GUILDMAG

Party Times!



GuildMag Party Times!

Enter GuildMag

One year. One year ago we released our first issue of GuildMag. Did we anticipate that we would grow, that we would learn and evolve into what we currently are? We certainly did not. Of course, one can dream to grow, one can set goals they want to reach, but in the end, it's the content that's important. We all hope that you enjoyed our past issues as much as we did, we hope that you learned something from our efforts. Most of all though, we hope we gave you a great time reading and listening.

This issue is about letting everything loose for the moment and doing crazy things. You will find that the amount of lore in this current issue is not as large as in our usual issues, though you will see that the usual lore writers tried to show something more of themselves via fan fiction or other articles. We also included a fictionstory about how GuildMag was created. There's a whole lot more in this issue as you can see in the index.
Noteworthy: we have gotten a chance to do an interview with ArenaNet to close off some gaps and we're able to give out four mercenary hero codes in a nice little contest!

Though the biggest thing which you probably already noticed is that we redesigned our magazine. No longer will you need to download a large PDF file to read our magazine. No, from now on we will be publishing the magazine in HTML so even more people can access these issues.

We really hope you've enjoyed our past year and that you will stay with us as we look forward to the next. Hopefully things will get

This issue:

- **The GuildMag Story**
  A fictional look at the beginning of GuildMag
- **Let them eat Cake!**
  Everything about confectionery, both in- and out-game.
- **Rise of a Lich, Fall of Gods, Prologue & Chp 1**
  A fanfiction by Konig Des Todes.
- **Mercenary Heroes Contest**
  Enter to win a Mercenary Hero code.
- **Melandru, Tender of the Forests and Fields**
  A continuation of Draxynnic's series on the human gods.
- **Dutch's Talk with... Hunter**
  We sit down blogging enthusiast Hunter.
- **Interview with Eric Flannum**
  Music, monster diversity, cinematics, dungeons and career.
- **An Unheard Tale**
  A fanfiction by Thalador Doomspeaker.
- **Featured Artist: Action Jack**
  Arghore interviews Action Jack, who is known for his "Can I Play GW2" comic series.
- **An Altaholic's Problem With Too Many Options**
  We're fairly sure some people will recognize themselves in this story.
- **End of the Line**
  The last tidbits.

© 2003-2011 ArenaNet, Inc. All rights reserved. NCsoft, the interlocking NC logo, ArenaNet, Arena.net, Guild Wars, Guild Wars 2, and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. All other objects are the property of their respective owners.

The GuildMag Story

by Valiant

The Seraph ran. Charging through the fields of Watchtower Coast, he held a Fellblade in his right hand and a black Oppressor's Shield in the other. His brothers in arms had all been slain defending Beetletun from a bandit onslaught. Now he was alone, chasing the bandit leader. The Seraph would not let him escape. Not today. And suddenly, he was there - the bandit had slowed and now they came face to face. In a flash of midnight the Seraph swiped his shield to bash this most vicious of criminals. He would make him suffer. He raised his sword.

"Jaaaack! I don't want to play this anymore! I always end up getting hurt!"

The young boy put down his wooden stick.

"SOPHIE! You're doing it all wrong! You always find a way to ruin this game just as I'm about to win! Of all the sisters in Tyria, why am I stuck with this one?!"

"But you're faster than I am and it's not fair! I'm going to play with the others."

Sophie pushed her brother aside and ran back the way they'd come. Her long blonde hair trailed behind her as she ran, hoping to catch up to her friends back in Beetletun. Jack sighed and began to follow his sister at a deliberate walking pace, dragging his stick on the floor as he went. He knew he'd be forbidden from going out tomorrow if he let his sister just waltz off by herself.

"Now Jack, you must take care of your little sister for she is still only young", his mother had said. "And if you don't, you know what will happen..."

It had taken about half an hour before he reached the edge of Beetletun. Sophie was sitting just outside the eastern entrance surrounded by a gathering of girls of similar ages. As Jack approached, he just began to make out what they were saying.

"My daddy used to run GuildMag, look!"

"Guild-what?" another girl asked.

Sophie was holding a piece of parchment that had clearly seen better days. "It's a piece of parchment from the very first GuildMag issue. I think it was called the Firs of Tyria."

"That's fires, idiot." Jack walked up behind her. "And it wasn't just a piece of parchment either. GuildMag used to be the thing that connected all of Tyria and beyond and it was our father who founded it."

"Who's your dad?" One girl asked, with an odd smirk.

"Well... his name isn't important. It's what..."

"Dutch Sunshine!" Sophie blurted out. The group sniggered and Jack shot Sophie a piercing glare.

"Just because he has a funny name doesn't mean he's any less normal! And I bet you couldn't start another GuildMag to the same greatness either!"

"Pfft, what made it so great anyway?" The same girl asked.

"Do you really want me to tell you? I mean really?"

Jack didn't wait for a reply. He began the story.

* * *

The norn had always known how to run a tavern. Large kegs of ale were scattered about the place and swaying bodies clashed their half-full tankards together before drinking the lot in one gulp. In the centre of the room lay a roaring open fire which enveloped the entire tavern in warmth, mixed with the unmistakeable stench of too much alcohol. Over the brutish sounds of norn laughter came the rusty squeak of a wooden door opening, and with it came a shivering human clad in the already-melting snow of the Shiverpeaks. Humans were becoming more common nowadays; nobody took any notice of him. He walked over to the bar his metal boots softly thudding on the stained floor.

"What're you drinkin'?" asked the bartender, staring at the human.

"A Witch's Brew - shaken, not stirred."

The bartender placed a flask of the orange liquid on the bar and extended his hand. The human paid him. The Brew itself cast an eerie glow on the wood, but the human grabbed it and consumed it in one click of the mouse. He climbed onto one of the nearby stools and turned to face the rest of the world. He took a long breath.

"Norn! I am human! My name is Dutch Sunshine and I am here to challenge you all! Every. Single. One." The human shouted, as the rest of the tavern stared back in bewilderment. "My challenge is this: I bet fifty platinum that not one of you has the courage to found an idea with me. The idea is for regular parchment-based notices to be delivered to every human, norn and asuran citizen of

Tyria! To connect the world and offer a force of good in these desperate times. The Krytan War left us almost defenceless and Cantha grows quieter by the day!"

Silence reigned in the tavern.

"Well? What say you?!"

Laughter erupted in the tavern. Slowly, Dutch's face turned red and then to a shade of deep crimson. He began to climb down, but before he knew it, a stool had been thrown in his direction and hit him square on the nose. His vision went black.

When Dutch awoke, he was lying face-down in the snow. It was the sound of a door smashing shut that had woken him, and suddenly he could hear the crunch of boots.

"We accept your challenge" said a strange voice.

Dutch's vision went black again, followed by a heavy boot kicking his side.

"Did you hear me? I said we accept!"

He groaned and turned to face his saviour-come-tormentor. Staring down at him was a scantily-dressed norn male with long blonde hair. Dutch didn't ask what had happened to the rest of the norn's clothes for he feared the answer. Behind the norn stood others, all of whom were staring at him: humans of all professions, tiny asura and more norn.

"All of you? But you laughed..."

"Not everyone thinks you're crazy," an asura cut in.

"Well then... with everyone gathered here today, I hereby found TyriaMag. May Lyssa bless our minds with the creativity we will need."

Dutch got up. Even now the blonde norn was a good deal taller, but at least from this height less things were flapping around in Dutch's face.

"Cold isn't it?" the norn asked.

Dutch stared at him. From behind the norn came the sound of the tavern door smashing shut again.

"You! You dirty, thieving bookah! How very dare you steal the Great Glaxx's ideas! How did you do it? I bet you used a psychotransitional flux matrix! Yes, that's how. It must be. No, you can't. Oh, stuff it Lesser Glaxx! I'm incharge right now! YOU CAN NOT SPEAK TO THE HUMAN! Now, where was I? I apologise for... NO! GO AWAY! I FORBID YOU!"

Dutch and the norn didn't know what to say in response to this angry asura. They looked around to see who he was shouting at, but apart from themselves and the other TyriaMag members, they saw nobody.

"As for you norn, you've been looking at me funny all day! SHUT UP GLAXX! I KNOW WE HAVEN'T BEEN HERE ALL DAY! I SWEAR IF ONE MORE THING... AHHHHHH!"

With that, the asura screamed. His voice was a mixture of high pitches and deep growls never heard before. He waved his hand in the air and a bright purple bubble encased Dutch. Through the bubble he could see a similar one encasing the others as they attempted to break free, their shouts muffled by the aura. Everyone apart from the norn was trapped. The asura charged at him, his little legs pounding the snow. His open mouth exposed teeth that had been sharpened to a point and before the norn could react, the asura had buried his teeth in the his leg. The norn tried to shake off the asura that was still screaming, but to no luck. Meanwhile, Dutch Sunshine stared in amazement at what he was witnessing - was this asura really taking a bite out of a norn?! Worse. In one bite of his jaw, the asura had gobbled the norn's entire left leg, and he showed no signs of stopping. By now, the norn was lying on his back in the snow. The asura stopped, stood up and picked the norn up in one hand. He then proceeded to eat the rest of the norn, savouring each mouthful. When he was satisfied, he let out a load burp before suddenly exploding into a million tiny pieces of asura. The purple bubbles encasing the others faded, as did Dutch's, and they stared in horror at what they'd just witnessed. From the group, a dervish guised as Grenth emerged. He strolled over to where the asura had been standing and muttered a peculiar spell before waving his scythe in the air. He slowly began to make his way towards Dutch. His name was Nightshade Special.

* * *

Nightshade Special sighed.

“He would’ve been a great asset to this magazine of yours, not to mention a hit with the lady norn!”

Several hours had passed since the norn’s passing and by now Dutch Sunshine and the rest of the new TyriaMag members had travelled through the asura gate into Lion’s Arch. They were all sat around a burning fire in a room above a tavern Dutch was renting for the night.

“I know. I just... how did that asura... was his mouth even big enough?” Dutch replied.

“It’s a little-known fact that a very talented asuran mesmer found a way to enable mouths to stretch limitlessly,” came a shy voice from a corner of the room. It was another asura.

“Great, more crazy little-folk,” came the voice of a human.

Silence. Dutch stood up.

“Listen up. If we’re going to make this magazine work, we need to get ourselves organised and then visit the Lion’s Arch council for support. Myself and Nightshade have been talking and he’s going to be in charge of distributing the magazine to the public for each issue. That leaves the jobs of writer, editor and designer still open. Who wants what?”

Clearly everybody wanted everything. Shouts flew across the room and quickly ears began to bleed to the extent that a rather nervous looking male passed out on the floor.

“Wonderful!” Dutch thought to himself.

Five minutes later and the noise had died, with many people in opposite ends of the room engrossed in the sulk of the century. They

wouldn’t even cast a glance at each other.

“Everyone, stand and line up behind this desk” said Dutch as he moved a wooden desk and chair into the middle of the room and placed a piece of parchment on it. “Now, I want each of you to state your name and your desired role then sign this parchment. Who’s first?”

“I am,” came the voice of the asura from before.

“Name?”

“Asuran.”

“No, your name, not your race.”

“It’s Asuran.”

“Please, I don’t have time for this! I want your official name and nothing more at this stage. If you can’t give me that then clearly you don’t have the intellectual capacity to work at this magazine.”

The asura’s face began to turn red.

“Now look here bookah, nobody insults my intelligence and lives to see the next day, especially not a foul-smelling, empty-headed, meat-gnashing human. My birth name is A-S-U-R-A-N and you are going to write it correctly on that idiotic piece of parchment before I turn your head into a pile of WOBBLING PRIMORDIAL OOZE! And as for the rest of you, should anyone have a problem with me then you can all kiss my hairy a-”

“Can I just stop you there?” Dutch butted in.

“NO! My hairy anthropomorphic-gigatrizer one thousand, three hundred and thirty seven.”

“Oh. Lovely! And erm... what role are you looking to fulfil?”

“Well, the way I see it, you’re going to have hundreds of pages all floating around in no particular order. Therefore, I’d like to be the one who puts it all together at the end by harnessing the extraordinary power of... glue!”

“Don’t you think that’s a bit of a waste of your talent?”

“Oh, not at all! Everyone else here would only find some way of mucking it up – this job requires somebody with brains!”

And so it came to pass that Asuran the asura joined the magazine.

“Wait, Jack, I’m confused. Why are all the asura so mean?”

“They just are, Sophie. All beings born asura have a mean streak through them, it’s quite sad really. Now shut up, we’re nearly done.”

* * *

A month had passed since that night above the tavern. Since then, the team were renting their own building in Lion’s Arch and had gone to see the Tyrian Council for Written Communications Amongst Tyrians in Tyria. They’d been told to change the name to GuildMag due to over-usage of the word ‘Tyria’ and shortly afterwards they’d begun work on the first issue: the Fires of Tyria. Nightshade Special had resorted to being called Jonny10, though nobody could fathom why, and many more people had begun to shine in their roles. To name a few included Free Runner the future fantasyologist, Draxynnic the lore lockkeeper and Daelin Dwin the asuran autopsy specialist. In time, other Tyrians would begin to send in their own articles in an attempt to reach fame, though fortune was severely lacking. Even the partly-digested norn had returned, reborn in Glaxx’s image due to some mysterious forces of the Eternal Alchemy which would take even the brightest asura one hundred and one years to fully explain – so I won’t.

After the success of the first issue, the pressure kept mounting to keep each issue after that as good as the first. After many months, GuildMag had grown to much more than a magazine: two team members known as Malchior Devenholm and Sabre Wolf decided to begin making things known as podcasts – short recordings of their voices captured in magical envelopes the asura had named ‘pods’. These could be sent quickly using the Asura Gate network and delivered to people’s homes to let them know the latest news much quicker. Eventually, an extremely attractive ritualist, with several jiggly parts, known as Izari joined in the podcasting. Many more people joined the magazine as it grew to reach thousands of readers and this legacy continued strong for many, many years. Nobody knows what became of GuildMag after Dutch retired. One thing’s for sure though: to this day, somebody, somewhere, will be continuing the work...

* * *

“Jack, that’s got to be one of the most boring versions of the story I’ve ever heard! Even Daddy tells it better than that and he dribbles all the way through it!”

“But I thought you said you’d never even heard of GuildMag before?”

“I lied. Partly because I wanted to hear the story again but mainly because I’m just such a cruel bi-“

“SOPHIE!”

© 2003-2011 ArenaNet, Inc. All rights reserved. NCsoft, the interlocking NC logo, ArenaNet, Arena.net, Guild Wars, Guild Wars 2, and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered

trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. All other objects are the property of their respective owners.





Let Them Eat Cake! And Cookies, and Candy...

by Verene

Mmmm, sweets. Cookies, cake, and candies, oh my! Just about everyone has some sort of sweet that they like, and there is no lack of available goodies in Guild Wars. With over twenty different sweet items, there is something for even the most discerning of palettes. Though, of course, this is all a game, and most people collecting sweets are mainly concerned with how quickly they can click through a stack for their Sweet Tooth title. But don't worry! There's more to it than just that.

There are a couple different ways that sweets tend to be classified by Guild Wars players: the number of points each item is worth toward the Sweet Tooth title track (between one and seven), and whether the item is spammable. Spammable items tend to be preferred by those title-hunting, but don't pass up sweets just because you can't click through a stack in minutes! The non-spammable ones are worth keeping because they also give effects that can help in play.

Spammable Sweets

Excuse me for a moment while I finish this slice of pumpkin pie... there we go. Spammable sweets are the ones where you can just keep clicking over and over and you can use as many at once as you want. Many of these can only be used in outposts, and all sweets that can only be used in an outpost are spammable. Outpost-only sweets give the effect of Sugar Rush, causing you to run 25% faster for three, five, or ten minutes, or Sugar Jolt, which makes you run 50% faster for two or five minutes. Obviously, the point level of the candy sets how long the effect lasts. Not exactly a useful effect most of the time, but it does come in handy during some of the festival games; It definitely makes getting from one end of Kaineng Center to another easier!

Spammables are the ones that are most often looked for by people seeking to complete the Sweet Tooth title. They're easy points, since all you have to do is park yourself in your Guild Hall, an outpost, or (in the case of explorables) just outside of a portal and click away to your heart's content. Depending on how good your mouse is and how much fast-clicking your fingers can take, it only takes a minute or two to plow through an entire stack.

However, just because something is spammable doesn't mean that you'll necessarily want to just click repeatedly on the stack and give it no further thought! The spammables that can be used outside of an outpost tend to give nifty effects—Candy Corns and Golden Eggs, for example, give +1 to attributes for a short amount of time, Rock Candies increase running and attack speed and decrease skill activation time, and Birthday Cupcakes grant +100 health and +10 energy as well as increasing your running speed. If you have some of those, they might be better used for a bit of a boost while farming or running.

Non-Spammable Sweets



Om nom nom, candy canes... non-spammable sweets are ones that can only be used outside of an outpost, and can only be used one at a time. Their effects are instant, unlike other sweets which last for a short period of time. The reason they can't be spammed is because of the effects they give - they all either remove death penalty or give morale boosts. Since there is a limit on how much death penalty you can gain and how high your morale boosts can go, there is obviously a limit on how many you can use at once. There are only six of these total - Honeycombs, Pumpkin Cookies, Refined Jelly, and the Wintergreen, Peppermint, and Rainbow Candy Canes. Wintergreen Candy Canes and Refined Jellies remove 15% death penalty, and Rainbow Candy Canes and Honeycombs give a 5% morale boost. Peppermint Candy Canes remove all death penalty, and Pumpkin Cookies grant a 10% morale boost.

These effects are on top of the sweet points you get from using them, of course! These tend to be less popular for gaining the title, though, because it is more difficult to use them up quickly. There are ways to go through them in a fairly fast fashion, but it's not as easy to do as simply clicking repeatedly. Their effects can make them highly useful, though; I'm sure everyone can remember attempting something that they found difficult and trying to slog through it at -60% DP. A few candy canes can remove that DP quickly, making the task much easier. This is especially useful in Hard Mode, where a death with the party at -60% DP means game over, back to the outpost you go. And if you're vanquishing or doing a difficult dungeon or elite area, that is something you'll probably want to avoid at all costs. I know that I personally made good use of candy canes while vanquishing the Desolation! So while non-spammables may not be the easiest to use for maxing your Sweet Tooth title, they're certainly not worthless.

So... how do I get these things?

Well, that's a good question. There are many ways of collecting sweets, whether you're looking to max your title and become a Connoisseur of Confectionaries, or if you simply want a stockpile of DP removers and boosts for your Hard Mode adventures. However, if you're going for that title, it's going to take a lot of time, effort, and/or money. 10,000 points is not something easy to collect or go through, even if you go the route of buying from other players.

Festival weekends

During many of the festival weekends, there are special drops of candies, alcohol, and party items. Collect every one you find. If you are a farmer? Go out there and farm all you can. Those poor raptors and vaettirs are going to be slaughtered by the millions by farmers looking to get as many festival drops as they can - either to max their own titles, or to sell to others looking to max theirs. If there are holiday quests on offer, do as many as them as you can. Take advantage of repeatable quests during those weekends.

Festival weekends are by far the best and largest source of sweets. (as well as items for the other consumable titles - consider working on all of them at once!)

Collectors

There are several collectors that you can get sweet items from, or at the very least, have a chance to get sweet items from. Nicholas the Traveler is the most popular and common collector to farm for; he moves each week, looking for a different item, and will give you up to five Gifts of the Traveler per account each week. There's a large variety of items that can be received in these gifts, including quite a few sweets, and several things worth a bit of money. It's a gamble, though, as you never know what you'll get. Still, if the items he's looking for are an easy farm, it's definitely worth it.

If you're in Pre-Searing, Nick is there as well in the form of Nicholas Sandford, who collects a different item each day on a rotation, and will give you up to five Gifts of the Huntsman per account per day in exchange. The variety of items available are much smaller, and as you can collect more of these gifts, it's definitely worth farming for if you have a Pre-Searing character. You'll also gain, on average, equal points in the Drunkard and Party Animal title tracks from these gifts.

If you have access to the War in Kryta content, there is a collector who will give Royal Gifts in exchange for War Supplies. Krytan Lokum is one of the items you can get in a gift, anywhere from one to five of them. However, there is a large variety of items available and only one that's a sweet, so there are better ways of getting your sugar fix. If you like a bit of a gamble, though, there's always the miniatures that you can get from the Royal Gifts...

There are also several regular collectors that you can sweets from - Mandragor Roots for Mandragor Root Cake, Blobs of Ooze for Refined Jellies, and Stone Grawl Necklaces for Honeycombs. Personally, though, I would say that these are not really worth it; they're not particularly easy items to farm, and the time taken would be better spent in other ways.

Purchasing

Now, this may seem like the fastest way to go about getting the title - just purchase the candy you need from other players. Keep in mind, though, that maxing the title is not cheap! Sweet items sell for, on average, between 110 and 150 gold per point. These prices will fluctuate depending on how recently there was a weekend with sweet drops, and Birthday Cupcakes sell for far more, but that's about the current average. Thus, to max the title, you're looking at over a million gold. You'll need to get that money from somewhere. If going on a farming frenzy over a festival weekend is not your style, though, and you'd rather farm for money over a longer period of time, buying sweets may be a better option.



Of course, then you have to actually get the candies. Kamadan American districts are generally the best place to look for sellers; just watch the trade channel and see if there's anyone selling, or put up a WTB ad yourself. It may take you some time to get everything you need, and keep in mind you can only trade so much at once. Also, don't forget to make sure you have enough storage space for everything!

Birthday Cupcakes sell for far more than normal sweets, because of the other effects they grant. If you have a stack of these, try and sell them! The prices on them are lower right now because of the recent event, but I've seen them go as high as 21-23e per stack.

And then, of course, if you have an abundance of money you're sitting on and want to avoid spamming ads and reading the trade channel, you can simply purchase from merchants. Merchants in Cantha sell Red Bean Cakes for 400g, which is 200g per point, and going this method it will cost you two million gold to max your title. However, simply purchasing stacks this way is much quicker. Ultimately, it's up to how much you think your time in-game is worth.

Other methods

Kieran Thackery's scavenger hunt will give you Paper Wrapped Parcels and/or Sacks of Random Junk, which have the chance to give you sweet items. However, since you have to give him a sweet to get them, it's not really worth it. Also, the Zaishen chest drops Crème Brûlées quite frequently, so if you're working on the Zaishen title, you may want to save those up. However, Zaishen keys are pricey, so definitely don't count on that.

How do I use up all of those candy canes?

Well, really, there is no quick way, since it means you have to die. A lot. Use them up naturally as you play. If you want a faster method, then something like what's commonly used to death level pets would probably be the fastest - get a few heroes with just resurrect skills, suit up in armor of Superior Runes, sacrifice yourself with Blood is Power or a vampiric weapon a few times, and then once you've hit -60%, use a few candy canes.

Nope, it's definitely not fast, but it's probably the only vaguely quick way to go through those candy canes and other DP removers.

All this talk is making me hungry!

Well, you're in luck! Most of the sweet items in the game are actual sweets that exist in real life. For those GuildMag readers that bake (or know someone who can bake for them), I'm going to go one step further, and include a recipe for you to make your own sweets! This is not just any recipe, but one I came up with myself with some experimentation last year for my boyfriend's birthday. They take a bit more work than normal cupcakes, but are well worth it. I will do my best to convert the measurements into metric measurements as well, so that everyone can give it a try.

Epic Birthday Cupcakes

- One box chocolate cake mix
- Ingredients to prepare said cake mix - follow the box for this!
- Cinnamon to taste

- 1 1/2 cups (170 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp (15g) baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon (5g) salt
- 1/2 cup (115g) butter, softened
- 1/4 cup (55g) granulated white sugar
- 1/2 cup (100g) brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 tsp (10mL) vanilla extract
- One bag chocolate chips

1. Preheat an oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Line 24 muffin cups with paper liners.
2. Beat the butter, white sugar, and brown sugar with an electric mixer in a large bowl until smooth. Add eggs and vanilla extract and beat until smooth. Mix in the flour, salt, and baking powder until just incorporated. Mix in the chocolate chips until there's the amount you want. It will be a much more cake-like consistency than cookie dough usually is (which is good).
3. In a second bowl, prepare the cake mix as instructed on the box. Add cinnamon if desired.
4. Spoon the batters into the prepared cupcake liners, alternating cake batter and cookie dough (spoonful of batter, spoonful of dough, spoonful of batter, or reverse it if you wish), until about 2/3 full. Basically, just layer the two batters whichever way you want.
5. Bake in the preheated oven until a toothpick inserted into the cupcake comes out clean, about 20 minutes. Cool in the pans for 10 minutes before removing to cool completely on a wire rack.

Now, if you want traditional Guild Wars birthday cupcakes, frost with a pink frosting and top with sprinkles once cooled. Or you can use my icing that I made for these:

- 1 cup (110g) confectioner's sugar
- 1 tbsp (10g) cocoa powder
- Cinnamon to taste
- 1/4 tsp (~2mL) vanilla extract
- Milk

1. In a small bowl, combine sugar, cocoa, and cinnamon. Add vanilla and stir. Add milk, about 1-2 tbsp (20-40mL) and stir until the icing is the correct consistency. Spoon/drizzle over the top of the cooled cupcakes, and let set for a moment.

And the most important step? Eat them and enjoy!

© 2003-2011 ArenaNet, Inc. All rights reserved. NCsoft, the interlocking NC logo, ArenaNet, Arena.net, Guild Wars, Guild Wars 2, and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. All other objects are the property of their respective owners.



Rise of a Lich, Fall of Gods

by Konig des Todes

An old man was lying broken on a shattered plain. Swirling lights danced around him as he lay still, tired and unmoving. His arms and legs refused to move. His fingers barely followed their master's orders.

Where am I? Tired… so tired, he decided to close his eyes.

"Grenth, wake up…" A calming sweet female voice called to the old man. "Grenth…"

Who is that…? What's going on…?

"Greeeeeenth, are you up yet?" The voice came again, but this time childish and whiny. "Grenth, you old vizier, wake up!"

"Ugh… Hara? What are you doing here?" Grenth groggily said, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes. *What was that dream… No… it wasn't a dream, not a normal one. It was a vision.* Grenth rubbed his eyes slowly trying to clear his head of his sleepiness. Opening his eyes after a short while, he saw the twelve-year-old girl standing near his shelves that were full of scrolls and tomes. As always, she was properly dressed in Orrian noble attire, though for some reason her curly brown hair was let down, something she hardly did.

"I'm bored," Hara said as she looked on Grenth's shelves, then, grabbing a scroll, said, "Oh, can I read this one?" She quickly sat down on a ledge near the window in Grenth's study and began untying the string that kept the scroll closed.

"No." Grenth quickly took the scroll out of her hands, moving at a speed very unusual for his old age. "That one holds very powerful magic that should never be read. Now why don't you go play with some kids like young people should and leave me be." He placed the scroll on the highest shelf, far out of Hara's reach, and then began gently pushing her out of his room.

"But only Konig is around who's my age… all the other people are boooring. Let me read something."

Grenth sighed, rested his already clearly aged finger on an old dusty tome with no magic in it and took it from his shelf, handing it to Hara. "Fine, fine, here. Take this and go read it. I have work to do." *Specifically, I have that vision to figure out.*

"Thanks, grumpy old geezer!" Hara shouted as she ran out to read the tome.

"Kids…" Grenth sighed once more and began thinking of the dream he just had.

Act I – A New Beginning

Chapter 1 – Royal Pains

"While the gods walk the land, a Prince of flesh shall become a King among the corpses. He shall create the blighted race, shall bear fruit to the most devastating cataclysms, and shall witness the fall of those holding sway over judgment and secrets. Servant of the fair one, he shall uncover the greatest hope of mortals in their darkest time. Until then, he shall become a void that walks the world and will bring about the death of thousands, and open the gateway for the doom of millions more.

While a Prince, he shall cause mayhem among those who know him, but once he becomes a King, he will bring the greatest threats into the void that he himself acts like.

And under the noses of the gods, man will conspire against man. In this time, the self-outcast Prince will meet the Maiden of Death who will have him make his move. His choice will be caused by forces upon him, and it will cause forces to move." – Excerpt from the Tome of Time

169 AA (After Arrival of humans)

As usual that time of day, the grounds of the estate were quiet. Not many people, guards included, expected someone to sneak around during the bright of day. Konig Doric, the son of the estate's owner, had always taken this time to sneak off to train under Afzal, the Sacred Guard of Balthazar. But that day, he headed the other direction.

Once more leaving his duties as the son of Herzog, he decided to head to the vizier's room instead of training with Afzal. Grenth, the current vizier of the human kingdoms, had been living with the king's brother the past few years and had been tutoring Konig personally. No one questioned his motives, but it had been unheard of in the past. Konig never had an issue with getting past

guards, and had always enjoyed getting past them as if he were an infiltrator – testing how easily and quickly he could get past his so-called "protectors."

After hopping over a low stone fence, he saw that the coast was clear. Just as easily as he got to the room, Konig hopped through the low window just as he did when he was a kid and began searching the tomes and scrolls spread throughout the room.

"Hmmm, it seems the spells in this scroll are in Kurzick. This will be enjoyable to translate. I always did love Old Kurzick spells, after all." For years, Konig had been taught multiple languages, but the only one that truly interested him was the Kurzick language, the spells of which were never simply chanted, but sung. But Konig didn't enjoy the Kurzick language for the singing, he was interested in it because, for an unknown reason, singing the spells allowed them to be stronger – a fireball that was formed from a chant or prayer was always overpowered by a fireball created from a Kurzick song. Or so the claims went. "Let's see, so this spell is called Cyclone Aura? Well, let's see how this works…"

Magic is said to only be usable by those blessed or chosen by the gods, and the gods themselves. Even though he knew this, Konig still read the spell multiple times. Each time nothing had happened.

Konig sighed deeply and cleared his mind. He focused all his attention to the spell in front of him and instead of speaking the spell, he sung it.

"Al eternum zu wasser"
"A mysterium al defender"
"Vulnero eorum in icher."

An eerie silence surrounded Konig for seconds. The spell must not have occurred. Konig sighed once more and rolled up the scroll, and then he saw it.

The papers around him began flickering, and droplets of water began to form around him. Within seconds, a whirlpool formed around Konig giving him just a little room to maneuver. Amazed, Konig stood watching the water he summoned despite not being blessed by the gods with the gift of magic.

The spell didn't last for a long time. Soon it began to settle down, and Konig saw his mistake. Grenth's tomes, scrolls, and his furniture were all soaked. The water touched Konig's leg, and he bolted for the door. Without thinking, he let all the water out into the corridors and ran to his room, avoiding everyone, with the scroll still in his hand.

****

Diana Doric, having just finished getting dressed and getting her hair done, walked through the corridor of the estate. The day was a special one which required a special outfit and hairstyle. She had her personal groomers redo her hair seven times before she settled on a style, and she went through possibly thirty-two dresses – she lost count after the thirteenth – and nearly fired five of her six servants. Her son was going to meet the woman he would marry, and she needed to look the best she could for her future daughter-in-law – perhaps future queen if Diana's brother-in-law didn't find a wife soon. It was a very important event.

On her way to the library, where Konig should be this time of day, she was nearly run into by three different rushing servants – each apologizing quickly and saying there was an emergency before they ran off – and Diana became annoyed. When the fourth one came, she purposefully tripped the servant, a young boy as it happened. He quickly got up and bowed as he apologized – at least he had manners.

"Where are you going? Many servants passed by me saying there was an emergency. What is this emergency? Speak, and it better not be that you're all still preparing for my son's future wife and her father's arrival!" Diana shouted at the boy, making a point to look down and show her superiority.

"No ma'am, those preparations are done. It's just that there's… there's a flood coming from the east wing. It's a mystery how it started. It happened in Grenth's study, and that's in the hi-"

"I know where it is! Do not treat me as an idiot! But how could a flood possibly happen there of all places?!" Diana demanded. This couldn't possibly happen, not naturally, and she wanted answers. *Konig better not be making trouble on this day of all days!*

"We don't know, ma'am. The others are still trying to figure that out," the boy said, looking down at his worn out shoes as to not look at Diana's cold stare. "Ma'am… I need to go get buckets, may I go?"

"Yes, yes go. I think I know how this flood started." Diana marched off back in the direction she was heading, making a right and then a left and another right – straight to Konig's room, the place he always went after pulling a stupid prank.

"Konig Hagan Doric!" Diana shouted as she shoved the doors open. "Honestly, I thought by now you'd be over your childish tricks. Why did you go and flood Vizier Grenth's study? Do you know how hard it is to dry up all those scrolls? And for that matter, why are you not ready yet?" She saw that Konig was reading a scroll that he had on his desk. His pants and shoes were even still soaked from his "prank."

"I told you once, and I'll tell you again, I'm not marrying her. I'm not interested in following dad's footsteps. As for the flood, it was a failed spell. Or maybe it didn't fail, and the flood was a side affect. It's rather annoying that everything is in Old Kurzick. Now, mother, leave me be."

"A spell? You… You worked magic? When did the gods bless you?" Diana's eyes widened at the thought. She even completely ignored the rudeness in Konig's tone and words.

"As far as I know, never. Perhaps the gods are not as great as we think they are." Konig shrugged, never moving his eyes from the scroll in front of him. "But maybe if you sent me to a temple where I could gain power instead of having me tutored by Grenth, I wouldn't have done such a 'childish prank.'"

Diana snapped out of her surprise when Konig mentioned his favorite word. It bugged her more than her incompetent servants. "Power, power, power. That's all you go on about these days, and yet you fail to realize that if you succeed your father or your uncle, you'll be the ruler of the people! What more power could you want?"

"I don't want power that's just hiding behind others, like that coward Herzog. Or my uncle, for that matter." Diana saw Konig's face as he looked up at her for the first time that day. The look in his face only made her angrier.

"Your father is not a coward, he…" Diana stopped and sighed mid-sentence, attempting to get rid of her anger. "This is pointless. Just hurry up and get ready to meet your future wife." She turned around as she finished talking, walking out the door as angrily as she walked in. As she left, she heard Konig sigh and roll up the scroll, and not long after that, she heard him closing his room's doors. *He better be getting ready now.*

****

The Regalia of the Gods glimmered in the sunlight as Konig walked outside of the estate. Dyed a dark red to fit his style and match his shoulder-length hair, the regalia bore the emblems of all six gods – Abaddon, Balthazar, Dhuum, Dwayna, Lyssa, and Melandru – and waved freely in the wind as Konig drew a deep breath before he would put up the ploy he had planned out after Diana's visit.

Noticing a simple-looking carriage at the bottom, he began to walk down the many steps to meet the woman he was to wed in a few days.

"So this is the famed troublemaker Konig, eh? He looks better than I thought he would." A short and stout man, almost as if he were a dwarf, stood at the doors of the carriage eyeing Konig as he stepped down. "Humph. He may do for my daughter after all. I've been uncertain about this, despite his political standings. But what's done is done. Why don't you come on out dear?" The dwarf-like man turned to the carriage door, apparently ending his little monologue to his daughter.

Great, I've been set up to marry a dwarf. I definitely have to leave.

The carriage door opened, and a thin and tall (compared to her father) woman in a bright white Regalia of Dwayna with raven black hair stepped out and greeted Konig timidly. Immediately after their introduction, those around them left the soon-to-be-wed alone.

They must be from the Temple of Dwayna to the east… Konig thought to himself as he inspected the woman, who, while seeming his own age from a distance, up close hardly looked fifteen.

"So, um, are you happy with what you see, mi'lord?" The woman timidly asked.

"I'm no lord," Konig stated immediately then paused to give thought to what to say next. Shortly after pausing, he decided to continue on with the ploy. "But better than what I expected. What's your name? They set us up to marry, and I was never even told that."

"Desmina… My name is Desmina. It's nice to finally meet you. I'm already less nervous… But I need to sit down…" Nearly collapsing, the woman managed to sit on a nearby stone ledge. As she went further from the group, Konig noticed that she seemed to age slowly.

"Let me ask you a question, Desmina. Do you at all want to marry?"

"Well… I… uhm… well you see…" Desmina sighed, giving up on acting as if she were the happy innocent girl others expect her to be. "No… Just like you, I'm forced into this, and I'd rather live in the Temple of Dwayna my whole life than be queen of our race, to be honest. And I hate that temple. By the way, if you were wondering about my looks, my father has been trained in illusionary magic and has been making me look younger than I am. He thinks everyone is like him and prefers girls not women."

"That explains that. But at least you won't miss me." Konig said as he turned to look at Desmina's father – who was talking to Diana and Herzog.

"Excuse me?" Desmina asked, peering up to Konig in curiosity.

"I intend to leave. Tonight."

"What, alone?" Desmina asked while quickly standing.

"How else would I go?" Konig asked, looking at her quizzically. *What could Desmina be thinking?*

"Well, Konig, I want to get out of here as well, and I know outside this estate a little bit. Tell me, Konig, how many times have you left your home?"

"Not as often as I have wanted to..." Konig said, realizing what Desmina was getting at.

"Well, you let me know when you can survive in the real world, spoiled boy," Desmina taunted Konig. He kept wondering what she was really like; she was unbelievably hard to figure out.

"I'm going on a wild whim here... you want to leave too."

"You're a smart boy. I'm sure night would be the best time to leave. Arah isn't that bad in crime, thanks to the gods being here, but outside Arah, we may run into troubles. So I suggest leaving with darkness, but not far before dawn."

"The east side of the estate is always the least guarded. We could leave out of there. You and your father will most likely be put into the north wing's guest room, and my room is in the south wing. You'll have a harder time getting around because the north wing is more guarded than the others – especially with guests. So I'll come to get you at night. Be ready at any time."

"Well now, you love to take charge I see. It must be the royal blood in you. Very well, I'll see you tonight then." Desmina smiled at Konig just before she turned and retained the feeble act she had when she first showed herself as she walked over to their folks.

"You know I don't even need to take you." Konig whispered in Desmina's ear as he caught up to her and held her up to help solidify the act. "Just be glad I'm helping *you* out. I can survive on my own."

© 2003-2011 ArenaNet, Inc. All rights reserved. NCsoft, the interlocking NC logo, ArenaNet, Arena.net, Guild Wars, Guild Wars 2, and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. All other objects are the property of their respective owners.



What's mandatory for each birthday? Indeed! Presents! For our birthday, we don't need any presents from you guys— we're giving presents away! ArenaNet has given us four single Mercenary Hero codes to give away in a competition. We want to hear from your soon-to-be-hero why s/he deserves to be a Mercenary Hero on your team.

Whether they're arrogant, virtuous, insane, or something completely different, tell us in your hero's voice why you should be the one to obtain a single Merchenary Hero code! This all has to be written within 200 words and you have to include a picture of your soon-to-be-hero as well for completeness. To enter the contest, just fill in the form at the end of this page!

After we have received all submissions, we will then blind pick the winners and will announce them on our website, but also include them in our next issue!

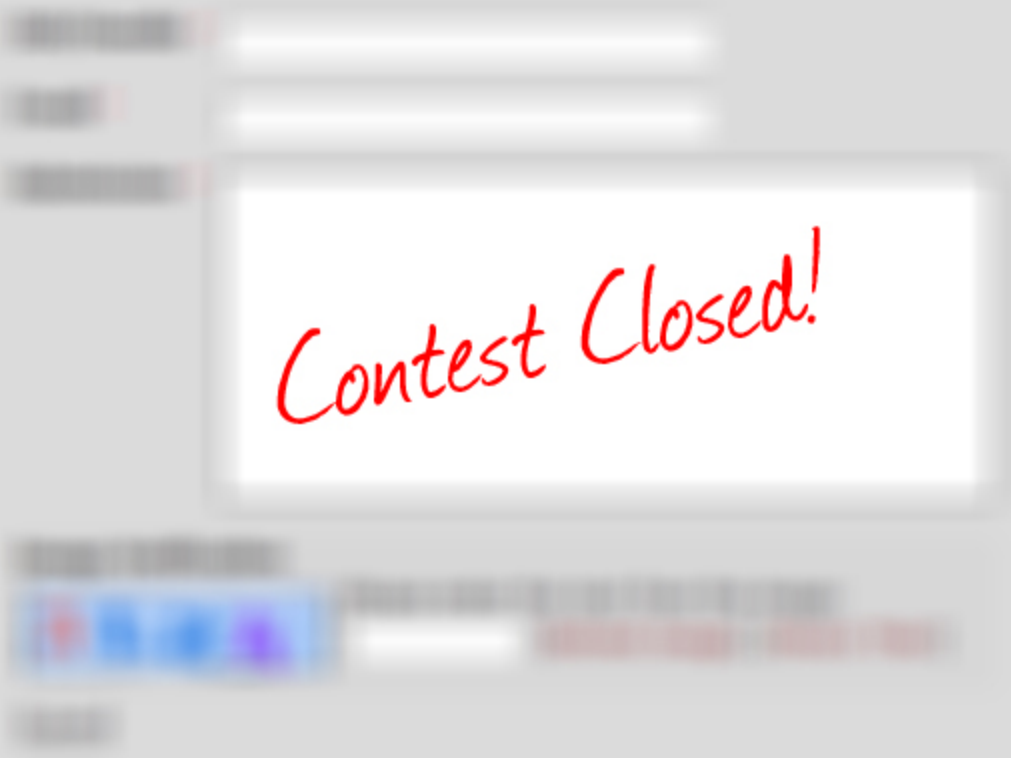
The contest closes at June the 19th at 12pm (GMT+1) | 4pm PDT (GMT-7) | 7pm EDT (GMT-4)

Prizes:

- 4x Single Mercenary Hero Code

All submissions must comply with the following:

- Include your own name or IGN and your email address. (This will only be used to contact you if you win a prize and will not be shared while the voting process is running)
- Your submission may be no longer than 200 words
- You need to include a picture of your soon-to-be-hero
- You're not a member of the GuildMag team
- One entry per person.



© 2003-2011 ArenaNet, Inc. All rights reserved. NCsoft, the interlocking NC logo, ArenaNet, Arena.net, Guild Wars, Guild Wars 2, and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. All other objects are the property of their respective owners.

Melandru, Tender of the Forests and Fields



by Draxynnic

And it was that a tribe of godless humans wandered the land. Where camped did they lay waste, senselessly destroying everything nearby.
And so the tribe set out to find another camp, when suddenly sprouted a wall of thorny branches, which blocked their exit.
Then saith Ewan, leader of the tribe, "Know ye our ways. Whosoever does magic in this tribe shall be put to death."
Yet none comes forward. Then, from the earth grows forth a large tree, and unfurling its branches, reveals the upper torso of a woman. Saith She, "I am Melandru, the Mother of earth and nature. Henceforth I bind ye to these lands. When they suffer, so shall ye suffer."
And as She saith, so was it done. From their limbs sprouted branches, and the blood in their veins was the sap of trees. Then was Ewan and his tribe converted, and became they stewards of nature.
-- Scriptures of Melandru: 48 BE



While it is likely that each of the six gods (or at least their predecessors) were active in the shaping of the world since the forgotten were brought to Tyria, Melandru is the only one definitively mentioned by name before the Scriptures. Her work in shaping the world as it is today (apart from the effects of magical disasters such as the destruction of the Crystal Sea, the Jade Wind, the Searing and the Cataclysm) is acknowledged not only by those who follow the gods but also those that see them as their enemies, such as the charr.

As the goddess of nature, Melandru is caretaker of the animals, plants, and of the earth that gives them life. She does not restrict her attention to the wilderness, though: she bestows her favour to cultivated fields as generously as to the forests and mountains, extolling her faithful to maintain the balance between civilisation and the wild in turn. Because of this, Elonian rituals to Melandru are focussed within the season of the autumn harvests as they thank her for her bounty. However, as the fate of Ewan's tribe shows, her punishment to those who recklessly upset this balance can be harsh; a policy that has been taken up in her absence since the Exodus by devout followers such as Zojun of Cantha and Melonni of Kourna.

Since her responsibilities lead her to focus her attention on the wild places and rural lands of Tyria, it is curious that Melandru is one of the gods named by legend and history as dwelling in the city of Arah before the Exodus. Another curiosity is derived from the wings depicted in many of her statues and murals – a feature that seems out of place with her focus on the features and inhabitants of the land below rather than the skies above, especially as her more common depictions also show her rooted to the ground through the trunk of a tree that merges with her legs. This has lead some theologians to theorise that these might hint at some deeper connection that lies between Dwayna and Melandru than with the rest of the pantheon, one that runs deeper than their shared interest in the well-being of living creatures – an alliance within the pantheon that was demonstrated when Melandru sided with Dwayna against Balthazar and Grenth last Wintersday.

However, Melandru does not seem to restrict her power entirely within the earth, as in Cantha the moon of the new year is viewed as belonging to her. Despite this, Melandru's following in Cantha has waned, with many Canthans believing that, as the wardens, dragons and kirin were driven mad, Melandru herself simply could not continue to abide within the transformed landscape. Despite this, her devout followers know that her influence remains still, rejuvenating what life can still thrive among the jade and stone.

Followers and Temples



Unsurprisingly, the most visible of Melandru's followers are the rangers that seek to maintain the balance between civilisation and nature and hasten the recuperation of lands such as Ascalon and southern Cantha that have been afflicted by magical disasters. Otherwise, few adventurers grant their primary devotion to Melandru, although her dominion over the earth attracts the regard of elementalists focussing on the magics of sand and stone. Dervishes are similarly attracted, and while they revere all the gods, they do appear to have a special bond with Melandru. Possibly formed during the early years of the profession walking the wilderness of Elona during the Shattered Dynasty era, today that relationship is reflected the maintenance of many Elonian shrines to Melandru by dervishes. Her avatar bolsters the resilience of dervishes that assume her resemblance (a more alien, tree-like form than in many of the popular representations of Melandru, although branches on her back are reminiscent of the wings seen in many of her depictions), especially against debilitating ailments and the power of the elements.

As well as the forgotten and humans in general, it can be surmised from the fate of Ewan's tribe that there is at least one group of plantlike beings linked to Melandru. The wardens, with their mix of human and plantlike features, are one possibility (especially if Urgoz was itself formerly devoted to Melandru) – being empathically bound to the petrified Echovald Forest would certainly explain

their psychotic behaviour after the Jade Wind. The druids of the Maguuma Jungle are believed to have been worshippers of Melandru, but this has never been confirmed, and while their current form is that of ghostly oakhearts similar to the watchers that receive offerings at Melandru's shrines, it is not known whether this reflects their corporeal forms before they abandoned physical bodies.

There are indications that other races close to nature may be followers of Melandru in different guises, even if they may not follow or acknowledge the rest of the pantheon. The centaurs of Elona show a strong connection to nature, although Mirza Veldrunner is known to have referred to the pantheon to a human as "your human gods", suggesting that, at least in the mind of that centaur, there may be no connection between any of the Five Gods of the time and the centaur spirituality based around the Ancestor Tree. Meanwhile, sailor legends speak of a cetacean race that dwells beneath the sea worshipping a goddess of nature they call "Melaggan" – likely the aspect of Melandru as seen by that race.

Formerly believed to be creatures of Dwayna, the true allegiance of the Jingle Bears and Moas was revealed last Wintersday, when Melandru openly sided with Dwayna after Balthazar threw in with Grenth. Both of these literal party animals were among Melandru's forces in the ritual battles fought between the gods, along with iboga and jacaranda plants decorated for the season, the ghostly Watchers, and, despite their endangerment in their native Ascalon, throngs of the Stalkers that are believed to be sacred to the goddess.



While all of the Kurzicks are concerned with the health of the Echovald Forest, it is the tree singers of House Lutgardis that lead this effort, caring for the Forever Trees and using their magic to restore the waters of the forest and encourage new life to spring forth. Founded in Cypress Hollow after an ancestor of the house viewed a near-miss by a petrified tree as an auspicious portent, the conservatory-cathedral of House Lutgardis sits next to what is perhaps the best sign of their success: the green glades of Melandru's Hope rolling down to the shore of a shallow lake.

The largest known holy place to Melandru is best known for its more recent history – a sanctuary nestled within the bowels of the earth beneath central Kourna. Abandoned for centuries, the five wells of the site were cleansed of their giant insect infestations by the remnants of the Sunspears after the disaster at Gandara, serving as the centre of resistance against Varesh until her forces moved into the Desolation. Another example of a holy site of Melandru found beneath the earth is that of a golden statue revealed in the earthquakes that heralded the rise of the Great Destroyer - unfortunately, the history of this hidden sanctuary has been lost, although the architecture of the place shows similarities to Ascalonian and pre-Kurzick architecture, including depictions of other gods such as Dwayna, Lyssa, and what appears to be Grenth.

If the druids of the Maguuma were Melandru's disciples as some believe, this would indicate that many locations sacred to them may be sites dedicated to Melandru. These include a pool in the north of the Sage Lands used by the druids for gatherings, a guarded place of rest near Bloodstone Fen apparently guarded by oakhearts but actually defended by nightmare-like ravagers that respond to any deaths among the tree guardians, and the Henge of Denravi itself. At least one female-only temple to Melandru is known to exist, if Vael's anecdotes are to be believed – however, he has not revealed the location.

With the exception of the defensive stone walls of Lutgardis Conservatory (which is, nonetheless, open to the fossilised canopy above), holy places to Melandru are kept in harmony with their surroundings, eschewing the elaborate constructions of other deities in favour of simple stone arches and columns. Even her likenesses are raised in harmony with their surroundings, often grown by magic from the wood of living trees (except in Echovald Forest, where they are shaped from stone instead). In fact, outside of the pantheistic sites such as Serenity Temple and Zin Ku Corridor, it is these shrines, that with her favour provide water and shelter on the roads and in isolated places in the wilderness, that best represent the Goddess of Nature to the common worshipper.

© 2003-2011 ArenaNet, Inc. All rights reserved. NCsoft, the interlocking NC logo, ArenaNet, Arena.net, Guild Wars, Guild Wars 2, and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. All other objects are the property of their respective owners.



As I continue in my path to interview well known people from throughout the Guild Wars community, I ended up with Hunter from Hunter's Insight this time around. We talk about his favorite things about Guild Wars 2 and how he enjoys voicing his opinion throughout his own blog.



Dutch Sunshine: Hey Hunter, done anything fancy today?
Hunter: Hah, no not really. Just blogged about charr week and written a post about Dragon Age 2. Otherwise a lazy Friday.

Dutch: Sounds... lazy indeed. Can you give us an introduction of yourself?
Hunter: Hello, I go by the name Hunter and I blog at Huntersinsight.com. It's basically just a site that details my thoughts on Guild Wars 2, and whatever game I happen to be playing at the moment. Instead of just relaying information, I try to voice my opinions and thoughts, inject some insight, and otherwise ramble on about Guild Wars 2.

Dutch: I was wondering, why did you decide to start your own blog, how did you come to it, and what drives you forward?
Hunter: Well I had my own blog years ago. It was a place where I just spewed random ideas about my life and pop culture, what I liked and what I didn't. A creative outlet, I guess. At the same time I was playing Guild Wars, and for some reason became curious as to whether there were Guild Wars blogs out there. After looking I found very few, while there were tons of blogs about WoW, there were only a few Guild Wars blogs. Acidforblood, KillTenRats, and a collective of LiveJournal blogs all seemed to talk about Guild Wars, but not often enough and not about the things I wanted to read and talk about. At the time, I didn't do anything about it, but when Guild Wars 2 was announced I started thinking maybe I would start a blog. After I saw the first Guild Wars 2 trailer, that really kicked the idea into overdrive, the trailer was excellent. The ideas behind the game superb. I couldn't stop now if I wanted to.

Dutch: I've noticed that you've also discussed other games at your blog, is that purely because there isn't that much yet to talk about for Guild Wars and Guild Wars 2, or are you looking to expand?
Hunter: I'm not really looking to expand, no. Part of it is that at times there can be a lack of new or interesting Guild Wars 2 information, but for the most part it's just the drive to write. I think of writing about other games as good experience too... the more I write about other games, the more easily I can describe the things I want to talk about.

Dutch: Yeah, I guess that's true, so what is your current top three out of the things you like about Guild Wars 2?
Hunter: I don't know if 3 is enough, but I'll try. I suppose the first thing is that they are making monsters do things. The whole 'ogres in a field picking daisies instead of attacking the village' thing. It is just so much more interesting and real. Secondly I love the art. I don't think people who play other games realize just what a giant step forward Guild Wars 2 art seems to be from other games. I've complimented the art in Rift for instance, but it just doesn't compare. Guild Wars 2 is way ahead of other games. Thirdly, I'd have to say the way you move. You're rolling around, you've got a ton of ground-based targeting, you can block stuff aimed at other characters, Guild Wars 2 just looks like it plays different. It looks like it plays different than every other MMO.

Dutch: Is there anything out of the original Guild Wars that you'll actually miss in Guild Wars 2?
Hunter: Honestly as much as I like Guild Wars, I've played it off and on for 5 years. There is very little I'll miss. The only thing I can think of off the top of my head is shared storage. That's it.

Dutch: Okay, that's clear to me! From the information that we currently have, what will be the first thing that you'll do when you enter Tyria, 250 years forward?
Hunter: Maybe it seems weird, but I'll probably figure out how to dye my armour. Every other game out there makes you jump through hoops to look the way you want. I'm hoping in Guild Wars 2, right from the first moment I can start dying my armour, that it wasn't some dream from the demo, or in the demo just to show off the dye mechanic.

Dutch: I actually did the same when I had my hands on the demo last GamesCom, so it's totally understandable! I was wondering, what feature in Guild Wars 2 are you looking forward to most, that have not yet been discussed?
Hunter: A lot of things have been touched on, but we don't really have the details on. I guess what I want to know about most is the micro-transaction items. We only know of the transmutation stones, so I'm pretty curious as to how far they're going to take their cash shop. I'm probably more open to micro-transactions than other Guild Wars players, but I hope they keep things reasonable.

Dutch: Now for something different, what would you say to people that want to start blogging about the Guild Wars universe?
Hunter: Well I'd say that you have to blog for yourself. If you blog to become well known, or blog to make friends, you're doing it wrong. Nobody comes to your blog at first, and nobody will comment. It takes dedication and a drive to write things, which isn't as easy as it sounds. Beyond that, you should write honestly, passionately, and do not be afraid to be opinionated.

Dutch: You've blogged quite some time now already, but what has been your favorite experience during your blogging career?
Hunter: I think it's always rewarding to be recognized or complimented. If someone on a forum somewhere links to my blog, I am kind of proud of it. What I enjoy most I think, is the comments. To think I wrote something that someone else felt was worthy of giving me feedback about, well I really enjoy the interaction.

Dutch: So, before we close this one off, anything else which you want to say?
Hunter: There are a lot of people out there who blog, or podcast, or host forums about Guild Wars 2, and I hope people don't just stick with the most popular sites. Back in the days of Guild Wars when I wanted to talk about it I was limited to some large and

anonymous forums where it was hard to have my opinions heard out. What I'm saying is, seek out the less populated but still quality sites out there and you will be rewarded.

Dutch: Okay, thank you for your time Hunter!
Hunter: No problem, thanks for asking me Dutch!

© 2003-2011 ArenaNet, Inc. All rights reserved. NCsoft, the interlocking NC logo, ArenaNet, Arena.net, Guild Wars, Guild Wars 2, and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. All other objects are the property of their respective owners.



Interview with Eric Flannum



Eric Flannum, Lead Designer at ArenaNet

GuildMag: In Guild Wars: Eye of the North, music changes when entering combat. Will music dynamically change according to the situation in Guild Wars 2?
Eric: Yes, we have specific music that plays when you enter combat. In addition to that we have the ability to change the music for other situations such as time of day, for particular dynamic events, boss battles, etc…

GuildMag: In the original Guild Wars - where you have a pack of charr - each monster has a skill set which can be identified by its name. What can you share with us about monster skills in Guild Wars 2? Can we expect diversity in skills, even when encountering a pack of identical ogres, for example?
Eric: In Guild Wars 2 each type of monster can have a unique palette of skills. For example, you might encounter a group of dredge, some of whom are riflemen that engage you from a distance. The melee fighters in the meantime will attempt to close and use sonic AoE attacks by banging their swords against their shields. Each "family" of monsters has a different amount of variety depending on how often we expect a player to see them and how large a group they are expected to encounter. The more often players see a creature or the more of those creatures we expect players to fight at any given time, then the more diversity we need.

GuildMag: The Elder Dragons are said to be huge—rather, enormous—will they be part of large dynamic events, or will we fight against them inside instanced areas?
Eric: The only Elder Dragon that players encounter in Guild Wars 2 is Zhaitan, and he is fought as part of a dungeon. So it's safe to say that at least for the initial release of the game, you'll only see Elder Dragons in instances.

GuildMag: We've seen the cinematic animations in the past few demos. Are there any plans to make changes in that area?
Eric: We are working right now on improving the quality of the cinematics where two (or more) characters talk to each other from opposite sides of the screen. This involves looking at animations as well as new technology and how we record and process voice overs.

GuildMag: Could you tell us about how we can expect to come across dungeons? Will we stumble upon them through exploration, or are they linked to social hubs? Will all the dungeons be introduced to us by our personal storyline? Can we also find hidden dungeons through exploration?
Eric: There are NPC's in the world who can point you towards the different dungeons. You are introduced to these NPC's through your personal story. For various reasons these NPC's are all following the saga of Destiny's Edge. Since the dungeons (in story mode) are the story of Destiny's Edge, they will have information on where the various members are and what they are doing, which will in turn lead you to the dungeons. In addition to being the story of Destiny's Edge, dungeons offer a different sort of play style that we want all players to have access to. Because of this, we have chosen not to have any hidden or hard to find dungeons in the initial release of the game.



GuildMag: Is there anything which you can tell us about the guild system or underwater exploration at this moment?
Eric: Nothing new I'm afraid (except for the next question).

GuildMag: What are aquatic weapons and how do they work?
Eric: So you noticed those aquatic weapon slots? Aquatic weapons are a separate weapon set that you switch to when you go underwater. They are a unique set of weapons designed and animated to look good while being used underwater. Other than that they work very much like our "normal" weapons.

GuildMag: How do you initiate a project? Do you have a predefined working process?
Eric: Every project starts out very differently. For example, I think we've shared our unusual story about how we started Guild Wars 2. I can safely say that I've never been involved in a project where we felt the need to announce we were doing it almost as soon as we started working on it! As unusual as that decision was, it felt like the right decision for us to make at the time, and I'm glad we did so.
Once you get past the decision to start a project, I think you have to begin with all of the big picture ideas about what you're trying to accomplish. What is your target audience? What is the setting? What are the core mechanics? Why would somebody play the game instead of another game? What makes the game fun? What business model will make the game a success for the company? It seems like an obvious thing but I've definitely seen and been in some situations where the team couldn't answer those types of questions and it has tended to end rather poorly as a result. You always have to keep the big picture in mind and that is especially true right at the start.

GuildMag: You now work at one of the industry's top companies. What path did your career take to get there?
Eric: I started out as an aspiring comic book artist who also loved games and worked at a game shop. There were several game studios near where I worked, and people who worked at those studios would come in all the time. I wasn't having much luck getting the comic book career going, and would talk to various people who came into the store about how I could get a job as an artist. To my dismay, most of them told me that 3D art was the next big thing, and that I needed to know how to use an expensive 3D modeling package. The one exception to this were the guys from a small company called Blizzard who told me I just needed to "love games and be able to draw".

So I applied at Blizzard and was lucky enough to get hired as an artist. One of the first things I did there was work on Warcraft 2. At the time they didn't have anyone doing map layout, so they sat me down with the editor and told me to "make maps". This was my introduction to working as a game designer, and I found that I enjoyed it quite a bit. From there, I worked as an artist and designer

on Diablo and Starcraft. Having done a little of both jobs, I knew that I was better suited to being a designer than an artist, and was looking to make the switch to being a full time designer. I had a friend who I worked with at Blizzard who got me a job as a game designer for a game called Sacrifice at Shiny Entertainment.
After that, I bounced around to a couple of different companies for a few years until I found myself at inXile Entertainment. Around that time my wife and I decided to move to Washington. I contacted my friend James Phinney who was working at ArenaNet and he (along with help from Jeff, Mo, and Pat) sold me on coming to work on Guild Wars. That was over six years ago, and I have to say that ArenaNet has been the best company I've ever worked for. I count myself as being incredibly fortunate in getting to work on a cool project like Guild Wars 2 and with so many talented and fun people.

GuildMag: Did you have any mentors?
Eric: I think we all learn a little something from everyone we work with and I've never had a formal mentor. That being said, I think the time I've spent working with James Phinney on various projects has benefitted me greatly. He's a fantastic game designer and one of the smartest people I know. Then of course there's Colin Johanson—how can you work with him and not learn something new every day?

GuildMag: We've asked this question to Colin before, and he gave interesting answer. We're curious about your answer as well. Do your family and friends fully understand what your job entails? How do you explain to people what you do for a living?
Eric: Well most of my closest friends all work in the game industry, so I hope they understand what I do (As for family, I don't think they really have an idea, and I find it very hard to explain to people I meet exactly what I do. I usually try to explain to them that I'm responsible for the moment to moment game play and overall experience that the player has while playing the game, and when they get that blank look on their face I switch to "I'm responsible for the story" (which isn't true but they can at least comprehend what that might mean).

We would like to thank Eric Flannum for giving us a bit of his time!

© 2003-2011 ArenaNet, Inc. All rights reserved. NCsoft, the interlocking NC logo, ArenaNet, Arena.net, Guild Wars, Guild Wars 2, and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. All other objects are the property of their respective owners.



An Unheard Tale

by Thalador Doomspeaker

Thaladus looked down on the jungle below. A twisting, silvery ribbon ran through the green, lush vegetation: the misty Ullen River as the first rays of the rising sun sparkled on the fog. The young mursaat focused his sight on the distant river. Tiny ripples were being formed in the fog as unseen objects passed through it. Possibly, only the most trained and sharp-eyed huntsman could've seen what were causing the disturbances, but Thaladus' enchanted eyesight allowed him to see the source: masts and sails of ships. The embroidered golden griffins on the sails and flags of the vessels spoke for themselves: these barges belonged to the Krytan royalty.

Just like the ships stirred the sluggishly swirling mist, a sudden fury disturbed the mursaat's thoughts. He knew who were traveling on those ships, and he hated them with every fiber of his being. Among his people, the hated mortals were called the "Chosen." These "special" humans were prophesied to bring about the destruction of Thaladus' race… and in the end they almost succeeded…

A three-legged fiend made of plants rampaged through the crystal streets, shattering them to thousands of shards. At the same moment, surges of energy and lightning impacted into the rotten plants that covered the creature's back. The titan roared, but in frustration: it just became more enraged. Its hollow eyes fixated on the sources – two floating beings in golden robes and armor. The beast of torment let out another cry, and charged at the two mursaat. The frequency of their attacks intensified, but the titan just kept coming at them, unhindered by the brutal magical force. The magicians tried to flee, but their legs were entwined by rotten twigs and vines that the titan had summoned during its charge to entrap its assailants. Several feet away from the couple, the titan pulled its heavy hands back to its spiky back and struck. The left hand hit one mursaat in the head, instantly breaking the neck. The right hand thumped into the other mursaat's shoulder, sending the body flying until it crashed onto the ground, dozens of feet away from the titan. Wings broken, the dying being tried to crawl away, but the titan was faster. It grabbed the injured mursaat, and then clenched its fist. The crunching sound of breaking bones echoed through the street, and blood gushed on the ground.

"Father! Mother!" the desperate cry came from a young mursaat standing at the end of the street.

The rotting titan turned its ugly head at that direction, finally releasing the broken body. The creature shrieked, but it sounded more like laughter. The bizarre smile that showed its hundred spiky teeth also suggested that the titan was laughing at its next challenger. It galloped at the new target but something was different now. Instead of absorbing the mursaat magic like it did prior, the surges knocked the beast back and golden flames erupted where they hit. The titan felt pain for the first time. The flames soon spread, and engulfed the creature. It screamed in agony, tried to extinguish them by weltering in the dust but nothing could put out mursaat flames that were empowered by rage, desperation, and anger. A few seconds later the titan's writhing stopped, and it shrieked one last time before dying. The young mursaat stood there tensely, waiting for the titan spawns to rise from the blackened corpse of their "mother" but nothing happened.

"The magic I used must have prevented the spawning as well," thought the mursaat and with that he floated towards the remains of his parents. Thaladus had to bury them…

"Thinking of the past, apprentice?" a demanding voice bellowed behind Thaladus, disrupting his meditation and making him return to the present.

"I have told you that you should not waste your time on pondering what you cannot undo. Our race needs you here and now. Fully focused on the goal, and not torn by memories of a life that you will never experience again."

"Why is it so bad that I delve in these memories, master? It reminds me of the vengeance we must mete out on the humans." Thaladus bowed his head in regret, since he's just questioned his master's order.

"In that case…" said the older mursaat with a slight frustration and resentment. "…it is useful. But don't let it make you unfocused."

Lazarus the Dire. One of the greatest mursaat leaders during the golden age of his race. He wore more regal plates and robes, representing the higher rank he had once fulfilled. He is also the reason why Thaladus finally had hopes of rebuilding their culture and race. For years, the young mursaat dwelt in a partially rebuilt crystal hut on the dry mountain that rose to the west of Aurora Glade. He didn't have a purpose; he just survived, existed for nothing. But three years ago, Lazarus found him…

It was raining. A rare occasion on the blasted mountain Thaladus lived on. He was reading a grimoire that survived the titan invasion. The last joys of his wretched life were reading and learning of the past of Tyria and his race. However, he always read only a few pages each day, fearing that he would run out of the books he found among the rubble of the library. Aside from the one in his hand, two more were left for him to read.

"What am I going to do if I finish all of them?" this was a thought that crossed his mind on a daily basis.
The monotonous drizzling of the rain had him relive the day in his mind when his parents died. He was lost in his thoughts for hours, when he suddenly opened his eyes. He heard something… and felt the presence of someone in the vicinity. Thaladus silently closed the book with his clawed hands, and grabbed his staff that was leant against the wall, then quickly used his powers to become invisible – the ability for which they were known as Unseen Ones among the superstitious humans.

"I hope you know that those having the gift of True Sight can see you." the disembodied voice came from somewhere the room.

"Those foolish humans would never come up here. They fear this place too much." said the young mursaat firmly. "Also, I've placed some magical traps in the unlikely event that one would actually be bold or dumb enough to climb up here."

"Ah yes, I have seen them. Not too sophisticated, but they do the trick."

"Enough of this! Show yourself!"

And with that, a floating, tall shape was slowly appearing in front of Thaladus's eyes. First like an insubstantial dream, then a ghost, and at last: an older mursaat.

"That… that… that is impossible!" Thaladus stammered in disbelief.

"Clearly, it is not. I am Lazarus the Dire. And… who might you be?"

"You're Lazarus the Dire? One of our leaders? Does that mean that more mursaat have survived?"

"I'm afraid it doesn't. You are probably the eighth I met in the last couple of years. But again: who are you, young one?"

"Thaladus."

"Is that all? No title?" The older mursaat gave a heavy sigh. "Then you are just a juvenile, are you not?"

"I might be just a juvenile, but I have defeated the titan that did this to my home." Thaladus was getting a bit mad at the unexpected guest.

"Really? That is an impressive feat." Lazarus crossed his arms and tilted his head to the right. "However, I will only see the proof tomorrow. My power has been damaged by those Chosen scum, and as you might guess, I am terribly exhausted. Could you show me a place where I could meditate and rest?"

Thaladus has just noticed that the great mursaat did not look well. His skin was paler than normal, and his stature was a bit stooping. His wings were moving weirdly, too. However, the word 'Chosen' struck a nail in his head. Although he had to tend the injured old mursaat first. "That question can wait until tomorrow."

"Of course," said Thaladus forgetting his previous anger. "I built a small meditation chamber into the side of the hut, and you can use my sarcophagus to sleep. I will sleep in my chair."

"Impulsive, prideful, but respectful. Good… good," murmured Lazarus to himself while floating towards the regenerating sarcophagus.

* * *

The burnt remains of the titan were still there where Thaladus had killed it. No matter how many years have passed, its three-legged shape stood there to this day. Dust had already covered most of the broken towers of the town, but this carcass was left untouched by the wind and sand, almost as if it was trying to avoid it as much as possible.
Lazarus thoroughly observed the battle scene. He looked a bit better but he still seemed frail and fragile. Thaladus tried not to look at his parents' murderer, but he failed. It made him remember the sound of breaking bones and the smell of blood.

"Hmm… what did you say you used to destroy the titan?" Lazarus asked as he tried to straighten up from crouch – it took him a while.

"Lightning surges imbued with spectral energy. I thought it was going to kill me too, so I just kept shooting them just to cause pain to it… But it was cast back by the impacts, and then golden fire consumed the damned creature." Thaladus clenched his fists while recalling the events, but some sort of satisfaction could be heard in his voice. "That was the one of the most beautiful sights I've seen in my short life. That writhing, screaming titan dying in front of me."

"I see." Lazarus was moving away from the scene, pondering and looking at the cloudy sky. "Still, it doesn't add up. I saw some of my brothers using the same technique against similar titans, but the surges failed to damage them. You are either a bloody talent, or simply lucky." Lazarus seemed to titter as he said that – the first occasion for days. "I hope it is the former."

"Of course it is." Thaladus stretched his arms towards the sky in arrogance as he said that. "My father always said I would become a counselor one day." The memory of his father made him sad and lowered his arms.

"What a ham," thought Lazarus to himself. "At least he is starting to grow up. And I think I have found a fitting title for him… but what are those?"
Lazarus saw two floating, pyramid-shaped headstones at the end of street. He approached them, and started studying them. Thaladus hushed away the memories, and looked around. He saw the old mursaat in front of his parents' graves.

"It must have been hard," began Lazarus. "But you cannot do anything now to change this, Thaladus. Instead of hiding here, you and I should start plotting our revenge on those who are responsible for this." he pointed at the two headstones. "The titans would have never come through Komalie if the humans had not opened that hell-hole."

"Last night, you mentioned the Chosen. Are they truly the ones who nearly spelled the end of us?"

"Indeed." said Lazarus, bowing his head and shaking. Thaladus didn't know that it was because of the anger or the injury. "They opened the Door, let out the titans, who then invaded our cities and killed everyone they could find. Only a handful of us survived. And now, even the other seven survivors I spoke of earlier are plotting to dominate Kryta instead of rebuilding our race and plotting a greater vengeance. I hope they will be successful, though."

"And what do you suggest?" excitement and anger were sparkling in Thaladus' soul as he eagerly awaited Lazarus' response.

"First, I will train you while I regenerate. Then, we will begin looking for more survivors, search for more mursaat lore and knowledge, and rebuild this town… And amidst doing that, we will start the preparations for our revenge against humanity. They will pay, even if we have to wait ten generations for it to happen." The shaking intensified, and bolts of lightning were shooting from Lazarus' clenched fists.

"We should go back to the hut where you could regenerate, master." Thaladus was surprised that he had accepted Lazarus as his master so fast, but he was more worried for the well-being of possibly one of the last of his species than to reconsider what he had said.

"Yes… yes," Lazarus said weakly, but the shaking became slower, and soon stopped and the lightning died down. "I need to rest, then find a way in your grimoires to cure this curse."
The two mursaat slowly started floating back to the crystal hut.

* * *

Lazarus' recovery did not go as well as planned. While the seizures stopped from occurring due to natural and sarcophagus regenerations as well as rituals and techniques described in the grimoires, an aspect of Lazarus' power was still rebelling against the mursaat… if Lazarus used that aspect, he would become exhausted fast and a convulsion would happen despite his recovery. The mursaat counselor became grumpy in the next three years as he saw his apprentice becoming more and more powerful while he still remained weak. Thaladus thought that the demeaning title 'the Arrogant,' was bestowed upon him by his master just to annoy him; however, Lazarus claimed that it was not the case. He said that the title would make his enemies complacent, thinking that the young mursaat is just a braggart without true power. In the end, said enemies would fall just as easily as the titan who had underestimated Thaladus all those years ago. Thaladus became content with the title after some time; what is more, he started liking it. Arrogance was in his nature after all…

Master and apprentice stood at the edge of dry plateau that overlooked the enormous Maguuma Jungle. They were scouring the beautiful vista for the ships that had passed earlier. The barges had already docked at Tangle Root, and now the crew was unloading their cargo.

"What will you have me do to them, my master?" asked Thaladus moments of silence after their quarrel over past and memories.

"Do not kill them." Lazarus crossed his arms and looked into the distance, almost as if he was trying to find the ocean to the south with his eyes. "These fools were former White Mantle knights. They turned on their comrades in the recent war, and played a great role in the demise of our seven brothers who commanded the Mantle in Kryta."

"With respect, master, but why? They killed our brethren, and now we are letting that crime go unanswered?" Thaladus looked upset, and he was looking at Lazarus now. The other mursaat was still watching something on the horizon.

"They came here to celebrate their victory and honor their role model, Saul D'Alessio. I want you to cause terror only by showing up and making threats. Deep down in their hearts, they still fear the mursaat. I want you to reawaken that fear. It may rot their hearts." Lazarus finally turned his gaze to his apprentice. "But more importantly, we need to rally the humans who are still loyal to us. Who will be the tool that unwittingly seals the fate of their own race, when the time is right."

Thaladus now looked puzzled.

"The White Mantle, master?"

"Precisely." Lazarus said smugly. He was amused. Not at Thaladus this time, but at his own plan.

"Without survivors, no one could spread the word that the Unseen Ones still live. The zealots are also outcasts, and some of them have been in the jungle for some time now. However, we need more than a few battalions for our cause." The older mursaat put his left hand on Thaladus' shoulder. "Fear attracts the fearful. You will be the fear, and you will attract those who fear us too much. By reigniting their old nightmares, they will see that they cannot escape the Unseen Ones, and in the end, they will flock to our guiding presence." Lazarus was getting into his speech, and Thaladus was drawn to his every word. The young mursaat became really enthusiastic. "Of course, the converted will draw others to them and more importantly, to us. They will reproduce in the process, and in several generations we will have an army of foolishly loyal devotees who are willing to sacrifice themselves just to make their gods satisfied." At that point Lazarus started into a deep, menacing laugther. Thaladus remained silent for a moment, but soon he began laughing too.

"An eye for an eye..." Thaladus said after both of them stopped laughing. "They will get what they did to us."

"That is the plan, Thaladus." Lazarus was smiling – the wrinkles deepened near his mouth that was covered by his regal mask. "Just play with them… like the cat plays with the mice. But I say this again: do not kill any of them."

"I will restrain myself, master."

"Good. But go now. You need to get to Maguuma Stade before the finale of their petty celebration. After they've been frightened enough, disappear, and return to me."

"It shall be done." Thaladus let himself down to the ground to kneel before Lazarus. A moment later he rose again, turned away, and started his journey through the jungle.

Thaladus the Arrogant knew that on that day he was going to start rebuilding the future of his species. He wanted to slaughter the Chosen vermin; however, he saw the wisdom in Lazarus' plan. They were the key to the destruction of humanity and to the ascension of the mursaat. That day, he was going to launch a chain reaction whose effects would only be felt hundreds of years afterwards. But he and his master had all the time in the world. They could easily wait that long in order to maximize the power with which they will deliver their justice on his parents' -- on his brethren's -- murderers.

He could hear the happy shouts and see the lights of fireworks. He was very close to the Stade now.

"Let the games begin…" Thaladus knew this wouldn't be his finest hour, but the time had finally arrived to set their hundred-year-long revenge in motion.

* * *

Thaladus looked weary, but he also seemed satisfied as he approached his master. It was twilight already, but Lazarus was still standing at the edge of the plateau, watching the sun go down to the west.

"How did it go, apprentice?" asked Lazarus excitedly, turning around to greet the young mursaat.

"Better than I had first expected." said Thaladus as he knelt. "Many fainted – mainly their females – others cowered in fear, while the

minority became enraged and attacked me. But no, there were no casualties… unfortunately. I merely deflected their curses and magics, which became rather boring after some time." Thaladus raised his head to look into the eye of his master. "I don't know how these Chosen swine could've defeated scores of the best protectors of Komalie."

"The Chosen they faced were enchanted by the powers of our sworn enemies, the seers." Lazarus said with scorn, but Thaladus was not sure whether it was meant for him, the seers, or both. "Moreover, an undead lich from Orr boosted their little powers, which then became enough to overpower the defenders. They ambushed small patrols and groups, trying to chip away Komalie's defenses slowly – and they succeeded. Do not disrespect the fallen who did everything in their power to stop those vile humans."

"I… I am sorry, master, I did not mean to…" Thaladus bowed his head in shame and started to apologize but he was cut off by Lazarus.

"I can understand it all too well, Thaladus. You are still inexperienced, but you passed your first greater challenge. And I appreciate the apology you were trying to make. But be mindful: do not underestimate the humans. We had made that mistake too many times, and look where it got us." Lazarus looked away anger at the last few words. "Now rise, my apprentice. You have done well. The first steps were taken in this long-long game."

"What do you think master?" asked Lazarus anxiously "When shall we make our strike at humanity? When will the plan reach its final stage? I will remain patient, but the blood of my parents, of our brothers demand vengeance."

"When it's ready, Thaladus, when it's ready," Lazarus said with an enigmatic smile. "I do not know, but while we become stronger, they will get weaker, softer. They will forget the techniques they used to defeat us. They will forget the true powers of the mursaat. Our wrath will be devastating. It will annihilate these vermins once and for all."

Lazarus the Dire and Thaladus the Arrogant watched silently as the last rays of the sun sparkled on the misty Ullen River. Both of them thought that the downfall of humanity was finally at hand, and the re-ascension of the mursaat in reach. They just had to wait…

© 2003-2011 ArenaNet, Inc. All rights reserved. NCsoft, the interlocking NC logo, ArenaNet, Arena.net, Guild Wars, Guild Wars 2, and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. All other objects are the property of their respective owners.



Featured artist: Action Jack

by Arghore



Click to go to Actionjack's "Can I Play GW2" comic series on GuildWars2Guru.



GuildMag: Can you tell us a little bit about your IRL self?
ActionJack: Well, I am a man of few words… So, lets start when I was five. It was a sunny June's day, and the Carnival was in town. It was also the day when I first tasted cotton candy, and was touched by a clown … Jokes aside. IRL, I am 30 years of age, live in sunny California, I am single, and enjoy short walks on virtual beaches. *hint hint*.

GuildMag: When did you join Guild Wars?
ActionJack: E3 for Everyone. So the week of May 10, 2004.

GuildMag: Do you have a favourite profession?
ActionJack: It's really hard to say. But I would say Strip Dancers. It's a hard job, but someone's gotta do it.

GuildMag: Did you do art before you started making Guild Wars related art?
ActionJack: I am a casual amateur artist. So besides doodling stuff in class, and some paintings in art classes, I wouldn't really say 'yes', unless it depends on how you define "art".

GuildMag: When did you start making Guild Wars related Art? (was there a special occasion that sparked it?)
ActionJack: When I start getting involved on the forums. It was a good output and release for creativity. And positive comments are always appreciated and encouraging.

GuildMag: What is your favourite art form? Do you have a favourite medium for your art?
ActionJack: I enjoy all sorts of art forms and art styles. But I do 'heart' chibi style a lot too. My favorite medium would be digital, as it's more accessible. That, or just the plain power of words (granted I am not a good writer, nor like to read).

GuildMag: I noticed you hardly work in colour, for example most of your armours can be called line art. Is that a deliberate choice?
ActionJack: Are you mocking me for my lack of skill in colour mediums? How dare you!
*Walk off the Interview.
*Walk back to get my paycheck, before realizing there is no paycheck.

Anyhow, although I would like to blame it on my colour blindness, I really can't (granted I do have a hard time telling the difference between FF0000 and F40000). Its a combination of a lack of colour sense, lack of colouring skill, lack of time, and overall abundance of laziness. Take your pick.

GuildMag: Have you ever participated in a Guild Wars art contest and did you ever win a prize with your Guild Wars art? (be it official or workshop?)
ActionJack: http://www.guildwars.com/events/contests/designaweapon07/
Can you find me in there? (look down… way down)

GuildMag: We sort of know we will be seeing you (and your art) in Guild Wars 2. Do you have any idea on what sort of character you will play?
ActionJack: Not sure yet, but maybe a female Assassin or Gunner. (cause I like the adventurer's outfit most).

GuildMag: Your latest outlet is the web comic 'Can I play Guild Wars2', what sparked this comic?
ActionJack: Various factors. One was Overlord's Dynmatic Event comics. Another was a want to try a new style of comic (something different from my last shorts). I was also heavily influenced by Matt Boyce's "Life is Humilation" comic at the time. And lastly, the daily 2-hour commute.

GuildMag: I know from experience that it can be hard to try and cover actuality within an outlet, since you have to rely on this actuality to provide you with inspiration. How do you deal with this and do you have enough inspiration for more of those adorable and funny (in my view) comics?
ActionJack: Many sources of inspiration are drawn from the major feature of the game (or what Anet released so far), as well as the discussion topics on the forum.

But the spark of ideas vary. Sometimes you've got a good one that just pops into your head, while often, no matter how much you stroke it, nothings comes. But its all just part of the creative process. And besides, if I run dry, I can always fall back on some Cakessassin silliness.



None the less, it is a surprise to see how many I have done, since the original goal was just to go for 30, then it changed to 50. Now the aim is 100, and by the looks of it, it will only take time to reach that goal.

GuildMag: If any of our readers would like to check out any of your art, where should they go?
ActionJack: For now, I would just say the art forum at Guild Wars 2 guru. I havn't put much of my older stuff, as well as the older comics, onto a page like Deviant Art yet.

GuildMag: Anything else you would like to share with our readers/your fans?
ActionJack: I enjoy gifts. Feel free to send me some.

GuildMag: Thank you for your insights and answers, and I hope 'I can play GW2' soon..
ActionJack: Me2. and I see what you did there.

© 2003-2011 ArenaNet, Inc. All rights reserved. NCsoft, the interlocking NC logo, ArenaNet, Arena.net, Guild Wars, Guild Wars 2, and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. All other objects are the property of their respective owners.

AN ALTAHOLIC'S PROBLEM WITH TOO MANY OPTIONS



By Alex

I have a massive problem when it comes to making characters. Not that I find it hard, no I make too many and then I feel the constant need to actually play all 15 of them. With Guild Wars 1 the options on character creation were quite small and I hated most of the faces, so I really didn't have to worry about making 12 characters just to do it.

Guild Wars 2 though is going to send me to A/A (Altaholics Anonymous) meetings. There are well over a million options to pick from and so far I have yet to see a character's looks I hate. It likely means I need to pre-order and get the game at midnight so I might get one character to play as on day one. Then of course I am going to think I messed up my first character no matter what and instead of just keeping him, he will be deleted.

Then I will spend a good two hours, (okay fine likely more than two), just to make my second one. At first I thought a Sylvari Ranger was going to be the first one I wouldmake, but then I decided no, Warrior was it. Now I am thinking Charr just for their armor and run animation. The lack of Sylvari, Asura, and Norn game play is making me want them less, for the little things are what matter to me. I couldn't play a Necromancer in Guild Wars 1 because I couldn't stand their run.

You would think that I should play and not worry about each character I create or worry about playing all of them I make equally. My girlfriend thinks I am crazy because I already told her that she will have to make just as many so we can always play together....I give her a week before she makes one of every race just so she can play with me that way.

Being a massive Altaholic you would think I wouldn't have any real connection to my characters other than the need to always want what the player next to me is playing, but sadly that is only partially true. I do want that Elementalist that I saw on the video, so yeah that will be my first, at leasttill the next profession is revealed. No, my addiction is from the obsessive need to create my own Storyline for each character and give them their own identity. Guild Wars 2 must have heard, because now they've made it a major part of the game, which means I will have to make so many characters till I run out of story line options. ArenaNet is going to be rich if character slots are sold.

In Guild Wars 1 I had a female warrior, only because males looked fat to me, and I also had a male monk. Normally my guild would have to figure out which random new character was me so we could do any kind of PVP or PVE content together, or if they needed my one male monk for anything.

I never just like one role and again Arena Net must be filled with Altaholics because everyone profession can do everything. But now I am going to need a character for each role based off each profession. I will need my first character, Ranger, (yes I changed it again), to be a long/short bow specialist. Then I will need one that uses nothing but the Greatsword. That isn't even mentioning pets because by now you have figured out I will have a Ranger for every pet.

Did I forget to mention that the Dye system is going to be used by me almost daily. I just love having new colors of things so if you are lucky enough to actually catch me on my so called "main" then he/she will have new colored armor every time. I am happy they didn't do weapons or I would spend hours getting my armor and sword to look right.

So I guess in writing this I am saying, "I NEED HELP". That's right I have a problem and I need ArenaNet to limit me to a character a week so I don't make a new one everyday. I know everyone out there at the very least knows one Altaholic. So please don't get angry when we are always behind you in level because we had to get our brand new Warrior which we already have three of to level 10 instead of getting our "main" Warrior to level 80. It isn't our fault, really. it is a sickness. If you know us then please make sure you plan everything a few hours ahead on new characters, we need time to create our masterpiece Necromancer.

I know I need help, and I know my guild will get frustrated with always having to figure out if I am on or not. But thegood news is, if you need any profession I have at least one or three of them. If you need a particular race I have two of each. If you have read through all of this I have only one more thing to say;

Please don't tell my girlfriend I am going to get a few accounts so I never run out of room for new characters, she already said no.

© 2003-2011 ArenaNet, Inc. All rights reserved. NCsoft, the interlocking NC logo, ArenaNet, Arena.net, Guild Wars, Guild Wars 2, and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. All other objects are the property of their respective owners.

GUILDMAG
Party Times!

Credits:

Project-lead:
Dutch Sunshine

Editors:
Malchior Devenholm (Head)
Bargamer
Ravious
Pamelakd
LittleBoat
Elixabeth

Designers:
Jonny10 (Head)
Verene

Writers:
Draxynnic
Konig Des Todes
Verene
Thalador Doomspeaker
Arghore

Submitters:
Alex
Valiant

Submit your work:

We're a community driven project. So everyone is welcome to submit a lore article, a rant, fan fiction, observation or a comedy story. You are very free to write what you like but keep in mind that we want to offer *quality* Guild Wars related material.

Head over to our submit page if you're up for it.

Contact:

Follow us on Twitter
Fan us on Facebook
Watch our videos
Podcast episodes

Website:
http://www.guildmag.com

Forum:
http://forum.guildmag.com

Subscribe @ GuildMag.com

We have a newsletter system set up to let you know whenever a new issue has been published. Click the shiny button to go to the opt in form. A confirmation email will be sent to your mailbox: please read the instructions inside it to complete the subscription. If you didn't receive it after 5-minutes, check your spam box. You can opt out at any time you like.

Subscribe

And don't worry, it's totally free.

Disclaimer:

© 2003-2011 ArenaNet, Inc. All rights reserved. NCsoft, the interlocking NC logo, ArenaNet, Arena.net, Guild Wars, Guild Wars 2, and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. All other objects are the property of their respective owners.