

Lions Faction Dispatches

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A LIONS OF LANTIA PRODUCTION

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Special Thanks to Bruce Myers for use of the Lions logo; legend says it waits for the coming of the Chosen One, but to be fair, I've been very busy.

Tip of the Season:

New Year, New Possibilities. Keep safe, keep warm, have fun!

Editorial

My brain hurts. There was apparently a statement made by someone, somewhere at some time that the Pack Up was maybe lacking in submissions. I was all for this endeavour; I mean “More submissions?! Hell yes!”

I am now in Day 42 of my self-imposed exile. So many submissions. So. Many. Submissions. I know I sound like a man who’s either been watching a 24 hour wrestling event or has decided to live in a fetish bar whose name happens to be “Dominatorz”, but in all seriousness, I got a ton of submissions, and it’s brilliant! Thank you so much to those who campaigned on the submissions front, and of course to all of you who sent in submissions, it’s phenomenal!

But lo; what event from yonder weekend breaks? It is the Parli, and Elementals be the cause! Dirty, wibbly freaks; who are they to do all these shenanigans and think they can get away with it!? By the Gods, I was shaking my fist at them so much over the winter season I developed Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, and more than a few dodgy looks from the neighbouring villagers. However, this is a Parli, and that means I can repair my poor shattered joints with good old fashioned slash n’ stab therapy. Ooooh yes, it’s on, and the Lions aren’t going to lie down and let these interlopers interfere with their land anymore, no Sir!

Sharpen your blades, band your shields, hone your arrows and get a tattoo on your spellcasting finger (though seriously, do none of these things as they will force me to kick you off site/laugh at you), we’ve got asses to kick!

Much love and disturbing hugs that go on about 12 seconds longer than is comfortable,

Gav

People of the Lions

Well, all in all it's been an interesting winter, what with the hard fought battle at Dupree and resultantly being able to hold enough land for the military to establish a beach head. The king being missing for several months and the crushing blow of finding we have lost control of two of our islands.

During the quiet time of winter I hope you have all had a chance to rest, regather your strength and prepare yourselves for the upcoming battles we have to face. It was so good to see so many of you at our winter festival, to reacquaint with old friends and hopefully make some new ones.

We are about to wade into the most hostile, enemy controlled territory we've had to fight for in years. We have a good idea what to expect in the form of Time Elementals but we must never be complacent. We know that there are those of our enemies who would use this distraction as a way to strike at us. As always the threat of Consangua looms in the background, as well as the Nolla. Although we appear to have dealt with the taint of the Nolla we are uncertain as to what they will do now, with their new found emotions.

I know as a faction if we stand together we will stand strong and vanquish this foe from our lands. Fight as I've seen you all do a hundred times and the Time Elementals will not stand a chance. Trust in those at your side and at your back and the line will not falter or fail. Believe in you military leaders, follow their orders and we will not lose anyone.

I know we can do this, and as always I am so proud of each and every one of you.

In Service,

Princess Lenia

Scout Reports

Emmerix.

Reports from our teams that made it back from Emmerix note that the isle is overrun by Elementals, with the citadel itself teeming with all manner of Elemental so much so that it could only be viewed from afar. If any members of Capsule Corps remained at the citadel then they are likely possessed now as well.

The interior of the isle is host to many varying Elementals as well and all villages that were happened upon proved to be void of Lions citizens. It is worth note that little blood was found when investigating these villages and that it is the belief of the scouts that the Elementals possessed most of the inhabitants.

Moving to the coast, our scouts found the beaches to be patrolled regularly by Water Elementals. Although there are places that a beachhead could be formed, it is unlikely to be an easy task or come without loss.

A message from the High Scout.

I had sent four 6-man teams to Emmerix to bring us information on the Elemental invasion, so far only two of those teams have returned home to their brothers and sisters in the Lions Scouts and in their own words they have done so only through sheer luck.

I bid you, take a moment to think after the dozen scouts that were lost to bring us this information, though we will do our job to the last, the supply of good men and women who act as Lions Scouts isn't endless.

Joining the Lions Scouts.

We are always looking for men and women who enjoy using the wilderness to their advantage and wish to serve their faction better, whether their skills see them re-mapping the various Lantian isles since our merging with Orst, or taking a more active role and sneaking behind enemy lines to bring back vital information for the legions. It could even be that you find yourself 60 yards away from friends, hidden in scrubland forming a perimeter of eyes along with other scouts to keep a legion or kings camp safe.

If you're willing then we will provide all the training we can to help keep you safe whilst performing your role within the faction. Keep in mind that this is not the path for everyone; if you seek fame and glory then I would suggest looking elsewhere, reputations usually don't carry any further than within the Lions Scouts and we are remembered by few outside of our ranks, but by all from within.

In Silence and Shadow,

With Luck,

Giblet

High Scout

Second day, Third Month, Eleven Hundred and Twelve
Onyx
Ontarix

Departed Gallathrix with 100 heavy horse. I commandeered the vessel Miruvor and her sister ship Massanie. Journey time between Gallathrix and Ontarix was in the region of one week. During this time we encountered and were engaged by several waves of Water Elementals. These did not pose a substantial threat as their attacks were poorly co-ordinated and their numbers few. Nonetheless five guardsmen did not survive the journey to Ontarix. Their names have been entered into the ship's log and they received last rites before being buried at sea.

We elected to avoid the Norwest port of Ontarix. The narrow approach channel was too easily defensible and our vessels were not fitted out for protracted naval combat. Instead it was agreed that we would run close to shore near the circle of Onyx West. Both vessels ran shallow in the draft and were well suited to beach landing.

After disembarkation contact was made with the local Watchguard at Onyx West. They were small in number, no more than a force of seventeen men. Morale however was high. There had been no sight of the enemy anywhere in the vicinity of Onyx West. We elected then to move South and East striking for the Circle of Onyx.

Journey to Onyx took longer than anticipated. This was due to multiple engagements. In the week that it took to transit the island we participated in around half a hundred actions against the enemy. Primarily the enemy consisted of small to medium groups of Water and blue Time elementals. This subset of time elementals appears to have naturally enchanted weaponry. Despite the scale of engagements the enemy was for the most part taken by surprise. Losses were mercifully light though another five men will not return from this campaign. Regrettably there was not time to provide proper burial for the fallen, consequently several small cairns have been raised.

Upon arrival at Onyx we discovered that morale was extremely low. Like all Watchguard manned installations manpower was a very tight resource. Onyx had been under prolonged attack by multiple skirmish groups of elementals. The attackers appeared to number about twenty in each group and were taking it in turns to assault the Watchguard forces and then retreat. In addition, despite multiple signals and attempts at contact there had been no communication from any of the Watchguard manned ports. Hicks, the local sergeant, was of the opinion that the three ports on Ontarix had necessarily been overrun with their people either killed or turned. We have not been able to verify this hypothesis.

In order to allow breathing space around Onyx we undertook to expunge the elemental threat from the local area. We were able to clear the surrounding area in about a one league radius from Onyx allowing something approximating safety for the growing number of refugees wishing to escape. Five Watchguard and ten Darkendale troopers fell in this action.

Arriving refugees brought tales of an elemental force advancing from the East. Leaving ten troopers behind to help reinforce the Watchguard the remainder of us headed East in order to ascertain the situation. We did not encounter the front line however we ran into a large group of Ontarician refugees who were running for the safety of the circle of Onyx. They were being chased and cut down by elemental skirmishers. We engaged and routed the enemy with no losses. Rather than advancing to contact with a larger force we provided escort to the fleeing refugees and brought them back to the safety on Onyx where they were able to evacuate the island. Before their departure some of the refugees gave mention of another Elemental approach. This time from Oriana, a city some twenty leagues North of Onyx. Once more we deployed to investigate.

We encountered the enemy. They were, as reported, moving South rapidly from the land surrounding Oriana. Whether the city is taken or not I cannot say but my heart tells me that it has fallen. The enemy was substantial. At least two hundred mixed water and time elementals. This time the time elementals bore red markings. When they struck their blows

were enough to force a warrior into an enchanted sleep. The enemy was upon us and we were unable to carry the action. En route to this we had passed through multiple farming and mining communities. With the rate at which the Elementals were advancing these communities would have been easy pickings for the enemy. Lieutenant Gibson of the Darkendale Guard took a detachment of thirty men and continued to press the attack. He employed a range of diversionary and delaying tactics so that the remainder of the troupe were able to disengage the enemy, and evacuate the Ontarician citizens to safety. Gibson and his men should be remembered and commended. They threw their lives in the way of harm to enable innocents to escape. I do not believe that they will have survived their own bravery. This engagement cost the lives of forty guardsmen, however it also saved the lives of at least a hundred and fifty civilians. The refugees were again escorted to Onyx where they were able to make an escape from the Elementals.

There are now two confirmed forces of Elementals converging on Onyx. They come from the North and East. Of the hundred guardsmen who came with me only forty now stand. All the remains of the Watchguard are ten men. Sergeant Hicks, realising that there is little more to be done has ordered his men to evacuate themselves to Onyx West.

As I detail the final aspects to this report I can see the hillcrests around me. The enemy is here at Onyx. They are just under a league from the Circle. I do not have sufficient force here to mount a credible threat against them and will not order my men to suicide. We have no choice but to move overland in the direction of Onyx West. It stands to reason that the enemy will, after it has taken Onyx attempt to move on Onyx West themselves. Accordingly we will make every effort to evacuate and guard the civilian populace who have steadings between the two circles.

In the name of Rhino Khazad,



Seraphim

Lions,

We are faced with a difficult choice, and one which may cause pain and concern for many. Especially to those of our people who may not fully realise our dilemma.

Emmerix is overrun, elementals are attacking, killing and possessing our people and yet we do not move to rescue them. Instead we move on Ontarix where the problem is not so grave. Without understanding, we run the risk of appearing craven and uncaring. This is not the case. We cannot move on Emmerix right now as to do so would be mass-suicide. However, we stand a chance of stopping the elementals gaining a stronger foothold on Ontarix and overrunning a second island. If they gain control of Ontarix too, we may never fully regain control of our lands. We must go where we can succeed, rather than casting our lives away where we cannot.

This does not mean that we have given up on Emmerix. Make no mistake, we will retake the island and drive these invaders from our shores. But we cannot do it immediately.

It had been my intention to travel through the villages and towns talking to the locals and reassuring them, quelling rumours, offering facts and support. Unfortunately events have overtaken me and I cannot do that. I would ask each and every one of you to go to the taverns, the shops, the farms. Wherever people are worried. Tell them of our plans, as far as you can. The only way to crush rumour is with firm, confident fact. Please help reassure our people that their kin on Emmerix are not abandoned.

As a Priestess and a Bard, it feels wrong to call people to war, but that is what I now do. We will need every sword, every healer, every mage, everyone who can drag the wounded to safety, or document the events as they unfold. If you can join us on Ontarix, then come. Follow your King into battle to save our people and our lands.

Tara Faith

Priestess of Humact

Sammerix: an update on our Dragon guests

As many of you know, the last few years have seen a massive upheaval in Dragon Lands, leading to thousands of refugees from Erin and Cymria seeking refuge outside of their lands. Some went to the Harts, some to the Bears, and around 500 came to us.

Initially, the 500 refugees were housed at Fort Borealis over the winter of 1110. Last Spring, work started on something a bit more comfortable. Over the course of last year, a temporary settlement of sturdy tents and wooden huts has been constructed on Sammarix to house them. It is now complete, and the refugees have moved there from Borealis. The abandoned mine we found nearby has had the entranceway sealed and about a hundred feet of tunnel behind it filled in. Even without the earthquakes, it was a deathtrap.

The area around the settlement has been converted to farmland. Across the Isle in general the winter crops have been harvested, the spring ones are being planted - if anything, we have a surplus of food here now, even with the 500 extra mouths.

I have been concentrating my spare time here, doing regular rounds of the Dragons and making sure there are no unpleasant surprises. They don't know the local flora well yet (though I'm teaching what I can - especially what the kids shouldn't be picking / eating / rolling in: some of the rashes can be spectacular), nor the signs of some of our more interesting local ailments. Luckily, there have only been the usual mild winter illnesses. No Lantian Flu outbreaks, no major accidents or diseases. There have been a few deaths through natural causes. There have even been a few new births. Not many, but some.

There are also pictures and letters up all over the settlement of lost loved ones and missing family members. If you know of any Dragons out there looking for family members, please come and look at these. If even one family can be reunited, it is a huge thing. It's hard, not knowing if a lost one is alive or dead.

There have been a number of volunteers coming from other parts of Lantia to help out, and with them has come a number of interesting rumours. I've had several of the Dragons tell me of some guy called "M" they've heard about from other field workers. Apparently the rivalry between the Freeman and the Darkendales is still going strong - this chap seems to have the Freeman's permission and help in setting himself up on Orlagnon taking over the criminal types there as it 'weakens the Darkendales'. But this is all rumour, and you know how rumours can get twisted in the telling.

So, the Dragons are doing ok on Sammarix. If anyone finds themselves at a loose end this spring, a hand weeding the fields would be appreciated...

Sheyna Darkleaf

Huntmaster of Malar, Knight of Lantia

Report on the Bards Guild Expedition to Malta,

3rd day of the 3rd month, 1112

Sheyna Darkleaf

I apologise in advance for anything missed out or slightly wrong in this report. I was somewhat out of it for several hours, so if it's wrong: blame the Time Elementals.

The day started nice and early with everyone pitching up at the Malta circle, only to find the pub / temple we were aiming for was in fact 2 hours walk away. There was a showing from almost all the Factions, and the Lions included myself, Kerr, Ilyria, Ilsa, Althea, Bliquis, Hadrian, Darkmare, Mathias and Alistair. Cosaint had requested help in finding the second of three items the Bards Guild were supposed to have been looking after for years, but no-one had thought to tell them this. The Guild has the Knowledge, we were looking for the Sound, and the Unliving already have the Light (we think).

So, after a pleasant morning stroll, we got close to the pub and began having to wade through shambling Unliving, who had apparently started to pitch up about the time we began our walk. Given the Guild had been attacked by Unliving all year who were also after the item we were looking for, this was no great surprise. What was a bit of a surprise was that the Unliving were coming from quite far away - we even had one turn up in a PBs tabard.

We fought our way around to the pub doors, and settled in. The Unliving would occasionally try and shamble our way, but for the most part we just smushed them. Inside, in addition to lunch and drinks, we found out that the Pub was actually a Temple to Time (the exact details escaped me, apparently the family that had been charged with running it had not bred enough, and now had too few members to run or protect it) and there was an hourglass on the shrine inside that

"only The Master Bard could move". There were also instructions that in order to get the item we sought (The Sound) we had to turn the glass at 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 o'clock, and then something would happen at midnight. Sounded easy enough. If we fluffed a challenge, there would be a chance to get the box it revealed at the next time slot. However, anyone could come and do the challenges, so we braced ourselves for Unliving to try do them too.

Whilst waiting for lunch, I found the Dragons present and gave them a full report on how their refugees on our lands are doing. It's entirely possible that two of the lads I spoke to (Geraint and Huw, who had spent the better part of a year escaping Erin) know a few of them, and will be dropping by sometime soon to let them know who else has made it out. They were all very grateful for us taking in their people.

At some point in the afternoon, I think when we first turned the Hourglass, a chap appeared in the Temple. He apparently has a Magic Demon (about 50 thaums worth, more than we could muster in a wedge) inside him, and when he turns 30 it will escape and rain down death and destruction on the Egg. The locals all seemed to have a rather hysterical reaction to seeing him out and about (including running headfirst into Unliving, and subsequently needing rescuing). We may need to deal with this, preferably before his birthday (which is some time in the summer, I believe).

Also at some point in the afternoon, a lady from the Harts was visited by something that blessed her with the ability to avoid paralysis for the day, and told her to ask about dreams and water. I had a nice long chat with her to check she hadn't been beguiled or otherwise mentally messed with, then discussed odd dreams with her. They weren't the sort she was looking for though, so I went back to fighting Unliving.

So, 2 o'clock rolled around and Cosaint stepped up to turn the hourglass. A Dragon Paladin (whose name eludes me, I'm rubbish with names) came on one side to Sanctuary him, I stood on the other to check his pattern. Almost everyone else was minimum safe distance away. It got turned, a map appeared, the Unliving attacked in force, and Cosaint vanished. I'm not entirely sure what happened next as I was too busy trying to discover where Cosaint had gone, but about 10 minutes later a party set out following a map that had appeared attached to the box. Myself, Cade, Lupus and Matt Lukan decided that letting the group of scholars that had just wandered off into the Unliving infested woods alone do so without an escort was a bad idea, so we grabbed 4 others and tailed them.

We got out to the large open fields behind the Temple, and at the first point marked on the map two Time Elementals appeared. It seemed they were repeatedly re-enacting a scene from somewhere, and it took a while (and actually getting to read the challenge instructions) to work out what was required of us. It appeared that the challenge was to work out what each scene was, and either correct it or finish it ourselves.

The first scene was the death of Lord Wolf Vlad at the hands of an assassin with a poison. However, the scene was wrong because the actor was in were-form, but the poison had actually prevented Vlad from shifting and he died with a sword in his hands. We acted it out properly, the actors bowed to us, and we moved on to the next spot.

The second scene was one I recognised - it was the first time Jasper (as an Avalonian Battle Demon) confronted Queen Sapphire and denied she was his mother. I couldn't remember if the wording was right, so we tried a few variations before instead going for finishing their story, and acting out the Birthday Party we threw for him. That worked, and we moved on to spot 3.

The third scene I recognised the people (the Dark Lord Gustav of the Vipers) but not the scene, so we hurriedly sent for some Vipers. They told us the context of the scene, that a

proclamation stripping his son (Prince Wilhelm) of powers was correct rather than Gustav himself, and after acting it correctly we moved on.

The fourth scene was supposed to be the finale of the Dragons troubles, but the scene was all wrong. The two sides still hated each other, and refused to work together. Kiera led us in doing it properly, having both sides agree to work together for the good of the Lands, and we moved to the final spot.

The fifth scene was an Albione one. Lord Karlennon (I believe) was pronouncing judgement on himself for binding a demon to him as a slave, and that the sentence for that was death, with Elspeth trying to talk him out of it. The Harts with us corrected it, as Elspeth had actually made the sentence one of exile: never to spend a night on Albione soil again. The actors bowed to us, presented us with a sealed box, and vanished. The Unliving stopped attacking pretty much as soon as that happened, and Cosaint reappeared in the Temple. He had apparently been teleported to a sealed room with boxes in it, much like the box we'd won, and his ability to keep track of time had gone all screwy.

We relaxed a bit, finished lunch, and awaited the next appointed time for a challenge. This time, as no-one had blown up the first time, a few more people clustered around as we turned the hourglass. Cosaint vanished, the Unliving attacked in force, and this time the box itself appeared with a scroll tied on top. This challenge was a translation piece, which Althea and a few others handled within minutes. What we didn't know was a couple of other things had gotten out at the same time. A short while later I was called outside to have a look at Silveron, who seemed to be having trouble recalling what he'd been doing 5 minutes ago, or even what a minute was. A brief peek inside his head revealed nothing out of the ordinary, but I carried on Mind Healing him anyway, just in case. When I'd finished, his problems seemed to have vanished, so I assumed I just hadn't been able to see what was causing it. The Dragon Paladin who had been granting Cosaint Sanctuary was having similar problems, and one long chat with him later he was feeling better too.

At the 6 o'clock turning, Garrett was standing next to us as the hourglass got turned and told us that another Elemental had tried to get in his head, but had failed and jumped elsewhere instead. So Althea and a few others did checks of everyone, and we discovered that baby Time Elementals, no bigger than 5 thaums each, were possessing people near to the Altar when the hourglass was turned over. We didn't have much power to spare from healing and didn't know if dismissing them would cause fatal wounds like removing possessions normally does, so I Mind Healed the victims instead, which seemed to work just fine. This box's challenge was to do a Rite to Darkness lasting 8 minutes exactly, which I didn't watch but heard they timed it by repeatedly knocking Kiera out. I was busy outside, as the Unliving got a little more sneaky with this attack, and there seemed to be more intelligent ones directing the forces. They came from both sides of the Temple this time, and we were actually quite hard pressed to keep them away. The archers were scarily accurate with their aim.

When Cosaint returned from this trip to his box room, he made a suggestion that initially had me checking he was actually our Cosaint. He suggested that dancing to instructions set out hundreds of years ago, just because some old guy said "that was how it's always been done" was silly, and we should try and see what happened when we strayed from those instructions. Checks said it was him, so we decided to move the turning by 10 minutes to see what happened. We got to 10 minutes before 8, set up the emergency healers and Sanctuaries, and turned the glass.

Several things happened.

Cosaint had a moment of piercing pain (which he later thought was something trying to tell him what had gone wrong as fast as possible), yelled "It's outside" and vanished. The Unliving attacked with a larger force than ever before, and pressed the attack hard. And my recollection of events went a little bit screwy.

How best to describe it? It was like there was nothing but Now. No future, no past, no concept of either. And there never had been, so it all seemed just fine. Nothing except what was happening right now mattered, but **everything** was all happening Right Now. I should have known something was wrong with my head, but with no knowledge or concept that anything other than that state had ever existed or could exist, why would I think something was wrong?

I couldn't help with a Rite anyway, so I wandered out to help with the fight. Vincenzo was hurt, so I healed him. Something in the back of my head said that was wrong, that should have taken longer than it appeared to me, and I remember mentioning something like that to him, but he misconstrued what I was saying and as I didn't really understand why I'd said that anyway, I moved on. A ghoul to the back knocked me furry, and I knew that something was wrong when my regeneration seemed to be happening randomly (as I couldn't keep track of how long it was or should take, I just knew it should happen), and my forced change back took me completely by surprise. It wasn't until I sat down and chatted with Kerr though, that she noticed something was wrong. Apparently I mentioned that the moon had come up three times in the same conversation, and couldn't remember the year I had first met Lemming. She got Wenceslas and Althea to take a look at me, and yes, a baby Time Elemental had taken up residence. As I was the only Mind Healer there, they had no choice but to blast it out. Luckily it went quietly, and a new round of checks was done on everyone else.

The box was recovered from outside where it had appeared amidst the Unliving. The Challenge (to write a song or poetry about something known, but not talked about) was completed, the Unliving were beaten off, Cosaint came back with a headache and we decided that the 10 o'clock turning would be done exactly on time.

Dinner happened after that, and the Temple cooks laid on a lovely meal. There was more food than we could all eat, and snacking happened until late into the night. At 10 o'clock on the dot, we turned the hourglass again. This time, I was 10foot away from the table as I didn't want to end up possessed again. The challenge this time was to create a Timeline of the last 5 years, and include a major event for every Faction in that. I was helping initially, until I got called away to talk to the Hart Lady from earlier who had suddenly started acting strangely. I recognised the signs of baby Time Elemental possession, and went to work. It succeeded, she seemed fine, except it hadn't gone away, it had jumped instead. So the next hour or so was once again a blurry mess. The challenge team appeared to be talking utter gibberish, so I ambled outside to kill Unliving once more. Except they weren't killing Unliving: Some bright spark had controlled the Skeletal thing in charge, and Vincenzo had talked it into submission. He'd then convinced it to go outside and order all the other Unliving to kill each other, saving us a lot of trouble. It worked for a while (and was highly amusing), until something bigger came along and took control again. For some reason, Ilyrio was disapproving of this tactic. I just think he was put out because he didn't come up with it first.

It wasn't until much later that I sat down next to an exhausted Kerr, we started talking about healing people by kicking their feet and she (eventually) twigged something was wrong again. Except this time we were much lower on power, and one Viper (Remus, I think his name was) suggested they could control me to make it leave rather than just explode it. He didn't quite seem to grasp the fact that after the control wore off, I'd likely still be possessed, and he'd have a very angry werecat trying to eat him. That's if my Alpha hadn't done so first. Eventually he backed off, and enough Incantation was found to blow up the Elemental.

Once the Timeline was finished and the Unliving stopped once more, the final challenge to unlock the Sound was delivered. Each box had contained a tuning fork. At midnight precisely three Rites needed to be done back to back, each lasting 10 minutes and the whole lot not running over

30, to Knowledge, Darkness and Time in that order. Then the forks needed to be sounded, with the high E being the last note. That would unlock the Sound.

I wasn't involved with the Rite planning, being all squiffy in the head and outside with Kerr having the Elemental extracted, so I tagged along at the end to be in the lines defending the Rites against the Unliving. A Temporal Enforcer turned up to tell us that we couldn't do a Rite to Time in a Temple of Time, else he'd have to do unfortunate things to us. So the Rites were done outside, in the open, in the least defensible place possible. Midnight came, the hourglass was turned one last time, and the Rites began. Mists descended so we could barely see past our weapons, and shadows loomed at us out of them. It was a long fight, but we kept them away from the three Rite teams long enough that they could do their stuff. However, when they were finished, nothing happened.

The Unliving stopped attacking, so we went back inside rather bemused. Then the tuning forks all started to draw together, an explosion of magic and paralysis went off, and in the middle of it was our missing Sound. We had found it, and no-one had died in the process. It seemed an appropriate time to crack out the drink, songs and cake, and the rest of the evening was spent celebrating those facts.

So, the Guild has 2 of the 3 missing items. Now to extract the third from the possession of the Unliving, and all will be well...

I am proud to introduce the wonderful work of Kara and Eskan, the winners of the Cuthbert Home for Orphaned Children's first Story Competition. Everyone who entered did a really great job, and it was tough to decide on the winners, but these are the ones that were chosen in the end. Thank you very much to the bards Leo and Kit who had the hard job of judging the contest!

Arden Hale

My Favourite Place by Eskan

My favourite place in the world is at the top of the tree behind the cowshed out the back. It is quiet and peaceful up there because the little kids can't climb up there and bother me. As well, it is quiet because no one can see if I am there so Arden or Marron or Jess can't ask me to do things and if I get sweets I can eat them there and not share. But I don't just like it because of being selfish.

I like it because I can see everyone who is out the back of the orphanage walking around tiny like insects, and I can imagine what they are thinking and doing. It feels like they are toys in a doll house, and not really real, and that is strange and kind of fun. I feel far away from everything, like nothing that happens when I am on the ground matters when I am hiding up in the top of the tree. That feeling is nice but then when I get lonely or hungry or it starts to get dark or cold I like being able to come down to where everything is close up and real again. Especially if it is dinnertime!

What I want to do when I grow up, by Kara.

When I grow up I am going to be a sailor and go to sea on a big ship. I will sail to Lyonesese and Cathay and all Merabia and Tutonia and everywhere. I will not be scared of the Kraken because he is good and he only eats baddies and I will not be a baddy. If I meet pirates I will fight them with a sword that is a cutless because you cannot have a sword on a boat, only a cutless. I will be feroshus and the pirates will all be scared of me because I will chop off the pirate captain's head after a big fight where we nearly fall into the sea.

Then everyone will be happy that I have chopped off the pirate captain's head and there will be a big party with twenty different cakes and I will get a big chest of pirate treasure. I will share the treasure but I will buy a horse and armour first so I can be a knight if I do not want to be a sailor any more.

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Sava, I'm the barman at the 'Dancing Dryad' tavern on La Lara near Camelot. I hear a lot o' stories and tales in the tavern. Some are nonsense, some are real, some are tales of love and bunnies, some are tales to make your pattern spin sideways. Mirjana my wife suggested (in that way a wife 'suggests' many things you know you should do) that I spin you some of these yarns. So, bardic lords and ladies, let me tell you of my recent hearings.

A man walked in a about a week ago, a tired looking man, worn out from many miles looking by the state of his shoes. In his sharp Albione accent he booked a room for the night and supper. As he removed his hood I saw his glamour and scars. A fae, not unusual around these parts, but the scars, why so many?

As I passed him the bowl of stew I asked "Been in the wars eh?" "

One or two you might say." It turned out he was from the forests of northern Albion originally, but had sided with the Lions in the civil war. He'd lived through the Nosta Kar, Benedict, Xivantal, the Akari. He had left the legions after Xivantal and took to wandering the isles, labouring here, guarding there doing enough to survive and moving on.

"I've heard many things on my wanders. I ran into a crofter recently from Rysarius who was convinced that the knight marshal had laid claim to Albion with the legion. He rambled for a while about how he was convinced that Nathaniel was invading Albion and about how the Harts would invade Lantia and how scared he was."

He fell to silence as he devoured his stew, not once pausing for breath. He must have been starving. As he finished he produced a long clay pipe.

"That crofter also thought that there was a cult to Satun on Rysarius, he said that he'd been finding loads of slaughtered sheep on the hills, normally in circles of salt and sand. Loads of weird objects around the circle all dripping with blood. Personally I think he was duped or was mad."

"Then this other chap, or was it a woman, I forget. Met her in a market on Gallathrix, in Rainforth. Apparently she had heard that the Lord Darkendale had taken to eating lamb at every meal."

He's odd one, I thought; everything seems to be sheep related.

"You ever seen that Elysium?" I shook my head "Well I have, saw it off the coast of Pardulon. Freaky looking thing, not sure I like the idea of being carted off in an unliving ship. Anyway that thing only got one purpose right? Wonder who died."

Although saying that, it were still there when I left again. Don't think it normally does that, does it?"

And with that he left again. Odd fella. But then I get plenty in here. Anyway I better get back, you take care now.

People of Lantia,

War rages on many fronts, none harder hit than the people of Emmerix. When the Isle is liberated they will need aid and they will need it fast, I implore you give what you can; be it spare cloths, any spare none spoilable foods and most importantly any excess medical supply you may have. Collection points will be on every Isle just ask your local Watchguard for more information.

Remember we're in this together, and no Lion stands alone.

Culrucaan Shadefellow Darkendale

Knight Sergeant

To those of the Faculty of Nightmares, component of the University of Pattern
'Perfection',

Greetings.

I do hope this note finds you miserable, and that my method of delivery does not trouble you too much. After all, I don't intend to let you blow yet another messengers mind.

To the point. I find I owe you an apology, for I have not had any nightmares this winter. In fact, you have done nothing to mentally hinder me, despite your promises. Even your little "healer", who you sent to lull us all to strange sleep, failed to reach me. Somehow I think you are as unsuited to your title as you feel I am to my guild. Your previous note to me does have a wonderful ring to it though, have you perhaps considered a career in barding?

No? Well, frankly I don't care either way. As you said, it's your time to waste.

I'm sure I'll see you over the next while. Do try to be a little more obvious, though? I have such plans. And for reference? Trying to disarm me by implying my deputy wants to step over me is past obvious, and into ridiculous.

I remain your most disinterested detractor,

Ravenfire Shadefellow-Darkendale, Melursus of the Children of Malar, Dean of the College of Life, Lions Liaison to the Healers Guild, Sheriff of Lantia*

PS I would insert a thinly veiled threat here, but I don't intend to sink as low as you.

*If you're going to use my full name, get it right.

An Invitation

Last year, my brother asked me to help him organise a party. He'd so much enjoyed the social events that had been put on by the Order of Celestial and Prince Bishop's Men that he'd wanted to put on his own shindig, with a Legionnaire's stamp on it. It's ironic really, that we decided to host a Ceremony of Remembrance.

As a faction, we have lost many people in recent years. Legions have been wiped out, villages destroyed, families decimated. Many of these brave Lions have recently been referred to as the forgotten fallen. Well I say we should not let them remain forgotten. We should remember them!

For this reason, I invite you all to Fort Borealis for a Ceremony of Remembrance and celebration of the lives of all the fallen of the Lions and our allies.

Sacrifice should not be forgotten.

Corporal Amy Redman

Expeditionary Forces

Newly-wed to a soldier? Unsure how to cope while your spouse is away? Contact the Lantian Military Spouses Association! We can teach you the skills you need to run a home, budget, maintain your house and grow your food while your spouse is deployed. If you're struggling, confused, have skills you'd like to pass on or just need someone to talk to over baked goods, look for the sign of the breadbasket and hammer. We're here and we want to help.

Hello all,

We are going to try something a little different with the Ritual ideas this year. In order to make things as fair as possible and avoid any arguments of favouritism I will be collecting the Ideas for ritualists this year. Once I have them I will pass them on to the ritualists anonymously. Once they have a pool of ideas the ones deemed to benefit the faction the most will be chosen (I shall not be taking part in the selection personally).

So send me your ideas, anything at all that you can think of would be appreciated and the more the better.

You can send any ideas via private message on this ley or to me at wilmckeever+rituals@gmail.com .

I must ask that you do not post them publicly; the purpose of this is to collect them anonymously after all.

Thank you for your time.

Marinus

"Some time ago, a Bear fell outside our gates to a group of demons known as the Broken Spear. The Lions did not come to his aid, and he died where he lay. In recompense for the failure to act, the Lions were asked to write a song as tribute to this man. I hope this will do him justice."

Caidyn MacBeth

(Music and lyrics by Tara Faith)

G D

I sing of a man,

Am

Honoured by his people,

G D C

Who fell at the hands of the Broken Spear.

A Warrior born

His Courage had no equal

He faced down the hoards never showing fear.

Em G

And as you walk down the road

D Cm

That leads you to Vallhalla

Em G D

In the hearts of those you loved you're still alive.

Em G

For there are many here today

D C

Owe their survival to your valour

Em G D

And your story will be told around the fires

G D C Em

Around the fires

A son of the forge

But iron was not his calling

Though why he left he would never tell.

He won great renown

In the lands of Caledonia

But what man could say that he knew him well

Chorus

You're gone from us now

Taking with you all your mysteries

An enigma in death as you were in life.

Still wearing your ring

We brought you home to Shakesferry

Where perhaps you can find final peace from strife.

Chorus

OOO STUFF:

Lions faction kit make 26th of May

It came up at the OOC meeting that the Lions monster kit could do with an overhaul, and because I heard the words “kit” and “sewing” in the same sentence I immediately volunteered to help out. So having discussed with Helen, she and Baz are going to sort through the monster kit after the Parli and get an idea of what the faction needs and what spare material the faction owns that can be cut up and used. Then Helen will have an idea of what’s needed, and that’s where we come in.

We’re organising a kit bash on Saturday the 26th of May in Nottingham, either in Helen’s house or we’ll hire a hall depending on numbers, to spend the day making decent kit for the faction. This will be in two parts:

1/ Anyone who has made kit they want to sell/give away bring it along with a label saying whose it is and how much they want for it. The faction gets first refusal on anything, and then anyone else who wants to can buy/claim pieces. Anything left at the end gets returned to the original owners – nothing to be left please, Helen will kill me if I even suggest increasing the clutter in her garage.

2/ We’ll also be making kit on the day – based on what the faction decide they need, I’ll bring along patterns and we’ll need folks to cut out, pin things and sew stuff. If you have a sewing machine please bring it along: if not please come along to help anyway since there’ll be several spare machines available for use.

If you’re interested: in helping, in donating or selling fabric to the cause, in bringing old kit to pass on, or in just popping round to see what’s happening, please let me know either on Marianne.wells@gmail.com or by PM on the Lions boards (my username is “Obsidia Fortune”.) We need to get a rough idea of numbers in advance so we know whether we need to hire somewhere or not.

Meeting Minutes, in the form of Haiku

Marianne Wells

Gareth took far more official notes than I did, which will no doubt be sent out in the fullness of time, but for anyone interested here is a brief overview, in the format that I feel suits it best. Haiku is after all, the sincerest form of flattery.

Independence talks
Irish, Scottish and English
Jamie calls order.

Neds steal the curtains
Bold warriors sally forth
Furnishings rescued.

New IC Coinage
General disagreement
Royal Mail to blame.

“Stumbling in the night
If something falls, don’t wee on it”
Sage words from Ads.

Ritual circle issues
Are quickly solved by staffing
Fewer problems, please.

All plot is awesome
But linears are lacking
Umbral lady rocks.

Faction gates wanted?
“No!” say command and army
Banners would be cool.

Under 18s welcome
Accompanied by elder
Event October 12th.

Monster room is crap
Rewards and planning lacking
Feed back to LT.

Feedback forms not read?
“Not so!” The plot team counters
Action point for Helen.

Guilds all are great
But research too expensive
Vampire is a dick.

Monsters need more clothes
Faction kit-making mooted
Marianne to plan.

Donning the yellow
Requires mighty questing
Barry will sort it.

Pack up read by all
But content sorely lacking
Hence these haikus.

Litter recycling?
Cost of failure is too great
Group attempts welcome.

Research requests

If you submit a research request to the LT please follow this up with an email to plot@lionsfaction.co.uk with the details of the research so that we can ensure that you receive a timely and accurate response.

Thanks,

Barry

Head of plot