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# Punishments at the Weyr

by Ron Swartzendruber

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Almost any job may be assigned as a punishment job, especially if the one to be punished sees it as beneath them (a bronzerider assigned to the laundry, for instance.) Weyrling punishments can be quite creative; anything from a macho-type being forced to wear a frilly gather dress for a few days, to a lazy weyrling having to dig a hole deep enough to stand in and then fill it in again, to whatever else the fiendish and frustrated minds of the weyringstaff can dream up to fit the behavior of their charges. Such things are generally reserved for special cases, though. Most punishments, for weyrings, riders, and staffers alike, involve work duties, usually either glow duty or midden duty. These both come in various varieties (and various degrees of unpleasantness.)

Glow duty is often a punishment job for weyrbrats, candidates, and younger weyrings guilty of minor offenses, though if not enough people need to be punished, weyrbrats will be drafted even though they have done nothing. Glows need to be exchanged about every once a sevenday and even though the new Weyr is above ground, there are many glows in each building so workers are always needed. Individual weycots are the responsibility of the rider(s) living there, but all other living and work areas are taken care of by weyrbrats and candidates working in teams. They carry fresh glows to the baskets and deposit the dim ones at a collection point near the kitchens. This is a chore that some find boring and others enjoy; but most people don't find it much of a punishment, and it is not intended as a serious one.

Another type of glow duty is less pleasant. Those who shuttle the glows down from the collection point to the glow cave are usually there specifically for punishment. Once in awhile nobody needs to be punished and four or five weyrbrats will have the bad luck to be around when the staff are looking for 'volunteers'; but it's a rare sevenday when the Headwoman can't find that many people to punish! This duty sometimes allows time to goof off if all the other glow teams take their time, but more often involves lots of hurrying and scurrying, not to mention being under the eye of Farlow, the glowmaster. This job is also a smelly one, since the glows are fed on manure, and the glow room is right next to the midden cave as well.

Sometimes weyrbrats on glow duty are tempted to hide a few glows for their own use, however this is of limited use as dim glows go totally dead in another sevenday, and a day or two after that they burst and spread spores everywhere. This fact is occasionally taken advantage of by pranksters, though it may backfire since nobody can predict exactly how soon a dead glow will pop.

Less minor offenses are punished by one of several types of midden duty. The most common of these chores is

'pasture duty', which involves hauling a wagon back and forth across the pastures and feeding grounds, picking up every piece of dung. When a wagon is full, it must be shoveled out onto one of the Weyrfarm's compost piles. This is a common punishment for weyrings on restdays, and is often assigned by the wagonful; those who have done more minor offenses may only have to help with one wagonload, while those guilty of worse may have to handle three or four by themselves. The weyrherdsman oversees this task, including the division of labor.

A serious punishment for the newest weyrings is emptying the dragonet manure pit. Newborns must be trained to use the pit, each weyring being responsible to clean up any messes made outside the pit by their dragonet. Whichever weyrings (generally from the youngest classes) that have most earned the displeasure of the Weyringtonmaster are assigned to muck out the pit into a wagon sent over each sevenday from the glow room. This is a really stinky job and one or two weyrings must stand in the pit itself once it is nearly empty and shovels no longer can pick up much from above. Adding insult to injury, the wagon is always sent over on restday!

The human-sewage arrangements at the new site provide the worst types of punishment jobs. Each living complex has several bathhouses which include latrines. The latrine section is slightly raised, and built over a ramped pit just large enough to hold a wagon, into which all the sewage lands. Every day or two, these wagons must be replaced with empty ones and hauled to the compost yard where they are shoveled out and cleaned. This chore takes several days each sevenday, and usually assigned to those guilty of irresponsibility, severe laziness, lying about important matters, and other middling serious offenses. Wingleaders sometimes use the threat of this duty to motivate their riders if they are performing very badly, and occasionally the loss of a bet between rival wings may result in one wing doing this chore. On rare occasions when there are not enough serious offenders to take care of this necessary task, more minor offenders may be assigned to it instead of pasture duty.

The worst punishment of all is midden cave duty. It is reserved for those who are guilty of serious irresponsibility, life-threatening carelessness, blatant disobedience, dereliction of duty, assault, theft, and so forth. Any crime not quite serious enough to result in expulsion from the Weyr, or a crime by one such as a dragonrider who cannot be expelled, will usually result in a month or more 'in the hole'. Glowmaster Farlow oversees this operation as well. The job is smaller than it was at the old weyr, but most of the latrines in the Main complex empty into this cave, where the feces come gurgling out of a large pipe and onto a pile. The pile must be kept back from the drains which allow water to escape (there is no such thing as a flush toilet, but some water is diverted from bathing chamber outflow into the sewer pipes to make sure nothing piles up and blocks.) Anyone who has worked down there believes that the facility was intentionally designed to provide a truly

humiliating experience; by the end of a six-hour shift, the workers smell like they rolled in the pile, and are covered with dried residue from splashes. For the sake of the weyr's innocent residents, there is a bathing chamber near the top of the passageway.

There is actually one worse job, and it is reserved for those already on duty in the hole. Once in a while the main pipe will clog, in which case someone must crawl up it and open it up again. Farlow will usually have his workers draw straws, unless he decides one of them has done something to deserve being assigned the job. For the sake of morale he himself will draw the last straw; as the story goes, once he actually did lose, back at the old weyr where the job, and the pile, were much bigger. According to the workers who were there, he never lost his unflappable cheerfulness even when the blockage finally gave and swept him down right into the dungpile.