

New Testament - Book Six

And it came to pass that the Children of the Bird did grow older, and several even older than that. The Faithful yet returned to celebrate and renew the sacred bonds of Badminton on Tournament Day, but Lo, though their spirit remained strong, the years fell heavily upon their features, and the lines came to dwell upon the faces of them. And even as they grew older they also grew in many and various ways, for some grew wizened and some grew rounder and some grew balder, while others grew hairs from within their ears. And their bodies did come to malfunction in diverse and often embarrassing fashion, and generally well-deserved, for the Way of the Bird is ever a challenge to physical integrity. Only upon the Court did their youthful vigor and swiftness of motion return, and sometimes a little flexibility; and some had again endurance like unto a hedgehog in heat, and many had speed. But upon the following morrow, and again the next even unto a score of days the Faithful did whimper and groan, and cry out when they moved suddenly; and many were pathetic. Thus did the children of the Bird grow older, and there was the sound of wailing and the gnashing of teeth.

And so it was that many of the Faithful sought out mates and spouses, that they would need not deteriorate in solitary fashion but rather in pairs so as to have someone else to watch fall apart besides themselves. First one and then another, and again yet another became wed, and these were followed by still others; and some were even wed to each other and some were wed to several others. And toasters and blenders grew thick in the land.

Thus did the Children of the Bird begin to beget; and first one and then the other began begetting, and still others beget, and some got to begetting again and again though others got to be getting tired of all the begetting. And the children of the Children of the Bird became many and numerous, and they filled the Courtsides with their tiny crawling bodies and the

air with laughter and the scent of unmetabolized strained vegetable.

And now did the Faithful truly know what it was to grow older, for the hairs which were upon their head did grow gray and sparse, and the lines which were in their faces grew deepened and dark, and they curved downward toward the earth; and from their throats came the words of their own parents which they had sworn never to utter.

But in their time the children of the Faithful did themselves grow older. and did in turn take up their own places upon the Courts; and so they followed in the footprints of their forbearers along the Way of the Bird, as is fitting and proper. And the days of Badminton were long in the land.