

The Hovan Narratives Newsletter

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Welcome to the fifth edition of The Hovan Narratives Newsletter!

*A man, haunted by the reoccurring nightmare of the loss of his wife, attempts to escape the anguish with a change of scenery.*

*The wizard, using his magic, moves to Earth.*

*Someone followed. Or preceded him?*

*Whichever, they do not want him on the planet.*

*Or alive!*

*The feeling is mutual.*

*Dangers that he is uniquely positioned to confront threaten him at home and on Earth.*

*This good man, capable of violence, must protect this magically vulnerable planet.*

*Someone has to.*

*So much for escaping the memories.*

Welcome!

Here we are at the fifth edition of the Hovan Narratives. Thank you for joining me. November was a wonderful month for me as a writer. The copy editor returned the manuscript with high praise. I worked through the suggestions, mostly grammatical. On Monday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:40 pm, I finished the last edit and clicked save. The manuscript is completed!

Just in time too! I agreed to send it to the proofreader on the 17<sup>th</sup> so I was rushing. Well, I got it to her before midnight. Still on the 17<sup>th</sup>! Her job is to read through it, making sure there are no typos, wrong verb tenses, missed punctuation, etc. I should have it back by the end of the month.

Once the proofreading is done, the manuscript needs to be formatted for a paperback book and an ebook. Anyone want to narrate an audiobook?

In the meantime, the cover has to be addressed. I showed my cover design to a group that has cover design experience. They were less than impressed. I like the cover I made. But the golden rule of cover design is that the writer should not make their own covers! Don't judge a book by its cover. Well, everyone does. The job of the cover is to sell the book. We writers tend to get too caught up with details of the image and forget its purpose. Also, I am not a graphic artist. The cover design people are going to present me with their version of the cover soon. Perhaps I will have a contest to see which one you like better. I would do that on Instagram since I need to decide soon. Keep an eye on my Instagram account for that.

The other major decision I need to make is the date and location for the book launch. I have some ideas but need to do more research to determine the best approach. The book launch is important. I am very excited that I am approaching the final step - publishing my novel! The Hovan Narratives: book one - Forestton, soon to be followed by book two - Shetteca.

Also, I continue to build an email list and an Instagram following. Join me on Goodreads.com as well. If you wish to help, please spread the word and repost. You can find me on Facebook at Christopher Iolaire and on Instagram at @christopher\_iolaire.

Last but not least, the next scene from the book. The scenes in the previous editions of the newsletter are from the opening of the book. The first three scenes occurred in Boston. In the fourth newsletter, Julian left Boston and drove to the lodge in the Berkshires. We continue there. If you wish to read the previous excerpts, then click on past newsletters at Christopheriolaire.com.

Take care,

Chris Iolaire



Julian startled awake. Unsure where he was, blankets twisted around his legs, his shirt damp with sweat, he swung his head left and right, searching for a landmark. A deep breath calmed him as he recognized his room on the second floor of the lodge. His head hurt from the tension produced by the nightmare that had interrupted his sleep yet again. Untangling himself, he stood, threw his damp shirt to the floor, and pulled on a dry, long sleeve tee shirt. He added a sweatshirt to warm up.

The stairs to the old lodge were difficult to descend quietly. Most of the guest rooms of the old wooden lodge were on the second floor, but Julian

knew that Racine's room was at the back of the first floor. Next to that was the room that Sanlar and Lily shared. Julian walked slowly, hoping to limit the creaking.

Julian looked at the rectangular bottles of whiskey standing side by side on the server in the dining room like books on a shelf. He slid out the bourbon and poured two fingers of the whiskey into a tumbler. He drank half before adding another splash. Looking down at the label, he read 'Estate Distillery'.

*Leave it to an elf to find a local farm that makes excellent bourbon.*

Carrying the glass and the bottle, he entered the kitchen.

Looking out the window, he saw trees and hills silhouetted against the pale pink dawn sky. He turned on the light over the oven and sat at the kitchen table, elbows on the table, slowly swirling his drink.

*Suzhanee, losing you still hurts. I am so sorry I could not protect you.*

Footsteps behind him caused Julian to look up.

Racine stood in the entryway to the kitchen. "The stairs are not quiet. It is early for bourbon." Racine spoke in his native language.

"It has been some time since I spoke Dahican. Sorry I woke you. I will use magic next time. I was hoping the drink would put me back to sleep."

"Nightmares?"

Julian shook his head yes. "I hope you do not mind me drinking some of your bourbon. Wine did not seem enough."

Racine disappeared for a moment. He returned and slid a glass to Julian. "I do not mind."

Julian poured some of the amber liquid into the glass and handed it back to Racine.

Racine sipped. "It has been forty nine years. Still, things trigger those memories."

"It has only been five for me. I think Melissa was the trigger this time. Not that much of a trigger is ever needed."

"I know your pain." Racine drank.

"I know you do. The same nightmare. The same ending. The same pain."

Julian looked at the green eyes of his host. They seemed sad in the dim light.

Racine sat down in the chair across the table. "I know."

They each turned to stare at the bourbon in front of them.

Julian stayed quiet, having no more words to add. He sipped.

"I was so confident." Racine began his quiet, staccato account. "When the attack began, I was in disbelief. I do not know how long they watched us, but they took out the two magicians in the first surge. They knew."

Racine took a larger sip. "We fought! We fought hard! Volleys of flaming arrows hit the carriages. If I had known then the magic that I know now, I could have saved them. We put out all the flames we could. But it was not enough. Smoke and flames forced them from the carriage. Elf after elf threw themselves in front of them, shielding them from the arrows with their bodies. And we fought! We fought well! They could not break our lines."

"Then I heard a scream that was not from a soldier. I saw my bride had grabbed a shield, trying to protect my mother from the arrows. So brave of her! The shield was not enough. She cried when she fell. Then my mother fell, pierced. My rage exploded! With nothing left to defend, not caring if we lived, we attacked. We were ruthless! Brutal! Finally, they broke and ran. I would have pursued, but Sanlar stopped me. We had too many hurt, he said."

Racine sipped his whiskey. "We turned for home. Walking, those unable to walk riding the few mounts left or being dragged on litters. I limped, refusing a mount. My penance. Still feeling he had to protect the Duke's son, Sanlar sent a rider to my father. The snow elves reached us first and escorted us through the pass. The Duke rode out to protect us and met us as we descended into the foothills. It is the greatest shame of my life having to make that report to my father."

Julian added another finger of bourbon to each glass.

Racine drained his glass. He stood.

Julian felt a hand grip his shoulder. He wished he knew what to say to comfort the elf. But in five years, he had found no words to comfort himself. He did not look up, but he heard Racine.

"Sadly, you are not alone. My only advice is to continue to live. Do not isolate yourself. There is good in the universe too. Choose to be part of the good. It can be restorative."

Julian came down the main stairs, less worried this time about making noise since it was midmorning. The first floor was quiet. He entered the kitchen and poured himself a glass of water.

"Bourbon?" said Racine from the entryway.

"Water. Hydrate to help with the headache."

"Sanlar cooked breakfast. He left you some wrapped on the counter. I am ready for you in the back workroom when you finish."

"I will eat quick. Then join you."

Julian entered the back workroom to find two tables with numerous pieces of jewelry, large coins, small knives, and keys laid out on them.

"I labeled each with the magic it needs," explained Racine. "Disguise magic on the silver chains, invisibility on the rings, protection on the coins ... If we can get all these done, this batch should last us through the spring, at least."

"Do you want your lesson before or after?"

"After, thank you. When we finish with these, you can spar with Sanlar or cross country ski with him and Lily before it gets dark. My lesson can wait until tonight and another tomorrow. Anything you want before we get started?"

"Coffee."

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