

# The Testament

## Gathering, 1107 – Opening Edition

### Rules of conduct for the Market Place *and all areas under Militia Jurisdiction*

These rules and regulations apply to any being that wishes to access the market place or any other areas that are under the jurisdiction of the Militia. Any infringements of these rules will result in Arrest, Imprisonment and possible Execution of the being in question. A copy of these rules and regulations will be posted at entrances to the market place and also the Militia Guild offices. Factions and groups are responsible for informing all beings under their responsibility of all the rules, ignorance is no defence.

#### **Militia Guild Elections**

The Guild is pleased to announce The First Election of its Guild Leaders. All Guild Members in good standing are eligible to stand and vote, candidates wishing to stand must provide five other members in good standing to nominate them. No one may nominate more than one person, and all candidates must be registered before 6pm on the Saturday of the Gathering. At this time, a Hustings will be held for the Candidates to answer all questions regarding how they intend to run the Guild. All members are encouraged to attend, this is your chance to find out about the candidates.

Voting will commence at 8pm on the Saturday night and will be open for 24 hours, again you are encouraged to vote as this is your chance to influence the direction that the Guild will take.

The Avatar of Justice will be invigilating and will announce the winning candidates and their positions soon after the end of voting.

1. No being is to take the life of, kill, murder or destroy another being. Exemptions to this are Militia approved executions or beings proven to be defending themselves from attack or harm where no other option was available.
2. No being is to attack or harm another being. Exemptions to this are Militia Guild when acting to enforce Justice, beings proven to be defending themselves from attack or harm, and beings engaged in duelling subject to previous Militia permission.
3. No being is to steal from any other being or commit acts of Abduction or Vandalism.
4. No being is to cast magic or use innate abilities on another being in a harmful or coercive way without their permission. This permission may be retroactive as long as no outside coercion is in effect. Exemption to this is the Militia Guild when acting to enforce Justice, The ritual of Peace, or beings proven to be defending themselves from attack or harm.
5. A being is responsible for anything controlled or owned by it that it brings into the areas covered under this document.
6. No being is to obstruct, impersonate or attempt to bribe Militia Guild officers.
7. Any being murdering a Militia Guild member is subject to execution.
8. Failure to complete any initial punishment will result in an increased punishment.
9. Repeated offences will always result in an increased punishment.
10. Factions and guilds may ask for groups to be exempted from these rules. The groups then become outlaw and not subject to the protection of the Militia. Each case will be judged on its merits at the time.

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### Elemental threat spreads

The impact of the Fire Ancient (also known to some as the Fire Entropy Dragon) having taken refuge in the elemental plane of fire continued to be felt at the moots, with its knock-on impact on the other elemental planes beginning to manifest.

The Fire Ancient escaped the Cataclysm battlefield along with the Evil Ancient. They were two of the four Famine ancients who needed to be ‘reminded’ who they were to stop them from trying to destroy Existence. We are now facing the consequences of failing to stop them. The Fire Ancient seems to have taken up residence on the plane of fire, at the same time as the elemental planes are moving closer to Edreja as a consequence of the cataclysm. This makes it easier for them to pop through and visit/bother us, and the presence of the Fire Ancient is warping the fire elementals, so that they attack us. They are also trying to take magical weapons back to the fire plane, so as to increase their, and the ancients’ power. In addition, the Fire Ancient seems to be directing them to attack ritual and transport circles and try to break them.

Incidentally, if a fire elemental offers you a nice flamey sword in return for a magical one, this is, surprise surprise, a BAD idea. 1) the flame swords probably won’t work as well on them if they attack you in future and 2) there are reports that the flame swords are somehow influencing their owners. So, not a good bargain to make.

But the Fire Ancient’s control of the Fire plane isn’t just affecting us, it’s affecting all the other planes as well, and then, guess what? Those planes are starting to affect us too, so we’re going to get hit on all sides. The Fire Ancient has stoked up the fire plane, making it bigger,

hotter, more powerful and aggressive. Because of this the elementals from plane of water are in pain from being overheated, and probably getting pretty irritable, and the magma between the plane of Fire and Earth is getting overheated and starting to break down. Because of this, at the moots some rather desperate Earth elementals turned up first asking for, then magnetically taking, silver and mithril items.

At the second moot, they travelled round the faction camps asking each faction for any of these, and if they didn’t get them, just tried to take them. When they turned up at the Bears gate, I took the opportunity to speak with them, and they confirmed my theory that they were doing this to try to strengthen the boundary between their plane and fire so it doesn’t break down. So they’re not really just mean pikey elementals – they’re doing it for a good reason, especially as the boundaries between planes breaking down would probably lead to all kinds of ‘end of the world again’ bad. As a result, the Bears gave them whatever silver and mithril they could, and I understand the Vipers have also made donations (whether willingly or not, I don’t know). The Tarantulas chose to fight the elementals instead of make donations, while the Unicorns camp was deserted following the previous days events. It is unknown what action the Harts chose to take. The Earth elementals also asked that any further silver and mithril that could be found be dedicated to them in a rite or ritual, for the same purpose.

To make matters worse, the Armourers Guild Ancestor Vulcan has apparently joined forces with the Fire Ancient. I guess he just likes all that firey, forge-y stuff. (The Armourers do have a nice Ancestor called Wayland too, I’m told, so they’re not all bad.)

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So, how do we deal with this, before the Fire elementals either kill us all, break all the ritual and transport circles, break the elemental planes, or all of the above? Luckily, there are still some civil elementals around who've given us some hints. A water elemental that appeared at the Fayre suggested a ritual or rite to strengthen the weak points between the planes, which would presumably hold off the problems for a while. Then an uncorrupted fire elemental called Calico turned up at the second moot to tell us to collect together the four Fire 'Heartstones' to use in a rite to defeat the Fire dragon: she'll let us know when the right time for the rite is. Then we've all been invited to this Gathering at Igneas by the Ionar deep dwarves, who are master forgers, and apparently have there the best forge ever go ask the Armourer's Guild about it and watch them salivate). And by co-incidence, they're having trouble with that Vulcan ancestor chap at the moment, who has ossessed the forge and is corrupting it. Who's betting this might have something to do with our Fire ancient?

Golgomoth of the Vipers seems to think both the Fire Ancient and the Evil Ancient (remember that one? Still unaccounted for?) will be having a get together at this forge, possibly even fighting each other. His imagination may just be getting carried away with itself, but what's pretty sure is that we're all going to have to start dealing with the elemental threat, and soon, or we'll all be toast...

*Bronagh Mac Cinaed*  
*Bears Master Bard*

### Mages Guild Ritual Circle Maintenance Department

The Mages guild would like to make a polite request of the factions of the Heartlands. If you have any ritual circles that stop being safe to visit for maintenance please let us know before we head there to keep it working. I would like to avoid any unpleasant trips like a recent expedition that landed me in demon infested waters by myself taking on an army of daemons. It is largely by luck that the daemon decided to possess and control me to fix his circle and then plan an attack on a faction. Thanks to some timely intervention I managed to regain my senses and remove the possession in order to prevent launching an attack on one of the heartland nations. The circle maintenance was, however carried out and Moonhaven ritual circle should be fine for a while, though I would strongly suggest that if the responsible faction could regain control of that circle before a repeat visit is required as I shall not be venturing another expedition there until it is secured, I will do my best to stabilise it remotely but deterioration over time is inevitable unless it can be visited periodically.

If you have any news or concerns over any of your circle please inform the mages guild as soon as possible or leave a message at your local Mages Guild guild house.

On a more cheery note the main circles of the Wolves and Bears are fully functional and join the Harts main circle in the list of circles recently repaired by the mages guild, If I'm not mistaken that makes all the main circles up and running in under a year. Other major circles are scheduled to be coming online soon, ask at your local guild house for more information.

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### The Milford Massacre

The Tarantulas vendetta against the Mercenary Alliance escalated on the Saturday of the second moot, hosted by the Harts of Albion at Milford, resulting in most of the Unicorns present being slaughtered.

Following the Mercenary Alliance's decision at the Great Edrejan Fayre to leave the Tarantulas and take a contract with the Unicorns instead, the Tarantulas entered the Scouts Guild and murdered Master Ori and a number of Mercenary Alliance members at the first moot. This was without taking their complaint (the unconfirmed accusation that Master Ori was indirectly involved in an attack on two members of the Tarantulas at the Great Edrejan Fayre) to either the hosts of the Fayre (the Guilds), the hosts of the Moot (the Jackals), or the Masters of the Scouts Guild itself. Having executed these assassinations with no retribution from the Guilds, the Tarantulas then decided to continue with their issues with the Mercenary Alliance, and by connection their host faction the Unicorns, at the second moot.

On Saturday afternoon, a group of approximately thirty Unicorns left their camp in a hurry, late for a meeting with the other factions in the market place to discuss the issues between their faction and the Tarantulas. The Tarantulas had left behind a group of their own in camp, ready to follow the Unicorns delegation on their way to the meeting. Before they reached the meeting, the Tarantulas fell on the delegation and slaughtered them.

Meanwhile, several Tarantula individuals entered the Unicorns, left unguarded with only a few individuals in camp, and slew whoever they could find. A witness, who was allowed to

leave because they were of another faction, said they were not taking out specific individuals, but simply slaughtering any Unicorn they could find, whether Mercenary Alliance or not.

The Harts response to these murders, as host nation implementing their laws, was to make the Tarantulas and the few Unicorns left to agree to an 'honour fight' to the death between twelve of each side. This was considered strange by many, since the Harts leader, Lord Regent William Hulce, had written in the Testaments only the day before that "All should be aware that violence against other factions is considered no more acceptable under our laws than violence against individuals and, whatever your grievances, we ask that you restrain from open affray. Should any faction fail to heed this then we ask that all civilised nations join us in holding the transgressors to account." The outcome of the 'honour' fight was inevitable: with most of their number having already been killed, the Unicorns scraped together whoever they had left to attempt to fight the strongest and most powerful warriors of the Tarantulas. They had no chance against the powerful magics and weapons brought against them: they died to a man.

The handful of Unicorns left behind did what they could to flee the moot, but not all were successful. Manthar, the leader of the Mercenary Alliance, was given refuge within the Militia Guild tent, those very people whose purpose it is to protect the rule of law and justice in the Heartlands. But the Tarantulas, showing the same level of respect for the guilds as they had when they killed Master Ori in the Scouts Guild the previous week, simply came and dragged the man out of the guild and murdered him.

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In total, between forty to fifty Unicorns were murdered over the two moots, a number to challenge even the notorious massacres of Bears and Jackals in 1104. Two of their leaders were among the dead, with only Lord Vadek surviving.

On Sunday, the Harts acknowledged the crimes that had been committed on their lands, and announced that Gabriel of the Wardens of the Tarantulas, who had led and ordered most of these attacks, was now a fugitive on their lands and any who found him were permitted to kill him on sight to execute justice over this matter. Whether he will ever be found is another matter.

*Anon.*

### **The Moots 1107 [sans politics]: Adventures of a Wandering Tart**

Well, the first Moot was in Jackal lands, and we were struck with a bizarre mixture of scorching heat and driving rain in the southlands of Aegyptus. I spent the majority of my time with the Bards Guild – chatting, singing and drinking with the other Bards. *I actually escaped back to the rock pools of Hearth and Home (and my awaiting gypsy lasses) for a while – and hence was late to reappear on the Sat'day.*

It was quite a quiet Moot, and there was little trouble – excepting the continual excursions of elementals. These timorous beasties are leaking out of the expanding plane of fire, searching for and destroying magical items to fuel their plane's expansion – and the power of the terrible ancient of fire. Apparently, the ancient is creating more potent critters with the remnants of the artefacts his minions have destroyed - and we need to reclaim these 'hearts' when we destroy those beasties.

I visited the Lions quite often, where their friendly gate guard ladies squabbled over who was to check me out – don't worry, ladies, there's plenty of Kianan for all! Upon my travels, I oft ended up bouncing from camp to camp, assisting wherever the corrupted elementals emerged. It's a fine way to meet people! The Dragons were also being plagued by a nasty foe, demons stalking them wielding terrible powers: a would-be ancestor warring to claim rights over their fallen, I believe.

Saturday evening found me in the Lions camp, for their Wavesinger competition. Sadly I missed the opening songs, including Footnote's – which I've been keen to hear since he defeated the Games Master with it at a Bards meet – due to a further eruption of violence. However, after bouncing around the Dragons, Gryphons and then Lions gates for some action, I was finally able to enjoy the show.

I did not myself enter, despite urgings on the grounds that the beast is apparently female! But the talent on display was formidable and provided a very enjoyable evening. The winner, however, richly deserved his prize.

The second Moot was on Albion soil, and the odd weather seemed to follow us – along with rather a lot of mud. It is not my intent to dwell here on the 'politics' that happened.

I spent much more time with the Bears, soldiering on despite the weather to rally around the campfire – flitting from fun to fun between the Unicorns and Bears camps, and getting to know a few of our newest allies. The Moon was out in full, and I was delighted to entertain Her Majesty and the incorrigible Datura. Sadly my Guild had other ideas, and kept dragging me back to work...

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I had news for the Privy and the Muster on the Sat'day, as word had reached me – care of Mistress Ei'Kara - of a sighting of Ciara's foul minions and some of their hostages. A scouting force was rapidly assembled and dispatched to the Blodwyn's Spring, where they battled foul unliving and others to free the Spring of a diseased taint. A second force ventured out in support, to bring home the wounded for healing – once the virulent diseases had been cured.

Elemental attacks continued, as did attacks from red-faced demons, and mud elementals began stalking the carriers of silver and mithril items – seeking to shore up their plane against the ravages of fire, and somehow pulling these items towards them. My companions and I continued to wade from scrum to scrum, chasing the mighty and illusive 'fracas beast' on our travels - for Pillow and I have claimed rights on the trophies!

Saturday evening was a busy one. I gathered my half-dozen lovely ladies to accompany me to the Harts for an entertainment competition. Sadly they had given up on holding it by the time we arrived, so we took over their command tent and entertained the beautiful Theni as best we could instead. Though I'm not sure they appreciated the more Caledonian numbers! And then I had to take my leave, to contribute in my first ritual for the Bards.

Then off we went to the Bears and, finding it quiet, the Bards started a party of their own. We were joined by two lovely Lions whose date had failed them, and so – of course – I stepped in to ensure their night was not wasted. Master Cosaint, myself and several others around the fire took turns entertaining, and the legendary Dougie joined us from the command tent's revelries to sing a few old

favourites alongside me. And, of course, there were further elemental attacks – for what night could be complete without?

The final day dawned, and the Bears assembled, ready to stand with the Harts against an approaching horde. A plague of demons had found its way to Albion, 'The Court of Lies' and 'The Court of Truth' vying for power and seeking allies against our neighbours. Agents had been visiting the factions over the weekend, pleading, persuading and beguiling their way into alliances. And now it was time to stop the menace.

Many factions formed up alongside the Harts force, ready to do battle. The Bears formed a mobile block of skirmishers, charging gaps and countering the assaults of the demons and their minions. The battle was hard and long, moving between fields, enemies appearing all around – yet they soon learned to fear the highland charge, and the combined forces were triumphant - I trust without loss.

*Kianan McAylmyn,*  
*Bards Guild*

The Company of the Blackened Staff is looking for entertainers for a Sicilian style masquerade to be held in the Harts camp the Saturday evening of the Gathering.

If any one is interested in providing any sort of entertainment, please contact either Captain Eclipse or Sgt. Edward James in the Harts Camp by 2pm Saturday.

All bards to be provided with hospitality and payment.

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### The Bards Guild –

*not just for your entertainment*

Come and see us down at the Guild if you are interested in:

- ❖ Perfecting the art of wooing
- ❖ Instruction in the art of complementary poetry (competitions possible)
- ❖ Learning and sharing songs and lyrics
- ❖ Singing, song-writing and music-making
- ❖ Calligraphy - scrolls, poems and letters
- ❖ The uses and abuses of research
- ❖ Journalism and aggressive barding
- ❖ Gossip-mongering, listening and sharing

Or if you just want to know 'What the blazes is going on?!

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### Song Corner

#### Blue is the Colour

Blue is the colour of my squeaky fey,  
Her face lights up the darkest day.  
She's got the sweetest smile and the brightest eyes,  
Beauty couldn't have a better guise.

I sing to her and bright she glows,  
Where her beauty soars only Heaven knows.  
I give her poetry - she gives to me  
The sweetest heart I e'er did see.

She came across into my Guild,  
An angel's gaze sapped all my will.  
With her dulcet voice, my poem brought,  
Its lines and words to her I taught.

Blue is the colour of my squeaky fey,  
Her face lights up the darkest day.  
She's got the sweetest smile and the brightest eyes,  
Beauty couldn't have a better guise.

I go to my lands, of her I think,  
Her picture's there with every drink.  
I write her a song, just a few short lines,  
And savour her smile like finest wine.

Blue is the colour of my squeaky fey,  
Her face lights up the darkest day.  
She's got the sweetest smile and the brightest eyes,  
Beauty couldn't have a better guise.

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#### From the Dun

From the Dun,  
Came a warrior:  
Under Geas,  
Dark and Long.

No more kilt,  
Only trews now:  
Queenie's orders,  
Douglas' son.

Pictish slaves,  
Clan he freed them:  
Chief of Pikies  
Free to run.

Wife he lost,  
Heads were taken:  
Blood was spilt,  
Honour done.

Came a squire,  
Chosen warrior:  
Blodwyn's Sori,  
Blessed one.

Laoch Bran,  
Noble leader:  
Married Herc,  
Bloodthunk's Mum.

Came a Laird,  
Took the field:  
Bound by oath,  
Faction's one.

Laird Protector,  
Anu's hero:  
Now he leads us,  
Home to Dun.

*Kianan McAybmyn,  
Bards Guild*