

Raven's Herald

Courage and Honor

November/December, 596

WAR DECLARED!

Ravenholt, arm yourselves! The vast forces of the Sessuar Emperium have struck back with greater might than ever conceived of when last we joined the fray. Reports are staggering in from the coast from surprised and overwhelmed citizens of the coastal towns and cities about the unconscionable attacks in the dark of the night over the past week. The Sessuar have already begun a two-pronged attack, coming Southward via Sercia, and Northward through into

Cumberland, heading from Valdis Keep through Gadren Castle, with no signs of slowing.

Reports are sketchy as to the numbers, but if even half right, we are facing a military might that numbers in the tens of thousands. As one of His Grace's first acts as Duke of Ravenholt, Duke Alaric Malinruin has called up all standing militia in the baronies of Capulus and Cumberland to bear arms, and those of the other baronies to prepare to support the ongoing war effort.

Baron Alaric Malinruin Named Duke of Ravenholt

His Highness, Prince Kevin Blackfox (full official name and title), recently attended the November Gathering within the Capitol City. In hopes of bolstering moral, His Highness named Baron Alaric Malinruin of Capulus Duke Protectorate of Ravenholt. His Highness and Baron Alaric met in council for most of November 6th behind closed doors before the announcement was made to those gathered in the Great Feast Hall on the next morning. Though deeply saddened by the loss of many of his friends from the commoner groups Anvil and Stormwatch on the first evening of the gathering (see Herald Article –

Skane Defeated), Duke Alaric appeared before the assembled people as cheerful and upbeat.

Duke Alaric stated that he still had not given up hope that Duke Andros and Duchess Alexa may still return, yet it was His Highness' decision to elevate Baron Alaric to the position of Duke Protector to maintain a strong leadership within the Duchy. His Highness' visit, though unexpected by many, brought grave news to the Duchy, still reeling from a year of misfortune and mysterious events and disappearances. The Raven's Herald has learned of rumors surrounding the possible invasion of The Kingdom of Rotaria by the

Desperate Winter Solstice Ritual Attempted

On the evening of December the 21st, members of both the Healers Guild and Mages Guild of Ravenholt, along with other prominent area scholars, performed a ritual in an attempt to ascertain the whereabouts of several missing nobles, most notably, now-presumed-dead Duke Andros and Duchess Alexa Ruinvorn (??). The ritual was an attempt to recreate the well known Scry spell of old, which was often used, prior to recent changes in the Cycles of

Magic.

Scry, in its earlier form, allowed a caster to observe where a given individual was at the moment of casting, and what he or she was doing. Since the Magical Explosion, which encompassed the Duchy, this spell had not previously been attempted.

Madame Zara of the Mages' Guild has always held an interest in researching and reworking older rituals that seem to

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Sessuar Imperium.

Duke Alaric's first official act was to declare a Feast that evening celebrating Prince Blackfox's visit to Ravenholt City. The feast was well attended and the entertainment provided by the wonderful Baljar clan of Gypsies was culminated with Boris and Natasha, keepers of the Voltan Bear, presenting his Highness with a towering cake shaped like the crown Prince Blackfox often wears for official engagements. His Highness was heard to remark that such a fine cake was too beautiful to eat, at which Magenta arose from within the center of the crown, having been well hid-

den from view by the creamy pastry and exclaimed "No desert your Highness? How could you possibly not like this cake to eat?" A hearty laugh was shared by all within and the celebration continued until almost midnight. Duke Alaric raised the last glass in salute and his toast "Long Live King Mykel, Prince Kevin Blackfox and the Kingdom of Evendar!" brought thunderous approval from those that had remained.

Prince Blackfox departed the following morning for the Duchy of Ashbury with a heavy escort of Eastwyck Rangers and Westmarch Regulars. Duke Alaric announced an official

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have changed through time, so when Viscount Daramor approached her with a request to focus on this particular spell in early October after hope had faded that numerous missing nobles would return, she willingly took up the cause.

Viscount T.F. Arcevol of Lake Hollym, who was also in attendance, was quoted as saying, "Against my better judgement, I allowed the ritual to proceed, hoping for its success, as all other avenues to this point have failed us. I never recommend such untried, experimental rituals such as this, be performed anywhere but in a controlled environment such as Lake Hollym. Viscount Daramor, however, felt strongly that our attempts would have a better chance of success here, where the nobles had disappeared, than outside Ravenholt's boundaries."

The ritual took place at one hour past sunset, with many of Ravenholt's most powerful mages in attendance. With Madame Zara overseeing the ritual, all seemed to be going successfully until the moment in which the final component was added to the process. At that time, a blinding ball of light erupted from within the center of the circle, felling all within. The focused energy of the now-fatal ritual, weakened and then destroyed the Mage's Guild's permanent circle. The escaping explosion then leveled the entire Mages' Guild building, alighting the night sky with a blaze of fire, which brought many to the rescue of the Guild. It took over an hour to extinguish the blaze. It became apparent that many participating in the ritual had died, and some had failed to successfully resurrect. Among those lost were Viscount Daramor and Guildmaster Kendrick of the Purple Guard, both of whom were found to have gone to the Westmarch

Duke Alaric was immediately summoned to where he was apprised of the situation. Upon arrival, Madame Zara became uncharacteristically self-blame for the tragedy upon the late Viscount Darkcloud. "I should have listened to my daughter. We weren't ready. Viscount Daramor insisted on it. We lost several good people here today, who we cannot do without. If we are ever prepared to attempt this ritual again, I will insist that we confirm our timing with a High Horoscope."

His Grace calmed her personally, and responded that he felt the risks in such a second attempt were too great: He would not ask it of any mage of Ravenholt to attempt such a process again.

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end of the gathering and promised all still gathered that he would continue to uphold the laws and traditions of the Duchy of Ravenholt. His Grace further announced a special council was to meet with him upon the morning the morning of the 10th of November at Blackpool Castle to name the position of the

Stonewood Forest Closes Borders

After receiving word from the Stonewood Council, Baron Johann of Capulus has informed the Raven's Herald that until cessation of hostilities, all contact with the Stonewood Forest has been suspended. With almost all of the major towns and villages of Capulus now considered occupied territory, it seems prudent that the Council take these otherwise extreme measures. While the Stonewood Elves pledge continued support and aid to the Duchy, as the small community has been cut off from all major trade routes, it was decided that attempts to ensure the safety of those residing in the Forest should not be risked. For the safety of those involved, it is asked that no word be sent to the Forest, not to send word, even if concerned about friends or family there.

Advisory Issued

Baron Johann of Capulus has issued the following travel advisory for the barony of Capulus: Due to the severity of the Sessuar invasion, the Northern Trade Route from the Westmarch Border to Stoneholm is hereby closed to all caravan traffic. Furthermore, I have been advised by the Stonewood Council that all unnecessary travel to the Stonewood Forest has been suspended indefinitely, until the conclusion of hostilities.

The recent invasion by the Sessuar Imperium has made this travel extremely hazardous to even those with extensive military training. While supplies are still desperately needed in the Barony, especially with the coming Winter months, Baron Northridge of Westmarch has agreed to stage escorted caravans through Traders' Rest.

Skane Defeated

On the evening of November the 5th, several elementals of rifted into Anvil Hall after the conclusion of Opening Ceremonies for the November Gathering. Still reeling from the loss of several friends and traveling companions last month at the hands of the elemental Lord Skane, those members of Anvil within prepared to give fight. Before the first spell was cast a magnificent, shimmering rift was opened by these elementals and a petite elemental emerged from the rift. Claiming that they were sent to assist Anvil in destroying Skane before he completed his plans, the small element representing Death stated that she could lead them to Kestryn's sword which was still intact upon the Plane of Death. Wary and fearing a trap, Arracor Stormhaven assembled a strike force consisting of many of the remaining members of Anvil, the commoners group Stormwatch, Baron-Regents Dereck Northridge and Victar along with members of their respective courts, Sir Grim and Dame Quin and several others that the Raven's Herald was unable to identify. As Arracor prepared to lead the assembled force through, the elemental handed him a talisman that would allow him to find the sword's exact location when he stepped through the rift. A boon of sorts was also granted to all that passed through the rift that they would be unhindered by the effects of the

plane upon mere mortals for approximately 1 hour. The strike force, a look of vengeance in many eyes, stepped through the rift in an attempt to destroy Skane.

The talisman transported all to the exact location of where Kestryn's sword had fallen in battle. Unfortunately, the sword was heavily guarded by minions of Skane, over a hundred twisted Death Elementals with orders to destroy anyone that approached the sword. Rifting in behind the seemingly impenetrable wall of death, Arracor immediately retrieved the sword and battle ensued. Healers within the assembled force were hard pressed in the opening minutes of the battle to keep all the warriors standing as several vicious waves of death elementals clashed against the front line hastily formed.

After half their number had been dispatched by the gallant strike force which had lost Johan of Anvil and Sir Victar of Eastwyck to resurrection, the death elementals withdrew a safe distance from the assembled force which took a moment to refresh magic protectives, refit armor and heal wounds. A dark rift then opened amongst the elementals and the Elemental Lord Skane stepped forth. Laughing maniacally, Skane addressed Arracor as being little threat to him, even with Kestryn's Elemental Blade in his hand. "You fail to comprehend that I will

never be defeated by any mere mortals and I shall slaughter you all like I did to all those that tried before," bellowed Skane. With a great cry, members of Anvil broke ranks and rushed forward, refreshing the battle. Skane's forces were slowly and methodically dispatched like a scythe through wheat in a fall harvest as the strike force fought with a deep passion to avenge their companions. Reinforcements were rifted in by Skane as the tide of battle swept to engulf his forces. The strike force refused to give quarter to their foe, driving a wedge within the elementals ranks which allowed Arracor and several others to give personal combat to Skane himself.

Kestryn's Elemental Blade appeared to protect Arracor as Skane called forth powerful magics in an attempt to destroy Arracor. Skane appeared bewildered by this fact as this power may have not manifested itself to Kestryn in her final battle with the elemental lord. Intent of the sword's destruction and the one wielding it, Skane lashed out, striking Arracor, wounding him deeply. With a frightening grim, Skane bellowed forth an ancient, incomprehensible language. Arracor was suddenly bathed in an electric glow, screaming in pain as he fell to his knees still clutching the sword. Having ignored those warriors and battle casters about him as they slowly inflicted dreadful

wounds from mighty blows and terrible spells, Skane called forth another magic and struck down all those that surrounded him in a similar fashion.

Kneeling next to her fallen brother, Lady Baliwick Stormhaven attempted to revive the fallen warrior with healing magic, to no avail. Skane slowly strode towards Arracor's seemingly lifeless form as Baliwick stood in defiance, the Elemental Blade in her unsteady hands, slowly retreating towards her still standing companions of the fight. "My dear girl, why delay the inevitable. Don't you wish to join your brother? It only hurts .. forever!" Skane laughed again. The remaining members of the strike force closed in about Baliwick to offer protection from Skane's wrath. With a wave of his hand, the elemental Lord closed the rift that the strike force had first appeared through as the time of the boon granted then expired. "It is time now to finish this game once and for all," Skane snarled and raised his hands high and began to incant another terrible spell. Baliwick, heedless of the protection the sword seemed to offer her, heaved the sword past Skane as the elemental Lord unleashed his magic upon her. Baliwick's form erupted into a fountain of fire that instantly dropped her to the ground. Smiling wickedly, Skane turned to retrieve the elemental blade as his victory

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PUBLIC NOTICES

On this the first day of the ninth month of the year 596 do I Gareth Gaelschin, Count of Arkham wish to announce the elevation of Archwizard Dougan Steelforge, Squire Wyatt Erastus, and Squire Eathen Heartshorn to the rank and title of Knight. Gentle citizens, pray heed them, as they now speak with my words and will in all my lands.

To The Citizens of Ravenholt.

We are proud to announce the reopening of the weapons and armor guild. Once the effects of the magical destruction are understood, we will be ready to open. If there are any questions feel free to contact Peregrine of the Ducal Household, Ioz of the Court of Capulus, or Brandel of Anvil.'

I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart, those friends and companions of mine who recently rescued me from my long imprisonment. Most especially I would like to thank the eight friends who slipped into the camp through a most dangerous passage where we were unable to slay either of them child of Arkham Seneschal of S

waiting for your word.

Sir Dougan of Arkham

Lost: Small, black leather scroll case. Please return to Dragonshire, if found.

The Raven's Herald would like to apologize to Sir Dougan Steelforge of Arkham for the gross misspelling of his name in the last issue, and also to Sir Wyatt Erastus, and Sir Eathen Heartshorn for ignorance of their names. The mistake will not be repeated.

Cole & Sabrina- Congratulations on FINALLY getting married. -Harry.

To all who helped me create the crystal sword and defeat Skane, my most profound thanks. I would especially like to thank those who came with me to disrupt Skane's ritual that night, and those who came to disrupt another ritual a month or two ago. I would not be alive today if it were not for your skill and friendship.

ryn Ardaen.

You are amazing! It was an honor to fight by your side.

Herald Congratulates Sabrina of Wanderlust, and I of the Thoria Gypsies and Wanderlust on their wedding member 2nd 596.

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prize from the ground where Baliwick had discarded it. There stood Arracor, Kestryn's Elemental Blade within his hand, "Yes, you're right Skane, time to end the game." Arracor shouted a name as he plunged the sword through Skane. The sword exploded within him and the form of the elemental Lord Skane also exploded, felling the entire strike force with unleashed elemental magic.