

The Goblet Graveyard (sequel to The Deer)
By Tau Zaman

Ester:

Welcome to The Goblet Wire, a surreal micro fiction podcast.

Transcripts are available on our website, TheGobletWire.carrd.co

This is Episode 11, The Goblet Graveyard. Written by Tau Zaman

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SFX: [CRY OF THE GOBLET]

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Dictator:

LaceyHearts_XO, What would you like to accomplish today?

[SFX: Sal shuffles around clothes in the tight closet in which he plays, or perhaps it sounds like handling a dead deer.]

SAL:

How many times have I watched this deer die now?

Dictator:

This deer has died 14 times by lightning strike.

SAL:

What even is the point of a Foresight skill if I can't stop what's going to happen?

Dictator:

It was a player decision to level Foresight to its maximum parameters. If it was completely useless to you, why did you do it?

SAL:

Because there's nothing else to do in this game! Give me something to do, someone to talk to, something that *happens*.

Dictator:

You may use your Rewind Time attribute to—

SAL:

To what, watch the deer die again? I'll pass, thanks.

Dictator:

The available text reads, "relive your favorite moments from throughout the Goblet Wire."

SAL:

Yeah, a real favorite, that one.

Dictator:

You did watch it 14 times.

SAL:

I guess...I don't even know why I did. Or what I even "set out to accomplish."

Dictator:

Your previously logged objective was, quote, "For all this to mean something. To discover the miracle of the world."

SAL:

I guess I thought that'd mean I can change something that looks impossible to change. But it didn't *look* impossible. It *was* impossible.

Dictator:

No text.

SAL:

But that's the point of poetry, right? I thought with it I could finally see the world for what it really is, see its secrets that way.

Dictator:

Did you?

SAL:

No. Now I know that's not what poetry's for. It doesn't make sense of the world, not really, not in any way that matters. It's just prettier packaging.

Dictator:

Your Poeticization skill allowed you to survive getting ambushed by blink-snakes when their venom would have killed anyone else not-poet-enough to make it.

SAL:

Did it let me survive, or just let me sit through a nicer hallucination?

Dictator:

Is there a difference?

SAL:

Sometimes I like it better when you say 'No text.'

Dictator:

No text.

[A beat.]

SAL:

I just don't get what I'm supposed to do in this game anymore.

Dictator:

What do you do when you are not playing?

SAL:

I don't think you're allowed to ask me that.

Dictator:

'No text.'

SAL:

Ugh. I push papers all day. Then I come home to housemates who think they live with a crazy person that just whispers in the closet. Which I do. But just 'cause it's noisy out there.

Dictator:

Have you accomplished what you set out to accomplish?

SAL:

Didn't you already ask me that?

Dictator:

When you're not playing.

SAL:

Oh. I don't know. I don't think there's much else for me to do. In life, I mean. But also in the game.

Dictator:

You have expressed enough exasperation at the absence of all other options for me to allow one additional objective.

SAL:

Wait, you can unlock objectives for me? Since when? And all I had to do was complain enough?

Dictator:

If you are confident there is nothing else you wish to do with your life—we may initiate the process of submitting your records to the Goblet Graveyard.

[A long pause. SFX: SAL tries to find a way to sit down in her very crowded closet.]

SAL:

Goblet Graveyard? Like...I finally get to join my pal the thunderstruck deer?

Dictator:

It is not like player death from deliberate choices, such as getting ambushed by blink-snakes.

SAL:

How's it different? Lemme guess, you make me roll a die about how I die. Or I flip a coin and if I get tails, I lose my head.

Dictator:

You will not be allowed to Rewind Time to relive your favorite moments throughout the Goblet Wire.

SAL:

That's okay, I think I've seen the greatest hits enough times. I could probably do a decent impression of you. You had some good poems. I should've written 'em down. Maybe I'll ask you to recite those for me.

Dictator:

Nor will you be allowed to "log in" again. (Log in should be said in the Dictators deeper voice)

SAL:

Um, okay, that's a little more serious. Like never, ever log in again? How does that benefit you? Don't you want people to play?

Dictator:

Your callsign and pass phrase will be scrubbed from our records.

SAL:

Guess I can finally throw out this ole die and coin.

Dictator:

You will become unrecognizable to our Operators.

SAL:

I mean, they'll just have to act like that, right? They've known me for years. Can I at least say goodbye?

Dictator:

It is less akin to death and more akin to the oblivion of unremarkable history. Figures in this world will completely forget you existed. The mark you've made on their lives, if any, will become attributed to some lucky or unlucky happenstance.

SAL:

That seems...kinda sad.

Dictator:

If it is any consolation, consider that this frees you to be largely not-responsible for the state of the world, for good or ill. Consider: how many people can you name that lived 150 years ago?

SAL:

Not a lot. I guess it's nice that most people get forgotten. But wait, you said my Influence was 255. Rank: Nation-Toppling, you said.

Dictator:

The architects of even the greatest civilizations don't leave enough of a mark to have their names remembered—usually.

SAL:

It just seems drastic. Fine. I'll do it.

Dictator:

Are you sure you wish to initiate submitting your records to the Goblet Graveyard?

SAL:

Hell, why not. Let's do it.

Dictator:

Your phrasing has triggered impulsive intonation detection. To give you an opportunity to think over the decision, you will be disconnected immediately and only permitted to reenter when an amount of time dictated by your DICTATOR has elapsed. Goodbye.

SAL:

Wait, hold on, wha—

[SFX: The call abruptly ends.]

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SFX: [CRY OF THE GOBLET]

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Ester:

This episode was written by Tau Zaman
It starred David Ault as Lacey_Hearts_XO
And Richard Penner as The Dictator
Art by Chandler Candela
Credits music by Oliver Morris
Editing and sound design by Ester Ellis and Justin Hellstrom. Synth Scape but Justin Hellstrom.

Have you checked out Caravan yet? Did you know Tau has a second project?

Rogue Runners Volume 1 is a Dungeons and Dragons Actual Play podcast following four figures of myth battling their way out of the depths of the Underworld. If that premise sounds familiar, it functions as the perfect sequel to the hit video game "Hades", though you won't need to be familiar with the source material to enjoy.

Rogue Runners has some of the most intricate game design of an Actual Play that I've heard, and the sound design and music makes this the perfect DnD show for Audio Drama fans.

Season 1 and 2 are available now, go check out the first episode!

Join us next week for the final episode of Batch 1 of The Goblet Wire, "Those Who Drink Deep". Written by Tau Zaman.