

Emma Goodwin : In Terrorem ...

Speeches

Transcript

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Chapter One: A Sign of Worse to Come ...

'Ahead on tonight's news: after ten years of conflict, Chiron has been defeated by Kirchland in the Grand War ...'

'The new national makeup of Chiron continues to make itself heard, with branching ethnic and religious communities ...'

'It has been suggested that Auran insurgents were responsible for Chiron's ultimate defeat in the Grand War ...'

'The Chief Administrator of the Chironese National Council, Gideon Drake, has called for unity within the country ...'

'A decided racial split has emerged between those who have inhabited Chiron since before the Grand War, and those who have an affiliation with the cult of Aura ...'

'Extremist Auran literature has caused widespread outrage in Chiron, with anti-Auran groups claiming that it is a sign of worse to come.'

Chapter Two: In a World of Shadows ...

In a world of shadows, where the sun could never penetrate the layer of despair, everything was grey. The once proud walls of the city square lay in ruins, blocks of marbled capstone lying strewn across the streets.

From her vantage point upon the pedestal, the dark eyes a formidable figure pierced the confidence of the swelling crowd, a cold intelligence magnified through the impossibly transparent glass of harsh spectacles. Pale hair, severely tamed, framed the crown of a high forehead. Detached, she absorbed their quiet speculation, standing behind the simple lectern and leaning upon it with deliberate domination. The swirl of chilled breathing betrayed the cold winter, and she appeared as if suspended by a whispered cloud.

A young girl stood on tiptoe, drowned amongst the multitude of adults, struggling to see the woman who had captured the audience without uttering a sound. Her eyes, twin kaleidoscopes of blue, locked onto the hardened face above her.

Oblivious to the scrutiny of the young girl in the audience below, the woman began her revolutionary courtship of words.

Chapter Three: The Revolutionary Courtship of Words (Speech 1)

My fellow citizens,
We stand today on a street that once formed the heart of Chiron. The rubble behind us has yet to be cleared away, acting as an unnecessary reminder of a war which none of us can forget. Now, each year on the anniversary of defeat, Chief Administrator Drake, the man who calls himself our leader, stands on the podium I occupy this afternoon and makes what has become a very tedious statement. We have heard how the post-war period has seen Chiron thrive. We have heard, time and time again, how we have united under our new flag with enthusiasm, demonstrated by the gold and tangerine flying high over the rebuilding of Theasor. He fails to mention that flying such a flag is required by law. We have heard how our new ethnically diverse population is making us a better people. We have heard how well we get on together and how it is reflected in our blossoming international reputation.

I am not here today so that I, too, can lie to you.

We have left the struggle of the Grand War behind us, but many still bear the scars. I know many of you lost loved ones in the effort to assert ourselves, and I know that many more of you will be forever afflicted both physically, and in the vivid torture of your dreams. My own husband was killed at the hands of foreigners when Theasor fell, his death tantamount to the ruins of the once mighty fortress, and for that anger burns fiercely in my heart. My anger calls out for revenge ... but for me, that is not the answer. I know that my husband died fighting for Chiron, and this knowledge preserves my sanity. Yet I am concerned that Chiron will still be lost, despite his last sacrifice.

We lost much in the Grand War - land, pride, loved ones. Yet it is our identity which continues to be threatened. The unique blend of humanity which once defined Chiron has been distorted, to the point where it is virtually unrecognisable.

The Grand War ended on terms that have been difficult to swallow – indeed, the galling taste of bile still lingers. It was clearly shown that there were some among us willing to surrender Chiron in order to protect their own interests. You know those of whom I speak, men and women misguided by their convictions to allow for the publication of such literature as the 'The Aura of Supremacy' – a manuscript that appears to be dedicated to the eradication of all Chiron holds dear. For too long have we tolerated their presence in our midst. For too long have we denied the growing dissent. For too long have we pretended all is well.

In an ideal world, the amalgamation of numerous cultural, ethnic and religious groups would be a harmonious one – we would live together with tolerance and understanding. But such idealism carries no weight in this world, for there are some aspects of human difference which cannot be reconciled. It is the fundamental character of Chiron which does not translate to our new inhabitants. I do not deny the humanity of these people, for they are made of blood and bone just as we are. But that does not mean that we should be forced to witness the destruction of our Chironese way of life, and it most certainly does not mean that we should accept a decline in the standards of our Chironese identity.

Chiron has been weakened and destabilised by the emergence of those who would see the might of our nation disperse if it meant a gain for themselves. They leech from our sorely depleted reserves,

pollute our religious convictions. They threaten to corrupt all that is good within this nation.

We cannot – we must not – we will not – tolerate such parasitic existence.

In the turmoil and confusion which threatens to envelop us, I have determined one thing for certain – a nation is only as strong as its weakest link. Thus, it is imperative that to survive and to flourish amongst the ethnic dissention poisoning our world, we must rise as the nation with the strongest links.

There is a trademark of all great nations – the homogenous population. The Chironese race was once regarded as the strongest in the world. We are descended from the very pinnacle of human evolution – the perfection which blossomed on a continent now lost to us beneath the depths of time. The prodigious legends of our ancestors have been channelled through each successive generation; every true Chironese child is weaned on the tales of cultured heroism, hypnotised by the knowledge that they share the blood of these iconic figures. But, no longer is the blood which flowed through the veins of our forefathers universally shared. Our blood as a nation is no longer pure.

We need to recreate the flawlessness which typified our origins. This is the point where we must make the crucial decisions so that our Chironese culture is not to be drawn further down the path of ruin. Now is a time of metamorphosis. I can sense it hovering in the air. I can see its shadow on your faces. When I close my eyes I can hear it in the beating of my heart. Now is the time to act – while we appear to be fragile, let us be strong.

As long as there is a breath left in my body, I will strive to revitalise the Chiron my husband died for; the Chiron your fathers and brothers and sons and friends died for, so that their deaths will not have been in vain.

And so, as we rebuild Theasor, we need to rebuild Chiron. My fellow citizens, I look forward to the day when it is not a lie to stand on this podium and proclaim that Chiron is thriving, with a blossoming international reputation to reflect national satisfaction.

The Chiron we knew as children lives amongst us somewhere, cloaked by the grief of war and defeat. We must look within ourselves

to resurrect the legacy of our ancestors. One day, the world will witness the might of a unified and proud Chiron, but first we must re-discover that unity and pride.

My fellow citizens, let us cleanse our homeland and embrace the true Chiron once more.

Chapter Four: Premonition of Fear

The eruption of the crowd – angered, ignited, impassioned – dwarfed the little girl cowering between her zealous parents. Ears buzzing, heart thumping, she witnessed the birth of a determined regime. She did not understand the future, but she understood her premonition of fear. Nothing would stand before the hatred which fared brightly on the crest of the horizon.

Chapter Five: The Consequences ...

'The newly formed Chironese Liberal Anti-Auran Socialist Party, or CLAASP, was elected into the midst of an increasingly corrupt National Council ...'

'International relations are taut, with far-off Melluvia offering a safe haven for the Auran people ...'

'CLAASP troops have moved beyond Theasor into the wider community and have begun a process of systematically collecting all Auran people ...'

'Melluvia has been kind enough to make way for floods of international immigrants who are fleeing the destruction in Chiron ...'

'The CLAASP regime is over. This morning, following a six-month siege, the fortress of Theasor succumbed to the power of the international forces ...'

'There has been unprecedented outrage as the horror of Auran extermination is revealed.'

'Dissent has arisen in Melluvia between the different ethnic communities, with rival gangs emerging within smaller communities.'

'A young Melluvian man has been killed by a gang of Chironese descent, aggravating the religious and ethnic divides which have slowly been developing after the War of Supremacy ...'

Chapter Six: Déja Vu

A mass of people had gathered on the soft grass, most with a cold beer in hand. The sea of pale skin stood out against the crimson of the national flags draped on the lawn, serving as shields against its tickling touch. The rocky outcrop, perched above the glassy lake, dominated the afternoon skyline. Upon it, slim elbows resting on a plastic table, sat a young woman, brunette hair fluttering in the casual breeze. She cast her eyes around the park below; could still picture the play equipment stained with blood. Hatred fared in her emerald eyes, masked by a grimly determined smile.

A little girl in the crowd saw that hatred, momentarily distracted from her scrumptious chocolate bar. She turned to her elderly grandmother – the only member of the amassed group fully attired with a concerned expression. The old woman's blue eyes narrowed, a frown of countless years impression perfectly folded into the aged skin.

The brunette, now erect against the backdrop of the flickering water, raised the microphone to her painted lips, and began her sad, sweet song to humanity.

Chapter Seven: The Sad, Sweet Song to Humanity (Speech 2)

The government has deemed the death of my brother 'an unfortunate accident, which by no means demonstrates a culture of racial intolerance'. That lie must be easy for them to tell. They didn't watch while his body, fighting for breath, was thundered by the discriminating punches of restless racists. They didn't hear his cries of pain. They didn't have to tell my parents that their only son was dead.

My friends, it was no accident which caused the puncture of his bruised and beaten lungs – and we all know it. It's not the fear of an accident which keeps us, paranoid, behind locked doors – away from the parks in which we grew up; from the people we love; from ourselves.

I'm sick of political correctness; I'm sick of the pain, the fear. Looking around at all of you today, I recognise my countrymen and women, we who still hold true to the values of the Melluvia I know and love. But what are those values? Amongst the finger pointing, blame and hypocritical political circus, I think we've all forgotten. This is how slowly, systematically, but surely, we're being destroyed from within.

When my brother was killed, I saw red. Every fibre of my being screamed out for revenge. I wanted an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth ... I wanted to give as good as my brother had got.

The revelation that I wanted to kill shocked me to the very core. But that's exactly the response they look for – rash decisions, passionate revenge without consideration of the consequences. I've been told that an eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind, and I can't help but think that blind, the world would be happier – at least it wouldn't be able to see the destruction that its people are causing ... But that doesn't make it right. And so there'll be no blood on my hands, only anger in my heart. We don't believe in capital punishment here in Melluvia. We consider it a matter of pride to be above such barbarity. It's a value that my resentment caused me to forget, one of many. My friends, we need to find those values again if we're to survive and flourish in this forbidding world.

When our country accepted the migrants from the War of Supremacy, it was an act of humility and friendship. The Melluvians who fought bravely in that devastating Grand War ignited a legacy, for it was fought so soon after our independence when we were still searching for the niche in which we were to grow. The blood that flows through our veins links us to the courageous Melluvians of the past, and we still gather together annually to perpetuate that legacy, so our forefathers did not die needlessly.

The second war we fought brought this cultural, religious and ethnic diversity to our shores, and so we have new blood within our country since the Grand War. I believe that's the problem. Our blood now no longer links us and unites us. It now separates us. We're

fundamentally divided.

We can't be united to a common set of values if we faction ourselves to different sets of values. Our politicians continue to stand before us and claim that Melluvians of all backgrounds are living harmoniously under our crimson flag, but it becomes more and more obvious that this is a lie. We now have Melluvians, Melluvian-Aurans and Chironese-Melluvians ... have you noticed that we always make the distinctions, to supposedly preserve 'cultural integrity'?

We've all felt the dissention. It hangs in the air we breathe; it spreads through disgusted gazes of dark eyes. It mocks, it torments; we know that it kills. This problem is becoming all-encompassing: we live it each and every day. We wake to the news that another gang has torn through the streets, another woman has been raped. Another boy has been viciously beaten to death. I ignored it for a long time. Then that boy was my brother.

The only thing I know is that Melluvia wasn't always like this. We were once a largely uniform population, at least united by religious convictions and values if not by race. The influx of immigration, however, changed our dynamics. I respect that our migratory inhabitants have a different cultural background, and I don't deny them the right to be proud of their differences. But I refuse to stand back and watch them attempt to enforce their beliefs onto the rest of Melluvia. I refuse to stand back and be told that the beliefs and the values of Melluvia that go back so many generations are wrong. I refuse to stand back and be threatened by those who, by their own admission, are foreigners.

Perhaps our country isn't big enough for the idealistic burdens we've asked of it. For this reason, it seems, the innocent die. I can't help but wonder, though, if anyone's truly innocent in these times. Perhaps we're all guilty of ignoring what's right, in favour of what's easy. Or, as the excuse goes, what's 'politically correct'. How do we deal with this problem? Well, I'll admit to you that I don't know. But we need to at least start by making the questions which plague us known – to acknowledge that which, publicly, we're supposedly unaware. It's pointless to continue to wrap ourselves in this veil of denial – one we've been taught from youth to fabricate. Have we become a racist country, as some claim? When you walk down the streets of some neighbourhoods, it seems so. It's a horrible feeling, to have the eyes of hatred follow you. You take to

watching your back out of instinct, afraid to relax.

But this image, it isn't Melluvia. We've become the refuge of other cultures, transplanted here to avoid the turmoil they've caused in their countries of origin. As a community, Melluvia grieves for the dispossessed and welcomes them with open arms. As people, we need to ask the migrants to leave their quarrels behind. Our diversity is poisoning us. Our national identity is threatened, along with our safety.

My friends, it's not selfish to want to preserve our Melluvian identity. Our values are not irrational, sinister, or beyond the reach of all.

We value a warm summers day. We value the right to walk down the street and feel safe. We value the harmless pleasure of a visit to the park. Most of all, we value each other – we've always valued our fellow man.

Today, each day is chilled with discomfort. Today, we hide behind our skin colour. Today, we spit on each other in the streets. Today, gangs patrol the parks and tear families apart.

My friends, some people will claim that I came here today for your sympathy, but that isn't true. I came here to raise awareness. I loved my brother, and I made a vow that he won't have died in vain. This weapon of hatred, turmoil and dissention must be fought. This restless and despicable scum of humanity need to be stopped before it's too late. I don't want to wake up one day to a world where justice is conducted through the vengeance bombings of schools, where innocent lives are cut down in their prime because they don't have the 'right' spiritual devotion. Something must be done, a weapon to counteract the violence and tyranny evolving amongst us – that weapon is our genuine union under one flag, under one creed. My friends, it should be up to each of us to determine our own destiny, as individuals. But first, we need to rediscover our identity as a community. Only then, united, will we be able to wipe our country clean of its parasites.

Chapter Eight: Ghosts of the Future

Amid the cheering, chanting hooliganism of a drunken crowd, the little girl sat beside her grandmother. The older woman, a look of pain and foreboding infusing her face, was unaware of her presence.

She was absorbed in a frightening montage of déjà vu, images long since burned onto a young girl's retina swimming vividly before her. The ghosts of the past danced, mocking a wounded heart. In that park, under a pulsing sun, amid the animated crowd, she lost herself in time. The ghosts of the past transformed. They were now the ghosts of the future.