

FRANKLY SPEAKING

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FREE, AS IN BEER

Out of the Ashes

Leon Lam
Contributor

The half-moon hangs low and huge in the night sky, limning rain-slick streets in silver. It will be dawn soon – few are awake at this hour, and none are out and about.

This is good.

Moving silently down the street, you take a deep breath. The air is fresh and clear, freed for a moment of its normal scents – the harsh tang of manure; the mingling aromas of a dozen different cooking foods; the intermingling sweet-sour sweat of a hundred different people, hope and fear and pleasure and pain struggling for dominance – Ah. There it is.

You shiver, detecting a faint note of Something Different in the air. It was once aloof and proud, powerful beyond imagining – the height of carefree decadence. Now it is furtive, secluded. Hiding itself as best it can, resenting the world that brought it so low.

Times change, you muse, and even the mightiest may fall. A pawn in the right place at the right time can take a knight, a rook...

Even a king or a queen. Chess has never been to your

liking. Too straightforward or confined, perhaps? Too violent?

You're not sure. But the analogy is sound, so you shrug and break into a lope. A bitter wind rips at the unbuttoned front of your coat, causing the fabric to dance and flutter, but you ignore it.

You like your coat open.

The trail picks up over the next few minutes, and eventually you trace it to a narrow-looking alley. As good a place as any, you think, glad you don't have to run any more.

The presence intensifies tenfold once you step off the street, a cloying stench of curdled hate and sour malice mixed with the faintest tones of apprehension.

It knows what you're here for. It just doesn't know why. Even in its diminished state, it's still more than a match for an armed man – maybe even an entire squad.

The wolf expects the rabbit to run. But you've tracked it to its lair, and if you're not mistaken it's having second thoughts...

"Why are you here?" A hoarse, rasping whisper. Something rustles against brick, like dry leaves stirred up by the faintest of breezes.

You don't answer. Its ap-

prehension fades, subsumed by disdain. Complacency.

It knows what you're here for. It just doesn't know why, and you feel the exact moment when it

DOESN'T CARE ANYMORE—

A nearly inaudible skitter of claw on brick, and something leaps from three floors up. But you're already moving, stepping out of its trajectory and reaching into your coat for Elizabeth. She whispers twice, sending silvery death winging through the dark.

Bolts ping off brick as your quarry twists and rolls in midair. It's a wily one. You duck under an impossibly long limb and fire again and again, keeping your quarry at bay and counting each bolt as it leaps from your weapon. It snarls and takes cover behind a pile of firewood, shrieking curses as you approach.

It pokes its head over the top and you catch a glimpse of skin stretched too tightly over bone, once-handsome features twisted into an ugly snarl. You level Elizabeth and fire on instinct, but it ducks too quickly.

No matter. You reach to your waist for a flash-bomb.

continued on next page

Not as potent as the sun, but the light...

Another presence, much like the first but different in a hundred subtle ways—

You turn just a moment too late and the second draugr slams into your side like a charging horse, knocking Elizabeth out of your hand. Claws like steak knives shred the fabric of your coat as you hit the ground hard, but the mail lining holds.

A moment's frantic struggle before you curl up and plant your legs against its midsection and push, sending it sailing through the air, then the first monstrosity's bearing down on you as you leap to your feet—

You barely sidestep its lunge — a spearlike arm whooshes through the air an inch from your neck. You snap a kick into the side of a knobby knee as the draugr goes past, knocking it off balance with a bony crunch you feel rather than hear. Isidore clears his sheath silently, and you sink his gleaming form into your opponent's neck as it takes in a breath to cry out.

Only a choked gurgle emerges, and you wheel the dying draugr around to meet the charge of its comrade. Slitted eyes widen in surprise as, for a fraction of a second, the remaining draugr sees something it wasn't expecting...

That's more than enough time for you to whip Isidore from your first kill and throw. He flickers across the ten or so feet in a dull streak, burying himself deep in the second monstrosity's chest. Both bodies hit the ground

at the same time, one of them still shrieking in pain as blessed silver scorches desiccated flesh. You step over the corpse, scooping Elizabeth from the floor as you approach the live draugr with unhurried footsteps.

"I'm sorry," you say, taking aim between its eyes. "You were just in the wrong place at the wrong time."

It looks up. No more hate in its presence now, no more malice. No disdain, no complacency. No surprise. Just fear and resignation and an age-old sadness, deep and wide as the ocean.

"Who are you?" it whispers.

"Nobody in particular," you murmur, and pull the trigger.

WHO ARE YOU?

1.[You are aide and bodyguard to Lord Maximilian Anselm, a diplomat charged with improving the tenuous relationship between your two empires. Few areas or pieces of information are beyond your reach — you may move through the jade halls and gilded gardens of the Forbidden Palace with impunity — but navigating the Great Houses' tangled webs of motive and deceit will require nerves of steel and a mind of quicksilver. Tread lightly, for every action you or your charge makes will be scrutinized by a dozen courtiers and spies...]

2.[You are an Inquisitor on the hunt for a heinous criminal. He — or she, or it — has assassinated dukes in broad daylight while remaining unseen by a hun-

dred witnesses, slaughtered entire garrisons of trained men, and evaded your organization's best hunters for years. But now clues have surfaced that point to its location, and you and your deputy have followed them across the sea...]

3.[You are a freelance monster hunter. Since you left the Huntsmen a few years back and stepped on a boat headed across the ocean, you've used skills from your time in the field to exorcise restless spirits and clear the occasional ghoul nest. Plying your skills in the local area, you built up a decent reputation for reliability and discretion. In the past few months, business has picked up as law enforcement tried to get all the riff-raff off the street, but you've been hearing scattered rumors of something larger...]

4.[You are a fugitive, on the run for a crime you may or may not have committed. Through sheer luck and the occasional stroke of brilliance, you've managed to get out of Imvarr and make it across the sea. Reshanese is not your main tongue, but you picked up violence and treachery with ease, carving out a place for yourself in the underworld. The magistrates started cracking down on crime a month before the Son of Heaven's mourning was scheduled to end, but tonight something is different...]

Email LeonJunWei.Lam@students.olin.edu with [OUT OF THE ASHES] in the title to vote for one of the above options!

Service Updates at Olin

Kelly Brennan
Contributor

SERV Auction: Thank you Shane Skikne, Amanda Sutherland, Michael Searing & Jennifer Wei!

Thank you again to Emily and Doyung for being great MCs at the Live Auction! Also thank you to Dhash Shrivathsa, Lauren Gulland, Linnea Laux, Isaac Vandor, Nicole Rifkin, Mel Chua, Ari Chae, Facilities, IT and the Dining Hall for the behind the scenes work in supporting the SERV auction! Our Olin community raised \$12,446 for Cradle to Crayons. Our donation will support low-income or homeless children in our Greater Boston Community receive the supplies they need to thrive.

eDisco: In addition to the Bottle Rocket Workshop this November, we had another storybook engineering with some of the professor's kids. We partnered with a local elementary school in their "understanding different abilities" workshop, which gets local community members to talk about their level of ability and has the students work with them to design something that would better their lives (look out for another one of these coming in the spring!). We are also continuing our work with Schofield elementary school in December by helping them prototype a new curriculum that we come up with in our weekly workshops.

The Daily Table: Organization led by Emily Yeh Olin plans to start a volunteering partnership with Daily Table in Dorchester, MA! Daily Table is a non-profit organization, founded by Doug Rauch, Olin Trustee and former CEO of Trader Joe's, that aims to provide delicious, wholesome and affordable food that competes with fast-food prices to keep the food affordable for all customers.

GO Bike Fixing: Led by Sam Meyers, Linnea Laux with GROW

Have you ever had to search for a working GO bike? Do you want to help fix them? The GO bikes got pretty damaged over the summer, so we're holding an event to help fix them. We'll be working from 2-5pm on Friday, December 4.

The Food Recovery Network: Led by Mackenzie Frackleton with GROW

The entire Food Recovery Network has recovered 1 million pounds! Olin's chapter will continue to contribute by donating untouched food from the dining hall every two weeks. Please contact Isaac Vandor or Mackenzie to get involved.

Big Brother Big Sister College Campus Program:

Olin and Babson College Max Wei and Justin Kuni-mune have started meet with their corresponding Littles about thrice a month on Saturday to participate in vari-

ous activities together.

"Universal Access" Adaptive Biking Program: Led by Mary Martin as part of Sara Hendren's Assistive Adaptive Work

Sara and Mary are helping with the proposal of a new adaptive biking program in Cambridge on Memorial Drive next summer to make "Riverbend Park" more accessible to people with disabilities who want to use adaptive biking gear and other "universal" wheeled mobility. The future volunteer program, which is likely to occur on eight consecutive Sunday afternoons from late May to mid-July, will connect people who couldn't ride bikes on their own with volunteers who can assist, creating both a fun activity for the people involved and raising awareness about accessibility.

Hula Hoops for Reducing Achievement Gap:

Do you remember the Hula-Hoops you may have decorated with colored tape? With help from Alison Black, SERV has donated the hula hoops to the Reducing Achievement Gap Program at the Wilson Elementary School in Framingham! Supported by the Jewish Family Service of Metrowest, the Reducing Achievement Gap program serves "Framingham's most economically and educationally distressed young school children and families" with a unique multi-tiered program.

Do Crazy Things, Get on a Bike

David Pudlo
Contributor

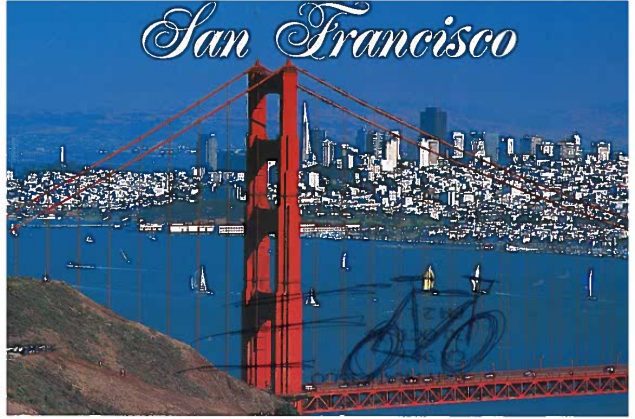
Hi Olin! I made it to San Francisco! It's been a crazy ride, full of beautiful details and wonderful people.

I thought I'd say a few things I think are important.

First years, ask someone who the heck I amand[?] if you should listen (they'll prob. say no?). Anyways, Do less. The more things you say "no" to now, the more you say "yes" to awesome things later that you couldn't have planned - and you won't stress burn out senior year. Treat idleness like a vitamin, not a disease; we all need time to let our thoughts converge.

Make your own major. I can't stress that enough. You have an opportunity to make your own education - do it.

Always consider the impact of your actions, and try to maximize the positive ones. That's what gets you into politics, social justice, and stuff. And always keep seeking serendipity and adventure



E-126 Do Crazy things.
SAN FRANCISCO Get on a bike.
Sailboats on the bay as seen through the cables of the north tower of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Photo by Ken Glaser, Jr.
Printed in Korea

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POST CARD that's what
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always keep seeking serendipity and adventure!
David Pudlo

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