

Lions Faction Despatches

APRIL 1110



- No Lion Stands Alone -

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EDITORIAL

- LIONS PACK-UP APRIL 2010 -

I think it was Julius Caesar who said “Don’t hate the player, hate the game.”

He was the ultimate badass, and the original LRP big bad guy. He plotted, schemed, and threw all suspicion of dodgy behaviour onto everyone else but him. When they finally went for him, Julius took down 51 sad fools with a cocked eyebrow and a small piece of timber. It took 23 stab wounds to finally drop him, and that wouldn’t have actually killed him if Brutus hadn’t been using a Living Bane dagger, and had not Jimmy (the Stable-boy) found Caesars enchanted heart hidden behind a horse. You’ve got to respect a man whose dying words were “*καὶ σὺ, τέκνον;*” Roughly translated: “That all you got, bitches?!”

And talk of Julius Caesar links me quite happily to the upcoming Moot (it works if you really think about it hard).

Julius Caesar was Roman, which is kind of similar to the Greeks (stay with me...)

Greece is a country that has a lot of Islands as part of its land mass (nearly there...)

Islands making up a country are very similar to Lantia (stick it out...)

Lantia is currently about to attack seven shades of solid physical excretion out of XIV, who’s a big ol’ bad guy (one more...)

XIV is a big ol’ bad guy, which a lot of people saw Julius Caesar as, therefore bringing us full circle in a perfect and historically ‘accurate’ thought process.

Anyone who has an issue with my historical knowledge and process should know I have read a book, and therefore am faultless. It was a large book.

So, the Moot! First mainline event of the New Year, and great googily-moogily it’s on Lions lands! If I could ‘high-five’ all the Lions players this very instant I would, but it would break my computer screen with repetitive extreme ‘high-five’ action.

A main event on our own Faction’s soil is always an event to remember, and considering we’ve got XIV well and truly sticking his fingers up our nose with his actions on Fort Hatfield, I think I’d be wrong in saying that this Moot is going to pass without an issue.

A whole Fortress decimated by a hideous carpet of flesh-eating Beetles. A super-powered Mad-man walking around taunting us with impunity and trying to kill our family, friends and Faction. Overall plan to wipe us from the face of Erdreja. Think that's going to go unpunished? Not on our watch.

Let's not forget the fact that we'll have all the Factions, Guilds and various other officials camped on our beautiful land, all with their own problems and concerns!

All in all, should be a cracker.

And now for my final thought:

LRP is an activity that requires a lot of time, money, emotional and physical pressure and interaction on a scale I've never seen before. Apart from a few other examples that come to mind (Airsoft, Extreme Ironing, etc) it's one of the most universally challenging activities. And every year, thousands of us do it.

To me, this event is dedicated to all of us who've sacrificed their lives, be it financially, personally or physically to do the thing we all love.

Best wishes,

Gav

A LIONS OF LANTIA PRODUCTION

WRANGLER BY: Gav Folens, Barry Holliday, Adam Sullivan, Derek MacAllister, Paul Feldwick and the fantasmagorical mysteries of Dave Heaton.

CONTENTS BY: Adam Sullivan, Allen Stroud, Kirsten Williams, Chris Cunliffe, Jen Phillips, Russ Phillips, Marianne Wells, Alan Wells, Gillian Smart, Amanda Hill, Barry Holliday, and Rachel Prince.

Special thanks to Bruce Myers for use of the Lions logo;
this one time, it came alive and attacked a small dog.

Tip of the Season:

New players enter the system every event, but none more than the first Main Events of the year. Remember, no one likes to be the new guy / girl, and it can be scary and lonely. Reach out to the new members of the family. They'll thank you for it.

(Julius Caesar was also a Rank 4 Berserker.)

FROM THE CROWNS OF LANTIA

Lions,

So soon after we gathered for a Parliament, we find summer coming upon us. So along with Xivantal, the Kalisto Company, Sirocco, unknown creatures and races from Orst, drugs, demons and all manner of other problems we face as a faction, we now add all of the other issues and threats from and to our neighbours and other Heartland nations

We are about to enter another season where Factions meet, where lines are drawn and erased, threats arise and are dealt with, and deals are made and broken.

So, who's bleeding first!

We are in a position now where the Lions will deal with any and all threats. As has been said before, if something or someone wants to come for the Lions, we will, true to form, *tear them apart*. I won't tolerate anybody threatening one of mine and I know you won't tolerate anybody threatening one of ours. We have fought as a Faction to be united and that is what we are and it is what makes us so strong.

So when Xivantal, the poncey little over-compensating git, comes at us wearing his tablecloth cape, we will show him where to shove his ego.

With all of the best minds in the heartlands together at our moot we will find a way to destroy him once and for all because I am getting fed up with one bastard after another claiming supremacy on my lands and over all of us!

I am sick and tired of atrocities being perpetrated against us, those we fight to protect, and those who never deserve to feel such suffering!

So let's deal with him now, let us, as a nation take the war to him, destroy him and scatter his remains to the winds, never to harm anyone ever again!

Let the Lions finish what the original Lantians began so long ago!

So take the opportunity to meet old friends, drink our own body weight, and get in fights like you should at a wedding, for our crown prince Seraphim Darkendale is marrying Karen Aldain at this coming moot and we wish them all luck and happiness for their life together.

Then take the opportunity to unleash your claws and teeth against any threat!

In closing, let us greet this moot and the subsequent gatherings as a Faction united in strength and honour.

For another year let the lands echo with the Lion's roar!

In the name of Avalon & Lantia.



Hergist MacConnell

LORD GENERAL OF THE LIONS FACTION

JAGUAR OF THE CHILDREN OF MALAR

GATEGUARD

REPORTS FROM THE MILITARY

Report from Commander Jermaine Hunter

Jermaine Hunter

HMS *Minotaur*

At sea

20 miles NNW Fort Hatfield

Your Grace,

As directed the *Minotaur* has patrolled the waters surrounding Fort Hatfield along with Shadow Fleet One who were nearby.

I can report the following after the attack upon the isle:

Previous messages were from the first runners from the fort when it appeared that all was lost. Fortunately of the three hundred and fifty civilian population not all were lost to the attack. Of the civilian population approximately two hundred were able to escape through the use of the fishing vessels in the harbour on the other side of the isle from the circle. These boats were re-used to ferry those that dived into the waters to escape, roughly seventy-five people were lifted directly from the sea.

I have collated the reports from the military officers of the legion and compiled them below:

The first creature came through the circle at around 17:00 hours, accompanied by a woman in a red headscarf with the mark of the 14th upon her right cheek and purple scale like markings on her throat and neck. The woman was hailed by the circle guards of the Watch guard Legion currently on duty at the transport circle; the woman refused to answer but started a new transport rite. However this rite was never finished and was evidently a distraction from the creatures. Each creature appears to split into two around every thirty seconds.

Within five minutes the circle was covered in them, the men of the Watch guard sent a runner to the fort and charged into the circle to dispatch the woman, the creatures devoured them and the woman. A detachment from the fort came promptly along with Company Captain Joanna Kirby in command. They witnessed that all living or organic material had been devoured by the creatures, no trace of the previ-

ous men could be found. They attempted to attack the creatures but due to the overwhelming numbers they were beaten back, losing all but two of the detachment.

Captain Joanna Kirby then called for retreat and sounded the alarm to abandon the isle. With the circle inaccessible the men of the Legion began herding the civilians to the docks as swiftly as possible. The encampment of Choma on the far side of the isle was unreachable by this point a select few were lifted from the sea later and tell of widespread panic within the compound which led to the rest all being lost to the creatures.

The Veterans of the Hammer of Avalon stood firm with Captain Kirby, with their kite shields at their feet to slow the advance of the creatures, but they too were eventually lost to them. Such bravery, ma'am, I have not seen often, but not a single man fell without calling for Avalon, Lantia or Your Grace. Members of the Prince Bishops Men section of the Legion took items of value and import as possible, mostly those which were portable, I shall detail those items saved later.

With the aid of the Shadow Fleet and the civilian vessels commandeered during the retreat approx. Three hundred and fifty of fifteen hundred fighting men and women were saved, the rest laying down their lives to secure the survival of the civilians. An accurate count has been undertaken and I'm sure will be forthcoming shortly.

The prisoners within the cells on the island, numbering twelve, were also taken to the ships. Six lost their lives during the evacuation to the creatures, of the other six, three were taken direct to the ships without incident but the other three did attempt to escape by jumping into the sea, including one Montego Hyskus. However Mr. Hyskus was retaken from the sea in short order and has been subsequently transferred to the sheriffs on Gallathrix at Varne. The remaining two were not found and are believed to be lost to the sea.

It is with my deepest regrets to report the loss of the following Officers and NCOs:

Legion Captain Guy Louis
 Company Captain Joanna Kirby – Prince Bishops Men
 Company Captain Michal Witold – Veterans
 Sergeant William Gilbert
 Sergeant Diane Margot
 Sergeant Dawid Kolek
 Sergeant Mannus Atta
 Sergeant Rava Bryni
 Corporal Huw Gwyn
 Corporal Owen Wynne
 Corporal Adelle Wynne

Of the items retrieved from the isle:

Numerous Banners of the Prince Bishops men, including the banners of the ancestors

The sign above the doorway of the 'Fighting Cocks' – this was removed in haste by Clementine Harris and Siradin, who were lost as they passed it onto the boats.

Your Grace's customary throne from with the great hall

A stock of Prince Bishop's tabards

And sundry personal items

At the time of the retreat it was not possible to remove St. Cuthbert's bones from his tomb. However, my men have remained on station in the waters around the island and the creatures have now left the island. It appears once they ran out of matter they could eat they then ate themselves back down to only one remaining. That one was collected via the circle by another woman; we were not close enough in the boats to see any of her features.

My first mate has led a party of men ashore to inspect the damage. All that remains ma'am are structures made of stone, all else has been consumed, no plants remain, no birds, no livestock, nothing. The civilian buildings outside the fort itself were made of timber and so they too are gone, a small number had stone foundations, the foundations remain.

The fort itself was obviously a stone structure and so it remains, my men are not builders but they believe it to be sound and safe. The creatures eat through all the doors within the fort, being wooden, and so each room is also now bare, leaving just the hinges on the floor. No personal belongings remain. Window panes are also unaffected, although this could be because they are above floor height. The mausoleum north-east of the fort which housed St Cuthbert's bones also remains. Whilst the door to the mausoleum was wooden and so gone the tomb in the centre was of a solid marble construction, this has not been touched. My men have opened it carefully to inspect inside and confirm that his bones are still within. The defensive structures around the fort, watchtowers and such like also still stand, being of a stone construction.

A party of my men has also successfully used the transport circle, transporting to Topaz South and back and this also appears unaffected.

My men and the HMS *Minotaur* will remain on station until ordered.

Yours in service,

Jermaine Hunter

From the Knight Marshall

The Military would like to thank everybody for their contributions during the Parliament. It is always difficult to pick out individuals that should be mentioned at this point, and this time it is even harder than usual. Some of these mentions are, sadly, posthumous.

Thanks to the Scouts – without their keen eyes and willingness to risk danger we would have been surprised by many attacks. Their bravery and skill allowed us time to prepare our defences. Everard and Helena especially deserve mention.

Thanks to the Healers – amazing and seemingly tireless work was done to keep people on their feet and fighting. Especially once it was established that the enemy was using poisons, I couldn't move for Healers checking me to make sure I had not been affected.

More individual acts of bravery than I can count or, sadly, name. However, we would like to bring attention to Sir Robin Belfort who stepped forward to keep Xivental himself occupied whilst a transport group escaped from Ontarix.

Finally, I would like to commend Sky. It was her actions and her sacrifice that finally cleared Lantia of the Akari, saving countless lives in the process. She made a difference to our nation and our land – I am certain that many of us wish we could make the same difference.

Nethaniel Huntington
KNIGHT MARSHALL

Regarding Fort Hatfield

We are still discovering the full extent of the damage done, both to the island and to the people who were there. We will be publishing information as it is collated, and I understand some may be ready by the time this letter is distributed.

A great many people died in the attack, including several hundred of my Men. They were all good and true people, who fought for the Lions not only on my order, but also because they believed in this Faction. Also among the fallen were many dozens of soldiers from across Lantia, who were also part of the Veterans Legion. It is my hope that those of you who lost someone close have now been notified, and also that those few who escaped have been reunited with their loved ones. My heart and prayers go out to all those who have suffered loss.

A number of civilians were also killed. They were the support staff, the administrators and the ordinary folk who lived in and around the fort. Brave efforts were

made by the Legion and other Prince Bishop's Men, and many of the civilians were saved. I pray that those who were not did not suffer long.

Assistance has been offered and received from various people, across the faction and beyond. It is all very much appreciated, and has helped greatly in restoring to health those who were saved, and helping the families of those who perished. It has been a difficult time for us, but we are surviving, and we will regain our strength and our heart. The kindness of those who came to our aid, and the compassion of those who have offered condolences have made the past month a little easier to bear. My thanks to you all.

In sight of Saint Cuthbert,

✠ *Ivory*

REPORTS FROM THE COUNCIL

From the Viceroy to the Guilds:

Liaisons to the Guilds

The Liaison role exists to further continued relations between the Lions and the guild: to assist Lions in the guild, and to relay back any ways in which the Lions can help the guild. It's a good way to get involved with a guild while still retaining a strong presence in the faction. Or vice versa.

At present our liaison situation is as follows:

Alchemist – Lithoway D'el
Archer – The Korpiklanni (en masse)
Healer – Wenceslas Farrier
Incantor – Lance Corporal Alfhildr Dreamstruck
Mage – Traylin Mourn-Atelier
Scout – Lorin
Armourer – *Vacant*
Bard – *Vacant*
Militia – *Vacant*

As you can see there is no current liaison to the Armourers, Bards or Militia. I believe that having no relationship with these guilds will put us at a disadvantage and so I am still looking to fill these positions as soon as possible at Moot 1. If you are interested in any of the vacant posts, or in working with any of the existing liaisons, please let me know.

Capt. Solanthe Swan
VICEROY TO THE GUILDS

FROM THE HUNTMASTER OF THE CHILDREN OF MALAR

When the Lions first arrived in Lantia, the Isle of Sammarix was where the Children of Malar set up their hunting grounds. Since then, the Lions have grown, the Islands have changed, and various Cults venerating Beasts have risen and fallen. Entropy has tried to corrupt and take Malar from us, failed, and been beaten. Huntmasters have come and gone, but Malar, the Wyld and His Pack remain.

The Children as a Pack are strong, but there are many out there who follow Malar and are not Children. So as his Huntmaster, I am opening the Hunting Grounds on Sammarix to any and all who would follow Malar. It doesn't matter if you are a Child of Malar, a priest, someone who incants in his name or simply someone who wishes to venerate him. All are welcome to come and settle here. If you have heard his call and wish to know more about him, come and find me and I will help guide you.

Tawny Owl

Wanted!

The Lantian Sheriff's department is currently recruiting.

We are looking for individuals with an open mind and an ability to think outside the box to take on the role of Sheriff.

We are also looking for individuals with technical knowledge to assist in our investigations.

If you wish to apply please come and see me at either Moot, the Grand Edrejan Fayre or the Gathering.

Karnak Justice
HIGH SHERIFF

Sheriff's Office
Port Struan,
Archon,
1st day 4th month 1110.

Friends and well-wishers in the Lions Faction

*Grandmaster Elrood Brond, of the Order Celestial
requests the honour of your presence
at the marriage of*

*Miss Karen Aldain
Companion of the Order Celestial*

and

*Mr Seraphim Darkendale
Crown Prince of Lantia*

*Sunday, the Second of May
at quarter to eight, for eight o'clock.*

*At the Cathedral of Akamon
Ceilidh and Dancing to follow*

OBITUARIES

Helena Shepherd.

The only thing you did better than getting into trouble was getting out of trouble. I miss your smile – the one you had when something funny occurred to you, and you were waiting for it to occur to someone else to share the laughter. I miss sharing laughter with you.

Company Captain Joanna Kirby.

Captain Kirby was born to the Palatinate, and dedicated her life to a succession of Prince Bishops. Throughout her service with the Prince Bishop's Men she was brave and true, and as she rose to leadership she was respected and liked by those under her command. To the end, she led from the front, and was among those brave souls who stemmed the tide of the beetles, buying precious time for others to escape. Captain Kirby, I salute you. Joanna, I wish you peace and rest.

The Fallen of Fort Hatfield.

The list of the fallen is too long to recount here. Some were civilians – there because their loved ones were stationed at the fort, or because they played a role in the running of it. Some were Choma, living on the island in the hope of finding peace and freedom – I hope they have it now, and that it is safer than that which we offered them. Some were soldiers, who had signed up for a life of danger. Many bravely held back the advancing beetles in the hope of allowing others to leave. Each one was a brother, or a cousin, or a friend. Each and every one of them will be remembered by their loved ones.

Sir Jane Hunter.

My heart sank when I saw you dead upon the field. I knew that a Knight of Celestial had been lost. Everything I have heard of you since confirms that you lived up to the title in every way.

Sir Robin Belfort.

You never gave up. You never wavered. You were true.

Squire Henrietta Forage.

I have rarely known someone put so much into life. I hope you know how many lives you touched with your faith and passion. You would have worn the title Knight well.



Squire Henrietta Forage.

A few scant months ago, Henrietta Forge came to me to ask that she be allowed to become a Knight of Celestial. I had little hesitation in granting her request, since her passion to do good was immediately obvious. I soon discovered that she was also one of the most selfless people I have ever met. Giving herself up as a hostage so that we might recover others was entirely typical of Henry.

Brave, selfless, loyal. She would have made a fine Knight.

Sir Jane Hunter.

Most of you won't have known Jane, because she never came on campaign with the Lions. She had a flair for telling extravagant stories and a passion for protecting the innocent. A few years ago, she felt she should seek out those who needed help. It appears she found some on Arrakesh, for she died there protecting the innocent. Now Celestial will be able to laugh at her stories.

I miss you, Jane. I'm sorry we didn't find you sooner.

Sir Robin Belfort.

I've known Sir Robin for some years. I knew life had thrown many tragedies at him, yet he always had a ready smile. He fought bravely, he fought well, and he'd sacrifice himself without a moment's hesitation.

Robin was one of the bravest people I've met, but most of all, I'll miss his laugh.

Elrood Brond

William Gilbert.

William Gilbert was a good man. He deserved to watch his son grow up, and he deserved a better death.

Aspirant Clementine Harris, White Lance.

Clementine died crouched, braced behind a shield, giving her life on the beach so that others could escape. She was seventeen and full of dreams. She is a shining ex-

ample, and one of many who died in a similar way - afraid, perhaps, but determined, and brave. Remember her when you remember all the nameless others who die for the cause of the Lions at the hands of our foes.

Arabella Carey

Amber Lance Sergeant Diane Margot.

I first met Diane a lifetime ago. She was keen to heal any hurt she saw and found it incomprehensible that some hurts were not for her to heal. She was as enthusiastic a Lanceman as any I have ever known. When I met her next, she was a driving force within Amber Lance. I wasn't surprised. In recent years I have relied upon her thoroughly to lead Amber Lance. Not only did she perform her duties beyond all expectations, but she was a friend to all and never lost her enthusiasm to heal whatever wounds were presented to her, be they of body, mind, or spirit.

We could really do with you now. But in your memory we will do our best to heal each other.

May St. John see you safely home.

Crimson Lance Sergeant Dawik Kolek.

It took a while to meet Dawik. One of the duties of Crimson Lance is to maintain a presence around the Palatinate and it was one he took seriously. He believed it was important that he spend as much time out on patrol as the men and women he commanded and so was not often found at Fort Hatfield. It is a misfortune to us all that he was back at the Fort on that day. He approached everything with good humour and often had a unique perspective that I valued and will sorely miss.

Dawik is survived by his wife Elayna and young daughter Jainey to whom we extend our heartfelt condolences.

May you continue your good work in Avalon.

Amber Lance Corporal Owen Wynne and Crimson Lance Corporal Adele Wynne.

The Corporals Wynne had a lot to teach us all about teamwork. They were brother and sister and followed their convictions from Albion where they fought just as hard for Avalon, and later Lantia, as they ever did for their homeland. They believed in a Palatinate family and it shone through in all they did. Owen was a highly skilled and passionate healer and not afraid to use what he called "tough love" to get his message across. Adele had a keen mind and what those on watch with her often called a "sixth sense". A single hair out of place and she would notice – a skill that was often useful during her shifts with the Sheriffs' Office. I have heard tell that they

were also the people to go to when a pub crawl needed organising, but I of course know nothing about that.

Your family will always remember you (and raise a glass to your name).

Captain Nazareth Sparkel, Cuthbert Company

Siradin Dreamstruck.

Siradin Dreamstruck was family. He was a good elf and an excellent healer. While he may not have always been at home in the lances, he stayed true to his oaths. We are all incredibly proud to call him family. He died a true warrior's death and fully deserves his place in Valhalla, where we will see him again. The Dreamstruck mourn his passing, but celebrate his life. He will very much be missed.

While up until now, the Prince Bishops battle cry against the Xivchillean has been *Milk, No Sugar!*, from now on mind will be *For Siradin! For Hatfield! For the fallen!*

Lance Corporal Alfhildr Dreamstruck

Legion Captain Guy Louis.

Legion Captain Guy Louis started as a private in the Fourth Legion in Avalon. Shortly after he signed up he was amongst the number imprisoned by the Nosta Kar as their opening salvo in the war for Avalon. After many years of brave service, most notably in the League of Evil wars, he was promoted to Legion Captain and led the company boldly and well. Though his body could not be recovered, we trust that his pattern resides once again with Rhino and the Dark One in Avalon.

Company Captain Michal Witold.

Company Captain Michal Witold joined the Veterans from Legio Orientale two years ago after serving with distinction for several Campaigns. A large-built man, he was last seen bodily throwing a wounded comrade to safety before being overcome by the scarabs. He leaves behind a wife and child.

Sergeant Rava Bryni

Sgt Rava Bryni was orphaned at an early age by the fae of Albion. She was taken in by the Prince Bishop's Men and the unit was more than a job to her: it was a family. She served under several Prince Bishops, always remaining loyal to the group's core beliefs. Though she had no known family, she often spent her free time helping out in the local orphanages and mentoring newer members of White Lance. She was

killed leading an unsuccessful attempt to reach the Choma population in the far side of the island.

Lanceman Anne Carter.

Lanceman Anne Carter was a dedicated soldier and a spirited woman. She had many friends and was known for her open manner and willingness to talk to anybody. Hers was a welcome voice across the parade ground and she will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Clementine Harris.

Clementine Harris joined the Prince Bishop's Men four months ago, but her lack of experience did not hold her back in the execution of what she considered to be her duty. When the attack hit she fought and died as a true soldier of the Lions, in the knowledge that her death would not be in vain and her determination would not be forgotten.

Solanothe Swan

Corporal Huw Gwyn.

For Corporal Huw Gwyn, his oath was his bond and meant everything to him. But a few years with the unit, he was always a fine example of what could be achieved. Only twenty years of age, he knew the path his life would take and faced it bravely, even when he saw the path coming to far too soon an end.

Not only a fine soldier, but Huw was a jugger quick that will be sorely missed both on and off the pitch. His "strategies" were something to behold, and no doubt the stuff of many tales to come.

Be quick to your rest now and trust that your fire burned brightly, if briefly.

Sergeant Mannus Atta

This can be a difficult world to maintain your faith in at times, but Sergeant Mannus Atta was one of those you could rely upon to never waver. He followed St Cuthbert from Albion and Avalon and he stood with his men to defend his resting place. He always believed that home was wherever St Cuthbert lay and he dedicated his life to defending it and all who lived there. The accounts of his deeds on that night are worthy of far more than a few lines here can contain.

For all that Mannus was at home amongst his men in Fort Hatfield, he also believed there was no truer calling than to raise a family. Sadly his wife Bertha and their

youngest son Alvin are also numbered amongst the fallen. They are survived by his elder children, Moris and Wendy. Our hearts and thoughts are with them.

Mannus, your home will be rebuilt and our faith will not waver while we remember your sacrifice.

Questions

“Just tell us what you did.”

Klem swallowed nervously and glanced around. Candles flickered light around the tent walls and made the eyes of his accuser glitter from across the table in the dim light.

“We weren’t doing nuthin,” he blurted in response, “we just did what we were told.”

“Yes, I’ve read your orders,” The man responded in a tired voice. “What they don’t tell me is whether you were following them.”

“We wuz,” Klem said.

The man sighed and leaned back in his chair. “Private Klem, do you know who I am?”

“Yez sir, Knight Lieutenant Sander sir.”

“And you understand why I am here don’t you?”

“I heard it was ‘cuz of the Sea Beast.”

“Yes indeed, the Kraken or ‘Sea Beast’ as you call it,” Sander leaned forward and fixed Klem with a look. He was a thin man with angular features that cast deep shadows across his face in the dim light. “After the recent conflict with the Akari some members of the army became rather attached to it. You were up on that wall along time; did you get attached to it?”

Klem flinched under the lieutenant’s gaze, “I dunno what you mean.”

“What did you think of the creature, private?”

“Well we wuz all pretty impressed,” Klem replied nervously.

“How impressed?”

“Well, we gave thanks to it, after what it did to them undead.”

Sander picked up a quill from the desk and scratched at a piece of parchment in front of him. “Gave thanks, eh?” he said. “What type of thanks?”

“Well we built a fire and said some words –”

“What kind of words?”

“Just stick to the plan and say nuthin,” said Jasper.

Fish nodded and scratched his ear. “Klem’s been in there a while.”

“He’s tough, he won’t say anything bad.” said Hedge.

“Why, we done something wrong?”

It was late evening and the three men were stood outside of a small command tent that had been hastily put up when the Knight Lieutenant had arrived that afternoon and immediately started interviewing the men. A long queue of soldiers stretched out behind them.

Jasper patted Fish on the shoulder reassuringly, “No Fish, you didn’t do anything wrong.”

“Just remember not to mention the chantin,” Hedge warned.

“Why?” asked Fish.

“Because word is they’re worried about it, dunno why.” Said Jasper.

“Plenty of people been praying to the Sea Beast,” said Hedge, “but don’t tell ’em we wuz.”

“Must be serious to send an officer out like this,” said Jasper. “I wonder what they’ll do to the ones they find?”

“Gotta be worse than cleanin’ latrines then.”

“I dunno, there ain’t much worse than that.”

“So you were praying to the Kraken?”

“I wouldn’t a called it prayin’ exactly –”

“It sounds like praying to me private.”

“Uh right well, then I guess you would know sir.”

The quill scratched at the parchment again. Klem could tell he had said something wrong, but he wasn’t sure what. “Sir, I has a question?”

Sander finished writing, shuffled the papers in front of him and stood up. “Make it quick.”

“What’s wrong with us prayin to the Sea Beast?”

The lieutenant walked around the desk and sat on the edge of it folding his arms across his chest. Now that he was closer to the candles, Klem could see he was tired. “There is nothing wrong with praying to the Kraken, private Klem,” he replied in a soft voice. “Nothing at all.”

“Oh,” Klem said and frowned, unsure how to take the answer, but he was relieved.

“Now as you probably saw outside private I have a great many other interviews to get through,” Sander glanced meaningfully at the tent flap.

Klem took the hint, got up and backed towards the exit. “Of course sir, happy to help.”

“Indeed, oh and Klem?”

“Yes sir?”

“Report back here with all your kit, first thing in the morning.”