

Raven's Herald

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Long Live Ravenholt!

December, 598

His Grace Duke Alaric Malinruin, Dead

On the eve of what would otherwise have been a most joyous occasion, that of our final and greatest victory over the malignant force known as the Sessuar Imperium, we have lost a great and noble leader in the personage of His Grace, Duke Alaric Malinruin. While Baron Greystone, Warlord Zomar, and the men and women of Ravenholt valiantly forced the last remaining Sessuar troops back out to sea in full retreat from our glorious and once again free Duchy, Duke Alaric lay weakened and gasping for breath, unable to so much as speak to his clos-

est friends and compatriots who gathered round his sickbed. Healers from the guild stood watch and gave what little comfort they could, but His Grace's body seemed to be weakening with each passing hour, presumably from his ongoing fight against the Sessuar poisons lacing his body since a surprise attack earlier this year.

Word was sent to Baron Greystone on the field of battle in Sercia, even as he and his men were preparing camp. Greystone sent riders ahead and shortly followed, riding through the night, on horse af-

ter horse, until each nearly dropped, taking up the reins of the next even as he leapt from the saddle of the one before. Crowds began to form outside of Blackpool as word spread of His Grace's dire condition.

As Baron Greystone passed from town to town, he was greeted by cheers of victory by the weary townsfolk who already worked to rebuild and recover their precious few remaining possessions and livelihoods. Well wishes were sent from all quarters to Alaric's chambers.

Baron Greystone arrived to a quiet, thoughtful mob of citi-

zens, torn between their desire to sing praises of the victory and to weep for the dying Duke. Greystone is reported to have knelt down at His Grace's side, upon his arrival at Duke Alaric's chambers, and to have whispered word of the final victory for Ravenholt. His Grace then grasped Baron Greystone's hand, raising it high and smiling a faint, pale smile, only to fall back in a stupor.

His Grace passed away quietly that evening, with his closest advisors and friends at his side, one night after Ravenholt

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Final Victory over the Sessuar in Sercia

By Koryon Greymeir

Baron Maximillian Greystone of Westmarch, leading a combined army of Ducal troops and Baronial militia, bolstered by the entire Minotaur nation, lay siege to the fortress city of Sercia in the former Barony of Capulus in the early morning hours of Dec. the 1st after being informed by returning emissaries sent to seek the formal surrender of the decimated and apparently leaderless Sessuar Southern Army that yielding was not an option. Sercia was the 1st Baronial capitol to fall during the opening month of the

Sessuar invasion and seemed a fitting place to end the terrible conflict that has wracked our Duchy for over two years. The Sessuar Southern Army had then pushed forward during the invasion as Sercia was rebuilt as a fortress seaport from which vital resupply to the invaders was offloaded from great ships sailing from the east throughout the war. With a shake of his head after hearing the reply from his emissaries, Baron Greystone gave the order to begin the siege. Great

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HRH Prince Kevynn Blackfox Presides Over Funeral

On Friday, December 11th, 598, His Royal Highness Prince Kevynn Blackfox arrived at Ravenholt City to pay his private respects to the remains of His Grace, Duke Alaric Malinruin, who lay in state at the Healers' Guild under close guard. That evening, Prince Kevynn met privately with Barons Johann of Eastwyck, Greystone of Westmarch, and Moonwind, of Cumberland. After conducting his business with the Barons, His Royal Highness addressed an assemblage of Ravenholt citizens to affirm that funeral services for

Duke Alaric would be held the following morning.

The service, led by Prince Kevynn, was held by Lake Ardynn at sunrise. All courts were present in full colors, and Alaric's body was borne by Baron Johann in Old Capulus colors, and by Barons Moonwind and Greystone. There was heavy Ducal Guard presence as well, also in full colors. His Royal Highness made a touching speech in tribute to Duke Alaric's personal sacrifices during the war and for the good of the Duchy, after which

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flaming debris was sent skyward from enormous siege catapults recently constructed, to rain death down upon our hated enemy. This fiery rain continued throughout the morning as our forces slowly moved forward in preparation of assaulting the final stronghold of the Sessuar within our Duchy.

By late afternoon, Baron Greystone then issued his final speech of the war to his assembled assault troops. "Our final victory over this hated enemy is now at hand. Behind those walls cowers the last of those who sought to rule our Duchy and enslave us all. We have fought valiantly side by side throughout these last few months after snatching victory at our last stand only recently at the gates of Ravenholt City. There shall be no such hope for those who brought this war upon our people. Go forward now and reclaim our last city so that we can cast their unwanted bodies back to the sea and the flag of Ravenholt may once again fly proudly above her."

The battle lasted for a day and a half before the Sessuar resurrection circle was captured and destroyed by Ducal troops. A last pocket of resistance upon the burning docks gave fight for several more hours before they too were vanquished and their bodies were rolled into the sea as Baron Greystone had asked us to do two days earlier. With the sheathing of our swords, Baron

Greystone strode through the swirling smoke, flanked by the Minotaur Warlord Zomar to stand before us and removing his helm, paused, surveying the final battle scene before pronouncing, "Well Done." A cheer arose from all around as we all suddenly realized that the war had unceremoniously ended. The years of fighting and retreating, the sacrificing of homes, lands, friends and loved ones had finally culminated in this moment aside the sea from which the enemy had come upon great ships to wage war with our Duchy. We hugged and cried, shouted at the top of our voices in attempts to let the entire Duchy know that at such a great cost, we had finally won. It was then that I noticed that in some ways the Duchy did know, as those that we had fought hardest for, the citizens of Ravenholt, which had watched as we fought, had helped bandage wounds, had carried water to those thirsty and our wounded to safety, had sacrificed food to the soldiers, dug defenses about our besieged Capitol City and carried weapons and armor across the Duchy to aid us, were suddenly around us as well, cheering and shouting along side us. We Had WON!! The greatest joy was the final sight that evening as a member of the court of Westmarch raised the flag of Ravenholt upon a small flagpole near the dock to flutter in the fresh breeze. Baron Greystone stooped and raised a small child to his shoulder as her fa-

ther, a warrior amongst us beamed with pride. "Long Live Ravenholt," the child shouted from the Baron's shoulder and we replied the same.

Baron Greystone then received a messenger and slowly lowering the child to her father's arms, called for quiet from his assembled army. "Long Live Duke Alaric Malinruin," he quietly said which was thundered twice as loud by us. "It is with a sad heart that I must now return to Ravenholt City for the Duke is gravely ill and has sent for me. Know this my friends, His Grace will know that Ravenholt is once again free, thanks to all of us and to those we have lost throughout this war. Ravenholt is once again free." Baron Greystone turned and purposefully left the battle, riding hard throughout the night to attend to our Duke with word that Ravenholt was once again free.

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time Duke Alaric was entombed alongside the lake among the graves of former members of Anvil, the commoners' group he founded many years before. The flag of Anvil will be left forever at half mast at His Grace's tomb.

HRH Prince Kevynn retired to Blackpoole with the Barons and several key personnel from His Grace's court for further discussions of the future of Ravenholt.

Disappearances in Arkham

A mysterious pattern of disappearances has become evident in the lands surrounding Arkham Keep. More than one hundred travelers and merchants making their way to the Capitol have gone missing without a trace over the last several months, and local officials are calling upon the citizenry of the Duchy for aid in discovering their fate, as not one has resurrected or been recovered.

The disappearances were at first so quiet and solitary that a pattern was not discerned for several months, but at this point local officials estimate that various citizens of Arkham have been going missing at the rate of one per night for several months now. No clues have yet been found for means or motive of these kidnappings. Those missing have no personal pattern. They range widely in age, wealth, experience and sex, so much so that common thievery has been ruled out as a major motive. The only pattern in all of the kidnappings has thus far been that all those counted among the missing were traveling alone, and most of the disappearances seem to have taken place during dusk or at night. Most puzzling of all no signs of struggle or violence were apparent in any of these cases, leading officials to believe that the disappearances may have been mystical in origin. If anyone has any clues leading to the recovery of the missing, they are urged to notify their local guard.

Soul Devourer Haunts Inn

Early this December, the Soldier's Rest Inn opened near Coombe, Eastwyck. The opening of the high-class inn was to be a grand event and nobles from all over the duchy gathered at the celebration. However the celebration was soon stained by death and mayhem. Members of the Inn staff began turning up permanently dead. At first, there were no clues as to how they had been killed. Adventurers investigated the murders, some of them trying to use seer abilities to try to determine what had happened. They discovered that the victims souls had been torn from their bodies by a soul devouring creature.

The first of the victims was found prior to the opening of the Inn within a mystic city which appeared and disappeared periodically near the site of the inn. This Lost City, known as Shallnod, was already known to some of the warriors of Ravenholt as a place of knowledge and old magics that once held the prison of the elemental menace, Skane. The Lost City was discovered to hold both a vast library of magical knowledge and a war college, run by the spirit of a warrior known as Kattrell. Magics were often found to work differently in or near the city: some old spells functioned once again, and other spells worked unreliably.

A messenger came from the Lost City, and brought some people to speak with a Sage within the city who had a form that appeared to be undead, but was not. They learned that the Soul-Devourer was a shapechanger known as a Gaki, and had once been held in a magical prison within the city, but that the wards had deteriorated with age, and the creature had broken free. The creature could be struck down, but not permanently killed: Only imprisoned. In order to lock the Gaki once

again within it's prison, the seven or eight pieces of the seal that bound it had to be retrieved first, then a ritual had to be performed involving representatives from as many different races as possible.

Many adventurers went on quests to retrieve the pieces, each of which had an aspect, such as agility, or fighting prowess, that influenced the nature of the opposition that they must face to gain their goal. The teams were led by Baron Moonwind of Cumberland, Baron Johann of Eastwyck, and Culain Steelforge of Eastwyck, among others. A large mass of warriors were assembled at the gates and sent in, twelve at a time to fight the powerful creatures within. Numerous warriors fell to the enemy with each assault and were temporarily left behind while the next band of heroes rallied to the attack.

Oberon Anduin at one point made a daring run to heal those downed within, saving many from resurrection. In the end, the piece was won. When all the pieces had been gathered, the creature was trapped through a ruse and Dougan Steelforge and Oberon Anduin led the representatives of the various races in performing the binding ritual to seal the Gaki once again within its prison. The ritual was concluded successfully, but the Lost City sealed itself before the heroes could escape, and they were trapped inside for two weeks until the city appeared again with the changing of the moon.

Champions of the Maze

For some time now, a Gate has opened periodically in Ravenholt that has transported willing adventurers to a strange realm to battle creatures in an underground multileveled maze in search of treasure and battle experience. After a set time passes, the adventurers have always been magically returned home.

This December the Gate appeared at the Soldier's Rest Inn, and once again a group braved its perils: however this time they reached the end of the maze and won its challenge. The group consisted of Baron Moonwind, Oberon, Sir Kyril of Eastwyck, and a member of Westmarch whose name the Raven's Herald was unable to learn. They fought their way down to the twenty-fifth and final level of the maze, battling reptilian creatures of great power. They received aid from the many potions generally found within the maze, which work only within the realm of the maze, but often grant powers that no Tyrran potion can.

Those who completed the maze say that they cannot speak of what the prize they gained at the end was, but that they had been asked by the master of the maze to simply respond to all queries, " Finish the maze, and find out."

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could once again proudly proclaim its freedom from the oppressive forces of the Sessuar Emperium. Nearly a dozen life spells were attempted, but to no avail.

Baron Greystone, looking pale and drawn, came forth to the gathered people of Ravenholt and addressed them, stating simply, "My Lord, His Grace Duke Alaric Malinruin, has this night passed unto his

final death. He was a fair and righteous leader of men, and he has brought Ravenholt back from its greatest test; that of this now finished war against our most vile enemy. Without his guidance, his presence, and his belief in the people and the lands of Ravenholt, we would be lost." As the crowds wept, he declared a week of mourning, with funeral services to be held the following Saturday. All flags will be flown at half mast until further notice.

Public Notices

Congratulations to Martimus on your induction to the prestigious "Dark Lions." Your bravery and commitment to the safety of all peoples has not gone unnoticed.

Seeking Red Wolf or Spirit Dancer: It has been a long time since you have made it to town. Many people seek your wisdom and knowledge. If you can not make it to town, please send word to the barbarians of Ravenholt so that they may meet with you somewhere. Thank You.

Order of the Codex, We wish to thank you for generating the idea to donate proceeds from our auctions. Let it be known that they, the Orphanage have thanked us numerous times so I wish to convey their thanks to those who implemented the idea.

-Rafter of the Darkwind Funeral Parlor.

Wanted: I am interested in recruiting new adventurers to the lands of Ravenholt as bodyguards for my shop. Please contact Amra Asland Al-Quadim at the House of Al-Quadim, located in front of the Healer's Guild Circle. Safe Journey to You!

Congratulations to Harold and Fallon for their new marriage. May it be long and joyous. May your mugs always be full, and your alchemy always fly true. May the elements offer you their strength and the totem spirits guide your path. From all those that love you both forever and always.

Wanted, Ritual components of the second power! Please contact Amra Asland Al-Quadim at the House of Al-Quadim, located in front of the Healer's Guild Circle. Safe Journey to You!

People of Ravenholt, The children and staff of the Darkwind Orphanage wish to thank you for your support in moneys and curatives that were donated in your name by the Funeral Parlour from a portion

Unto the Barony of Cumberland:

I would like to put forth my congratulations for your outstanding success this last gathering. You handled yourselves bravely and proudly in adverse situations and I am extremely pleased with your over all performance. I look forward to future challenges by your side.

-Baron Alan Moonwind, Cumberland

Found: one unique two-handed sword. Contact Sheriff Logan if you can describe it.

To Culain of Eastwyck

You have proven yourself a true friend once again. I will never forget how you have treated me. You define the meaning of nobility. May the sun always light your path, good dwarf.

Let it be known that Culain Steelforge, Mastersmith, is in search of any and all shatter resist components and will pay well for them.

Friends, Due to events beyond my control, I find myself having to make this public announcement. While returning to my home, I was drawn into some form of magics near the Soldier's Rest Inn. Events that took place are still a bit unclear, but the end result is a change in my being. Please don't be alarmed; I am well, but I am no longer human. My form is now that of a Wolf Scaven. My nature seems to be mostly the same, and I continue to explore my new limits as well as assets. Agasin, I am well..My thanks to those who aided me. -Bosk Wolffe

The Healer's Guild wishes to thank all nobles and commoners alike for their support both in contributions and financial remuneration at the Ravenholt Healer's Guild Auction. We appreciate everyone's patience for sitting or standing in the hot sun. We certainly had a good time, and hope that everyone else enjoyed themselves as well. See you next year at the Guild Auction!

Now holding open interviews for any wishing to join the group "Omega". Contact Sheriff Logan.

ATTENTION!!

Come join the Wenches Guild! Come to the tavern December 30th at 8:30 for training! TIPS!TIPS!TIPS!!

Let it be known to the town of Ravenholt: the Mage's Guild is currently in possession of the ritual scroll of Celestial Spirit Forge. Any seeking its use should go there and request permission to use it.

A great thanks to the barony of Cumberland, Many times you have proven yourselves most worthy of your noble titles. I bow down to you in honor like I would to no other. Let it be known that your sacrifices are not going unnoticed. I wish you success in your future.

Your Average Commoner