

ISSUE #12

GUILDMAG

MAGIC AND TECHNOLOGY

THE ASURA AND CHARR
Magic and technology embraced

EVOLUTION AND REVOLUTION
The secrets of Tyrian power, unraveled



An Introduction to the
Elder Dragons of Tyria



Tyria in Brambles:
Season 2 of the Living
Story



Secrets of the Fire &
A Different Kind of
Nightmare

EDITOR'S LETTER

GuildMag has been like a child to me. While I am no parent myself, I have been at its birth; I have witnessed it grow up and expand; I was there during its struggles, and I am proud while looking back at all that it has achieved. This child metaphor is striking at another point: at some point, you need to decide to let your children go and develop further all by themselves.

It then comes with great pain in my heart that I have decided that it is time for GuildMag to stand on its own two feet (though counting all of the wonderful people that have helped it grow, that might be a few dozen more feet) and find its own path into the future. I have decided to retire from the GuildMag project, and hand over the parenting to the team that GuildMag has built up during its years. With the publication of this issue, Valiant and all the other current team members will embark upon a new chapter in the GuildMag story - one that will bring new challenges and experiences, but most of all new people that will take GuildMag even further than what it has achieved so far.

To be fair though, in the end, GuildMag never truly was my child alone: it was a project by the community, for the community. It was a child of us all; of me, of you, of all of the Guild Wars 2 community. I want to thank each one of you that has helped GuildMag grow into what is it today, and I invite you to continue supporting it into the future. Specifically, I want to thank all of its current, but also previous, team members that have helped shape the site. On its journey, many people have helped it grow and I would love to call you all out by your name but I simply do not have the space to do so (you know who you are!). Instead I'll limit myself to those that have dedicated more than what I ever expected them to do: Jonny10, Valiant, Draxynnic, Konig des Todes, Thalador, and Littleboat.

I will still lurk in the shadows of the Guild Wars 2 community, and I will continue playing the game, so drop me a line in-game or via Twitter if you ever want to catch up and talk. Guild Wars 2 has been the best gaming community I have ever been involved in and I have learned many valuable lessons during my time at GuildMag that I will take with me during my future career. Thank you all for your continued support. Thank you.

I hope you will enjoy this last issue under my command, and I thank you all for your continued support.

All the best,
Ollannach / Marc



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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ELDER DRAGONS

WRITTEN BY KONIG DES TODES

The Elder Dragons are vast, ancient beings of histories unknown to modern races. The jotun and norn have tales of the beasts placing them to be older than 20,000 years, and records hint to a cycle of waking half that time, making the modern rise the third known rise. The Elder Dragons are known to consume magic, corrupting the living and the lifeless as they see fit, and only ceasing their rampage once too little magic remains in the world for them to survive, going back into hibernation to let the magic of the world renew itself.

Many consider the Elder Dragons to be akin to natural disasters – mindless and uncaring – while others view them as sapient, malicious forces bent on domination, and still others view them as protectors of magical balance. The truth has yet to be revealed.

Dragon Risings

Whenever an Elder Dragon awakes, they cause catastrophic events in the area. When Jormag awoke, he shattered the Far Shiverpeaks wide and deep enough to create an inland sea, and within four years scattered the kodan and pushed the norn south all the while devouring Owl and changing the auroras in the sky. When Zhaitan rose, he lifted the Orrian peninsula and caused a tidal wave that reshaped much of Tyria, and within a decade was ready to wage war on the mortal races due to the surplus of corpses that lay at his feet. When Kralkatorrik stirred, he flew south across Ascalon, corrupting all beneath its path to the Crystal Desert, his rampage stopped only by the actions of his freed champion, Glint, and Destiny's Edge.

Primordus and the unnamed Deep Sea Dragon's awakenings are unknown for cataclysmic events, as they awoke in ways and locations that has not been noticeable to the modern individual. However, 50 years prior to Primordus' awakening – when he was originally meant to awake – his champion, The Great Destroyer, acted as a herald for his coming and spread hundreds of Destroyers across the subterranean networks of Tyria, having them surface in the Tarnished Coast, Far

Shiverpeaks, and the now-called Blood Legion Homelands; and when Primordus himself awoke, he drove the skritt and any remaining asura to the surface, and the dwarves fully underwent the rite to fight the Elder Dragon and keep him beneath the surface. The Deep Sea Dragon, on the other hand, has only been hinted and implied at having pushed the krait, quaggan, and karka out of their homelands, while threatening the largos homelands at the same time.

Mordremoth has been the most recent to rise, and currently in the world we are facing his cataclysmic awakening. Like Jormag, he was not a once-and-done rise that occurred right when he awoke, but instead is having a multi-month long spread of his actions. Mordremoth is setting his domain now, as his corruption grows beneath the soil and across the continent of Tyria, sprouting out in isolated locations of magical power, which he no doubt intends to feed and become ever stronger. And as we have seen with Zhaitan: a faster gain of power and minions results in a faster large-scale assault to the world.



Observations on Activity

One notable thing that is common amongst the Elder Dragons beyond their drive to consume, corrupt, and hibernate is how they react. Over the centuries, many adventurers had probed the Elder Dragons' minions, resulting in a noticeable – even if unintentional by the adventurers – consistent reaction. The Elder Dragons are territorial creatures. If an outsider assaults their territories, their champions retaliate in kind. And the bigger the threat to the Elder Dragons' territory, the harsher the retaliation. It's not uncommon for a dragon champion to assault a large city in retaliation, as we have seen the Dragonspawn – a champion of Jormag – do just that after a failed attempt on its life by Eir Stegalkin, Snaff, and Zojja shortly before the creation of Destiny's Edge.

Atop of this, though they are continuously expanding their territory slowly over the decades and centuries, the Elder Dragons are known for 'short' bursts of activity, which take the form of a massive assault force that is an Elder Dragon short of being as strong as their actual awakening. The periods of these 'invasions' are still questionable, as each Elder Dragon has seen a differing amount of activity.

Primordus, for example, has only two noticed bursts of activity since awakening: firstly, the creation of Mount Maelstrom. And even then, the connection between the volcano and Primordus is speculative, only supposed by the heavy existence of destroyers present. And secondly was in 1319 AE, when the Destroyer of Life breached the surface in the wetlands of the Tarnished Coast in apparent preparation to assault Rata Sum. However, this is also speculative as while there was a large number of destroyers, any invasion or assault was stopped before it could occur – similar to the

Destroyer Queen of 1325 AE, which was surfacing near a skritt Scratch with a new form of minion-creation and was subsequently defeated before most of its minions could be fully formed.

Jormag, on the other hand, has only had a single burst of activity noticed since awakening: in 1325 AE, the numbers and fanaticism of the Sons of Svanir had increased, and shortly thereafter Steag Frostbeard attempted an assault on Lion's Arch, though was stopped before he could put his plans into point. Also during this time, the Claws of Jormag laid siege to the northern Shiverpeaks in the Dragonspawn's place, destroying Lionguard trade routes and harassing the kodan. Still during this time were attempts to consume the Spirit of the Wild, Minotaur, just as Jormag had done to Owl long ago, and Jormag's influence had spread even further south than Hoelbrak itself. This rise in activity has remained for two years, with a continued pressure on Hoelbrak and the norn in full.

These two indicate that, normally, an Elder Dragon needs roughly 200 years before they can begin their full assaults – and Primordus is slowed only by the dwarven armies beneath the surface.

Zhaitan shows a different pattern: he awoke with a nation of corpses at his feet and in a land full of magical artifacts (and as such, awoke with all he needed at the tips of his talons). A decade after he rose, in 1229 AE, he began a full out invasion of Port Stalwart and destroyed it utterly, and 37 years after that in 1256 AE he assaulted Lion's Arch with the same, grown, force. Later on, he sent another massive invasion to Port Noble, wiping it out, and lastly in 1325 AE (106 years after waking) he sent Blightghast, one of his most powerful



Mordremoth consuming magic from the ley lines.



champions, to take Claw Island and further send forces to both Lion's Arch and the three Orders' headquarters. If not for the would-be Commander of the Pact and Lionguard at Claw Island reducing the risen numbers, they could have overran Lion's Arch there, but still managed to nearly wipe out each Orders' HQs before being beaten back.

And even those armies sent by all dragons are mere token forces that they command. Signifying that even being victorious against such invasion forces is merely doing insignificant damages to the Elder Dragons and their minions.

Methods of Corruption and Personalities

Each Elder Dragon corrupts in different manners, each assaulting differently, and each consuming differently. Fundamentally, they're the same, but when you get beyond the basics "corrupt, consume, destroy, sleep" they become infinitesimally different. In corrupting, there are only two similarities to be held. Firstly, corrupting is an active choice for dragon and minion – for example, when Kralkatorrik awoke, though many thought him to have been passively creating the Dragonbrand, it was in fact an active action that he ceased and resumed many times in the battle against Glint and Destiny's Edge. Secondly, all dragons can corrupt equally, but they apparently choose not to – for example, the Sons of Svanir are often seen spreading Jormag's corruption in ways that pure icebrood do not, as does the Sanguinary Blade; with Zhaitan, the presence of risen spreads the corruption into the soil, and artifacts are known to corrupt living beings while Zhaitan himself does not.

Furthermore, through the methods of direct corruption as well as the sayings and actions of the dragon minions and champions, one can determine a shared personality trait (or traits) amongst a particular Elder Dragon and its minions.

Zhaitan – Zhaitan's minions have a continuous theme speaking about what I would summarize as "immortality through undeath" in various manners, as well as telling lies to demoralize the enemy, and the latter is often used in conjunction with the former. Some choice examples include:

Risen Keeper of the Shrine: "The Mists are filled with lies. Zhaitan is our only chance at immortality. Serve him!"

Veteran Risen Kitah Conjurer: "Zhaitan's chosen... Never truly die..."

Sovereign Eye of Zhaitan: "All the death around you. All those who have gone before you. Come to Zhaitan, and find everything you have lost. You can be with them again."

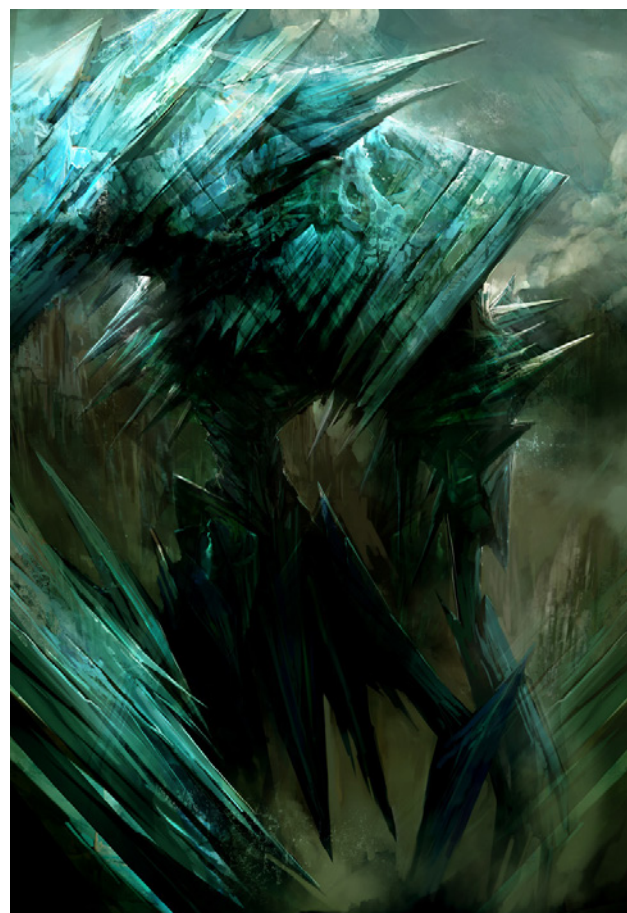
Risen Bronn Svaard: "Don't worry, Grym. You'll join me in the service of the dragon, and we will again fight as one. We will server Zhaitan forever!"

Captain Whiting: "The rule of the living has ended. This is the time of the Elder Dragons. Thus begins the time of Zhaitan and of Orr. The days of their ultimate victory is close."

This mentality in the minions also shows in how Zhaitan corrupts: though we've seen cases (Necromancer Rissa and Corporal Kellach as well as some hearts in Sparkfly) in which Zhaitan's energy corrupts living beings, and we've seen cases where he corrupts plants, this is indirect corruption – directly, he only corrupts the corpses of animals. The living can be corrupted by consuming risen or by being too close to corrupted artifacts.

Though necrotic in nature, Zhaitan has been seen using mesmers that specialize in illusions in high amounts, and some of his most powerful non-dragon champions, the Eyes of Zhaitan, are mesmers as well, furthering his field of lies and deceit. Zhaitan is a liar and deceiver, making a kingdom of undeath to rule forever.

Jormag – There are two things that are constantly used to describe Jormag and his minions: "hate" and "power." The Sons of Svanir aren't the only source of Jormag's minions describing gifts of power, so Jormag seducing norn with such is not simply a case of giving individuals what they want – he offers power, strength, and nothing more. In Frostgorge Sound, Khrigar Ripjaw (a Order of Whispers member integrated into the Vigil and stationed in Safewatch Vale) will tell Whisper members: "Other dragons corrupt creatures in order to enslave them, but Jormag entices victims with promises of power before they're corrupted." Other mentions of power include the Frost Portal in Drakkar Spurs: "Strength alone governs this world. Embrace Jormag, and you will gain power beyond belief."



Jormag's corruption shows itself slowly, coating the victim in ice and freezing the insides over a long period of time until nothing but bone and ice exists.



The mentions of hate come primarily from Eir's retelling of the story of Jora and Svanir, and the Sons of Svanir's origins. Particularly: "[...] They were crossing the frozen waters when a strange presence grasped Svanir's mind. It whispered seductions to him, promised power and prey. It was a voice of infinite hunger and hate, and Svanir listened to it. Jora heard the voice, too, but it terrified her. She refused its dark gifts and tried to drag her brother away, but he struck her and told her she was weak, told her he had discovered the well of power. She fled. Svanir remained to commune with his newfound lord. In time, the voice began to change him. It taught him to hate all living things." As well as: "And despite the destruction, there are still foolish norn who hear the call of Svanir and seek the power of Jormag. In the end, they are reduced to icebrood themselves, flesh wrapped in ice, fed by malevolence and hatred."

Something to note is that only the Sons of Svanir (or former Sons who've kept their minds upon becoming Icebrood) forcefully corrupted beings into icebrood. There are rare cases of corpses being corrupted, but all directly-by-icebrood corruption is through mental enticements. Jormag is, in short, a mesmer and a seducer, bent on only the strong being left in the world, and under his control.

Kralkatorrik – Most of Kralkatorrik's minions do not speak, with only three known cases of such: Glint, Chief Kronon, and Victurus the Shattered, however as Glint has long been freed from Kralkatorrik's yoke she is an invalid source except where she describes Kralkatorrik (and she rarely did beyond to emphasize how powerful and fearful he is), and Victurus appears to be little more than a masochist/sadist – vastly different from Kronon. Victurus speaks only about harming the minions beneath him, and desiring pain himself; Kronon on the other hand speaks only of following Kralkatorrik and giving his master things (such as Ebonhawke shortly before storming the fortress).

There is, however, a moment where we see Kralkatorrik's own mind during the battle with Destiny's Edge: "It was like standing in the eye of a cyclone. All around, a great storm raged, tearing down the heavens and churning up the sands and whirling all in primordial chaos. Tortured coils of cloud mixed with dissolving seas of silt. The winds scoured away rock and rill, tree and blade, flesh and bone – and tossed them all to a crystalline tempest. All things were fuel to that storm. Everything was a feast to Kralkatorrik. [...] The center of every vortex is a great emptiness – a hollow longing. The storm tries to fill the emptiness, but the more it hungers, the deeper the emptiness becomes. And Kralkatorrik's hunger was insatiable."

This points to Kralkatorrik seeking to obtain things. One can view this as seeking perfection – or rather, to become everything – or the more direct view that is: he has absolute greed, wanting everything – even the negatives such as pain,



Kralkatorrik corrupting all around him on his flight to kill Glint.

if one factors in Victurus' dialogues.

Primordus – Primordus is by far a tougher nut to figure out, as none of his minions speak – or at least, have been seen speaking, and this may be due to them all being made out of fire and rock (thus no vocal cords or lungs in which to speak with). However, in his method of corruption and the actions of his minions, we can deduce one thing about Primordus and his plans: genocide. He ignores the living beings, and his minions kill remorselessly. Destroyers are said to be fully mindless killing machines, until a champion comes about. The means of corruption is that they are born out of pools of lava, formed slowly over time. The exception to this is the Destroyer Queen who is speculated in-game to either have been a living being corrupted by Primordus, something unheard of, or a new type of dragon minion – however, if you go to save the skritt you see that some eggs spawn Destroyer Trolls, thus proving the first theory false. The Destroyer Queen is not a living being corrupted, despite most people's thoughts, and the eggs seem to simply be what eggs are: portable incubations for spawning destroyers – the difference is that the destroyer eggs are forming what will be birthed out of rock and lava, rather than flesh and bone. It should be noted that Primordus is still capable of corrupting living beings, however (Source), but he does not utilize this capability it seems.

The only solid evidence we have of Primordus' intentions via words rather than actions is that the Great Destroyer's purpose was to wipe out all life in order to pave the way for Primordus – one can view this as meaning that the Great Destroyer's purpose, aside from waking Primordus, was to hinder the other Elder Dragons of corruptible materials while



building an army and territory at the same time.

Most Elder Dragons act by corrupting life, but Primordus is unique in that he destroys it.

Mordremoth – Due to the lack of examples of Mordremoth's corruptions, it is hard to be clear on the exactness of this Elder Dragon's methods of corruption and personality. Similar to destroyers, we've seen no Mordrem talk (excluding the corrupted sylvari of Aerin and Ceara), but based off of their actions Mordremoth and his minions attack in a very unique manner: through strangulating vines and poisons. Ceara and Aerin do not give much as their level of corruption is questionable, and their manner of speech does not give insights beyond having "seen the bigger picture".

The Mordrem seen appear like tangled vines, formed and compressed into shapes and sometimes with flowers as heads. They appear only where large vines, speculated by Taimi to be part of Mordremoth itself, and spring forth from the ground after an expanse of corrupted vegetation appearing, even in lands desolate of most plantlife such as Dry Top.

There were subtle hints to Mordremoth before his rise in the Inquest facility of Crucible of Eternity, where an abundance of poisonous vegetation took root, furthering the ties of poison that is now seen commonplace amongst the Mordrem.

Recently, the Pale Tree has revealed an interesting piece of information about Mordremoth and his corruption. He is, for reasons still unknown, actively seeking to corrupt sylvari and does so through the cracks of the sylvari's will. This is akin to Jormag's pre-corruption actions, speaking into the mind of victims and converting them to follow him before he attempts corrupting, and may hint to the oddity of Aerin and Ceara compared to standard dragon minions – that Mordremoth does not corrupt to enslave, but breaks the will of his victims first.

This coincides with the conversion of the Nightmare Courtiers; those who do not give in willingly are tortured and tormented until they give in and Nightmare engulfs them, leaving them forever changed to varying degrees. This connection has been speculative for a long time, fueled primarily by the existence of Nightmare Hounds and Summoned Husks that the Court utilizes within the Crucible of Eternity, but with the World Summit there was an attack by a foe long tied to Nightmare: the Shadow of the Dragon. Originally said to be a manifestation of the PC sylvari's Wyld Hunt given malevolent form due to the Nightmare, it has entered Tyria as the first dragon-shaped champion of Mordremoth. This reveal brings further question as to the tie of Nightmare and Mordremoth, and further implies the connection to be true.

All of this points to Mordremoth seeking to strangle life, with force or poisons, and corrupting through torment and breaking down his victims' will – with a preference of plantlife, indicating a possible desire to rule a world where plants are the apex, not animals.

Deep Sea Dragon – Too little is known about the deep sea dragon to draw any conclusions that aren't purely baseless for ties to the Elder Dragon itself. All we know of its means of corruption is what Decimus the Historian wrote in *The Movement of the World*: "In the deepest waters of the sea, another dragon breathed, twisting the waters themselves into tentacled horrors that rose from every lake and river of the land." This indicates that, like Primordus, the deep sea dragon has little need of the living in making minions, and uses the water that it thrives in to make its minions out of directly.

The Dragon Numbers

From jotun stalea, the Durmand Priory has deduced the existence of six Elder Dragons: Primordus, Jormag, Zhaitan, Kralkatorrik, Mordremoth, and the deep sea dragon whose name has not been revealed. However, subtle hints exist throughout the world that may mean that there may be more, by at least one. The primary case of this is in how Rotscale, Glint, and Kuunavang had been continuously compared to each other – even after Glint's reveal as a champion of Kralkatorrik having been freed. There is no known dragon tied to Rotscale, though to his connection of undeath one may think of Zhaitan (alternatively, given Rotscale marched continuously westward towards the Maguuma, he may be tied to Mordremoth – akin to how the Branded march south towards the Crystal Desert and Kralkatorrik; it is not impossible that Rotscale was meant to awaken his plant master, and his being raised by the Stone Summit removed the living plant matter from his body explaining his skeletal look, as Mordrem Wolves are known to contain at least a partial skeleton). Kuunavang, on the other hand, holds nothing in similarity with any of the six Elder Dragons, hinting to a seventh Elder Dragon's existence. The common theory being an Elder Dragon related to sky and/or stars.

There is counter evidence to this, however, in the form of the vision of the Eternal Alchemy witnessed from Omadd's Machine. However, the Pale Tree suppositions to non-sylvari who witnessed this vision that what they saw was not their ties to the Eternal Alchemy, but Scarlet Briar's, indicating that the view was subjective and partial.

It is also possible that the comparisons made are not a hint to the other two (Rotscale and Kuunavang) being dragon champions, but of a race of actual dragons. True enough, there is reason to believe such things.

A STUDY IN MAGICAL DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE SEARING

WRITTEN BY DRAXYNNIC

They say that necessity is the mother of invention. If so, then it could probably also be said that upheaval is the father of necessity...

In the last three centuries, we have possibly seen the greatest period of upheaval since the Exodus. Humanity has gone from being the undisputed masters of Tyria, to a degree where the greatest threats to the human nations seemed to be one another, to being reduced to effectively a single kingdom that is perhaps half of its former extent and under constant risk of losing further ground. Races that were once spread widely across the continent have been pushed together by the pressure of elder dragons rising in the north, south, and beneath our feet.

As a result, it should not be surprising that the magical arts have also changed substantially in this time. Refugees mixing with older inhabitants of Tyria have brought their own techniques, and when combined with more traditional methods have lead to more capabilities still. But much has also been lost as books of knowledge, the experts that wrote them, and the academies they taught at have been lost to cataclysms unleashed by war and by the activities of the Elder Dragons.

In this study, I will seek to chart the changes that have occurred in the body of magical knowledge, identifying the new practices that have arisen during this time and seeking to shed some light on those that have been lost. Due to the size of this study, I have split it into multiple parts, with this first part concentrating on those forms of magic available to adventurers and defenders of Tyria with the direct assistance of magical devices (which will be the subject of a later part).

One of the most significant changes has been a steady decrease in the apparent influence of the Bloodstones, as the supply of magic that does not directly come from the Bloodstones has increased. This has lead some theorists to postulate that the schools of magic associated with the Bloodstones is no longer relevant to modern magic users, as they rely more and more on ambient sources of magical energy that do not seem to hold the same constraints. Certainly, recent revelations coming from Orr as to the true nature of the Bloodstones (to which I refer the reader to other documents) indicate that the Bloodstones were never the ultimate source of magic, and that the magic that has been released from the Bloodstones for mortal use could easily have been soaking into the world of Tyria in general over the centuries since.

However, the restrictions imposed by the Bloodstones established the foundations of many of the magical disciplines we see today – and those disciplines have not merged together as legend says was the case before the splitting of the Bloodstones. Thus, they still remain relevant, as the Bloodstones caused the divisions among the magical professions that persist, albeit blurred, to this day. Accordingly, I have structured this study according to which of the bloodstones I consider each of the professions to be closest to.

Aggression

Necromancer

When the uninitiated think of necromancers, they typically think of the undead that necromancers raise in their service. This may be one of the few things that has actually remained constant over the centuries.

However, several developments have been made in this area. In centuries past, necromancers could raise large numbers of minions with an ample supply of fresh corpses... but they were all fragile things that decayed rapidly after animation, and which would fall apart within minutes of animation unless maintained with increasing amounts of additional energy. While some necromancers continue to use minions of these type (often without even going to any effort to maintain them), most rely more on minions that are protected from decay and persist until released or destroyed. Furthermore, they no longer require a corpse to be fresh to raise a new minion. This transition might have been initiated by an Ascalonian necromancer named Verata – records speak of such a necromancer being chased into exile and finally hunted down and killed for murdering Ascalonian refugees in the trek across the Shiverpeaks to use their bodies in experiments for creating longer-lived minions. At least some of his discoveries survived his death, and may ultimately have lead to the long-lived minions we see today.

As well as long-lasting minions, modern necromancers also make use of some shorter-term animations. Swarms of undead insects have long been part of the undead arsenal, lasting only for a few seconds and thus being viewed more as ammunition than as minions. More recently, necromancers have mastered an art of animating skeletal limbs to grasp at their foes.

The biggest change, however, is that necromancers have moved into the spirit realm – often literally. In ancient times, necromancers were able to curse their foes with debilitating afflictions, conjure wells from the corpses of their foes to aid their allies or hinder their enemies, drain their life force to replenish their own, and draw strength from deaths around them (much as they still do now) but apart from the odd hex that was believed by some to draw the attention of malign spirits, necromancers mostly remained with the aspects of death that remained on the Tyrian side of the veil. Now, however, necromancers are more inclined to unleash the powers of the spirit world upon their foes – summoning shadowy wraiths alongside their corporeal minions, manifesting spectral claws to tear at their enemies, and even transforming into a spirit form – known as ‘death shroud’ – themselves for short periods of time. Previously, magic affecting the spirit world was the province of ritualists (to be discussed later) – perhaps these new abilities were developed due to an assimilation of some of that tradition into the ways

of necromancers, granting them a more complete degree of control over death?

“

MORE RECENTLY, NECROMANCERS HAVE MASTERED AN ART OF ANIMATING SKELETAL LIMBS TO GRASP AT THEIR FOES.

A more subtle change that is observed in the histories is in the use of marks. The marks used today are essentially a form of magical trap, possibly similar to those used by rangers and thieves – however, past records speak of marks as having been a form of curse, granting some additional effect to attacks directed against the target. These marks, along with another lost branch of necromancy referenced as ‘orders’ that can strengthen the blows of allies at the cost of a blood sacrifice from the necromancer, could allow a necromancer to support and direct a group of warriors, directing and augmenting their natural aggression.

Denial

Mesmer

Mesmers have long been regarded as being the most subtle of the dedicated spellcasters. However, in present times, this is a relative thing – when a typical person thinks of a mesmer in battle, what they think of is a powerful mage conjuring large-scale illusions left and right, appearing and disappearing in bursts of smoke and purple fire, directing blasts of chaotic energy, and twisting time and space to their will.

This, however, clashes with records of centuries past of mesmers in battle. Accounts from the Guild Wars speak of mesmers apparently doing nothing through most of a battle except watching intently, waiting for an opponent to attempt a vital spell... and then with a flick of a wrist, the spell fizzles with a burst of unbound magical energy. While mesmers retain the ability to interrupt, steal, and redirect enemy spells, most mesmers nowadays would say they have better things to do in a fierce battle than to simply wait to interrupt a key spell – and they would be right.

The most overt change is the use of large-scale illusions. While illusion has always been part of the mesmer’s toolkit, accounts from centuries ago speak of relatively minor illusions – such as a brief but well-timed distraction that causes a warrior to fumble a blow, possibly causing harm to himself instead of the target. While such techniques remain

in use, more extravagant illusions have become the norm. Mesmer illusions nowadays range from clones of the caster conjured to confuse foes to semi-solid phantasms, able to inflict real harm with their attacks. Research notes dating to before the Searing indicate that around that time, mesmers had begun experimenting with compressing ‘ether’ – or magical energy – into a semi-solid form to protect against attacks or to hinder the movement of foes: perhaps this research was the initial breakthrough that led to phantasms and holographic constructs today?

One tactic that is also mentioned in accounts of mesmers in battles of the past is one of draining magic from their foes, denying it to their enemies while replenishing themselves. This, however, is a technique that has fallen out of favour. When I asked my niece why, this was her response:

“Yes, every mesmer learns the technique of siphoning ether from one place to another in their first steps along the path, but it’s too slow to be useful in combat. Why slowly drain magical energy from the target while they continue casting spells unhindered when you can instead strike them with a concentrated blast of ether that they’ll actually notice?”

It is my hypothesis that this shift in focus is a result of the increased availability of magic in modern times. In the past, magic was sparse enough that stealing it from your enemy could be decisive. Today, however, it is too plentiful for this tactic to be effective – instead, mesmers have reversed it, learning to overload a target with enough magic energy for it to cause harmful effects, manifesting as burns, flares of magical lightning, even as freezing cold or deadly poison. Those particularly competent in the art of chaos magic can exercise a degree of control over these unpredictable effects, harming their enemies while also aiding their allies.

This increased supply of magic may also explain the abilities mesmers have gained to twist time and space, forming portals from one location to another, speeding up and slowing down time... and the often-cited reference to mesmers raising a barrier that reflects projectiles to the attacked may itself be a form of limited time reversal. In times past, the magical power required to manipulate the fundamental fabric of reality in this manner simply was not available. Now, however, time and space have become the playthings of the dedicated mesmer.

I only wonder how many mesmer apprentices and researchers turned themselves inside out or otherwise suffered gruesome fates as they experimented with what increasing quantities of magical energy.

Note: The following section is not to be included in copies of this document that are made available to the general public. Copies with this section are to be viewed by trusted Magisters and others with genuine need to know only.

Another technique recorded as being in use by mesmers that appears to have fallen out of favour is the ability to directly interfere with their target's mind. Soldiers that survived encounters with mesmers speak of seeing visions of their worst fears that none of their companions could see, sharp pains with no clear cause, or being swept by intense waves of uncharacteristic emotions such as shame, guilt and panic that hindered their ability to fight. When I asked my niece if she knew anything about this apparently discarded branch of the mesmeric arts, she denied all knowledge and suggested that any such accounts were most likely those of soldiers attempting to blame mesmers for their own failings.

While I did not think to question her explanation at the time, I have wondered, since that discussion, if perhaps she was protesting too much.

Thief

The thief has the dubious honour of being a profession that was named by its detractors. Unable to agree on a common term among those, the people who emphatically do not call themselves thieves have found themselves stuck with the label that others have applied to them.

While most scholars agree that there is a distinction to be made between thieves and the Canthan tradition of assassins (as I have made here), it is also clear that many of the techniques of assassins have worked their way into thief methods – the art of rapid teleportation known as shadow stepping was first developed by the assassins, and many fighting styles employed by thieves, particularly when wielding daggers, appear to be Canthan in origin. However, much of the mysticism of the Canthan tradition has disappeared.

Historical records indicate that while some assassin guilds aspired to higher ideals, some of the less scrupulous have long been a fixture of Cantha's underworld. In the period of increased communication with Cantha after the Searing, it is likely that, one way or another, their secrets filtered through to spy organisations and criminal groups on our continent as well, that did not share the focus of assassins on bringing death. As this happened, the magics of shadow and deception that were most useful in their lifestyle were developed further, while those that were more concerned with killing or the mystic aspects of the assassin were forgotten – or never learned in the first place. This makes the thief one of the few professions which, instead of expanding from the more rigid constraints of a Bloodstone school, has actually become more closely aligned with one – having lost the trappings of death associated with Aggression in exchange for greater depth in the trickery and illusion of Denial.

Possibly the greatest breakthrough for members of this

profession has been the discovery of true invisibility. It is unclear whether this was first discovered by a mesmer, an assassin, or a true thief in the modern parlance, but certainly thieves have become the greatest experts in its use, such that armies and law enforcement officials alike are now seeking for ways to break such invisibility or at least prevent it from being applied in the first place.

Their most infamous ability, however, is their ability to swipe objects off a target and then employ them against their former possessor – including objects such as magical foci that thieves never normally use. This may, again, be a result of their greater concentration in the school of Denial – stealing the knowledge and magic of their foes and using it against them has long been a part of the mesmer's arsenal. While thieves are even more reticent to reveal their secrets than mesmers, they may be combining the physical act of theft with a cantrip to acquire the knowledge of how to use the item.

Destruction

Elementalist

Soldiers who have fought against the Flame Legion and the centaurs in Kryta will have observed that they employ a very different style of elemental magic to that preferred by more civilised nations. Instead of shifting between different elements as is standard practise, Flame Legion elementalists employ fire magic effectively exclusively, while most centaur shamans focus on earth magic, with some use of air magic by more powerful practitioners.

At the time of the Searing, this was standard practise among all elementalists in the known world. Most elementalists would specialise in a single element, or in two elements with synergetic effects – however, the more a practitioner focused in one element, the less they could attune to others. While a practitioner in those days could switch to different elements, this was a lengthy process that had to be performed in a safe location, as opposed to the almost instantaneous switches that are possible now.

The development of this new technique allowed elementalists to gain the best of both worlds – giving them the benefit of specialising entirely in a single element, but retaining the versatility of wielding multiple elements. However, since this technique still allows focusing only on one element at once, even if they can quickly switch between them, a number of spells that relied on synergies between elements have fallen out of favour.

However, the source of this new method of wielding elemental magic is unknown. Records from the time of Nightfall indicate that Kournan elementalists developed a technique that allowed them to attune with all four elements

simultaneously, a technique that spread beyond Elona's borders in that conflict – however, this technique was not popular at the time, as it proved incompatible with many of the more powerful spells that were available to elementalists at the time. Whether this technique later developed into the fluid switching between elemental attunements employed by modern elementalists, or whether it was simply a dead end and the modern technique was a parallel development, has been lost to history.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS NEW TECHNIQUE ALLOWED ELEMENTALISTS TO GAIN THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

This is not the only major change in the discipline of elementalism, however. While elementalists have long had the ability to bind elemental energies into weapons, this had traditionally been to enhance existing weapons – making it a practise that tended to be employed more by warriors and other more physical adventurers dabbling in elemental magic to augment their attacks. Now, however, instead of simply augmenting an existing weapon, this art has developed into creating new weapons out of raw elements that can be employed by the elementalist that conjured them, or even to be granted to an ally who can then use the spells imbued within the weapon without needing any knowledge in elementalism themselves. Beyond this, the creation and binding of elementals has gone from a lengthy process only available to specialists that are willing to devote lengths of time to creating an elemental army, to a viable battlefield spell capable of bringing a limited amount of elemental assistance at a moment's notice.

Another significant development in elemental magic since the Searing has been the capability to conjure water with healing properties. In those times, 'water' magic was primarily concerned with generating cold and frost to freeze enemies. Despite this, around this time sources of magical water were known to have healing properties – particularly in the Maguuma Jungle, but rangers had also developed the ability to invoke a spring of healing water at any location. Might these discoveries have served as impetus for elementalists of generations past to learn how to conjure such water for themselves?

Unfortunately, it seems some knowledge has been lost as well as gained. My research has uncovered mentions of 'wards' – similar to guardian consecrations and necromancer wells, these allowed an elementalist to extend an umbrella of protection over an area against enemy attacks. Alas, this branch of the art seems to have been completely lost in the

present day.

Rangers

At the time of the Searing, use of magic by rangers was much less overt than it is today. Apart from the conjuration of spirits, in fact, contemporary writers often disagree on whether those ancient rangers actually used magic at all, or whether it was a mix of canny woodcraft, animal empathy and bit of simple alchemy.

From the writings of contemporary authors, it appears that ranger summoning of spirits has advanced greatly in sophistication since the Searing. At that time, the spirits that rangers could summon applied their effects, beneficial or otherwise, to friends and foe equally. While a prepared team could still take advantage of this by being better prepared for the effect of the spirit than their foe, this limited their utility.

Today, rangers have learned how to conjure spirits with more directed effects, boosting their allies and/or harming their enemies. This may have been the result of a sharing of techniques with ritualists (which I will discuss later), which had established the ability to control spirits to only harm their enemies or aid their allies – while the spirits bound by rangers are of a very different nature to those reportedly summoned by ritualists, the techniques of controlling them may have still been compatible. Some modern rangers have also developed the ability to conjure spirits that can move on their own power to follow the ranger after being summoned, instead of being limited to remain in the location they started. Again, this may be a development of ritualist techniques developed to resummon a spirit from its original binding location to a more useful one.

Otherwise, rangers appear to have developed a more overt use of magic. While rangers have been able to generate fire for some time, in recent centuries they have also developed the ability to conjure frost to place traps or to freeze a weapon as they throw it. In the meantime, rangers seem to have made a deliberate move to abandon the simple alchemy that their ancestors may have employed to ignite their arrows – instead this technique appears to have spread to warrior archers that care less for natural magic.

Of course, most rangers would say their powers are not related to those wielded by elementalists, but instead come from nature itself. It's possible that this is indeed exactly what has been happening throughout the centuries – calling on nature spirits without relying on Bloodstone magic in a similar manner to how ritualists reportedly invoked their spirits since long before the unlocking of the original proto-Bloodstone. Such a theory as to the nature of the magic wielded by rangers would provide a simple explanation as to why rangers have more overt forms of magic than in past generations – because there is now more magic to be

received from the world around them. If this is the case, then it is possible that the only reason that it manifests in elemental forms is because, as the elements are a part of nature to begin with, this feels more natural to rangers than magic that is more closely related to the other schools.

Preservation

Monk

Readers unfamiliar with history may be perplexed at the mention of monks as a spellcasting profession, as in modern times they have been effectively replaced in most circles by guardians. In fact, today it is most common for monks to be found among undead and other groups that continue to practise magic from before the Great Tsunami. Interestingly, Pact forces from Orr have reported little if any presence of monks among the forces of the Risen – a number of theories have been put forth to explain this, but as monks were reported among the Orrian undead unleashed upon Kryta by Vizier Khilbron after the Searing, the simplest is probably that Khilbron had already recruited most of them before Zhaitan awoke.

The disciplines of monks were divided among three main strains, which human practitioners at the time associated with the gods (even more strongly than other branches of magic). Two of these have been further developed by modern guardians – the discipline of Protection largely consisted in conjuring barriers of magical force in order to defend a subject against attack, a discipline guardians still employ today both in its original form and in converting them into weapons to defeat their enemies. A more directly aggressive tradition at the time was of Smiting, directing energies against the monk's foes that human texts label as "holy". Descriptions of this energy of use speak of blue-white flames and bolts and beams of light – very similar to that used by guardians today, including early records of symbols.

Interestingly, these energies are commonly described as being particularly effective against undead. No such additional effectiveness from such energies are observed against undead in modern times, although it is worth noting that at the time of the Searing, the offensive capabilities of monks were usually seen as being all but ineffective against any enemies apart from undead, an observation that cannot be made of guardians today. A likely explanation is that the conjurations that produce this energy have been refined so they are as effective against living and constructs as they are against undead, rather than that their old efficacy against undead has been lost.

The third discipline of healing, however, seems to be one that has atrophied in recent decades. While guardians are still quite proficient magical healers, they pale against accounts of monks of old, which accounts speak of being able to bring an

ally back from the brink of death with a word and a gesture... and to continue doing so for a lengthy period of time until their powers were exhausted (or drained by a mesmer). Tales even speak of monks as even being able to resurrect those who have crossed death's door, as long as they can reach the fallen in time.



ACCOUNTS SPEAK OF BEING ABLE TO BRING AN ALLY BACK FROM THE BRINK OF DEATH

That such a powerful ability is spoken of in such a matter-of-fact way, and yet now has been lost entirely, is astounding. Some of my colleagues have argued that this 'resurrection' was most likely actually nothing of the kind, and that the ancients were pronouncing as dead those that were merely mortally wounded – that this 'resurrection', in fact, was merely the ancestor of the basic battlefield first-aid taught to all soldiers and would-be adventurers today. On the other hand, records have spoken of such resurrection magic continuing to function even after a minion has been raised from the corpse of the dead, suggesting that it at least represented a magic powerful enough to restore a subject to a measure of health even after a significant portion of their skeleton has torn itself from their body and wandered off at a necromancer's command. It seems unlikely that such powerful and, seemingly, widespread magic would have been simply lost – that it is no longer available today suggests something has changed that prevents it. With the silence of the gods and reports that Zhaitan was able to pull souls from the Underworld and force them into his Risen, perhaps Greenth felt it necessary to seal the Underworld against return traffic, and the loss of resurrection magic was a necessary sacrifice in order to prevent more souls from being forcibly claimed by Zhaitan?

Paragon

The tradition of the paragon is believed to have originated with the Order of the Sunspears in Elona, where Paragons formed much of the officer caste within the order, although paragons were often found as officers in other Elonian armies – and sometimes abroad, as traditions spread after Nightfall. Legend has it that every Paragon had been the survivor of a near-death experience, which unlocked their new abilities and encouraged them to take up the spear and shield. Perhaps some divine inspiration was involved in the initial discovery of these techniques, but they have also proven to be able to be taught just like other traditions.

Tales of paragons speak of acting as conventional leaders, inspiring, rallying, and directing their troops through a set of vocal commands, speeches, and stirring verses. However,

while paragons were not regarded as true magic users at the time, tales also speak of their arias and ballads generating supernatural effects – causing the weapons of their allies to set those they strike aflame, preventing and healing injuries, hurling javelins that strike like bolts of lightning, and even raising the dead. It would be easy to write such stories off as hero-worship of beloved leaders, if not for one thing:

Many of the same abilities are used by guardians today. While they dispense with the song-and-dance attributed to paragons (which raises the question of whether this was really necessary or a show that was being put on for their subordinates...) modern guardians are able to do many of the things attributed to paragons – except, of course raising the dead. While spears have fallen out of favour except as a weapon for underwater combat, a common guardian technique does involve projecting bolts of energy from their spears... and orbs of lightning are a common part of the guardian's arsenal above the waves, although there they dispense with spears for more traditional spellcasting foci.

This is consistent with what we know of the guardian's origins in that chaotic time after the Great Tsunami, when several traditions came together to form what we now know as the guardian. While monks had more scholarly knowledge of the school of preservation, the paragons had an instinctive knowledge of how to incorporate this magic into their fighting styles and leadership skills. As the guardian tradition became more established, techniques that had been previously applied to spears only got expanded to a wider range of weapons, and guardians became experts at using a range of martial weapons as magical foci as well as for their original purpose.

Guardian

Many efforts have been made to establish a fighting tradition that seamlessly blends magical and martial fighting techniques – including the dervish (to be discussed later) and various orders of warriors dabbling in magic to augment their fighting techniques. The guardian, however, represents the most advanced iteration of this concept currently known, although other magic users also make use of martial fighting techniques in a limited fashion.

As previously discussed, history records the guardian as being a conglomeration between multiple traditions – the monk and paragon as previously discussed, the ritualist (to be discussed later) and some have argued the dervish as well, although no firm evidence of this connection has been made.

The story goes that over the years, monks increasingly began to recognise that they were priority targets in most battles – due to the combination of their light armour and ability to keep the rest of a squad fighting – and sought ways to improve their own protection. These monks formed a

collaboration with paragons from the Order of Sunspears that had fled from Palawa Joko's occupation – the former learned how to employ magic while wearing heavier armour and to blend the magical and martial arts, while the latter benefited from the greater breadth of magical knowledge of the monks. Afterwards, additional techniques were absorbed into the tradition.

As a result, many guardian techniques are developments of those used by their predecessors – as well as those already described, the sheet and ball lightning employed by most guardians for ranged combat most likely grew out of the ethereal lightning once employed by ritualists. Significant advancements appear to have been made, however – in the past, protective fields were only able to be applied on individuals (although some spells are capable of applying them on multiple individuals at once) while now they can be cast to protect an area. Where symbols used to be purely offensive in nature, the symbols employed by guardians usually provide some benefit to allies in their area as well as harming foes. The biggest advancement, however, probably comes in the ways guardians have learned to combine spells into physical attacks – including directing waves of force at foes from a sword blade and producing symbols through slamming a blunt weapon into the ground, among other examples. While other magical traditions have developed their own techniques of augmenting physical blows with magic, guardians are probably the masters.

Possibly as an extension of using the physical forms of weapons in their magic, guardians have developed one technique that is truly their own (albeit with some analogues in mesmerism and elementalism) – that of generating weapons of magical force to fight beside them for a short time. Opinions vary as to the true nature of these weapons – some guardians regard these 'spirit weapons' as being spirits that they call to their aid that happen to manifest in the form of weapons (similar to the animated weapons reported in Orr, although those have physical forms rather than being constructs of magical force). Others regard them simply as magical constructs that act as extensions of their own will, similar to the phantasms produced by mesmers.

Undefined

Ritualists

According to Canthan history, the tradition of ritualism represents the oldest form of magic used by humans on Tyria, predating the unlocking of Bloodstone magic by several centuries. While ritualists expanded into using Bloodstone magic once it became available (which I suspect to be Preservation, given that ritualists were also associated with healing and protection, and that ritualist techniques would later be absorbed by the guardian) the ritualist's practise of spirit-binding allowed them some measure of supernatural

power at a time when magic in the world was much weaker than it is now.

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ACCORDING TO CANTHAN HISTORY, THE TRADITION OF RITUALISM REPRESENTS THE OLDEST FORM OF MAGIC USED BY HUMANS ON TYRIA, PREDATING THE UNLOCKING OF BLOODSTONE MAGIC BY SEVERAL CENTURIES

This likely occurred because, at a time when very little magic was available within Tyria itself, the most efficient use of what magic was present is to access somewhere where more power can be found – namely, the Mists. By using what magic they did have to open a portal to the Mists and beseech a creature from the other side to employ its power on behalf of the ritualist, the ritualist was able to multiply the limited power available to them, possibly by several orders of magnitude. Even when Bloodstone magic was available, the subsequent division of the Bloodstones meant that, through calling on spirits with knowledge of other magical disciplines, the ritualist could achieve a level of versatility that other spellcasters often lacked.

Whether because of the destruction of Lion's Arch and the loss of communications with Cantha, or simply because the strength of Tyrian magic has increased such that the practise of drawing power from the Mists in this way has grown obsolete, the ritualist tradition has fallen out of use in the local region of Tyria. However, there are many signs that parts of the ritualist art has been absorbed into other traditions – as discussed previously, rangers have developed a finer degree of control over the spirits they summon and necromancers have expanded into the spirit realm they once mostly eschewed. Stories of ritualists speak of them bestowing 'spirit weapons' on their allies, although if a link truly exists between these and the spirit weapons used by guardians, they seem, like elemental conjurations, to have graduated from enhancing an existing weapon to creating a new one. Even the more practical conjurations of elementals used by modern elementalist may owe something to techniques of spirit binding that were pioneered by ritualists.

Assassin

As previously discussed, the commonly accepted original source for many of the magical abilities displayed by thieves

are the members of the legendary assassin guilds of Cantha. While the stories indicate that these shadow killers relied primarily on their skills with daggerwork in order to do the deed, they also indicate that many assassins relied on a number of minor supernatural abilities to ensure that they could reach their mark, dispatch them, and make their escape.

Prime among these is the art of the shadowstep. Appearing as if teleporting from one location to another, accounts suggest that assassins may not actually have been able to use this technique to reach places they could not reach by conventional means, suggesting that shadowstepping may not entail true teleportation, but a short burst of extraordinary speed. For a long time, teleportation was viewed as the province of necromancers, but in recent times this has been overturned as followers of other schools have discovered their own, often more efficient, means of teleportation. With shadowstepping now common among modern thieves – who otherwise seem much closer to the Denial school – it seems that this ability was part of this school all along.

However, this is not the only ability linking the assassins of old to the powers of necromancy – assassins are credited with the ability to draw power from the afflictions they have inflicted on their foes to rejuvenate their own spirit and vitality, along with sapping the health of their target through magically conjured toxins – not necessarily delivered through a weapon as is common practise among thieves today, but manifesting directly within the target's system with a touch of the hand or even at a distance.

How this is possible is something that, without re-establishing contact with Cantha (and perhaps even then, given the changes that have taken place in the way magic seems to operate since then), we may never know. Perhaps the assassins were another early adopter of the rising current of ambient magic alongside an attunement to the Denial Bloodstone, or perhaps they found a way to tap into two Bloodstones, accepting a reduced flow of power compared to more specialised spellcasters in exchange for being able to access the lesser magics that were important to their vocation. Another answer could be in their relationship with Grenth – assassins from the more principled guilds were known to request the sanction of Grenth before taking an assignment, and it may be through his hand that they were able to wield powers associated with other forms of magic.

Or perhaps these more mystical talents of the assassins never truly existed, and the tales of their powers have been exaggerated by fear and superstition. Certainly, the claims that the most skilled of assassins could stand up to all the horrors of the Underworld without suffering the slightest injury can hardly be regarded as credible.

Dervishes

It is difficult nowadays to find information of the scythe-wielding holy warriors known as dervishes as those schools in this tradition that had been established in this part of Tyria were destroyed in the flooding of Lion's Arch. Any masters of the profession that survived this catastrophe seem to have been lost thereafter, possibly fighting against the many enemies that Kryta had at the time or returning to Elona to join the resistance against Palawa Joko. With the route to Elona blocked by dragon minions and Joko's armies, we have also been unable to seek information at the location where the tradition was established.

Rumour has it that the Order of Whispers – another organisation that began in Elona – has a secret route that allows them to access Elona and assist in the resistance against Palawa there. I have submitted a request to the Order of Whispers for any light they might be willing to shed on these holy warriors. No response has been forthcoming.

What the records do show, however, is that dervishes were capable of wielding effects that were reminiscent of a variety of schools of magic. They had the power to call the earth and winds in their vicinity to their aid, a power typically associated with Destruction, but also to manifest the blue fire and burning light associated with the school of Preservation. Finally, some battlefield reports speak of dervishes healing with every sweep of their blade, reaping their enemy's life force to replenish their own – a capability usually shown by wielders of Aggression magic. In a time when the divisions between the schools were reportedly stricter than they are now, how could this be?

The answer may well lie in the relative newness of the tradition compared to most that were around at the time of the Searing, or even today. Dervishes first started appearing in Elonian legends during the Shattered Dynasties era, six centuries after the Exodus of the Gods. If the Bloodstones have been feeding magic back into the world in general since the Exodus, it is possible that dervishes first appeared around this time because it was then that the ambient magic of the world first became strong enough to be useful in combat, albeit lacking the power available to more specialised magic users that relied on the Bloodstones. This lessened power would also explain why dervish traditions emphasised mixing magic and martial techniques – their magic alone would not have made them a match for a specialist, but when combined with and used in concert with their skill with scythes it made them a force to be reckoned with. Alternatively, of course, it is worth noting that dervishes were known as the most devout of the traditions around the time of the Krytan civil war, including being able to assume the forms and some fraction of the powers of the gods – it is possible that the powers of dervishes came purely through being granted by the gods, as members of some other traditions once believed of their

own magic, and it is this divine mandate that kept them independent of the Bloodstones. If so, this would provide an additional reason why this tradition has faded from history.



DERVISHES WERE CAPABLE OF WIELDING EFFECTS THAT WERE REMINISCENT OF A VARIETY OF SCHOOLS OF MAGIC

It is difficult to point to anything that the dervish tradition may have passed down to present times. Since the Searing, magic users of all traditions have placed a greater focus on training to defend themselves in close combat, including using their magic in concert with martial weaponry, and otherwise demonstrate powers and techniques similar to those reported of dervishes – but this may simply represent finding their own path to a similar goal. Certainly, nobody in current times uses the scythe as a serious weapon of war!

There is, however, one element of dervish training that may have persisted – despite the silence of the gods, reports persist that some particularly heroic and devout humans are able to retain the power to call upon the blessings of the gods within themselves, including being able to transform into forms associated with Melandru and Grenth. Perhaps these represent some vestige of the powers once wielded by dervishes.

Warrior

Many warriors, particularly among the charr, scoff at the notion that they use magic. However, increasing evidence has been growing that they do – they just don't always realise they are. Instead, it mostly seems to be an instinctual process, using magic that flows through their bodies to augment their strength and toughness. Since this has only recently been recognised, however, it is difficult to track how warriors may have changed in the way they have used this power over the centuries.

One intriguing connection, however, is in the observation that the energy that trained warriors build up when fighting to unleash powerful blows is one that, in the past, could be drained away from them by a mesmer or augmented by a friendly necromancer. These techniques have been lost, but if this buildup of battle energy can be augmented through the use of the Aggression school of magic, this raises the possibility that this energy might itself be in the same school. As a necromancer instils their minions with the power of Aggression to rouse previously inanimate corpses to fight their enemies, a warrior may instinctively be channelling the same power through their living tissue, greatly amplifying

their strength and allowing them to withstand blows that would fell other adventurers.

Even so, however, warriors in times past often dabbled in other forms of magic. One monk orison in particular, known then as Mending Touch, was particularly popular among warriors around the time of the Searing to keep them on their feet and in fighting condition - this appears to have become a staple in the training of many warriors. Furthermore, at the time, many warriors also dabbled with earth magic, particularly in conjuration with hammers – the seismic effects generated by some warriors when wielding blunt weapons may simply be due to hitting the ground that hard, but the moment of focus needed to unleash such effects may also involve a now-instinctive harnessing of earth magic that warriors past learned to incorporate into their fighting. At the time of the Searing, no warrior could employ both of these magics at once due to the constraints of the Bloodstones – now, however, Tyria’s ambient magic is likely more than sufficient to power such relatively minor cantrips.

Finally, the technique that has developed among warriors of igniting their arrows before firing should be considered. While alchemical substances may be the source of the flames, these warrior archers may also be unknowingly employing rudimentary fire magic to ensure that these flaming arrows behave as desired.

Engineer

Possibly alone among the adventuring professions of Tyria, engineers do not appear to be using magic directly. However, they have become experts at making use of the magical properties of the materials they use, creating a variety of alchemical substances and technological devices that exploit the properties of magic to function in ways that would be otherwise impossible.

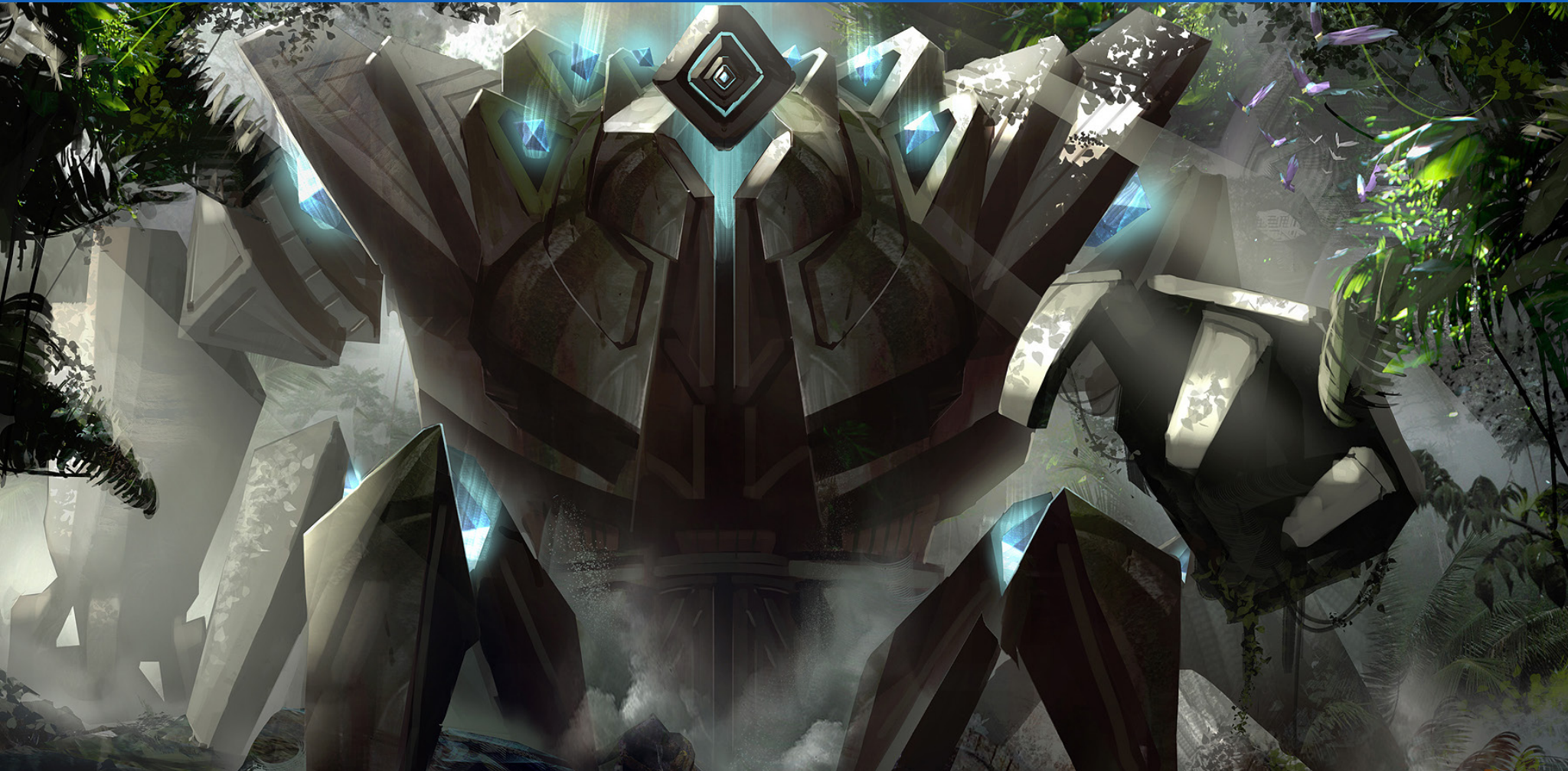
Such developments in magical technology will be covered in a later part.

Conclusion

This concludes my review over the ways that magic employed by the adventuring professions of Tyria has changed over the centuries. In future parts, I will research developments in how technology has been used to harness magic, the discovery of new properties and sources of magic, and the properties of magic when it has been absorbed by those beings that represent the greatest threat to Tyria presently known – the Elder Dragons.

A DISSERTATION ON ASURAN GENIUS

WRITTEN BY MIKO RIEL



**Dissertation by Dagg of the College of Statics,
in partial fulfilment of graduating degree requirements.**

Asuran genius is a concept well understood by any asura with the cerebral and cranial capacity to comprehend such logical and simple matters. Interactions with other sentient races, however, demonstrate that these Tyrians are more primitive in their beliefs, preparation, and training, and, more importantly, that their ability to understand asuran genius is limited. To that end, the goal of this dissertation is to explain to lesser races, in terms they can understand, who we are and why our knowledge and understanding of the Eternal Alchemy makes us geniuses and the most advanced Tyrian race known to date. Given the variety and fluctuation of comprehension levels within the target audiences, I've kept this treatise brief so as not to tax cerebral synapses.

Origin

Asura are an ancient race dating back more centuries than average Tyrians can fathom. We had no reason to interact with other races, save the dwarves upon occasion, until 1078 A.E. when the Great Destroyer, general and champion of the Elder Dragon Primordus, forced our people to the surface in search of habitable environs where we could re-establish our cities, labs, and residences. Yes, asura lived below the Tyrian surface, closer to the core of our planet where we could

study the Eternal Alchemy and its magical ramifications more precisely and without distractions. Unlike other tunneling races, such as dredge or skritt, whose coarse cultures and diminished intelligence leave them open to enslavement and stupefaction, asuran genius flourishes individually, increasing through the exchange and competition of ideas in logical and analytical exercises. This adaptability made us perfectly capable of adjusting to life on the Tyrian surface, establishing cities and labs quickly. As Cepha's recent physiognomic research proves, asura are best equipped to understand and expound on the Eternal Alchemy (1); adaptation to new terrain and environments, then, are akin to a progeny's first lab experiments.

Benefits to Tyrians: Asuran Technological Advancements

The first and still most well-known asuran achievement is the asura gate, those portals which allow rapid and instantaneous travel to distant parts of the world. These marvels are one of our most basic transportation ingenuities requiring careful calibration and maintenance, something that appears complex and impossible to other races, naturally. Merchants and citizens fund the maintenance costs of these gates with a fee schedule dependent ostensibly on local laws and the type

and quantity of matter seeking transportation. While some merchants balk at these fees, the convenience of accelerated travel in proportion to their commercial gains soon outweighs any resentment.

The next well-known convenience is a different iteration of the aforementioned technology: the magi-matter transportive device, commonly known as waypoints. This innovation also facilitates individual travel over small or large distances, for a nominal fee. Without asuran genius, Tyrians would be running everywhere they needed to go, making commerce and defense inefficient, not to mention sweaty. Our understanding of the Eternal Alchemy, and our experiments, led us to place these waypoints, we now know, along strong magical ley-lines, which we did not realize at the time. We abandoned those set further away due to the decrease in magical energy able to sustain them. This fact was confirmed just recently (2) by a progeny engineer from the College of Synergetics, proving once more that even our children are more advanced and capable to lead Tyrian societies than those of other races.

Asura are also known for our golems, beings created by golemancers out of stone, vegetation, and other semi-natural materials. With their imposing size, durability, and tenacity, lesser races might conclude that anyone can pilot a golem, or that they can replace asura when genius is required. Without the correct user input, however, golems are not capable of complex rationalization and analysis, and this is by design. Golems are tools and most effective when using Snaff's mind/golem interface technology. Having golems that can be operated remotely with the power of one's thoughts is a double benefit to their programming, which is why most modern golems now use this technology. Refining and improving effective technology is what asuran genius is best at. Controlled experimentation and field research are crucial to the maturation of our creations and improvements.

Organization Leads to Innovation...

The key to success of asuran genius is our propensity for collaboration in order to augment the potential of successful creative endeavors that understand and master the Eternal Alchemy. Our culture has evolved from a system reliant on mentorships and krewes to one of apprenticeships within one of our three colleges. Graduation ultimately leads to working with the most innovative krewes, or becoming one of our pioneers. Unless an individual prefers scheming and thieving with the Inquest, this advancement in our culture and society foments our creative genius, allowing us to gather knowledge, develop theories and projects that test and refine this knowledge (in order to demonstrate our successes; inspire and remind less-gifted krewes that their work is substandard), and progress to the next innovation with krewes members worthy of our talents.

Because our culture prizes reputation and shrewdness, the most successful geniuses ensure their krewes are comprised not only of cutting-edge thinkers, but of asura who can substantiate their theories through demonstrable evidence. No one wants their lab's reputation for innovation and safety questioned. To this end, our experimentation necessitates precise measurements and verification, whether we tinker with levitation buttresses, magiphsical armatures, or the prestimystic readouts generated by sentient beings; asuran genius, though logical, is not to be taken lightly.

Conclusions and Implications

Thus, lesser races would do well to continue their associations with asura. We may be diminutive in stature, but that is only because genius flourishes best when one's cortical neural impulses have less distance to travel. It is a logical manifestation of the Eternal Alchemy. Our technologies and incessant studies of the Eternal Alchemy will be Tyria's greatest weapons against the Elder Dragons.



SECRETS OF THE FIRE

PART II

WRITTEN BY LADYLALA

Lydia collapsed back onto the pillows. "That was amazing." She looked at the man beside her, who scowled. "Don't look so surprised," he muttered darkly. She laughed and swatted at him playfully. "You are amazing, Nolan. That never surprises me," she said, stroking his face. That brought a smile to his face, and he drew her closer to him so she was lying on his chest. She turned her head so she could stare unabashedly at him.

Short, wavy black hair sat above his dark brown eyes, which melted like chocolate as they looked at her. He had a chiseled jaw and prominent cheekbones with full lips, which she traced with her fingers. Tanned skin from years spent in the sun stretched tightly over lean but strong muscles. Lydia felt a fierce sense of pride as she stared at him. Nolan was hers; her brave soldier. He had come from the slums of Divinity's Reach, enlisting in the military as soon as he was of age. He worked his way up to become a member of the Seraph, and now directly served under Logan. They had met after she came back from Orr, when he was guarding the queen.

"You ok?" he whispered, looking into her eyes. She was about to nod, but couldn't. Instead, she shook her head and looked down as she told him about the conversation between her and Senela.

"They're insane!" he replied, shaking his head. "Your father voted for it, didn't he?" Lydia nodded. "Damn him. I don't think Logan knows yet; he's not always privy to what goes on in council meetings." He got out of bed, shaking his head again. "You need to tell him tonight. I've got to get ready for patrol anyway."

Lydia watched him get dressed. Watching him put on his gleaming armor was always a sight to behold, and it also gave her a thought.

"Why do we have to continue to hide? I'm not ashamed to be with you, and it's not like anyone can do much about it."

"Ah, but they can, dear," Nolan replied. "You know your father, and what he would do. He already doesn't approve of you helping the poor, and he has the power to keep you locked up in here like a delicate princess if you do anything else he disapproves of. As for me...I'm disposable. They could make me disappear any time they liked."

Lydia's heart sank just thinking about it. "You're right, as usual. I'm just tired of hiding. I'm tired of constantly looking over my shoulder for so many reasons."

Nolan finished getting dressed and sat in front of her on the bed, reaching out to touch her face.

"I know, Lydia. Not to sound harsh, but some of that is

the price you pay when you save the world. As far as our relationship goes though, I completely understand. We shouldn't have to love in secret. No one should. But for now, I would really like it if you weren't locked up, alright?"

She smiled and held his hand to her face for a moment longer. "Alright."

Nolan nodded and stood up. "Good. Now, go see Logan. He needs to know right away." He kissed her one more time before walking out the door.

Lydia sighed before standing up and getting dressed. She looked in her wardrobe and was mildly amused. Most of the ample space was taken up by armor and various battle gear. Shoved against one of the sides were a few court dresses, reserved for when her father absolutely demanded it of her. Even though she was raised like a noble lady and knew how to act like one when the situation called for it, she hated it. She had always felt most at home on the battlefield. She slung her bow on her back and walked out.

Lydia stepped up to Logan's door and raised her hand to knock. What stopped her was muffled voices coming from the other side. A corner of her mouth raised as she recognized them. She stepped back a few paces and waited. A couple of minutes later the door opened and Queen Jennah made a startled noise.

"Lydia! I mean Lady Toran, I mean--"

"Hello, lady queen. I had no intention of intruding, I simply have a matter to discuss with Logan."

The queen's eyes narrowed in suspicion. "At this time of night?"

"I'm sure it will be brought to your attention, if it hasn't already. Besides, I'm sure you and Captain Thackeray have been doing quite a lot of...discussing. I wouldn't want to burden you any more tonight."

Jennah relaxed a little and chuckled. "Thanks, Lydia. Just make sure you come to me if it really is important."

"Of course, my queen." Lydia smiled after the queen as she walked away. She meandered through the door to find a

shirtless Logan glaring at her.

"Captain Thackeray? A bit much, don't you think?"

Lydia laughed and folded herself into an armchair. "You can't blame me for having a little bit of fun. Besides, it's about time something happened with you two. I was getting tired of seeing the longing glances across ballrooms and banquet halls."

Logan threw a cushion at her, which she deflected lazily.

"What are you doing here, Lydia?"

Lydia's expression sobered. "I was going to wait until tomorrow to tell you, but I...thought better of it. Minister Senela called me to her office tonight. They passed another tax law."

Logan cursed and started pacing around the room. "What were they thinking?! How could they have thought this would be a good idea?"

"I said the same thing. But the minister also warned me that this could be the final straw to start a rebellion among the lower classes. I've heard some rumors, but nothing concrete yet. She was concerned for my safety, but I'm more worried about everyone else's."

Logan stopped and looked at her. "Senela's right. Some intel just went missing. It was high level access, so whoever stole it has to be high ranking. Maybe there is a rebellion, and the leader is one of our own. This is a nightmare. I'm assigning you a bodyguard."

"No! That would make it worse. It'll make it look like I'm suddenly afraid to go around them, like I'm afraid the so-called scum of Divinity's Reach could become monsters and attack at any moment. You know I can handle myself. And I'll have Bena with me at all times."

Logan sighed and sat back down on the bed across from her.

"I hate it when you're right. Just be careful, Lydia."

She smiled and patted his knee. "I will. Now get some sleep, you must be pretty worn out." She giggled and ducked as another cushion was launched at her. She scurried out the door before he could start throwing bottles.

The next morning, she awoke to find a letter had been slipped under her front door. She opened it, and read: You were right. The rebellion is starting. The council is meeting at midnight tonight in the queen's private offices. I hope you'll be there. – Logan

Lydia immediately burned the letter. Bena slunk in, sniffing at the smoky air.

"Sorry girl, I can't take you tonight. We'll go hunting again soon, I promise." Lydia absentmindedly stroked the big cat's head, thinking. Her father would definitely be there, which was all the more reason to go. He couldn't exactly refuse the head of the Seraph's wishes, as much as he would like to. She made up her mind, then decided to wander around the city to pass the time.

As she stepped outside her district, the familiar senses overtook her. She always relished her ability to get lost in a crowd, and even more so now. But still, there were a few people that recognized her. Her magical ability amplified her hearing, and she started wishing she could turn it off.

"There's that bastard Toran's daughter. I wonder if she helped him pass the new law."

"Who does she think she is? She'll never fit in here. She just helps the poor to make herself look good."

Lydia turned her gaze downward and picked up the pace.

She kept walking until a noise stopped her. She looked up and realized where she was. Uzolan's Mechanical Orchestra loomed before her, playing its eternal song. The music brought a smile to her face, like it always did. As a child, she used to spend hours listening, watching the cogs and wheels turn to produce the beautiful melodies. Even now it brought her tranquility.

Some time later, Lydia shook herself out of a daze. The sun had already set; darkness had fallen on the city. Silence had replaced the music. She made herself stand up, and looked toward the clock tower in the middle of Rurikton. She still had half an hour to get to the meeting. She started meandering out of the district, but stopped halfway down the road.

She listened closely, hoping her ears had tricked her. They hadn't. A moment later, she heard a soft swishing noise, and a footstep. Lydia ducked and swung around to the right, bringing her dagger out of her boot as she went. She made contact with tough leather armor, and heard a grunt as she knocked her opponent into the wall. She quickly reached out, grabbed hold of their neck and pressed her dagger to it. Her would-be assassin was a slender woman, with raven black hair and piercing slanted eyes that glared at Lydia.

"I'm sure you know the drill," Lydia explained. "You tell me who sent you, and I let you live."

The woman laughed. "If only it was that easy. I don't value my life that much, and neither does my employer. It's out of apathy, not loyalty, that I tell you I would rather die than give you information."

Lydia was puzzled, but tried not to let it show. "You know who I am, you know what I'm capable of, and yet you would give up without a fight?"

"Oh, I didn't say I wouldn't fight." The woman shoved Lydia away and swung a dagger, seemingly out of nowhere. Lydia barely dodged it, and returned with an attack of her own. She immediately regretted leaving Bena at home. The two women danced and wove, fiercely striking at each other. Neither gained the upper hand until Lydia tried a desperate feint, which the other woman read too late. Lydia whirled around and caught the woman in a chokehold, whipping her dagger up to her neck.

"Still want to die?" Lydia asked her. The woman just laughed. "We're all dead, even you. Do what you will."

"Have it your way then," Lydia replied, and opened her throat from ear to ear. The woman collapsed to the ground, and Lydia stumbled back a few steps. She took a moment to think, and glanced at her surroundings. She grabbed the woman's limp body and dragged her around the corner to a thin alleyway, then wiped her dagger on the woman's clothes. As she did, the cloth shifted and a small object rolled onto the ground. She picked it up, and stared in shock. It was a sapphire, one of the most rare and precious gemstones. Whoever hired her must be beyond rich. That narrows it down considerably. She pocketed the gem and noticed her hands were shaking slightly. She didn't like killing in cold blood, and what she had just done unsettled her. She shook her head, pushing it to the back of her mind, and hurried along the winding streets to the center of the city. She spent the ride to the top trying to disguise the bloodstains on her clothes. She walked silently through the gardens, paying no attention to the beauty. When Lydia got to the doors of the queen's chambers, she took a deep breath and pushed them





TYRIA IN BRAMBLES: SEASON 2 OF THE LIVING STORY

WRITTEN BY ARCHAES8

When we last left our band of heroes, they were in The Dead End bar in Divinity's Reach, celebrating Scarlet's defeat and contemplating the rise of a dragon, the colossal creature our heroes now know to be Mordremoth, the jungle dragon of poison and annoying summertime weed growth. The dragon's thrall, Scarlet Briar, had laid waste to the city of Lion's Arch and stabbed at a massive leyline hub beneath the ruins of the submerged old city only weeks earlier. Since then, Braham Eirsson and Marjory Delaqua had been recovering from injuries acquired during the Battle of the Breachmaker.

This article contains spoilers for the first half of Season 2. Turn back or be forever spoiled - you have been warned!

Closer to the end of the party, the player is also introduced to Belinda Delaqua, Marjory's older sister. After the two catch up for lost time, Belinda drops a line about being moved out to Brisban Wildlands to investigate Black Market activity in the area, a not-too-subtle hint that we were headed west for Season 2 of the Living Story.

The arrival of Belinda also served to deepen our character's relationships with the Living Story cast and the relationships between cast members. Kasmeer is eager to get to know Marjory's family, possibly because she has been without her own for some time.

Season 2 picks after the Festival of the Four Winds, a traditional celebration held by the Zephyrites of the Zephyr Sanctum at their landing in the Labyrinthine Cliffs. The Zephyrites had recently returned from one trip and were preparing for another, to west of Kryta. The heroes of the Battle of Lion's Arch took the opportunity to relax and enjoy the festivities at the Bazaar of the Four Winds and at the reopening of the Crown Pavilion in Divinity's Reach. Eventually, the Zephyrites left the Bazaar again and the festival ended, as did the lull between seasons.

SEASON 2: EPISODE 1

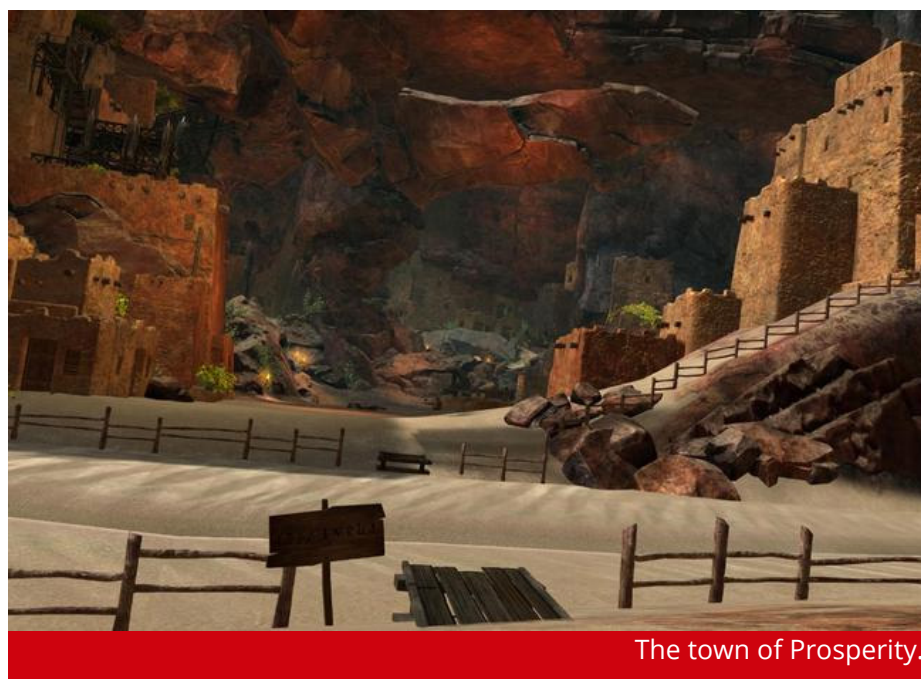
GATES OF MAGUUMA

The Pact Commander receives a new letter from the mysterious "E" asking the heroes to investigate strange happenings to the west of the Brisban Wildlands. This brings us to the region of Dry Top, a location known for its desert-like badlands at higher altitudes and its moist jungle climates at lower spots like much of the Maguuma Jungle of Guild Wars familiarity. On arrival, the heroes note the massive thorny vines responsible for creating the more accessible openings to the Dry Top area. Here the heroes are reintroduced to Belinda Delaqua, working a Seraph outpost near a water pumping station. The peace is short-lived as a small army of Inquest attacked the outpost (a very "small" army *snicker*). The heroes hold back the asura invaders while attempting to clear out the vines blocking the passage to Dry Top at the same time. Eventually the Inquest are dispatched and the players resume their journey, parting ways with Marjory's sister, who is ordered to return to her post at Fort Salma.

Upon entering Dry Top, the heroes are met with a dreadful sight. The wreckage of a Zephyrite airship lay strewn across the landscape. The survivors were those lucky enough to use to their aspect magic crystals to survive the fall. Many others weren't as fortunate. The Pact Commander, Marjory, and Kasmeer split from the group to examine the wreckage and discover the cause. After conquering many natural and unnatural obstacles (courtesy of the Inquest), the group happen upon a fatally injured Zephyrite who explains that a sylvari had been behind the crash and that the sylvari is after the Zephyrites' leader, the Master of Peace.

Marjory and Kasmeer remain at the crash site to tie-up any loose ends, leaving the Pact Commander, Rox, Braham, and Taimi to investigate the small nearby mining town of

Prosperity. After collecting a few clues, the Commander follows a trail of clues out into the wastes using scattered fragments of the Zephyrite aspect crystals to traverse the terrain. Soon, the group reconvenes and continues the hunt together. This finally leads them to Aerin, a male sylvari that had been present aboard the airship. However, the sylvari is distracted, but driven, driven with an inexplicable desire to find and kill the Master of Peace. After multiple encounters, the heroes finally put the sylvari to rest, allowing the Master of Peace to continue his pilgrimage to an unknown location. Afterwards, the group shares notes, mentioning that Aerin's mannerisms were similar to that of Scarlet Briar's. They also rummage through the sylvari's belongings and find a note scrawled with the sylvari's thoughts and paranoia. One important point on the letter is that the citizens of Prosperity had been wary of his presence in town. The heroes double back and learn that Aerin hadn't been the only sylvari to roll through town in the past. A number of villagers' accounts detail the arrival of a female sylvari several months back, with red pigtailed.



The town of Prosperity.

Scarlet Briar had made Prosperity her home prior to her opening act at the Queen's Jubilee, even before the events of Flame and Frost.

Scarlet's early lab is quickly discovered in a rented home and Taimi excitedly volunteers to stay and research the lab from corner-to-corner while the Commander follows another lead to one of the miners in town a norn named "Toska". Toska explains that she'd pointed Scarlet in the direction of a "magical river" that the miners had uncovered before her arrival.

They had found a leyline.



SEASON 2: EPISODE 2

ENTANGLEMENT

Unfortunately, our heroes are several steps behind the enemy. Mordremoth's reach is growing and not long after learning of Scarlet's discovery, Prosperity has fallen victim to the dragon's enthrall. The Commander leads the group further into Dry Top where they encounter a friendly centaur tribe, likely descendants of those who followed the centaur Ventari's teachings. From there, they venture westward again, following a trail of clues left by Scarlet only a couple years before. This eventually brings the team to the sylvari's field lab in the leyline cavern. After clearing out the local Inquest infestation, Taimi, once again, eagerly volunteers to stay behind in the cavern, but not before discovering that Mordremoth has already started feeding off the leyline's magic. The prodigious progeny taps into the asuran waypoint network and discovers erratic behavior coming from both the Fort Salma and Fort Concordia waypoints. The group splits up to investigate with Marjory and Kasmear heading to Fort Salma in Kessex Hills, and the Commander, along with Rox and Braham, to Fort Concordia in Timberline Falls.



You know there's a lot of ambient magic if rocks are floating.

The Pact base is in shambles, and the Commander eventually leads the members of the Pact to the "safety" of the Goldenlight Hallow asura lab to the north, but not before whacking an army of Mordrem weeds along the way. The lab itself is nearly overrun as the Commander approached. With the Pact soldiers and scholars under Rox and Braham's supervision, the Commander quickly takes the waypoint network to Fort Salma. Sadly, much of the fort is already in ruins with Mordrem crawling above and beneath the walls. Even with Marjory and Kasmear's help, the Seraph are struggling to hold their own. After clearing out the Fort, and culling the Mordrem numbers with arrow carts, the attacks subside, but not without cost.

Marjory discovers the lifeless body of her sister, Belinda, in the grip of a Mordrem vine. The Commander and Kasmear try to comfort the detective, but amidst the tears, she urges them to return to Taimi, and leave her to prepare her sister for a funeral.

Finally, the group (sans Marjory) return to the underground leyline in Dry Top. There, Taimi brings them to a smaller side chamber in the cavern. A large (and very pretty) construct of asura design sits at the center of the chamber. The device is revealed to be Omadd's machine, the device that opened Scarlet's mind to the Eternal Alchemy and Mordremoth. Taimi, being the young and curious mind that she is, rushes into the device with the hope that she'll glimpse even a little of what Scarlet saw. The others try to stop her, but the young asura is caught in a magical stasis. The Commander is able to push through the device's defenses with Kasmear's help and throws Taimi out of the way of the magic beam only to take her place.

The Commander's mind opens to the world's network of magic and is thrown into a vision of the Eternal Alchemy with the Pale Tree at its heart, surrounded by six rotating facets. The hero wakes from the vision, confused, disoriented, and alive to the delight of the others. After a game of 20 Questions, the Commander and Kasmear devise a plan to meet with the Pale Tree and the other world leaders to coordinate a World Summit against the threat of Mordremoth with each of the members of the group left to convince their race's leaders to attend.

SEASON 2: EPISODE 3

THE DRAGON'S REACH: PART I

The meeting with the Pale Tree goes off without a hitch as she agrees to host the World Summit against the threat of Mordremoth. From The Grove, the group splits. Rox leaves to find an audience with Rytlock Brimstone with the hope of attracting Imperator Smodur, while Braham seeks the aid of his mother, Eir Stegalkin, to convince Knut Whitebear to join him against the newly woken dragon. Kasmear follows suit, and seeks an audience with Queen Jennah.

Taimi, not present for the meeting with the Pale Tree, had returned to Rata Sum to catch up on her own studies, but sent the Commander information about Mordrem sightings in the Iron Marches, spurring the hero to head out for another field investigation. Like Fort Salma and Fort Concordia, the Mordrem had populated various locations

throughout the charr territory. After lending the fearless felines a hand, the Commander received a second letter from Taimi, mentioning that she'd managed to score a meeting with Councilor Phlunt through her mentor, Zojja, and that he's joined her at the leyline hub. Upon the Commander's return, there was an immediate and vocal conflict between the old councilor and the prodigy progeny. Taimi's age, along with her relationship with Zojja had left Phlunt with nothing short of contempt for the pupil and her wild speculations about leylines and dragons didn't do much to curb his skepticism.

Together, the Commander and Taimi present the prototype for a leyline repairer after fetching some last-minute parts. The device would cycle the magical frequencies throughout the waypoint system, making it more difficult for Mordremoth to abuse the devices. Phlunt, after much debate, agrees to return in a few weeks to witness the effects of the device. Kasmear arrives as the councilor is leaving, reporting that she managed to convince the Queen to attend the World Summit. The Commander then waypoints to the snow-covered city of Hoelbrak to check up on Braham. Just before joining the norn, the hero receives a letter from—wait for it—Trahearne. The Marshal of the Pact has caught wind of the Commander's World Summit and writes that he'll also be attending to give the world leaders an update on the Pact's status and listen to what his favorite commander has to share about the new dragon threat.

The Commander arrives at Eir's home in time to join the nervous Braham as he reunites with his mother. Eir welcomes them into her home and they discuss the Summit. After hearing her son's request, she airs (harrharr) her concerns over whether Knut Whitebear can be convinced as he already has his hands full with the Sons of Svanir and Jormag. She proposes a plan to ease some of Knut's concerns by tasking the Commander with the infiltration and elimination of three powerful Sons shamans causing chaos in Frostgorge Sound. The plan is carried out without much complication and as the three convene at the base of a large shattered dragon totem, Eir and Braham share a short but sweet bonding moment. Braham realizes the burden his mother has had to carry for her people for so long, and understands a little more about why she had to leave him and his father behind. Eir promises to speak to Whitebear and share news of their victory over Jormag's followers.

Rest is for the weak, and the Commander flies off to the Black Citadel to join a frightened Rox as she greets Rytlock Brimstone, whom she hadn't seen since he'd given her orders to kill Scarlet Briar, orders she refused in order to help save Braham and Marjory's lives on the Breachmaker. Rytlock, despite his outer brutish demeanor, simply gives Rox a little tough love before shooing her away to talk to the Commander. Much like Eir, Rytlock is skeptical of Imperator Smodur's willingness to attend the World Summit with so many enemies encroaching on charr territory. Similarly, Rytlock also has a solution; one he thinks can do away with the Ascalonian ghost problem. That's when he mentions his sword, Sohothin, and it's supposed role in ending the curse of the Foefire.



Rox confronts Rytlock.

Rytlock explains that the swords were gifts from Orr and came with a crown that likely belonged to the true royal bloodline. According to the curse, only a member of that bloodline, wielding Sohothin (or Magdaer), could put the souls of Ascalon to rest. Sadly, Rytlock is just about the opposite ideal candidate to undo the curse. For those who know their Guild Wars lore, even King Adelbern and his son Prince Rurik were not of the royal bloodline, Doric's bloodline. Regardless, Rytlock seems to believe he could be an exception, and sends the Commander out into the field to retrieve the fragments of the royal crown.

Once the crown is back in one piece (and your human characters have asked for its return to your hands after the ritual), Rytlock, Emperor Smodur, Rox, and the Commander descend into Duke Barradin's (guess who WAS a descendant of King Doric?!) tomb and begin the ritual. Like clockwork, the angry ghosts rise up to defend their Duke's resting place and repossess his statue. The group defeats the ghosts with minor difficulty, and Rytlock finally puts his research to the test. With a dramatic "Ascalon, I free you from this curse!" the Tribune plunges Sohothin into the floor of the tomb. There's some rumbling, a hole in the floor opens to an unknown dimension and swallows the sword. Rytlock, of course, does what any main character would do in this situation: jump in after the thing. Out of raw instinct, Rox tries to follow after, but the hole shuts, leaving the three with an unbroken curse, a missing tribune, and many "dead" ghosts. Emperor Smodur commends Rox and the Commander's efforts on the latter, agreeing to attend the World Summit at the Pale Tree for the heroes' service to the Black Citadel.



The World Leader Summit.

SEASON 2: EPISODE 4

THE DRAGON'S REACH: PART II

As the Summit nears, a development in Divinity's Reach changes Queen Jennah's plans to attend the World Summit. Kasmear writes that she needs the Commander's help to root out someone spreading dangerous rumors about the Queen, and how she'd been conspiring with Scarlet before the Queen's Jubilee. In response, Countess Anise has thrown a party for the nobles and ministers as an opportunity for the

Commander and Kasmear to boost Delaqua Investigations' cred and trap the culprit in a web of their own lies. The trail eventually leads to Minister Estelle, who is quickly revealed to be known ally of Minister Caudecus. After a hard day's mingling, the two interrogate the minister until she trips over the details of her own story. Countess Anise and her disgruntled companion, Canach, the ill-mannered sylvari from the Southsun Cove incident, swoop in to make the arrest.

Anise, pleased with the heroes' success, offers Kasmear the chance to travel to the World Summit as the Queen's guest and speak to her about the events that led her family to ruin with the intention of restoring some nobility to the Meade household. Kasmear accepts, but not soon after is the Commander summoned back to the leyline in Dry Top for the testing of Taimi's waypoint repairing device.

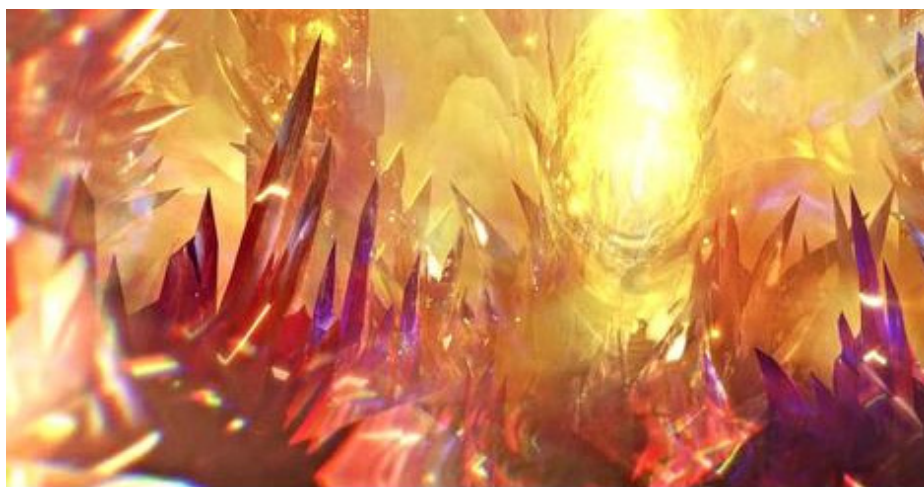
On arrival, the Commander is greeted by Braham, back from the Shiverpeaks, and (regrettably) by Councilor Phlunt, who's run thin on patience. Taimi demonstrates her waypoint-repairing device on a miniature waypoint field and her results are positive. So positive that they attract the attention of the Mordrem, hoping to put an end to her device before it can do their master any harm. Braham and the Commander make quick work of the minions while Phlunt and his Arcane Colleagues cower at a distance. With the immediate danger gone, Phlunt recognizes Taimi's achievement and agrees to attend the summit per his one stipulation: Taimi is to leave her invention in his custody. Naturally, Taimi is proud of her work and the thought of her genius ending up in the wrinkled claws of someone like Phlunt upsets her greatly. To no one's surprise she hops inside Scruffy and dashes into the wastes of Dry Top with her invention in-hand (I was kind of hoping we'd just toss Phlunt off a cliff and be done with him, but hey! We can't always have what we want). To add to the danger, the Inquest are skulking around the entrance to the cave and jump at the chance of harassing a young progeny with a promising looking device. They chase Taimi to the edge of a cliff and disable Scruffy. The Commander and Braham, hot on the young asura's heels, overcome the Inquest before they can reach her. Shortly after, Phlunt also catches up. Taimi apologizes and hands over the device, choosing to do what is best for Tyria—a noticeable moment of growth for the progeny.

With all the leaders accounted for, the World Leader Summit begins. Every major player has made their way to The Grove to listen to the Commander and the threat of Mordremoth. Trahearne and Caithe are both present and congratulate the hero on the momentous occasion. Rox, Braham, Taimi, and Marjory, back from Divinity's Reach, are also present and waiting for the procession of leaders, and the arrival of Kasmear. Even a disguised Countess Anise and Canach have infiltrated the crowds with whisperings of their own agenda.

Finally, the Commander joins the leaders in the Omphalos Chamber and the discussion begins. Each race brings their own burdens to the table, but are ultimately countered by the immediacy of Mordremoth's threat, quite literally. The elevator pod that floats to-and-from the Omphalos chamber is destroyed and the Mordrem attack. Trahearne jumps to the defense of his Mother while the other races engage (or

cover) with the corresponding member of the Commander's team. Kasmear quickly establishes a portal for escape, and the leaders exit as the Mordrem are culled. Before the Avatar of the Pale Tree can be evacuated, the Omphalos chamber is assaulted by one of Mordremoth's lieutenants, "The Shadow of the Dragon". Alone, the Commander fends off the powerful foe, eventually injuring it to the point of retreat. Weakened and terribly injured, the Avatar of the Pale Tree calls the Commander to her side. She reaches out with her mind and touches the hero's, imparting a vision of dying forests, a sea of thorns, vines, and brambles, ancient structures, and a cavern of crystals appearing to be flooded with magic.

The sylvari flock to the Avatar's aid and the Commander returns to rest of the gang below. The Summit Leaders vow to help in some form in the battle against Mordremoth, and the Pact plans to assemble as soon as possible. On the side, Countess Anise asks Canach to pay a visit to Fort Trinity to find out what the Pact's plans are, to which he (somewhat) respectfully obliges. In true Delaqua Investigations spirit, Marjory and Kasmear volunteer to do some follow-up research at the Durmand Priory, while Rox and Braham offer to watch over Taimi as she works on newer and better inventions. The Commander, however, is poised to discover the meaning of the Pale Tree's vision, what it tells the heroes about Mordremoth, and how to destroy it.



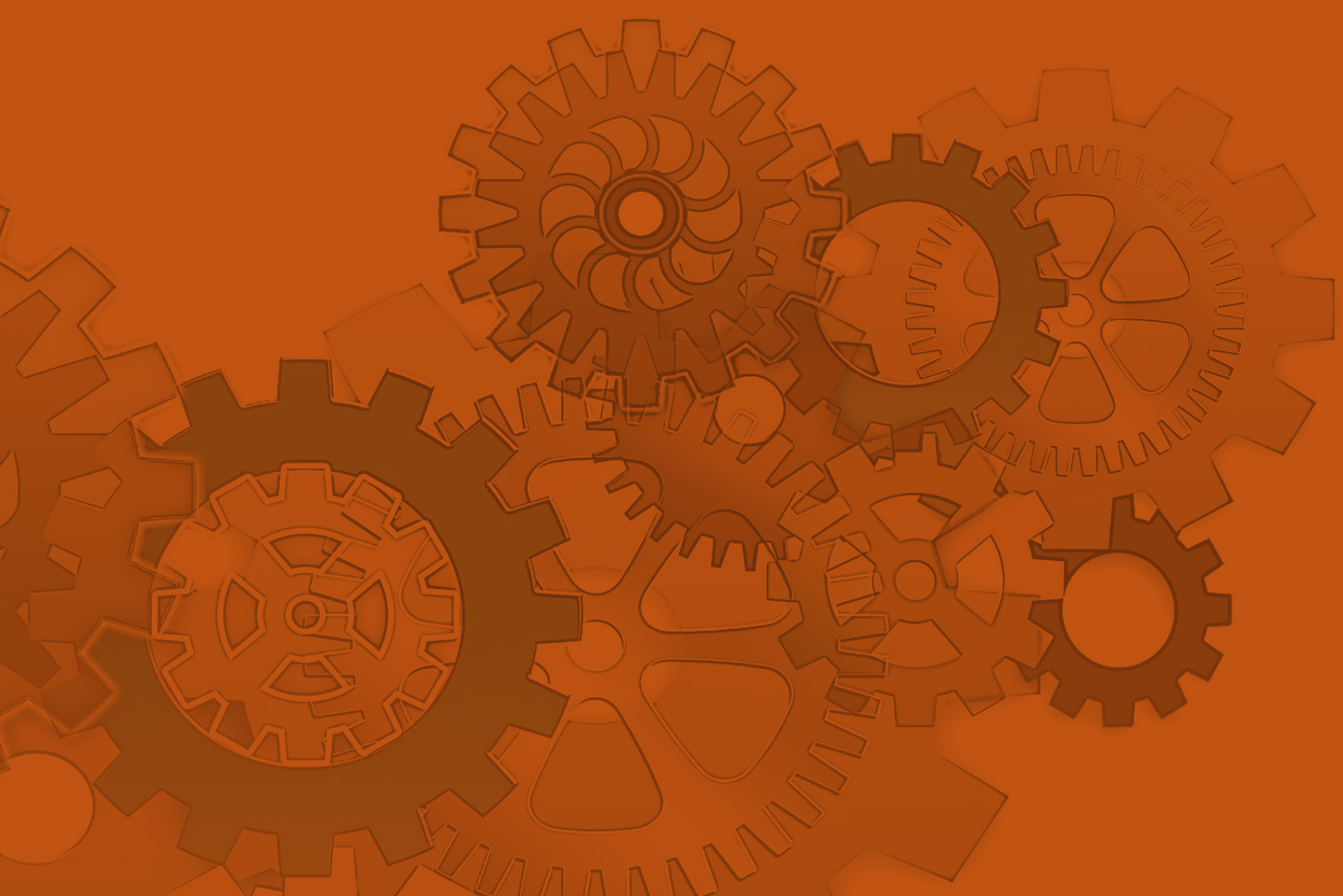
The Pale Tree's vision.



THE TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION OF TYRIA

WRITTEN BY DARRYSHAN

*"Victory is a matter of ingenuity, not muscle.
Even magic is just a cog in the Eternal Alchemy.
Brain, not brawn, will change the world."*



Since the appearance of the asura and the abandonment of the titans by the charr, technology in Tyria has been steadily improving. Before this time, most of the advances from the races of Tyria were in the field of magic, with even Gods contributing to this. The God, Abaddon, gave the gift of magic in 1 BE (1328 years before the current date) to the races of Tyria. The mursaat found out how to disappear from the view of those without the gift of sight. The charr discovered the titans, and by worshiping them gained the ability to cause the Searing. Before the capturing of their respective cities by the charr, Vizier Khilbron of Orr and King Adelbern of Ascalon destroyed them with magic in 1071 AE (256 years before the current date) and 1090 AE (237 years before the current date) respectively.

The Asura

When the asura escaped from the stirring Primordus and his minions, they set up cities on the surface. Their first cities were not fully above ground, but rather were in shallow caves with a large above ground presence (e.g Rata Pten). At this time, they had not yet developed the floating structures that are now synonymous with asuran architecture. However, the angular aesthetics are easily visible in this ruin.

When they began to fully leave the caves, they established many other cities; the most major of which was Rata Sum, the centre of asuran activity on the Tarnished Coast. By this point, the asura had developed the technologies of golemancy; the asura gate network, and floating structures. Rata Sum went from being a major outpost to a huge city in a timescale comparable to that of Divinity's Reach, largely due to similar circumstances: large amounts of refugees.

In 1219 AE (108 years before current events), Zhaitan awoke and Orr rose, destroying the ancient home of Krytan monarchy, Lion's Arch. The city was rebuilt over the next few decades with the help of Cobiah Marriner, the first commodore of the new Lion's Arch. As part of this rebuilding, due to the neutrality of the city, asura gates were set up to lead to all five of the major races' cities: Rata Sum, The Pale Tree (this was set up much later around 1302 AE (25 years before current events)), Divinity's Reach, Hoelbrak and the Black Citadel. This investment helped the asura thrive, as it allowed them to have somewhat of a monopoly on travel across Tyria. A fee must be paid to travel by gate and by waypoint, which goes into the pockets of the asura.



The Asura Gates of Lion's Arch.

Asura architecture is so well made that it can resist erosion and degradation, despite the majority being in an area of heavy rain and plant growth. While it may seem on first glance that the plants in the Tarnished Coast are reclaiming the land, they are in fact just integrating with the asuran architecture. This creates a strange balance of technology and nature, which no other race has been able to reach, with



The Idea Incubation Lab.

the sylvari not attempting technological breakthroughs, and the charr actively destroying nature. One major area that showcases this intertwining is the Idea Incubation Lab. Its structures are almost entirely encased in vines, yet there are no ill effects.

The Charr

Once, the charr stood united under one leader, the Khan-Ur. When the Khan-Ur was assassinated around 1 BE (1328 years before current events), leaving no clear heir, the four Legions were formed. Blood, Ash, Flame and Iron. With this split, the charr could not withstand the might of the humans, and were pushed back from most of Tyria into the Blazeridge Mountains.

However, this would not last. Soon the charr, jealous of the humans with their Gods, looked to the Titans, strange shape-shifting creatures said to obey the bearer of the Scepter of Orr. These so-called 'Gods' gave the charr the Cauldron of Cataclysm, a magical device that would rain destruction upon their enemies. The Flame Legion Shaman Bonfaaz Burntfur, called down the Searing, destroying much of Ascalon.

The actions of Vizier Khilbron resulted in the titans attacking Kryta in 1072 AE (255 years before current events). However, human heroes managed to drive the Titans to extinction in full view of the charr. This caused a shift in the charr ideology, with warbands breaking away from the religion. Some charr attempted to worship new 'Gods' such as the destroyers in 1078 AE (249 years before current events), but were ignored by many other charr. Even with the breakdown of order in the charr ranks, Ascalon was eventually taken, with the final battle resulting in all nearby humans becoming ghosts in an event known as the Foefire. Distrust of the shamans and anger at the Foefire resulted in a rebellion, and the beginning of an industrial revolution.

When before the most important Legion to the charr had been Flame, now Iron took the podium. With a new focus on technological advances, the charr war machine became one of admirable strength. Large iron and steel structures were built on the ruins of Rin, and became the Iron Legion capital, the Black Citadel, in 1112 AE (215 years before current events). Research became focused on creating new machines for war, as the war in Ascalon became condensed on Ebonhawke, a city with fortifications so strong that even the charr could not break through them.

Understandably, the industrialisation of Ascalon had an effect on the countryside, which was already damaged by the Foefire. The lifespan of charr is short due to this pollution, and their obsession with war. Currently, with no war to fight in, the charr machines are at work defeating ghosts, Separatists and branded across Ascalon, and will continue to do so until all enemies are gone from Tyria.

The charr and asura, while very different, are also somewhat similar. Both races have made a huge imprint on the world with their technology, but while one does it out of love for science, the other does it for love of war. Only time will tell which race becomes the forerunner in the technological race, but while the asura seem further ahead, they have a knack for keeping their discoveries secret. The charr are more willing to share their discoveries, as can be seen with the Pact's technology.

The Other Races

Both the sylvari and norn have never had much need for technology, but the ways they have used it are very innovative indeed, and fit very well with the respective race's culture. The sylvari's innate ability to manipulate plant life allows creation of technology such as elevators and reliable lighting. These developments are so exclusive to the sylvari that they are not seen anywhere without sylvari nearby. Sylvari also have the capability to manipulate plants into growing into housing and other buildings. This has increased the speed of growth for their settlements and allowed the Caledon Forest's population to become almost 100% sylvari as they expanded outwards from the Grove. Norn technologies, on the other hand, are very few and far between. Most of their innovations have been in the alcohol making process - specifically that of ale. Norn ale making is a very delicate process, and innovations have allowed the process to be much more efficient. One can assume that the shape of barrels is one of these innovations, with them being elliptical in shape rather than circular. There is a large deficiency of otherwise notable innovations, likely due to the nature of norn society, which frowns upon those who do not fight.

Humans, on the other hand, are quite technologically advanced. For example, they have developed large plumbing systems which extend across Kryta, as well as irrigation machines. Windmills are also in use for driving machines as shown in the picture below. A lot of human technology is used for entertainment purposes, as with Uzolan's Mechanical Orchestra in Divinity's Reach. The Zephyrites



The Searing ritual.



A Searing crystal.



The Black Citadel.



The Great Imperial Smelter.



A sylvari elevator.

machines, one of which recently crashed in the Maguuma Wastes. Human technology, while impressive in some aspects, is far behind that of the asura and the charr, who have entire cities devoted to their respective technologies.

One group in Tyria, the Pact, an amalgamation of the Order of Whispers, the Durmand Priory and the Vigil, has taken the technologies of all five major races and combined them to help fight the Elder Dragons. For example, this group has created the airship and electrical fencing, all in aid of saving Tyria. It seems as can be seen with the charr and the Pact, that peril can really encourage the need for technology to progress.



Norn brewing equipment.



Uzolan's Mechanical Orchestra.

are known for different mechanisms. Namely, their flying



Fort Trinity.

HOW TO WIN A WAR

WRITTEN BY STARCONSPIRATOR



**Report by Shaymar Cloudwatch,
a gladium of the Ash Legion**

Every cub in the Fahrar knows about the humans and their claim on our territory. Ages ago, they stole our hunting grounds from us, driving us north into the colder climes where the hunting was poor. Without our Khan-Ur, the High Legions fractured, fighting each other for the scraps the humans had left us. Only when we worked with the Shamans did we reclaim part of our homeland. Together in battle, the legions forced the Orrians' hand. My, what were they thinking; sinking their land, killing their people to escape us? But the Orrians weren't the only ones. Every cub can tell you the story of Aldebern and his son Rurik. They can recite by rote how the humans tried to hold the Northern Wall but failed, and how Rurik escaped over the Shiverpeaks to the jungles and swamps beyond. And everyone knows how the story ends, how Aldebern, that Sorcerer King, remained behind, emboldened by the relic Stormcaller. A mere two decades later, he cursed himself and his people; the precious land he loved ravaged with an endless death, rather than bow to the inevitable superiority of the charr.

But despite that superiority, we have not yet beaten the ghosts hence Ascalon City (pile of rubble that it is) cannot truly be called ours. The tribunes may have their own excuses for this endless war, but our ultimate hindrance is

our inability to work together. In the past, when we worked together, the charr advanced across Tyria. Now, we are hampered. We are hampered not only by the traitorous Flame Legion and various breakaway factions, but by our own shortsightedness. This inefficiency threatens our future, and may prove the undoing of Smodur's rumored plan to bring the legions together again.

The myopia colors our very thoughts and feelings. Any given evening in the Tavern on the Grey, when the whiskey flows, the insults do as well. Iron cannot understand the subtlety of Ash, Blood thinks Iron hides behind their machines, and Ash is certain the others are cretins.

Although we all have shortcomings, each legion plays a part in shaping the greater war effort. Ash Legion knows all and sees all. When the machines rust and the front lines crumble, Ash Legion will step from the shadows. It is this knack for invisibility that allows Ash to aid the charr. It is through Ash's spy network that the plans of the saboteur are thwarted, the hidden bases of the Flame Legion are discovered, and the assassination plot fails. Iron Legion's contribution is all around us - the Citadel itself, one of the greatest Charr cities in Tyria. All races know of Iron Legion's prowess. Even the

asura have sought their metallurgic knowledge. Without the experimentation of the Iron Legion, we wouldn't have any engineers of any races, nor would there been any firearms.

For their part, Blood Legion fills the front lines. When our enemies remember the charr, it's the Blood Legion they dream about. It is this legion who meets our enemies head on, fighting both the ghosts of Ascalon and the Flame Legion along the Blazeridge Mountains. Perhaps the most important force outside of the charr, the Vigil, grew from the Blood Legion, embracing Almorra Soulkeeper's broader world vision about the Elder Dragons' threat. This charr and her order recognize that dragons cannot be fought with a fragmented society.

Combining forces for the good of our people is at the heart of the Black Citadel's power and continued existence for nearly one thousand years. In the recent past, Flame Legion treachery took advantage of the in-fighting that plagued the Black Citadel, attempting to turn Blood and Iron against each other. If not for Ash, the plot may have succeeded. Throughout these years of fighting ghosts, this single fact has resurfaced again and again. We are stronger when we work together. Iron knows this as well, refining our ghost hunting technology and offering it to Blood and Ash for our combined war effort.

Despite the signs of the fragmentation of our society found throughout the Black Citadel and surrounding villages, I see our people changing. I've seen legionnaires working with scrappers to find solutions to problems instead of dismissing these charr as worthless troublemakers. I've seen Flame Legion shamans come to their senses for the good of our people, and more astonishing, given the benefit of the doubt in order to foil their plans.

Not just ghosts and Flame Legion, but Elder Dragons as well have fallen before the combined efforts of the the Charr Legions as they have joined with other races.

Witness Tribune Brimstone's deeds with his guild, and his recent courageous attempt to cleanse our lands of the Foefire, freeing us to concentrate our military might elsewhere. He, a tribune of the Blood Legion, recognized the value of working with the Durmand Priory in order to free Ascalon from the Sorcerer King's mad curse.

And though the tribune's attempt was not completely successful, we know he continues to fight somewhere in the Mists, and he will return triumphant one day, as Imperator Smodur has said.

It's true the peace that exists between the three legions is an uneasy peace. But, if we are to succeed, we must make a conscious effort to change how we view the smelly brute elbowing up beside us. Our disdain must give way to tolerance, if not acceptance. We charr have shown time and again that we need only rely on ourselves, not false gods like the lesser races. We are charr. We are strong when united

in purpose, our own talents and deeds forging our paths, bringing victory over the ghosts and setting the stage for our ultimate dominance of Tyria.



A DIFFERENT KIND OF NIGHTMARE

WRITTEN BY ARCHAES8

A voice echoed in the soupy morning fog. "Just look at you. All of you... heroes."

"Hello? Who's there?" The sylvari asked as she pushed through the mist, wading in the bog water just below her knees. She could feel the mud squelch under her feet and water plants loosely cling to her legs as she pressed on into the thick of the fog. Insects hummed and buzzed, near and far, creating a distracting and disorienting symphony. The sylvari glanced down at the water, her purple face distorted in the ripples. Without warning, a face rose out from her reflection, followed by the rest of the body. It was another sylvari— green, with darker veins that flowed across her skin, and two bright red bramble pods that sprouted from the back of her head. This sylvari was, like her, naked. She'd never met this stranger, but a memory surged to the forefront of her thoughts, "Ceara... Scarlet!"

"Don't you want to know why I did it? All that chaos and destruction?" The new arrival said, her tone erratic. She hung in a slumped stance, like an Orrian undead.

"I'm sorry, I don't understa—."

"They didn't want to know. No. The big one just said, 'It doesn't matter now. You're done', but see, I wasn't done, and then they hacked me to bits," she said, straightening her stance. Her grin filled with terrifying delight. "You'll let me tell you, won't you?"

The sylvari shuddered, trying to think of a response as with every passing moment Ceara's expression darted between sadness, glee, and perversion.

Ceara released another deeper chuckle before plummeting back into the swamp. "I'll take that as a 'yes'."

The sylvari looked around desperately for any other company, preferably someone with all of their marbles intact. Finally, she moved forward, more cautious than before. Another step, another breath, her pace quickened. Suddenly,

she dropped underneath the water; the ground had vanished underfoot. Flailing around violently, the sylvari reached out to the water itself and attempted to rise to the surface. To her own surprise, a powerful current surged from underneath her, pushing her towards the light of the sky above. Before she could make it, tangles of vines lashed out and wrapped around her limbs.

"Such a stripling! Your meager attempt at magic is no match for my master!" Ceara roared with laughter, a darker and deeper voice enveloping her own. Incapacitated, the sylvari reached out to the elements again. The water around her froze, cutting through the vines that held her with surgical precision. Soon, she was encased in a spiked sphere of ice. Larger thorny tendrils erupted from the murky depths and lashed at her protective barrier until, with one motion, she emerged in a maelstrom of icy blades that circled her, lacerating most of the flailing offshoots. Her sunset colored eyes burned as she thrust a hand in the direction of the vines, lightning coursing from her fingers. The monster in the deep roared and hissed at the sylvari's defiance.

"You can't fight it! It starts to wear you down, dragging you into the darkness, and eventually," Ceara's brooding voice quickly perked up, "you just give in! Think of the power, little one. Think of the worlds you could conquer!" she finished with a chuckle.

"I will not!" the other sylvari's thoughts echoed through the deep. With a slow spin, she began to whirl beneath the water. Again, she pushed herself to the surface, this time atop a vortex. Her icy blades still circling, lacerating anything that came too close; her magic had grown to become an extension of her body.

Sunlight. She rose from the water to see blue skies, and the soft rays of the sun flicker through the branches of what she



recognized as The Pale Tree. Now wavering above the water at the apex of the twister, she slowly descended to a sandy shore at the base of the sylvaris' home. Tired, she allowed herself to fall against the warm earth, closing her eyes for only a moment.

"Mordremoth," Toiraesa whispered, "Mordremoth is coming."

She woke to an entirely different scene. Fire, brambles, smoke, and thorns. Massive vines strangled the colossal tree, relinquishing it of its splendor and life itself. Ceara casually strolled up to the sylvari's side, admiring the sight.

"Isn't it beautiful, little one?"

She grabbed Ceara's neck and raised an icy blade to her throat, tired of her antics. Her eyes filled with tears of anger and exhaustion. "Why are you tormenting me? What are you trying to do?"

"Me? Oh no. I'm just a messenger," her voice began to deepen, "of our savior, Mordremoth."

"You're insane!" the violet sylvari cried, jerking Ceara's body ever so slightly.

"All things have a right to grow' and my master is just beginning to bloom," Ceara cackled, but was quickly cut short. The sylvari allowed Ceara's limp body to collapse into the sand while her maniacal laughter still reverberated through the air. Facing the tree once more, she watched with horror as a storm of thorny vines and branches raced towards her at amazing speed. The beach sand rose to protect her, forming a thick sphere. Ice blades zipped out from the water and whirled madly around the earthen barrier. The briar barrage was nearly at striking distance, giving the lone sylvari the time she needed for one last spell, something she'd see in the Dream, something ancient. A hole appeared in the sand shell and a massive gout of fire erupted forth in the shape of two winding dragons. Their mouths opened wide as they tore into the vines with a roar. Toiraesa's roar.

Toiraesa was born into the world screaming. She'd burnt her way out of her pod, which turned more than a few heads in the process. The other sylvari rushed over to aid her. One of them, dressed in flowing turquoise robes, bearing the insignia of the Durmand Priory, was the first to ask. She placed a hand on her shoulder.

"What did you see, child? What was it you witnessed in the final hours of your Dream?"

Toiraesa, still shaken, shared what were already starting to feel like distant memories from somewhere far away. "I met Scarlet... no, I met her master, an Elder Dragon. It... it tried to kill me."

"Did it tell you its name?"

She looked down at the grass underneath. The many blades pricked at her skin, a reminder of the tangled growth that had attempted to strangle her.

COMMUNITY CONTEST

To mark the occasion of Ollannach stepping down as administrator for GuildMag, we're holding a contest in his name. We've put together an awesome list of prizes, and an equally awesome competition to go alongside it, which takes its inspiration from how GuildMag has always chosen to operate: producing unique content created by the community, for the community.

In order to enter this competition, all you need to do is write an article for an upcoming issue of our digital magazine. Don't let the word 'write' put you off – the topic you choose can literally be anything related to Guild Wars 2, and we're not expecting university-level dissertations! To get you started, we've put together a few ideas:

- Are you an artist? Why not write an article that showcases some of your best fan art, or perhaps one that explains the process you go through behind creating them?
- If art isn't your thing, but lore is, then why not consider delving into your favourite piece and writing about it for us? We've always had a strong focus on lore in our magazines, so consider taking a topic that has not been recently covered and write about it!
- On the Tube? If you enjoy making videos, why not make a new one for us? Be sure to include a small write-up to accompany it too.
- If you enjoy writing fan fiction, why not submit your best piece? And if you've never attempted it before, now might be the time!

Of course, any idea is welcome – the more unique, the better! All entries must be submitted before October 30th 2014. Each entry will be judged on its creativity, style and how well it inspires others to get more involved in the community themselves. And don't worry if you're scared that your writing skills aren't up to par – our team of editors will be happy to take a look at your submission and help tidy it up!

Prizes

2x 2000 gems (gem cards provided by ArenaNet, thanks! <3)
2x Miniature Llama Code
1x Guild Wars 2 Mousepad
1x Guild Wars 2 Notebook
3x Guild Wars 2 T-Shirt (each with a different design)

Each winner will randomly receive one of the above prizes. Plus, all winning articles will be published in an upcoming issue of the magazine!

Rules

- Articles should be no more than 1000 words long, 6 images maximum (you may go up to 1100 if you absolutely need to).
- Articles need to be submitted before 30th of October 2014 (11.59pm GMT)
- Entry is open to the Guild Wars 2 community of Europe, America and Australia.
- Due to shipping costs, all physical prizes (mousepad, notebook and T-shirts) are exclusive to citizens of the European Union.
- GuildMag team members are allowed to participate. Judging will happen anonymously and judges will not have seen the articles beforehand.
- Entries must be related to Guild Wars 2.
- By entering the contest, your submitted article is eligible to be published within a future issue of GuildMag. The respective author's name will be credited.



Entries should be submitted at
www.guildmag.com/submit

or sent to submit@guildmag.com

Good luck!

JOIN THE TEAM

Are you interested in contributing regularly to GuildMag? If so, then we're looking for you!

GuildMag is one of the longest-serving Guild Wars 2 fansites, run entirely by volunteer gamers. We produce regular e-magazines, website articles and a weekly podcast, all about the world of Tyria and its inhabitants. All of this is made possible by our team of amazing, talented individuals working behind the scenes. If you fancy joining this team, we've got a tonne of different roles to suit everyone's skillset - read on below for more information!

Writers

Writers are the backbone of GuildMag. They're the ones who spent countless hours playing, researching and then writing about the game. Some specialise in one topic - such as lore or fiction - whilst others simply write about whatever takes their fancy at the time. To become a writer, all you need is a good understanding of the English language, and a passion for Guild Wars 2.

Editors

Without these guys, GuildMag would be awash in a sea of missing punctuation and mistyped words! Editors help writers clean up their articles, proofreading each for mistakes and ensuring that everything we publish is as good as it can be. Editors are our final line of defense in the endless war against bad grammar; to join their elite ranks, your English needs to be top-notch!

Designers

If you have an eye for good design, then this might just be the role for you. Designers are responsible for, you guessed it, designing each magazine article. It's a designer's job to make sure that an article looks pretty on the page; we give them a blank canvas, and they give us a masterpiece. We applaud bold design, and look for even bolder individuals. To become a designer, you don't need a qualification in graphic design - just show us what you can do!

Website Developer

HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP. If these mean something to you, then you could be our next website developer. The web dev's job includes troubleshooting issues, implementing exciting new features and aiding in the development of future website layouts. Think you have what it takes? Then get in touch!

How to apply

If you're interested in one of the above roles, simply navigate yourself to **www.guildmag.com/join**

You'll be able to find more information on each position, as well as an application form. If you do choose to apply, good luck!



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