

## RPG Crossroads

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#### PRELUDE: Flora's Journal

Post by [SisyphusX](#) on 04/30/2004 at 11:22:19

##### Flora's Journal, Day One

The Castle is abuzz with rumour and activity - sound and fury, signifying nothing. It has been two weeks since anyone saw or spoke to Fiona, and Julian's rangers have just this night reported that Morgenstern is charging about Arden unriden. The recently-returned young Prince Orion offered to take temporary command of the rangers, but Bleys returned immediately from Shadow at Random's request and used the rangers to organize a search of Arden for Julian or evidence of his whereabouts. Those efforts continue even now.

Even more disconcerting is the news that Benedict has been unreachable for days. What could possibly have happened to *HIM*? Caine fears that two or three such disappearances is an obvious prelude to attack, and he assembles the navy even now for a fierce wargame and drilling to maintain their readiness. King Random is still relatively new upon the Throne - he looks to Corwin for advice. Corwin is a rock for him, but I sense Corwin's wanderlust taking hold day by day. I believe he tires of languishing within these walls; he craves action and the search for the enemy of Amber that would dare assault the children of Oberon.

Vialle's is the coolest head in the castle - she counsels patience even now. Fiona is a skilled sorceress, she says - surely her work takes her to strange locales for long periods of time. Benedict might as well be practicing commando tactics in the field, she says - and he would not take Trump calls during such intense concentration. And Julian lacks Caine's taste for carousing, but Vialle asked Gerard to search the taverns of Amber City, just in case.

We received word today that a delegation from House Hendrake of Chaos has requested an audience with the King in seven days' time. It is not an official delegation from Chaos itself - just their House. I know not what to make of their request, ostensibly to discuss 'security and possible trade issues', but the timing could not be worse. Random accepted the request, but he worries that without Benedict to advise him militarily, he will make some mistake in the negotiations to Amber's disadvantage.

The Golden Circle holds fast to Amber's allegiance - they know naught of these troubling developments. It is good - if Chaos is indeed mobilizing in our time of apparent weakness, the Golden Circle will need our support - and vice versa. I will travel as emissary of Amber to Begma this week to renew a multi-faceted import agreement. I sometimes wonder if a grand project might be undertaken to create steppes on the side of Kolvir to raise food crops, so that we might not be -so- dependent on sea traffic for the sustenance of our citizenry, the efforts of Baron Bayle aside.

The King has begun to consider recalling what children of Amber we can from off in Shadow - who knows what menace threatens them as well as us? There are a few who are currently in residence - Shiro, Orion and Killashandra. Random's own son Martin has flatly refused to even answer Trump contacts - and with good reason, I think. Corwin has asked Random and Bleys to leave Merlin alone, and they acceded to his wishes. And that ghastly Vorus hasn't been seen or heard from in some time - I must thank the Unicorn for the mercies we are shown.

The sky is grey tonight, but I do not believe it will storm. It is a tense and unpleasant sky, filled with the promise of wrath undelivered. It merely provides all here with a sense of dread as to what is to come.

*Florimel, Daughter of Oberon*

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#### Re: PRELUDE: Flora's Journal

Post by [SisyphusX](#) on 04/30/2004 at 11:22:59

##### Flora's Journal, Day Six

The attacks (if that is what they are) seem to be coming more frequently. King Random's disappearance from inside the Royal Treasury three days ago has stunned everyone - and created a governmental crisis of sorts. Vialle had to be summoned to permit an investigation, as technically only the King and Queen are allowed to admit visitors to the Vault. But indeed, after Bleys and Caine searched it thoroughly, they declared that the King has vanished. (Though I might suspect that both Caine and Bleys might have tripped over Morganstern in there, so intent were they on monitoring the other's reactions.) Attempts to contact him by Trump proved as fruitless as the rest. Vialle maintains a presence as the Royal Family Head, but Bleys had for all intents and purposes assumed the Regency. With Bleys in the Palace maintaining order, he finally accepted Orion's request to take charge of the rangers of Arden. I believe Orion may be ready for this duty, but the rangers are far more experienced at the ways of Arden than he is himself, so he is merely their organization and direction. He gets on well with Julian's lieutenants, so the men are of good cheer - a rare enough commodity in these times.

Corwin left the next day - shouting something about too galling an insult to allow to go on unchecked. I have no idea what he intends to do, or where to go - but he was off as the wind. We have not heard from him since, and I am afraid to try to Trump him - afraid of what I will learn. Orion has regretted that he could not go with him - but he had already accepted his charge and could not abandon his post.

I am just returned from Begma. The trade negotiations went well, and the goods continue to flow, but they claim to be grievously assaulted by the Weir. The shapeshifters have left Amber alone since the war to a large extent, so I know not why they should resurge in violence at this time. It never rains, but it pours.

Llewella has announced that she is not leaving Rebma until the crisis is over. We were all taken surprise by *that* announcement, I must say. I'm not sure what she has to fear, though - she had never pressed a claim to the throne anyway, and was a neutral party during the Interregnum. Only her relationship to Vialle ties her to the current situation at all - and that is quite a tenuous link.

Tomorrow, Bleys will meet with the representatives of House Hendrake in Random's stead. I do not know how he intends to explain the substitution - nor what affront the nobles will take at this apparent act of mistrust. I trust Bleys to handle the situation as diplomatically as possible, but some situations might tax even his powers of persuasion. And while he has not spoken of it, his attempt to contact our Grandfather has left him more shaken than I would expect. I believe he thinks something is horribly, horribly wrong.

Gerard has affirmed Random's suggestion to gather our relatives in strength. He apparently knows how to contact Tanda, but due to some problem he has asked Bleys to do so. He has scrounged up a Trump of Talen, but is reluctant to use it - and may only try if others are there to help him. And he has muttered something about Caliban. I've heard the name, but I think we had all assumed that he was lost in the Patternfall War. If he has not, it has strange implications for our foreign policy. Good or bad, I cannot tell. Martin remains defiant about not returning, and Vorus never remained here long enough for a Trump to be drawn of him, nor did he wish one done. His lone visit four days ago was to request a private audience with King Random - and Random did not choose to reveal what was said to me. And Gerard is respecting Corwin's decision to leave Merlin alone - for now.

The sun is bright today - it belies the foul work being done and the dire doom that seems to draw near. It mocks our suffering and our frustration, and I hate it more today. I would wish that Fate would be a more honest and open thing, and that the weather had remained as gloomy as our outlook. I cannot wish it today.

*Florimel, Daughter of Oberon*

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