

The Guildsman

The Magazine of Pathfinder Live Role Playing Club.

Issue 14: August 2008

The State of the Realms

Erinan

Though rocked by the near death of the husband of the Queen, Erinan is beginning to recover well. Her armies continue to arrive home through the port of Celtar and fan out into the countryside sweeping back the remnants of the invading armies. As much as possible refugees are being assisted in returning home as long as food stocks are in place to see them through the winter. In Pironeas it has been noted that the Queen now wears a rapier on her hip and is rarely seen without a red cloak or cape about her shoulders.

Dralazar

The desert land is as ever-changing and as timeless as always. With the cessation of the coastal raiding and the return of troops via ritual circle the kingdom has suffered less than many of the others. Shamizel has decreed that he will both take in refugees from the other lands, and will also use some of the countries stockpiles of food in order to ease the burden on the other lands. He also has awarded Baron Kieran Summoner with the desert rose, the highest honour that Dralazar can grant to a person from another country, in recognition of his bravery during the battle of Mara.

Calsmeer

Worn and tired, Calsmeer's legions return home swiftly from Mara with the use of the same magic's that took them there. In Appia the king counts the rolls of the dead and shakes his head wearily, for though many were saved through the grace of Starsha's church many more were lost as their bodies were never recovered or identified. And too many lay dead for them to all be returned to life before their spirits moved on too far for recall. With the Shadowling threat ended and the last organised remnants of their army scattered he now turns his mind towards the rebuilding of his country and ensuring that never again will it suffer such invasion or strife.

Gralamire

In the Frostmane kingdom Sethain hands much of her power over to her advisors, preferring for now to spend

her days in the gardens talking gently and quietly with a young man rescued from the enemy camp. Rumours abound as to who he is. In the fortress cities of the north there is much joy and song as the Renranaiy decide en mass to winter in Gralamire and to ensure that no-one cannot feel the joy of the freedom now won or the sadness at the price it was bought with. At Mara its self a monolith is to be raised with the names of each and every person that died there inscribed upon its surface as an eternal reminder of the battle. At it's base a smaller marker is to be placed by the High King's order which will recall the name of the Darkling Lord, beseeching all who come there to live in understanding of each other and never to allow such a thing to come to pass again.

Amatukiland

The rainforest remains as impenetrable as ever, the armies of the Treewalker land fade back into the mist and jungle like ghosts, leaving many to wonder what indeed lies deeper in the heart of this great unknown.

The Duchy of Kiral

The High King's seat throws open it's doors, and any ship landing finds it's crew searched with impeccable care and manners, then dragged to the nearest tavern en mass and plied with food and drink for the evening. The green cloaked warriors of the guard laugh and joke with everyone, and bright banners now hang from the windows of every house. Plans are being made for a coronation long awaited and before it a gathering of the Monarchs.

The Troll Lands

The trolls return home, carrying the body of their king with them on a litter made from the hide and bones of the dragon that slew him. Sad eyed the Princess Brightstar takes up the granite crown of the Troll homeland, while the High Priest Stormclaw stands vigil on his friend before burial. Few object as many of the warriors from the battle hang up their armour with pride, but also with a determination never to have to don it again in the cause of war.

2008 Season

31st August (Sun) –

BOOKED BY PETE C TO PLAY

Location: Bowbrickhill Woods

Level: Mid Length: Triple - Quad

Type: Roleplay canted Mix

Start Time: 8.45am for a 9.00am start

Note: Monsters wanted.

6th September (Sat) –

BOOKED BY CHRIS C TO RUN

Location: Bowbrickhill Woods

Level: Mid Length: Triple

Type: Mix

Start Time: 9.30am for a 10.00am start

End Time: 4:00pm Nominal

Note: Monsters & Players wanted, plenty of space for Low to Mid level characters.

13th / 14th September - FREE DATE

(NO MARK P)

20th / 21st September - FREE DATE:

27th / 28th September - FREE DATE:

(NO MARK P)

4th October (Sat) –

BOOKED BY CHRIS C TO PLAY

Location: Bowbrickhill Woods

Level: Mid Length: Triple

Type: Mix

Start Time: 8:45am for a 9.00am start

End Time: 4:00pm Nominal

Note: Monsters & Players wanted, plenty of space for Zero to Low level characters.

11th / 12th October

BOOKED BY SAM P TO PLAY

Location: Bowbrickhill Woods

Level: Mid Length: Triple

Type: Combat

Start Time: 9.30am for a 10.00am start

End Time: 5:00pm Nominal

Note: Monsters & Players wanted, plenty of space for Low to Mid level characters.

18th / 19th October - FREE DATE

25th / 26th October - FREE DATE: LAST

ADVENTURE OF THE YEAR

1st November (Sat) - TAVERN NIGHT / SOCIAL

Please check forums for info.

The Tale of the 3rd Battle of Mara

It came to pass that I beheld the plains of Mara, laid out before me as in the time of old no more a barren waste but instead covered with the surging life of the multitudes of Vara. Many men and women stood there on the plain of Mara, Elves rubbing shoulders with Dwarves and Trolls. All of them with a forlorn hope that they might stand at least the first charge for Calsmeer had not come.

Calsmeer, land of the wolf, at the last Battle of Mara they had held the centre and been the bulwark of the people against the dark with their legions, but as the morning lengthened we knew they were not to come. No troops of that magnitude could be moved without being known no and the betrayal of the wolf to the High King was evident. We should not have trusted a king back from the dead.

The enemy's number swelled, a tide of dark creatures, yet for all the oppressive power of this horde, not one of the hated Shadowlings could be seen in its number.

The monarchs stood on a rise, at their backs the camp of the Renraniay, flags fluttered in the wind as a palpable silence enshrouded us all. Light pitched opposite darkness, each waiting for the other to move.

Then I saw it, a small flash of white against the grey-green of the plain, a single mote of brightness charging at the enemy lines. Rushing to pull out my spyglass I discovered it to be what at first I thought was a white dog, then I saw the easy ripple of its back and the long loping stride of a wolf. The air about it seemed to glow with an aura all of its own.

Alone it charged, and many thought it a succinct summation of the pointless hope we all had, a winnow of chaff on the wind over a blaze, to be consumed un-noticed by the enemy. Closer it came to the lines of the foe.

Then, all of a sudden, there was a brief flash of light, white like the wolf. Behind the brave beast rode a wedge of men, wrapped in tempered steel, tabards blazoned with the image of the beast they followed and high above them snapping the twin banners of the King of Calsmeer and the Order of the Wolf. A pang of hope surged in my chest, for even as futile a gesture as it was, Calsmeer had at least sent someone. However before even the ragged cheer of the men could reach me, there was a brighter, bigger flash. Behind that wedge there came a wave of men on horses as the entire heavy and light cavalry of the Legions of Calsmeer burst onto the field, lances already sweeping down into line as they spurred their mounts into a breakneck torrent of force.

The wind carried a surprised sound, an in draw of breath for a yell as something built in each of at watching this defiant act, as if Robert Pedriany had taken out hearts, and made them as one with the will of the men who even now rose in the saddle in preparation for the moment of contact.

For that blessed king, and shame to he who does not bless the name of Pedriany after this day, gave us our fighting chance. There was a rippling wave of light, and a noise like an endless roll of thunder as before our lines all the legions of Calsmeer arrived. I discovered later that the King and a select pair of his generals had planned this, had taken a gamble in order to protect his people to the last moment, and then had sought to not burden the supply lines nor camps of Mara with his men until that very moment when they were needed. With the same shining courage he and the loyal men of Calsmeer had seized the front line, taken it for themselves to draw the brunt of the battle and show us all that the Land of the Wolf would stand with the other four kingdoms would never shirk or turn away as they had in the dark years under Ethan.

The roar of our army in joy and shock was drowned in the titanic pounding of the hooves of the charge; there was a moment when the lances were the only bridge between the wedge of Calsmeer, and the dark horde of the enemy. Then the charge slammed home, drove deep into the lines and all the time more and more horsemen swept the breach wider.

We yelled, we screamed, we threw our fury into the very teeth of the darkness, and then the Demons began to dive from the skies above us.

For a time there was nothing but chaos, the Demons hit us when we had nothing in the air to fight them, the fell beings threw down balls of energy as baleful as those that cast them. Yet relief came, from the rear ranks, from the tents of the healers, from all over the field men and women with the white dove on their robes rose on glowing wings, armour made as if of the light we stood to defend shrouding them and weapons that beacons of hope rose and fell in their hands as the fight was taken to the skies. Behind them a corps of Shield Bearers took to the air, a spike that sought out the largest of the demons, and with swinging mace and sword hammered them to the earth. The hot blood of the battle above fell on us like the tears of the Goddess herself. The children of peace turned to war and showed us how fearsome they could be. Never will I stand by while the brethren of Starsha are mocked for their calm ways again. They bought us time to fight and the safety of the skies.

On the Eastern flank the South Essen of Erinan were falling back, waves of Goblins coming at them faster than they could cut them down. Volley after volley of magical power came from the ranks of Major Edgeman's men, when they had no room to aim they stood and fought hand to hand, green and silver jackets darkening to black under the slick of gore. To the West the Storm Lancers, hardy knights of Gralamire, held the ground they had been tasked to hold, the heavy plate armour yielding time and again to the blades of Orcs but each time another man stepped in to cover his fallen brother and take his place while squires pulled the wounded and dead back and away from the lines.

In the middle a large contingent of mixed troops stood, made up of volunteers and allied mercenary bands for the Legion of Battle and other groups. Central in the mass stood the Red Lady of Calsmeer, a silver fillet on her brow, other notables

stood by her. Uushki Mag the crossbowman, the companions Thornton and Sherbet, the fell mage Ashym. Focused on the battle before them they were surprised beyond measure when the group behind them drew blades and began to strike about them at any and all in their reach. The lead warrior threw off her helm and revealed a face akin to Nerys' as she dove at the valiant lady of Calsmeer and sought to embed her daggers in the fragile flesh, truly a traitor to us all. However the Lady Briar-Dasmus dove like quicksilver under the savage cuts. Her own slim blades moving so fast they left glittering arcs in the sunlight. Joined in a deadly dance the pair moved and ducked. Feet and elbows as much weapons as the slender daggers that flittered and whined. Each managed to slip cuts through onto the other but neither able to land a telling blow until Nerys, throwing herself to the floor and all but at the feet of her enemy at the same time flung one of her blades upwards sinking it hilt deep into the jaw of her foe-woman burying the point in her brain. Standing wearily the Lady Nerys bent, tugged free her blade, and returned to the fray with but a simple shake of her head at the waste of a life and the foolishness of the traitor.

Above the battle a knot of demons was burst asunder by a writhing blast of thorns as a green tinged metallic dragon flew through them and then banked up and into attack. It slipped and turned on one wing as it wove through storms of arrows and blasts of energy thrown by the Demons, an indomitable arrow that swept the skies and with titanic blasts of power that vaporised Demons or with swats of its metal limbs reduced the skulls of immature demon-dragons to so much pulp.

The legions of Calsmeer held the centre, but even the wall of men and their drilled training was crumbling in the face of the ceaseless sea of the enemy; Orcs and forsworn men crashing into the braced shields of Calsmeer were slowly but surely buckling the line and each man of the wolf lost was another winnowing of the strength of the wall. In places they were breached the tides of the darkness rushed into the breaches to widen them.

At this moment, a great and deep horn sounded from the western flank, a long drawn out note that echoed round and round the plain. Then there came a sound that unlike the charge of Calsmeer which was a rippling thunder, instead shook the ground its self and sounded more like the crashing avalanche of the high Gralamire mountains.

A wall of steel, twelve feet high, swept across the front of our lines, like the sweep of a cart running down a stray dog, the Trolls thundered down the battle line mounted on barded mammoths and rode down the front ranks of the enemy. At their head the hammer of King Sourbelly burst the skulls of the dark lovers like over-ripened fruit. At his left side his high Priest Stormclaw and his right his sister Brightstar. The corridor of space they brought allowed the belaboured legions time to regroup and reform their lines. The enemy caught behind it swarmed and cut down with the brutal and calm efficiency that made the legions the formidable fighting force they are. Ground was given as they fell back, fresh centuries' of men coming to the fore giving others the time to grab longed for water and bandage dripping wounds.

A great shadow fell over the column of Trolls from above, and a terrifying screech made men's hearts quail and weak knees collapse. A sweep of wind preceded the passage of the largest Shadow Dragon yet seen as it stooped, folding back wings into a missile of black and unfathomable death that sped like a javelin to strike the King of the Trolls. The impact threw him from his mount, breaking the neck of his beast and scattering his guard like chaff. The dragon furrowed the soil with its claws as the young King of the Trolls hauled himself to his feet. His shield arm hanging at his side in mute testament to the force of the blow and his head shaking to clear the dizzying waves that must have assaulted it, this noble newcomer to the fold of Varan monarchs fought his way to his feet and lifted his hammer with that crushing finality that comes when a man knows he has met his fate, that he will fight one last time because his spirit cannot in conscience step into the night without refusing to yield on last time. His arm had freed his people from the yoke of the Shadowlings, had forged an army ready to stand against the darkness without any mercy offered. He stood and with no words but only the monolith of his stance, dared the dragon to face him.

The beast charged, chunks of earth the size of anvil thrown out behind it as its claws dug deep for grip, the maw wide and ready to rend the armour of the king to so much waste scrap. Even as it closed the mighty arm of Sourbelly pulled back that hammer, shield turned towards the onrushing titan of shadow even though the broken arm behind could not brace it for the impact. A wide and slow cast of the hammer's head swung it at the full extend of the corded arm that held it, a half circle that put all the king's weight and that of his coat of steel to bear on the six inch square of the face of the hammer, A battering ram of scarred metal that landed on the side of the Dragon's jaw. Nothing that walks on this earth should have deflected the mammoth bulk of the dragon, but the blow landed and turned its course wildly away, the sickening crunch of snapping bone counterpointed by the ear torturing screech of rent metal. A bright spray of crimson flowing from a shattered breastplate Sourbelly staggered back. One of his knees giving under him his shield fell unheeded into the churned dust of Mara. Opened to the bone and his life spraying out the king brought his hammer up from the floor, up and over his shoulder with his arm straight as he wound it up, continuing down and following it through to again smash it into the broken jaw of the beast that lay near him. The scream of agony from the dragon a pathetic mewl in the face of the stoic silence of the mortally wounded king. Figures raced for him desperately from where they had been thrown but the adamite claw of the dragon found him before aid and transfixed Sourbelly through the rent in his armour, emerging from his back as it drove him to the floor and pinned him to it.

Stormclaw and Brightstar lead the charge, beside them came the flaming blade of the high king, come to the aid of his brother monarch. From the lines of the legions burst the Baron of Navarre with a contingent of other warriors, Kiall of the Silver Swords, Delores, emissary of Clan Yannash with her own hammer seeking vengeance for the fallen Troll. A warrior woman of Gralamire in whose hands held a twin pair of blades that glowed like the soft light of the dawn. Elves

and men and dwarves, racing the Trolls to save this valiantly fallen king from the indignity that the enemy would heap on his body if they could take it.

The dragon rose again, jaw hanging crooked and teeth splintered in their sockets. Rose and turned like a fox at bay as the High Priest of Bronwen for the Trolls rattled off incantation after incantation to shield himself and the others. Rose and beheld the spear of Brightstar enshrouded in lightning and revealed as the most sacred relic of the Faith of the warrior goddess. Rose and tried to breathe balefire at them as it reared, only to stiffen in spasm as the Spear maiden impaled its chest with the arcing point of the Storm spear and drove it half its length into the breast of the dragon and deep into its blackened heart.

The tail thrashed wildly, and the scream of agony was drowned by the howl of the Princess of the Trolls as she unleashed the full fury of the spear and tearing it from the body of the beast. The broken jawed head levelled at her and there was a faintest warning of the shoulders hunching, enough for Stormclaw to throw himself bodily before the princess as the beast belched forth a torrent of roiling black flame. A bright blue glow enshrouding him as the energy licked at his grimly smiling face, with that Brightstar drew back the haft of her spear, and thrust it deep into the braincase of the dragon and out the other side.

Even as the beast dropped the skies darkened more as wing after wing of demon dragons and shadow dragons filled the skies above us, bringing an odd half-light to the scene below as Brightstar cradled the head of her brother on her lap, there on the field of Mara did the great king of the Trolls, who brought them freedom and into the fold of the arms of the Varan nations, leave that gift to us all as his legacy as he drew in his last shuddering breath.

In the skies the furious battle between the flying priests and the metallic dragon against the demon and shadow dragons had become a chaotic mess of swirling bodies. While from the west more and more dragons from the Dralazar Weyr were arriving and joining the fight, the Metallic dragon was seemingly more and more fatigued, having fought for well over an hour almost alone against the sweeping horde of the enemy's dragons.

Finally it was simply overwhelmed, and a crashing impact with a demon dragon that threw its self in a death dive at it battered the valiant construct to the ground on the Eastern flank. Sunk into the ground by the force of the impact it was beyond belief when a hatchway opened in the fallen creature's chest and from inside staggered a Treewalker who had on her brow another of the silver fillets, this one resting under a bronze and gold wreath of leaves. Holding her up and resting her weight on a wrapped banner was a human woman. Both of them looked drawn and tired, legs barley supporting them as they moved a little way from their fallen mount and then unfurled the banner. The blazon on the standard instantly proclaimed them to the Calsmeerians as the Marquesa Sylvana of Foinaven. Before them from the enemy lines came a formation of traitor Trolls, huge blades drawn and door shields ready. From above the Dragon that had brought them low again dived, but wave after wave of arrows from a contingent of Northern Calsmeerian archers on the flank, who turned in place as one at the sight of the endangered pair, swept the skies clear above them by riddling the diving horror with enough arrows to turn it into a pin-cushion.

Two stood alone, a wall of muscle and meat oncoming as no relief could be spared for them now, none bar a group of irregulars and the high king. Carnak sped to the defence of those who had brought aid to the army, with him came others from that northern settlement. Utgard the Druid, Uushki, his crossbow rattling a fast as he could load it on the run and fire, Baron Storel of Navarre with the emblem of the legion of battle proudly on his shield, the Lizard man Jakari and the Frostmane Warrior Maiden Silverfrost. With but scant breaths they reached the fallen metal dragon and the riders, in a heartbeat they formed line and braced to meet the trolls.

Uushki slung his crossbow and ducking under the first trolls swing he rammed his sword into the pit of its arm. At the same time Silverfrost parried up the sword of the second and slipped her second blade between its shield and body to gut the turncoat. Carnak flared into a living flame and in his hands the sword of the High King became a brand that seared past shield and armour to roast flesh and leave bodies in his wake. Utgard fell back and tended to the weakened riders, urgent flicks of her hands sending blasts of wind to throw back any that got past the line back into the savage melee that raged no more than a cart's length from them. Storel worked efficiently, his shield sweeping aside weapons and his sword slicing deep into Troll flesh as he ran through any and all who came near him. Jakari was a calm locus in the writhing mass of steel and body. A hand reaching out almost lazily now and then, his touch dropping any that seemed about to reach the backs of the warriors and strike from behind. The whole flow of the fight seemed equal, none making ground, but then there was a teeth jarring whine of noise as the banner bearing woman planted the standard in the earth at the side of Utgard, and drew a slim blade from her hip, Sylvana also rose and seemingly less tired she pulled her own pale Ironwood blade from its sheath and together they joined the melee. With the introduction of the Treewalker warrior and the woman I learned later to be the King's Bard of Calsmeer the Trolls stood no chance, Sylvana deflected the sword of the first Troll stupid enough to face her up and over her head, her foot coming off the floor and kicking it with enough force to shatter its back in one blow leaving it on the floor writhing and squealing in pain.

Arwenna, chosen Bard of Robert Pedrianly was less forceful, but elegant and swift. Clad in no armour but instead a modest dress trimmed with gold, weapons seemed unable to hurt her despite her seeming vulnerability. Where the Treewalker hammered to the floor with force she brought low with hamstringing and cuts that left the recipient desperately trying to stem the flow of blood from opened arteries. Her slim weapon sheering chainmail apart like it were knitted wool.

Despite this knot of combat, the eastern flank was crumbling in places; Wyldmen broke past the lines and ranged out for the baggage train. Only to find again the innocent and weak were protected by adventurers come to the field of battle to stand with the light against the forces of Evil. Screams of panic from the camp followers turned to cheers as the emissary Delores of the Dwarven house of Uberwalen flung Wyldman after Wyldman back from the helpless with wide swings of her hammer, Beside her two commoners stood, one a Skywise who danced merrily between the be-furred barbarians and left swift and deadly cuts in their flesh with her light daggers, Her companion Thornton merely slapped a Wyldman across the face with his riding crop and the brute stopped, turned, and attacked his fellows instead. Behind them the Newfolk Myst shepherded those in danger away from the fight stopping only to lift a trampled child and with a few light touches of her silvery grey hands heal the child and hand her to a distraught mother with the child wild eyed but unhurt. Further up the line the Silver-Sword mercenary Kiall stood against the brunt of eight Wyldmen alone, his long-blade like a scythe carving respite for those behind him as he shrugged off blow after blow from warriors seven foot tall and simply laughed back and then answered with a fist that shattered bone and pulped flesh. Behind him a mage in blue robes rooted strays to the spot with spells while the injured from the camp hospital commandeered bows and simple peppered the held men on the spot till they collapsed.

On the hill above stood the monarchs, only a low berm isolating them from the back of the lines, that and a good distance of the slope. However this was not enough, and from behind a flanking force of Beastmen suddenly charged the camp, placing the very heart of the five kingdoms at risk. Fortunately the monarchs were protected by the men and women of the Red Falcons, who rushed to ensure disaster, could not occur. However something drove these Beastmen into fervour as before unseen, and despite the shining skill of the thin line of red velvet and steel that stood against them a knot of bear and badgermen managed to plough past and into the main compound. The gap behind them was closed suddenly by a volley of fireballs that came from the hands of Baron Kieran Summoner, who stepped into the breach and held it alone for perilous moments, on his brow another of these silver circlets that seemed to be everywhere in the battle. Held it at the cost of deep wounds until he was joined by Shamizel of Dralazar and his pages who unleashed a blaze of light into the eyes of the Beastmen long enough to drag back the Baron and let the Falcons redeploy into the gap.

Even as they did a volley of arrows arced in towards the delicate Queen of Erinan, yet with a swirl of crimson suddenly in front of her, shielding her with his own body was her new husband the Red Falcon Datalno De'Celtar. His arms up and covering his face, arrows whined and whickered as they skipped off his silver bright steel breastplate and bracers, however still more sank with crushing finality into his flesh or punched through the steel leaving him riddled with flighted shafts.

He sank back, falling to his knee then to the floor, his royal wife bending over him desperately.

The Beastmen in the camp ran for them, a fervour in their eyes that was beyond description. In their way there came the Red Falcon Altos, strong and indomitable with twin rapiers in his hands that engaged five of them and in swift flowing movements he ran through one, punched a hilt into the face of a second as he simultaneously slid the other into the throat of a third. Turning he opened the forth from navel to gut with a powerful swing, driven by his sturdy frame, however the last managed to power a massive overhead swing at the knight, who crossed his blades and took the impact but was driven to one knee, like lightning he freed one rapier and took the Bearman through the heart only to be pinned by its dead weight as it collapsed on top of him.

The reduced interlopers closed the distance between the kneeling queen and themselves only to be met by a second man in steel and crimson, this time the man had a slight build and looked more suited to a scribe than a knight. His sword held point down he spoke rapidly and gestured again and again at the Beastmen and nearly half of them turned, glazed eyed and fell on their fellows. Even so four of them came on, and though the man moved with the smooth steely grace of a man who lives by the sword, wounding several, the power and mass of the Badger and Bearmen drove him back and under leaving him lying on the floor with blood trickling from his scalp.

A female troll in a red dress with a silver bodice stood near the Queen, alone against the oncoming group, when a cart came careening from one side, driven by a man with eyes wide in terror as at his side a third Red Falcon with his hair held back by a bright cloth and his waist encircled by sashes that almost but not quite clashed with his cloak. He fired a crossbow and dropped one of the Badgermen, as the others were forced to desperately halt their run or be mown down by the cart, as it passed the knight grabbed a short rope, and swinging away from the driving bench he arced out into the air, one hand flinging daggers that sank hilt deep into the remaining Beastmen, he landed and rolled, coming to his feet with an easy grin and his blade in his hand. He laughed, took two mocking dance steps towards the largest Badgerman and slammed the basket of his sword into its face, there was a cracking blast as something detonated enveloping the closest Beastmen in a flare of energy and the Badgerman was left standing with the lower half of his face blown off, others swaying in shock at the attack. The knight turned, and with a polite comment slammed the toes of his boot into the crotch of one of the two Bearmen still standing. As the creature folded over he grabbed it by the scruff of the neck and holding it an instant he dispatched it with a brutally efficient thrust through the heart.

Leaving the melee the only remaining Bearman pounded for the Queen, only one obstacle in his way in the form of the Queen's Trollish handmaiden. The Troll crouched a second, then drew a sabre so massive that its length was the height of

a man and was thicker edge-to-edge than most broadswords. Dropping into a duellists trained stance she swept the blade up and round as if it were nothing in weight. The Bearman turned, taking the impact on one shoulder and though wounded he grabbed the Troll's wrist and with his other claw hammered his fist into her shoulder. There was a sickening crunch and the Troll dropped in screaming agony.

Nothing protected the Queen now, as the staggering Bearman closed the last distance to her in weary but deadly strides. It raised one claw high, ready to fall like the inevitable fall of night at the end of the day, raised it as he stepped to within his arms length, raised it as the Queen turned, rising from her crouch beside her fallen husband. As she rose, with a look in her eyes that spoke nothing of the perceived distant Queen of Erinan and everything of a woman who loved fiercely and wept openly for the man fallen at her feet in her defence. Rose and dropped one hand behind her with the elbow bent. Rose, and with her other hand thrust Datalno's rapier forwards and through the chest of the Bearman transfixing its heart, her body a perfect focused base for this single thrust that showed years of study behind it. The Bearman dropped, and the queen knelt and kissed her husband's lips once as healers rushed to him, then she turned and moved towards the holding line of her Knights, her handmaid falling into step beside her with her shattered arm tucked into her belt and the massive sabre held in her left hand. The trio of Palthos, Aramand and Altos forming on her as the young Queen Elenora of Erinan stepped to stand on the line with her knights and join them in personal refutation of the dark and its servants.

As the battle built, dissolving more and more into a heaving mass of men and beasts and less and less a factor of tactics there came a horrifying sight. Wading chest and shoulders above the rest through the troops of the dark came the Shadowling lord. We beheld him and all the rumours of the Shadowlings being gone were suddenly felt false, we feared the coming of this tide of the old and greatest enemy. Clad in dark iron armour and holding a massive great sword a stillness seemed to envelop the field as the armies drew back to see what would be decided by the coming of the ultimate leader of this fell army.

From our lines stepped forwards Carnak, about him arrayed many notable or simply brave men and women of Vara, For Calsmeer stood Lady Nerys Briar-Dasmius, Baron Storel of Navarre, Utgard VorOni, Uushki Mag and Ashym. For the Dwarves stood Delores of House Uberwalen, for Gralamire came Silverfrost. Others of no fixed land stood as well, Myst and Jakari, Thornton and Sherbet, Kiall, Honeysuckle the Newfolk and Tellow the mage.

The Darkling lord threw off his helm and in a moment he revealed himself to be something different than expected; an Elf of ancient providence whose hair seemed to shift through the spectrum of colours as the light moved across it and whose skin also seemed to shift in hue subtly as time passed. He yelled in fury at the High King and strode to the attack. The other in reply simply moved forwards to engage him with the weary reluctance of those who fight because it is what they must do. The Lady Nerys stopping only a second to call a banner out of the air to her, planting it firmly in the ground to display the standard of her Order, that of the Broken Sword, and then join the fray.

The fight was brutal, for the Fell lord of the dark was mighty indeed and he laid about him in fury, Kiall was smashed back by a blow that seemed impossible to survive, let alone to take and rise to one's feet to fight again. Storel had a leg sheered from his body, yet after only a short pause to seal the wound was seen to re-join the battle with but one leg and the support of his fellows. Nerys threw daggers then drew a sword and cladding it in soft light attacked in her inimitable ducking and weaving style. Uushki slid his strange metal blade into the flesh of the enemy, and for his pains received a wound that left him on the floor gasping for his last breath, only to be saved by the almost instant healing of Myst, who was now clad in glowing armour.

Bones were broken, and bodies were riven, yet still the Darkling lord stood. Baron Storel threw himself at the creature again and was struck down one more, lying broken on the floor unmoving as the fight moved away, Utgard knelt over him for a moment then turned, fury in her eyes as the normally calm druid charged the Darkling Lord, her diminutive frame topped with a banner of raven black hair came at him, even as his massive blade came round in anticipation of her like the tides irresistible flow. The blade began it's lethal arc and just before the moment when nothing other than Utgard being sheered in twain would have happened, Ashym, now a tall and terrible wolf-man, hammered a fist into the side of the Darkling Lords head and threw him to the side.

There was a pause, and the Darkling lord yelled a challenge to the High King, for Carnak to face him alone and if he lost to quit Vara forever, if the High King won then the Darkling lord would renounce his claim on the land.

Many voices cried out that this was not to be allowed, that too much rested on this. Others upheld the challenge as Carnak stepped forth, once more clad in his form of fire and with the sword of Kiral also transfigured. A living light to beat back the darkness of evil.

The Darkling lord showed his foul treachery by attacking others who stood about, before Carnak ordered them away, and unleashed a volley of fireballs that forced the Shadowling lord back and staggered him to one knee. Carnak ran in and laid about this most hated foe with blow after blow intent on allowing him not to rise. However the enemy struggled to his feet, towering over the High King. In the minds of every person watching who knew their lore, visions of the Jenia's valiant death at Mara four centuries before began to play. A terrible warning that victory might cost us the high King still.

But this fear was not to be, for Carnak drew in a deep breath, and sprang to one final assault, weapons snarled and crashed in the lengthening light and in brief moments the Darkling Lord was cast to the ground and did not try to rise, Carnak raised his blade and with the steady rhythm of a man who knows something must be done he severed the head from the

body. Then with utmost care he laid out his enemy at rest, showing that even in a battle such as this mercy and respect can be offered. That even as implacable a foe as the one that sought the death of everyone on the face of the land can be honoured and made equal in mourning.

A terrible howl went up from the army of the darkness, as we all, thousands of men, Elves, Dwarves, Trolls, Halflings, and many others raised out weapons high and cheered. Cheered for joy at simply living, cheered for courage that had seen us through, cheered for the hearts of our High king and those that had faced the Darkling Lord when the rest of us quailed in fear, Cheered hardest and longest for all those that had come here only to fall, and who had died in the long years of strife leading to this day that had been engendered at the behest of the now vanquished foe.

We stood a moment, watching the angling rays of the evening sun glint off the weapons and armour of our heroes, at the shine of the Circlets some of them bore and then we turned as one our attention to the army of the darkness. We turned our eyes, and then began to advance, tiredly but gaining speed as they fell back, fell back, and then turned and ran from us. With the sun to our side and the wind at our backs, with the skies clear of all bar the swift wings of the Dragons of Dralazar we chased them scattering them forever and leaving Mara a place of glory and sorrow.

I write these words and know they can never capture that moment fully, that no-one who did not stand on that soil and see these things can know truly what that day meant and how it changed us all. I do know this, every freedom we have now was bought at the price of many lives, was bought in blood and courage and fear. To you, who reads this, never forget those who paid that price for you and never take the gift they have given you lightly.

Guild Dispatches:

The Children of Shashay

In every country you are to refrain from any action against those that fought at Mara, we will respect the sacrifice made for us all. Also Davon has made known to the guild masters that every effort is to be made to both see refugees safely home (and to sweep abandoned towns for any little surprises left behind before the arrival of returning people) Food is going to be at a premium, so anyone gouging the poor is to particularly be made a target for taking that wealth and using it for the betterment of those most in need.

The Order of Hermes

Having lost a great many of our order in the war and the battle, all members are to be on the lookout for those with the potential to wield the Art, we intend to petition the High King to ask for the right to build formal schools in every country in order to teach the practice to any that show aptitude.

The League of Pathfinders

The war is over but there are many lost or homeless people out there. You are encouraged to lead hunting parties and foraging groups as often as possible before the winter closes in but to be sure to not over tax any one area. Our resources will be small for the coming years since we have many to provide for after so many of our members died in both the lead up to Mara and at the battle it's self. Those on the roads from now on are to be aware of a special note that any vulnerable person or persons travelling without an escort are to be offered aid and guard at only the cost needed to maintain yourselves, no profit is to be made from those in need and anyone who is under the protection of the guild is to be escorted even if it must be done without their knowledge.

The Legion of Battle

THE LEGION HONOURS THE DEAD OF MARA, WHILE THERE ARE MANY ACTS OF HEROISM THAT HAPPENED WE KNOW FULL WELL MANY MORE

WILL HAVE BEEN MADE THAT WILL NEVER BE KNOWN. THE LEGION MAKES ONE SIMPLE DECREE TO ITS MEMBERS. REMEMBER THOSE THAT DIED WHEN YOU DID NOT, AND HONOUR THEM BY ALWAYS KEEPING A SPARE GUILDER IN YOUR POCKET TO GIVE TO A VETERAN OF THE BATTLE WHO YOU FIND DOWN ON HIS LUCK. LET NO MOUTH GO HUNGRY OR BODY SHIVER IN THE COLD WHEN YOU CAN BUY FOOD, OR DONATE A BLANKET TO THOSE WHO WERE THERE THAT DAY. MARK THE DAY OF THE BATTLE EVERY YEAR FOR ONCE NOT WITH LOUD CELEBRATION, BUT WITH QUIET REFLECTION AND SOBER RECOLLECTIONS SHARED TOGETHER, AND ON THIS DAY EACH YEAR GO OUT, FIND ANY THAT WERE THERE AMONG THE BEGGARS, AND BRING THEM INTO THE GUILD HOUSES TO EAT, BE WARM, AND BE WITH FRIENDS. FOR ALL THAT STOOD TOGETHER AT MARA ARE BOUND TOGETHER TILL DEATH AS COMRADES.

General notices

Scrolls

Scrolls for sale:

Spells from the Movement, Thaumaturgy, Energy, Knowledge, Control & Alteration spheres available. Instant teaching of the same spells available, rates negotiable.

Contact Ashym or leave a message at The Aurora in Appia.

(Ref note: any transactions of scrolls MUST be either via e-mail with Royce cc-ed in, or during time in on adventure. Any teaching of spells is TIME IN ONLY.)

Notices

REWARD

700G - For the capture of a mage by the name of Tellor

Description: New Folk Elf, Mostly black face, short cropped hair. Usually seen wearing blue robes.

Crime: Known membership of the illegal organisation Guild of Incantors.

Details: This is a High King's bounty and therefore can only be claimed at a Crown official in one of the major cities or on Kiral itself. The bounty will be paid for Tellor if delivered dead or alive however alive is preferred as he is wanted for questioning and only half the bounty will be paid if he is delivered dead.

The Editor Speaks

I'm going to refrain from waffle because this is already 8 pages long. I will however say that the August event was awesome, and here's to another 10+ years of awesomeness!

I will take submissions in between issues, providing that they are sent to

***anonymousblueberry@gmail.com** in either .doc or .txt format (not in the body of the email please) and if we have room, it'll go in.*

Submissions

Any submissions you have should be sent to Beth Charlton at:

Email:

anonymousblueberry@gmail.com

(please cc Royce in:

saphdragon@gmail.com)

(We can now accept simple graphics for inclusion)

Website: <http://pathfinderlarp.org.uk>

Forums:

<http://pathfinderlarp.org.uk/forum/index.php>

(Do a login for each character, with an icon, it makes life easier)