

THE REAL PLAN OF THE BARON OF MORLAY

I wrote this short essay to fix one of the biggest incoherences that was put in the game in "Night Howlers", "Wrath of the Immortals", "Immortals Fury" and "The Poor Wizard's Almanac" completely ignoring what was clearly stated in the Gazetteer of the Principalities of Glantri, and that is the birth of the Principality of Morlay. I don't want to completely thrash that idea, so I will just re-write the events and make everything in a more logical way.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT

GLANTRIAN SUCCESSION LAWS AND POLYTICS

First, let's look at what the gazetteer says.

Page 14:

Parliament votes are counted by the raising of hands.

Page 17:

Positions such as the Viceroyalty of a Fort (...) are called Charges and are awarded only to Princes.

Page 19:

Nobles are usually grouped in large factions, called "Houses" or "Clans", simplifying voting procedures in the Parliament. There is one House per Wizard-Prince. (...) Thus, there are ten parties in Glantri.

Page 25:

Morphail plans to have these barons increase their lands and then abdicate in his favor. Boldavia will then cover the whole northeastern area of Glantri, making him the most powerful prince.

Page 56:

When two ruling nobles marry in Glantri, they lose the dominion farther from the capital. For example: the Duchess of Fenswick marries the

Baron of Oxhill; the Baron becomes Duke of Fenswick. The baronial dominion becomes available to lesser nobles. No decisions in the couple's dominion can be made without both nobles' consent.

WHAT'S STATED IN THE OTHER SOURCES

All of the other sources follow the line that was given in *Night Howlers*, therefore I quote directly from that book.

Page 40:

He actively seeks to attract pro-werewolf settlers to La Vallée des Loups, to extend his influence to the free territories within the valley, and to demonstrate his abilities as a just and fair ruler. Control of the Fortresse D'Ybourgne would help, but must wait until he becomes Prince.

Page 41:

The Baron realizes he must extend his influence to the Vicomté de Malinbois and most of the free territories before calling for an act of Enfeifment.

Page 42:

The Baron has considered uniting his dominion with Malinbois by proposing marriage to Dame Diane de Moriamis. (...) He would retain his Barony, and would be in a position to influence Dame Diane and the government of Malinbois. He could then convince her to petition to the Council to create a new County encompassing Morlay, Malinbois, and the free lands between. If he planned everything exactly right, he might even be able to convince the Council to grant him the title of le Comte of the new County, leaving Dame Diane with some honorary title and little real power.

(...)

None of the Princes are likely to tolerate such a powerful neighbor. They may, however, listen to proposals for a secret Principality - one which no one but the Princes themselves (and the werewolves, of course) would know of. This Principality would have no official sanction; Sire Malachie's voting powers within the Council would be kept secret; and the common populace wouldn't be aware it existed.

OBVIOUS PROBLEMS

The first thing that comes to the eyes is that the law, clearly stated in the gazetteer, says that two nobles who get married lose the dominion that is the farthest from the capital, and in this case the Barony of Morlay. There is no way for two nobles to merge their dominions, except if one of them abdicates in favor of the other one.

The second thing that is to be noted is that there is no reason to change a dominion which is already a Viscounty into a County just because one petitions for it to happen, or because the dominion is getting bigger. It is not the size that matters, but the Order of the Radiance. Moreover, both him and Dame Diane would have the same title and would rule together, and that would not change because the name of the dominion changes.

Third, in the Parliament the votes are made by raising hands, and everyone can see and count the votes. A Prince has 10 votes, plus the ones that come from his secondary title. In case of a secret Principality, Malachie would be forced to give up his ten votes in Parliament to keep things hidden. Moreover, if he plans to get the Viceroyalty of Ylourgne, he must be recognised as a Prince, otherwise he would never be able to achieve that.

Another thing that collides with the idea of a secret Principality is the application of the laws. If killing wolves and werewolves is legal and actually

pursued in the free territories, and the common people will not know about the "secret Principality", no law to protect the werewolves may ever be made in these lands without revealing the secret Principality itself.

Finally, Malachie would never be able to build his own political party in the Parliament, if he doesn't come out as a Prince, and he would always be a subordinate Prince, who has to submit to another Prince's party, thus giving up most of his influence and power.

LET'S MAKE SOME ORDER

The following description is how the real plan of the Baron should be, in order to get what he wants without twisting the setting just to fit the plan.

The baron of Morlay needs to extend his influence on Malinbois and the surrounding areas, for sure. His barony doesn't have enough population to ensure an enfeoffment act in his favor. However, it is unlikely that Dame Diane will leave her dominion, even if offered a higher position, and if she dies any other Baron may get it. Moreover, these events are not possible to plan in advance, and Malachie wouldn't risk to murder a noble for a plan that could be derailed in no time.

Therefore, there is only one viable plan: to marry the Viscountess and become Viscount of Morlay with her. Malachie has planned his moves well, and is ready to act.

Malachie managed to place some of his werewolves among the counselors of Etienne and his most trusted men. Moreover, following Etienne's request, he exported some werewolves to Caurenze, and infected some of Prince Innocenti's most trusted counselors as well. When the time comes for him to leave the Barony, one of the werewolves in Caurenze will petition to get the Barony of Morlay, and Etienne's werewolf

counselors will push for him to back the request, so that the misunderstandings between the two Principalities will be settled. If the plan works, Malachie will have a faithful ally in Morlay. If the plan doesn't work, his wolves are ready to infect the new Baron anytime, and then blackmail him to do as he is told. Realizing that a huge part of the population in his barony is made of werewolves, and that they may easily ambush and kill him anytime, the Baron will have no other choice but give in.

Once the ally is set in Morlay, Malachie needs to get rid of the useless wife. Some time ago, the Baron managed to capture a doppelganger and is keeping it safe in his prisons. His plan is for the monster to murder Dame Diane, and keep the Doppelganger around to show that she is still alive. The Doppelganger will have to comply with Malachie's orders until the population of Malinbois starts loving him, and will be paid for his services. Then, Malachie will fake a disease for the Viscountess, and she will disappear from public life. The Doppelganger will be free to leave under a different identity - just to be murdered by Malachie's men once far from the tower, so that it may never tell the truth.

Within a few weeks, news will be given of the death of Dame Diane, and the Baron will mourn her for a decent amount of time. Then, he will marry a younger and more beautiful woman to get his heirs. After the new marriage, Malachie thinks he will be influent enough in the region to promote an act of Enfiefment. Then, the Princes must vote to accept or reject it.

It is true that Malachie is a werewolf, and Etienne knows it. It is also true that Etienne wouldn't want him to become a Prince. However, Etienne cannot expose Malachie to the other nobles - nor Sephora or Gilles would - for two very simple reasons. First, if they say that Malachie is a werewolf, they must also explain why, if they

knew, they didn't speak before. They may be charged for protecting a werewolf, and be suspected of plotting with him against the nation. Malachie would surely push things down this alley, to get his revenge, if the three nobles try to obstacle his dream. And for sure, Etienne's enemies would be more than happy to have such a good weapon to use against him.

Second, Malachie is the only one that is able to keep the werewolves of Glantri relatively quiet, and to keep the peace between them and the common people. If they expose him, the Council may rule to kill him, or take the dominion away from him, and when he is gone, the werewolves will be free to devastate the country the way they prefer - starting with La Nouvelle Averoine -, and Etienne and his allies would never want to experience that.

Malachie is already trying to plot to get votes from the other Princes when the time comes, even if he doesn't get Etienne's full backing. He has his men in Caurenze, and is planning to re-build Les Citadelles Invincibles to improve the commerce with the Principality of Aalban, which is something that Jaggar would be very pleased with. Improving this route would also benefit the other Principalities to the East. Finally, Malachie is always backing all of the Erewan plans to protect woods around the nation, to get Carlolina's votes but also to protect the environment where his wolves are better set to live.

If the Council allows the Principality to include the Barony of Morlay, the new Baron will be granted a new Barony somewhere else - as they normally do. If the Barony is not part of the Principality, Malachie will be able to get lands from the free territories around Malinbois to rule over. Either way, the Baron of Morlay (or former Baron) will soon become his first ally, building his own party in the Parliament, as the House of Malinbois.