

29.09.215.3.3

The 29th cycle of the Ninth Moon of the 215th Year of the Third Age of the Third Era

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Abstract

The following chronicle discusses adventures that took place over the course of the date listed above, as described from memory of personal account on 30.09.215.3.3 and 01.10.215.3.3. Corrections, comments, and further details are welcome and encouraged. The following account will also be given in part in informal language, as per the desires of the author to speak authentically, and in doing so, convey some semblance of the emotional truths discovered throughout the day, which she believes to be as substantive as the factual truths that were found.



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Account – First Mission: To resolve a dispute between Dusk Eyes and Weathered Faces builders attempting to rebuild a cracked pathway

This was the only mission to take place in the morning, as well as the only mission to which I did not acquiesce. From the report given by ~Tyson~ (memory may be failing me on who gave the report), the clans were attempting to solve the issue of a crack down the middle of the road, with one attempting to add supports to the crack, while the other was trying to fill it in. They reported that the issue was resolved.

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Account – Second Mission: To investigate the Bellmorn district, in hopes of finding clues to the Bellmornian government's withdrawal from Halidar

Our second excursion, and indeed, my first mission of the day, was to the Bellmorn quarter of Halidar, in search of any clues unburied in the nation's abrupt departure from the city.

When reviewing missions at the beginning of the day, our innkeeper, Kuyag, mentioned that they (pl., perhaps referencing All-Hearth), had some suspicions regarding the Bellmorn government's actions. Following on this detail, before leaving, I asked Kuyag about the information and suspicions they mentioned earlier. They said that they believed, based on the investigation that they (pl., presumably All-Hearth) conducted, that the withdrawal was not due to foul play: it was a decision that the government of Bellmorn made fully intentionally, and of their own volition. This agency is an important note to keep in mind when reviewing the case at hand, but it does not eliminate the possibility of the influence of another darkness on the choices of Bellmorn's leadership.

Arriving in Bellmorn's quarters, we found the streets exceptionally clean. Among the members of our party, we were able to speak with several Bellmorn citizens who were left or remained behind in the wake of the government's leave. To give a short list:

– The first person to whom I spoke was watering flowers, which I later heard from another member of my party were purportedly left behind by a Bellmorn noble. According to another party member, the flowers that remained were either primarily or solely comprised of species representing beauty, innocence (somewhat unsure on this count), and a third quality which I forget. The citizen themself was worried about lack of sponsorship for Bellmorn quarter to participate in the All Hallow's Eve festival, since they require some amount of funding to support their participation in the festival events, which are now later this moon. I attempted to convince Bazil to support the project, but he made abstractions about the question of fiscal feasibility, and so I received no resolution on the matter.

– There was also a builder repairing roads, which were, to mention again, oddly clean despite the massive amount of dust in the city (which I realized only because Cassius noted it to me after the fact). It remains a present question as to why were the roads so clean, but also as to why they were broken in the first place. How interesting to see cracks spreading



in even earth, dividing the clans as we found on the first mission, and even now spreading through the stone of our city. Perhaps we should care more about the legacy that someplace called as rift-lands carries on its shoulders.

– Cassius also related to me that there was a messenger searching for the lead builder. After my party member departed, I conversed with the worker repairing the roads, who stated that he did not know who the lead builder was. I am unsure if this is reasonable, given the structure of construction crews, or if it is concerning, and indicative of a break in communication. The messenger did not find the lead builder, to my knowledge, as they appeared to still be looking when we departed. I wonder where the lead builder is now?

– Present was also a retired duelist in fine clothing (fabrics, if I recall accurately), (human, short-cropped blond hair (if I remember right), and roughly 32 (once more, to my memory)). Bazil reported that the duelist was a Bellmorn noble, dueled them, and apparently was to have drinks with them later that night.

– One citizen nearby where the duelist was standing around was giving away fruit juice for free. I had one cup, which was quite good, and honestly a necessary refreshment for what would come later that day. I believe one or more other party members discussed with them, and consequently may have more useful information than I can give.

After a short bout of exploring, I noticed some other party members convening to discuss at the side of the road. They broke apart as I approached, and one of them- whom I now recognize as Izik- approached me to inform me that they had found that the ambassadors from Eldar might have more information, but they were leaving today. Consequently, they were attempting to corral the party and direct us back towards the inn to pursue the ambassadors immediately.

The next sequence of events was a somewhat confusing, but Paku purportedly completed a seance with a spirit in the encounter, which she and Kaja (?) said was from Bellmorn, left behind by it, because something was either lost or died here, or somewhere near here.



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While this discussion was ongoing, I took the opportunity to spar with Theobold, who had brought up the topic to a somewhat distracted Bazil in hopes of winning a bet for money against the Bellmorn noble. I include this part to mention someone I had not noticed before: a guard that was apparently supposed to stop fights from erupting, but did not care enough to follow Theobold and I more than five meters away to disrupt our sparring match. They also claimed that they had not seen either of the duels that took place earlier with the aforementioned duelist.

I leave it now in my notes that Theobold should never be challenged to one-hit sparring matches, but I nevertheless would enjoy the opportunity to practice further by attempting the exercise again. We returned to the inn and quickly recapped our results to our second innkeeper, then voted and redirected ourselves to the Eldar embassy.

Extensive notes taken 30.09.215.3.3, *written description completed* 01.10.215.3.3.



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Account – Third Mission: To meet with the ambassador from Eldar, in hopes of learning the information they have on the Bellmorn government's withdrawal from Halidar

Upon arriving at the embassy of Eldar, we found them rushing to leave. The guards at the door quickly hurried us inside, searched us for poisons and alchemicals, and then let us in, with our weapons, oddly. There was a group of more militant actors whom I would guess to be knights, preparing for the trip they were about to undertake. The ambassador themselves appeared to be a wild mage, wore a traveling cloak, and, most notably, had a frank and knowledgeable demeanor about them.

First, and most importantly, they told us that they were leaving to carry a message directly to Eldar. One of our party members inquired as to why they could not rely on the Great Link or some other means of messaging, and the ambassador explained that a person or entity whose name I do not recall has the ability to immerse itself in the Great Link (do not trust my memory on this particular detail; the point is that it is possible for the things that the ambassador is trying to avoid to spy through the Great Link), and a messenger can obviously be intercepted. Therefore, the only secure way to relay the information to Eldar is for the ambassador to travel there on foot.

The information itself is also dangerous, so much so that the ambassador refused to tell us because "it would put [us] in danger." They stated that they, the ambassador and their group, had suspicions which I recall to be either regarding or related to the Bellmorn government's departure from Halidar. When asked, they clarified that their suspicions came from both investigative work that they had done, and a collation of observations into a conclusion, as well as from historical precedent. If I recall correctly, their words were that "this [sort of thing] has happened before" (insertion possibly mine; memory fails on that piece of the particular phrasing). In particular, the ambassador mentioned that the history they were drawing upon was not something that everyone might know of, but naturally, they had access to more extensive records in Eldar.

The next sequence of information was particularly interesting. The ambassador described the events currently unfolding as a shadow, which casts a specific shape, but whose shape can change, even as the object itself remains the same. As they said, it is not the shadow of which they are afraid, but that thing which is casting it. Several party members took



guesses at what the shape was. One asked if it looked like an oval, which puzzled the ambassador, or if it looked reflective, which they understood. I believe our party member was referring to the shape of a mirror, but whatever the ambassador understood of their question, they said that it was indeed reflective, “but not in that way [the way you meant it].” Another member of our party inquired as to what the shadow looked like, and the most certain answer we received was that it looked like the shadow of a heart, or the shape of a heart (I believe it is the former, but I do not recall which it is, so again, refer to your own judgement).

The companion to this sequence of observations was the ambassador’s mention of each nation’s struggles. Historically, they said, Bellmorn has struggled with this tendency towards self-destructiveness, which is something deeper. Our party identified it as a cultural pattern, and relayed this in the summary to the innkeeper, but neither confirmed this with the ambassador, nor heard it from them. Indeed, to my recollection, the word “culture” was not used in any of its forms; rather, they were talking about the countries, or the peoples, or the nations, directly, which may be a small distinction, but it is one I find to be worth preserving.

In continuing this thread of discussion, the ambassador also mentioned that Eldar’s great struggle has been with responsibility (this is the word that they used). They also mentioned that, in the union of the two nations some stretch of history in the past, Bellmorn took onto themselves the problem which has historically been a problem in the connection between the two nations. That is, there was some issue in the relationship between these two nations that Bellmorn ended up carrying by themselves, and, in the ambassador’s words, they now carry it inside of themselves as a rot. This thing is closer to the threat that the ambassador fears than is Bellmorn the nation, to my understanding. This thing is perhaps Bellmorn, but perhaps more so some dark force or dark forces which pull upon the people and sway them into the conflict and civil war we now see brewing or erupting.

Finally, the ambassador reminded us that all nations have some such issue that they struggle with deeply, even, one might say, fundamentally. They implored us to discover what it is that the Riftlands struggles with, and has always struggled with– and many members of my party immediately observed the communication issues from the first mission of the day, and the conflicts in between clans, but I do not think that this is the



most accurate expression of the issue, both because it does not fit the pattern, and because “communication” does not feel like it rhymes with the ones we have been given thus far. I, personally, would propose harmony as the struggle, but that is mortifying to face, for how ironic is it that we, a nation so devoted to this shared rhythm of life, still cannot make a song out it, for all the discordant notes we are sounding over each other? As in the example earlier today– both Dusk Eyes and Weathered Faces were correct, to my knowledge, but they clashed over disparate language, lack of communication, lack of connection in methodology. They are able to coexist, but not to collaborate, and yet, if you cannot collaborate, eventually, living in the same space with force you apart, should you continue to fail to learn the lesson.

It is also something of the way the world turns, with people giving to others what they have but others lack, and yet never able to give to themselves what they need– for then why would they need it? When I brought up the point of harmony later in the day, some of my party members joked at the thought, comparing the word to the name of town, Harmini. Yet, I think there may be more cohesion here than they realized. It occurs to me as I write this that Harmini, to my recollection, is the origin of Trade Talk, our common tongue, which allows us to form a melody of our actions. The Riftlands, much contrary to this, has such a diversity of languages that one could perhaps spend an entire lifetime studying and still not know all of them fluently. There is a beauty in this that should be kept, and I strongly oppose the replacement of our languages with Trade Talk. Yet, I also value the harmony that could come from being able to construct a melody of motive together, and the right that could be set by learning to love our difference, and our tension, rather than fight it or let it turn into aggravated conflict. As something tries to divide us, it is crucial that we all remember to sing the same song. I have left at the end of this document several rounds, for your consideration and memorization. If all who read this could learn to sing some words, not only in their own language, but also in the languages of other clans, I think that we would fare better as a people, for our history is not that of many nations sharing a space, but of a nation of clans sharing in the disparateness of our own, impassioned selves.

With that personal call completed, I shall finish my account by mentioning the final point of order in the meeting, which was the discussion of navigation. Although the only Stonecall Passage to Eldar rests within Bellmorn’s lands, and is thus a very dangerous option for the group to take, with some persuading of my fellow party members and one of the guards or



soldiers or knights who was present, the ambassador reluctantly agreed that all other safe options were barred from them by predictability. The group thus decided to strike out directly into Bellmorn, in order to sneak through their resources and move immediately towards the Stonecall Passage to Eldar as a safe route of travel, once they make it there. They told us that we should expect their return in three moons, and start worrying if they have not returned in four. While it is unfortunate that they will be missing the All Hallows' Eve festival, I understand their hurry, and their need to deliberate in Eldar, and I wish them the best of luck in their trek through Bellmorn's lands, and abroad in general, for I fear that, if Bellmorn is indeed aggressive to this information, or some faction within their borders wishes it silenced, then luck will be the only thing keeping them alive.

Written 30.09.215.3.3.



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Account – Fourth Mission: To redirect Stone Tusk clan members attacking Bellmornian travelers to help create a distraction for the group from Eldar

Following naturally once again from the results of the prior mission, in accordance with the safety of the Eldar ambassador and their team, we decided to form a distraction on the east side of the city, directly opposite their exit point, in order to attract the attention of the possible aggressors and thereby weaken said aggressors' attempts to strike down the Eldar group and the information that they carry. We planned to do this by pursuing the Stone Tusk clan members who have been attacking Bellmorn citizens on the road, and convincing them to join a tournament of our making in order to prove their strength. Ideally, this would doubly solve both the issue of Stone Tusk members attacking travelers from Bellmorn, as well as provide the aforementioned distraction to whatever forces may be watching for the group from Eldar.

On the way to the location where the assaults were taking place, we fought off a group of aerial monsters that I believe were dreiguns. They were feasting on the carcass of a large bear, which I identified as a species native to the area (and indeed, one of the few bear species native to the area, as all endemic bears tend to be larger than the average bear found across Falnorian). Other party members identified that it had been killed by a death ray, and then expertly skinned.

Before this encounter, we had had a run-in with a group of miskmarmots, which the party abruptly began dropping. In the after-mission brief, the rest of us were apprised of Senna's adventures being lowered into the miskmarmot burrow by Paku, where Senna found an insignia that they had presumably taken from a traveler, which was shaped like a black pawn – a symbol since identified by the party to be of allegiance to the Court of Darkness. Now is, of course, as every moment, a perfect time to return to the roots of our history and understand the ways in which the world grows, which is an exploration I leave to the reader to take upon themselves with the wealth of the old archives of past chronicles. However, before my diatribe grows too long, I will mention that, given events later in the day, it is rather likely that the Court of Darkness is indeed at play here, which puts me in a markedly interesting position.



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In any case, we arrived at the scene of a band of Stone Tusk clan members attacking two Bellmorn travelers. We were not swift enough, nor are we strong enough, to defend the lives of the travelers from the Stone Tusk warriors. That said, even if we were, I do not know that opposing this conflict with more conflict would be the way to a true remedy. The two travelers were killed, but to my knowledge, were able to able to be returned to life successfully, which left us to discuss with the members of Stone Tusk. I did not manage to fully sway any of the warriors I spoke with, but some seemed at least partially amenable to our tournament idea, and another member of our party, as far as I could tell, convinced the leader (a shaman, I believe) of the value of participating in our tournament. With this much accomplished, we returned to our inn to make preparations.

Summary notes taken 30.09.215.3.3, *written description completed* 01.10.215.3.3.



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Account – Auxiliary Steps: To host a tournament as a distraction for Eldar's escape

While some of our party members carved out a space on the eastern side of Halidar to serve as a dueling ring, I and several others participated in enticing people to join the event. In the end, our primary competitors were from Stone Tusk, Bellmorn, or our party. Izik, whom I mentioned earlier, served as the main announcer and coordinator for the tournament, while the rest of us assisted in getting the slowly forming crowd riled.

As I recall, the first people to begin gathering to watch were from Weeping Canyon, and then Dusk Eyes, but as more people trickled in, we amassed a rather large crowd. Some of the party members began making bets, and the competition raged as Stone Tusk easily took the lead in the ring.

For those who did not read the third mission, or as a recap for those who did, this was planned as a distraction to lure Bellmorn, or whatever dark forces (likely the Court of Darkness…) are present, away from the Elder emissaries' passage. This was important particularly since they chose to take a carefully planned route undercover to the Stonecall Passage from Bellmorn to Eldar - an extremely risky plan that the ambassador was reluctant to pursue, but was persuaded by one of the chief strategists to support, and which the party also supported for the benefit of its unexpectedness.

Now, given this, it is quite a good result that this tournament reached its conclusion, and with only one death - much cleaner than I expected. As the tournament progressed, it became more about the sport of combat, and its vibrant exercise of motion and ability, than about the feud between Stone Tusk and Bellmorn, or any other factions. The onlookers were erupting with noise and celebration, so much so that I, and our dear party physicker, stepped slightly away to preserve our ears from the noise. It may be only because of this, my luck in a moment of sharp senses, and my speed on foot, that I escaped what happened next.

A human, who apparently was a well-trained assassin, snuck up on and Slayed Izik, before running and, eventually being killed and Spirit Buried by some of my party members (as reported by some of those party members). They were not alone; to my count, at least three more assailants were present. One appeared to be a guildmaster or



nearly-guildmaster pyromancer, wielding an explode ball. Another was wearing half-plate, and I would guess purely from my observation of their fighting style, that they were likely a high-level ranger. This last one chased me until I outran them to the outskirts of the encounter, and they turned back to pursue more sedentary prey.

Of the attackers, I know of one that we captured unconscious, and my party members report at least one other captured unconscious and the one that Slayed Izik captured dead but Spirit Buried. We returned to the inn immediately after this conflict, and related our stories to our second innkeeper. In Paku's account, she once again alluded to the dark forces that must have been the source of this attack, which appeared to have been motivated by a possessive control over the attackers. Indeed, it seems ever more likely that the Court of Darkness is again at the board. With the equinox just behind us, I can almost smell the autumn air around the corner. So if Darkness plays again, must we search once more for the Light? -or is it simply time for the world to turn over again, through the Twilight and into a wintry night?

Sooner or later, the season must change. So are we ready to change with it?

Partial notes taken 30.09.215.3.3, *written description completed* 01.10.215.3.3.



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Account – Party Members:

Chumkali "Willows" – A pleasant face, with a quiet consideration put into all his efforts, as he moves through life learning and connecting with people. From our conversations, he said that he started learning guitar roughly 2 weeks ago, but is seeking to improve, though if I remember right, there is a different instrument he wants to play more, though I don't believe he mentioned what it is. He has worked a lot of jobs over the course of his life, and it seems that now adventuring is the appropriate one. If you meet him and are able to call him by his name, I think he would appreciate that service. A name, after all, oftentimes shows its face simply as a way to be seen. He is a member of Weeping Canyon.

Cassius – A contemplative fire. I see him burning slowly, careful not to blaze too loud, as he concerns himself with the ordeals of the world around him, and yet never with the wick upon which he alights. -but perhaps I am wrong in my sight. He is nevertheless quite clever and observant, and I think that he will do good. He has somewhat of a streak of singing, so perhaps I shall get him to join our rounds at some point. He is a member of Echoed Steps.

Celise – A stranger, for now. They joined Chumkali and I at roughly the same time that Cassius did, though I got the sense that they were there more for the words spoken than the melodies Chumkali was voicing. I believe that they are a member of Dusk Eyes.

Senna – A friendly sprout, with a rambling tongue and a good deal of spirit for the world. He is an herbalist, focused on collecting ingredients for recipes to bake herbal remedies (?) into food, a rather unique idea that he had from an experience with bitter medicine. From one of our conversation, if I recall correctly, he said that he has had a master herbalist that he's looked up to for many years (since he was 4?), and up to whom he still looks today. He expressed the desire to apprentice under them, if possible. He is a member of Underfoot.

Bazil – A Bellmornian noble. At my count, he wears six odd devices around his wrists. They appear to be of some sort of hourglass design with birds atop them. He seems to me to be too rich for anybody's good, but with an odd amount of nerves for someone with so much power. He is, of course, from Bellmorn.

Sasha – A stranger as well, for now. He has strong ideas, but he is not necessarily wrong.



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~Jeremy~ – An interesting person. They refer to themselves in the third person as “this one”, and address others as “honored elder” (according to one of my party members- it may have been Izik or Quaker- on that other hand, I have always heard “honored builder”; perhaps I shall ask them for clarification). The first time I spoke with them, they were collecting flowers of various sorts, but were particularly searching for four-leaved clovers in order to create an elixir of some variety. I did not manage to help them find such a lucky flower, but I did find for them a small yellow aster, which was one of the flowers that I think they were collecting. I believe that they are not from Halidar, but I do not recall from where they do hail.

~Mary Rose~ – A noble of some high rank. I am grateful to them for allowing Ember Moss to join Echoed Steps in clan discussions of further plans between missions three and four, given our similar dispositions towards the information from the prior mission. They did appear to me to be partially reticent (there may be a better word for this emotion, but none occurs to me), or perhaps simply have been turning over concerns. I do not know the reason for whatever I sensed, particularly since they did not express any such feelings directly to me. They are a member of Echoed Steps.

~doctor~ – A physicker looking to study some variety of ailment, from what I gathered. They dislike, or are overstimulated by, loud noises. During the tournament around the end of the day, I helped lead them away from the arena cheering, where the audience was the loudest. I do not know from what faction they hail.

Quaker – A stranger still, to me. They wield a large battle hammer, but I know relatively little of their personal abilities or qualities, other than that they are a skilled enforcer. I believe that they are a member of Stone Tusk.

Theobold – An interesting character. They have interesting weapons, and asked interesting questions. They are from Eos.



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~Tyson~ – A delightful spark for whatever catches their eye. They told me at the tournament that they are just here for the violence, but they also helped organize a nonlethal tournament, and I do not recall them advocating heavily for allowing killing, but I do not think that they are shy of it. They were making faces at the tournament- at what, I am not entirely sure, since they have a somewhat chaotic demeanor. They are a member of Dusk Eyes.

Izik – A good leader, insofar as you are sailing on similar ships. He announced for the tournament, and also has quite the spirit, from what I observed. He is a member of Stone Tusk.

Summary notes taken 30.09.215.3.3, *written description completed* 01.10.215.3.3.



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Author Bias

For as much transparency as I am willing to provide, I am a member of Ember Moss. I do not think that I carry the bias of my clan as much as others, but that is one of the tricky things to decipher about oneself, and so I will not make that claim. I am also an Illion Elf, and so the rounds that I was able to include below in part favor my native tongue and culture, insofar as I have been able to understand it through my research of history, and my travels. I am an historian, which is one of the things which has taught me to favor a contextual understanding of events, and I am slow to conclude, even if I may sometimes join in being quick to action, so I have attempted to present the events of the adventuring day as neutrally as possible. That said, my inclinations and imperfect memory have naturally lent themselves to carrying errors that likely propagate my work. Nevertheless, I hope my accounts, observations, and other writings have been, and will be, useful to those who are also attempting to solve the issues of our contemporary age.

Thank you for your time, and your literary curiosity.

Written 01.10.215.3.3.



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Rounds

(The character ~ indicates a note with vibrato. The character - indicates syllables enunciated with clear separation.)

A *Round for Turning*
Round and round the e~arth is turn-ing
Tur-ning al-ways i~nto mor-ning
Mor-ning i~nto night~

A *Round for Friendship*
Make new friends, but keep the old
One is silver and the other's gold
A cir-cle is round; it has no end
That's how long I want to be your friend

A *Round for the Return of Happiness*
White coral bells, upon a silver stalk
Lilies of the Valley deck my garden walk
Oh don't you wish that you could hear them ring
That can only happen when the fairies sing

A *Round for Our Home*
I like the flowers, I like the daffodils
I like the mountains, I like the rolling hills
I like the fireside, when the lights are low
Boom-dee-ah-da, Boom-dee-ah-da
Boom-dee-ah-da, Boom-dee-ah-da

A *Round for Fall*
All things shall per~ish from un-der the sky
Mu~sic a-lone shall live, mu~sic a-lone shall live
Mu~sic a-lone shall live, ne-ver to die~



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A *Round for Day and Night*
At summ-er morn~, the merr-y lark~ heralds in-the day~
At e-ven tide~, sad phi-lo~mel breathes her plaintive lay~
War~bling~ sweet~ly~ all~ her grief~ a-way~

A *Round for Greeting and Goodbye*

Céva arin, i cuivëa tuilë	fresh morning, o the wakening spring
Mára aurë, alassëa lairë	good day, joyous summer
Sára hísë, amanya yávië	fiery dusk, blessed fall
Melin fuinë, marceminqua hrívë	dear night, homeland winter

A *Round for Us* (from the accounts of a previous adventurer; song name mine)
Spiraling down to the center, the center of our souls
Spiraling down to the center, the center of our souls
We are the weavers, we are the woven ones, we are the dreamers, we are the dream
We are the weavers, we are the woven ones, we are the dreamers, we are the dream
("This is meant to be sung over and over to create a rhythm.")

A *Round for Action* (ditto above note)
We are the flow, we are the ebb
We are the weavers, we are the web
("This is the base verse. You replace the words with ones that suit your needs.")

A *Lírelwa i Tindómerel*	(A *Round for the Nightingale*)
Tindómerel, Tindómisel	nightingale, nightingale
Lindëa an i fuinë, lindëa an Ilúvë	singing for the night, singing for the World
Lómelindë, Súnaliel	nightingale, Muse



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Signature

As I have just completed a great deal of written work, I now take the time to verify this art, these accounts, and this knowledge with my signature. Call it a scholar's promise that I have told these stories to the best of my ability, and in the manner clearest able to convey the facts we need to know.

