I will begin this message, like all my messages, by saying that the below is the opinion of me, and me alone. And who am I you might ask? At the end of the day, I am just a player like you. But currently, I am the Sabbat Coord. I was elected (by a slim margin this time!) to both lead and enforce genre within One World By Night as far as The Sabbat are concerned.

The Sabbat represents a large number of our active players in the Org. Last most recent survey counted somewhere around 100 active and unique players and I know it's functionally more than that. And while the struggles facing all of the Sects/Genres are different in their own way, a lot of them are shockingly the same/similar just wearing a different mask.

So with that out of the way, I want to clarify that the below message is intended to be read in a conversational, not confrontational tone. I welcome positive discourse, constructive criticisms, and intentional dialogue.

At the end of all of this, you only have me for 2 years (or less if I like… really screw up) and at the end of that, someone else will get the chance to hop in the seat, and I remain forever excited about the future of The Sabbat and One World By Night. I ask that everyone take a peak at my automated signature, the tag line underneath is my true belief in what OWBN is and what makes it the best.

With all of that said, I please invite you to join me in the journey of my thoughts below, and ask that you engage with them fully. Take the time to read the whole thing please! And thanks!

Consequences are a good thing and we need to stop telling people that they are not.

I think it is important to begin with a quick note. When I say Consequences, I do not just mean 'Bad things happening to one person.' It is very important to me, as a Coord, Story Teller, and Player, that the word Consequences in the context of LARP and Role Playing Games in general, be a multifaceted word that largely means "**Story progression or story conclusions, for one or more characters, as a result of competing actions in a living world.**" Can we all agree on that? Can we all get on board with that as the basis of what I mean when I say the word Consequences? Can we likewise agree that consequences need not be positive or negative then? They simply just… are.

Cool, if we can all agree with the above, or at least agree with them in the context of my Sabbat Talk message you are reading, and you can go with me on this journey, let's continue.

One World By Night is a game that may never end. That is to say, time and again Council votes down an Org Reset, or an End Time plot, or similar topics in favor of the game progressing to a conclusion. Part of the allure of OWBN is the fact that your characters get to keep on and

despite troubles, hardships, stories, and more… you know your character, or a new one, will still be there to play in the future inside the same world.

So flashback to my description of Consequence. "**…in a living world**" This is very important. The thing that differentiates what we do here day in and night out from essentially writing a big communal fanfic, is the fact that the world is alive, and it's out of our hands as players about how it reacts to us. Sure we can stack the deck with influence, disciplines, choices, actions, and more, but at the end of the day we are trusting in our STs, our Coords, and our Volunteers to direct the course of the world our characters live in, with the agreed upon rule that "The world will remain, even if my character is not in it anymore."

To have a living world, things have to move. Stuff has to progress, plots have to play out, and most importantly…. The world has to react. The World in this case isn't just the stage our characters act on, it's the NPC (Non-Player Characters) they interact with. It's the institutions that our characters interact with, the realms/lands and more. If these things aren't acting or reacting to us, then characters are just bouncing off of eachother in a void. Which can be fun! Some of the best plots are player made and player driven, but without a living world to inhabit and influence, everything would just become CvC combats and table talks.

That brings us to another part of my words "…**as a result of competing actions**" All characters have the ability to interact with the world around them. There are limiting levels to this of course. A Paladin of a Cardinal or the Archon of a Justicar will have more ready access to powerful movers and shakers than your average Cainite/Kindred who has but 1 status to their name. But status can't stop the enterprising vampire from getting a tanker truck filled with fuel and driving it into the Bishop/Prince's Haven at 90MPH in broad daylight. Or for a less direct/violent example, Status won't stop a young and hungry vampire from kidnapping/stealing people for sustenance or resources for the coming nights. And yet, all of those actions, from the High Status character asking for favors, to the low status character making things happen, cause things to occur. And someone, somewhere, along the way is going to get a chance to interact with the results/fallout of those choices. In the case of the Paladin/Arcon, someone down the line is going to have to deal with the favor that was asked and the Cardinal/Justicar making it happen. In the case of the 1 Status Vamp, that Prince is about to have a super bad morning, and those blood bags are about to be food.

This causes a cascade of effects, as complex and deep as the Storyteller's desire it to be. How much character on character conflict, strife, or consequence do the STs want to cause? Does the explosion of that Haven cause damage to property to other vamps in the city? Did those blood bags belong to someone? Did it hurt someone's influence? How many people were watching the news and saw the explosion or the missing persons report? How will they react? Panic in the streets? Martial law? Detectives?

Now we get to the next stage "…**for one or more characters,**" Simple acts (or drastic ones) spiral out onto the stage, and multiple people now interact. We have caused the live world to respond, and we have created story, plot, and consequence not just for the character who did

the deed, but for potentially an entire game, region, or more. We created engagement within the the live world that doesn't require a Council Prop or a Coord Team Email Scene for a player to engage with it.

This is the level at which most things should exist within One World By Night, the local/regional and individual game level. Perfectly possible for National players to travel to, for consequences to occur from on high, but dealing directly with the ST Staff and Game in which the event occurred. Games have the flexibility to be more active, reactive, and wide reaching than a Coord Staff does, and it's primarily the job of Coord Staff to support games in telling stories at their level, not the other way around (outside Meta/Org Wide Plots which have to pass a Council vote)

So now we keep digging in. The deed happened, the world responded to it, other characters got drawn into the event. NPC's have issued orders or directives to their PC subordinates, favors have been paid out or bought. Local Sect's have closed ranks, opened borders, or in general the living world has taken its breaths and done its things. So… that brings us to the last part "...**Story progressions or story conclusions**" I am going to harken back here to my first Sabbat Talk I dropped this month (May 2024) about Friends and Enemies, the part written by Alex about the 3 Stages of a character. Characters have 3 stages in One World By Night, and really in any game with similar themes as World of Darkness.

1. You make a character
2. Your character makes enemies and dies or repeats this step
3. You make a new character

That's it, there is no 'winning' at OWBN in terms of beating OWBN. We already covered the game can't and won't end. It's a part of our major appeal! Vampires don't age out and die, they live forever until an external force changes that fact. So if we can't win in the traditional sense, well Alex helped cover that too, we win in different ways.

- You win when you help tell a story that makes memories for you
- You win when you close the chapter on a book and get to smile about it
- You win when you truly feel for this world and its characters, good or bad
- You win when you get to write up a character you are so excited about
- You win when you and your ST's come up with an idea you can't wait to play out
- You win when you get a leg up on the plot or struggle you have been competing with
- You win when you watch your friends win, at any of the above.
- And so many other ways…

But you don't win by denying the consequences of actions. If that vampire didn't ram that tanker truck into the Prince's haven? Then it was just another night. If that other guy hadn't talked to an NPC and convinced them to act on their behalf? Then the NPC was just existing in space and that character was doing something else, maybe nothing. And then you aren't doing anything,

you are just waiting for the next plot to fall into your lap, you are just waiting for consequences to happen to you.

There remain two truths in story telling that I think are also super true to RPGs and LARP.

The Story has to progress. All good stories come to an end.

So, how can you help? How do you breathe life into the living world? How can you help your STs (who might be tired! Volunteering is hard!) How do you help your coord teams? (We ARE tired, I promise you!) How do you help your friends and yourselves?

…Might I direct you to a few Exxon Mobil gas stations in your character's immediate area?

Ha! That is to say, go out, and seek out consequences, and be ready for them to happen to you too.

I will close this with a nod to the problem elephant in the room. Obviously, for consequences to be levied and to be accepted, we have to trust the people handing them out. And trust is a hard commodity in the Org right now, always has been. Bad Blood that never got healed, old rivalries, differing play styles, and everything else I have mentioned in my other talks. I don't have easy answers to resolve these, but the resources to do so exist. Mediation, Coords and STs that are happy to talk if only you would ask us, your friends in the games around you or abroad.

We increase trust by engaging honestly in Coord and local Game elections. By holding our ST's and Volunteers, and our fellow players accountable to their behaviors and their influence on our game spaces. We increase trust when we truthfully and reliably engage with the DA process to correct problems that can't be mediated away. We increase trust by employing empathy and giving people grace to be human, allowing them to make mistakes, but holding them accountable to doing better or correcting those mistakes. We increase trust by asking questions, seeking understanding, and talking in good faith with one another.

We don't increase trust by engaging in negative rumor mill practices. We don't increase trust by slinging dirt about our Volunteers in places we don't think anyone will see. We don't increase trust by derailing honest attempts at improving the Org just because we disagree with the direction others think might be good. We don't increase trust by weaponizing others' empathy and employing it in bad faith against them.

I want a living, breathing, exciting, and terrifying World of Darkness. I want to see my characters live, strive, die, and do it all over again! I want to tell the stories of their lives around drinks at an event game and relive mine and others moments again and again, all while gearing up to do it again!

I want to tell collaborative stories where we talk about triumph, loss, empathy, and the soul of what it means to be human by exploring what humans are not. I want to do that with friends,

acquaintances, and everyone else, like a big community of people. Telling these stories together, for as long as we can get OWBN to last…. Hell, where have I read that before?

~ Matt Armitage
Sabbat Coordinator

"We are One World By Night; a Community of collaborative story-telling, aiming to explore stories of triumph, loss, and the human soul. We are not just an organization of games and gamers, we are a Community of storytellers, together."