

Cathedral of Christ the Savior

(The Sword)

This Tether is noteworthy primarily for its unusual history. While more than a few Tethers out there have been destroyed and later reconstituted, and some even shared the same Seneschal in their first and second incarnations, very few have had an interregnum as long as did the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Or have quite the same current reputation, even today.

The Cathedral was built in the mid-19th century in homage to Russia's victory over Napoleon; the Tether itself formed during the Cathedral's consecration in 1881. Unsurprisingly and not unusually, the Tether was to the Sword, and seemed reasonably stable and fairly promising. Accordingly, Archangel Laurence chose James (a Seraph Servitor of his who was familiar with the region) to be Seneschal; he performed his duties in an efficient and laudable manner, earning no criticism and only a moderately respectable amount of praise.

Then came the Bolsheviks. The Cathedral was always going to be destroyed; Joseph Stalin only delayed in demolishing it until a suitably bombastic alternative could

be drawn up to take its place. What he eventually came up with would have fit the bill, with emphasis on 'bombastic.' What plans survive depict a pillared architectural monstrosity in fact, resembling nothing so much as a 1980s video game joystick (complete with a statue of Vladimir Lenin doing the hustle at the top*). Fortunately for the sake of the world this structure was never built, as World War II and a misbehaving Moscow River combined forces to doom the project.

But that was incidental, from James' point of view. He had personally held off the wreckers for as long as he could, but both Heaven and Hell's networks of influence and oversight had been effectively shattered by the Bolshevik Revolution; the Seneschal didn't have the power to stop the destruction of his charge. He tried his best, but Laurence still had to (sorrowfully and without criticism) strip James of his connection to the dying Tether, lest it kill him. It very nearly killed him, anyway. The Seraph came as close to losing control of his Forces as you can get and not be obliterated.

So what saved him? Angelic selflessness, diverted into a new channel. The Soviet Union destroyed his Tether, and tried to destroy him? Fine. James would calmly, reasonably, and coolly destroy the Soviet Union.

Which he did.

The precise details are still classified, as Heaven may need to do something similar in the future, after all. But the general gist is that James spent the next fifty or so years displaying a ferocious imagination and crazed genius which had been previously absent earlier. There's some question about whether his activities were all that *nice*; actually, that's putting too gentle a face on it. There are factions in Heaven that are flat-out **enraged** that the Commander of the Host let one of his Servitors run roughshod over a major Earth nation-state, however depraved. And from an environmental point of view alone they might have some reason to be so. Laurence's only response is to point out the difference between bad and worse -- and, Truth be told, he has reason on his side, as well.

At any rate, the Soviet Union 'fell apart' eventually, the Russian Orthodox Church came back out of the shadows, and people were pretty quickly calling for the Cathedral to be rebuilt. Odd, that -- but not as odd as the speed with which it was rebuilt, in both the getting of permission and the actual physical rebuilding. What wasn't odd at *all* was

how Laurence cheerfully reaffirmed James as the Seneschal once a new Tether blossomed there.

The Cathedral now acts as a central nexus for Moscow: James pursues an open door policy, permitting free use. It's presumed that he wants to encourage goodwill and obligations in advance of the next time his Tether is threatened.

James, Seraph Vassal of the Sword

James is a very polite, fairly cheerful, and somewhat quiet angel. His current vessel is late youth to early middle aged, wears glasses, and shows maybe a slight hint of plumpness. He almost never raises his voice and never really loses his temper. His duties take up a good period of his time, but James handles them with slightly distracted efficiency.

It is almost impossible to reconcile this persona with the angel that single-handedly wrecked the Russian moon program, or strangled Lavrenty Beria with the preserved intestines of Leon Trotsky (trust me, *nothing* about the death of Stalin that you might have read in the history books is particularly accurate). Many celestials don't try, and instead choose to not annoy him unduly. Which, of course, suits James just fine.

Also, for the record: he didn't set off Chernobyl. James merely knew well in advance that it was going to happen, and did nothing about it except quietly do some prep work among the Ukrainian separatists against the day that it finally did melt down. Some celestials find that to be more disturbing than the angel simply causing the accident.

Cathedral of Christ the Savior: Average (9 Forces, Regular Flow, Celestial Harbor, Noisy)

*No, really:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_the_Soviets#/media/File:Palace_Of_Soviets_2.JPG

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