtue.

Nathair Autumngale, Wisdom Assembly, Autumn Equinox 386YE, Vote: Greater Majority 354-10

A History of Hacynian

Until recently, the Great Library was a surprisingly modest affair. In Spring 381YE, a small edifice was constructed in the ruins of a much larger ruined library that actually dates back to Terunael times. In fact the library takes its name from the ancient Terunael city of Hacynian, the ruins of which are nearby. The site was haunted by ghosts of dead Vard and Navarr warriors for many years, but the ruins were reclaimed by a heroic expedition in 379YE.

The foray uncovered some kind of "Temple of Phaleron" that was constructed in a strange regio that cycled between the Day and Night realms. There is evidence that the Celestial Library was not the only eternal involved with the location. There is a suggestion that the enigmatic Rainbow Serpent was once close to the site as well. There has been no obvious sign of that in recent years, but the Night Singer's influence can be subtle and easily overlooked. Given the breakthroughs achieved since the Library was expanded, it would be unwise to clearly discount the possibility.

The first library was tiny but beautiful. A dozen shelves, each of which contains tomes of history carefully compiled from scrolls, parchments and texts by students of Navarr history. It is no surprise that there is a small shrine to Wisdom here, lit by a single lightstone held by a wooden candlestick with swirling vines carved on its surface. In truth, it was more of a shrine to

Wisdom than a thing of substance. As one historian commented, it was the seed from which the Great Library of Hacynian would grow.

In Autumn 384YE, the Imperial Senate considered plans to create a new Great Library, something that could finally unearth the truth about the vallorn. The motion was passed and 250 thrones disbursed to begin the work. The nation wasted no time in gathering the materials needed so that construction could begin immediately. A year later, it was completed, and the Great Library became a reality as well as a dream.

The new library is a massive structure that is able to house scores of librarians and historians as well as their guests. Poets claim there is enough room for every book in the Empire, and while that is not true, it is a grand edifice whose shelves will take many years to fill completely. The original shrine is still there, but now it barely suffices to contain the throngs that are visiting the Library every day. If the site is to be consecrated with true liao, those pressures will need to be dealt with.

Guidance

- **Three proposals have been prepared for the Writ of Consecration**
- **Only *one* of the proposals can be enacted**

The residents of the Great Library have helped the civil service prepare three proposals for the true liao consecration to Wisdom. All three of these proposals require a majority decision by the General Assembly. As usual with such competing judgements, if two or more judgements in favour of different choices pass, the one with the greatest margin will be chosen.

Apply What You Have Learned

- **The Library could become a place for scholars to study and expand the Empire's knowledge**

Wisdom teaches that the Virtuous apply what they have learned because they know that all knowledge is incomplete. Learned scholars of Wisdom will often point out that this guidance is trying to urge devotees *not* to constantly chase new learning. People should not worry that they don't know everything before they act, because all knowledge is *a/ways* incomplete. If you allow action to be stymied by the fact that you don't yet know everything then you never achieve anything at all. By contrast, the Virtuous should apply what they have learned.

In practice, people often quote the final part of the guidance in isolation and take it as instruction that more study is needed. The Great Library was built to study the vallorn, to pool the knowledge that people already possessed and then disseminate it across the Empire. By spreading the information far and wide, the scholars hoped to inspire the Virtuous to

apply what they had learned. The great success of the library has inspired people to embrace that sentiment. The General Assembly could use the following mandate to stress the first precept of Wisdom.

The Virtuous apply what they have learned. We send {named priest} with a dose of true liao to consecrate the Great Library of Hacynian to Wisdom. All knowledge is incomplete.

Synod Mandate, General Assembly

If this mandate is passed, then for the next year, it will allow the Wisdom Assembly to use a judgement to select one of three subjects chosen by the scholars of the Great Library to research. These would have to be areas of interest to the scholars - these are not civil servants being paid for their work like those employed by the Department of Historical Research, who can be directed as the Senate wishes. The outcome would be similar, a short piece of text summarising their findings which the scholars would pass to the civil service to disseminate before each summit. Once the work was complete, the Wisdom Assembly could then ask the scholars to work on another topic from their list.

At the moment there are three areas that interest the scholars - they are;

- **Vates:** There are hundreds of vates in the Navarr, so many

that people often consider them nothing more than the Navarr word for a magician. Yet there is surprisingly little information published about vates by the civil service. The scholars propose to dig into the history of the vates and compile and publish their findings on their history and role in the Navarr.

- **Empress Giselle:** The life and history of Empress Giselle is already a matter of public record, but how exactly did she die? There have been rumours for years that she was murdered, but if that is the case then who did it and why? The scholars are keen to probe the mystery of Giselle's death and share the findings with the rest of the Empire.
- **The Volodny:** Many terrible actions are ascribed to the volodny, including the creation of Alderei the Fair. They are said to be immortal sorcerors who have hidden their hearts outside their bodies. Is that really possible or is it just a myth? The Great Library has unearthed a trove of information on the vallorn, but there might be something to be discovered about another ancient enemy of the Empire.

Test What You Learn

- **The Library could become a place for Imperial magicians to meet and work together**

The fourth precent of Wisdom instructs the Virtuous to test what they learn and warns that only fools accept hearsay as truth. This guidance is intended to remind the Virtuous that incredulity can be a virtue. Things should not be taken as fact simply because someone expresses them with a confident air,

nor because they flatter the listeners' prejudice. The wise remain alert to the possibility of falsehood and error at all times. Everything can be challenged and there is great learning in rejecting even the longest-held assumptions.

It is often noted that this guidance seems to conflict with the precept that urges the Virtuous to take action and not to wait until all knowledge is complete. Some guides who are challenged on this will claim that these paradoxes are central to the Way. The faith of the Empire doesn't tell you what to do, it provides you with Wisdom that guides you to a Virtuous path.

The information shared by the Great Library has left people with a thirst to test what they know. The theory for how to combine the vallornhearts is there, but it is likely to require a great mastery of Spring magic to carry out. The General Assembly could use a mandate to urge those magicians who are currently visiting the Library to test what they know.

Test what you learn; only fools accept hearsay as truth.

Only fools accept hearsay as truth. We send {named priest} with a dose of true liao to consecrate the Great Library of Hacynian to Wisdom. Let the magicians of every nation test what we have learned.

Synod Mandate, General Assembly

If this mandate is passed, then for the next year, it will allow the General Assembly to use a statement of principle to choose a single arcane projection to be codified by the magicians and scholars who are visiting the Great Library at a rate of 25 ranks of magnitude each season. If the Library completes a ritual before the end of the year, then the General Assembly could select a new ritual to work on in the remaining time. The completed ritual text will be delivered to whichever priest raised the original statement choosing the ritual.

Find the Right Question

- **The Library could become a place to embrace reason and intuition**

The third precept of Wisdom teaches humility, reminding devotees that Wisdom is not always about knowing the answer. True Wisdom is only found by asking the right question. It urges people to think outside the constraints of what is accepted, to question the assumptions, and find a different way to consider problems. So many of the great discoveries of the world began by someone thinking to ask the right question.

Books and learning can only take a scholar so far.

The Kallavesi claim there is an essential mysticism in Wisdom, a paradoxical truth in which ignorance frees you of your assumptions. The more certain you are of your knowledge, the harder it is to question it. When you empty your mind of everything you know what is left is everything you don't know.

In the mystic tradition, Wisdom is found in the spaces between learning.

The Great Library has an old history, a deep history that predates the revelations of the vallorn. There were truths found here before the formation of the Empire. There was Wisdom here before the fall of the Terunael. Night Singer's touch is feather-light here, but there are a few scholars who believe that it was crucial in the success that Library enjoyed uncovering the secrets of the vallorn. Those who slept near the regio or walked there at night experienced strange dreams and visions that some believe were sent by the Everflowing River helped them find the right questions.

Spiral Dancer is not the only eternal connected with this place. Phaleron, who many called the Celestial Library, is known to claim the day regio at the heart of the Great Library. There has been little direct communication with the eternal, he has not spoken with mortals here since the original expedition to clear the ghosts from the ruins. But it cannot be a coincidence that the Empire has raised this Great Library around a regio claimed by the eternal who is variously called the Celestial Library, the Great Library and sometimes the Coral Library.

The General Assembly could encourage the librarians to embrace both of the patrons of the regio at the heart of the Great Library in the hope that this would better enable the Empire to ask the right questions.

Wisdom is not always knowing the answer. We send {named priest} with a dose of true liao to consecrate the Great Library of Hacynian to Wisdom. Let us embrace the Silence and the Song and search for the right question in the space between Night and Day.

Synod Mandate, General Assembly

If this mandate is passed, then the Wisdom Assembly could appoint a single Imperial magician to act as the *Singer of the Silence*. The Singer would need to engage with the two powers of the Night and Day realms that are present at Hacynian, Night Singer and the Archives of Silence to try and unlock the potential of the enigmatic regio. It is not clear what the benefits of this would be - but if they were successful the Singer might be granted mystical abilities by the two eternal = akin to those abilities gained by the Guardian of the Maze of Zoria. But the only way to find out what they might be, would be to try it.

Vines

The Vinery
Commission Type: Sinecure
Location: Any Navarr controlled region
Cost: 7 white granite, 7 weirwood, and 42 crowns in labour
Effect: Creates the title <i>Keeper of the Vinery</i>
Keeper of the Vinery

Type: Navarr

Appointment: National Assembly

Benefits:

- Receives fifteen herbs every season
- Receives a Bloodcloak once a year

Responsibilities: To encourage partnership among the vines at Anvil

Special: Only works if a vine is appointed to the title

- **The work at the Library has inspired the nascent vines movement**
- **A vinery could be commissioned to serve as a meeting place for vines**
- ***A Keeper of the Vinery* could be appointed to help secure valuable herbs**

The scholars and historians of the Great Library are not the only ones inspired by the knowledge on the vallorn that has been shared. For years the Navarr healers at Anvil have encouraged their fellow practitioners of the healing arts to embrace the oaths of the vine. There was a great deal of resistance to this change at first - the magic of the egregore bond helps to keep a nation strong, but it can make it harder for a nation's culture to adapt and grow. The vines did not relent however, and now their persistence has been rewarded.

The realisation that the vallorn can be purged in their lifetime has sparked a fire among the nation's healers. Now that the last battle with the vallorn is about to begin, more healers are

embracing the ideal of a life dedicated to healing the greatest wound the world has ever known. (OOC

Note: the vine archetype has been added to the wiki and the game).

The Navarr could try to capitalise on this new tradition by commissioning a vinery, either here at Hacynian or anywhere in a region that the Navarr control. The proposal is for a simple construction of stone and wood but rather than growing herbs directly, it would serve as a meeting place for vines across the nation to come together, discuss ways to partner with each other and find ways that they can work to heal the vallorn.

If a well-recognised vine in good standing were appointed as the *Keeper of the Vinery* they would gain an income of fifteen herbs each season - donations from the vines visiting the Vinery. Initially, these would be three of each of the basic herbs, but the Assembly could use a Statement of Principle to spread the word of which herbs to bring. If that was upheld with a greater majority, vines would know to bring more of the requested herb instead, increasing the production of that herb in the following season at the cost of the others.

In addition, if the Vinery is built, then Navarr artisans have promised to create a powerful magical item, a Bloodcloak, to donate to the Keeper of the Vinery each year. It is hoped that the vines at Anvil might use the coming year to find someone who might create a suitable garment, a cloak befitting a vine in

good standing. The artisans could then re-enchant that cloak each season, creating a fitting piece of regalia for the Keeper of the Vinery.