ISSUE 10

FROZEN TALES

THE SHIVERPEAKS • THE DURMAND PRIORY • THE NORN AND JOTUN • FICTON • AND MORE!



Welcome to Issue 10

Editor's Letter

We're proud to present you with our 10th (or is that 11th?) issue! When we started this project nearly 4 years ago our goal was to help people understand the lore of Guild Wars 2 and get to know all of the hidden creativity that's abundant in the Guild Wars fan community. While you're always free to submit your own pieces to submit@guildmag.com we've rounded up a nice amount of lore and fan-made creativities for you in this issue!

The focus of this issue are the Shiverpeaks. Inside you'll be able to explore the Shiverpeaks one piece at a time with our new exploration article, which gives you a guidance to read through our issue at your own leisure. You'll get to know more about the norn, jotun, the religions of the Shiverpeaks, Jormag, the Durmand Priory and others! We've also included a handy catch-up article for the current Living World story related to Scarlet Briar. Perfect for those that are rejoining us again to enjoy the Edge of the Mists and more.

Ollannach - Project Lead

In This Issue...

- The Shiverpeaks: Land of Snow and Siege
  - Miko Riel explores everything the Shiverpeaks have to offer! *[Exploration]*
- The Dragon of Ice and Snow
  - Discover the tale behind the Elder Dragon of ice and snow: Jormag. *[Lore]*
- Guild Wars 2 Music Covers
  - Listen to these amazing Guild Wars 2 music covers by Laurent. *[Music]*
- The Norn
  - The lore behind the shape-shifting hunters of the north is uncovered by Achilles. *[Lore]*
- The History, Culture and Territory of the Jotun
  - A race that has become a mere shadow of its former self, as assessed by the ingenious Professor Blorp. *[Lore]*
- Secrets of the Fire
  - What is the secret that the fire holds? *[Fiction]*
- The Legend of Thorgir
  - The story of a norn blacksmith who lost everything to the Elder Dragon Jormag. *[Fiction]*
- History and Foundation of the Priory
  - Discover the knowledge of the Durmand Priory. *[Lore]*
- Religions of the Shiverpeaks
  - Draxynnic takes a look at all the religions that can be found in the Shiverpeaks. *[Lore]*
- One Last Gift
  - The tale of Navai and his brother Deus. *[Fiction]*
- Walking in a Winter Wonderland
  - Fan-made artwork by: Agwong, Isvoc, Kerynean, Garretpack, Aer in Darkwater, Threep Woody, Amolino and Evorazgriz. *[Art]*
- The Growing Madness
  - A handy summary of the first Living World season, in preparation of Scarlet's finale. *[Living World Recap]*
- The Origin of the Elder Dragons
  - Are you ready to enter the mind of an Elder Dragon in this piece of fan-fic? *[Fiction]*
- The Back Pages
  - The last tidbits and a chance for you to get involved in the next issue!



The Shiverpeaks: Land of Snow and Siege

Written by Miko Riel

The Shiverpeak Mountains. My home. This is a snow-covered land, glimmering white and grey with its often rocky terrain and chilling lakes. I am Norn, a proud and courageous people who live for the hunt. Our home was once in the Far Shiverpeaks, but we, like the Kodan, were forced south by Jormag, the living blizzard, the vile corrupter. Perhaps you've heard of him? If not, this scroll holds an accurate account of his campaign against northern Tyria. Sadly, his filth can infect Norn and Kodan alike, as well as the Quaggan, Jotun, and Grawl. Wherever weakness shows a chink, Jormag's corruption can take hold, driving his Icebrood mad for power, threatening us all.

And yet we survive. Survive and flourish from our halls in Hoelbrak throughout the wintry ancestral lands of the dwarves, though the southern regions have now warmed, leaving lush green landscapes, a smoldering volcano, and the sunken ruins of a grand dwarven city called Droknar's Forge.

Called by the Spirits of the Wild, we Norn grow and train for the Great Hunt, testing our skills and increasing our renown from one region of our lands to another. Proving myself in every corner of the Shiverpeaks, the Tyrian Explorers Society believes there's no one better to introduce visitors to our lands. This is a strange assignment for a hunter but I do have a curious nature, so I'll also direct you to some useful literature I've acquired during my travels. For instance, if you'd like to know more about my people, this booklet may interest you.

Wayfarer Foothills

We begin in Wayfarer Foothills, just east of Hoelbrak. The Great Hunt brings the most worthy Norn here. Last year, the great Knut Whitebear captured Issormir, a giant Ice Wurm, for the Hunt, and I was honored to be joined by Eir Stegalkin, eventually slaying Issormir. You can still find this wurm's powerful carcass north of Snowlord's Gate in Hangrammr Climb.

The green foothills in the southern part of this area are home to several of our Spirits of the Wild. Here, you can honor Raven, Bear, Snow Leopard, and Wolf by protecting their shrines from skelk, jotun, Sons of Svanir, dredge, and grawl.



Wolf teaches me that there's a time for violence and a time for peace

You may find such foes worthy, but personally, I find the jotuns' toughness, the dredges' tenacity, and the Sons of Svanirs' unrelenting devotion to the vile corrupter, to be the most promising hunts. A lone opponent is often soon joined by comrades, making the annihilation of the swarm very satisfying.



As is common throughout most of the Shiverpeaks, snow and often blinding blizzards greet you as you move north very soon in Wayfarer. They say Jormag is responsible for this, but I don't suppose the corrupter is responsible for all of it. These are mountains after all. Several steads, homes typical of my people, will greet you along the way. Travel west through The Osenfold Shear, though, and you'll find curious relics, remnants of the Jotun ancestors. They were a proud people once and seek to reclaim their honor, making them a target for the corrupter. My younger brother tells me he actually battled and spoke with an ancient elder Jotun after touching their worship stone recently. I have no reason to doubt my brother's prowess – he is, after all, a fearsome guardian. But if he was, as he claims, able to stop Jormag's influence over the Jotun this far south in the Foothills, so much the better. Professor Blorp, a curious Asuran (aren't they all?), will be able to tell you more about the Jotun if you like.

If your curiosity brings you to the Shear, then I'll wager free beer that you're the kind of person that would welcome the challenge of besting the shamans of the Spirits of the Wild in Shamans Rookery. Only the savviest and most capable adventurers can best these hunters and our sacred animals. Becoming like the Spirits of the Wild is the mark of the Norn, something which humans first learned about nearly 250 years ago around the time of Jora's hunt of The Great Destroyer, the dragon Primordus' champion, and her own brother, Svanir, who'd been corrupted by Jormag. If you're brave enough, the shamans will reward your courage.

Having proved your worth, you may now be ready to face the dangers of the northern foothills. Though the Lionguard have their outposts here, Jormag's corruption begins to be more noticeable, owing to its proximity to Frostgorge Sound. The Sons of Svanir's camps and mischief dot the countryside, their territory always marked by their defiant flag.

And their mad shamans can often be found trying to spread the dragon's corruption throughout the region. One of the best hunts you can experience is defeating the Svanir shaman chiefs' control over ice elementals in the Frozen Maw. Only the stoutest hunters will succeed so be warned.

More fine hunts can be found in Svanir's Dome, a large village of sorts. The Sons regularly do battle with the Lionguard here, who require some help from us to succeed, their own numbers being thin. This reason seems more like an excuse to me, but no matter. They welcome talented adventurers, which shows their wisdom.

The Dome is unmistakable. It's ringed in corrupted ice that glows blue-black, and at the center is a large Dragon Totem for their foul worship of the corrupter.





The curious among you may also want to visit the village of Cragstead. Earlier this year, Charr of the Flame Legion joined with the dredge to harass the peaceful folk of the north, suddenly invading Cragstead, intent on razing it. They failed, but refugees of their cruelties can still be found around Tyria. Cragstead, though, is recovering and rebuilding. Even the children are starting to laugh and play again.

Snowden Drifts

Crossing to the northwest of Wayfarer Foothills is Snowden Drifts. Its southern edge borders the north of Hoelbrak but a mountain range makes it inaccessible from the city. To the north of Snowden also lie the dangers of Frostgorge Sound, so you can expect to find many more steads surrounded by that unnatural blue-black ice, and Icebrood creatures, such as Norn and wolves. You'll also encounter dredge tunneling their lives away in caves and harassing my people whenever they can, especially in the southwest in the Skradden Slopes.



Because their town of Molengrad is so close, the dredge incursions into Podaga Steading, a small Norn village, are relentless and fierce. Their soldiers often tunnel their way up to the surface. Others hide themselves inside mining suits like cowards. I'm proud to say I've helped the fine folk of Podaga drive the dredge back several times.

The dredge, as elsewhere, seem to be most interested in dwarven relics and claiming the ancestral dwarven lands for themselves. I suppose this is understandable since they say the dwarves once enslaved their people. But they have my people to contend with now. Our natural abilities as hunters helped us claim these lands and we're not going to give them up without a fight. Their alliance with the asuran Inquest, however, makes me respect them less, adding to my desire to hunt them down.

If you're curious about the stout dwarves, those brave fighters who turned themselves into living stone in order to defeat The Great Destroyer, you could speak to the Durmand Priory scholars at their library in Scholar's Cleft, in the northwest of Snowden. The Sons of Svanir will try to hinder you, as will centaurs whose last foothold seems to be here, east of their main bases in Kryta. The fights are worth it though; the Priory scholars are Tyria's foremost historians and their knowledge of the world grows every day. One scholar I've found particularly helpful is Eleanor Draxynnus. She has an enlightening work on the dwarves and others who call the Shiverpeaks their home. Feel free to take this copy, I can always bother the Priory librarians for another.

If you'd like to explore the ruins of a dwarven haven, I suggest you head east to King Jalis' Refuge. Apart from being quite picturesque, the ruins give an idea of the complexity of the dwarves' underground homes. Scholar Gina of the Durmand Priory, who is investigating the refuge, believes the dwarf king, Jalis Ironhammer, who later fought against The Great Destroyer, used it as a haven during a battle against the Stone Summit dwarves. You can find her in the refuge yourself, if you can make it through the ruins.



Without a doubt, though, the place I find the most humbling is Owl Lodge, in the southeast region of Snowden called Owl's Abattoir. Owl, as you'll learn from Scholar Eleanor Draxynnus, sacrificed herself for my people in order to hold back Jormag for a time as we fled south. Owl was a kind and shrewd spirit, so we honor her still as

the shamans around this lodge can tell you. The lodge, however, is under constant attack from the Sons of Svanir, who defile it in their attempts to claim it for Jormag. This cannot happen but as a result of their desecration, Owl Lodge is now a shell of its former self.



Enough of this sad talk. I will now tell you about the Kodan whom you may first meet here in Snowden Drifts. They come from the far north and, like my people, were displaced from their homeland by Jormag. They are a solemn people, not unfriendly; more cautious perhaps than others. They speak of the Voice and honor spirits which seem to resemble my own. It is said they believe we Norn are their descendants since we are able to Become the Bear and that we are cursed somehow for falling away from Koda. Frankly, though I respect them, I believe this is absurd for we Norn are more than just Bear; we are blessed by all the Spirits of the Wild, if not, they would not have guided and protected us as they do to this day. Still, their belief in balance seems to make a lot of sense and I encourage you to seek out their village, Song of Final Exile, in southern Snowden.

Lornar's Pass



By now you may be ready to visit Lornar's Pass, a region with treacherous terrain in the mountainous, snowy north, and green foothills in the south. It lies south of Snowden Drifts and holds several interesting features. You'll often find yourself traveling through deep and narrow valleys where you'll encounter dredge, grawl, and other creatures. The most curious of these are the Steam creatures that appear through portals on the frozen Lake of Lamentation. They are strange beings who seem to be made of metal.

Where they come from beyond their portals is uncertain, though the Priory is studying them, trying to learn more about them. There is a rumor, though, that the nefarious Sylvari, Scarlet Briar, may have something to do with these strange beings. You may have heard of Scarlet. No? This pamphlet should tell you what you need to know. She's currently terrorizing Tyria and is testing a new aethercannon in False River Valley.

For whatever reason, her cannon is an enormous marionette made of twisted metal, so it is possible there's some sort of connection between this metal creation of hers and the metal steam creatures. Everyone is working hard to figure out her schemes, and it seems the Priory has discovered she has a secret base under their headquarters!



The Durmand Priory are located here in Lornar's Pass. A majestic structure, their base of operations looms high on a mountain bluff on the west side of the Pass.

Here you'll meet many scholars striving to expand our knowledge of Tyrian history, and you may also meet a hero from the distant past: Ogden Stonehealer, a dwarven hero who fought alongside King Jalis Ironhammer and the Norn hero, Jora, to destroy the great fire dragon's champion, The Great Destroyer. Ogden lives, but like the rest of his people who fought in that battle, he is now living stone. With his knowledge as a priest for his people, he stays on assisting the Priory to expand their knowledge of the Elder Dragons and is in constant peril for his life. The dredge, who hate the dwarves, seek to destroy him in revenge for their former enslavement. I can tell you little more of the Priory since I do not belong to their order, but perhaps you'd enjoy this tome of their history and foundation.



On the eastern edge of the Pass, heading southeast from the Priory, is Reaper's Gate. This may interest you as there stands still an enormous statue of the human god of Death; you may know him by the name Grenth. I am not certain why this statue is here, though they say it once served as a gate to the Underworld. As a Norn, I honor the Spirit of Death's power, for there is little doubt that he acts as medium of the Mists. Aatxes and Shades can be found lurking as you approach this statue so if you plan on visiting it, prepare yourself for a hunt.

Your travels south will take you into the greener portions of the Pass where, as you may have realized by now, the Priory are busy studying. Like elsewhere, though, you may also come across relic hunters and pirates. You might want to search for dwarven artifacts yourself, which can still be found in False Lake, only do not be too reckless. The dwarves held great power and the remains of their civilization should not be handled lightly. If you go adventuring for their treasures in the lake, take care to stay out of range of Jetsam Isle, a large base for pirates. Do not worry; their command center is hard to miss as it's a large wooden ship perched on a rock.

Dredgehaunt Cliffs

If you're ready, I'll guide you east now to Dredgehaunt Cliffs. You can travel their through Winterthaw Snowfield out of Lornar's Pass or you can enter this region from Hoelbrak itself, which lies directly north of it. If you're not up for a good hunt, I warn you now this may not be the place for you. There are many dwarven ruins here, including those of what looks like an important small city for them called the Granite Citadel. Only graves remain now. You can find this in the southeast corner of Dredghaunt, but take care. As the region's name implies, the dredge haunt this section of the world, with several important settlements to be aware of, fighting us fiercely to take it as their own. As I said, the dredge believe they have the strongest claim on the Shiverpeaks since they were slaves to the dwarves. Their war on us is most clearly visible here, with the bulk of their attention focused on the Priory scholars who work here, so you may find it a bit treacherous traveling to the old citadel.

Before you head so far south, though, I have a real treat for you, better than hunting relics at the bottom of a lake. Seek out, instead, the Forsaken Halls, the ruins of an underground dwarven city, still amazing in its decay. The entrance is through a sealed door near Wyrmblood Lake, but Gerrvid, a Priory scholar studying dwarven lore, can get you in. Once inside, you'll need a stout heart to find your way through the darkened halls, but the adventure is well worth it and the location rather breathtaking.



With some gold in your pockets, head south and prepare for trouble. You'll find jotun in some numbers near Theign Spiritwalk, the location of one of their holy sites, Theign Kenning. This site is guarded jealously by the spirit of one of their elders, a small sample of their devotion to their past and what their power was once. The Jotuns' savagery, even at times towards each other, is a poor way to honor their ancestors; it is no wonder Jormag seeks them.

In the middle of the Cliffs is a large cavernous area known as Dostoev Sky Peak. Here, the dredge tunnel and dig for the Spirits know what.



This operation of theirs has no comforts that I can see, and only looks like an infinite maze of wooden scaffolding climbing high to the roof of the cave, or suspended from it. Why or what they're excavating even the Priory doesn't know. Whatever it is, I know it cannot be good.

Further south, the Cliffs become truly dangerous with the satisfaction and glory of hunting dredge. Their largest city is found in the southwest corner of the region, Sorrow's Embrace as they call it now. The Priory tell us this was a large mine called Sorrow's Furnace where the Stone Summit dwarves forced them to work. It seems as if they stayed here after the dwarves left, relishing their newfound freedom. Their numbers are certainly formidable and they harass the entire south of the Cliffs, attacking anyone from Tribulation Rift in the west all the way to the Betrayal Grounds in the east. With fire cannons, bombs, sonic weapons and more, the dredges' ferocity is relentless, especially in Tribulation Rift, and often outside Mantlet Refuge itself, a modest sized monastery-turned-fort where the Priory hold out against the dredge.



Timberline Falls

After the din of ceaseless battle, taking the road south out of Frostland Melt and into Timberline Falls will seem peaceful indeed. You'll still find dredge in this area just south of Dredgehaunt Cliffs, but as you may have guessed, the Shiverpeaks begin to lose more of their snow from Timberline Falls southward. This far south, the mountains are part of the Shiverpeaks' Steamspur chain, and Jormag's corruption is not noticeable. Instead, the corruption of a different Elder Dragon is present through his risen, undead army, and the presence of xenophobic serpents known as Krait, forced this far north by the Elder Dragon of the deep sea. My own people prefer the northern edge of this region, with its remnants of snow, and you'll find hearty moots and good ale flowing in Krongar Pass at Kyesjard in the northwest corner of the Falls.

Further south you'll find Concordia, an outpost of the Pact, an organization made up of the three Orders of Tyria who fight the dragon of the undead, and of which I'm Commander. Time, the dragons and their ravages have changed Tyria, and these lands of the once proud dwarves have now all but swallowed their remains. From the sunken city of Droknar's Forge much further south, to Rankor Ruins covered in moss and vegetation here in the Falls, the Elder Dragons' power and cruelty are upending Tyria. The Shiverpeaks, as you see, have not escaped this so I think it's time we turn to the far north, to the heart of my people's battle with Jormag.

Frostgorge Sound

There is a reason why I've left Frostgorge Sound last. Jormag's corruption is strongest here in Frostgorge Sound, infecting grawl, quaggan, the Sons of Svanir, and even the peace-loving Kodan. A person cannot truly appreciate the power of the dragons and the devastating impact they have on all of us without meeting their enemies –

their victims – first. From the brave dwarves who first faced the fire dragon's champion from underground, to the dragons emerging from the seas, none of us are safe.



It is true that Frostgorge is covered in dwarven ruins as well, like the sunken Iron Horse Mines in the lake of the Grimstone Mol, and that you'll find the dredge claiming old dwarven cities as their own, as they have with Krok's Ruin. Nowhere else, though, will you find the Kodan in such large numbers.>

Having fled south like my people, the Kodan traveled in large floating cities they call Sanctuaries, beautiful structures acting as both housing and ships on glaciers.

Here in Frostgorge, though, they are beset not only by dredge in their warlike tenacity, but by Jormag himself through his lieutenants. Time and again, Jormag's minions, the infamous Claws of Jormag, attack the region, sending shards of corrupted dragon ice crystals into the land, to seep into and destroy the hearts of those weak enough to succumb to his promises of power.

When this happens, no living being is safe and every brave hunter rallies to destroy first the crystals and then the dragon minion itself. It is a fearsome battle, but the safety of us all, not just those of us from the northern Shiverpeaks, depends on our continued victories.



I invite you, then, to my homeland. But I hope you come not just as a spectator and tourist, but as one ready to fight for its people.





The Dragon of Ice and Snow

Written by Konig

Jormag, the Elder Dragon of Ice, was the second of the five currently awake Elder Dragons to rise. Ruling over the north in the Far Shiverpeaks and beyond, Jormag is continuously pressing south, invading the warmer lands and freezing them as his influence grows. Like Primordus and the mysterious Elder Dragon of the Deep Sea, Jormag has displaced several races, including the norn.

Corruption of Jormag

Minions and Means of Corrupting

Though all Elder Dragons seem capable of corrupting all things, or rather their draconic energies hold no known bounds on what they corrupt, each dragon has their own unique way and element in doing so. Jormag is no different.



Jormag's power lies in mentality and ice. He corrupts primarily the living, though is known to spread his influence into the very land, air, and water around him and his minions. On rare occasions, he's even known to twist corpses in the same way that Zhaitan does. His minions, the icebrood, have progressional stages on their age - newly made icebrood are just caked in ice, which grows over the individual's skin. Like this, the icebrood are still capable of bleeding and thus can be felled by piercing weapons such as arrows. In time, the ice expands and soon enough the blood freezes and the insides and skin of the creature turns to ice itself, leaving nothing but bones and ice in the final stages of corruption - during such stages, crushing blows are the primary means of destroying these creatures.

But what makes him most unique amongst the Elder Dragons is not what he corrupts, but *how* he corrupts. Jormag is the only Elder Dragon to have non-minion followers, and on top of this, the only one who's minions do not immediately kill any and all living beings. There are many cases where even seemingly mindless icebrood work alongside the Sons of Svanir.

Not only this, but Jormag has another unique ability. According to a Whispers spy within the Vigil, Khrigar Ripjaw, unlike the other Elder Dragons that corrupt to enslave, Jormag entices his victims with promises of power before they become corrupted. This can be seen in various places; most predominantly is via the Frost Portal in Drakkar Spurs in which a voice echoes through, promising passer-byes gifts of power – and should you claim to be powerful enough, challenges you with icebrood. Should you pass the challenge, the voice offers once again for Jormag to show true power.

Despite this, though, the Sons of Svanir are known on multiple occasions to forcefully corrupt and twist victims for Jormag's armies – and are granted with more power by Jormag for doing so (Side interjection: on the opposite side, however, he does not punish when the Sons of Svanir kill female norn that were twisted into icebrood – what's interesting is that whenever Jormag and his champions are attacked, there is retaliation, but if left alone they bide their time within their territory). But those who are fully icebrood first use mental powers to convince their victims of joining – such as when Zojja, Snaff, and Eir fought the Dragonspawn for the first time.

The promises of power that Jormag and his minions offer for servitude extends a bit further, in that it shows the mentality of Jormag's minions. To quote the aforementioned Frost Portal:

"Strength alone governs this world. Embrace Jormag, and you will gain power beyond belief."
Though one may think it is misguided of the Sons of Svanir in their belief that Jormag grants them power and that Jormag, to them Dragon, is the strongest predator and Spirit of the Wild, perhaps it is not so foolhardy. At least, even non-Sons of Svanir minions seem to view this very same way.

In the end though, one thing of Jormag is certain:

He seeks willing victims for his army, and does not hate it when his army is decreased by his own men. And all his minions – Sons or not – value strength and power above all else.

Known Champions

Aside from Zhaitan who's very domain has been breached to its heart, Jormag is the one whom we know the most dragon champions of. As a brief introduction, dragon champions – or lieutenants – are the higher ranked minions among the Elder Dragons' individual armies. Said champions are capable of leading, or bullying, lesser minions (whom are usually mindless) and are capable of high intelligence and tactics, often times even conversation (should they choose to have such). They are the leaders of the army, and their death often sends nearby lesser minions into a panic frenzy as they retreat, or alternatively turn into mindless killing machines with no tactics or thoughts of self-preservation.

The oldest known champion of Jormag's name is not entirely known. Hints and indications have led to what's still only a nickname being likely to be its true name: Drakkar. A creature from the previous dragon rise, it is huge and aquatic-looking, with pincer for legs and was frozen beneath a large lake in the far Shiverpeak Mountains known as Drakkar Lake, from which its nickname came (and given the aforementioned indications, the lake's name may in fact come from Drakkar). Drakkar is also the only known minion of Jormag to have survived the supposed 11,000 years since the last dragon rising, and may still live to this day.

The first icebrood, and champion, of this rise was corrupted by Drakkar. Svanir, a norn hunter, was twisted into his bear form and coated in ice akin to the early forms of icebrood stages. Unlike any other icebrood shown he was capable of disappearing into and appearing from thin air. These acts were that of traveling into the Spirit Realm – a name sometimes used for the Mists. How he was capable of this is unknown, as it is an ability akin to that of the norn Havrouns, and Jormag is said to have no Havroun (nor was Svanir one before corruption). He was eventually slain in 1078 AE, not long after his corruption.

The Dragonspawn was a construct made of ice, mist, and multiple animals' bones - including a minotaur skull. It's well known for its mental abilities, capable of mesmerizing nearly anyone even when they held resistances to such magic. It acted as a guardian in Jormag's southernost territory, living in a deep cave just north of Hoelbrak that was full of hundreds of icebrood - from wolves and bats to norn and even giants (a rarity in the Shiverpeaks). The Dragonspawn never expanded

Jormag's territory, but only defended it. On occasion it would send icebrood to raid Hoelbrak, bot only when itself was attacked by wannabe heroes; its retaliations being stronger the more danger it came in. It was the first of the dragon champions felled by Destiny's Edge, slain in 1320 AE.



Lastly among the known dragon champions of Jormag are the Claws of Jormag. Each Claw of Jormag is a dragon-shaped construct of ice and bone (or bone-shaped ice), with wings of pure ice that is weaker than the rest of its body. Whether they were once living beings or if they're constructs like the Dragonspawn is unknown, but they match in appearance the latest stages of icebrood corruption, indicating having once been living creatures. They were the champions responsible for hunting down the kodan, harrying their Sanctuaries as they fled south, now residing in Frostgorge Sound. Now, the Claws of Jormag raid the southern edge of Frostgorge Sound where they fight the Pact, and occasionally can be found even in the skies above Snowden Drifts.

Many more intelligent icebrood exist, such as former Sons of Svanir like “Kodan’s Bane, the Huntsman of Jormag,” whom may be champions. But whether they are or not is currently unknown.

History of Jormag

When Last Awake

Very little is known about the previous dragon rising in general, with only the actions of Primordus, Jormag, and Kralkatorrik having any hint to what they were. Jormag’s influence in the previous rise comes in the form of the dwarves – though not much.

The Stone Summit dwarves are known to have held a relic of these times in their possession, known as the Sanguinary Blade. This sword was forged out of the frozen blood of Jormag during the previous dragon rise and was capable of corrupting those it cut – or wielded it too long.

Though he fell asleep far to the north of continental Tyria, his name was written in dwarven legends and they held artifacts that came from him, even one of his champions, Drakkar, was found in the Far Shiverpeaks in hibernation to show that his influence came far south during the previous rise.

As Dragon Slept

Jormag is one of the two Elder Dragons known to have held an influence on the world while in hibernation – the other being Primordus. As he slept in the far north, near the arctic seas, his champion Drakkar was frozen in a lake further south.

Drakkar Lake was forbidden territory to the norn who lived in the Far Shiverpeaks. But one day, two norn hunters and siblings, Jora and Svanir, crossed the lake hunting their prey. They felt an ancient presence calling at them, promising them gifts of power and prey if they listened. Jora pushed the whispers away; Svanir called upon them. And as Svanir tapped into the ancient magic that came from Drakkar, Drakkar corrupted Svanir, transforming him into the Nornbear – a new champion of Jormag.

As the Nornbear, Svanir ravaged the mountainside, raiding villages and lone travelers by appearing from thin air and disappearing the same after his kills – or rare failed attempts. Jora hunted her brother down and slayed him with the aid of individuals from other races that lived south of the norn. Time passed, and others felt the very call Svanir did. Drawn by promises of power and the story of Svanir’s sudden increase in the same, many norn created a cult that called upon Drakkar and shunned women for her deed against Svanir. This cult became the Sons of Svanir. And though they thought to be taking power from Drakkar, it was in truth taking power from them.

Power used to help Jormag rise.

And the Mountains Shattered…

Zhaitan may have raised Orr from the watery depths, and Kralkatorrik may have scarred Ascalon with the Dragonbrand, but both pale in comparison to the acts of Jormag’s awakening.

As he awoke, the tallest mountain range known in the world shattered. They broke and split so much so that the chasms created filled with water: earth and snow of such high elevation that the mountains is stuck in winter year round split so wide and deep so that a large basin of water, deep enough for glaciers, was made. This was the waking of Jormag, the formation of Frostgorge Sound.

Jormag’s attention first fell to the arctic seas, the closest area of known life to him upon waking. It was there that he sundered the kodan first. Living on their iceberg cities known as Sanctuaries, he toppled over the icebergs in whole, crushing them, and overall splitting the kodan race into the four winds. At least four Sanctaries eventually made their way south, through Frostgorge Sound, though one had sunk on the voyage: Morning Frost.

Next, Jormag pushed south. And the norn stood in his way. Unlike the kodan, the norn had ample warning of Jormag’s coming. For five years before his arrival, an endless blizzard reigned on. According to the skaalds, when the dragon finally arrived in norn lands, they threw themselves at the towering beast as the mightiest of hunts, and Jormag swept them all aside with ease. Even the greatest lodge of the north, Gunnar’s Hold, was crushed beneath an iceberg. The Spirits of the Wild saw this and feared for the race, seeing their extinction if not aided.

Together, eight Spirits of the Wild came to the norn’s aid. Guiding Asgeir Dragonrender, he became the first norn to ever injure Jormag – with an ancient scroll of the jotun in hand and the Spirits behind his back, Asgeir knocked a tooth out of Jormag’s own maw. Showing that Jormag could be beaten, he led the norn south with Bear, Wolf, Raven, and Snow Leopard guiding the way to the valley that would become Hoelbrak. But Jormag would not let his prey go easily. Eagle, Wolverine, Ox, and Owl had remained to keep Jormag occupied.

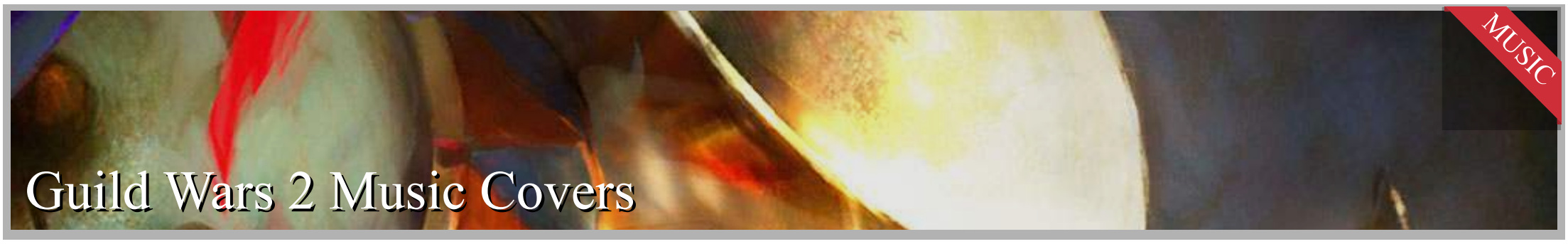
Above the skies as the norn fled south, a battle raged on. It came down to Owl alone to protect the norn, as she was the only thing between them and the Elder Ice Dragon. Seeing no chance of victory, Owl made a desperate move: she dove straight into the maw of the dragon. Scratching and clawing as she was within Jormag, she enraged and distracted the beast long enough to save the norn below. And Owl became no more. The fate of the other three Spirits that remained behind have been unknown, with no Havroun during or since to confirm or deny their deaths.



Concept art of Jormag fighting the norn by Richard Anderson.

Since then, Jormag has bided his time in the north. His forces push ever so slowly south, taking bit by bit and his influence spreading further than his actual domain through the Sons of Svanir. If the Honor of the Wave's Claw's words ring true, Jormag's time to push south in full force is coming soon.





Guild Wars 2 Music Covers

Written by Valiant

The Guild Wars 2 community has always been a diverse one, with fans producing a multitude of amazing creations based on the game - and GuildMag has always been proud to be a part of this. For our tenth magazine issue, we've chosen to feature a fantastic composer and sound designer who produces some truly outstanding covers of Guild Wars 2 songs (as well as original Tyria-inspired pieces!).

Laurent, AKA 'Lzn02', has been uploading Guild Wars 2 inspired tracks for over a year, and we'd like to share a few of them below. If you'd like to hear more, his YouTube channel can be found at http://www.youtube.com/user/Lzn02, and his SoundCloud account at http://soundcloud.com/lzn02. Please support Laurent's work, and help keep the Guild Wars 2 tracks coming!

Fear Not This Night Cover, Featuring Sharm



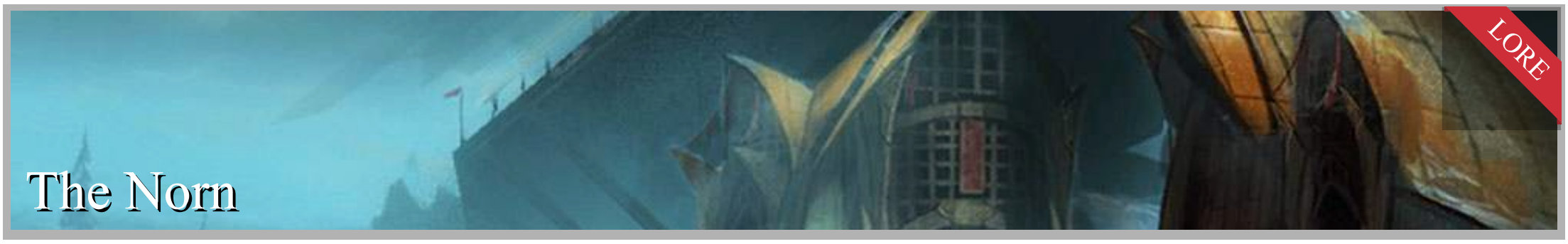
The Tales of the Four Winds



Canthan Main Theme - Guild Wars 2 Version







The Norn

Written by Achilles

The norn are a race of individualistic, shape-shifting hunters. They thrive in their mountain homesteads, such as Hoelbrak, by the acuity of their senses, the speed of their perception, and the strength of their bare hands. The norn are guided in this world by the Spirits of the Wild which embody the virtues of the strongest beasts.

Their large and muscled form is able to shift with the blessing of the four main Spirits of the Wild: Bear, Wolf, Raven, and Snow Leopard. Their human form should not fool you: they are about nine feet tall and their proportions are much broader and more muscled than humans. Their body mass also emits far more heat, allowing them to withstand extremely cold temperatures without much clothing.

Their racial skills are related to their Spirits, which allows them to call upon animals such as an owl or a wurm, to help them in the battle.

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Almost nothing is known about the origins of the norn. A theory among the kodan Voices claims that they may descend from a group of kodan hunters that went astray during a great storm, becoming lesser creatures and losing their natural bear form for their human form. This contradicts the so-far common belief which said that the norn ability of were-transformation was gifted by Bear. On the other hand, the jotun believe that they and the norn once ruled the Shiverpeaks together, until magic was taken from them and while the jotun fell into civil war, the norn turned to the Spirits of the Wild for guidance. These theories are yet to be confirmed as facts.



The norn have always been an individualistic, sometimes nomadic, people. This did not stop them from convincingly holding their lands in the far north against invading charr warbands. Their defense earned the respect of their opponents and thus, a cooperative peace with the charr emerged from their mutual respect, which has already lasted for about 300 years now. 250 years ago, the norn made their first contact with humanity, as well as the Elder Dragons' minions. This took place in the years after the downfall of the Great Destroyer, during the events of Guild Wars: Eye of the North. During such time, a handful of norn were vital in fighting off the Great Destroyer, champion to Primordus, as well as killing Svanir, champion to Jormag. Though even this threat would not unite the race fully.

In the year 1165 AE the Elder Dragon Jormag awoke in the frozen Far Shiverpeaks, the northern reaches of the Shiverpeak Mountains. The Dragon forced the native races, such as the kodan, to abandon their homes and head south across the newly made seas. His minions of snow and ice, the icebrood, forced the norn to emigrate to the southern abandoned dwarven areas. There, they established their new home, the Great Lodge of Hoelbrak, found new hunting grounds, and made new enemies. They fight to this day with the dredge for dominance over these parts of the mountains.

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Norn are warriors and hunters who focus on personal success and glory. Boisterous, stubborn, and passionate they are independent people who swear servitude to no single being. They are not afraid of death and the only thing that haunts their thoughts is that they may become weak and end up forgotten. They are heavy drinkers, and love to feast and hunt with the same passion as they always strive to become a hero among their people. They are also very honorable in many cases, but easily angry. Many norn are just as easy to anger as they are to forgive and forget or to become friends. They accept others for their own individual action, judging others for what they did themselves, rather than who they associate with which has led to even the Sons of Svanir whom follow Jormag being welcomed into Hoelbrak.



Humans believe that norn who gain respect from their peers through courageous deeds have accomplished what the norn values most, and makes them equal to the legendary norn who performed even more respectable acts. However, the norn themselves would not be satisfied with mere respect from peers, but making a legend of their own, regardless of what it is or how it was made. And among all, their legends must be known, sang by the skaalds and told well after their life ends, which they would willingly give to make their legend.

Their names originate from Norse, Finnish, and other Viking cultures.





The History, Culture and Territory of the Jotun

LORE

Written by Draxynnic

Greetings, empty heads in need of filling! It is I, Professor Blorp, palaeontologist, archaeologist, xenologist, biologist... in fact, your source on all matters related to life, culture and history of Tyria!

Today, we will be speaking of the lumbering brutes of the Shiverpeaks. No, not the norn, those *other* lumbering brutes. Listen closely, and you will learn of the history and culture of the jotun, and of the object lesson that this provides to all bookahs that would rather fight among themselves than respect the superior intellect and organisational skills of the asura!

First, we shall talk about their history:



As some of the less ignorant of you may already be aware, the jotun were one of the races known to have existed at the time the dragons were last active. Showing a wisdom lacking in most today, the jotun put their faith in the most magically accomplished among them, raising them as so-called 'giant-kings' over the brutish warriors. Under the giant-kings, the jotun dominated the Shiverpeaks, building a civilisation upon magical devices that can now be found spread throughout the mountains. Many of these serve as monuments to the giant-kings, some of which have bound spirits to the physical plane, but the most significant of these was a magical telescope – or "far-viewing device" to you bookahs unfamiliar with scientific instruments – which the jotun used to predict the rise of new Elder Dragons, having observed that new constellations formed in warning of the waking of an Elder Dragon. Worryingly, such a constellation was observed by the Pact agents who retrieved the telescope, but such discussions are not the topic of this discourse.

Through their alliance with the other races present at the time – dwarves, seers, forgotten, and the treacherous mursaat – the jotun survived the last rise of the Elder Dragons to rebuild their civilisation. And then, they destroyed it themselves due to infighting. Two theories have come forth as to how this happened.

The *credible* theory is that having run out of foes to fight, the jotun, like the charr before unification under the Khan-Ur, fell to fighting among themselves. To make it worse, there was more at stake than who would unify jotun civilisation among themselves. You see, the jotun believed that their magical and physical power came from their blood – and from slaying another jotun, they could claim that jotun's power. Thus, instead of a war of unification, it became a war of genocide, each jotun clan seeking to slay all others. The realisation that all this killing was doing nothing to increase their power and was in fact consuming it as their most adept minds were the most high-profile targets never seemed to enter their small minds.

A jotun claiming to be the last jotun thruln – their title for a historian – claims that the jotun and norn were once the favoured of the gods and protectors of other races, including the humans. He claims that the gods betrayed the jotun and norn, taking away their magic and giving it to other races, leaving norn and jotun civilisation to flounder. Where the norn regained its sense of identity and purpose through the Spirits of the Wild, the jotun had no such supposed anchor – as if the favour of supernatural beings is needed to maintain a civilisation! – to prevent their slide into their current barbarism.

It is my opinion – and thus you bookahs should take it, unless evidence is found to the contrary, as absolute, incontrovertible FACT - that the first theory is the closest to the truth. In addition to archaeological evidence, a norn adventurer claims to have communed with the spirit of a thruln from the time of the fall of jotun civilisation, who corroborates the Priory's theory. The modern Thruln's oral history, by contrast, has had thousands of years in which it may have been corrupted. Through the brutish behaviour of the jotun clan-chiefs, it is likely that any thruln who told a story that the clan-chief did not approve of – such as a story of the fall of the jotun that places the blame solely on the clan-chief's ancestors, the only things that jotun clan-chiefs respect except themselves – would face significant evolutionary pressure to change their story to one more palatable or be replaced. Posthumously. At the time this would likely have happened, humans were the dominant barely-sapient species on the surface of Tyria (beneath was, of course, another story), so what account could be better received than one that says the dominant species only had its power through stealing the legacy of the jotun?

However, it is possible that the modern Thruln's story does contain an element of truth. We know that, in the last rise of the Elder Dragons, one of the other races – the Seers – coalesced most of the world's magic into the Bloodstone in order to protect it from the Elder Dragons. We do not know if the Seers consulted their allies on this action, and with the seer civilisation not surviving the last rise beyond a few scattered survivors due to the seer-mursaat war, they may not have been able to inform the jotun of what they had done – leaving the jotun with an unexplained deficit of magic. A deficit they attempted to replace with the lifeblood of their rivals. When they heard of the human gods and how they manipulated magic through interfering with, and then breaking, the Bloodstone, they may have come to the conclusion that the sudden loss of magic described in their histories – which may, at that time, have still been written – was the fault of the same gods.

The fighting between jotun tribes still goes on today – while jotun will attack anyone who enters their territory, they place particular priority on other jotun not of their tribe. As a result, their knowledge and culture has continued to deteriorate. While the norn are more concerned with their stories of so-called heroism than over maintaining a coherent historical record, human adventurers who fought the jotun around the time of the Destruction of Quora Sum reported fighting jotun wielding powers similar to those of necromancers and mesmers. Whether through the actions of adventurers, each other, or the rise of Jormag, these are no more. Now, the only magic you're likely to find among a jotun clan is within the artifacts and spirits of their ancestors.

Having discussed their history, it is time to move onto their culture – such as it is, anyway:

The first thing you need to know about jotun culture – and understand that I use that term very loosely – is that each jotun worships only himself. This should not be mistaken for the enlightened rationalism of the charr – each jotun truly believes that he himself is a god.

Now, I know what some of you bookahs are thinking, and no, we asura do not consider ourselves gods. We're just smarter than you. Now, if I may continue in my possibly ill-advised attempt to educate you...



As I outlined in my observations on jotun history, the jotun believe in the power of their blood. Naturally, every male jotun believes that the power of *his* blood is the most potent and every other jotun is his inferior, seeking to hold him down out of jealousy when they should be recognising him as the most suitable to lead the tribe. As a result, leadership of a jotun tribe is determined on the basis of who is strong enough to bully the other jotun into submission. Jotun show no loyalty to their chieftains and will seek to take their place at the first opportunity – often fatally, as the new chieftain takes revenge for past real and imagined slights.

You're probably now wondering why I specified 'male' there and wondering about their females. Well, they don't get it even that lucky. To the mind of male jotun, female jotun are prized sources of the next generation to carry the tribe's oh-so-potent blood... and little else. Females belonging to the clan are kept in the safest hiding places known to the tribe where they can continue bearing children, and where they will not be found by other tribes. Females of other tribes are killed on site – no tribe wants to dilute their own blood by mingling it with that of another tribe.

For those of you who are aware of a little thing called "inbreeding" and what that can do to the health of a population, this will explain a lot about the jotun.

The one thing that jotun revere apart from themselves are the relics and monuments of their ancestors, which they believe to be their rightful inheritance – and evidence of the power they will *surely* hold once again, after they have consumed all of the power held within the blood of their rivals. As a result, jotun will preferentially settle in the ruins left behind by their ancestors when possible. In some cases, the presence of these relics can temper the usual anarchy of jotun leadership – such as the artifact containing the spirit of the Elder Thruln I mentioned earlier, which the tribe used as a means of weeding out contenders for the leader's position without the strength to pose a real challenge. More evidence for the jotun regard for objects of their ancestors is their use of stones bearing script from their ancient written language as currency. Of course, the oafs have long since forgotten what they meant, and it is likely that being removed from their original site to serve as currency has destroyed whatever message they once carried.

Having said that, for any of you who are brave or foolish enough to seek them out in their lairs, where can they be found?

Most of the known jotun settlements (or "kennings", in their language) are to be found in the vicinity of Hoelbrak – in fact, most travellers entering or leaving Hoelbrak will pass by at least one, unless they travel by gate. It may seem strange that the majority of that barbaric race may be found so close to the closest thing to civilisation in the Shiverpeaks, but it is likely that the same considerations led norn and jotun both to settle in that area – a relative lack of worse enemies. Close to Hoelbrak, the jotun are shielded by efforts of the Priory and the norn to hold off more implacable enemies such as Jormag's minions and the dredge – foes that the jotun, fragmented into small tribes as they are, would not be able hold off on their own. Meanwhile, the jotun themselves are not considered enough of a threat for priority eradication – some, in fact, hold out hope that the jotun might be recivilised through patience and re-education.

Two such kennings can be found in Wayfarer Foothills, apparently belonging to a single tribe – Kresdor Kenning just east of the Shrine of Bear in the foothills below the snowline, and Haivoissen Kenning in some of the most well-preserved ancient ruins known north of Breakneck Pass, including the stone reported to contain the Elder Thruln.

Three more kennings can be found south of Hoelbrak – Hessdallen, in the shadow of the archway on the road through the Troll's Teeth, Theign Kenning on the mountain to the east, and a third kenning of unknown name further to the southeast, near Nakrojos Pass. The jotun of these kennings often come into conflict with Priory archaeological teams studying ruins and artifacts nearby, and seem to have a particularly strong link to the spirits of their ancestors, which have often been seen and sometimes fought by adventurers raiding the kennings.

More distantly, a small jotun tribe is known to have occupied a grove on the Gentle River, just south of Kyesjard. Further north, Grogshadow Kenning can be found on a ledge overlooking Vanjir's Stead in southern Lornar's Pass. Finally, a jotun tribe has taken up residence on the north shore of Valslake, opposite the Song of Final Exile. Previously a wilderness, this area has become more important since icebrood encroachment forced the Lionguard to reroute travellers through this territory, leading to efforts being undertaken in order to pacify the jotun population there to ensure the safety of travellers.

And here ends the lesson for today. You can continue sitting here – or sleeping as the case may be for some of you at the back, don't think I can't see you – but I'm going to get back to more interesting projects than trying to teach you lot. Seriously, it's like the Priory will take any bookah with delusions of scholarliness these days...





Written by LadyLala

(This story is a product of the author's fiction. Its content is not necessarily reflected on the already established lore of the world of Tyria)

The arrow sprang through the air, wobbling slightly before hitting its target. Lydia allowed herself a small smile before she approached the deer and started skinning it. Halfway through, she heard a growl behind her. She glanced around to see her animal companion glaring at a tree. The big cat growled again, and she heard a strained voice come from the branches.
"Call her off, Lydia! I'm tired of climbing trees every time I'm around you."
Lydia smirked. "Here, Bena," she called, and the cat crept to her side. A man emerged from the tree line and grinned sheepishly at her. He was dressed in court clothing that was torn in a few places from the tree he had just vacated.
"What are you doing out here, Faren? I didn't think hunting was really your thing."
"It's not. I was sent to fetch you; Minister Senela wants to see you."
Lydia raised her eyebrows. "And whatever it is was so urgent she didn't let you change clothes?"
"No, I just felt like giving you something nice to look at."
Lydia rolled her eyes, but suspected Faren was avoiding the question. "Whatever. Do I at least have time to drop this off?" she said, motioning to the deer.
He shrugged. "I guess. Why are you even hunting? It's not like the palace needs food."
Lydia returned to skinning the deer. "No, but I know someone who does. And besides, I could use the practice."
Faren shook his head as he watched her. "Savior of the world, and she still thinks she needs target practice."

Divinity's Reach had many defining features, but the first thing to assault the senses was the noise. Merchants called out their wares, beggars rattled tin cups half full of coins, women gossiped, and drunken men started impromptu brawls over whose turn it was to pay. Compared to the relative peacefulness just outside the walls, it was overwhelming.
As Lydia and Faren pushed their way through the teeming crowds gathered near the entrance, Faren shouted, "Where are we going?"
"Rurikton," Lydia yelled back.
When they had muscled through the majority of the mob, Lydia checked to see if the pack of deer meat was still full. Her burdens had been lessened by light fingered thieves too many times to take chances. When the inspection was complete, she shouldered the pack again and started the descent into Rurikton.
From the outside, it looked like there was an eternal party existing in the district. Brightly colored confetti was strewn on the cobblestone streets, streamers hung from buildings, and banners proclaimed how proud the residents were of their Ascalonian heritage. But under the bright exterior, the people of Rurikton still mourned the loss of their homeland. They tried to make their little slice of the city feel like home, but it was hard.
Maybe it's for the better, Lydia thought as she passed the portal to Ebonhawke. *If they saw what their once great nation had become, they might not want to go back. I sure don't.*
Lydia had been to Ebonhawke only twice, both times on official missions. Since she was of Ascalonian descent, she was naturally curious, but that curiosity had been stamped out within minutes of being there. After seeing the land that was ravaged by the Searing and years of war, she never wanted to return.
Shaking her head, she walked past the portal and onto a side street with a row of small wooden houses. She knocked on one of the doors and waited until it opened.
"Lady Toran! How nice of you to stop by, please come in! Your friend too, if he wants."
Lydia smiled. "That's very kind of you Mary, but Lord Faren will wait out here with Bena." She shot a glance at Faren, who blanched and backed up against the wall. Leaving him to his own devices, she followed the woman inside.
Mary Castor was a mousy, middle aged woman with long brown hair that had gray streaks far before it should. Lydia had met her in a market with her daughter, who was a cripple. After conversing with her, Lydia felt compelled to help.
"Would you mind saying hello to Brianna, my lady? She just loves when you visit."
"Of course. And I've told you before; it's Lydia, not 'my lady'. You make me feel like an old aristocrat's wife."
Mary giggled, but then stopped herself. "Alright, if you insist."
"Where's Gavin?" Lydia asked.
"Oh he's been working a lot lately. It's been helping with the money, but I worry about his health," Mary said of her husband. "Oh, here's Brianna."
Brianna was nine, with dark blonde hair and dancing blue eyes. She pushed herself into the room with her wooden wheelchair, and beamed at Lydia.
"Hi, Lydia!" Brianna wasn't old enough to care about proper names, which suited Lydia just fine.
"Hey, Brianna. Is that a new necklace? It's very pretty."
"Yep! Daddy got it for me at the market last week," Brianna proudly exclaimed, fingering the string of shells around her neck. Lydia smiled and turned to Mary.
"I just came by to drop this off," she said, handing the woman the pack of deer meat. She opened it and gasped.
"Lydia, thank you! This will last us for a month!"
Lydia winced internally, thinking of how little they would have to eat to make it last that long. "It's nothing. I had to cut my hunting trip short, but maybe next time I can get more."
Mary expressed her gratitude again, and the two said farewell. Lydia walked outside to find Bena sitting demurely by Faren, who looked utterly terrified.
"Took you long enough! I thought she was going to eat me!"
Bena licked her chops, as if to make a point. Lydia rolled her eyes.
"She may not like you very much, but she knows better than to touch you. Right, Bena?" The cat butted her head into Lydia's hand. Faren looked dubious, but followed them out of the district and into one of the elevators going to the upper levels of the city.
"You know, you can't help everyone, Lydia," Faren said, straight-faced for once.
Lydia sighed, and walked out of the elevator. "I know."

At sunset, the palace garden's beauty was accentuated. Rays of light pierced the glass ceiling, illuminating the flowers and fountains. Lydia took a moment to admire them before leaving Bena with Faren outside and walking into the offices of the Ministers. She was shown into one of the spacious rooms, and moved to stand at the floor to ceiling window overlooking the city. She marveled at the difference between the levels of the city; she could understand why the Council felt they had such power. *Up here, isolated from all the unpleasant matters of the lower classes, they're invincible. Or so they think.*
The door opened behind her, and a tall, imposing, gray haired woman walked in. "Hello, Minister Senela," Lydia said, walking forward to greet the older woman. Senela gave her a small smile and sat down behind her desk. Lydia took the chair opposite, and regarded the other woman. She looked more worried than Lydia had seen her lately, but also distracted, as if her mind was in several different places at once. The minister leaned forward and put her chin on her hands.
"Things aren't going well with the council. They passed another tax law today."

“That’s the third tax raise in three months! Are they insane?”
Senela sighed. “Apparently they are. I opposed it of course, but the majority won.”
Lydia gazed steadily at her. “Senela, tell me my father didn’t vote in favor of it.”
Senela looked down, avoiding her eyes. Lydia pushed back her chair and stood up.
“I’ve had it with this,” she proclaimed, starting towards the door.
“Lydia wait,” Senela said quietly, standing up and moving towards her. Lydia halted and turned around. She didn’t like most of the Ministers, but she trusted Senela, because she had a decent head on her shoulders.
“I know you disagree with a lot of your father’s actions, but don’t be hot-headed about this. Do you want him to put you on a tighter leash?” Senela had a point. Lydia’s father didn’t care much about what she did, as long as it didn’t interfere with his political aspirations. If she protested too loudly, he could stop turning a blind eye to her activities, and she definitely didn’t want that.
She sighed and nodded. “You’re right, I’m sorry. I just think about all of the poor people this law is going to affect, and I can’t…”
“I know, Lydia. But I didn’t call you in just so I could give you more ammunition against your father. I called you here to warn you.”
Lydia looked up in surprise. “Warn me?”
“Passing this law may give the middle and lower class citizens enough incentive to revolt. I know you spend a lot of time among them, so just be wary that a noble like yourself may not be welcome.”
“I see. Thank you, Senela. I’ll be careful.”
The women said goodbye, and Lydia went outside. Faren was nowhere to be found, probably off at a party somewhere. Bena came trotting to her side, and together they set off towards the Salma District. She briefly considered talking to Logan about what the Minister had said, but decided it could wait. There was one person she wanted to see first.

A man hurried down dark alleyways, clutching a small package within the folds of his coat, frequently glancing back to see if he was being followed. If anyone caught him now, he’d be dead. After navigating the labyrinth of narrow streets, he came to a brightly glowing tavern and entered. Once inside, he pushed his way through the dirty, noisy crowd to a table near the window, and sat down to wait. A few minutes later, a man dropped into the seat opposite and eyed him. He was wearing a dark hooded coat, so only his mouth was visible.
“Do you have it?” he asked.
The first man nodded, swallowed nervously then withdrew the package and slid it across the table. The other man took it and hid it out of sight. He withdrew a parcel of his own and handed it across the table.
“Don’t look so nervous, comrade,” the hooded man said gruffly. “You’re doing this fine city a favor.”
“I’m just – I’m just doing this for my family,” the first man stuttered. “Thank you for the reward.” He stood up and bowed his head politely to the stranger before leaving. He hurried down the dimly lit streets, trying to get back home. The money in his pocket felt like a heavy weight, and indeed it came with a heavy mental burden. Yet he tried to push the matter out of his mind and focus on what this would mean for his family. He smiled a little when he thought of what he would use the money for. The first thing he was buying was another shell necklace for his daughter. She would love it.





The Legend of Thorgir

Written by Achilles

(This story is a product of the author's fiction. Its content is not necessarily reflected on the already established lore of the world of Tyria)

The Ice Dragon had taken away all of those that he loved. His parents, his brother, his wife and now even his own children. Only a few close friends were left, and they had abandoned him out of misery. There was no one in the world for him now.

Thorgir Ingvarson, a Norn smith, stood by the fire forging what was supposed to turn into a sword. He grew up by the fire, he had spent so many moments of his life close to it. Enough to know that ice had no chance next to its presence. The time had come.

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It had been a couple of days of march already since Thorgir's party decided to leave Hoelbrak. Along the road they crossed paths with some roaming icebrood that fell easily under their weapons. They knew that the presence of the corrupted was a sign that they were getting closer to their actual target.

Only a cluster of trees was left to traverse now in order to reach the other side of the snowy forest. The naked trunks were acting as if they were curtains for the sunlight that bathed the fringes. They stood there blinded, till their eyes could adapt to what wasn't the gloom of the woodlands anymore.

Their vision was clear now. They could witness right in front of them the purpose of their entire journey, roosting down in the valley. He was the size of a fortress; a crystal fortress made out of icy scales. His eyelids had come down to form two of the finest of diamonds at the place where his eyes were supposed to be. Could they be so lucky? Perhaps he got tired from hunting all day long, they thought. This might have been their chance to strike.

Quietly, one by one they sneaked behind the Dragon. Thorgir was standing next to the beast's rear legs when full of anger and hatred he raised his sword and sank it deep into Jormag's flesh. A sudden roar was heard when the massive silhouette woke up trying to stand on its feet. He spread His wings and flew up in the sky performing a difficult maneuver above of their heads. The Dragon did not intend to flee. He quickly changed direction in the air and started descending towards Thorgir and his companions.

It was Jormag's chilly breath the last thing that Thorgir felt on that day.

***

The old smith woke up. He was sitting by the fireplace in his hut just outside of Hoelbrak. He grew up by the fire. Just a little bit further away, on the table, lied the sword he was working on in the previous day. A masterpiece he dared to believe, one of the finest blades ever forged, a Dragon killer. He lost all of his relatives to Jormag in the past and now he has decided to use his craftsmanship against him.

Some loud footsteps coming from the outside suddenly stopped his train of thoughts. Thorgir stood up from his chair and made his way to the front door, as if the whole process was part of a well-established habit. Another day has gone by, another herald has come by to spread the news and another bunch of foolish drunk Norn have gone missing attempting to mess up with the Dragon. This time though something felt different. Today, no posters of those missing were pinned at their usual place. Instead, laid an icy mirror.





History and Foundation of the Priory

Written by Konig

"Your power is only equal to the sum of your knowledge." - Durmand

The Durmand Priory is one of the three largest multi-racial militant organizations currently on continental Tyria. On top of this, it is at the forefront of recording both historical and modern knowledge and continuously works to find the truth of the world events. In addition to this, it is one of the main forces fighting the Elder Dragons, making the bulk of the Pact alongside the Vigil and Order of Whispers.

Origins of the Priory

The Durmand Priory is named after its founder, a well-proclaimed human historian by the name of Durmand. There are, surprisingly, conflicting tales of Durmand's establishment of the Priory. By 1078 AE, he was already seen as an aged man as he made – with the help of others – discoveries into the pasts of Saul D'Alessio, Master Togo, Turai Ossa, and Gwen Thackeray. Even at this time, he was well known and had a sect of scholars working under him to produce multiple copies of various records and documents. Similarly, the established date for the Durmand Priory's establishment is 1105 AE – though despite this, there are recordings of meetings of scholars recognized as the Durmand Priory as early as 1075 AE.



However, multiple reports, including the Priory's own members, refer to Durmand himself being present when Orr rose and flooded Lion's Arch in 1219 AE. According to these records, Durmand used his personal cliff-side monastery east of Lion's Arch to house scrolls and tomes from Lion's Arch's library to prevent the knowledge from being lost. Over time, scholars and mages from all races joined Durmand in keeping this knowledge safe and the Priory was established. Durmand realized the potential of multiple races working together and set the Priory on the path of combatting the Elder Dragons. Other records claim that it was the Order of Whispers who moved the scrolls and tomes from Lion's Arch and where they were moved to became guarded by the Priory afterward, and still others say it was the already-established Priory that moved the documents (rather than Durmand himself).

All reports, however, keep one consistency: the scrolls, tomes, and documents were moved to where the Durmand Priory now stands, and reside within its halls. And the founder was still nonetheless, the Historian Durmand.

Structure of the Priory

The members of the Priory can be divided into two fields: those who work in the field making discoveries, and those who catalogue those discoveries. The Priory's rankings are based on this division, though all members begin at the rank of Novice. The Priory is led by a Steward, currently being the aged asura Gixx, and its most renowned member if Magister Ogden Stonehealer, the last dwarf on Tyria's surface. On top of this, there is a group within the Priory known as the Archons, however, who they are and what they do is fairly unknown – what is known is that dangerous magical artifacts and knowledge are left for them to study and handle.

The rankings appear to be structured as the following:

a. Novice
b. Explorer | Scholar
c. Magister | Arcanist
d. Steward

Explorers will graduate into Magisters, while Scholars graduate into Arcanists; or so all indications imply.



Accomplishments of the Priory

As mentioned, the Priory is most well known for their collection and study of knowledge and their retrieval of lost history. However, their accomplishments are not limited to this.

In the same year of its official establishment, 1105 AE, the Durmand Priory was a crucial catalyst for establishing New Krytan as a singular writing system for all races of continental Tyria. Since then, the Priory has sent out to increase the literacy of all Tyrians, regardless of their social standings, as well as general education. In addition, in recent years the charr had sold them some printing presses, allowing the Durmand Priory to continuously print books and sell them across Tyria. Many books in book carts in places like Divinity's Reach were printed by the Durmand Priory itself.

In 1325 AE, they were also as mentioned one of the three main forces that established the Pact, being a source of knowledge and study of the Risen and Orr for the invasion into the Orrian peninsula to increase the chances of the Pact's forces to survive and deal heavier damage. The Priory's scholars were even behind many of the

Pact's advancing weaponry against the Risen, from Fort Trinity's generators and the undead-deterring electric fencing defending the Pact's various outposts and camps, to the very cannons used to bring down Zhaitan himself (with help from Zojja, on the latter).

Sources:

- The Movement of the World
- Cultural Diffusion in Contemporary Kryta
- Discourse on a Tome (1075 A.E.)
- A Bold New Theory
- Dredging the Past
- Pegga
- Chikage
- Arcanist Slizz





Religions of the Shiverpeaks

Written by Draxynnic

A review on the beliefs held by the peoples and culture of Tyria's largest mountain range, penned by Eleanor Draxynnus for the Durmand Priory in the year 1326 AE

Of all the realms of Tyria, the Shiverpeaks are possibly the most mysterious beyond Orr itself and the Crystal Desert. The former home of at least two of the races that fought during the last time the dragons rose, some seekers of knowledge have also linked the lost ice city of Moladune to a third, and the Shiverpeaks are also the site of at least two sites of significance to the Six Gods – Reaper's Gate, an ancient temple of Grenth in Lornar's Pass, and reportedly a temple containing strange energies and a statue of Lyssa in the Mineral Springs region of Deldrimor Front.

With the possibility looming of a campaign against Jormag, and with the success we've seen of how Zhaitan was able to corrupt the fixtures and priests of the Five in Orr, it seems prudent to gather what information we can on the religions and holy places in the Shiverpeaks so we can prevent Jormag from using them against us like Zhaitan did the sacred places in Orr... or better yet, so that we may call upon their aid against the dragons.

The Spirits of the Wild

A natural place to begin in a description of the religions of the Shiverpeaks is the one that most readers will probably already be familiar with, particularly those who have seen the great statues around Hoelbrak – the reverence of the norn for the spirits of the animals in their habitat. It should be noted that this reverence does not take the form of worship as happens in many other religions – as the norn will tell you themselves, they have no need of such things, and are too independent to place themselves even in implied subservience to spiritual beings.

Instead, the norn have adopted a working relationship of mutual respect with these animal spirits. While our gods held themselves aloft from their worshippers even before the Silence of the Gods and only the worthy were likely to have contact with a direct representative of a deity, for the norn every animal is an embodiment of the spirit in question, and many norn meet the spirit representation of their patron spirit at least one in their life. A norn may call upon the blessing of a patron spirit or undertake a quest on their behalf – but in the view of the norn, this is viewed as an exchange of favours between close friends rather than as acts of worship.

The exact nature of the animal spirits, as with many such beings, is a mystery. The highest shamans of each spirit among the norn, called havrouns, enter into the Mists in order to commune with their spirit, and thus it seems that these spirits are at least partly entities of the Mists. It is possible that the spirits are essentially gestalt consciousnesses of the animals they represent. Another possibility is that the spirits are entirely separate beings, either reflections of Tyrian animals in the Mists, or perhaps the original template from which the animals we see are formed. Regardless, whether the spirits are directly linked to their animals or not, they hold a protective attitude towards them – while they do not take offense at the slaying of individuals in self-defence or in the course of normal hunting, crimes such as over-hunting, excessive cruelty, or magical corruption of their flock will earn their ire, while those who protect their flock against these and other dangers will receive their gratitude. This connection goes both ways, as the animals can become weaker in body and mind when their spirit is slain, as happened with the death of Owl.

Among the norn, spirits are seen as upholding certain characteristics. This has lead to some human scholars drawing comparisons between the animal spirits and the gods, particularly when they share characteristics, but to the norn, there is a fundamental difference. Gods, as represented by the Six, Melaggan, and Zintl primarily embody abstract concepts and ideals, and any animals or elements linked with them come because they are linked to that ideal – for instance, Balthazar is connected to fire and to dogs because these are associated with war. The animal spirits, on the other hand, primarily represent the animal, and the virtues they hold are purely those that are held by that animal, although they may be purer and more concentrated when expressed in the spirit than when associated with any single animal.

Below are the descriptions of the four most important spirits to the norn, along with a handful of minor spirits of particular importance. Note that this list is not likely to be exhaustive - the norn believe in the existence of a wide range of minor spirits, and it is likely that any norn you ask will give a different list to the next.



Bear: The most popular of the Spirits of the Wild, many of the characteristics most associated with the norn – strength, courage, independence – are all characteristics that are embodied by Bear. However, Bear is not only a warrior and hunter – as a mother she is a fierce protector of her home and young, and encourages compassion and mercy to the unfortunate so that they too may build up the fortitude and self-reliance to stand on their own feet once more.

Wolf: Uniquely among the Great Spirits revered in Hoelbrak, Wolf encourages not individual glory but cooperation. As wolves hunt in packs, Wolf encourages those who follow his ways to work together to bring down foes they could not face alone, and to forge ties of loyalty and siblinghood among their companions. Perhaps because of this spirit of community, it is Wolf's name that has been taken by the Wolfborn, the semi-official police force that keeps the peace in Hoelbrak.

Raven: For centuries, Raven's association with the dead and the underworld have lead human scholars to draw parallels with Grenth. In fact, until certain secrets of the priesthood of Grenth regarding Grenth's true ancestry were revealed, some scholars not in the know hypothesized that it might have been Raven that originally overthrew Dhuum, taking the name Grenth upon ascension. This has now been debunked, but the exact nature of the relation between Grenth and Raven is

unknown. Perhaps they are allies – Raven is credited with using his cunning to protect the spirits of the dead, and it is possible that Raven assisted Grenth in achieving the downfall of Dhuum. Or perhaps Raven simply regards the keeper of the Underworld as just another straight man upon whom to perform his tricks.

Apart from his association with the dead, Raven is also attributed with the qualities of cunning, trickery, knowledge, and wisdom – making his lodge in Hoelbrak a home away from home for Priory members when visiting. His shrine over Snowlord's Gate is known for the challenges during which his statues light up and ask riddles of the contestants, sharpening the logic and thinking of the participants.

Snow Leopard: Formerly regarded as a minor spirit, Snow Leopard came to prominence among the norn in the retreat from the north, where in Jormag the norn found an enemy they could not overcome. Like Bear she encourages independence, but where Bear favours attacking an enemy head-on with strength, Snow Leopard teaches strategy, subtlety, stealth and intrigue to outwit foes and solve problems that cannot be defeated by more direct means.

Interestingly, Snow Leopard is sometimes, albeit rarely, called Snow Lynx, in contexts that imply it is the same spirit. This could be an indication that a single spirit could cover multiple types of related animals - similar to how Bear is the spirit for bears generally, rather than having specific spirits for each form of bear.

Owl: While many Spirits were lost holding back Jormag while the norn fled south, Owl is the one that retains the most honor among the norn, with many shrines still to be found in the remaining territory of the norn, including a lodge in the Snowden Drifts just north of Hoelbrak (although, unfortunately, this is now in a dilapidated state due to attacks by the Sons of Svanir). Perhaps this is because, while the other lost Spirits are simply missing, Owl is known to have been consumed by Jormag, sacrificing herself to buy time for the fleeing norn. While living, Owl encouraged caring for one's family, emphasising the importance of kindness instead of strength alone, and of the silent hunt that takes down their prey without the target ever knowing the hunter was there.

Ox: Also known as Dolyak, Ox was another of the spirits that was lost in holding back Jormag. Unlike Owl, which is known to have died and is still advocated for by shamans in the area of Owl's Abattoir, the other spirits simply disappeared and have not chosen new representatives since, with Ox's last known shaman having died some time ago. He was known for stubbornness and fortitude.

Wolverine: Wolverine is another spirit that held back Jormag and since lost. An interesting distinction, however, is that Wolverine's memorial at the Lost Spirits' Hallow in Hoelbrak gives nothing but a vague emptiness, where those of Owl and Ox give of sensations and sounds to those that come to pay their respects.

Eagle: Eagle is the fourth and last spirit lost holding back Jormag, although oddly enough, he lacks a shrine dedicated to him at the Lost Spirits' Hallow in Hoelbrak.

Wurm: Not much is known of Wurm, however Wurm does retain enough of a connection to the norn that those who pray to this spirit will be granted a temporary Ice Wurm Hatchling companion to aid them.

Minotaur: Rarely manifesting on the physical plane, many norn were not aware of Minotaur's existence until recent events lead to its manifestation. At present, there are no norn that follow Minotaur, and thus he does not have any traits formally assigned to him, but those few who have been witnesses to his presence report an aura of "untamed strength and savage cunning" around him.

Hare: While not taken seriously by most norn, a small enclave of "bunny shamans" can be found on Hangrammr Climb over Breakneck Pass, caring for a colony of suspiciously strong rabbits. They attribute Hare with qualities of speed, stealth, perception and fortitude. Of particular significance to them is the jackalope, a rabbit with antlers whose fur, harvested without harm to the creature, is believed by them to enhance the senses.

Other Spirits: Along with the animal spirits, the norn believe in the presence of other spirits that represent inanimate forces and objects, such as seasons and geographical features. However, they do not regard these spirits as allies, but as hostile forces to be overcome.

The Cult of Jormag

After the Spirits of the Wild, the most important religion in the Shiverpeaks is the worship of the Ice Dragon, Jormag.

The most visible form of this is seen in the Sons of Svanir, who regard Jormag as another of the Spirits of the Wild, and, in fact, the most powerful – a viewpoint which some norn shamans outside of the Sons reluctantly share, although those outside the Sons regard Jormag as a hostile spirit to be fought rather than one to be aided. Certainly, worship of Jormag in any form is contrary to the normal arrangement between norn and their patron spirits – among most norn the spirits are viewed as friends, allies, and sometimes teachers, while among the Sons of Svanir, there is clearly a hierarchy and that hierarchy ends with Jormag.



Two hundred and fifty years ago, in the decade after the Searing, Svanir became the first icebrood in recorded history when he tapped into the power of a hibernating champion of Jormag beneath Drakkar Lake. This power transformed him into an ice-encrusted bear, in which form he raided norn settlements until slain by his sister Jora, who had resisted the power and later went on to assist in the destruction of the Great Destroyer, another dragon champion that had arisen during that time.

The Sons take Svanir as their inspiration and, perhaps because of Svanir's fate, they view women as weak and unworthy of receiving Jormag's power, refusing to allow them into their ranks. An enclave is tolerated within the Veins of the Dragon inside Hoelbrak, as long as they offer no direct threat to the lodges. Outside of Hoelbrak, however, they raid settlements of norn and other beings, offer sacrifices to Jormag and his champions, raise magical blizzards and corrupt the land by infusing it with the dragon's energy.

Of particular interest is the relationship between the Sons and the icebrood. Uniquely among the known dragons, Jormag and its minions accept worshippers who have yet to become full minions without killing or converting them on the spot as the minions of other dragons do. This may be partially because, as a Son becomes involved with the cults activities, they often naturally transform while largely retaining their mind and personality, a process seen as a sign of Jormag's favour by the Sons. However, accelerated conversion into icebrood is within the powers of some Svanir shamans, and is sometimes used as a means of conscription, enabling the forced conversion of prisoners and/or ensuring the continued loyalty of Sons that might otherwise waver in their convictions.

Aside from the Sons, some grawl tribes have also taken to the worship of Jormag, either directly, as seems to be the case with the Dragon Tribe grawl southeast of Yak's Bend, or indirectly through worship of a large icebrood or other powerful minion. Unlike the Sons, though, there is no evidence of any special relationships between these tribes and icebrood. However, the Sons are eager to encourage other races to join their cult, and sometimes serve as a form of intermediary – holding back the icebrood if a tribe obeys, or unleashing them on the recalcitrant if a tribe attempts to break from the fold.

The Balance of Koda

As recent arrivals to the settled regions of the Shiverpeaks with Jormag's icebrood hot on their heels, the kodan could be forgiven for having not had time to teach others of their beliefs. Fortunately for us scholars, the kodan appear to consider teaching others of their ways as something akin to a religious obligation, although there are no doubt secrets that the kodan religious caste keep to themselves, let alone sharing with outsiders.

According to the kodan, Koda (who carries the titles of the Ancient One, the Founder of the Earth, and the Keeper of the Sky) is responsible for the creation of the world as well as the kodan. In the early epochs of the world, according to their beliefs, chaos reigned, and one of the first bears asked Koda why that was so. In response, Koda offered the bears a deal – those that wished to serve Koda in bringing balance to the world would be raised to full sapience as kodan.

Not surprisingly, this philosophy of balance is important to the kodan, which is why they are eager to spread it to other races. To the kodan, a being seems to be in balance when it has achieved a form of harmony with its environment. It is permissible to kill and destroy as part of your own survival – the kodan themselves are hunters, and believe that cycles of life and death, and of creation and destruction, are part of the balance of nature. Excessive destruction, large-scale aggression, and pollution of the environment, however, are seen as being out of balance, putting the kodan in opposition to the elder dragons as well as races such as the dredge, who ruthlessly exploit the resources of the land in order to wage their xenophobic wars against their neighbours.

This concept of balance extends to the kodan leadership. Each Sanctuary is guided by one of the leaders of their shaman caste, called the Voices. Similar to norn havrouns, the Voices have the ability to cast their minds into the Mists in order to commune with Koda, and to set law and policy aboard the sanctuary according to Koda's wishes. This process is not without its hazards, however, as it has the potential to drive the Voice insane, a condition known as the "Rage of Koda" – for the kodan, having the Voice of a sanctuary enter this condition is seem as a time of trial as Koda tests the sanctuary's balance and resolve.

The Claw, on the other hand, serves as the day-to-day leader of the Sanctuary, implementing the policies and laws set by the Voice and leading war and hunting parties to ensure the sanctuary's survival. From an outsider's perspective, this looks like the Voice is in fact the Claw's superior – however, the kodan maintain that the two are partners, and that one cannot successfully lead without the other.

However, there is a legend among the kodan of a Claw that was without a Voice, and who abandoned the dictates of Koda to lead his followers to the south. Kodan history does not tell of what happened to this band, but some modern Voices believe that the norn may be their descendants – cursed by Koda to wear an "inferior" human-like form most of the time and to only be able to return to their "true" bearlike form for short periods as a reminder of what they once were. This theory has several inconsistencies, however – the norn are able to take more forms than that of the bear alone, and they believe they gain the ability to assume animalistic forms as gifts from the spirits. In fact, it seems as if this theory may in fact have been crafted not as genuine scholarship, but as a control mechanism, turning the norn into an object lesson of what happens to kodan who abandon the guidance of the Voices.

Unlike many of the races, the kodan do not believe that the spirits of the dead find their final resting place in the Mists after death, but that the spirits continue to proceed through a cycle of reincarnation. In most cases, a soul returns as the same species as their previous life, but in cases where a spirit has achieved an exceptional state of enlightenment or depravity, they may be reincarnated into a more or less advanced form – with the kodan, naturally, believing themselves to be the highest rung on the ladder. While the kodan are generally silent on the topic of where they consider other races to be, they seem to be generally approving of the sylvari and quaggan, and see the asuran philosophy of the Eternal Alchemy as similar to their own – although they are quick to add that philosophy and action do not always align.

This belief, unsurprisingly, leads the kodan to be particularly interested in cases of races entirely disappearing – such as the dwarves – or appearing, like the sylvari. These cases, the kodan believe, are the result of an entire race achieving such a state of enlightenment or decadence that they are all promoted or demoted on their next reincarnation.



The Great Dwarf and the Great Destroyer

While the dwarves acknowledged at least a couple of the human god,s and sometimes invoked them at appropriate times, the primary deity of the dwarves was the Great Dwarf.

According to Dwarven legend, the Great Dwarf was responsible for forging the dwarven race upon Anvil Rock, a plateau that now lies to the north of Snowden Drifts if it was not broken by Jormag's activities. Apart from this act of creation, the Great Dwarf's main achievement that is known to modern scholars is the binding of the Great Destroyer, sealing its name and power within the Tome of Rubicon.

As part of their revolt against the nation and morals of Deldrimor, the Stone Summit rebellion turned away from the Great Dwarf and towards the Great Destroyer. It is unclear whether the Stone Summit actually worshipped the Great Destroyer per se – they are known to have resorted to forming pacts with a number of demons in their desperation as the civil war turned against them, and they may have seen the Great Destroyer as just another demon. The effort by the Stone Summit to unseal the Tome was believed to have been prevented during the assault on Sorrow's Furnace, their last stronghold in the southern Shiverpeaks, in 1072AE – nonetheless, however, the Great Destroyer rose six years afterwards. It is not known whether this was the result of their tampering or whether the Great Destroyer rose for unrelated reasons.

In response to the destroyer invasion, the dwarves used artifacts of the Great Destroyer to perform a ritual that transformed all of the dwarves into stone – giving them the strength of arms to fight the destroyers, but effectively meaning the beginning of the inevitable end of their race as they no longer had the ability to reproduce. After completing this ritual (called the Rite of the Great Dwarf), the dwarves entered a hive mind like state, which their last king, Jalis, reportedly expressed by exclaiming "We are ALL the Great Dwarf now!" These words, and their collective behaviour, have lead modern scholars to reach the conclusion that the Great Dwarf is indeed the collective consciousness of the dwarves, and the Ritual caused the manifestation of this consciousness in the minds of the dwarves, partially submerging their individual personalities.

This does not, however, match with the legend of the creation of the dwarves by the Great Dwarf. How can a being be the collective consciousness of a race, and yet be responsible for creating that race in the first place? Perhaps the forging of the dwarves on Anvil Rock was simply a myth with no basis in fact. Perhaps the Great

Dwarf was once an independent entity, that distributed its essence into its creations after the creative work was done to become the hive mind that was observed two centuries ago. Or perhaps what the dwarves were actually speaking of was the forging of the dwarven race as a single, united people through recognition of their shared consciousness through the Great Dwarf, at least until that cohesion was broken by civil war centuries later – a more metaphorical form of "forging".

Regardless of the above, though, the comparisons that can be drawn with the animal spirits are interesting. Could the Great Dwarf actually have been the spirit of a sapient people, in the same way that Bear, Wolf and the others are spirits of individually nonsapient species?

Minor Religions

As with grawl elsewhere, the grawl in the Shiverpeaks display a range of beliefs. Along with the worship of Jormag and Jormag's minions as described above, the grawl have been observed worshipping statues and other edifices as well as elementals and demons. Of particular interest is a shaman near the Pact defense line in Frostgorge Sound, who appears to have some connection with the kodan in the area and tests the worth of Pact operatives and other dragon-hunters passing through his territory.

The jotun believe in their own power and the supposed power of their blood, which translates in part to a crude form of ancestor worship. Some tribes have maintained connections with the spirits of their ancestors through various artifacts and other significant locations, such as a stone that was found by a norn adventurer in Haivoissen Kenning, used by the jotun to test claimants to leadership of the tribe against the spirit within.

Historical records suggest that the dredge had a shamanistic, spiritist religion while they remained enslaved by the dwarves, but that religion and the magics associated with it did not appear to have survived the centuries under the moleteriate. The recent formation of the Molten Alliance has brought some magic back to the dredge involved, but insufficient information is available on the inner workings of the alliance to be able to tell whether they actually share the Flame Legion's beliefs or whether they're simply making use of the magic.

Quaggan refugees can also be found in the lakes of the Shiverpeaks. As has been observed by many scholars, their goddess Mellaggan has a number of similarities to Melandru, apart from a focus on the underwater rather than the terrestrial environment. The quaggan Pastkeepers maintain the histories and rituals of their people, but they maintain no temples within Jormag's reach.

Finally, while not truly a race of the Shiverpeaks any more, centaurs of the Modniir tribe were once prolific in the northern Shiverpeaks before being driven out by Jormag. Like most of the centaurs of northern Tyria - possibly imposed by them since their conquest of the other tribes, in fact, since history records the tribes of the Maguuma employing other elements in their magic - the Modniir combine ancestor worship with worship of an earth-based nature spirit. Again, this may be an aspect of Melandru, but the centaurs would never admit it, and if so the message of this gentle goddess has been twisted - Modniir rituals, certainly in recent times, have become scenes of violence and the glorification of warfare against other races. Unfortunately, while they have occupied some holy places in Kryta, history does not record where any such sites may have once been found within the Shiverpeaks.

Afterword

This concludes this review on the religions of the Shiverpeaks. For further information, Pact strategists and other readers are directed to more detailed reports on the religious sites, cultures and tribes of the region contained within the Priory's libraries.





One Last Gift

Written by Chase I

(This story is a product of the author's fiction. Its content is not necessarily reflected on the already established lore of the world of Tyria)

I never paid much attention to the holidays, normally I just saw them as an excuse to skip out on work for a day and spend it drinking away the night. At least that's what I did for the past few. One would expect a sylvari of all people, to be amazed with all the whimsy and joy that these festivities would bring. Not me though, like I said, I would rather much spend the day resting with a very large glass of wine in my hand. Wintersday was an exception however. I admit I was curious the first time around, that and my friends kidnapped me to celebrate with them. To be honest it was not as horrible as I thought it would be.

That was a year ago, this year I insisted that they keep me out of their plans. I had a few arrangements of my own this time around, and these arrangements involved Lion's Arch. It took me a while to fully understand all these holiday traditions. The gift giving, the communing with friends, all that nonsense. Of course I did see this as an opportunity to spend some time with someone very special to me.
"Are you sure about this?", asked Daniel. My friend was kind enough to come help me take everything we needed to the destination, which was the Crow's Nest Tavern. A nice, little establishment that had enough people to count as witnesses, yet it was not an overwhelming crowd. Despite its odd appearance (it was practically a boat that was held high into the sky by a bunch of beams and planks), it seemed comfortable enough. Besides, I had brought my own food and drink for the occasion.
I glanced over at the human that was questioning my methods.
"Of course," I assured. "Everything will go according to plan."
Daniel frowned at me as he ran a hand through his short black hair.
Obviously he had his doubts. It was normal for him to think that, this person did not have the best reputation amongst my friends.
"You know I can stick around," said Daniel. "Make sure nothing goes wrong. Or help you out if things do."
I pulled the basket of goods closer to me as I looked up to the tavern that was perched above the ground.
"They won't," I said confidently. "At least I think they won't..."
"Because that's reassuring..." deadpanned the human.
"You can spare me the lecture, Daniel. Either way, I think I can take things from here." I held out my other hand to Daniel. He swung the leather sack over his shoulder and placed it into my hand. It was a bit heavy, but nothing I couldn't handle.
"I just hope you know what you're doing Bana-"
"Call me 'Banana-Boy' and I will make sure you will be nursing third degree burns well into next year."
Daniel simply looked at me with an impish grin.
"Banana-Boy!" Before I could even conjure a decent sized fire ball, he had already vanished in a plume of smoke. I simply rolled my eyes. I was not about to let him of all people ruin my mood, so without thinking much of it I started towards the tavern.

The taverns in Divinity's Reach were much different than the ones in Lion's Arch. The first thing I noticed was that everyone inside seemed like the lowest form of scum, second was that they were passing watered down swill as a drink (I could tell just by looking over at the counter). Then again, what was around me was irrelevant. All that mattered to me was that there were enough people around to prevent any rational person from starting a scene. Fortunately there was, they were mostly inebriated sailors but it still counted. All that was left now was to find an empty table and wait. Luckily that did not take much time at all, in minutes I found a nice empty area where I could keep an eye on the entrance.

Waiting was simple in itself, however that was for people who had the slightest bit of patience. The only source of entertainment that I could find in such short notice was to have a small flame I conjured dance around my hands. That started getting boring after a minute.
"This is nerve wracking..." I said under my breath as I extinguished my flame. After deciding to conserve my strength I simply rested my chin on the table and stared at the two sacks I had left on the table. *I swear if he doesn't come...*

Suddenly I saw a dark figure make its way into the tavern. There he was, the exact replica of me, except in much darker colors. The thick leaves that were brushed over his head were a bright crimson, and his skin was pale like ash. Even his face was identical, covered with rough features as if wearing a wooden mask. And then there was the bright pink flower bud on the back of his head, of course he did his best to hide it. As soon as he took a few steps my eyes locked into my twins gaze. It was our usual greeting, no words were required...
"Navai..." Well it seemed that I wasn't the only one breaking tradition. Still though, his tone was rather cold. I sat up and cleared my throat to ease up my nerves. So far everything was going well.
"Hello, brother..."I said with a forced smile. Deus cocked an eyebrow at my greeting.
"Brother?" he asked. "You haven't called me that since... well since we went our separate ways. What are you up to? I should have known this was a trap." I saw him reach for the dagger hidden into his black long coat.
"C-Calm down," I reassured. "You know me, Deus. You know I'd never lie to you of all people. I just wanted to talk..." My heart was pounding at this point. This would either go as planned or end in disaster.
He removed his hand from his dagger, and I sighed in relief.
"Alright..." He said unconvinced. "What do you want?"
"Um..." This was where I had stopped planning ahead. I didn't really expect to get this far. "H-How have you been?"
"...now I know you're up to something, It may not be life threatening but I know it's going to be unpleasant." Deus turned towards the door.
"Hold on!" I rushed over to his side and placed my hand on his shoulder. His reflexes reacted and he held my arm away from him, his eyes pierced into me. "Look, I'm going to be honest. It's Wintersday and instead of spending it hating you, I wanted to have just this one day where we're not trying to kill each other..."
His gaze softened, no longer carried its usual murderous intent. There was just curiosity, yet a bit of uncertainty.
"Now..." I continued. "Can you please just take a seat and have dinner with your brother like a normal person?"

Deus sighed as he walked over to the table and took his seat.
"I was right," he said. "This will be unpleasant."

I simply rolled my eyes as I went back to my seat. This was a good start, however, without any more hesitation I reached for the basket of food I brought. I served enough for the both of us and we just sat there staring at the food.
"I have to admit," said Deus. "I don't know what people do on this [i]'winter's day'[/i]. Are they all happy just because it's cold outside?"

“I’m not sure…” I shrugged. “It’s another one of those human nonsense things.”
“Ohhh,” Replied Deus. “So… an excuse to get drunk?”

I simply smirked as I reached into the leather sack and took out a bottle of wine; Deus’s expression mirrored my own as he looked into the sack for mugs. He quickly extracted them and placed them on the table. After pouring some wine, we didn’t bother with any more talking until we had downed at least half of the mug.

“So…” I said leaning forward a bit, now that I had a bit of wine in me. “How are things with the court?”
Looking at me with a serious face, my brother leaned in as he took another swig of wine.
“Do you really want to know or is this part of the tradition?”
“I’d rather you leave out the parts where you torture and/or murder our kind.” I answered, whilst the basket for some more food, luckily I packed quite a bit.
Deus didn’t answer right away, I didn’t know leaving out the gory details took so much thought. Finally he smiled.
“It’s good,” he said. “I live comfortably and I have a good group of friends.”

“Oh?” I admit I don't know much about the Nightmare Court, but I didn’t realize that some of them were social creatures. “I didn’t think they made friends… I just thought that there was this big,thorny, black thing where their hearts should be.”
“Hah!” That was a genuine chuckle coming from my brother, something I hadn’t heard in a long time. “Not all of us, brother.”

The rest of the evening was spent with the both of us talking and drinking. He told me about how he would spend his free time with his friends and in return I would tell him about my own adventures. A thought loom around in the back of my mind. Would this be our last chance to bond and talk as brothers should; on a cold Wintersday, two sylvari twins having their final moments of peace before one would kill the other? All the more reason to make sure it would count, so I refilled my mug.

I wasn’t sure for how long we talked. All I know was that we were out of wine and that my brother somehow learned to be a mesmer in the past few minutes because I was seeing more than one of him… last I checked he was a necromancer.
“So then,” said my brother as he was reaching the conclusion of his story. “I had to explain to her, why those hounds wouldn’t leave her alone.”

I responded by releasing a massive guffaw. I barely remembered what the story was about, but everything seemed funny to me at this point. I had been drunk for a while now though, and after eating the leftover bread I was pretty sure I was coming back to my senses (a bit of them at least).
“I like this…” I slurred. “This is nice.”
“Yup.” Deus responded with an over exaggerated nod. “We should do it again some time.” He reached for the wine bottle to take another swig only to find that it had been completely emptied. With a disappointed frown he set the bottle back on the table.
“Yeah,” I chuckled, but my smile began to fade. “But we can’t, can we?”
“Nope.” Now he was shaking his head left and right. His expression remained the same though- a faint smile with half closed eyes.
“I didn’t think so…” I looked into my mug, suddenly wishing that I had more to drink, I’d be damned if I ordered what they had on the counter though. There was no point on trying to prolong the evening anyway. So I did my best to put my mug back into my leather sack, I succeeded eventually.
I went back to my basket and looked for the last item that was left to take out. It was bright red present, after all, what was Wintersday without the present?
“Present,” I said placing out the red box in front of my brother. “For you.”
Deus took turns glancing between the gift and me. He picked up the gift and shook it slightly.
“It’s a pendant,” I blurted out. “You should wear it.”
“Is the gift part of wintershday?” he slurred. I nodded in response. “But I didn’t get you anything…”
“Don’t worry,” I dismissed by waving my hand a little too dramatically. “You came and…” I was struggling to finish my sentence. “that’s all that matters to me.”

Deus began to release a very loud snicker. “You’re drunk!” He said.
“So are you!” I laughed. After sharing one last laugh we shared yet another moment of silence, it was official, the evening was over. So without any more delay, I gathered my things and stood up from the table.
“Wait,” Deus stumbled to his feet and managed to move in front of me. Before I even had a chance to ask, he threw his arms around me and held me tightly. My eyes widened in surprise, but my expression quickly changed into a stupid smile plastered on my face.
“You know things are going back to normal once we see each other again.” I said.
“I know,” my brother moved back and leaned on the table. “But you’re my brother. And I love you. Even if I do have to kill you.”
“I love you too, brother.” I said as I was released, I then started towards the exit. “See you later.”
“And I don’t want you to hold back!” he called out behind me.
“I won’t.” I said before leaving.

It was difficult going down the stairs outside the tavern without falling face first, though halfway down I felt someone pull my arm over their shoulder and practically carry me down the rest of the way.
“So you’re completely wasted,” I didn’t need to look at Daniel to know that he had a grin. “I guess it went well?”
“Mmhmm,” I nodded. I didn’t bother trying to speak after that. I was enjoying my moments of clouded judgment, of no thinking about things I should be. About how I had a brother that I could not let live based on principle. Even if I didn’t have a connection to the Pale Tree anymore. I just wanted to think about that day, so that when the day comes that one would end the other, not every memory would be filled with hatred.

This was the last day I spent with my brother, Deus. The last day we would spend as a family.

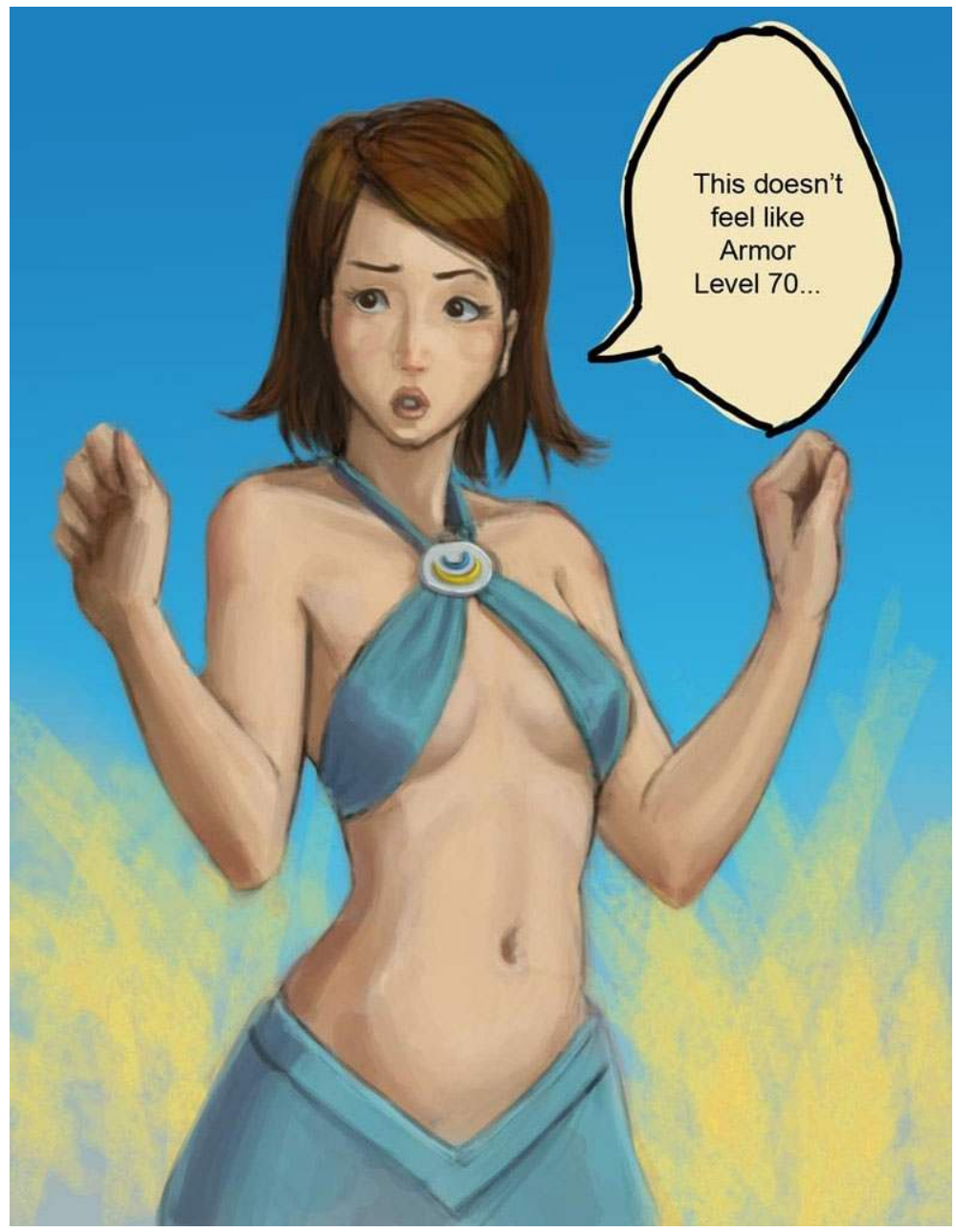




Walking in a Winter Wonderland

Written by LadyLala

Keeping with the theme of this edition, this month's fan art gets frosty! But to start off, with the first anniversary of Guild Wars 2 passing a few months ago, I thought I'd throw it back a bit to the good old days of the barely-there armor we all strived for our dervishes to have. Credit goes to Agwong for the feeling of nostalgia.



Next up is the Claw of Jormag, depicted in a fierce blizzard and ready to strike. Isvoc did a wonderful job instilling fear in all who gaze upon it.



A snowy sylvari perched in a tree, with an owl reminiscent of Hedwig? Stranger things have occurred, and Kerynean shows what happens when you have too many drinks with a norn. All jokes aside, this is a fine piece of art.



Here, a norn ranger and her wolf face off against an angry minotaur amidst a frozen landscape. Garrettpack illustrates what could potentially be a very interesting fight.



This beautiful piece by Aer in Dark Water, aptly titled Frozen Dangers, retells the tale that every norn starts with - the face off with Issormir, as one brave warrior attempts to protect her fallen friend from the great wurm's wrath.



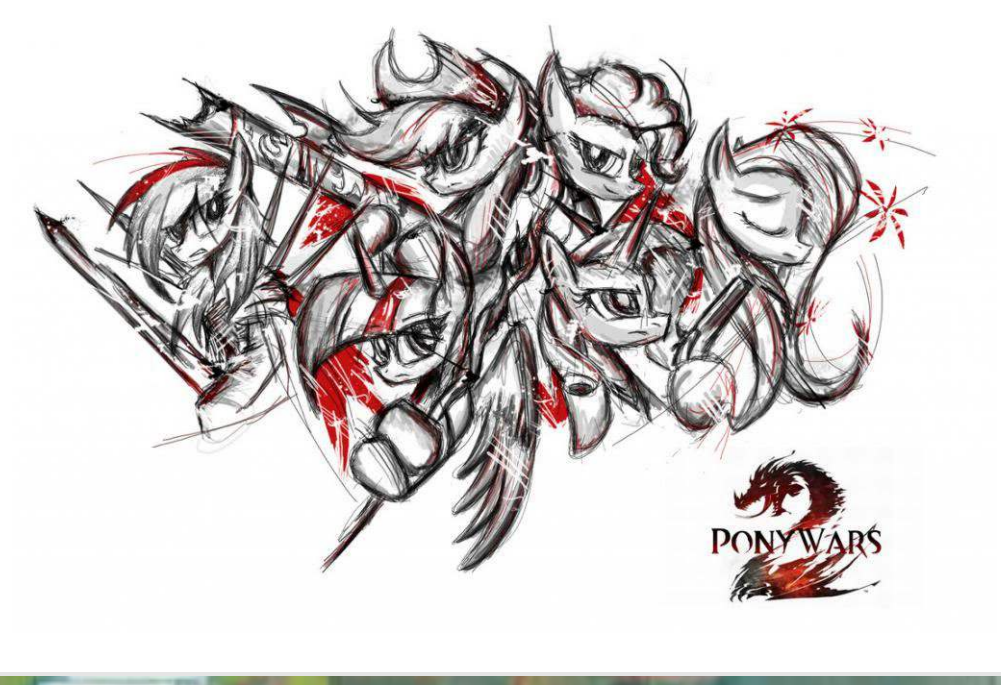
This charr definitely looks like he's up to no good in this creation from Threep Woody. The detailing work in this is impressive, and the yak with its companion always reminds me of Nicholas the Traveler.



Just take a moment to stare at this one. It's too beautiful not to. At first glance, I honestly thought this was a photograph that was altered and put together with the bear. But after closer inspection, I was pleasantly mistaken. Amolino demonstrates ridiculous talent and skill in creating a (rather attractive) norn and his animal counterpart. Immense props to this artist.



I know this last one does not exactly stick with the Shiverpeaks theme, but it was too good to pass up. While I myself am not one, I salute all the Bronies out there and present you with this Pony Wars. Credit goes to Evorazgriz for this gem.







Written by Distilled Will

The madness escalated further this month as Scarlet released her Twisted Marionette onto the peaceful slopes of Lornar's Pass – but how did we get here, who on Tyria is Scarlet and what the fooOOoo does she want? GuildMag's living story update will give you the info you need:

Scarlet Briar

The Origins of Madness update is the next in a long story arc which has been unfolding since pretty much this time last year. Whilst not all the details are completely 100% crystal quite yet, with each update another piece in Scarlet's grand puzzle falls into place – we've met new friends and allies along the way and talk is that the whole story will culminate within the next few weeks.

Scarlet Briar, born with the name Ceara, is a sylvari with a fascination for complex systems. She emerged from the dream with an almost insatiable thirst for knowledge, but not just to put this knowledge to use academically. She wanted to get hands on – create her own complex systems and leave her own intricate webs. Ceara travelled from city to city, learning from some of the greatest minds Tyria had to offer – norns in Hoelbrak, charr in the Black Citadel and the asuran colleges in Rata Sum. When she outgrew each master's teachings, she moved on to the next.

It was under Headmaster Omadd of the College of Synergetics where she developed an interest in the asuran concept of the Eternal Alchemy. The world is the most complex system of them all and Ceara wanted to understand everything. When the asuran colleges grew uneasy with her intentions to delve into the "fabric of reality" she sided with the Inquest, an organisation whose loose morals would allow her to go the extra mile the asuran colleges would not.

After her dealings with the Inquest earned her expulsion from Rata Sum, Headmaster Omadd offered Ceara one final chance to investigate the Eternal Alchemy. Ceara would enter his experimental contraption and thereby be separated from her corporeal form and set free to explore and investigate metaphysical reality as she pleases – as long as she returned to report back her findings.

However, when she awoke in the contraption, what stepped out was not Ceara anymore. She had seen something the Pale Tree had not wanted her to see – a great secret untold – Ceara was no more, Scarlet Briar was born.



The Lost Shores

Our story begins, not with Scarlet, but another sylvari: the cunning, though misguided, Canach.

Many in Lion's Arch were recovering from various festivities, workers were taking down the Halloween decorations and the city inhabitants chatted jovially about their plans for Wintersday; swapping gossip and rumours in the crowded bars and taverns. Whispers of terrible sea monsters had been circulating the city for weeks, warning posters and strange new ships had appeared in the harbour, but they would be ok - the Lionguard would protect them.
These new ships offered passage to Southsun Cove – a tropical paradise island occupied by hoardes of vicious Karka. Under the direction of the mysterious Consortium, Canach and his team were sent to investigate the island. Unfortunately, the Karka did not take too kindly to Canach's snooping and wiped out almost his entire team, Canach himself fled back to Lion's Arch – but the Karka pursued him.
The gigantic Ancient Karka attacked the city with full force. It took the entirety of the Lionguard and the whole population of adventurers to quell the attack – the city was left devastated and the population sought revenge. We drove the Ancient Karka back into its lair, defeating it once and for all.

Canach himself fled again to Garenhoff, in Kessex Hills, but the Karka still found him. Reluctantly he agreed to aid the Lionguard in fighting the Ancient Karka and go into custody, though once the creature was dead, Canach had disappeared.



Flame and Frost

We first encountered Scarlet's grand plan, though we did not know it, during the events of Flame and Frost. A new threat had emerged in the north: an unlikely partnership between the charr Flame Legion and the dredge had been forged – the Molten Alliance.

Hundreds of refugees were forced from their homes in the Shiverpeaks and Diessa Plateau due to the violence of this terrible army. Beneath Wayfarer Foothills we discovered a great Molten Facility where the Alliance were training soldiers and testing terrible new weapons. We forged new unions ourselves, with powerful new friends – Braham and Rox – both with axes to grind against these new invaders and together we destroyed the Molten Facility, restoring temporary peace to the land.



The Secret of Southsun

Having been expelled from their homes in Wayfarer Foothills and Diessa Plateau, the refugees still needed a place to call home. The Consortium offered to set them up with space on the island of Southsun Cove – a place which, following the defeat of the Ancient Karka, they had claimed to have completed tamed.

Unfortunately, it appears this was false. The wildlife of Southsun once again reacted aggressively to these outside interferences. Adventurers were invited to help Inspector Ellen Kiel in dealing with the clashes between Consortium staff and angry refugees, and investigating why the wildlife was acting up.
After some expert investigative work, the culprit was discovered to be Canach. In a misguided attempt to assist the refugees and combat the Consortium who had been sending assassins to kill him, he was attempting to nullify the contracts which bound the refugees to the island by releasing mysterious pollen across Southsun which whipped the wildlife into a frenzy.

Unfortunately, Canach's ill-advised plan did more harm than good and he had to be stopped. Assisting Inspector Kiel, we tracked Canach down in his lair and defeated him – taking him into Lionguard custody for good.



The Sky Pirates of Tyria

During the Dragon Bash festival, we celebrated the vanquishing of the terrible Elder Dragon Zhaitan. Sponsored by the Lion's Arch Captain's Council, we spent weeks bashing dragons and generally partying ourselves silly – all culminating in the lighting of two great dragon effigies by the great fountain in Lion's Arch. However, during the ceremony a new enemy emerged: dropping from airborne transports, the sky pirate Aetherblades attacked the councillors at the ceremony and, by exploding one of the dragon effigies, managed to assassinate Theo Ashford – a human councilmember.

We were tasked with ferretting out how this attack came to happen and who was responsible. After some sterling investigative work, the culprit was exposed as Mai Trin – a human attendee at the ceremony who had offered to help tend to injured councilmembers – she had engineered the assignation in order to attempt to gain her own place on the council. After being exposed, Mai Trin escaped to her Aetherblade base in a cliff face in Lion's Arch.

With the help of Inspector Ellen Kiel we fought our way through the Aetherblade base, killed Mai Trin's first mate Horrik and took Mai Trin herself into custody. During the fight, Mai Trin revealed that: "Scarlet's going to have my noggin for screwing up!" The Lionguard locked Mai Trin in a cell in Fort Marriner.



Cuttroat Politics

Due to the unfortunate demise of councilmember Theo Ashford, a new space became available on the Captain's Council. Two main candidates emerged from the people: Inspector Ellen Kiel of the Lionguard and Evon Gnashblade of the Black Lion Trading Company. A major part of both of their election campaigns would be the securing of the support of the recently arrived Zephyr Sanctum at the Bazaar of the Four Winds in Labyrinthine Cliffs.
Both candidates proved themselves to be fierce competitors and savvy politicians, but eventually it was Ellen Kiel who the people voted into the position on the Captain's Council.

After the rather cutthroat matter of council politics, the people were ready for a little pomp and ceremony. Queen Jenna's Jubilee provided the perfect chance for adventurers across the land to let their hair down and spend some time wrecking millions of gold's worth of clockwork automatons. You know, just for fun?



The Queen's Jubilee and Clockwork Chaos

Just like any good soap opera, no happy occasion is the same without a little drama. Queen Jenna's shiny new Watchwork Knights were perhaps not quite as well programmed as we first thought and, during the process of the ceremony, they went a little haywire; attacking guests and heroes alike. Queen Jenna, however, was undeterred and once this attack was quelled she forged on with her grand speech regardless. During the Queen's speech the clockwork minions attacked again – this time blowing up the balcony upon which Queen Jenna was standing! As the balcony crumbled, the figure of the Queen disintegrated – a mere mesmer's illusion! Hapless Lord Faren, however, was not quite so fortunate and he fell into the twisted grasp of Scarlet Briar.

After battling through Scarlet's playhouse, heroically rescuing Lord Faren and restoring peace to Divinities Reach we turned our attention to the equally pressing matter of the thousands of Watchwork minions streaming out of portals all across Tyria. For a few weeks, Tyria was utterly besieged by Scarlet's Watchwork monstrosities and though we fought valiantly to push them back, occasional invasions still occur to this day.

For a while the return of Moto's Super Adventure Box and the rising of the great undead dragon Tequatl provided some much-needed distractions, but ultimately Tyria's adventurers knew that Scarlet was not yet finished.



Twilight Assault

As if the Maguuma jungle didn't have enough on its plate what with Tequal gaining new and previously untold strength; a stirring in the Twilight Arbor caused significant concern amongst the sylvari.

Caithe and Co were determined to find the root of the disturbance: it seemed a good chunk of the already treacherous Twilight Arbor had been co-opted by a branch of Scarlet's Aetherblades and they were using the space to produce vast airships and train their soldiers using a corrupted Oakheart as a power source. Whilst battling the dangerous "Clockheart" – Scarlet captured and taunted Caithe, claiming to have discovered a terrible secret about her past: *"What do you think the Pale tree will say when she finds out what you did? Or does she already know?"*

With the Twilight Arbor Aetherblades under control, Tyria faced a new threat – the yearly return of Mad King Thorn (this time accompanied by his son – the Bloody Prince Thorn!). The occupants of Tyria were perhaps too distracted by this new danger to notice the changes in Kessex Hills; the increased Krait activity and a strange mesmer illusion hiding... who knows what.



The Tower of Nightmares

Undeterred by defeat in Twilight Arbor, Scarlet turned her attention to her most ambitious project yet: the mesmer illusion fell to reveal a gigantic tower in the middle of Kessex Hills – with a monstrous plant heart at its centre. The Tower of Nightmares spewed corruption and toxins across the land and, to make matters worse, it was guarded by yet another new and dangerous coalition: The Toxic Alliance. Comprising of the Nightmare Court allies Scarlet was able to recruit in Twilight Arbor and an army of gullible krait whom Scarlet had deceived into the thinking the tower would summon their god, the Toxic Alliance used poisons and hallucinogenic toxins to incapacitate their foes.

After battling past the guards, we fought our way to the top of the Tower and, with the help of Marjory Delaqua and Kasmeer Meade, we injected a powerful anti-toxin into the heart of the tower. The Tower of Nightmares fell just as the celebrations for Wintersday were beginning, and Tyria hoped to forget Scarlet Briar's crooked machinations for a few brief weeks. But what dark knowledge had Scarlet gained from her corrupted florae?



Fractured

After bringing down the tower, we had the chance to indulge in a little time-travel before the festivities of Wintersday began. Having voted Ellen Kiel into office on the Captain's Council many months previous, we had also voted for research to begin on the origins of the explosion at the Thaumanova Reactor in the North West segment of Metrica Province. After Dessa gave us access to this particular fractal of the mists we were able to travel to a moment before the explosion occurred and, just by chance, who might we find fiddling with the controls?

Scarlet was using the reactor to investigate powerful dragon energies and magical ley-lines: it was her experiments which ultimately led to the explosion. More pieces of Scarlet's grand plan seemed to be falling into place. Back in our current timeline mysterious and unexplained pulsing metal probes appeared at numerous sites across Tyria.



The Origins of Madness

And so we reach our current predicament: The Origins of Nightmares. In Lornar's Pass a great experiment has begun. A gigantic mechanical puppet is suspended from an immeasurably large hovering platform, wave after wave of vicious Watchwork minions flood towards the site in an attempt to power it up to full capacity. We heroes fight constantly to hold back the armies of Watchwork monstrosities which would assist in completing this hulking great marionette. Each time we succeed, the marionette is banished, only to return a few hours later. Each time we fail the clockwork automaton releases a pulse of energy which instantly kills every living adventurer in the entire zone.

One piece of progress which has been made is the discovery of a secret lab underneath the Durmond Priory headquarters. This abandoned laboratory contains countless sketches, diagrams and schematics for all of Scarlet's previous attacks – a plan for the Tower of Nightmares, a chart displaying potential and existing evil alliances and numerous currently non-existent abominations (the rocket dolyak being of particular interest). Most disturbing, however, is a still functional holo-screen which seems to display a map of Tyria with marks for each mysterious energy probe and a plan for an attack on what appears to be Lion's Arch – this information would correlate with the latest, unsettling discovery: a mysterious probe nestled at the bottom of the lake right in the heart of Tyria's finest city.

Scarlet's intentions are still not yet 100% clear. Is she attempting to wipe out Tyria and recreate the world as she sees fit? Is she trying to take control of the land to lead and hold dominion over all its inhabitants? Or are her ends perhaps even more nefarious still? Scarlet has a fascination with complex systems, an interest in dragon magic and her attacks always seem to occur across particular paths which criss-cross the land of Tyria. Some adventurers have suggested that she is attempting to either understand or gain access to the magical "ley lines" mentioned the in Orrian History Scrolls and in the Thaumanova Fractal – but for what end? Only time will tell for sure.

Be sure to stay tuned to GuildMag to keep up to date with the Living Story developments as they happen – the next few weeks are going to be rough for Tyria and the world will need all the heroes it can muster to finally bring the villain Scarlet Briar to justice!





The Origin of the Elder Dragons

Written by Achilles

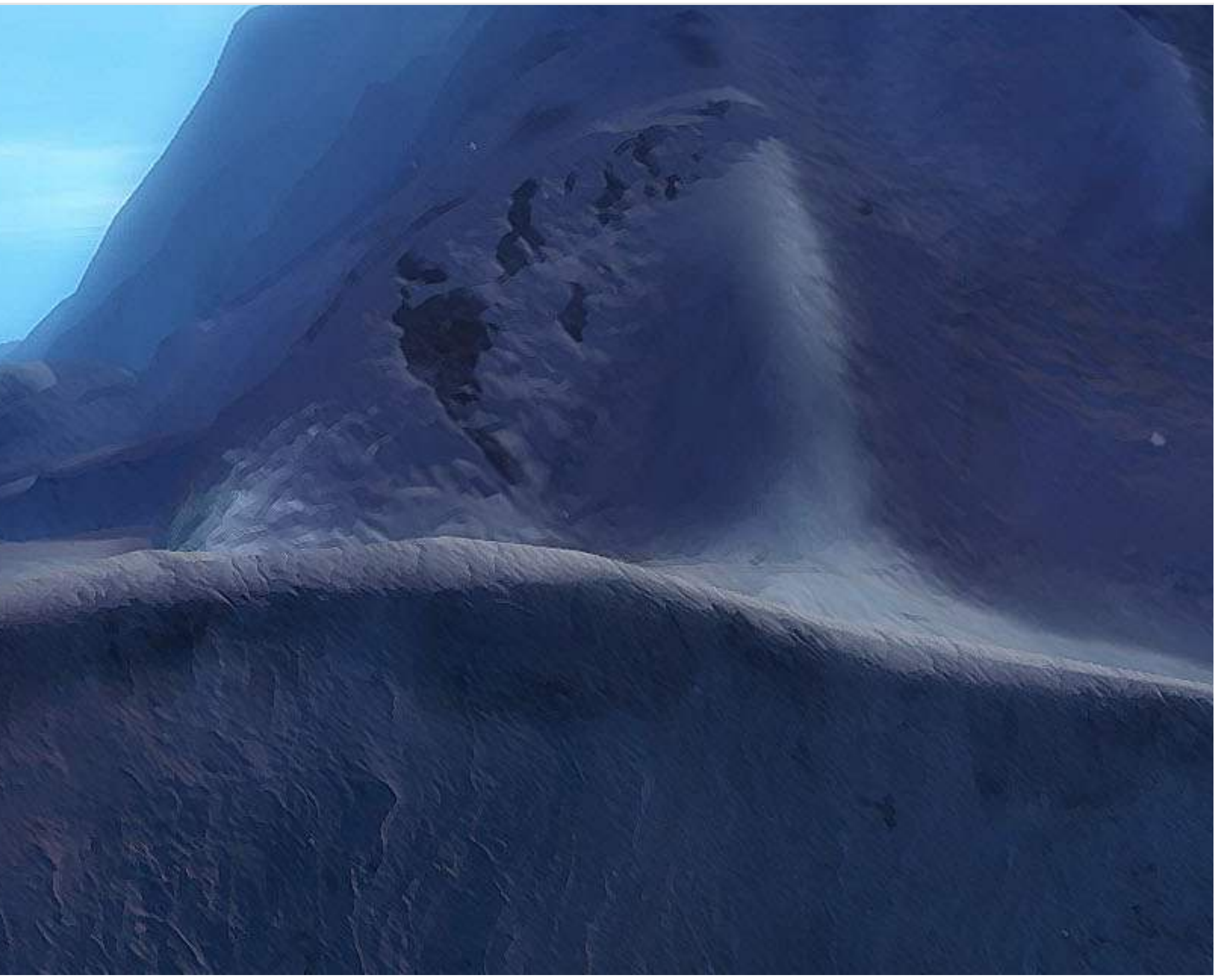
(This story is a product of the author's fiction. Its content is not necessarily reflected on the already established lore of the world of Tyria)

The tale of the Elder Dragons is more than thirty one thousands years old. My spirit has always been part of this world and like a dark energy, it has been feeding the evil within the souls of every ambient living being. There were times that darkness was dominating the world giving substance to what had been, up until then, just a powerful mind of mine. Like a wind I blew into the lungs of an evermore solid ocean. Like a dark force I reaped life out of the creatures of the sea and by absorbing their souls I became a reborn matter. Deep within my wet condemnation, my ins and outs turned into solid ice. I took the most terrifying form I could, that of a giant Dragon. I rose up and flew in the sky leaving behind me a crater the size of a continent.

I travelled all across the world showing nothing less than terror and destruction in my path. That's when I met other forces, similar to my own, which managed to survive all these years in slumber. Primordus is what the mortals call one of those, the lava that flows within the core of Tyria. Kralkatorrik is the name of the second one, the thunder that tears the sky apart. Zhaitan is the bearer of death and destruction, while Mordremoth is the reincarnation of the flora and fauna. I even heard of legends about a being that brought the whole ocean together in order for it to take shape. Together we brought all of the living races close to extinction in order to feed our never-ending hunger.

But there were some who resisted. An alliance of dwarves, mursaat, forgotten, seer and jotun marched against our will and put us back to our natural prisons, one by one. Because that is how the circle of life goes. And each and every time we arise, we are here to destroy for the balance to be sustained. And this will never seize to happen.

Wherever life exists in Tyria, that is part of our power. It's what makes us immortal. For when we lack of our physical form, we still exist as light and darkness; crawling and seeking to reborn from our ashes, fiercer than ever before. Within us lies the knowledge of the past, the fears, the might and magic. We are what can be seen and what not. We are everything.





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