

The Travance Chronicle

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Justification or Justice?

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Justifying the Means

By Bellanear Cyeos

I have heard the phrase "the ends justify the means" many times in my life. In point of fact, I have used the phrase myself. But what does it truly mean? What does it mean to pursue an end through any means, particularly when viewed alongside the tapestry of light and dark, good and evil, creation and destruction?

To begin with, we must examine what the ends are. Do you seek to have a more enjoyable life for yourself? Do you seek to slay an enemy or defend another? Are you serving the wishes of another, be they noble or deity? Do you seek instead to protect many lives or even the whole world? There is a hierarchy here, with some ends being truly more important than others. It has been said that the essence of goodness, at its most basic level, is to advance another's well being at the expense of your own with truly selfless intent. If we operate with that assumption, then it only makes sense that protecting more people is a greater good. So if the end is to protect others, what means can be utilized to achieve that goal? Surely a lesser or petty wrong is a small price to pay to save a life. And perhaps it is. However, when one crosses the line into true darkness, the question gets more difficult, just as the consequences for you, for others and for the entire world grow ever more dire.

Calling upon powers of the dark gods, summoning the powers of necromancy, even forging pacts with demons can all grant immense power to achieve what appears to be a greater good. If enacting a mighty black sorcery ritual could save an entire village, it would seem that the ends, though evil, are outweighed by a much greater good. This is not the case. In this example, the release of negative energy will taint the land and the people, and if it spreads too far, the results can be devastating. A journey to

Alok Malagan is all that is necessary to see the truth of this. You have saved a village only to damn it to unknown consequences in the future. We are not gods and not even the Lorestri can be sure of all the possible futures that our acts may bring about.

The question of good and evil is not one of arithmetic. When lives are weighed against difficult choices, the lives lose their meaning. This village is not 30 peasants, it is families, loving mothers and fathers, children. This village is not a number, it is comprised of people, of lives, of stories.

So what to do? Of course we cannot stand by and let devastation befall the village. But we cannot pursue the easy path and bring forth something even worse. So we find another way. One of my dearest friends once told me, "There is always another way." When Glammermere Glade was attacked years ago, a dark force threatened the fabric of the weave itself. The beings that assaulted the glade could have been controlled and turned away by calling upon other darkness. It seemed to be a solution that would have carried the day for Travance and for the world. But there was another way. We fought, and there came a time when all hope was lost. My friend, Malagar Kross, Paladin of the White Fox, fell in battle and passed from this realm. And yet in that moment of despair, the Power that guided and empowered Malagar infused him with such might that he single handedly struck down the leader of the creatures we fought. Malagar was gone from this world forever, but we had won. Malagar found another way.

That is what we are all called to do. It is not easy, and it calls for sacrifice and a conviction stronger than mithril. But when you find another way, when you have sought the way of good to do good, only then can the ends truly justify the means. This may very well be an impossible goal for most mortals, but it is in the striving that we succeed.

A Different Path

By Kardin Armister

The people of Arawyn have faced down tragedies time and time again. We are all too often unable to do anything against them other than mourn after the fact, watch as our families are taken away, watch our homes burn to the ground, and feel our souls breaking into pieces as we continue to live despite the pain.

When tragedy strikes, each of us is presented with a choice to make. Some may say that there is no choice, but do not listen to this lie. We are often blinded by our own pain and fail to see to the truth of the matter. An important decision that determines what manner of person we truly are, and what will drive us after our losses are tallied and our inner demons emerge.

Do we search for Justice or Vengeance?

Those twin spirits that grant us closure take many forms and promise much to our aching hearts, but the paths they follow always diverge before the end. Both are methods of attaining balance and punishing the crimes of the wicked. They can even stem from the same place in our minds, but there the similarities end.

When we suffer against the pain of existence, the cruel slice of the villain's blade, and the undeserved pain of those we care for, our hearts cry out for retribution. The path we choose to follow is how we decide to re-balance the order of the world. An eye for an eye. A home for a home. A life for a life.

But what are we really trying to achieve? Whenever we go to stamp down evil we may not consciously understand it, but we are acting as the arbiters of Order.

I have lost too many people very dear to me, and once I desired to kill those responsible for my pain. But what is accomplished by that? In response to my slain kin, I would have gladly answered with a horde of souls I send to the Abyss myself.

However, I recently came to a difficult conclusion, but one that I know in my heart is right. Vengeance pushes your own pain onto others you feel deserve it more, but Justice is having the strength to break the cycle and answer darkness and death with light. It isn't forgiving murderers for breaking apart a family or ruining a life, but being willing to take the high road that they would never take themselves and denying them the satisfaction of making you just like them. It took me a long time to realize this.

Justice is keeping that balance between good and evil and finding the courage to travel the harder path. When we search for Vengeance, we destroy what we hate, but when we choose to search for Justice, we replace what we hate with something better and brighter.

I don't know if anyone is going to read this but if you feel as I do and fight against a similar pain, know that you are not alone. If you search for Vengeance or Justice, I know the roads you have walked.

And it is never too late to seek Justice.

Tread Carefully

By Anonymous

The forest is still, the animals have fled.
And all who dare the night carefully tread.
The carrion birds circle the heights,
death in motion, reapers in flight.
A flash of motion, a sense of dread
Creeps into the back of your head.
A scream builds in your throat,
A terror filled, discordant note.
And suddenly your courage has fled,
down the darkened path it's sped.
Jaws upon your neck snap,
as you fall prey to the wild one's trap.
Your body goes cold, your mind goes slow,
and the nightbirds announce your doom with a crow.

Tread carefully this Galladel's Watch.

Memorial to the Fallen

There is to be a memorial for Dominic Strong, witch hunter and stalwart Travancian, on Saturday at 4 bells in the afternoon. It will be held at the Witch Hunter Encampment. Please join us.

As this month is Galladel's Watch, please contact Ilana Darkwood with the names of any fallen you wish to be remembered with honor.

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Questions, comments? Contact our offices in Honor's Peak

Monster of the Month: Vampires

By Huntress Lorelai K.S. VonRitter

The people of Travance know more than they realize, but the trouble comes in separating fact from fiction, rumor from truth. Many people believe everything they hear, but this kind of misinformation can get people hurt. I'd like to share truths and facts about the kind of monster I specialize in fighting, in the hope of protecting each person in this town with that knowledge.

Vampires - at their core, they are undead, like the skeletons and ghouls we've all fought before. This means that the ever-frustrating sun card applies to them as well - normally, most vampires would not be strong enough to go out in the sunlight. They are also, thus, negative energy creatures. There are several types, variations, and strengths of vampires.

There are, however, some consistent facts that all vampires have in common. The first is that all vampires have fangs. These can be hidden, even retracted, but their purpose is to pierce skin and draw blood to feed. Vampires, being undead, do not require food or water, simply blood to obtain 'nourishment'. All vampires have pale, nearly white complexions, their skin appearing waxy or papery, sometimes thin enough that you can see the blood vessels beneath when they have recently fed.

When vampires are fully using their supernatural abilities, their eyes may appear red and bloodshot, even glowing. There have been some reports of vampires who have gorged enough that their veins bulge, and their muscles can expand.

Lesser vampires, such as nosferatu, may be feral and sometimes hunt in packs. They cannot think much beyond obtaining their next meal and not being injured; if they can speak, it is no more than a handful of words at most. Stronger vampires are often proud and arrogant, seeking power over others and deference from those lesser to them.

All vampires are quite fast. Some, just fast enough to dupe you and make you see double for a moment. The stronger the vampire, the faster they are able to move, to the point where they may appear as a blur in your vision. This means they can be difficult to track and equally hard to follow.

Now for the good news - there are ways to counteract or fight against their abilities. As negative energy creatures, vampires are susceptible to positive energy (including healing) and divine energy. They do not heal quickly like Lycans, but they are often very tough. It may be difficult to injure a vampire enough to stop them before they run away (and they often will) without a way to make the injury really stick. As undead, vampires are immune to most poisons. You can, however, have any Master Witch Hunter imbue poisons with positive energy so that these become effective (with the added bonus of surprising most of their kind).

A vampire's bite is dangerous, and not just because they can drain your blood for sustenance. They can also use their bite to enthrall you to their cause against your will, using you like a puppet through this bond. Or they may try to make you into one of their own, turning you over time into a vampire. Anyone who has been bitten by one of these creatures may be affected, and should be immediately looked over by a physician or witch hunter. To counteract this possible injury, wearing chainmail can help to deflect the fangs, as well as using your weapon or other armor to blunt the impact. Sometimes leaching the affected bite, when done quickly enough, can remove the toxins as well.

The hardest thing for most people to counteract is a vampire's speed. Members of House VonRitter are generally the only people able to move quickly enough to keep up with the fastest vampires. The speed with which these creatures move means that they could injure you ten times over in the time it takes you to blink. Being prepared and ready to defend yourself, as many times as possible, is recommended. I am, myself, always willing to come to your aid. I spent many years as a defender of the people of this town, and I will always attempt to come between one of these foul beings and the members of this barony.

I cannot teach just anyone to move and react with the kind of speed necessary, but fight your hardest if you cannot match their speed. Wear them out. Have someone, or be someone, that can take many hits, and surround the creature. Something that fast must be over-



By Voo

whelmed to take it down, and they will certainly try to escape when they realize they may not be able to win. Use their arrogance against them - let them think they are winning and pick away at them if necessary. Insult them, even. They may not realize how injured they are if they are furious at what they consider to be a 'lesser being'.

I urge all of you to study the fluid movements of nyads, the smooth gait of a swashbuckler, the swift silence of an acrobat, and keep in mind that most vampires can and do move with similar traits. Train against these people to better understand how to fight a vampire, if the time comes.

While you may want to defer to others in a fight like this, I implore you all to do everything you can to learn what you can, and thus protect yourselves and others. Please feel free to come to me with any questions, and be safe, Travance.

[OOQ Note: The above article counts as the Monster Lore: Vampire. If you have the prerequisites (i.e. a single build to spend and the ability to learn Monster Lore), you may learn "Lore: Vampire" on your card and spend your build accordingly. The teacher will be "Chronicle October 16". If you see a paper copy of this Chronicle at any time, including at the Scholar's Table, you may choose to learn this lore.]

The Baronial Guard's Monthly Advisory to the Populace

By Private Arradir Go-Dringol

Honorable populace of the Barony of Travance, the following article was written with the intent of furthering your knowledge on the criminal element at large and updates regarding matters of the Law.

.: Summons .:

By order of the Barony, the man going by the name of *Radu Dragovic* is to report to either the Magistrate or Captain Oren Tenderson regarding the standing charges of assault, attempted murder and evasion of the Law. Anyone attempting to conceal his whereabouts will be charged with a Standard Punishment. Failure to willingly do so by the closure of this feast's festivities without good reason will result in further charges and escalation of punishments as seen fit by the Magistrate or his Excellency.

.: Law of the Month .:

None shall hold or confine another, nor conceal the whereabouts of another without consent, excepting the Guard or the Sheriff in the courses of their duties, or one of noble title where necessity demands. *Whomever breaks with this law shall be subject to a Standard Punishment.*

.: Reminders .:

Remember to travel in large and well-armed groups during the late hours of the day. All townsmembers have the right to ask to be escorted by any Guardsmen on duty.

- Please report all suspicious activities to the Guard with as much information as possible so that due diligence can be performed during the investigation. Anonymity will be preserved to the fullest extent of the law.
 - If you are interested in joining the Baronial Guard, please see a Guardsman to inquire about the monthly meeting and training times.
 - If you wish to aid the Guard but must honor your given word to your Lord and Lady, you may be deputized. Please speak to any of the Lieutenants regarding this if you plan on lending your hand regularly.
-

Hangover

By Chet Hardwick

Justice is like a hangover.

I mean that in all sincerity. All that fun you had the night before, regardless of how many coins you plunked down on the bar and slid across to the actual hero in our lives, you paid for it the next morning. See, with drinking, there's one force that makes its presence known. Violently. In between the inability to remember what you were doing, where, and with whoever and the sturdy desire to blot out the sun, there it is.

Karma.

You exchange fun in the present for pain in the future, a feat which is as true whether you're falling in love or falling out of your chair because that whiskey was a little too good.

Either way, it's a bargain we all make because we think it's worth it. In the end, we know that everything comes with a price.



Missing

Lark of the Winged Victory. Female Satyr. Blue eyes and brown hair. Dark brown horns and cream colored fur. Freckles. Has a tattoo on her lower back of a rose. Horns are like that of a ram. Also a tattoo of the Winged Victory sigil on upper right arm.

Last seen in New Coast Haven (Lower Drega'mire) on the night of August 1216's feast day.

If you have any information on her whereabouts, please contact the crew of the Winged Victory immediately.

Justice in the Highlands By Father Donald MacFhionnlaigh

To an Outlander, Highland Justice is different from one raised in Kornyre or Khitan, or any one of the other nations on the face of Arawyn. This is because our society is different. To understand this, I will break down the differences and discuss the different structures, crimes and punishments.

It is no secret that we have no nobles. We tried this once, and tyranny led us to abolish the monarchy and replace it with a council of chieftains. A chieftain does not lead in the sense of a Kornyrian Lord. First and foremost, he is kin to those he leads, a first among equals, if you will. He will not view it as beneath his dignity to help an old widow with the planting if he happens to be around, as this old widow is his kinswoman, and her well-being is his concern. A chieftain can be challenged to replace him, or pulled down if he has been found wanting. Our opinion of crime is different in some ways to the ways of Kornyre.

Amongst the Celtic people, our views of crime are dif-

ferent. First, we have violations of our traditions. The chiefmost that leads to headaches and misunderstandings is the tradition of hospitality. In this tradition, one highlander can show up on the doorstep of another, be it chief or farmer, and ask hospitality. Other crimes include, but are not limited to:

-Cowardice

-Murder

-Thievery (this is particularly odious when the target is a poor farmer, or a decent kinsman)

As our crimes are different, our punishments are a bit different as well.

For minor things, our chieftains may impose a fine, but for larger things, we refer this to the Black Watch (similar to Travance's Baronial Guard/Militia) and the Council, and they decide whether to imprison the person in our one prison, or to impose a fine, or to even make the offender a broken man. The broken man is stripped of his clan and kin, and cast out of our lands. When decisions are made by Council or Chieftain on these things, we consider the following things:

-Will this endanger the peace of the Highlands at large?

-Is this a young hot-blooded youth, doing things out of impetuosity, who will settle as the blood has time to cool?

-Is there another issue, such as hunger, that led to this? In these cases, the person may be hired on by the chief as indentured at first, then paid as restitution is made. Many a lean hungry lad whose crime was stealing a loaf of bread or a sheep have found an honorable trade and never made trouble again.

For violations of one's honor, the field of honor is where it is settled. You are expected to fight for your own, unless the one or the other party is infirm, either by injury or age. These are commonly done with fists, to a certain number of touches, though weapons to the first or third blood are not uncommon. If one dies, this is rare, but not unheard of, especially between two hot-headed youths, or hated enemies. This sort of fight is discouraged, as there are precious few of us, and our lands are just as harsh as they are beautiful.

I hope this gives insight into justice as applied in the highlands. May you be blessed.

Der Mond By Grashügel

Moon shining above
what secrets do you keep veiled
I seek your true face

Thoughts on this month's topic:

Justice

By A. Romani

Justice - a word that is often spoken and used as justification. But who decides what is right? What allows a person to say another is wrong? A title or a sense of duty: Priest or Scholar? Which is greater than the other? Can you justify an action with just reaction?

Travancians have this habit of jumping to conclusions before the facts are given, jumping to kill when simple talking would suffice, and acting without thought or reason. Bloodthirsty savages at our gates - kill them all. Tribes of Goblins attacking out of fear or religious zeal - kill them all. A little girl who has more power than she knows she can handle - murder her.

I find those with white face and skin: the artificial skin if you need to be specific: are just as much people as are those who talk about them as if they should not exist in the world. So, if you were born and someone told you that you weren't real, does that excuse your existence? Does the evil twin in a set of twins make it so that the good one is never more than the thought of the other?

I redirect your thoughts to more peaceful ones. May your roads take you far and leave you wanting to take other roads. May the wheels never break when you can't fix them. May the hug you share with a friend mean that your friendship means more than just that hug. May lovers kiss freely and with the knowledge that they are loved.

May the passage of time greet you fairly in the end!

Justice

By Grimkjell Eirson

Justice is difficult at best to determine in the heat of the moment. Clear thought is required to make proper decisions much of the time, and in a battle or tense situation you often cannot have a moment of clarity to consider the situation. It is best to have a code, or a rubric for one to adhere to. The order of

the white fox have a specific code. Many huskarls and followers of the path of the sword have their own codes as well. Codes lend themselves well toward those who are both sword and shield, and who must make decisions swiftly in the field. Each religion also has its code or tenets. They act as a compass for us in times when lengthy contemplation is not available.

Justification in my mind is most often justification of one's own actions by impulse after the fact. We sometimes will look over the facts of a situation we were involved in to later explain or add moral weight to our actions, even when perhaps our motivations at the time were not those we later claim them to be.

The moral decision is not always ours to determine. The general of an army must weigh the moral choice of committing forces to action, and whether the cost in both lives and horror are worth the possible rewards of a decisive maneuver. A weapon that questions its purpose, while it may be noble indeed, can at times be treacherous to one that wields it. For if we say, "No, I will not do as I am ordered to do," it may well break discipline and loose disorder upon the battlefield or in civilian life. Yet, if an act seems to revolt the conscience and be repugnant, where lies our duty?

Ser Magnus, when he was commander of the guard, said an unjust law is no law at all. But who determines the nature of a law being just? We cannot claim a thing is unjust simply because we do not like it.

In the end, we must make of justice what we can, and be guided by the law-givers and magistrate when we can, where our own knowledge falters. I think this is a good time to remind everyone to learn and remember the laws of Travance. [Editor's note: the laws can be found in the Baronial Library or by asking a member of the Guard]

The Word of the Baron is Law. All of the laws shall come from an understanding of this. Our laws aren't justice in and of themselves, but they are the bricks on which it is built. Stay within them and you can't go too far wrong.
