GUILDMAG

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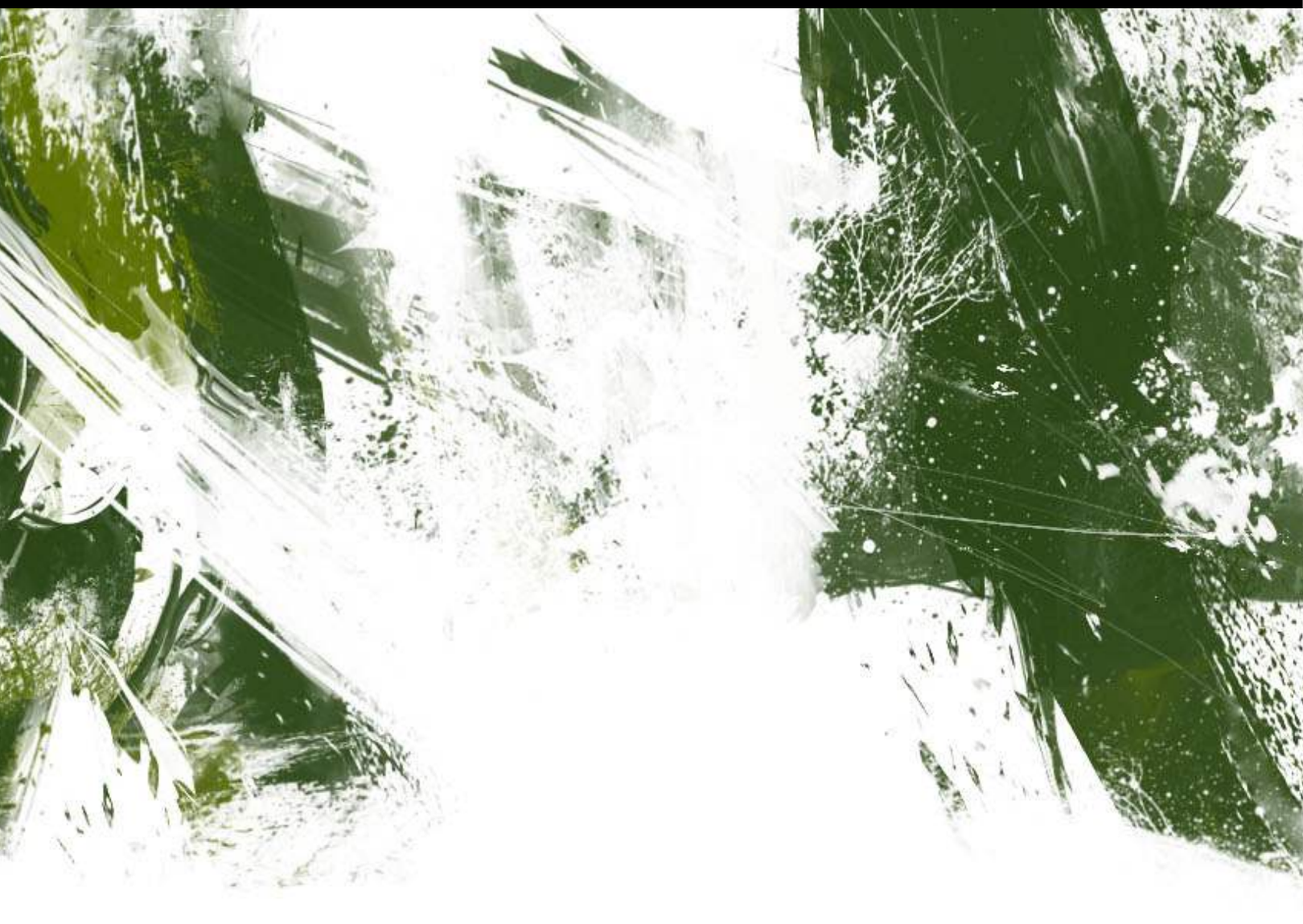
A New Dawn

The Kingdom of Orr

Lore Interview

The Vigil

Mordremoth the Jungle Dragon



In this issue...

- The Kingdom of Orr
- The Wild and Wonderful World of Fan Art
- The Vigil
- Interview with Jeff Grubb, Ree Soesbee and Scott McGough
- Mordremoth, the Jungle Dragon
- The Guild Times
- The Ascalonian Peace Process
- The Oldest of the Youngest
- The Mirage 2.0 - Perceived Value
- The Back Pages

Editor's letter

It's been a while since we've put out a new magazine, but that's not to say we weren't working on getting a new one out constantly. We've been trying different kinds of approaches for our magazine and we finally ended up back where we left off last year, just with a touch of more simplicity and style.

Much has changed since we released our last issue: Guild Wars 2 has come out, we created a new podcast (Dynamically Spoken), made new friends along the road, and strengthened our bonds with old. One of the things that came forward from our friendships was a 100+ counting Guild Wars 2 Game Guide, that sadly never saw the day of light in the online world, but I still want to take a moment and thank those involved: Tillion, Ravious, Kaden, Tasha, Distilled Will, Daniel, our own team of course, and all those that I might've missed that were involved.

In this issue, we delve deeper into the mysteries and tales of the Orr, Mordremoth, The Ascalonian Peace Process, and more. We also have a big interview with Ree Soesbee, Jeff Grubb, and Scott McGough and take a look at the creativeness of the Guild Wars 2 community.

Ollannach - Project Lead



The Kingdom of Orr

WRITTEN BY THALADOR DOOMSPEAKER ARTICLE TYPE: LORE

A Thorough Study of the First Human Nation on Tyria
by Magister Thalador Doomspeaker

Foreword

It was almost three years ago when, with the backing of a news agency centered in Lion's Arch, I published my speculative article on risen Orr. It only appeared in a limited number of copies and – fortunately – it did not go beyond the borders of the Black Citadel and the outlying ranches. While the general purpose of the study was to draw the attention of my kin to the growing threat of Orr and Zhaitan, looking back I am not surprised it was not well received – given the passive support of the Durmand Priory that I got by proxy only through said agency.

And now, three years later I return to the field that started off my scientific career. After becoming a gladium, going through several personal crises before first joining the Priory, and forming a new warband of charr suffering the same fate, I had the tremendous honor of being part of the Pact's war effort in reclaiming Orr for the living and destroying an Elder Dragon once and for all.

Similarly to my first study, I will go through Orr's past, present, and future, but in far greater detail and enlightened by the history and lore we recovered among the ruins. I was considering actually publishing all of my journals starting from my arrival at Fort Trinity to the Battle of Arah; however, I felt I would rather not burden the readers with the host of the tormenting memories and the image of the twisted horrors that plagued the dying nation… maybe another day.

Even then, I must speak of the heroes who gave their lives so that we could carry on the fight and return. Too many fell to the depravity of the Elder Undead Dragon, but without their courage, I could neither write down these lines, nor there would be anyone to read them. As such, although the debt is impossible to repay, I offer this study to the memory of every asura, charr, grawl, human, norn, ogre, quaggan, skritt, and sylvari who made the ultimate sacrifice. Orr would never have been freed without them.

Orr, the Jewel of Tyria

Originally I made the mistake of calling pre-Cataclysm Orr an arid peninsula, due to never having seen a map of Tyria made prior to 1071 AE. As I delved into historical records shortly after I joined the Priory's ranks, I could not have been more surprised. Yet it didn't prepare me for the experience of seeing Izz-al-Din Sarayi just off the eastern coast of Orr. The small island was basically unsullied by Zhaitan's corruption, and save for the sad sight of ruins it was a beauty to behold. It was the first time I was shocked to acknolwedge what was lost to a folly of an insane human and the filth of an Elder Dragon.

It is still up to debate whether Orr was always an island or it became a peninsula after the Crystal Sea to the east had turned into a desert in the wake of the event known as Exodus. However, regardless of its geographical classification,

Orr was a bountiful land with a tropical climate, probably similar to that of Kryta. Its lush, verdant jungles received rain from both the Bay of Sirens (now the Sea of Sorrows) and the Unending Ocean. Beautiful as it was, Orrian waters - especially the northern shores - were hazardous and a challenge to navigate through safely. Even before the Cataclysm, many ships were lost to the reefs and jagged cliffs that crushed hulls in storms. Orrians had to rely on the guiding light of grand, magical lighthouses, called torches, shepherding vessels to the southern harbor of Arah.



We have also learned a great deal of the nation's flora and fauna even during the war. Cypress forests and special jungle woods covered much of the land, the latter being used in crafting many magical weapons and objects – the source of the trees' uniqueness probably found in the highly magical waters of Orr. Within their shelter gorillas, raptors, eagles, and other tropical animals dwelled, while Orr's shores and coastlines provided habitat for drakes and bull sharks. Unfortunately, all of these creatures were twisted into mindless, rotting horrors by Zhaitan.

Orrian farmers grew various crops, including some unique to the land such as the marvelous omnomberries, ghost pepper, lotus, and delicious truffles, while the carnivorous side of the Orrians' diet was supplied mostly by poultry, cattle, and fish.

There is still one mystery I was not able to find an answer to yet: dragons. It is obvious that Zhaitan slept beneath the southern reaches of Arah for eons, and upon his rise he created his horrible draconic champions that spewed their master's plague across Tyria's coastlines. However, the first sighting of undead dragons 250 years ago is still unexplained. During the first undead invasion of Kryta following the Cataclysm, the rotting bone dragons were the most feared elements of the Lich Lord's army. Many believed that Orr also housed living dragons beforehand, but I found no record that would support this theory. Maybe these abominations were hibernating with Zhaitan the whole time, and the nation's submergence woke and freed a few, who in turn flocked to the strongest, wakeful source of undeath they could find: the Lich Lord.

The History of Orr, Volume 2

> *"She placed her pale foot on the stones of Arah, opened the gates, and brought humanity to the world."*

To know the history of Orr is to know the history of Tyria.

The time before the arrival of the human gods is shrouded in mystery. What is known of this prehistoric age is that the magic of Orr was very potent and imbued the land in huge amounts through its immense, artesian well.

It is now established that the foundations of Arah existed before the Six Gods: a quadrant of the city, which later became the Grand Basilica, was built by the serpent race called the Forgotten. It was here that the Forgotten achieved what had been previously thought impossible: they broke the Elder Dragon Kralkatorrik's hold over Glint, the legendary crystal dragon who was known as Glaust prior to her redemption. With Glint's help the five elder races survived, and the Elder Dragons fell into slumber once starved long enough by the sudden disappearance of their prey. How or why Zhaitan came to Orr in the first place is either unknown or up to debate; maybe it sensed the magic-rich Source of Orr or discovered that the Forgotten were hiding there. But before it could see to the consumption of Orr and the eradication of its enemies, it had fallen asleep.

Although no date is given at this time, the Six Gods stepped forth onto Tyria at the artesian well now known as the Source of Orr, bringing their mortal children, humanity, with them. While some historians say that it was the artesian well itself, the very font of Orr's magic, that drew the gods' attention to Tyria, I personally believe someone or something – like the Forgotten who were said to have been allied with the Pantheon for the most of recorded history – offered them our planet and more precisely Orr as the place of their new home. It is unknown why they had to flee their mysterious homeworld in the Mists, but all indications imply a calamity transpiring there.

While we are starting to learn more and more of these powerful entities, there is still at least one more major contradiction with what we have gathered on human arrival in Tyria. The first records speaking of human appearance in the world are dated to the year 786 Before Exodus, and far over to the southern continent of Cantha. From there, their spreading into Elona and the Tyrian continent only occurred around 205 BE. At the same time, Canthan legends make the earliest mention of gods somewhere around 510 BE, as according to them, the gods ordered the first Lord Emperor, Kaineng Tah, to unite the warring human tribes and form the Canthan Empire. The coronation and the formation of the empire happened in the aforementioned year.



Jumping ahead several centuries, Orr became a thriving kingdom that encompassed the whole of the island after having continuously expanded from Arah, where the deities still resided and collected ancient artifacts from all across Tyria. The Orrian people were blessed, and not only via the pristine, magical waters of the Source that they drank and bathed in, but thanks to their own gods. While all revered and loved their gods above all else, the Orrian nobility formed clergies and turned to a single deity to pray to for his or her blessing. Incredible cathedrals rose all over the kingdom, devoted to one of the Six. Peace was widespread, even when the gods bickered among themselves.

Dhuum, the former god of death, was deemed too harsh and unjust in his treatment of the dead, and so the other Five did not interfere when Grenth, the Prince of Ice and Sorrow, made his move against him. The demi-god lured Dhuum to a trap and overthrew him with the help of seven mortal heroes who became his avatars in the Underworld: the Reapers. After Grenth had ensured Dhuum's imprisonment, he was allowed by his godly mother, Dwayna, goddess of life and air, to join the others in Arah.

Orr continued to grow in the meantime, its populace steadily increasing. The current king of Orr, the noble Doric, humble devotee of Dwayna, sent his people to the rest of the Tyria with his blessing. One of his sons, Mazdak, traveled to the coastal realm of Kryta with his pilgrimage and built the first settlements there. This long-dead king of Kryta was corrupted into Zhaitan's servitude sometime after the dragon's rise. Fortunately, a sylvari Valiant with the help of Caithe ended the sovereign's suffering not so long ago.

Meanwhile King Doric oversaw the conquest of Ascalon. Blessed by their gods themselves, he and his armies pushed out the charr with ease, and around 100 BE he had himself crowned the king of the newly created Republic of Ascalon. Following his coronation he established a personal union between the province and Orr. This was the height of human dominance not just in Tyria, but the whole of the world as well: King Doric's empire stretched over the whole continent, the Elonan Primeval Kings were building a prospering civilization from their island home of Istan, and even the Canthan Empire experienced an age without turmoil, even sending ambassadors to the northern neighbors. However, all golden eras must come to an end…

We charr often like to say that humanity's decline is connected to the exodus of their gods, and that without powerful beings to back them, they are worthless. While it certainly holds some merit – imagine a charr mother pampering her cub for too long and taking it to a fahrar of bloodthirsty whelps – the immediate reason for their weakening is tied to the many follies the Six committed. 1,327 years ago Abaddon, god of secrets and water, gifted not just humanity with a new form of magic, but other races as well, including the charr. This kind of magic had not been seen on the world for millennia, and the sudden introduction of such a staggering power sparked pride and envy in the hearts of most mortal beings. Bloody wars raged across the world, resulting in unparalleled destruction. The humans not only had to withstand the wrath of the races they stamped over in their violent expansion, but they had to struggle against their power-hungry brethren who wanted to claim the human kingdoms for themselves.

When the upheaval began, Doric was either in Ascalon or his summer residence in Lion's Arch. It is unclear what was transpiring in Orr at the time, but the king had to fight his own countrymen at the Siege of Jumah on his way to Arah. The noble ruler reached the city of the gods, and convinced the deities to take away the fearsome powers they unleashed in order to stop the senseless massacres. Doric gave his own blood and life to shatter and re-seal the ancient seer relic called the Bloodstone; the source of these new magical practices. The sacrifice of humanity's greatest and earnest king was not in vain, for soon the five shards of the Bloodstone were hidden in a place that no mortal could reach, and the wars finally died down. The human nations survived and came out mostly victorious, but the damage was done: unity was no more.

However, the gods could not get away with the undoing of Abaddon's plot; the wrath of the maddened god was upon them before they knew it. He rallied his most devoted servants; the seafaring tribe of humans called the Margonites, and stormed the Gates of Heaven in open rebellion. In their brief but apocalyptic battle the Five Gods defeated Abaddon and banished him to his own realm, but the raging traitor did not admit defeat but swore revenge against his kin and all they held dear. Their war was far from over, and the turning of a sea into desert was pale in comparison to what the fallen god of secrets would do to an innocent world in his insane quest for vengeance.

The human gods decided to leave Tyria in the wake of the destruction they caused, albeit it may not have been the real reason for their departure. As they pulled out of this sphere once more, the Orrians took upon themselves the sacred charge of caretaking their home, hoping, or rather believing, that the Five would return one day. At the same time they erased all available knowledge and art of Abaddon, and plunged his Cathedral of Hidden Depths into the sea.



The kingdom of Orr, after its secession from the union in 2 After Exodus, spent the next eight hundred years in absolute prosperity. Out of the citizens of the three Tyrian human nations, the Orrians were still incredibly adept in

the arcane arts, yet it felt absolutely natural to them. An Ascalonian merchant visiting the enchanted markets of Wren described their everyday life the best:

"Fishmongers display live catch in watery orbs above their tents. Porters enhance their strength with spells, routinely carrying loads that would cripple a pack bull.
The finest silks ripple in the air, showing their quality: songs play themselves on golden lyres; parents project their voices across the square to the find the ear of a wayward child."

While Ascalon continued to defend itself against constant charr raids and Kryta struggled to rise and shake off the Elonan rule, Orr remained practically undisturbed… until the age of the Guild Wars.

As mentioned before, the five shards of the Bloodstone – four equal but opposing stones of magic, and one Keystone – were placed in the most hazardous place in all of Tyria: the volcano of Abaddon's Mouth in the Ring of Fire island chain. It remains unknown what transpired within the Mouth (it could've been either due to Abaddon's machination or a natural phenomenon), but the volcano spewed out the shards and scattered them across the continent. The four schools of magic – Destruction, Aggression, Denial, and Preservation – seeped into the land around them and reignited the desire for power in the heart of men. The guilds of Ascalon and Kryta combined were stronger than the armies of their respective kingdoms and what started out as localized violence between guilds soon escalated into a war between the two kingdoms. Orr, naturally, remained neutral in the face of the conflict through two bloody wars.

However, about two hundred years before the Searing, the Orrian armies were called upon for unknown reasons. Very little is known of this event other than the fact that the commander who led his battalions to the first Battle of Arah was Lord Victo. Not much is known about this man or the battle he fought on the holy streets, but in my original study I suspected that it could have been the first transgression of Ascalonian and Krytan guilds on Orrian soil. On second thought, it could also be tied to Lord Odran's unholy rituals that he made in attempt to enter the Rift to seek out the gods. Lord Victo died sometime in the mid ninth century, while Odran first entered the Rift in 851 AE. The proximity of the two events is intriguing, as well as the fact that Victo was buried in the Ascalonian Drascir, where the mage lord had also created a portal leading to the Mists.

In 1013 AE the third and last Guild War broke out, but this time Orr was dragged into it as well. There is no actual date given, but when Ascalon and Kryta brought their petty war to the holy City of the Gods, Orr rose to defend itself, escalating the conflict into an all-out war. The number of casualties can give us a good estimate on how powerful the Orrian military was; the death toll exceeded that of the previous two Guild Wars combined.

Orr not only had a nearly unrivaled army, but its armada was far superior compared to the others as well. King Zoran, father of King Reza, led the nation's navy to prominence, and the kingdom could call the largest fleet of barges and warships of other classes its own. As if it was not enough, Zoran's benevolence gained him a full corsair fleet as he protected the Elonan corsair, Lady Glaive, and her ships after they had lost to Istan in the Second Great Corsair War. In exchange, Glaive's pirates defended Orrian vessels instead of preying upon them.

With such navy, army, and magical superiority Orr should have brought the other two kingdoms to their knees, as well as annihilated the invading charr horde. So how did the Guild Wars drag on for 57 years without a decisive Orrian victory? And why did they lose so easily to the charr armies in 1071 AE? The answer lies not only in the savage destruction that the Flame shamans wrought upon the world, but the naïve kindness of the last king of Orr, Reza.

Reza tried to shield his people from the wars, and encouraged a greater focus on spiritualism, magic, and the arts. As a devout follower of the gods, he tried to stop their wayward children from destroying each other in their senseless squabbling, and as such, he tried to bring peace to the three human nations by using his own armies to stop the

fighting. It left Orr undefended, and once the charr seared Ascalon and reached the nation from the Crystal Desert, all hope was lost.

The charr leaders, however, had little interest in destroying everything in their path, and made an unbroken stride towards the City of the Gods. The little resistance they encountered was decimated, and in less than twelve hours they were already nearing the Gates of Arah. The reason for this strange behavior lies in the commands of the titans, demonic creatures that the Flame Legion once considered gods and used to enslave all the other charr. The titans were also servants of Abaddon, and the god of secrets wanted to wipe Arah from the face of the world. The Searing cauldrons were all set when the personal advisor of the king, Vizier Khilbron, uttered an ancient litany which defeated the charr forces and sunk Orr to the bottom of the sea.

These last moments prior to the Cataclysm are the strangest of all: why did Abaddon trick Vizier Khilbron via one of his demonic minions to use the Lost Scrolls, when the Searing of Arah was also at hand? Maybe he wanted the death of the whole nation for defying him and destroying his temple? How did the Vizier sneak back into his tower following the theft of the Scrolls from Arah's forbidden vaults, when there was an entire charr army between him and his quarters? And why were there two cauldrons set up in the immediate vicinity of the Vizier's tower? Maybe the charr got wind of the Vizier's plan, and wanted to destroy him before he could read the horrible curse? There are still many unanswered mysteries surrounding the Sinking of Orr, but it is undeniable that the near-total annihilation of such a grand civilization and its populace was a terrible loss… and one that only strengthened the Elder Undead Dragon when it rose 150 years later.

The Undeath of Orr

Zhaitan was not the first to raise the tortured remains of the Orrians, for Vizier Khilbron's betrayal knew no limit. It is still unclear how did he become a Lich Lord, but in 1072 AE he used his reanimated countrymen to invade Kryta in his pursuit of the Scepter of Orr. Now a sworn ally of Abaddon, his plan was to release the main force of the titans on Tyria through the Door of Komalie and bring the dark god's return ever closer. Fortunately for the world, Khilbron's body was slain atop the bloodstone shard in Abaddon's Mouth and his plan was thwarted. The Vizier was a true survivor, however, as his spirit still persevered at Abaddon's side in his Realm of Torment, but three years later he was destroyed for good.

The broken isles of the sunken nation stood undisturbed for the next one and a half century, with the only denizens being corsairs and the leftover wandering dead. When the coral-encased ruins rose violently on a sunny day, it all changed, however…

It is unfathomable how – even a dragon of such immense power – made an entire landmass rise in nearly the same way as it existed before its sinking. I would be inclined to believe that the curse written on the Lost Scrolls was connected to the dragon itself, and it simply undid it during its awakening, although this theory will require much more research.

The centuries-old corpses touched by Zhaitan's essence rose from their watery tombs along with their drowned home, and before the dragon's conquest began, all the undead flocked to the dragon in Arah, where it had made its lair. The corruption and consumption of Orr began, and Zhaitan first feasted on the many magical artifacts left behind by the gods, while his champions traversed the barren wastes to create more risen out of the massacred inhabitants.

Azabe Quabar, the royal tombs, was the next to fall prey to the dragon's filth, and the noble queens and kings of Orr became nightmarish horrors carrying Zhaitan's sight all across its domain. Among them was Reza, the most powerful

who assumed the role of the Sovereign Eye of Zhaitan in corruption. Once one of the holiest of men, his transfigured body ventured into the Source of Orr, and poisoned the artesian waters that gave Orr its magic and life.

Zhaitan's victory over life in the tortured kingdom was almost decisive, and soon his rotten bone ships manned by risen pirates set sails from the ruined harbors of the land, intent on slaughtering the rest of Tyria and bringing it to the dragon's servitude. For a hundred years did Zhaitan's reign of terror and undeath go unchallenged, but even an Elder Dragon could not stand against the combined might of our races and the three Orders of Tyria.

The Resurrection of Orr

The Elder Dragon of Undeath roared its last in the skies above Arah, and now its broken corpse lies buried under the tower that was once the home of the human gods. Stripped of its sight and sustenance, its armies in disarray, and its corrupting hold over Orr broken for good with the cleansing of the artesian well, the dragon stood little chance against the MEGA-LIT (mist-cooled tripartate thautmatium energy weapon with a lead tracer array set for draconic energy) cannon of the Glory of Tyria.



I was fighting on the streets of Arah with a Pact battalion when I heard the ear-piercing roar. For a moment I thought Zhaitan would sweep down swallow and us in whole, but seeing that gigantic, rotten carcass of a dragon plummet back into the hole it crawled out of was a sight for sore eyes. Even though I'm charr, I admit I cried in joy. Now the land of the human gods can heal, slowly but steadily, while the last pockets of risen are released of their torment by indomitable Pact steel. I cannot wait to continue my research in a reborn and rejuvenating land. To see Orr as it was 255 years ago... As my last chapter of this study, allow me to help you show the wonders as they have been and as they will be once more, dear reader.

The Cathedrals of Orr Possibly the largest, most ornate temples dedicated to the human gods can be found within Orr. Each houses the very first statue made in the image of one of the gods, sculpted over 1,400 years ago by the legendary Malchor. Unfortunately, all six of them were corrupted by Zhaitan, and the risen priests and priestesses who cared so much about tending these shrines in life turned on their respective deities and defaced the beautiful stone images. Now that all temples have been reclaimed, their renovation can finally begin.

The Cathedral of Glorious Victory

Built to honor the war god Balthazar, his temple is situated in the foothills of the northeastern mountainous regions. According to legend, Balthazar was the second to step onto Tyria after Dwayna, bringing along his fierce hunting hounds, Temar and Tegon, as well as carrying his father's severed head. The god engulfed the land in a cleansing flame upon his arrival, which could imply that Zhaitan's corruption might have already taken root in Orr during the last rise of the dragons.

The trek to his altar is a serpentine path going along the outer rim of the mountain. At the top the pilgrim is greeted by a gigantic statue of the god of war, challenging countenance, face hidden behind his horned helm, greatsword in one hand, the other covered in flames, with Temar and Tegon growling viciously at his feet.

The Cathedral of Hidden Depths

This forsaken temple now lies in ruins on the bottom of the Strait of Malediction. Condemned to the sea after Abaddon's fall, the cathedral was basically untouched for more than thirteen centuries. Zhaitan's corruption had barely scathed it by the time the Pact launched the liberation of Orr, although a powerful, unknown artifact was still lost to the dragon's servants and most of the temple is caved in now.

Unlike the rest of the Cathedrals, Abaddon's altar was – true to its name – hidden inside the main structure, and the many defenses of the temple only allowed the worthy to walk its halls. Defeating the image of Abaddon's many devoted gave the pilgrim an illusory essence that, if placed in special orbs, opened passages leading deeper inside the temple. At the heart stood a mighty statue of the god, showing Abaddon as a noble man deep in thought, his face concealed by his signature mask of six eyes and tentacles, in his hand a mysterious scroll.

Unfortunately, I could not see the cathedral for myself, and only the graceful largos huntress, Sayeh al'Rajihd told me of its wonders. Even then, her description of Abaddon's visage made me ponder: how could the Secret-Keeper fall so deep from such heights? If we look upon these enigmatic Six as a warband, how could he betray his own brothers and sisters? How could he commit genocide against his own people so many times? I fear that Abaddon's tale has much more to it than a deadly vengeance born of a misunderstanding, and one day the details of his fall shall be revealed.

The Cathedral of Eternal Radiance

The twin goddess of beauty and illusion - as well as of water and duality - had her cathedral built on the northern shores of Orr at Mirror Bay, just above the huge inlet called the Reflection Cove. Since even the sea surrounding Orr was polluted with Zhaitan's taint, it is hard to tell whether the water surface was pristine enough to reflect the gigantic disc shape of the temple. All we know is that both the structure and the cove was a beauty to behold, and the latter served as a meeting place for star-crossed lovers.

The layout of the cathedral is that of a mirror, similarly to the Sebelkeh Basilica floating above the Mirror of Lyss in the southern lands of oppressed Vabbi – it is probable the Basilica, which is also dedicated to the goddess Lyssa, was inspired by the cathedral itself. The walkways are arranged in a chaotic, swirling way, surrounding irregular shaped sections that could have only been gardens in their glory. Four main avenues lead from Lyssa's altar: one to the entrance, two to the shrines of the sisters that make up Lyssa – the Song of Lyss and the Spark of Ilya – and the last to the symbol of their conjoined state, the Seal of Union.

The Cathedral of Zephyrs

Dwayna's temple, also found on the northern coast, is nestled among the high cliffs overlooking Whisper Bay. In front of it lies the Plaza of Lights, and a grand plane that served as a festive ground during celebrations of King Doric. From the Plaza, two long sets of stairs lead up to her altar, a concentric platform with Malchor's statue of his beloved goddess rising above the pilgrim.

According to legend, the mortal sculptor was blessed with such a memory that he could recreate the perfect replica of anything or anyone he only glimpsed at. As the divine glory of the human gods was not meant for human eyes, they looked for someone to create their stone images for their followers. Dwayna's choice fell on Malchor, and the man accepted without hesitation, falling in love with the goddess of life in an instant. One by one, the Six visited his workshop, he glanced at them, sculpted their marvelous statues while his sight continuously faltered. He left Dwayna for the last, but he could only finish her statue once completely blind. The goddess, weeping, let Malchor touch her face so that he might know the precision with which he carved her stone form, but even then, she had to return to Arah, leaving the desperate man who still believed he failed utterly at capturing her beauty. He continued to sculpt more statues of Dwayna, but the more he created, the more he delved deeper into insanity, depressed by his

imagined ineptitude. In the end, when he could not take it any longer, he threw himself into the sea from the tall cliff behind his love's temple.

I was there when my fellow colleague, Vermoth, and bold bunch of heroes and Pact soldiers stormed the altar to cut off Zhaitan's corruption. It was incredible and terrible at the same time to see that Malchor still lingered on Tyria as a ghost, eternally tormented by his "failure." His connection was so strong to that statue that he could take control of it and use its powers against us in his last attempt to protect it. With the statue destroyed for good, however, I wonder what will happen to him next? Will he ever pass on to Dwayna's realm?

The Cathedral of Verdance

Melandru, the goddess of nature and earth and the oldest of the Six was the third god to grace Tyria, and the one credited with turning Orr into a flowering expanse. Fittingly, her cathedral protectively sits on the caverns leading to the Source of Orr, at the southern tip of Winterknell Isle. The golden terraces and lush gardens that once surrounded her serene altar are long gone, however.

I would like to share my dearest experience that is actually tied to this place. On our way back to Caer Shadowfain after Zhaitan's demise, we stopped to rest at the temple - which was unfortunately destroyed by the Pact in order to flush out the risen forces entrenched there. It was here that I first witnessed life returning to Orr. Possibly the waters coming from the artesian well had their effect on reversing the corruption as well, but I also felt something else... something hopeful as I gazed up at Melandru' smiling face: and there, running down her stone hair, a liana that was black and decayed when we'd first reclaimed the cathedral was green and blossoming now. I do not know where these powerful beings are now, but I believe they are proud of all of us, and not just the humans, for what we accomplished.

Many of my charr brethren do not know this, believing that these so-called gods wanted to slaughter us and push us out of our lands, but Melandru, along with Dwayna, always strived for peace between humanity and the rest of the world. It is a shame neither their children, nor the world listened to them.

The Cathedral of Silence

Last but not least, the temple of the god born on Tyria. The brooding chambers of Grenth's cathedral are carved into the mountains of Graven Cay, on the westernmost reaches of Orr. His altar and the Buried Archives rest upon a vast complex of crypts, which made the temple the least affected structurally by the Sinking of Orr.

The Cathedral of Silence, also known as the Shrine of the Seven Reapers, is the oldest temple of Grenth ever built on Tyria. Grenth's first high priestess, Desmina, and his warrior-priest who carried his worship to Elona, Mausollus, walked its halls.

During my brief visit there, I felt the same feeling that my colleagues spoke of: Grenth and his statues were fighting Zhaitan's corruption, and while they still could not prevail over the dragon completely, the cathedral was much less corrupted than the previous four. Marshal Trahearne speculated that it might be connected to Grenth and the Elder Dragon having power over the same domain.

The Many Wonders of Orr

It is an impossible task to collect them all here, since most of them have not been properly excavated yet, and a significant portion of Orr is still up for exploration. Here I collected some excerpts from my journals of places I found most intriguing.

The Vizier's Tower, Shark Teeth Archipelago



We finally climbed this wretched tower, although it still claimed the life of two. The eroded ledges gave in under their weight.

Being here, on the very spot where the Cataclysm started, is horrifying. I thought it would be a mound of dust and debris, but this place looks fairly intact even now, and the magic of the Scrolls cannot be detected at all. (I wonder what happened to them after the Sinking.)

Not much is left of Vizier Khilbron's possessions. We found the writings of an earlier Priory Explorer, Mollen, who died here, a marred mural of the fallen god, Abaddon, a ruined vase that must have been beautiful in its prime, and... I am still shaken... a broken mursaat statue. It looks like someone cut it in half in a fit of rage, possibly the Vizier himself. But why? What sort of connection could there be between him and the Unseen Ones?

The Royal Forum, Strait of Sacrilege

We approached the site via submarine, having to blast a few risen sharks to smithereens on the way there. After securing the area, I and a few fellow Pact soldiers dived in. Unfortunately, there wasn't much left of this grand center of the kingdom. At least our exploration was peaceful, since the central and northern invasion forces had long since eliminated most of the risen threat. Only a lone statue of Melandru observed our underwater excavation.

Before the Cataclysm, this place was the very eastern shore of Orr. Ships left and moored at the majestic piers and molos, unloading their exotic cargo which was to be sold on the enormous marketplace or carried deeper inland on huge avenues. Across a now sunken bridge the dome of one of the kingdom's greatest conservatories resided. Inside I still felt the magical vibrations of an experiment long abandoned.

A damned current took me further west along the shore, where I found the banished structures of the Plaza of Lost Wisdom, and the entrance to Abaddon's cathedral itself. I'm glad I didn't stay long, though. Only survived with the skin of my teeth as a risen megalodon decided I was an appropriate course for dinner.

Kitah Manse, Waste Hollows

A horrible place. A Mouth of Zhaitan made its lair here, feasting on many valuable magical objects. Fortunately, now it's just an unmoving, decayed pulp, and Zhaitan is getting hungrier.

Not much can be told of it, only that the last lord of the estate was a cruel man called Kitah, and he considered himself a devout worshipper of Lyssa. It is even said that the goddess visited the Manse back before the Exodus.

The Wealdwood, Pyrite Peninsula

Impossible. That was my first thought upon seeing the enormous golden orb floating above gilded soil and trees. The magical energies radiated by the sphere are off the charts, yet it has not been consumed by Zhaitan... what's more, the orb turned corrupted tissue into metal instead! Not just any metal, but gold! Some secluded parts of the dead trees here are still rotten, but those touched by this thing were turned into gold; the complete inner structure as well.

On closer inspection, it seems the shining core is surrounded by a transparent “film” with swirling designs. I hope I live long enough to learn of its origins.

...

Damn these Inquest fools! They tampered with the orb at night, trying to enchant one of their soul-powered golems (so disgusting, so unethical) with its energies. The result? The golem became gilded as well, turned on its owners, ripped a few to shreds, then started rampaging in the area, killing anything that moved; including several dozens of risen. Strangely, it was shouting ‘Must. Protect. Orr.’ in its weird, mechanical voice most of the time. I would’ve liked to study it further, but Pact command decided to eliminate it - it got too close to Shelter Docks. A human Whispers sniper girl put a slug into its aetheric flux capacitor... Titan’s teeth, I have never seen such a huge mushroom cloud, not even when one of the newest prototype ordnance was thrown into the Great Imperial Smelter back at the Citadel.

This mystery is driving me crazy: a powerful artifact of unknown origins that cannot be corrupted, turns even corrupted material to gold, and alters a soul to kill everyone in the name of Orr’s protection.

Addendum: some colleagues found a similar orb, although smaller, at the wreck of the Golden Vanity in the Harrowed Sea. It looks like it was the ship’s last cargo – maybe they were trying to take it away when all seemed lost. However, this orb is not exhibiting any gilding property. Perhaps inactive?

Bayt Fallahin, Garden of Ilya

Imagine the look on my muzzle when my unit arrived here. The tortured remains of the noblemen and noblewomen of this village (a city, rather, being one of the kingdom's most populous towns) were working side by side with the common folk - tilling and seeing to other hard work most highborn would consider unsavory. After putting them all to rest, we learned from the few remaining log books and journals that the people of this place were exceptionally kind to one another. Every night, the inns and pubs were filled to the brim with both peasants and nobles enjoying themselves. I fear the loss of Fallahin and its people are irreparable.

The Village of Wren, Garden of Ilya

One of the largest settlements in Orr, it must have been beautiful before the Cataclysm. I imagined its markets just like that Ascalonian merchant had described them in his journal, and was left most saddened when I opened my eyes to the ruined visage. Though good thing I did, as a risen was about to jump on me from a tattered roof.

Wren existed from the time before the construction of Arah was finished, and the goddess Lyssa lived here, veiled and hidden, with mortals. Her scriptures even speak of an occasion when she came to Wren in the illusion of a sick, gnarled woman who tried to ask for help from the residents. They all turned her down, save for young woman named Sara. When Sara approached her with the honest intention of aiding her, Lyssa cast down the illusion of plague and revealed her beautiful form. The villagers all begged for her mercy, but she only blessed Sara with her gifts, for she alone saw the true beauty that comes from within. When Lyssa was forced to join the others in Arah, her tears fell like rain on the western road.

Dhuum’s Last Stand, Blighted Arch

The crypts built to the side of the Cathedral of Eternal Radiance gave me the creeps. And not only because the bodies of the holiest followers of Lyssa were used in the creation of the disgusting abominations, but due to that one little spot I accidentally stepped into. It made me tail-twistedly terrified.

Legend says it was the very place where Dhuum was defeated at Grenth's hand, and where the demi-god took away the god of death's power.

Doric's Shrine, Karst Plains

Traversing the shrine of the first king of Orr was a tough skull to crack. Risen worshippers of Dwayna rose at every turn, and we even ran into an Eye of Zhaitan (hopefully it wasn't Doric himself). None of them could break the Pact's unyielding will, however.

On the far side of the King's Passage we could rest a little, but our battles were far from over: the Plaza of Lights was a huge complex, and we still had to clear the upper levels.

Sculptor's End, Cathedral of Zephyrs

The brutal battle with Dwayna's statue, possessed by her beloved Malchor, was finally over. Vermoth and I ordered the troops to catch some rest when three human ladies approached us - a Slayer from the Order of Whispers, a Tactician from the Vigil, and an Explorer from the Priory. Fate brought them together, and now they were more than just allies: they were friends. The Explorer told the other two of her Orrian ancestry, and how maidens had used to wreath the very rock of Malchor's fateful leap every year before the Cataclysm. She wanted to honor that tradition after 255 years of hiatus. Although our troops were weary, we roused them up for one more walk.

That extra trek paid off for all of us: as the three of them each placed a flower - a winter sage, a red iris, and a dandelion blossom - on the etched stone, hope was rekindled in all of us. At that moment, these brave, young women were the symbols of Pact unity, and of Pact victory: as we free Orr from the evil of the dragon, we continue to honor the people that once lived here. We marched on, always towards Arah, but with morale higher than ever before.

I hope to see the the three maidens again, a year later at Sculptor's End, with a flower in a hand they picked from a regrown Orr.

Winterknell Labyrinth, Winterknell Isle

A maze of deathtraps and the utter mockery of what it stood for before Zhaitan's rise. According to my book on Orrian architecture, these mazes served to represent humanity's struggle through life. So did we fight our bloody way to the center, but instead of the 'magnificent gardens and magical masterpieces' waiting us at the center, we found a depraved risen groundskeeper who grew corrupted trees out of the corpses of his victims. The risen monstrosity was cut to pieces along with the trees, but not before it gave us plentiful of nightmare material for the night... or the coming thirty.



Gallow's Hang, Noose Road

Just like with so many former wonders and breathtaking sights of Orr, Gallow's Hang had been reduced to a sad rubble overgrown with decaying sea life and spoiled by Zhaitan's corruption. Once the cultural and arts center of Orr, now a mockery of everything it stood for.

Hosts of risen Orrians waited the play to begin, with the lead actor and actress being of the nobility itself. As we provided them salvation, I couldn't help but wonder: did these people die like this, waiting for the play to begin? Among the ruins we found several tarnished sets reminiscent of Orr's spired towers. I guess the last performance would've been a national piece... a sad tale, nonetheless.

The Village of Ewan, Craven Blight

I must say I was both surprised and disheartened at current state of this village. Priory records claim that Ewan's village was surrounded by lush farmlands from the Cathedral of Verdance to Compass Plaza, effectively making it Orr's breadbasket. Today they are all but rotten, dialpidated soil, with little (other than the rough edges of the plough lands) to remind the visitor of its former beauty.

My surprise was born of the fact that while this village was named after Ewan, I saw nothing that would imply the events written in Melandru's scriptures actually took place here. According to the legend, in 48 BE there were still pockets of humans in Tyria denouncing the Six as their gods and punishing the use of magic in their midst. One such tribe under the leadership of a man called Ewan wandered the land, laying waste to nature wherever they camped. The goddess Melandru grew tired of the destruction they'd wrought, and so she cursed Ewan and his tribe: they were turned into trees, charged to protect the land as stewards of nature.

I'm not sure what I was hoping for, but I was excited to see those trees, even corrupted. Their absence from the area leads me to believe this particular event of the scriptures happened elsewhere, and the people of Orr simply named this - once - fertile, flowering area in tribute to Melandru and her deeds.

Closure

I reached the end of my knowledge on Orr and now my claws hurt from writing with this pen – charr fingers were not made for this. Orr is being cleansed, slowly but steadily, and years from now it will be a land teeming with life once more.

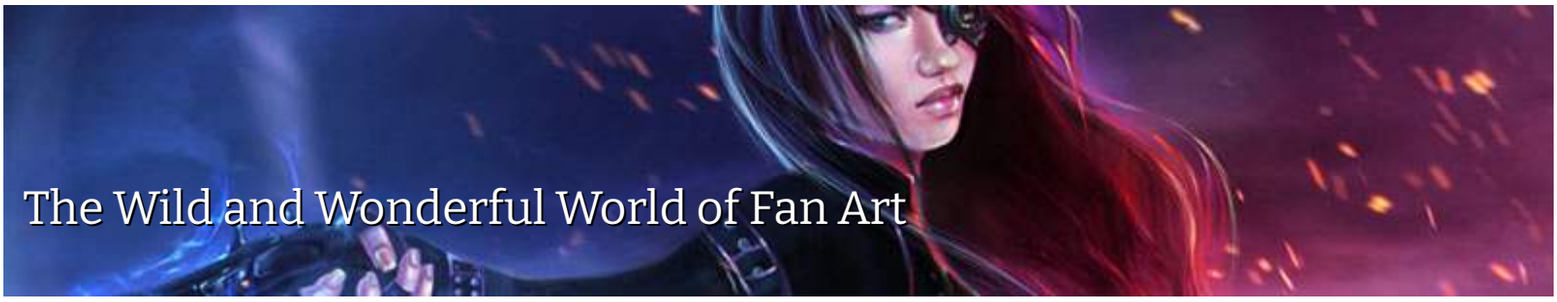
I cannot wait to return and continue my research into the land of gods. Who knows, maybe my studies will turn into a book once? I certainly hope that this writing provided answers, but piqued your interest enough to thirst for the

answers to the many questions raised by the mysteries of Orr. I am counting on you to join us in uncovering those secrets one day, and to see what the Pact achieved through so much pain and blood: a land returned to its former glory. A land seeing dawn once more.









The Wild and Wonderful World of Fan Art

WRITTEN BY LADYLALA

ARTICLE TYPE: ART

Fans of Guild Wars 2 have always expressed their love for the game in various ways – cosplay, fan fiction, paper crafts, stuffed toys, baked goods, and art. With everything from pencil sketches to digital airbrushing, the world of fan art is vast and inspiring. This month we'll take a look at a few artists who have displayed passion and skill in their work.

MagicnaAnavi has an affinity for digital art, and she does it well. Her "divas", as she calls them, are sassy and powerful. Her style is serious and lifelike, and the facial features are very detailed. She combined Photoshop and a tablet to create them, and the result is amazing. You can find more of her work at http://magicnaanavi.deviantart.com







Qvi is also a digital art aficionado, but her style is more cartoon like. The portraits of her asura characters are very well done, and she gave them interesting personalities. Her Summer Madness picture is fun and silly, and displays her talent in working with multiple characters. You can find her work at http://qvi.deviantart.com

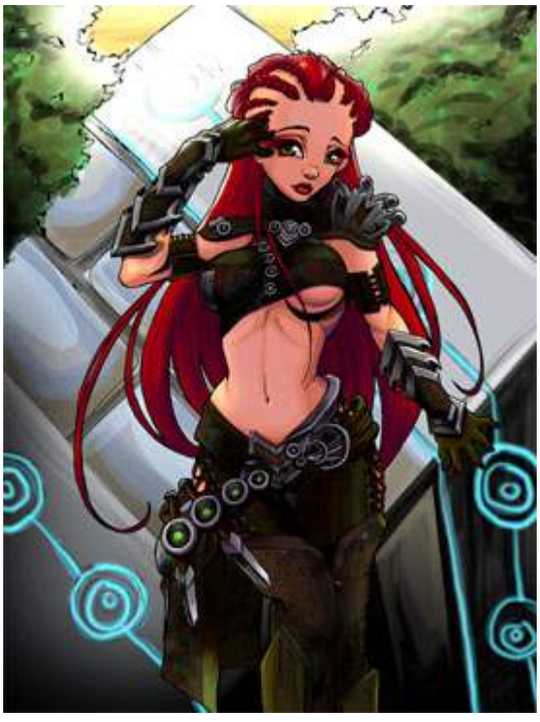








ZeroJigoku has varying style and techniques, from mechanical pencils to markers to Photoshop. Her styles range from serious to cartoonish to chibi, and she does each one with great skill. Her quaggan picture is adorable, and her thief pin up is an interesting take on a normally somber and dangerous profession. Her Guild Wars 2 art thread is http://www.guildwars2guru.com/topic/794 ... erojigoku/ and her artwork site is http://www.mint-tart.com





These artists are just a sample of what's out there. The fans of Guild Wars 2 are talented, creative, and dedicated to their work. So get browsing, and support the amazing fans and their art!





The Vigil

WRITTEN BY PAEROKA

ARTICLE TYPE: LORE

"The Vigil is a group made up of members from many races, nations, and guilds. They are dedicated to resisting the depredations of the Elder Dragons by force of arms". (Killeen, Ghosts of Ascalon)

The Vigil

The threat of the Elder Dragons is constantly looming over Tyria and forces the individual races to organize. Only as a combined force do the races of Tyria stand a chance against those Elder Dragons and their minions.



For centuries, two orders have existed in Tyria: The Durmand Priory, which was founded in 1105 AE, and the Order of Whispers, which was founded after Palawa Joko's fall several centuries ago. The third order, the Vigil, is the newest one and was founded only about six years ago by a charr called Almorra Soulkeeper. While the Durmand Priory prefers doing research and learning everything there is to know about the Dragons' strengths and weaknesses, the Order of Whispers instead relies on using spies to gain information that will give them an advantage in the fight as well as pulling strings in the background to manipulate power. The Vigil, on the other hand, is the most active of the three orders, ready to fight the Elder Dragons and their minions at any given moment.

All three orders try to combat the Elder Dragons in their own ways, but in order to succeed they have to unite their forces. Despite the Vigil being such a young order compared to the other two, it is already well established and treated as equal in the Pact, the union of the three orders.

"Leave whispers to the Order and books to the Priory - the Vigil hits first and asks never." (General Almorra Soulkeeper)

Some important members of the Vigil

Almorra Soulkeeper. This charr is the founder of the Vigil. She was on patrol with her warband through the region of eastern Ascalon when Kralkatorrik appeared in the sky. This Elder Dragon had just risen and flew over the region of Ascalon, crossing the path of Almorra and her warband. Everything and everybody it passed was left branded and crystallized - everybody but Almorra Soulkeeper. She had to kill members of her own warband that were turned into branded, crystallized minions of Kralkatorrik.



“To have any hope of defeating an Elder Dragon, the peoples of Tyria would have to band together to fight it.”
(Almorra Soulkeeper, Ghosts of Ascalon)

Without her warband, Almorra was nothing but a gladium, the lowest rank in charr society. After a period of mourning and despair, she realized that Tyria – and Almorra herself – need saving and that this can only be accomplished by uniting strong fighters together in one order to resist the Elder Dragons. Because she suffered from her warband being turned into minions or killed when Kralkatorrik flew over them, she feels compassion with everybody else who experienced the same, no matter their race. This sympathy made it possible for her to overlook racial differences. For her, it doesn’t matter if the person who suffered is a human, a charr or some other race. They all experienced the same thing and they all need to overcome their trauma and fight back.

Ember Doomforge and *Dougal Keane*. The human queen Jennah asked the Vigil to retrieve the Claw of the Khan-Ur on her behalf. Jennah wanted to use this artifact for starting a peace treaty between charr and humans. Ember and Dougal, both members of the Vigil, were among the group of adventurers and returned with the artifact, which was then given to Smodur the Unflinching, the imperator of the Iron Legion. This helped start the truce between those two races after being at war for centuries.

Warmaster Forgal Kernsson. Player characters new to the Vigil will be mentored by this veteran norn. He lost his family to the dragons and ultimately feared that he would not have anybody to tell his tale. Even though norn usually embrace being and fighting on their own, Forgal prefers being part of the Vigil, if only to fight back against the dragons.

"Some must fight, so that all may be free."

Why should one join the Vigil?

Members of the Vigil are not just brainless berserkers attacking every dragon minion without thought. They are those who work on the front lines. They have seen with their own eyes what the Elder Dragons do and how innocent civilians have to suffer by being turned into mindless minions or losing their family and friends. They do not want to stand around waiting for something to happen and prefer a more direct approach to fighting against the Elder Dragons trying to fight to eradicate the Elder Dragons, unlike the Order of Whispers, who does not believe that the dragons can be killed and think that they can only be put to sleep again.

The Vigil's actions are not limited to the battlefield. They offer a helping hand to the victims of attacks and also help rebuild what has been destroyed as much as they can.



"They're a hammer without a nail." (Ree Soesbee, Towertalk interview)

Following Almorra Soulkeeper's lead, the Vigil wants to act now. They believe that they have no time for long research or for convincing others to join them first. They want to fight now, before too many Tyrians get turned into the dragons' minions or get killed. But on their own, with no help from the other two orders, they would lack the knowledge how to do it. The Order of Whispers sends out their scouts and informants to get to know their enemies while the Durmand Priory focuses on finding new weapons. Only with their help can the Vigil succeed on the battlefield.





Interview with Jeff Grubb, Ree Soesbee and Scott McGough

WRITTEN BY THE GUILDMAG TEAM

ARTICLE TYPE: INTERVIEW

For the occasion of having a new magazine issue to release, we wanted to do an in-depth lore interview with the Guild Wars 2 lore team. In this interview we talk with Ree Soesbee, Jeff Grubb and Scott McGough about the Zephyrites, Kryta, Centaurs, Zhaitan and other lore topics. We also ask about the upcoming August update as well as a feature for Living Story cutscene that won't take up space in your inventory.

Magazine Audio Player - Please enable Flash and JavaScript to use this feature.



GuildMag (Thalador / Tom): Our first question would be that, starting with the recent living story update, we have the introduction of the Zephyr Sanctum and that reading between the lines it seems that the Sanctum might be the successor organization of the Brotherhood of the Dragon acting on Glint's behalf after the dwarves underwent the Rite. If we were to ask one of their historians about how the Sanctum was founded, what would they say?

ArenaNet (together) : Woooow.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Yeah, that's a good one.

Anet (Scott McGough) : That's a very good question. A lot of that is still in the works. We have introduced the Sanctum now. We're not really ready to reveal all of the details about how it was formed and where it came from, but yeah, what you mentioned there is in the game and it is part of the set-up. There is sort of a passing of the baton from the Brotherhood of the Dragon to the current Zephyrites.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : I think that's something the Durmand Priory would be researching too. Whether or not the Zephyrites wanted them to know or not the Durmand Prioriy would be poking around.

ArenaNet (Scott MCGough) : The Zephyrites have kept themselves very aloof from the other societies on Tyria, so they're relatively secretive. People don't know much about them so we're looking forward to revealing more about them in the upcoming months but right now we don't have a pad answer for you because we're trying to stretch that out and maintain some of the mystery.

GuildMag (Thalador): So one more question. So why do the Elonians and Canthans take up most of the crew of the Order of the Zephyrites?

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : I believe it has to do mostly with the way the organization was founded and where it was founded. They do have this connection to the Brotherhood of the Dragon. They were in – like I said they keep themselves separate, they keep themselves distinct from the Tyrian races. So naturally the only thing left after you deal with Tyria is Cantha and Elona. It's really just a question of geography. This is where the organization was founded so it drew on its members from those places before the Sanctum figuratively took off and floated away never to touch the ground again.



GuildMag (Draxynnic / Chris): Okay so, moving on to Kryta. At the end of the Harathi Hinterlands meta event chain, we defeat the Modniir Ulgoth, also known as the War King, which is presumably a significant blow to the centaurs. Meanwhile from Marjory's story it seems that the corruption in the Ministry has, if anything, grown worse. What is the current state of affairs in Kryta?

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : Well the background of that story was of course – spoiler alert – were that there were ministers in Kryta who were sort of fueling the centaurs, who were making sure they had the weapons and the goods to really cause some unrest because they wanted to say that Queen Jennah is doing a really, really bad job. I don't think that the minister's purpose there necessarily changed at all regardless of who is the leadership, or who is in charge of encouraging that. The ministry wants to see Kryta destabilized enough that the queen can be deposed.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Right. They want to see just enough unrest, just enough pressure from the bandits, from the centaurs, basically to create that doubt among the followers of the queen. Basically, to expand their own power base. So they're exploiting the situation as opposed to creating. The centaurs are there but basically they're seeing them as a tool that they could control or influence.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : And that dynamic between the Ministry's Guard and the royalty is still very much in effect. There's still a lot of intrigue. There's lots of push me pull me tug-o-war on who's actually making the decisions. The Ministry feels they should be making the decisions. Jennah and the Shining Blade feel the queen should be making the decisions. And so it's very much a chess game.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : And you've got the situation where just killing the king of the Modniir doesn't necessarily mean you've stopped the centaur. The centaurs have their own reasons for attacking. If they weren't unified by the Modniir, they'd still be causing problems. They just wouldn't be as organized, they wouldn't be as effective. So taking out Ulgoth doesn't eliminate the centaur threat, it just eliminates the organization of that threat, at that level.

GuildMag (Draxynnic): So does that mean that the Krytans have been pushing the centaurs back even though they're still there, or is it still pretty much what we've seen in the zones?

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : it's a back and forth-

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Pretty much what you're seeing in the zone. There's still the incursions coming down out of the mountains. There's still the Modniir controlling the other centaurs, uh, nations. What's lacking is that whole unifications under one warleader, and another could arise.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : And another problem is that the centaurs don't have anywhere to go. It's hard to truly drive them off, you would have to almost eradicate them or find them somewhere to go. Because right now they don't have anywhere else to go, they're backed into a corner.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Yeah they've hit the area around Lion's Arch and that's about as far south as they can go. The Modniir are just one more displaced people like the norn and the kodan who are basically driven south by Jormag.

GuildMag (Ollannach / Marc): I was wondering cause previously the centaurs were near the Maguuma, in the Wastes of the Maguuma Jungle.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Those were the other – those were not Modniir. Those were the other races.

GuildMag (Thalador) : Those were the Harathi?

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Harathi. I think Tamini were around…

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : The Tamini have always been nomadic. The Tamini don't really have a homeland-

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : They were the smallest of the groups.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : They used to have a lot of Kryta and some of the Maguuma, the Shiverpeaks they would just roam through. The Modniir in the Shiverpeaks just got moved as much as the norn and the humans.

GuildMag (Draxynnic) : Sounds like a lot of foreshadowing, possibly.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : One thing that's really cool about Tyria is that it's a big world and we keep a lot of plates spinning in the air, a lot of groundwork to provide a foundation so that as we move forward we can pick up a piece and say 'you know we haven't talked about the Ministry versus the queen, is there a story we can tell here?' And given that we're now on this two week cycle of updates, we've been doing this for eight weeks now, and we finally went live and said 'hey guys we're doing this.' We've now moved forward with our living story and that gives us potential for new stuff.

GuildMag (Thalador): As the City of the Gods, Arah has a deep historical significance to humanity. What has been the reaction to Kryta to the events of the personal story? Because – I won't speak much of the spoilers – but Orr is in a state that could lead to some recolonization.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : There's a lot in Orr that could affect the culture of Kryta – to the story of the gods and the interaction with gods to the actual culture of Orr and the things left in Orr that Kryta can take up. We're gonna have to see who kind of has primacy over these things. The Ministry's going to want to seize it, the Queen's going to want to use it. But I really think that the Pact and the various Orders are the people who have sort of the gateway of control about how those things are going to filter back.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : I actually disagree with Kryta being involved but they have restricted access-

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : -I meant they want it-

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : -they might want it, but the idea – they aren't in an expansionistic mode. That's the challenges about being human in Tyria right now. Is the fact they're basically "fall back, fall back" and basically they're still stabilizing, fighting amongst themselves to a great degree. I do agree that the Pact forces are the ones that are going to be more prominent. Just because with the revolution of the story we have a still very state of unrest. There's still a place for the Pact, there's still a place for military forces. I don't see people resettling that area. But I do see much,

that like we did in the explorable mode of the final dungeon, basically seeing the Durmand Priory for example coming in and trying to research that area. And also the fact that Orr was not part of – was considered a separate nation at the time of the first Guild Wars, from Kryta. And while there's that human heritage and that descent heritage, it's like Ascalon in that it's basically a different territory – the humans have fallen back from that area.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : There's a story in another part of the game about, I believe he was the first king of Kryta. The son of Orr, the prince of Orr, who left Orr to settle that part of the mainland.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : So there's a heritage thing, but I think they're separated enough that they're considered separate nation.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : And just to expand the situation, the Pact is the organization that has their boots on the ground in Orr. So they're going to have first crack at anything they find, and right now Kryta is not formerly part of the Pact but the three Orders are, so when the Pact finds stuff it'll be funneled through the Orders first before it goes anywhere else.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : And it's interesting that I just considered that the first Guild Wars came from the fact that we have nations that had large guilds that basically became super-national organizations dragging the nation-states in. And now we have unifying super-organizations in the Pact and the Orders that are basically trying to coordinate everything as well. And the question is: what's the reaction of those nations – not just Kryta but the charr of Ascalon or etc. to the fact that there are these larger groups that are basically pan-species operations that are moving forward.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : And we don't have any strong plans of this at the moment but it's sort of analogous to a country objecting to the UN coming in and saying 'we're the ones who did this so we're the ones who'll decide what happens to it.'

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : They're NGOs. They're non-government organizations.

GuildMag (Thalador): That makes sense. Although Queen Jennah has a rightful claim to the throne through the bloodline of King Doric. So what about that?

ArenaNet (Ree) : I think that when the prince who left Orr to establish Kryta, when he went to do that, by doing that he – I want to say he completely left the claim to the Orrian throne, and he certainly has a bloodline to it. But I think that the distance between the two thrones is going to be too disparate for her to just step up and say 'I own that.'

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : And I think Kryta has their hands full.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : Well that's certainly true. She could say it but couldn't necessarily back it.

ArenaNet (Jeff) : Basically, they could claim Orr if they wanted but it's not going to happen. They have just been emerging from fighting over Ebonhawke forever. And basically this is a long, long-distant claim operation that it'll just create havoc. Do they really want another venture like that?

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : And I think the distance is a key factor in that. I think it's far more immediate for the government of Kryta to sort things out with the charr – with the Black Citadel. With Ebonhawke, with the Claw of the Khan-Ur, there's peace treaties, there's negotiations in motion. I think this is the first and most important and most achievable step to peace they could take, that Orr is secondary on their doorstep.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : And even though you have asura gates as being an instantaneous means to go from Divinity's Reach to Ebonhawke very easily, they can basically set up something to get to Orr without going to Lion's Arch. It's

still that, there's the immediacy of problems right outside your gate versus of on the other side of the continent.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : And we've seen in the novel and the game that the peace process between the charr and the humans is making progress. I think their first priority is to finish that as best they can before getting into Orr.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : And there are also some implications in Guild Wars one when you get into the stuff with Vizier Khilbron and so forth, there are survivors of Orr. There are people who got away when the continent sunk. You'd need to look into those to see if any of those were move closely related to the throne because they might have a better claim. Not necessarily that they can pull it off-

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : A secret heir lost off-end.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : Yeah a secret heir, a lord of Orr, because like I said, the queen's descendency dates back to the first king of Kryta. But that is not necessarily as close to the throne as someone who's great-grandfather was king.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : And Salma was a revealed ruler as well. They had lost the entire Krytan house. And then they found her, and therefore that's a step as well.



GuildMag (Draxynnic): One thing I will comment on, coming back to the centaurs not leaving, it does strike me that if Orr was to be cleansed and the Pact would allow it, then Orr would be a good spot for humanity to retreat to if things got too tight in Kryta.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : They can certainly move some of their population but you're never gonna have a situation where you say 'Hello British people, there's a lot of room in America!'

-Laughter-

GuildMag (Draxynnic) : True enough.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : We'll give you Jersey.

GuildMag (Draxynnic): Okay, so we mentioned Marjory's story earlier on. There was an interesting exchange between Logan and Kasmeer at the end of the cutscene in the journal which finished with an interesting close-up on Kasmeer. There are some people who consider that to simply be surprise at seeing her in a hive of scum and villainy like that

bar. Others are wondering if it may be more significant. If we were to ask Logan about Kasmeer and her family, what might he tell us?

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : Kasmeer's from a prominent family that's fallen on hard times. So they're no longer a wealthy family, they don't have the kind of cash reserves that other noble families have; that's the main reason that Kasmeer has a job. She needs to work to support herself. I spoke with Angel McCoy who wrote that scene that you were talking about and that last moment where Logan says 'Lady Kasmeer!' with a sort of shock. And according to Angel that is the long and short of it, that Logan was shocked to see such a high born woman of such refined and gentile manners in this hive of scum and villainy. And that sort of points to the larger story that she's in that place because she works with Marjory and that's Marjory's instance. The uh – I forget the name of the bar, it's got a great name, Last Chance Salone, uh –

GuildMag (Thalador) : Dead End.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : Dead End that's it! Yes, I think that Logan, being as plugged in as he is into Kryta's society and Divinity's Reach, he knows who Lady Kasmeer is and knows her background. I don't think they're close personal friends, Lady Kasmeer is close personal friends with Lord Faren. But Logan's –

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : That's Lord Faren.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : Yeah, Faren's friends with everyone.

AreaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Yeah, come on.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : But, yeah, I think that was really more of a shock and surprise to find such a fine woman in such a low dive situation.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : By the way, that particular cutscene I really like, I thought that was – (interruption by Scott) – I hold that up as an example of as we move forward we get better at everything; (interruption by Scott) that whole noir feel of that: 'It was Thursday. Back in..'

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : And if I can detour from that, that kind of scene is a new storytelling tool we have. And that was the first time we were able to use it. I am really fond of them, I was really fond of the film noir effect that Angel stroll for and that the cinematic team delivered. But that kind of cinematic interaction, that's a kind of storytelling device we're going to see a lot more use in the future.

GuildMag (Thalador) : In Marjory's story we also learn of "unusual" disappearances happening in Divinity's Reach. We wonder how widespread these disappearances are, and whether the kidnapped people turn up one way or another, if they return at all.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : Well that's very much part of the mystery. This was the motivating event that prompted Marjory to leave the Ministry Guard, she didn't want to be part of this corrupted institution anymore. At some in the future we intend to circle back and that will be Marjory's origin story. How she got to be how she is. The story that Angel wrote, the prose piece, is a hint of that.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : So will it be resolved?

ArenaNet (Scott) : The plan is to.

GuildMag (Ollannach) : That's great.

GuildMag (Ollannach): So I have a question I'm seeing on the internet quite often. With the living story about Marjory, we get a journal. Are we going to get any sort of personal story book in the future of the game that collects all the cutscenes, just like the personal story one?

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : You mean some kind of mechanism to replay the cinematics and cutscenes?

GuildMag (Ollannach) : Yeah, well the current journal takes up an inventory space. So I've seen people asking if it would be possible to have a menu like the personal story menu.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : That's a technical hurdle we're trying to overcome at the moment and we are working hard on it. I know I have a meeting later today to discuss that very issue, but yes we are working towards a better story tracking system for the living world.

GuildMag (Draxynnic): Okay, one thing I was wondering about: Kasmeer's father, it's mentioned that he's one of the disappearances. Is there a story behind that?

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : There is but I can't tell it here. (laughter) I'm not trying to be extra cagy but you're hitting on a lot of the plot points that we're planning to explore in future releases.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : It's wonderful that you're asking these-

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : I love the interest. I feel terrible I cannot satisfy your interest. But no, you're on the right track. These are all things we want to explore and delve into deeper. I mean –

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : You're in the first quarter of the book here.

GuildMag (Draxynnic): Fair enough... okay, let's move onto some questions we had regarding Fractals. Okay so, in a previous interview with TowerTalk there was a tease of a mention of about just when the Cliffside Fractal takes place, but we still don't know much about the Underwater and Volcanic Fractals. In the former we see some sunken statues which look a bit Elonian but the surrounding ruins feel Ascalonian. Can you shed some light on when and where that takes place?

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : Uh, not very much I'm afraid. I feel like I'm letting you down here. But yeah, the existing fractals are all scattered far and wide throughout Tyria's history and pre-history. Some of these things are from the time of myth and legend and so we can't exactly verify exactly how they happened or how they connect to the modern world. That one, uh... yeah, I'm afraid that's just going to have to be my answer for now.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : One of the things with Fractals is because they're in the Mists, they are echoes. They are not true history, they are basically the resonant history.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : Exactly, yes.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : So therefore you're seeing a lot of combined feelings coming in sometimes. Maybe there is a place that had that Ascalonian Elonian crossover area. But just as easily, it may be the effect of the Mists.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : And, check me on this guys, the Mists as we define them – the Mists by definition: anything that can be there, or has been, can show up in the Mists. So we get some strange pairings sometimes. Sometimes, for examples, in the Urban fractal, it's a recreation of the battle for Ascalon, but it's not – it's a recreation, not the actual – there's no time travel involved, you're not taking part in the actual battle.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : If it was just the actual battle, if it was just a very precise rendition of history, you couldn't go fight there, you couldn't do things there. The Mists very much are flexible because they're like memories – you can go back in your own minds and sort of write someone into a memory where they weren't there and what would have happened 'if this person went to the movies with us.' And the fractals are very simpler, the Mists are very simpler.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : It also makes it easier for the players who are of other races. No one's saying 'hey what's an asura doing here' or 'what is this strange leafy creature.' It opens the entire pasts for all of our races. Which is a cool thing and we basically use that as a sounding board and a starting place like our PvP Raid on the Capricorn, that's a piece of history, there weren't any norn there.

GuildMag (Thalador): Similarly in the Volcanic Fractal, it presents us an interesting setting: an abandoned mine, human captives, lava-infused with mystic powers, with bats and a crazed shaman turning into something a bit destroyer-like. Could it be a hint that Primordus can actually corrupt living beings since so far we've only been told that he can twist fire and stone.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : We've shown that from the early Eye of the North, and when we designed the Elder Dragons we were looking at them having specialties where they could corrupt more than just one type of substance. Some of them could affect life, some of them could affect inanimate objects, some of them could affect the elements, vegetation, water, you know they all had their some specialty but they also have some overlap and I believe Primordus, 'cause we had the troll, the Destroyer Trolls who basically were very molten but also very humanoid as well. So I do believe that Primordus can affect the living.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : But probably not easily.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : But not with the same animating force you see from Zhaitan, reanimating the dead of Orr.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : I think that it's, perspective wise, it's more like the troll or the grawl has a layer of rock over them. They turn a little bit elemental in –

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb and Scott McGough) : Sort of like Jormag and the Sons of Svanir

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : The icier the Sons of Svanir, the more corrupted they are. I would say that Primordus can-

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : The rockier they are…

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : Yeah.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : There are rules for the Elder Dragons but they're not the same rules for every Elder Dragon.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : It's kind of like he's converting those living creatures into stone.

GuildMag (Draxynnic): Okay, so moving onto some questions regarding Zhaitan: Between some of the cinematics we see near the end of the personal story there's quite a transmutation between those cinematics and his final form that we see in the Arah story dungeon. Was this simply a design decision to better reflect the feeling of Zhaitan's necrotic powers and make him more of a Lovecraftian entity or is it the result of his weakening throughout Orr, such as being starved, taking their toll on his body?

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : It's a combination of things. A lot of times when you see him in those earlier cinematics, those things are coming from a perspective of a character and that person saw a certain thing or perceived him or carried the image of him in a certain way from how they had interacted or they had seen the dragon or the dragon's

activities. At the end it's… we wanted it to be a little more of a revelation too. You hadn't just seen this creature four or five times and now you get to fight it – it's a little different. It's not quite what you were expecting. Some of that is impacted by what the player characters do throughout their personal story and how they weaken him and how they impact him directly and some of it is just storytelling.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Part of it too is that we evolved – behind the screen, we evolved as we moved forward as well. We did the early first (image of) Zhaitan awakening beneath the ocean. We were going that direction – we always had an Elder God feel to it, but it really crystallised around Kekei's art piece, were we had a dragon that breathed dragon heads – that then breathed undead. Now, this is cool, this is different, this is what we really want to get to with the idea of making them, Elder Dragons, more alien, more outside the realm of your traditional, Glint-style dragon.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : I agree with everything that's been said, but I also want to stress the second half of that that yes, the campaign of the Pact that is conducted in Orr has gone a long way towards weakening Zhaitan. We the storyteller worked with the designers and the artists to sort of present those last levels as a campaign. You enter Orr, and then it's a very military progression. You kill of the spies when you kill the Eyes, you kill the food supplies when you kill the Mouths. All the things you do in Orr weaken Zhaitan.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : So he CAN be fought.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : And in the last few sections you actually hear him roar in anger and frustration after you complete something because you are making him weaker. It's very much what Ree said but it's also… I like that aspect of that sort of gameplay supporting the story and vice versa. This is a military campaign we're conducting and it's gone very well.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : It let us have a certain facet of the story where we had presented this Elder Dragon as completely undefeatable. Well, then, you can't just march up to him and say "I've got my 80th level, thump, you're dead!"

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : I hammer it with my sword.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : You need to have a legitimate reason why he can be defeated NOW, and that's why the campaign in Orr follows that direction.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : And that's why we have that big air battle at the end. So that's just, basically, we have to get everything rolling.

GuildMag (Draxynnic) : I remember that discussion about the "dragon made of dragons" back before release, actually.

GuildMag (Thalador): Thank you. It concerns a lot of people that we never see Zhaitan's corpse crushed under the debris of his last stand – that gigantic tower – and there's also the incredible benefits that the studying of an Elder Dragon's carcass could yield. And yet the Pact made no such expeditions yet. What might be the reasons behind that?

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : The idea is that we have many stories that we can tell, that we are going forward with, and while I don't know if we've got anything in the docket right now – I'm not going to speak for anybody as far as process – the idea is that we do have a big dragon carcass somewhere out there.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : Or potentially – when you go out there into the repeatable of Arah, when you go into that after thing where you're… you're dealing with his spirit.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : You're dealing with the… well, no, you're dealing with the fragments of the past as well. Basically that story of the elder races – I think that has a more prominent feel than the immediate "quick, let's go loot the body".



ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : Yeah, it's not a quick let's go loot the body but while you're in there, some of the justification is that while you're in there you're doing research, you're looking into that, you're dealing with some of the after effects of his spirit.

GuildMag (Draxynnic): Back in Guild Wars 1, we had that mention of the last appearance of the Giganticus Lupicus ten thousand years ago. And then the first people to get to the explorable dungeons in Arah were probably rather surprised to find the Giganticus Lupicus corpse sitting there waiting for them. Is there a story behind how one got to be there?

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : How one got to be there… I think brought from its original resting place by Zhaitans minions for that big arena, central cathedral area as a watchdog, as a guardian. The whole… In many ways, the whole tale of the Elder Dragons begins with that one line – that was the first line of the timeline. During the Cantha project I said 'what does this mean' – well, we have some big skulls out in the wilderness and we didn't know what they were so that's what they are. But when we started telling the story of the Elder Dragons it just fit in so neatly that well, if they've come before, when did they come? Hey, we have the Giganticus Lupicus being wiped out in this era! Oh, okay, THAT must have been the last time the Elder Dragons showed up, and the story evolved from there. It's one thing we're very good at moving forwards – we leave a lot of hooks so future designers, future storytellers, ourselves in the future have a lot of potential that we can build off.

GuildMag (Thalador): I was personally wondering that in the Crystal Desert back in Guild Wars 1 we saw lots of skeletons lying around and we considered them to be the skeletons of the Giganticus Lupicus.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Some of them are, yes.

GuildMag (Thalador) : When we see him – the recent specimen in the centre of Arah, he's sort of a jackal-like, Anubis sort of thing, and yet the skeletons back in Guild Wars 1 were sort of draconic or with large tusks or larger…

GuildMag (Draxynnic) : Sea monsters.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : I think the look of the Giganticus Lupicus evolved over time – in the fact that we started off with "okay, here's the skull, build us a creature that looks like this." Giganticus Lupicus also – Lupicus has a wolf origin to it, so we were thinking in terms of wolves at the time, and from there we basically got to that jackal-headed, Anubis type of figure. So they basically… I could see the older, larger versions of the Giganticus giganticus would be the huge skulls, because of course, with limitations within the game we could only put the figure so large and still have you be able to fight it in any reasonable sense.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : And I think that much like the centaurs, you're gonna have this ancient creature that has some distinction according to territory, according to how it has evolved. So you can have a couple of different skulls that have similarities but aren't.

GuildMag (Ollannach): So we've also gone to Twitter and asked our followers to send us some questions. While we read through a few of them and chosen the ones that were most important. So... in Edge of Destiny it's observed that men who go to fight Jormag's minions and fail, return as icebroods but women don't return at all. Is there anything more about what happens to women who fall under Jormag's power?

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb): I don't think they fall as much as they are killed.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : Yeah, they die.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : The Sons of Svanir just... the way that they worship Jormag has evolved is very chauvinist, very male chauvinist, in the fact that it is a very boys-only club, they don't really get to reanimate. The women are just slain.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : I think it's less that Jormag won't corrupt a woman and more that as they are being corrupted, the Sons of Svanir will just kill any woman who is caught being given Svanir's gift.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Jormag doesn't care. Jormag really does not care. It's as if ants that are going off, the red ants and the black ants, that's nice. But the Sons of Svanir...

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : The Sons of Svanir have a cult, it's a religious organisation.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : It comes through hat funnel, the Sons of Svanir are his mechanism in the world, so therefore their beliefs, and their prejudices, have that effect.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : And so they kill the women.

GuildMag (Ollannach): And another question that someone wonders what the current situation is with the Zaishen order, has it shattered after the destruction of the Battle Islands or are they still in the PvP business? Why do we see so many non-humans in an order dedicated to the human god of war?

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : Well, certainly the PvP and the battles in the Mists are not dedicated to the human god of war any more. The temple has... shamans of Bear who want to see norn fight and do well in battle, there are charr there with their atheistic tendencies, and it's spread through the races.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : But the big thing is I think the way the Zaishen has reinvented itself in the wake of the destruction of the Battle Isles is they still have that component of combat to them but now they've spread out, they've become that large umbrella-type of order which can include asura and sylvari and others, so basically has dropped away its philosophical roots with Balthazar and embraced more the sense of conflict itself.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : One thing I'd like to see – a lot of our maps and a lot of our Into the Mists scenarios are very human-centric. I'd love to see a...

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : A lot a points in human history.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : A lot of other human history, most from that history, but I'd like to see one of... not even the norn being south or the asura being driven upwards but even... who was the first asura leader, how did he get that position, what were the ancient norn in their glory days of old. The original charr, what was it like...

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Foundation of Hoelbrak

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : Even before, before the Guild Wars 2 chronology, what were the norn before they met the humans?

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : I think one of the reasons we see a lot of human history in the fractals and in PvP in the mists is the fact that we're in Tyria and a lot of these races have come in. The asura, the sylvari are very recent, the norn… the charr I think have great potential there for what their history was, the early battles against the humans that were pushing in to their territory.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : It'd be neat to have one of those PvP battles be right after the death of the Khan-Ur, when his children are fighting among one another after his death.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : That War of Succession would just be… has a rich feel to it.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : And those things exist in the Mists. We've established the Mists as being memory, and being the history of the world in all places for all races, and the Zaishen order have changed for the same reason, they're looking back at wars in all places and for all races.

GuildMag (Draxynnic): One I was wondering: In Guild Wars 1, Kryta extended not only further south, but further west than in the currently explorable areas. For instance, we had Loamhurst, which was just a little bit west of where the western border of Queensdale is now. Does modern Kryta continue to extend beyond the currently explorable regions towards the west and possibly to the north or is what we can currently explore all there is to Kryta nowadays?

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : We had originally planned for it to go west, but we didn't make those maps.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Yeah, but we did not, and also looked further north as well.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : Right above the lake.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Right above the Divinity's Reach area, which we did not see fruition on, because we were basically looking at what do we need for producing the game. So the answer is: Yes, Kryta is larger than just what you see there, but that's the core. That's the heart of Kryta, right there, in the game, and where the borders are exactly… western side of Brisban Wilderness?

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : We roughly designed it but didn't spell it out.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Again, foundation for future development.



GuildMag (Draxynnic): Speaking of the somewhat soft borders, one of the edge cases is Garrenhoff, it's in a region that is classified as being Kryta and has a human population, but there doesn't seem to be much sign of it being Krytan…

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : No Seraph there, no…

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : It is technically Krytan, but it's Krytan in the way that the very distant regions of a lot of countries – they don't pay a lot of attention to Kryta, they don't really have people there

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : It's also got that somewhat semi-independent city-state vibe to it.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : If you look at a map in Divinity's Reach, it'd be marked as Kryta. Divinity's Reach would mark it as Kryta.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Yeah, Divinity's Reach would mark it as part of the area, but I don't think they've seen an official from Kryta there.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : There isn't a Minister from Garrenhoff

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : No, it's very much this secluded territory underneath the shadow of the great floating castle and its warmness, its kind wizard.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : And its awesome cliff jump

GuildMag (Draxynnic) : Sounds kind of like the Two Rivers in Wheel of Time

GuildMag (Thalador): I think we're done with the questions, although, it might sound a bit demanding, Ollannach mentioned something about the August Living Story, that we could get a glimpse or a morsel of what's coming up in August.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : Ahhh, okay, yes. It is the one-year anniversary of Guild Wars 2 release, so we have a celebration planned. It'll be… not so much I want to give away, but it'll be in Divinity's Reach, we'll be dealing with…

GuildMag (Draxynnic) : Interesting

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : Sorry?

GuildMag (Draxynnic) :I was saying it's interesting, considering how many have been in Lion's Arch. Continue.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : Yes, this one will be in Divinity's Reach, the story will move to Divinity's Reach, and we will follow up on some of our iconic characters. We are going to have a celebration, an anniversary party, that all the players are going to be invited to. There's a different reason for it ingame – I think I'll keep that to myself for now so it doesn't spoil the surprise – but yes, the action in August will return to Divinity's Reach, we'll have a bit of a celebration, and then a bit of a surprise.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : Drama, escapade, and shenanigans!

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : Fun for the whole family! Bring the kids!

GuildMag (Ollannach): Let me see… there are some other questions from readers, but they're mostly speculation, I'm not sure if you can answer them…

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : One of the things is that we love speculation, okay, but again we don't confirm or deny them…

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : Send it to us, we'll giggle over it.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : We love the fact because it's an engagement, because people are, so I say, this must mean this, because of this statue, and this plaque, and this encounter, and that's really cool, I really do enjoy that, and we do not comment in part because… we may pick up those pieces and do something else with them. It's a living world, a growing world.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : It does help us see how subtle or unsubtle the story needs to be., what people pick up on and what they haven't, what we need to say louder and what we've said enough.

GuildMag (Thalador): Just one more thing, I always wondered if you guys look at the forums, and get inspired or something about the theories going on there – so you see something there that's actually very compelling or unlikely or…

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : We've actually even responded to some forum theories from time to time and say this is good or this is bad or that's a bit of a stretch or maybe you should look over in this area.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : But I don't think we've looked at anything and said "Oooh, that's good, let's do that", it's been more of a case of "Ooooh, that's good, they're getting it."

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : Sometimes it's a "Oooh, that's good, we'd planned to go in that direction, and that's a piece I can add to it." Sometimes there are bits of lore that we've forgotten and somebody mentions and we go "oh yeah, that does tie in."

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : In case I always when I see something like that I go back and check our own primary sources to see whether it's coming out of our own primary sources or some other theory that they had two years ago.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : I want to echo what Jeff said, whether the theories we read on the forum are absolutely correct or if they' correctly predicted what we planned to do or if it's a case of "Oh, they're out to lunch" - they're way out in the left field with no correction to reality. We love the enthusiasm, we love when people put the time and effort into thinking, into trying to connect these dots. But we do plan ahead three, six, sometimes twelve months, so often when someone mentioned something that we're planning to do in a different form than we don't respond to it because we don't want to give away the secret of it. But yeah, we don't want to discourage theorising, we love that stuff.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : If nothing else, it helps get the gears flowing.

GuildMag (Ollannach): One example of such a question is that someone wants to know… in the human personal story we meet members of the White Mantle in Queensdale and Kessex. After their defeat in Guild Wars 1, they retreated to the Maguuma Jungle, where it was noted that they thrived in secret. Will there be more of them or will we hear more of them?

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : That is definitely a question.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : That is a good question. I think by the fact that we mention them in game you can assume that there is information out there, you can assume that there is part of the story in history or current that spawned what you have seen in that game. That that is not the only White Mantle cell, that is not the only piece of that story. As to when or how we will tell that we can not answer.

GuildMag (Ollannach): This actually hooks kind of into another question of a concerned fan, particularly because of the Living Story – she's not really amused by the recent developments in Guild Wars 2, it all seems to be losing

ground for short-term business decisions. She feels it's more like a themepark where there's minigames, jumping puzzles, etcetra, but not really bigger, lore-enhancing stuff. She's mostly just concerned that because of the Living Story there's only going to be small new lore added to the game, which will, in the end, result in a bigger story.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : We wanna be more epic, right, AND we have this huge, flying city, just, go for it. Whatever you want.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : Well, two things. The reality of the situation is that this is our first year doing things this way, and after the initial game release and people got to experience all of the content that was in Guild Wars 2, we specifically tried to introduce some new characters to broaden things and stretch things out, and to make… a bit of surmounting the problems of how to make the iconics… we didn't want them to be in two places at once.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : We don't want to be continual.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : There's a lot of stories to be told.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : This gets back to the whole big world concept. It's more than just Destiny's Edge, it's more than just Kryta, it's a larger world.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : That's really the main surrogate, the Living World is much bigger than any one group of characters and so, we were expanding and adding to that. We wanted something cool to be happening every month, to make people come and check it out, but we're also trying to lay the groundwork for a larger story, much more in the line of the epic story we saw in the personal story in the game launch and in the dungeons we saw.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : I'd like to refer this questioner to some of your earlier questioners who were asking questions like "What's the background story behind this character in the cinematic! What's the background story behind that character in the cinematic! What's the background story between why Logan was there!" I think that story is there, but what we've done, a lot, is to, as Scott has said, we've put those characters there and made you want to ask questions. Is the lore there? Well, because you can't answer the questions, I guess you can say that no, the lore is not all there so far, but I assure you it will be and you can see where it will be.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : And there's a lot of stuff that's under the hood and behind the scenes that isn't appropriate to include in the story because it's just background, but we will be delving into these as we explore these characters more fully.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : New PvP maps that show history stuff, new characters here to show areas of the world you haven't been to yet.

ArenaNet (Scott McGough) : Callbacks to existing content and descendants of existing characters.

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : We've got a LOT of plans, we're back to shenanigans – we've got a lot of them.

ArenaNet (Jeff Grubb) : I think our greatest regret is that we can't do everything at once. We would love to address all of these in one giant monthly release but it's not physically possible.

GuildMag (Ollannach) : I guess we're done!

ArenaNet: (Ree Soesbee) : It was good to talk to you guys.

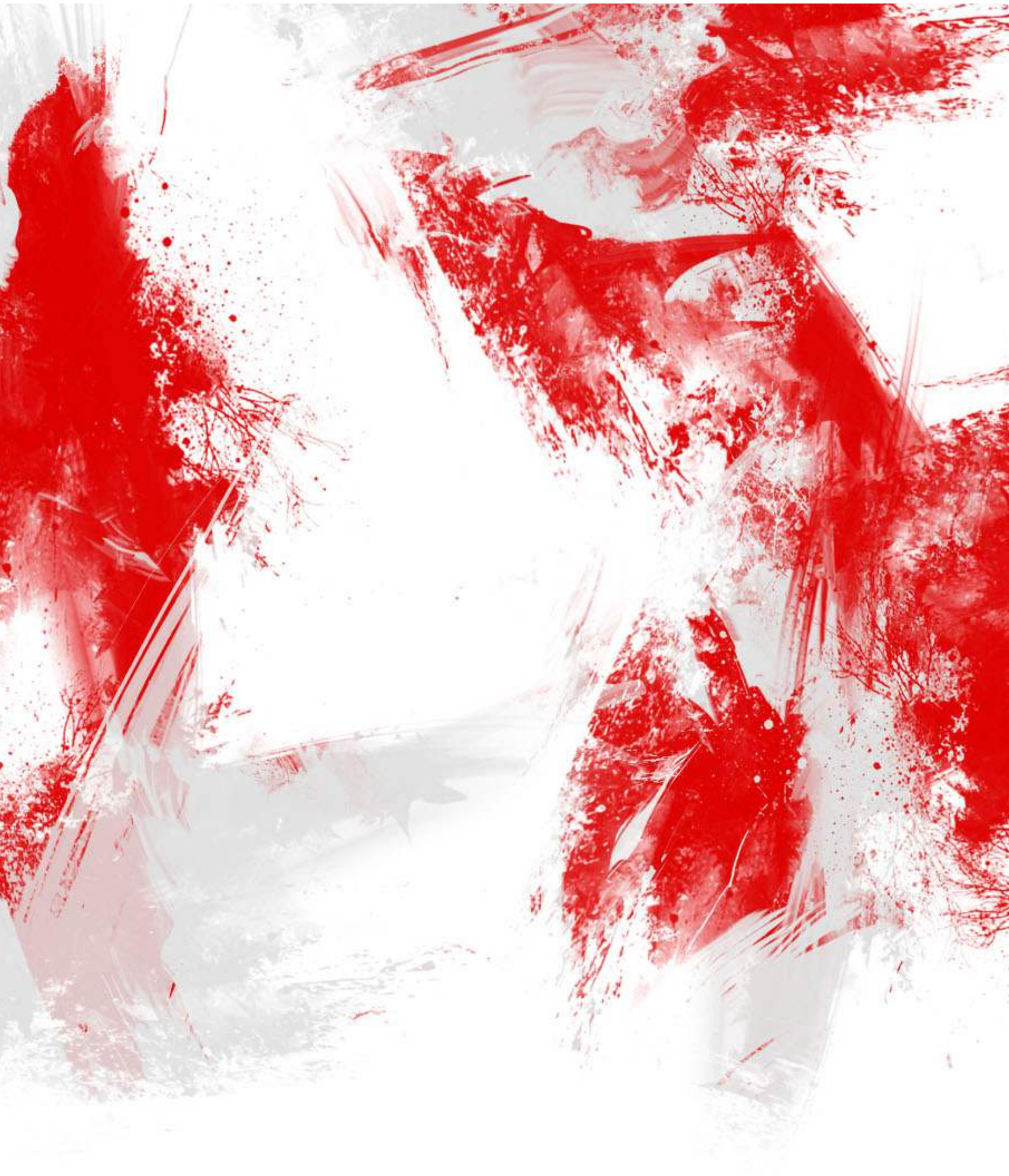
GuildMag (all) : Thank you too!

GuildMag (Draxynnic) : And… may your Life-Quest never blow up in your faces.

– Laughter –

ArenaNet (Ree Soesbee) : May your shenanigans never be found out.

– Laughter –





Mordremoth, the Jungle Dragon

WRITTEN BY KONIG DES TODES ARTICLE TYPE: LORE

Tactician's Report on Mordremoth, the Jungle Dragon

Mission Overview

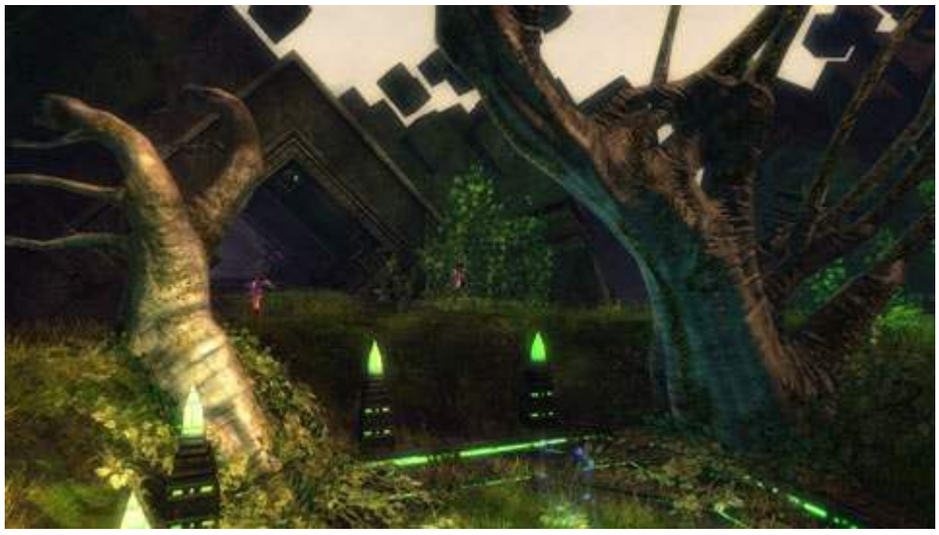
In my most recent assignment, I was tasked by my superiors to investigate a peculiar mention brought upon by the Vigil's allies within the Durmand Priory. The Priory Scholar Trueclaw has reported that the Tome of the Rubicon make mention of five races surviving six Elder Dragons. This has piqued the interest of said superiors, as we have only seen the influence of five such Elder Dragons, and even one is so minor that knowledge of it is scarce and kept to the Pact's allies. These Elder Dragons are: Primordus, Jormag, Zhaitan, Kralkatorrik, and the aforementioned scarcely known one, who's name remains aloof to us. My task was to investigate what I can find of this unknown sixth Elder Dragon - does it still live? Where is it? When will it awaken? What is its elemental domain?

To do this, I crossed the accessible lands of Tyria, seeking the answers. My first obvious stop was the Durmand Priory, however they told me nothing of the sixth Elder Dragon, aside from that there's mention of six Elder Dragons. Whether their tightlipped-ness is due to them not knowing or refusing to share is unknown, though given our shared interests I will presume the former. Knowing I'd get little to nothing more from the Priory, I went to gather information from the group outside of the Pact forces that holds interest in the Elder Dragons: The Inquest.

Investigations from Inquest Research

Before continuing my report, I shall clarify in the off chance that the readers of this report are unaware of the Inquest's research on the Elder Dragons. Within the Steamspur Mountains is a large facility of the Inquest dubbed the Infinite Coil Reactor, and at the center of this lies the Crucible of Eternity – a lab led by the now-deceased Kudu with the primary intent of researching and utilizing the Elder Dragons' unique magical energy. Foul as it is, it seems that they made decent progress. I'd also like to point out that records show that the Infinite Coil Reactor was the successor of the Thaumanova Reactor found within northern Metrica Province – established after Thaumanova Reactor had a meltdown. As such, not only did the Inquest research the Elder Dragons, but chaos energy. This is something I shall bring up again later, but for the most part is not relevant at the moment.

Thanks to the Pact's efforts, the Crucible of Eternity has been demolished before I got here, so I had to refer primarily to reports from Agent Spire who was in charge of infiltrating the base and destroying it. The foundation of the Infinite Coil Reactor is that of a hexagon, with six corners. Each corner is referred to as a "zone" which contains a lab beneath. Each zone, and by extension lab, holds a single theme and color (from northern going clockwise: Green, White, Purple, Blue, Black, and Red). The important part is that four of these zones are explicitly tied to Elder Dragons: White to Jormag, Purple to Kralkatorrik, Black to Zhaitan, and Red to Primordus. Blue holds aquatic themes, tying it to the allusive Elder Dragon of the Unending Ocean. This leaves Green without a known or suspected dragon, and it is nature themed. This was the first real step I found regarding the Elder Dragon.



From records Agent Spire recovered, there is mention of a “Subject Alpha” – an abominable creation tied to four of the Elder Dragons’ power with the addition of an earth theme. Along with this, there is mention of a unique name to Subject Alpha, used in the same means as the other Elder Dragons’ names (specifically Jormag and Primordus). Sadly, it’s never said to be related to the Elder Dragons, but this name may be related to them nonetheless, and if the Inquest somehow managed to get more knowledge on the Elder Dragons than the Durmand Priory, this holds horrific implications – specifically, the implications that somewhere out there is another Elder Dragon active we do not know about. This name is “Mordremoth.”

There is one final, and far more peculiar, mention of this “Zone Green” and “Experimental Green Lab” which may be tied to this “Mordremoth” (this name is used in reference to the earth theme mentioned before, and not anything water-related, thus it seems to be related to Zone Green and not the Elder Dragon of the Unending Ocean). This is the subjects within Experimental Green Lab. Within Red Lab were Destroyers; within White Lab were Icebrood. And within Lab Green were Husks and Nightmare Hounds. Both are plant creatures utilized by the Nightmare Court.

The Sylvari’s Connections

I have seen many philosophical debates upon the purpose of the sylvari in this world. And lately, I have seen an argument that the sylvari may be related to the Elder Dragons (specifically being that the sylvari are minions), despite their opposition, due to various reasons – and these arguments are coming about at an increasingly alarming rate. I, personally, having fought and worked beside sylvari and seen their rather peculiar culture for myself find such arguments hard – if not impossible – to believe. However, I fear the above research may push these arguments into feasibility. But the Vigil has no need for mere speculation and unproven discriminations. So I set out to investigate the most direct connection the Inquest’s research has: the Nightmare Court.

This led me to travel through the Maguuma Jungle, where I found a number of interesting facts. Firstly, as I learned in Brisban Wildlands, it appears that the Nightmare Court and the Inquest have allied themselves – and knowing that the sylvari are immune to draconic corruption (something I should denote now that is unique unto them and not shared with dragon minions), I considered the possibility that the Inquest built their Green Lab in order to study this immunity, rather than to study dragon minions. But I continued forth with an open mind, to not be clouded by personal hopes.

My travels led me south into Wychmire Swamp, which gave me a very peculiar observation. The Wardens stationed at Falias Thorpe told me that there were dark magics happening in the swamp. One of the sylvari there, a Wyld Hunt Valiant known by Gamarien, told me that there was a large number of husks that did not seem to be related to the Nightmare Court’s own presence in the swamp – but rather, he suspects, something darker. This felt like it was related to my research, so when he went on patrol and asked for assistance, I eagerly agreed. During the patrol, Gamarien happened upon this dark force he mentioned. Rotting-looking husks, grubs, mortars, and vines appeared from seemingly nowhere and began attacking all. These creatures were collectively referred to as being Blighted. All of which were accompanied by a giant jungle wurm, almost seemed like they were led by it even. After all was said

and done, and the threats neutralized, there was little more to gain. Only that the darkness remained after the great wurm's death.

I then went into Twilight Arbor, located in the depths of Wychmire Swamp, to investigate the Nightmare Court directly. When I arrived, Faolain had been cast out and the three Nightmare Courtiers seeking to obtain the Nightmare Tree dead and the tree itself burned down. It is regrettable, but I still gained what I wanted to know – or rather, what was relevant to my investigations. I went to Twilight Arbor to investigate the husks – what they are, how they come to be. I didn't get much there – or elsewhere for that matter. However, one of the three aforementioned Nightmare Courtiers, Vevina, employs husks in large numbers. One is of particular interest to this, called The Defiler, which is (or rather, was) part of Vevina's guard. What makes this particular Husk interesting is its appearance, sharing the same appearance with the "Avatars of Blight" I witnessed within Wychmire Swamp. Overall, the husks seem to be the sole connections between these three groups (for reminder's sake: the Crucible of Eternity, the Nightmare Court, and these "Blighted"), but little more – so it's hard to find where the relations truly end, as it is too coincidental that an Elder Dragon research facility and a swamp with an unknown dark force, both use something otherwise unique to the Nightmare Court.



My final piece of research regarding this was in the Sylvan Hounds. I knew from past experience that they are canine-appearing plants born from the Pale Tree just as sylvari are human-appearing plants born of the same Pale Tree. But I needed to know more. I traveled to Town of Cathal just south of Wychmire Swamp. This little village is used as a place to train Sylvan Hounds into proper pets for the Wardens. I inquired Warden Fila regarding the Nightmare Hounds, and she told me something interesting. To use her words, "it's more than just their heart that is tainted by nightmare. Their very bodies shift into something that is darker and more malevolent." And their physical appearance does indeed change! They become darker and appear with almost rotting foliage. A different Warden, Gwynda, makes mention of powerful "nightmare magic" at work in Wychmire Swamp, which the Wardens prefer to keep "hush-hush," as she says.

There is one more thing I must note regarding the Nightmare Court: it was often said in my interactions with the Wardens and the Nightmare Court that when sylvari turn to the Nightmare – that is, the force behind the Nightmare Court's belief, the opposite of the sylvari's Dream of Dreams – they are unable to return. It is a permanent twisting. Much like that of the Sylvan Hound's inability to return to its previous state, and much like an Elder Dragon's corruption.

Potential Dragon Influences

At this point, I am led to believe that the Nightmare Court is – knowingly or, most likely, not – spreading this Mordremoth's influence, and that the special denoting of the Dragon's corruption is twofold: a darker, rotting plant-like appearance (whether flesh turns to bark or vines like how Branded turn to crystal or Icebrood to ice is undeterminable in my findings), and holding a poisonous relation. The rotting plant appearance I had covered, but the poison I had not. Within Zone Green and within Wychmire Swamp, poisonous plants were in abundance, so I feel that it may also hold ties to this Mordremoth.

Using this as a basis, I dug through records to see if there were any previous presence of this. I found little, but there was one thing of interest I found.

For this, I returned to the topic of the Thaumanova Reactor. Knowing that it was the predecessor of the Infinite Coil Reactor and Elder Dragon research, I went to look into the fallout reactions. To my interest, there are five different elemental showings alongside the chaotic mess of teleporting creatures from across the continent. Four are obvious: the northern area has been engulfed in flame; just south is a river that seems to come from nowhere; to the southeast is a section engulfed in plantlife; to the southwest is a section covered in ice; and, very rarely found, to the west in a cave is a purple crystal. Knowing its background, this isn't too surprising. But what's interesting is what occurs in the southeastern section: poisonous rotting oakhearts periodically get warped in there (just as Icebrood seem to periodically get warped into the southwestern corner of the facility).



When I had dispatched one of these such oakhearts, it reminded me of something. Its appearance was surprisingly similar to mosshearts which were twisted by the Nightmare Court in Ogham Wilds. Not only this, but I have seen similar oakhearts within Greatheart Weald of Queensdale. Most interesting about this discovery was that a Seraph hunter mentioned that the rotting oakheart could spread corruption to the rest of the forest if left alone. I now wonder if said hunter was a Whispers agent in disguise, sadly he left far too soon to question what he meant, and the term "corruption" is used in more than just Elder Dragon influence. If not for my investigations above, I would not consider linking these together at all, but the similarities are becoming too commonplace to ignore.

After this, while on my travels I happened upon a wandering oracle who was asked which Elder Dragon should the Pact go against next. He mentioned almost every dragon, perhaps in an attempt to avoid answering the question, but there was one line most peculiar: he mentioned a "Jungle Dragon" within the Maguma Jungle. It so happens to be that these odd influences are all within, or near, the Maguuma Jungle – sans, of course, the Infinite Coil Reactor complex.

Conclusion

I shall leave each reader of this report to their own conclusions. I found nothing conclusive in my investigations, but I do believe there are existing patterns to what and where this "Jungle Dragon" – perhaps named "Mordremoth" – is. My personal view? I suspect that Mordremoth is still slumbering, only influencing the world like how Jormag influenced it through Svanir over two centuries ago. And the influence is being channeled through the Nightmare Court – perhaps via the mysterious "Nightmare" itself.

Report written by Vigil Tactician Lambert Caito



WRITTEN BY OLLANNACH ARTICLE TYPE: HUMOUR

MASSIVE CLIMATE UPROAR

By our reporter Beark Sunclash

BLACK CITADEL – A crowd of sylvari have been blocking the entrance to the Great Imperial Smelter to demand better attention to climate-neutral alternatives. The sylvari claim that the smelter has a bad influence on the nearby environment, making it nearly impossible for new flora and fauna to flourish nearby. “The charr are preventing the fabled beauty of this area to return by maintaining this facility. All things have a right to grow and this needs to stop now!” tells Grian, the sylvari spokesperson.

LATE VIGIL PREVENT CENTAUR RAID

By our reporter Detsch

ASCALON SETTLEMENT – The Vigil made a stand against a recent centaur raid on the Ascalon Settlement near Lion’s Arch. While the Ascalon Settlement is known to often be under attack by centaurs, mostly resulting in a loss for the latter, this attack force was proportionally larger than those that preceded it. The attack endured for one hour before the Vigil’s attention was drawn. After their arrival on the scene, the tide of battle went over quickly in favour of the Settlement. Afterwards, the Vigil refrained to comment on their late reaction.

FLUCTUATING STOCKS ON THE BLACK LION TRADING POST

By our reporter Soola

LION'S ARCH – Seemingly out of nowhere the stocks of the Black Lion Trading Post have been fluctuating at an accelerated speed. Reports claim that someone managed to figure out the algorithm behind the system and is now playing the market with that knowledge. Even worse, said person has been spreading this information so that there are multiple cases of fluctuation being reported, causing in a rising value of the gemstones that high-profiled traders tend to trade with. We asked Evon Gnashblade for a comment on the fluctuation: “This fluctuation is just a result of my continued effort. People seem to like spending their money on my market, and I definitely like see them doing so.”





The Ascalonian Peace Process

WRITTEN BY DRAXYNNIC ARTICLE TYPE: LORE

A summary of the charr-human peace process as of the end of 1324 AE,
prepared by Whispers analyst Audovacar Draxynnus

In our efforts to prepare the nations of Tyria to fight against the dragons, one of the most promising developments has been the forming of a nascent peace between the humans and charr. For centuries these powerful nations have pitted their strengths against one another – the prospect of peace allows for the hope that military forces freed up from fighting one another can be pitted against Tyria's common enemies instead. As such, maintaining and furthering the fragile peace process is of paramount importance to the Order.

The majority of agents reading this briefing are expected to be familiar with the history of the charr-human conflict. For any who aren't, a brief summary is given below, although agents are advised to research additional details beyond this document:

The first recorded clash of humans and charr occurred around 100BE, when human armies under King Doric invaded the lands they called Ascalon. As this coincided with the mysterious death of the last supreme leader of the charr, the Khan-Ur, the charr were unable to stop them, and the humans of Ascalon were able to spend the next thousand years consolidating their hold, pushing the charr ever northwards while building the Great Wall of Ascalon to provide a defensive line to fall back to. The eruption of the Guild Wars distracted the armed forces of humanity, a distraction the charr took advantage of to invade southwards and conduct the ritual of the Searing to devastate Ascalon and breach the Great Wall, as well as invading the other two human kingdoms of Tyria. This was the start of a twenty-year campaign to mop up the remaining Ascalonian holdouts, culminating in the Foefire and the beginning of the siege of Ebonhawke that was only lifted with the signing of the truce.

While both sides had shown signs of tiring of the conflict, the first major breakthrough came with the Dragonrise. Faced with the prospect of annihilation and the death of Queen Jennah at the hands of the Branded, the human defenders of Ebonhawke released and armed charr prisoners from the war. This precedent of charr and humans fighting together against a greater enemy provided the impetus to turn the stalemate of two centuries into a truce.

Through negotiations carried out through Vigil messengers, the conditions for a peace were agreed – the charr would accept a ceasefire if the Claw of the Khan-Ur could be retrieved and returned to them. With the success of a multiracial Vigil team in recovering the Claw earlier this year, hostilities between Ebonhawke and the Iron Legion have ceased and negotiations are underway to cement a treaty between charr and humans, although dissident factions in both camps (labelled by the Order as Renegades and Separatists respectively) refuse to accept peace with their old enemies and seek to disrupt the truce.

Threats to the Peace

As mentioned in the summary, dissident groups have arisen among both the humans and charr. Ogres descending from the Blazeridge Mountains also present a threat to humans and charr in the region of Ebonhawke, although if anything they may be accelerating the process by providing charr forces and the Ebon Vanguard with common enemies.

Separatists

Not surprisingly, hatred runs deep among the humans of Ascalonian descent, whether in Ebonhawke or the descendants of expatriates in Kryta. The Ebon Vanguard has a history of employing covert operations against the charr since before the Foefire, and the Separatists have made use of this along with loosened security to form a series of camps from the Fields of Ruin to locations north of the ruins of the Great Wall. From these camps, many named after heroes and martyrs of the years after the Searing, the Separatists launch raids on the nearby charr, hoping to provoke the charr back into conflict and to weaken their position should hostilities recommence.

As would be expected, the majority of Separatist activity is found in the vicinity of Ebonhawke, where they recruit disaffected Ebonhawkers through persuasion and threats of force and seek to disrupt the delegation by sabotage, assassination, and direct assault. Our agents have also been seeing increasing evidence that the Separatists may be active in Kryta, seeking to discredit the queen who came up with the idea of a treaty in the first place.

Renegades

Formed from charr who could not accept the peace, the Renegades can mostly be found in the fields just north of Ebonhawke attacking any human they encounter. So far, their tactics have proven quite simple – the Renegades have not attempted to infiltrate Kryta the way the Separatists have infiltrated the charr territories.

Ogres

In response to the withdrawal of the charr from the vicinity of Ebonhawke, ogres have started moving down from the mountains, building kraals and attempting to push into the power vacuum left by the charr. Two kraals have been established to the east of Ebonhawke itself, with more further north. Ebon Vanguard and charr have been cooperating in fighting the ogres, granting them an opportunity to build experience in fighting alongside instead of against one another.

Personnel Dossiers

A number of individuals, both human and charr, are of special interest to the Order due to their importance to the peace process… or the possibility of disrupting it. Summaries of the portions of their dossiers as relevant to the peace process are given below – agents are referred to their complete dossiers for more information.

Queen Jennah



Race: Human
Gender: Female
Affiliation: Queen of Kryta
Magic: Mesmer

Jennah became Queen of Kryta at a young age due to the untimely death of her father – too young to be granted power over the kingdom, the Legate Minister took up a regency over Kryta until she came of age. Even now, her political opponents use her youth as evidence for her unsuitability for power. Despite her youth, the Queen is one of the most accomplished mesmers in the current generation.

Until the Dragonrise, Queen Jennah supported continuing Ebonhawke's war against the charr, committing to increased support to Ebonhawke from Kryta in a speech given just before Kralkatorrik's awakening. The events of the Dragonrise changed this – seeing humans and charr fighting alongside one another after a personal encounter with an Elder Dragon appears to have lead to an epiphany in the young monarch. After weaving an illusion that persuaded the Branded ogre attackers to abandon the assault, the Queen gave a speech in which she formally released the charr that had fought in Ebonhawke's defence, speaking to human and charr alike of the importance of the two races learning to cooperate against the greater threat.

This unique perspective makes Queen Jennah an indispensible figure in the peace process in the eyes of the Preceptors, combining in one person the will to do what is necessary to ensure the peace holds and the authority to carry out that will.

Logan Thackeray



Race: Human
Gender: Male
Magic: Guardian
Affiliations: Seraph, Destiny's Edge (former)

A person of great interest to the Order of Whispers due to his membership of the Destiny's Edge guild and his suspected role in its breakup.

Prior to his membership of that guild, Logan was the black sheep of his family (refer to dossier: Dylan Thackeray, a member of the Seraph unit assigned to the Queen's protection, KIA 1320AE in the Branded assault on Ebonhawke) serving as a mercenary escorting caravans to Ebonhawke. Under unclear circumstances, this lead to his arriving in Lion's Arch in the company of Rytlock Brimstone and Caithe. Shortly after arrival, these three were sentenced to fight in the arena to pay off a fine incurred as a result of property damage from an altercation between Logan and Rytlock, believed to be over the sword Sohothin.

The gladiatorial team formed by the three went undefeated until challenged by Eir Stegalkin, Snaff and Zojja. Their defeat lead to the formation of Destiny's Edge, which proceeded to defeat several dragon champions before breaking apart.

While the exact details are currently unknown to the Order, the information we do have places Logan at the Branded invasion of Ebonhawke while the rest of Destiny's Edge was in the desert, where he was responsible for the recruiting of charr prisoners from Ebonhawke's stockades to assist in fighting off the Branded assault.

In the aftermath of the siege, Destiny's Edge shattered, for reasons that the Order believes are connected to the death of Snaff. With his estrangement from his former companions, Logan followed his brother's footsteps in joining the Seraph, currently serving as the captain of the Seraph company responsible for the protection of Divinity's Reach. Rumour suggests that Logan and Jennah are romantically involved, and that the friendships that Logan has found among charr have lead him to swear off further conflict with the charr. If both of these are true, his influence may be a significant factor in the Queen's determination to see the treaty succeed.

Minister Caudecus Beetlestone

Race: Human
Gender: Male

Magic: None known
Affiliations: Ministry, Bandits (suspected), Separatists (suspected)



Minister of Beetletun and Legate Minister of the Krytan Ministry, Caudecus Beetlestone served as Jennah's regent until she achieved her majority, and has been attempting to regain control over Kryta since.

A full description of Caudecus' activities to undermine Queen Jennah's power, overt and suspected, is well beyond the scope of this document – agents with a need to know are referred to documents on Krytan politics and Lord Beetlestone's full dossier. Of relevance, Caudecus has spoken against the treaty, shows a dislike of charr, and has been observed associating with Separatist dissidents. It is not known, however, if this is representative of the Minister's true beliefs or a position that has been adopted in order to capitalise on resentment directed at the Queen over the treaty. Whether through true hatred or simply political convenience, however, Minister Caudecus represents a significant threat to the treaty, on which the Order is seeking to gain further insight.

Minister Duran



Race: Human
Gender: Male
Magic: Elemental
Affiliations: Kryta

Raised in a village near the area now called Wiley's Cove, Minister Duran's experience with dealing with other races during visits to Lion's Arch made him well-placed to become Queen Jennah's spokesman at the peace summit. Our information suggests that he is a cautious and pragmatic man, but willing to take risks when needed for his duties.

Wade Samuelsson



Race: Human
Gender: Male
Magic: None known
Affiliations: Ebonhawke

While only claiming the titles of Duke of Ebonhawke and Captain of the Ebon Vanguard, records held by the Order indicate that Wade Samuelsson is descended from the Ascalonian royal line, making him the clearest known heir to the Ascalonian throne should it ever be restored. His demeanour, however, is informal for a person of his rank, and he appears more inclined towards seeking a peaceful life over a quest for glory.

As the commander of Ebonhawke, Samuelsson is an important figure in the peace process. Fortunately, while he remains cautious of the charr, our reports indicate that he is genuinely tired of the war and eager to do his part in forging a lasting peace.

Dougal Keane



Race: Human
Gender: Male
Affiliation: Vigil
Magic: None known

After deserting from the Ebon Vanguard, Dougal Keane took up a life of treasure hunting and tomb robbing. After one such expedition – an illegal trip into the catacombs of Divinity's Reach – lead to his arrest, Dougal was recruited (although "conscripted" might be a better term) into the team sent to retrieve the Claw of the Khan-Ur.

The reason he was chosen was simple – after their desertion, Dougal Keane and the majority of his unit went on an expedition to loot the treasures of the haunted city of Ascalon. Dougal was the only member of the unit to escape the city – however, this distinction made him the only living person at the time to have entered Ascalon City and escaped, making his knowledge indispensible for the expedition. While details are sketchy, as part of the mission he reportedly prevented a traitor in the expedition from stealing the Claw and turning it over to the Flame Legion in hopes of intensifying the charr civil war enough to render the charr vulnerable to an Ascalonian counterattack.

Dougal Keane can sometimes be found in Fort Marriner in Lion's Arch, telling stories of his experiences and dispensing advice to young adventurers and would-be dungeoneers.

Smodur the Unflinching



Race: Charr
Gender: Male
Affiliation: Iron Legion
Magic: None known

As Imperator of the Iron Legion, Smodur the Unflinching epitomises the ideals of his legion, being a skilled warrior and engineer. As befits the commander of the legion that has driven the charr industrial revolution, Smodur has garnered a reputation for thinking of the future rather than the past. Rumours overheard by Whispers agents suggest that having obtained the Claw, Smodur may even be intending to melt it down as a symbol of his determination to build a better future from the present rather than to seek to return to the perceived glories of the past.

Since Ascalon is regarded by the charr as Iron Legion territory, on the charr side it is ultimately Smodur's decision to pursue the treaty or not. Some Whispers analysts regard Smodur's cosmopolitan attitude as an indication that Smodur saw peace with humans as desirable without requiring the Claw as a condition for peace – an analysis reinforced by the generous terms offered to Ebonhawke. Either way, holding the Claw likely shored up Smodur's authority to declare a truce without risking being challenged for the Imperatorship by an objector.

Malice Swordshadow

Race: Charr
Gender: Female
Affiliation: Ash Legion
Magic: None known

While the Imperator of the Ash Legion has not been directly involved in the peace process, some of her more trusted agents have been acting behind the scenes to facilitate the treaty. Our information indicates that Malice has recognised the need for the allied legions to make peace with one of their enemies. As a female Imperator, she is likely wary of the possible end result of making peace with the misogynistic Flame Legion, making forging a peace with humanity, at worst, the best of a set of bad options in her eyes.

Bangar Ruinbringer

Race: Charr
Gender: Male
Affiliation: Blood Legion
Magic: None known

Viewed as a loose cannon by the other Imperators, Bangar's hatred of humans makes him a source for serious concern for the Order of Whispers. Fortunately, the Blood Legion territories are physically distant from the front lines, limiting his ability to carry on the conflict on his own authority. With his reputation for rashness, however, many in the Order fear that he may employ - or may already be employing - a more underhanded method of carrying out his vendetta versus humanity.

Almorra Soulkeeper



Race: Charr
Gender: Female
Affiliations: Vigil, Blood Legion
Magic: None known

Almorra Soulkeeper was possibly the first charr outside the Order of Whispers to realise that the charr could not stand alone against the dragons, when she was the sole survivor of her warband during the Branding. Lacking the clout with her new status as a gladium to push the legions towards making peace with humans directly, she formed a multiracial organisation called the Vigil, dedicated to charitable works and the defence of the innocent.

While officially outside the hierarchy, however, Almorra played an important role during the peace process. The Vigil served as a neutral go-between for communications from the legions to Queen Jennah and back. When Smodur demanded the Claw of the Khan-Ur as part of the price for a truce, it was Almorra who formed a group in order to retrieve it from the ruined city of Ascalon.

Ember Doomforge



Race: Charr
Gender: Female
Affiliation: Ash Legion, Vigil
Magic: Shadow

Granddaughter of Almorra Soulkeeper, Ember Doomforge's loyalties are split between two leaders – her grandmother as a member of the Vigil, and her Imperator as an Ash Legion agent. Fortunately, so far, they share a common purpose - in fact, Whispers analysts have suggested that Almorra is likely aware that Ember is acting as Malice's agent within the Vigil, and allows her to continue to do so as a sign of good faith and to demonstrate that the Vigil has nothing to hide from the Ash Legion...

...or at least, nothing that they can't hide from known Ash Legion agents, if the Vigil has any skill to speak of in the art of counterintelligence.

Ember was dispatched with the Vigil team that retrieved the Claw of the Khan-Ur, acting as their guide through charr-controlled territory. She has since been assigned to the peace summit outside Ebonhawke, acting as one of the representatives at the summit for both the Ash Legion and the Vigil.

Ajax Anvilburn

Race: Charr
Gender: Male
Affiliation: Blood Legion, Renegades
Magic: None known

The son of Almorra Soulkeeper, the Order's information suggests that Ajax Anvilburn's philosophy regarding the treaty is very different to his mother. Having been raised to hate humans in a fahrar, Ajax appears to have been unable to let go of his prejudices for the sake of peace. Whispers agents have placed him among the Renegades and rapidly gaining in recognition among that group. If Ajax was to assume command over a large Renegade unit, this could lead to alarming developments of Renegade strategy, as Ajax's records indicate that he has inherited the tactical acumen of his mother.

Ambassador Steelcrusher



Race: Charr
Gender: Male
Affiliation: Iron Legion
Magic: None known

Steelcrusher first came to our attention when he fought alongside Smodur on the Granite Front - a meeting that lead Smodur to trust him as the lead charr ambassador at Summit Peak, a position which he volunteered for. His record paints him as an aggressive soldier while on the field, favouring bold strikes against an enemy. Our information suggests that he is appropriately concerned about the threats to the treaty, but remains confident that it is the best path forward for the Iron Legion.





The Oldest of the Youngest

WRITTEN BY VERENE ARTICLE TYPE: LORE

The sylvari are the newest race to grace Tyria, and despite the fact that the game has been out for some time, there is still a large amount about them that we do not know. We certainly know much more about them than we did back when Guild Wars 2 was officially revealed in 2009, but there's still large gaps in our knowledge of this race of living plants.

One of the things that we do know about the sylvari is that originally there were just twelve of them - the Firstborn. These twelve sylvari are the closest things to rulers that the sylvari have, though the respect for them largely comes from the fact that they are the oldest of the sylvari, and hence have the most knowledge of and experience of the world. Four of them are Luminaries of their Cycle, charged with guiding and tutoring newborn sylvari that have awoken.

Of these twelve Firstborn, we know about nine of them. Three of them are directly involved in the plot of Guild Wars 2, though how heavy their involvement is depends on if you are playing as a sylvari or not yourself. If you are playing as a sylvari, the first person that you meet is Caithe, a Firstborn of the Cycle of Night, who soon becomes your mentor and later you learn shares with you the Wyld Hunt of defeating Zhaitan. She is a mysterious person, keeping things close to herself, though it becomes clear very quickly as you progress through your early personal story that she is a dark individual, who has no qualms about killing when necessary, and has been hurt deeply in the past.



Caithe was, in fact, the first of the sylvari to leave the Grove and explore the world, to see what Tyria is outside of the Grove. During this time she became a member of Destiny's Edge (along with the other racial mentors you encounter in the game), who made it their task to hunt dragons. Despite Caithe's best efforts to convince the group to stay together, they broke apart after the disaster that was attempting to fight Kralkatorrik. She is the one that initiated their eventual reunion, and can be seen in the dungeon storylines trying to bring the splintered guild back together, though with limited success until the end.

The real hurt in Caithe's heart, though, came at the doing of a fellow Firstborn. Faolain, born of Dusk, had left the Grove to wander Tyria with Caithe. The two started out as simply traveling companions and friends, but at some point during their travels, became lovers. It is not yet known exactly what happened, but Faolain fell to Nightmare, joining the Nightmare Court and becoming their leader, the Grand Duchess. Caithe refused to follow her love into the Nightmare, and the two are now seperated. Faolain has been shown to not want to settle for this situation, however, and is determined to see Caithe fall as well.

She is not above using sheer manipulation to this end; in the Twilight Arbor dungeon's story, she refers to Caithe as her "dearheart" while simultaneously mocking Caithe for her own failings. By the end she has resorted to creating

illusions of Caithe's former Destiny's Edge companions, making them taunt her for her failures. This is Faolain's final attempt at pulling her former love to Nightmare, however, as she is defeated after this.



The third sylvari Firstborn who is heavily involved in the personal story is Trahearne, and personal opinions on him aside, he is an important part of the storyline. He is the eldest of the Firstborn, and was born with a difficult Wyld Hunt - to see Orr restored to its former self. He is a necromancer and a noted scholar, who has been studying Orr for most of his life; he is one of two individuals, the other being Caithe, to have seen Zhaitan and lived. Because of his studies of Orr, he is considered something of an expert on Zhaitan and the risen, and is respected by the three Orders of Tyria.

He is given the task of leading a force made up of the three Orders into Orr by the Pale Tree, who gives him the sword Caladbolg, a powerful weapon made from the bark of the Pale Tree. When the Pact is formed, he is suggested to lead, by the player character - Trahearne is known and respected, but not a member of any of the three Orders. His knowledge of Orr, the elder dragon, and the risen become vital in planning ways to weaken Zhaitan before facing him head on, Before the player character goes on to fight Zhaitan, Trahearne is able to use Caladbolg to initiate the cleansing of Orr, fulfilling his Wyld Hunt.

Of the remaining six Firstborn, most of them will really only be encountered if you are playing as a sylvari yourself. Early on you will meet the Luminary, or leader, of your Cycle; each of the Luminaries personifies the traits commonly seen in sylvari born in a specific cycle. Aife is the Luminary of Dawn and as such is known as a skilled diplomat, and has traveled to each of the large cities on behalf of the sylvari. Niamh, a bold warrior, is the Luminary of Noon; she is also the leader of the Wardens, a group of sylvari who are the guards of the Grove. The Luminary of Dusk is Kahedins, who helps sylvari who have just awoken to understand what they have seen in their dreams. He is also a shaper, having designed the seed turrets that sylvari use, as well as working to make the Grove habitable.



One sylvari, however, was not so lucky. Riannoc was the first of the sylvari to die, an event that the other Firstborn would not forget, though it was quite some time before they knew what had happened. His task was one that seemed to be rather straightforward; to confront and slay the undead lich, Mazdak the Accursed. For this task he had been given the sword Caladbolg from the Pale Tree, and he brought along his human squire, Waine, when he went to face Mazdak. Unfortunately, they were overwhelmed by the risen; Waine stole Caladbolg and ran out of fear, leaving Riannoc to die.

The last of the Firstborn that we meet is Dagonet. He is a scholar, having studied the dreams of many of the sylvari; this includes all of the Firstborn. We know little more about him than simply that - during the game he can be found in Divinity's Reach, and you also meet him during the story mode of Caudecus's Manor, but speaking to him does not reveal much.

With all that we do know of the Firstborn...it's easy to see that there is a great deal that we still do notknow about them. The most glaring exception is the identity of three of the Firstborn. Just who are these three missing sylvari? We have nothing - not even their names, let alone where they are. I do hope that we learn something about them - who are they? What are their Wyld Hunts? Where were they during the fight against Zhaitan?

One theory that I have is that their absences may be because they are serving as emissaries to the other human lands. I think it may be an unlikely one, due to Elona having been overrun by Palawa Joko and Cantha ruled by a xenophobic, isolationist emperor, but it is a possibility. It is possibly that they have died, but that is another that I find to be unlikely; I think that any Firstborn that had died would be noted, as Riannoc's was. The third is simply that their Wyld Hunts were such that kept them away from the Grove for long periods of time, which I believe to be the most likely, if only for the fact that it's the easiest way to explain their absences once (if?) they are finally introduced to us.



Even with the Firstborn that we do know of, though, there are a number of questions. Just what did Caithe and Faolain see on their travels? What was it that dragged Faolain into the Nightmare? How was it that Malomedies was the first sylvari to meet another race when Caithe and Faolain were the first to leave the Grove? How were the four Luminaries chosen out of the twelve?

I don't expect any, let alone all, of the gaps in knowledge to be filled in; I know I had been hoping that the Twilight Arbor story had gone deeper into Caithe and Faolain's relationship, and had been disappointed that it didn't. However, it never hurts to hope that we get to learn more about the youngest race to walk Tyria.





The Mirage 2.0: Perceived Value

WRITTEN BY 4THVARIETY

ARTICLE TYPE: EDITORIAL

Prices of consumer products have little to do with supply and demand anymore, they depend mostly on what people are willing to pay, not what commodities cost to produce, in relation to how many people want one. The story you have heard, about that one guy who bought a Wii for $300 and made $100 profit from reselling it, does not represent our economic normality. The whole story hinges on its premise of “can you believe there weren't enough consoles?” The absence of consumer good ubiquity and how one wily person used it to their advantage is the special event deserving mentioning; not the availability of products. Supply and demand is the easy to understand lie, which is covered up by a more complicated truth. You will certainly come across supply and demand from time to time, but trust me, it is a surefire sign to stay away from a market. At least, if you want to make money and I suppose that is the goal of those of you interacting with the GW2 economy. So stop flipping stacks of butter, copper and other materials and turn your eyes to higher profit margins.

Case and point the iPhone, a device infamously produced in China from parts and costs of labor adding up to roughly $200 (source: http://www.isuppli.com/Teardowns/News/p ... veals.aspx). Usually sold for more than three times the manufacturing price, the iPhone is as close to a money printing machine as you ever going to get as a company. Fanboys might argue the costs of software engineers, Apple stores and bandwidth of all things. But one look at the stock price of Apple, the $50 billion cash reserve they have these days and the designs for their new company HQ and you know all you need to know about Apple's profit margins. They are healthy, they are large, so in essence, you could be paying much less and Apple still would not have to fire a single overpaid iTunes programmers, or machine shop full of underpaid Chinese factory slaves. The iPhone is cheap to produce in any quantities and customers are willing to pay any price Apple asks. It is the poster child for an idealized way of how to earn money producing commodities. This is how you want to conduct business in GW2.

But where do you find such a thing in GW2? Could you say the Superior Rune of Divinity was Tyria's iPhone? Is attractiveness among consumers enough? The rune weighs in at 60 points on every attribute (420 in total) and 12% critical damage. At best, the competition will muster 150 points on one attribute, 8% critical damage and some gimmick. Taken on its own, the rune appears scary strong. However, in the grand scheme of total attribute points, the impact of running a divinity set over any other runeset is only about 2.1%-2.8% depending on whether you compare it to a runeset with critical hits (2.85%), or one without (2.1%). Those kind of numbers are never going to be the reason you fail even the toughest fractal. Meaning that technically you only need them in those very tight situations that any 'pro gamer' with a shred of pride will deny having ever encountered in their entire life. Much like the iPhone, demand is not the result of an actual necessity for the product, but rather a self-imposed desire to join a club whose members express their membership by wearing the insignia identifying them as part of a perceived elite. It cannot come as a surprise that vanity is the main force driving up the price of Superior Runes of Divinity on the customer side. Is this enough to make it GW2's iPhone though?

Because on the production side of divinity runes, there is no clear path to play the game and end up with a Superior Rune of Divinity. The only way of getting one is to get incredibly lucky on a drop, incredibly lucky after clearing a map,

or incredibly enduring at the mystic forge. Zomorros is a harsh master, but he can be defeated with statistics. If you make your sample size large enough, you can pretty easily see at which rate you are going to get an upgrade. From masterwork to rare, from rare to superior, the chances differ. The chances for an upgrade even differ depending on the level an item has. The lower the item's level, the higher the chance for an up-conversion. Another factor is the input. Throw the very same item into forge and your chance for an upgrade is better. Not only that, but you can also control which item you get. Four random weapons will get you another random weapon, but four greatswords will always produce a greatsword. Four times the very same greatsword will produce am up-converted greatsword at a higher rate. The item you will get comes from a pool of potential up-conversions. Famously, you can up-convert exotic swords into either special skins, or precursors. But for each weapon you toss in, the target pool is different. Pools have a size of 2-8 items and which one gets 'awarded' by Zomorros is pretty much random. To succeed, you want to know which is the cheapest thing to toss into the forge in order to get a dice roll on the desired pool of results. You have to investigate which item has which result pool as your first step of getting anywhere with your production line.

The underlying systems are anything but random and allow you to calculate production costs. The Superior Rune of Divinity is exotic, so you need four rare runes. Lucky for you, no matter which rare rune you try to up-convert, the desired rune of divinity will be in the (bad since it is so big) pool of potential upgrades. You cannot toss four items from the same stack into the forge. However, you can split a stack and start tossing in the same rune four times that way; optimize price and chances. If you do score an up-conversion, there is a 50% chance you will get a random soulbound rune. You also have a 50% chance to get a rune you can sell. Bad news though, those runes sometimes have recipes and their price does not depend on your production costs, but on the costs of various lodestones. Their prices also depend on the amount of dungeon-farmers out there creating them, counter-balanced by the players buying them up for legendary weapons and runes. This means your 'junk' creations have a price you cannot influence to your advantage, hence you have to raise the price of the Superior Rune of Divinity all the more, in an effort to get your invested money back in this very complicated market situation. Chances are, you will not break even on this one, or at least subject yourself to extremely random dice rolls to get there. The pool of results is simply too large to be efficient anytime soon. There is also a scramble for the base materials of this method, meaning the more people compete for low priced runes, the higher those prices get and this type of economy is the last thing you want to compete in without having intimate knowledge of the inner working of Zomorros. Remember, you want to be Apple, you want to sell for an outrageous price at an ensured and very large profit margin. You do not want to enter a supply and demand chain and aim for 'break even +X'. That is for suckers. Feel free to poison the well for others though, by participating in these market with excess funds.

Which goes not to say earning money was impossible by using the mystic forge, it merely takes a lot of time and a great dedication to statistically analyze your conversions over a large sample size. It is not uncommon to spend 10 gold before you even know whether or not something has any chances to be profitable in the long term. For investigations into high level items, the price goes up even further. At some point, the very nature of the product you are selling shifts from produced commodity to risk insurance policy. Which is a problem for the GW2 economy. The road to turn from a trader into an insurance company starts like this. Imagine you simply play the game for a long time and you end up with 1000 rare items. This type of player is best off selling them, instead of tossing them into the mystic forge. Because of how Zomorros behaves, the wily player gone trader takes the money from those 1000 rare items and puts out an order for one item, but 1000 times. This step already creates value. The additional value of this procedure comes from converting a chance for a random precursor into a chance for a specific precursor. In economic terms, you added value to your random drops, by de-randomizing them in the Trading Post. From a strictly economic perspective, the trading post has made you richer, without you having a single copper coin more than before. The added value is in the optimization of the dice roll which comes next. As a player, you have moved up

from player to trader. You not only add virtual value to your account by playing, but also by using trade. Persons who do not like fiddling with the trading post all the time, should go vote for a “de-randomized loot feature” right about now.

Up to this point, the Trading Post works spectacularly well. The former player (now trader) is left with 1000 rares, which should yield one precursor of his choice. Please don't nail me on this number of 1000 rares and the chance of 1:250 to create a precursor from a rare. Even if the real ratio is different, the argument which follows remains the same. If there is anything to complain about, it is the amount of your head banging against the loot wall and the endless micromanagement clicks required to de-randomize everything. Anyway, once you did all this, you should get your precursor and finally 'progress' one noticeable step further down the path of “legendaries are motivation” laid out by ArenaNet. But you are only guaranteed that precursor in the same way that a six sided die should roll at least one six, if you rolled the die six times.

For the player gone trader who barely plays enough to roll that six-sided die six times, this is not a chance he wants to take. Statistically speaking, this type of player is better off not rolling the dice. Rolling a six sided die six times in hopes of a six turning up, is the equivalent of taking a 67% chance of success. Out of all dice roll combinations you can get, only 33% will make you happy. If you roll the dice long enough, then sure, on average you will have rolled one six for every six times you rolled. But write down all the possible combinations from 1-1-1-1-1-1 to 6-6-6-6-6-6 (46656) and you will find only 67% (31031) of them are in your favor in the sense that you do not end up empty-handed. If you were to put all possible results into a fishbowl, then sure, your global average after pulling out all of them, would be equal to the true average. But if you can reach in there only once, you take the biggest risk possible. One revolver, two bullets, one round of Russian loot roulette.

If you therefore toss your average requirement of 1000 rares into Zomorros and roll the “250-sided die” 250 times, the same applies, assuming the precursor rate is still 1:250. But due to the math, your chances have deteriorated another 3%, down to a 36% chance of a bummer result. Fans of Excel use this formula in row B: =SUM((A4-1)/(A4))^(A4). If A1 is the amount of sides your die has, the formula spits out the chances of you missing a desired number after rolling the die for as often as he has sides. If you have barely enough resources to throw enough rares into the forge to get a precursor, then this is the risk you take. Please note how the risk does not really change that much, if ArenaNet tinkered with the precursor dropchance. It will be important later to remember: chances change, risk remains the same. Another thing worth mentioning is that even if you had twice the amount of rares required (2000), you are at a very real 13% chance of ending up empty handed. Which is the same chance the first person in a round of Russian roulette enjoys; be my guest.

The really rich players, who can buy thousands of rare items and are able to take their chances dozens of times, are the ones who should play this game. On average, they will be rewarded with a precursor for every 1000 rare items they toss in, while having the resources to survive a bad beat or two. Having a lot of money will ultimately protect you from bad beats, a luxury a player hoping to barely get together the average required amount of rares cannot ever hope to achieve. No matter the drop chance of the precursor, rich players also know that any person wanting to create a precursor takes that 33% risk, which can only be eliminated by rolling often enough. Since drops are totally random, the system as a whole is destined to create very unlucky players. You find their stories in the official forum by the dozen each week.

Due to the chance of ending up short by taking a risk, a player who only has money to do it once or twice will think really long and hard whether to try his luck or not. This is the moment where the perceived value of the precursor stops correlating with the average median of rares you need and starts getting closer to the average number of chances you are willing not to take. Where do you push your luck to? 36% failure rate? 13%? 5%? The more risk

averse you are, the higher the price you are willing to pay to somebody else, instead of taking your money to the forge and get it over with.

Will you risk 200 gold worth of rares, or will you pay 260 gold on the trading post and get the precursor for sure? Did you read the post from the player burning 600g that way? As mentioned earlier, there is only 3% difference between six sided die being rolled six times and the 250 sided precursor die being rolled 250 times. So find a few dice and test your luck.

The very nature of the totally randomized system allows only the very rich players to produce at reliable costs and perceive precursors as cheaper than they are to the regular player looking at his chances. Meaning there is profit to be made. Statistically speaking, for you as a rich player, this is a situation with no risk and a high reward, so all you need is the money and of course a working knowledge of how many rares you actually need. People selling gold on eBay must be laughing all day having premium access to this stylish method of earning money without botting. Most players who want to buy a precursor are better off overspending, than taking their chances with Zomorros, because they can most likely not afford failing a few hundred dice rolls in a row. ArenaNet is willing to end (or severely impede) a player's journey towards a legendary on a dice roll beyond ArenaNet's control. Which is insane considering legendary weapons were supposed to serve as motivation. By being rich, GW2 allows you to hit the real average consistently. Your profit will be the money from players who are rather willing to overspend, than take their chances. As you can see from the formula, no matter where ArenaNet is pushing the dropchance, be it 1:50 or 1:150, the risk is pretty much the same; around 35% to be the sucker. Meaning the profit for insuring against the risk will be at least that number. Supply and demand can merely change your turnover rate without ever endangering your business of converting 1 gold into at least 1 gold and 30 silver.

This is by no means an eternal truth chiseled in stone. All it takes is one patch to take down the advantage of rich players when it comes to production cost consistency; and all other RNG complaints for that matter. The problem is not the average chance of getting a precursor a player has. The problem is the potential of bad luck which will be created in the process. A few player might remember the 1:50 chance the Super Adventure Box offered. Under these conditions, opening 100 chests and not getting a thing is as probable as opening seven chests and get something. Guess which player will feel cheated? Nobody has a problem with players getting lucky, we can keep that part. But players being extremely unlucky is something to get rid of.

At the same time, eliminating the worst forms of bad luck will be removing the business model of being able to sell risk insurance at a premium. Eliminating the 36% chance of bad luck requires only a tiny bit of stacking the deck with a trick called “Fake Luck”. Under the current system, rich and poor (poor meaning less than four digit piles of gold) players have a different perception on the value of the precursors, a perception which in turn becomes the basis for their economic exchange. This is definitely a lot more similar to the relationship Apple and their customers have. Problem being, if you play like a normal person your chances of entering the precursor game are as low as calling up Chinese factories and have them produce smartphones for your personal brand.
Off Topic Explanation: “Fake Luck”.

Fake luck is best created by tinkering with the die itself. We know that if we take a 250 sided die, we can easily roll it 500 times and never have “1” turn up as the result; “1” being your lucky precursor day. Imagine a 250 sided die being rolled once. It fails, you get nothing. Next time, instead of rolling the same 250 sided die, you roll a 249 sided die. Insane in reality, however, computer can do that with ease. Your chances just went up. If you fail again, the number of sides on the die get reduced by one again. Even the most unlucky person in the world will get “lucky” after 250 dice rolls. No way he will fail the roll on a one-sided die. The guy complaining about his 200 empty Super Adventure Box chests does not exist anymore. You will not read his post on the forum.

Now for step two. What happens if the die rolls the “1”. It could simply reset to 250, but doing so would effectively lower the average from 1:250 down to 1:125. This is why the game remembers the number of sides used in the successful dice roll, e.g. 145 sides and adds another 250. After getting the first precursor, the player can roll for his second one. But instead of starting at 250 again, he will now start with a die having 395 sides. From there, the process starts over.

The beauty of this method is that no matter how many dice rolls you take, you will never drop beneath the designed average. You will always be able to say, that you beat the odds a little bit, but you will never be able to say that you are haunted by bad luck. Because luck is no longer part of the equation. Since you can no longer fall behind the average, a rich player has no insurance to offer. We effectively dropped a nuclear bomb on his business idea, since players no longer need to get scared of missing dice rolls so often they take it to the forums.

The average chance over a large sample size is determined by the number of sides you add to the die in the event of a positive result. The maximum size of the initial bad beat you might endure is regulated by determining how many sides the initial die has. The initial number of sides to the die also determines the average chance on the first round. Imagine a Super Adventure Box with an 80 sided die in the beginning, adding 50 new sides whenever it triggers. You end up with pretty much the same amount of rare skins in the system and a lot let forum posts to moderate, a lot less angry customers. Forget RNG, this is modified RNG, fake luck.

Right now, a rich player can roll the “mystic forge dice” more often allowing him to hit averages more consistently, thereby transforming RNG dice rolls into money. If you can barely afford the chance to enter the lottery once and therefore rather choose to pay a premium, you effectively lose money by handing over your money’s worth of RNG dice rolls to a rich player. Not only do RNG dice rolls equate to money, but they are also transferred from poor to rich due to the risk attached. The RNG ends up not being an equalizer, but the source of money piling up on one side of the equation. This is not just a GW2 phenomenon, this also works with weather patterns and globally operating reinsurance companies. Which is why SwissRe can then go on to erect a space dildo in the center of London; player housing anyone?

There is also the potential of an economic vicious circle. A rich player can buy up whole sections of the trading post and reseed them at a profit without customers really being bothered by the price increase. A rich person can use gold to generate knowledge about the game's systems, which can then be used to make more money. A rich person can sell you risk management and earn enough money to affect the prices of the raw materials. The start of a vicious cycle wherein the same 35% risk amounts to more and more gold, since the more players pay for risk management, the more base prices go up, causing a bigger financial risk in the first place and more desire to buy risk management. Supply and demand in this instance do not bring prices down and regulate the market, they do the polar opposite causing prices to explode. By not documenting anything and by giving only the vaguest of hints, ArenaNet themselves have driven up the prices of all items surrounding Zomorros. Because the less a customer knows about the real manufacturing costs, the less they can tell, if they are overspending or not. Meaning they overspend more, meaning base prices get inflated more. This regularly happens with Zomorros, but never with any of the documented crafting recipes. Such is the power of information.

Take the regular crafting professions for example. The unwritten law of GW2 says that the raw materials are always worth more than the finished product. There are even sites, such as GW2Spidy, which do nothing else than to ensure those profit margins remain negative. A normal economy could not work this way, but the GW2 economy can for a very simple reason. Crafting is done for crafting's sake, not the sake of selling the finished product. Many players will perceive to have recovered their costs the moment the crafting XP is awarded, not when the final product is sold. This perception hurts the cost of the final product, it is the final nail that drives costs below 'break even + service charge'. There is also a small inflation problem. You cannot exclusively craft for your own consumption, because you

will have to level your crafting profession to get the items you need, therefore you will create excess items. Oversupply does not result in price-pressure on raw materials. Because the price of raw materials is determined by whether or not you consider them a fair price to help you level your profession, not produce items for sale. This annihilates any chance to productively earn money by crafting. I will concede there being a few items with which to earn a little bit of money. But honestly, you are scraping the bottom of the barrel taking that side of the argument. We want to be Apple Inc., not they guys who flip butter, remember?

Still on my quest to “pull off an Apple” on a level I could afford, I went through all these motions and they have led me down a very unfortunate path. I really did find it. The secret items hidden away in the Trading Post. Why were input items so cheap? Why were large parts of Zomorro's Up-Conversion pool so expensive? In economic terms, for every 1 gold I tossed into the forge, I was getting back 1.75 gold on long term average, +/- 10% depending on my competition. The market size of supply was such that I could earn roughly 8 gold per day. Supply & demand played a role, but not in terms of the gross profit I made, but rather in terms of how many items I burned through. So I came home from work, picked up 200+ items from the trading post, tossed them into Zomorros, took the gold, logged out. It did not even take ten minutes per day and it earned me exponentially more gold than regular play had ever provided me with. Secret knowledge is by far the best thing you can have, if you want to make money.

To this day, I do not have the slightest idea why the finished product is that expensive. Believe me, I tried to find out, to see the value, to get the idea. I still only got conspiracies to offer. Not in a million years would I pay the price I am currently selling at. There was one thing though, which caused my supply to drop: ArenaNet. In weeks during which ArenaNet seemed particularly pleased with having bots removed from the game, the supply dried up to a degree. But for some reason, the price players pay for the up-converted items went up. Am I buying from cheaters and selling back to cheaters at the same time? Has Zomorros an underbelly of money laundering? Another thought which crossed my mind was player flux and economic stability. If the U.S suddenly lost 30% of its citizens, the economic impact would be tremendous. For obvious reasons, that does not happen, 30% will not just stand up and leave the economy. On the other hand, the very same thing happens in GW2 all the time. There is a constant turnover of players, there are activity spikes around patches and weekends. How do you prevent that from derailing the economy? One idea which struck my mind was that of “virtual players”. They do not exist, they are just ArenaNet controlled bots, trading all day to stabilize prizes. They do not need to cheat items into the game, they just juggle them in some ways to provide economic connective tissue between different tiers of items. Some bots simulate items flowing into the market, some simulate items being purchased. This might be close to tinfoil hat country, but there is the fact of me getting roughly 100 items of one (undisclosed) type each day, never any more, never any less, not on weekends, not on patchday. It is like a stabilizing pillar driven into the ground, which has the same size than the maximum amount of visibile items in your trading post pick up queue; weird. The same goes for the items I sold. No matter how dumb the prices were I made up, things got bought. I tried making masterwork items more expensive than rare items and they would still sell faster. I tried making gold items excessively expensive and they sold at the same rate. Without real information, the limits of things to find out by looking at it from the outside were at an end. Be it stupidity of players or mad hatter level of economy design, the day had come to cash out.

When I first started my crazy gold earning schemes, I figured Zomorros was the easiest way to earn the money for the asuran tier 3 cultural armor I set my eyes on. Everything else was just too well documented. Looking back, nothing could ever hope to be easier than what I did. But once I had the money, I lost interest in buying the “Tron” armor. I did not earn it the right way. This armor would not have been something which represented the fun I had playing the game. Instead it became this insight in how dysfunctional the GW2 economy can be and how it long since has started to serve only itself and not the players. Its powers to bring you closer to your goals are nothing compared to its powers of annihilating your ingame progress. This was even before I put on the tinfoil hat to make

sense of what is still happening. I suppose I am one of the players who wants to earn their equipment by actually playing the game; silly me.

For quite a few players, this is probably the largest problem of the GW2 economy. There is no clear path to play the game and properly earn most of the stuff available. You get all this loot, but none of it ever matters to you. For every ecto you salvage that gets you closer to a sword, such as Visions of the Mists, you get piles of merchant trash, which you convert to silver, which you spend to drive up and maintain the costs of ectos. Loot is not reward, loot is work. You need to put effort into converting your loot into the stuff you actually want. 99% of all trading post prices are fueled by that endless conversion of drops, the direct results of a drop design which hardly ever gets you what you want.

At a superficial level, you could argue that all prices are therefore supply and demand. This would be true, if this was a third world country and prices are the result of living human beings having to decide how to spend money in such a way that they do not die. No, the GW2 prices are not the result of biological imperatives and at which price the local eco-system can supply them for a population of humans competing for access to those resources; third world water anyone? The GW2 prices are an expression of arbitrary desires, an entirely different thing. Players do not need berserker gear, they desire berserker gear, and hence the price of blood goes up. Items have the value we perceive there to be and not consuming items has no negative consequence. Which is worlds apart from a real supply-demand conundrum such as the oil price, or grain, or any substance of sustenance a civilization might require. Not consuming a commodity subject to supply & demand has really bad negative consequences. Which is why a third world inhabitant with no excess income will turn every penny twice to make sure he gets the most bang for his buck. It is the very reason some commodities are declared public goods and exempt from being subject to free market forces. By contrast, not consuming a good of desire leaves you perfectly fine. Because of this, you get products such as the iPhone, where you absolutely must be in a position to not need it at all, to be ready to overspend by that amount and actually buy it. Otherwise you walk away just fine. This is what you have to hammer in your head really hard to make it in the GW2 economy. Screw all the supply & demand theorems, go for desirability ratings, do not stop, if they seem to make no sense. Why were ectos ten times more expensive than Mystic Coins for a long time, although you can easily create ten times more ectos each day than you can Mystic Coins? Demand is only one factor, the real culprit here is desirability and only now are players waking up to the fact of Mystic Coins being rarer than ectos. Until the time, the desirability violently shifts away from them once more.

If everybody understood the GW2 economy perfectly, it would be a zero sum game with no winner, a mere loot conversion machine. For the more profitable parts, it does not even make sense to try and write a guide. The moment I shared my method, would be the moment in which it goes to hell in a handbasket and my guide would become void. Other profitable ventures, such as the precursor game, are locked off by the costs of entry to this market. The three core rules of the GW2 economy are that I either earn no money, or money at your expense, or money due to your risk aversion. I tried to perceive the value of all individual commodities inside GW2 and gain an advantage by guessing better than the next guy. But at the moment I realize the core rules of the GW2 economy, its biggest problem emerged. When trying to determine the value of the economy for the game, you can’t help but notice that there simply isn't any.



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