

Raven's Herald

Valor and Might

September, 596

Capulus Declares Victory Over Sessuar

This August, Ravenholt won minor victory in Capulus over the Sessuar. The looming threat of Sessuar invasion has been in the minds of virtually every citizen of Evendarr for some time, but now the people of Ravenholt can breathe a little easier after this heartening

with those of the Imperium, and at first things did not bode well as the Sessuar mages summoned their warship and galleon fleets. But the destabilization of magicks around Ravenholt actually did our favor as the Sessuar weather control and their storm suddenly blew away. With help from other nations, we were able to defeat the Sessuar forces with only moderate effort.

Our weaknesses, such as resistance to certain magical and alchemical attacks. Despite our efforts, we were unable to take any actual free Sessuar captive, as once they were captured they were lost before they could be questioned. Even attempts to gain information from the Sessuar, such as the Elves and Biata triggered this strange suicide reaction, which may be due to

the actions of the King at the beginning of the Noble's Tournament. He expressed his hope that the aid that aided him in the battle and claimed that victory would not have been

High Nobility and Local Heroes Lost Without a Trace

On the second day of August, a large group of prominent Ravenholt citizens including many of the Duchy's high nobility vanished and has not been heard from since. Their disappearance is currently assumed to be the work of Nikijo, a powerful and evil being who first appeared in Ravenholt in July 595.

Nikijo, Morpheus' predecessor as the Icon of Dream, and now a corrupted being of Nightmare, menaced Ravenholt last year with a large group of powerful death knight minions with unique powers. He was believed to be defeated at the time, though he threatened to return before he was cut down. There was no evidence that his defeat was only temporary until very recently.

On the evening of August 1, a member of a group dedicated to Order called the Joyous Guard came to Ravenholt seeking aid from Duke Andros and Duchess Alexa. He brought the news that Sir Colta, one of Nikijo's high minions was in danger of taking over and corrupting the Joyous Guard and requested a group of fifty people to be sent to help him before it was too late.

Many brave and formidable townsfolk rallied to his call. Among these were Count Gaereth, and much of the noble courts of Dragonshire, Arkhar, and worthy citizens. This impressive fighting force left on Monday, but no sign of them since that moment. Their spirits have not appeared and they have been baffled. Baroness Ganthe and her court of Eastv are on a separate quest to try to regain a cup that would be of aid in protecting the Duchy.

Those noble remaining have been distributed across the duchy and Viscount Anduras is covering Dragonshire. Fast riders were sent out in three directions, three heading south, one west, and one north. No noble warriors, however.

With the loss of the Duchess, both Counts, and two out of five of the Duchy's most prominent commoners, the seat of the Duchy has been abandoned and there is no hope for their safe return.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Citizens of Ravenholt: I make a plea for your understanding. For decades, the Tinkerer has subjugated the clockwork people under his rule and under his control. This time is at an end. I have taken the Tinkerer's knowledge and will put it to good use to see that our two peoples can live in peace with each other. I and what is left of the Tinkerer have merged to become one great being of higher understanding. His mortal death serves as a trophy to the clockworks for decades of oppression. I simply ask that you allow us to exist in peace. We do not wish any ...Unpleasant confrontations. Until we meet again...Harbinger, King of Clockworks.

To the Barony of Eastwyck,

Great job in winning the tournament. I know how much work it is. I heard your team really excelled..

To Derek Northridge: I have heard about your impressive showing in the fighting tournament. Congratulations on what must have been an excellent job.

LOGAN APPOINTED DUCAL SHERIFF

On June 16th 596 Logan of Barrymoore assumed the duties of Ducal sheriff of Ravenholt. The post had become vacant with the ennobling of the former Sheriff, Baron Alaric Malinruin. Logan's appointment was sanctioned by Duchess Alexa and Lord Magistrate Ezariah MacHine.

Sheriff Logan is currently assisted by a group called Omega, with whom he was seen traveling about town this August. The Raven's Herald wishes him luck in his new and difficult post.

RAVEN'S HERALD WELCOMES NEW EDITOR

As of this issue, Lorel Westglade is assuming duties of Editor-in-chief of the Raven's Herald. While she intends to make some changes, Lorel assures us that submissions from the people of Ravenholt will always be welcome in this newspaper.

"In the past it has always been the submissions from the people that made the Raven's Herald really exciting," the new editor said. Letters to the Editor, Public notices, and the like make the Herald a sort of public forum rather than a mere bearer of news, or a scandal sheet."

The new editor also wishes her readers to know that it is her intention to present nothing but the true facts as news in the Raven's Herald. If you notice any inaccuracies, oversights or other errors in this newspaper, it is because the staff was misinformed, not because of any malicious intent to print falsehood. Please report any such errors to the Raven's Herald so that a correction notice can be run in the next issue.

Clockworks Rebel Against Tinker

During the last weekend in August, the clockwork creations of the madman known as the Tinkerer came to Ravenholt with the Tinkerer's newest and greatest creation, Harbinger. The mechanical creatures, commonly known as Tic-tocks, set up a carnival with various challenges where citizens might earn passes to the Tinkerer's workshop. The Tinkerer felt that Harbinger represented his final mastery of the art of tinkering and now wanted to take apprentices that he might pass on his knowledge. Those who he admitted to his workshop might be offered the opportunity to become his apprentices as well.

The Tinkerer, however, never had the chance to meet those who won his challenges. When a group of townsfolk including Johann, Talin, Kain and Dougan was escorted to the Tinkerer's workshop by some of his greater clockworks, they found the place aflame, with the smashed bodies of clockworks littering the ground. The group entered the building despite warnings that it was rigged to explode. They managed to rescue a badly damaged Lucien, a clockwork who is well known to Ravenholt.

From Lucien's account of what happened, and other sources, it seems that Harbinger revolted against the Tinkerer, and took over the leadership of the tic-tocks. Harbinger's violence ended there and he and the other clockworks supposedly wanted only peace with humanity, however a group calling itself "the Blood Alliance" attacked them and caused much of the destruction in the workshop. The Blood Alliance is a group of humans who harbor grudges against Tic-tocks for their past assault on Ravenholt; many of them suffered personally at their hands, or lost loved ones to the clockwork's attack. One member who would not state his name urges that the people of Ravenholt crush this menace before it is too late. He also points out that it was only four years ago that the clockworks assaulted the town of Ravenholt.

The night after Harbinger's rebellion, the clockwork known as Chronos returned to Ravenholt with obvious modifications making him more combat capable, and told the townsfolk that Harbinger had a message for the people of Ravenholt. A large group followed him to where many tic-tocks were laboring industriously in some unknown project. There an image of Harbinger appeared to them to announce that he had absorbed the Tinkerer's knowledge and made himself ruler of the Clockworks, but that he meant no harm to the people of Ravenholt, and wished to live in peace. The people of Ravenholt can only hope that his warlike preparations were meant as a means of defense only and that his desire for peace is sincere.

The exact fate of the Tinkerer remains unknown at this time, as do many details about Harbinger and why he rebelled against his creator. Document pertaining to the Tinkerer's research are being examined for more information.

News From the Mystic Wood

At the opening of the Gathering of Nobles on August 2nd, Baron Ganthe Overwind of Eastwyck reported to all those gathered the following news from her investigations into the disappearances of all Mystic Wood Elves throughout the Duchy of Ravenholt. “In our continuing investigations into the missing family and friends of the Mystic Wood Elf race, the Court of Eastwyck has concluded that the disappearances are probably related to the magical shockwave that spread across the Duchy on the afternoon of the 15th. No further appearances have been reported since their mysterious disappearance on our around the Kingdom that have journeyed to Ravenholt and have seen the loss and loneliness and none have ventured into the Wood itself.”

Observing a decline in life within the wood itself. I dispatched Sir Victar to report any findings. After two days, Sir Victar reported that it appeared as if the elves had gone into hiding or hibernation or had left the wood itself. The trees and plants are beginning to go into the fall ritual of shedding its leaves although the usual display of autumn is missing. It is believed by several mystic wood elves that visited only two

months ago that they were behind our missing friends and family and His Grace, Duke Andros, has directed the attention forward to Baroness Ganthe to aid her investigations

Baron Johann Faces Challenges With Optimism

Capulus is a very difficult barony to rule, both because of its past history, and its current problems. But the newly appointed Baron Johann feels that he is up to the challenge. He assumed the rule of Capulus this month when Baron Alaric was made Duke and Protectorate, and he is no stranger to leadership before this most recent appointment. Baron Johann must face among other things, the Curse of Capulus, the shadow of its infamous former barons, and possible Sessuar invasion.

However, Baron Johann told the Raven’s Herald that for him, the greatest challenge comes from the people of Capulus, “Most severe of all challenges is teaching the people the proper means by which they should be governed. The people have learned the lessons of the Montesque and Sagramore lines that rule is by a dark and oppressive force. They fear their leaders, and fear is not the means by which I wish to rule, nor is it the most effective.”

Baron Johann expressed gratitude and admiration for former Baron Alaric and the court he left to his successor. He called Alaric “An excellent leader who made great strides in a very difficult position. Not just in changing the villainous rule of the previous Barons, but doing so while maintaining the strength that has been the hallmark of this barony.” He also spoke in glowing terms of the court that Vandal had assembled, prior to Alaric’s tenure, which Alaric had maintained.

Though optimistic, Baron Johann is very aware of the challenges and difficulties that he faces. He admitted to being worried about the Curse, though he is certain that he can defeat it, with his prior experience.

When asked about his notorious predecessors, the Baron replied, “Sagramore has long been my enemy, and I have long been his. It does not change with my being Baron of Capulus.... We will find his weakness and exploit that to see his end. His rule here is over, and I am Baron of Capulus.”

Baron Johann plans to strengthen Capulus through peaceful methods, such as trade and alliances with their neighbors. He hopes to increase the confidence of the Capulan people in the possibility of prosperity under benevolent rule. With his wife standing proudly at his side, the Baron stated that “It will take time for the people to understand, but my leadership and the strength of the fine court which remains from Alaric will advance Capulus in military strength, commerce, and unity, while they see that we do not have dark secrets hidden from them.”

New Nobles Named

During the King’s visit, several nobles took the opportunity to make new nobles or to re-swear old oaths in the presence of King Mykel. Duchess Alexa made Aleena Endicott Enfield her personal squire in a brief but touching ceremony in which the strong friendship between the two women was clearly apparent. The nobles of Capulus re-swore their oaths to Baron Alaric, and the King himself received their oaths in Alaric’s name. Sir Victdar of Eastwyck also made Mastorium of Eastwyck his squire, claiming that he expected that the former Westmarch Lord would teach him more about being nobility than he could ever hope to teach Story. Count Gaereth also made three knights of Arkham before the king, including Duggin the Dwarf. Unfortunately the Raven’s Herald was unable to learn the full names of these three knights; they will be announced and congratulated in the next issue.

Wraiths Invade Ravenholt

In early August, Ravenholt was suddenly inundated with strange, wraith-like creatures of Shadow, bone, and blood. They came heralded by Thorick Ironcall of the Order of the White Raven, who warned that they had escaped an old confinement and were loose in the area.

The wraiths had originally been discovered by Duke Basil Ravenhurst when he first came to the land that would become Ravenholt. He sent elite troops armed with weapons of purpose to dispatch them, but they were only able to drive them back and confine them in a cave with a Proscribe ritual versus undead. This proscribe was evidently destroyed by the magical shock wave that recently hit the Duchy, and the creatures were freed to wreak havoc upon the land.

The wraiths proved difficult foes for even the battle-hardened people of Ravenholt, largely because of the powerful Shadow Wraiths that led them. They launched into a berserker frenzy when they were severely damaged,

swinging very powerful blows and requiring a fighter's strongest blow or a spell of at least Lightning Storm strength to harm them. They could infest the shadows of people they had brought down upon the field. They later emerged from the shadows of effected citizens in large numbers while they were resting in their homes, enveloping entire buildings in their darkness and causing much destruction.

In order to defeat the wraiths, first it was necessary to understand them. Many brave citizens ventured into a cave where they found themselves reliving an ancient battle. From what they witnessed, and from other clues, they were able to piece together the events that had created the wraiths.

A hundred years ago, Cecil 'Swordhand' Eastwyck came to quell goblin hostilities in this area. A small goblin tribe offered to make a truce, and Cecil sent a contingent to meet with them in a cave near modern-day Ravenholt. However it turned out to be a trap engineered by a rebel Nimani lord,

and Cecil's people were all slaughtered. The carnage was made complete by some traitors in Cecil's own regiment who prevented them from leaving the cave and escaping. Before the sergeant in charge of the doomed contingent fell, he laid a curse with his last breath that none of their spirits would rest until the land was conquered for his liege. The violent wraiths overrunning Ravenholt were the twisted remnants of these once proud souls.

In order to lay the wraiths to rest and remove their menace to the peace of Ravenholt, it was necessary to recover the twelve weapons of purpose originally wielded by Basil's troops to drive the wraiths back. Several groups of adventurers organized by Squire Bailiwick Stormhaven of Eastwyck descended into a series of caves to retrieve them.

Once the weapons had been recovered, their wraiths were named them and dispatched them in a ritual powered by hundreds of crystal shards gained from slain wraiths that had been gathered to

Lady Quin of the Ducal Household. The Raven's Herald was unable to gain a full list of all the twelve heroes who wielded the weapons of purpose, but they included Duchess Alexa, Arracor Stormhaven of Anvil, Bosk Wolffe of Dragonshire, Borax of Stormwatch, Ethelred, Sir Grim of the Ducal Household, Houlie MacHine of the Baljar gypsies, and Malace of Eastwyck.

All that remained was for these weapons to be brought to battle, and a full host of warriors of Ravenholt joined them in returning to the cave where the original betrayal took place a century ago. There, through the agency of more of the crystal essences, they fought the same battle that Cecil's men had lost, facing hordes of rebel Nimani warriors.

Citizens and Spirit of Cecil Eastwyck

Even while the wraiths of his soldiers ravaged Ravenholt, Cecil "Swordhand" Eastwyck's past came back to him in other ways as well. The spirit of the first baron of Eastwyck returned to Ravenholt in May to seek Cecil Eastwyck, and ask for their aid. This August they were able to make progress in fulfilling his pleas for help.

When Cecil Eastwyck had won the land that became his barony from the barbarians during the Goblin Wars, the Barbarians killed his family in vengeance. A barbarian spellcaster named Greywhisper trapped their spirits somehow, and even after his death, they have remained in torment to this day. Cecil's spirit came to Ravenholt seeking help in releasing them, but only certain people were able to see or interact with him: the current court of Eastwyck, Naeryck Northridge, Jatrina Sartosa, and Houlie, Ezariah, and Stack-o-lee MacHine, whose ancestor Waylan MacHine fought with Cecil in the wars.

In order to help Cecil and his family, it was necessary to retrieve several items associated with them. The first necessary item was the staff of Greywhisper, which was recovered successfully. Progress has been made towards the next step, but the quest to free the deceased Baron's family is not yet complete.