GUILDMAG SPECIAL
BY THE COMMUNITY, FOR THE COMMUNITY

WAR IN KRYTA

In this War in Kryta special:

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Foreword:

Since my youth, I've lived in Kryta. Since Saul's disappearance, I've known about the Unseen. However, both me and my companions are aware that few know the secret plot within the tale. Few are driven to open forbidden books and find out the truth.

Truth is actually the whole point on which the recent war in Kryta has been based upon. The White Mantle have described the Unseen Ones as the saviors of Kryta, worshiping them like gods. On the other hand, rebels who call themselves the Shining Blade have opposed these "deities." Several months ago, both sides began campaigns to rally people for their cause.

Now is the time that we can look back and see how the War in Kryta began, progressed and ultimately concluded with a new ruler of Kryta. We can explore the motifs and goals for each of the factions, learn of their recruiting techniques and even discover the creation of a third splinter group!

I've tried to find the best explorers to seek an answer to the truth and I hope you'll learn a thing or two that you did not know before. Follow along as we delve deeper into the War in Kryta!

- Ollannach Grian (nicknamed: Dutch Sunshine)

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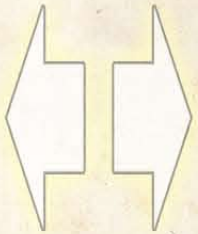
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Attention Bookah!

In this GuildMag special, we introduce a new way of navigating through the magazine. Instead of using the navigation bar in the top-right of the screen to flip through pages, it is now used to jump back and forth to articles.



These arrows can be used to read through the article instead. Don't get lost now :)

A History lesson of Kryta

As the old saying goes "Whoever knows the past, knows the future. " And thus we'll start at the beginning and start with the charr invasion.



It began as a fight along the Great Northern Wall in Ascalon, but when the wall fell, the charr proceeded to invade the rest of Tyria. With the Great Northern Wall destroyed by the Searing, the Charr could now quickly spread their forces over Tyria, including Kryta.

Here the charr almost had a successful takeover, if it was not for Saul D'Alessio. He returned from exile and formed the White Mantle, after which he quickly dealt with the charr by calling upon the help of the Unseen Ones.

Kryta was free yet again, but since the Krytan king fled the throne during the charr invasion, it was missing a true leader. A lot of people came to believe in the cause of the White Mantle and their saviors, the Mursaat. Thus, the White Mantle took the throne and the age of Mantle rule of Kryta began. A few years later, in the year 1072 AE, it was found that the past king had left an illegitimate child in Kryta. Soon after the Lionguard got mobilized and began preparing for battle, the Shining Blade joined the cause to get Salma, princess of Kryta, back onto the throne. Meanwhile the White Mantle's Unseen gods were exposed as the Mursaat and were nearly brought to extinction. Even the White Mantle had to suffer the loss of their leader, Confessor Dorian, and their Inner Council, which caused their grip over Tyria to loosen.

While an influx of heroes traveled to the north to battle a new threat that had arisen, a civil war in Kryta had broken loose. To get an upper hand in this civil war, Livia, who had sought the help of the Asura, was sent out to find a weapon of power.

- Ollannach Grian



Concept art of the in-game loading screen for Krytan areas.

By Dutch Sunshine

History of the War in Kryta

An account of the events leading to the restoration of the Krytan monarchy, as penned by Cassandra Draxynnus in the days following the Battle for Lion's Arch...

With the conclusion of the defeat of the White Mantle at the Battle of Lion's Arch, it has fallen to me to pen a record of the events leading up to their defeat while the memories are still fresh in the minds of the participants. While Murro's accounts have provided snapshots of life during this period, it is perhaps fortunate, given his tendency towards capture by the White Mantle, that he was not in possession of full knowledge of the operations that were undertaken against the Mantle.

Dismantle or Obey!

The first signs of an escalation in the conflict came in the form of a propaganda war between the two sides, starting with posters being raised by the Shining Blade and White Mantle extolling the people of Kryta to "Dismantle" and "Obey" respectively. As the campaign developed, subtle hints and coded messages directed those who supported Princess Salma to Dakatu Village in the Talmark Wilderness, where Salma and the other leaders of the opposition to the White Mantle had gathered and constructed a training camp.

These signs of impending conflict polarised the adventuring community. Most, having seen the atrocities committed by the White Mantle on the Bloodstones and having fought the Unseen in the Shiverpeaks and the Ring of Fire, sided with the Shining Blade, eager to see the end of the Mantle's grip on Kryta. Others, feeling that the White Mantle had been unfairly vilified, that the sacrifices were justified in keeping closed the Door of Komalie, supported the existing regime, feeling that Kryta needed to remain united in the face of external threats.

This division, however, ended with the appearance of the Peacekeepers.

Attack of the Goons

Ostensible volunteers raised by the Mantle in order to assist in keeping order in Kryta, the Peacekeepers quickly revealed themselves to be little more than government-sponsored bandits, extorting gold and food from Krytan civilians and raiding smaller Krytan settlements including Nebo Village, Beetletun, and the Ascalonian refuge. The situation was further worsened with the implementation by the Mantle of a system of wartime travel permits, that were required to legally travel between Krytan provinces. Whether the result of Shining Blade interference or Mantle indifference to the impact this would have on the Krytan economy, few permits reached those who needed them, effectively placing much of Kryta in a state of siege imposed by her own government.

In disgust, most of the good-hearted men and women that had remained with the Mantle quit the organisation, singly or in groups, throwing their support behind Salma against the regime that they now knew to be corrupt. While not entirely trusted by all of their new allies, they were accepted, if not left unsupervised. Others remained, feeding information to the Shining Blade and its allies.

Meanwhile, the Mantle and its Peacekeepers tightened their grip, forming camps throughout Kryta. White Mantle justiciars and inquisitors began to join the Peacekeepers in terrorising the populace, harassing the priests of the Temple of the Ages despite the edict of their founder and displacing innocent Krytan farmers from their lands at the instigation of collaborators such as Layman Josef. Meanwhile, Inquisitor Bauer was unleashed on the Ascalon Settlement, but fortunately the quick thinking of Farmer Dirk directed his attention to the mergoyles and skales of Scoundrel's Rise.
To combat this, the Shining Blade increased its activity, directing its agents to join with friendly adventurers from Tyria, Cantha and Elona in fighting the White Mantle camps throughout Kryta. Meanwhile, Salma sent out a call for allies, directing Livia to seek out the Asura and Evennia to meet with the Ebon Vanguard.

New Allies



Livia's expedition met with success sooner than expected. As a consequence of his unwilling participation on the assassination attempts on human leaders in Kryta, Cantha and Vabbi, the golemancer Zinn and his assistant Blimm had been exiled from the asura lands. Intercepted by Livia, they were drafted into the war effort and directed to a secret lab near Shaemoor, where they were instructed to work on a counter for the Mursaat's Spectral Agony.

Evennia, however, had somewhat less success – without authorisation from King Adelbern (which was unlikely to come, given the Ascalonian king's attitude towards Kryta), Captain Langmar of the Ebon Vanguard was only willing to commit a single unit to the assistance of the Shining Blade, officially to serve as "observers" to the conflict. That unit was the Ebon Falcons, lead by Lieutenant Keiran Thackeray. Officially, this was because the Falcons were

By Draxynnic

the Vanguard's best unit and that Langmar and Evennia had agreed that if only one unit would be sent, it would be the elite – however, many adventurers who have worked with the Ebon Vanguard speculate that Lieutenant Keiran volunteered his unit in order to have some time away from his failed relationship with Gwen, Captain Langmar's second in command. Keiran had previously been soliciting adventurers for supplies in a picnic that he had planned to take Gwen on for her birthday, only to be rejected by Gwen in favour of her duties.

Leaving Gwen in command at the Eye, Captain Langmar herself ventured to Kryta to assist in training the Shining Blade's new recruits, while Evennia journeyed south to Ascalon to seek authorisation for further assistance from King Adelbern in return for Salma's pledge of assistance against the Charr. Witnesses report that Gwen attempted to say something to Keiran before he left, but was unable to get it out. When Captain Langmar and the Ebon Falcons arrived in Kryta, they were received inside the audience chamber of Lion's Arch Keep itself.

The Lion, the Blade and the Vanguard

While they had tightened their grip on the rest of the country, the White Mantle had been willing to leave the capital under the protection of Lion's Arch's traditional protectors, the Lionguard. However, it had been an officer of the Lionguard that, with the help of adventurers in the retrieval of the relevant documents, had found Princess Salma in the first place – and when she arrived at the gates of Lion's Arch, the Lionguard declared their allegiance, expelling, slaying or imprisoning any of the White Mantle that remained within the city.

After securing the capital, Salma initiated a series of royal bounties to attract more mercenaries and foreign adventurers to Kryta's shores. At first, these bounties were issued against low-value targets such as Peacekeeper gang leaders, but as the bounties proved successful, the Princess began to aim at higher targets, including three of the White Mantle's top inquisitors. However, the unseen backers of the White Mantle had also reinforced their devotees with jade constructs capable of inflicting a spectral agony that tore through any of their opposition that lacked the protection of infused armour, adding a never-before-seen construct capable of wielding elemental magic to the previously seen warrior and archer constructs.

Despite these reinforcements, Inquisitors Lashona and Bauer were the first to fall. Bauer was found by adventurers still searching for evidence of an alliance between the Shining Blade and mergoyles in Scoundrel's Rise, while Lashona was caught in the act of attempting to arrest the citizens of the Ascalon Settlement as punishment for the actions of the Ebon Falcons and the Ascalonian adventurers that had participated in the opening of the Door of Komalie. Finally, Inquisitor Lovisa was tracked down on a beach on Watchtower Coast, where she had been in the process of brainwashing children stolen from Krytan parents.

Meanwhile, while Captain Langmar took up the training of new volunteers, the members of the Ebon Falcons began undertaking operations within Kryta, including leading a squad of new recruits on a reconnaissance mission into Mantle operations on Kessex Peak (likely leading to the issuing of several bounties for Mantle leaders in the area) as well as discovering the locations of Mantle troop concentrations through the simple process of asking – or so Keiran claimed, to Bartholos' disbelief. It was not to be long before the bells began to toll for the Mursaat themselves.

The Beginning of the End

Intelligence had been received that one of the remaining Mursaat, Willem the Demeaning, had been located gathering White Mantle forces within the Temple of the Unseen in Riverside Province. Slipping into Riverside Province by boat at night, the assassination team was presented with two options – to either launch a frontal assault on the Temple's gates (which had been reinforced by a magic-draining Mursaat tower) or attempt to secure a key to the back gate. In the end, the frontal assault proved quicker and easier, as the guards of the temple were spread out enough that they were likely not to notice and respond to an attempt to reach Willem by stealth anyway.



Willem the Demeaning receives a taste of his own medicine.



Aily the Innocent receives divine judgement. The verdict? *Guilty.*

The second of the Mursaat to be located was the ironically named Aily the Innocent, then watching over the Fountain of Truth in Shaemoor. As protection against a similar operation, the key to the gate was put into the possession of a powerful Jade construct in the village of Loam hurst. After the key was retrieved by the assault team, Aily dispatched ambush teams of White Mantle to intercept the team before it could return to Shaemoor. The assault team reached Zinn's lab in Shaemoor safely, where it turned out that the asura had developed a veapon to assist in the attack.

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It appeared that while Zinn was still working on the protection golem that he had been commissioned to build, he did have a large supply of failed prototypes. These prototypes were supplied with the teleportation devices normally used with functional golems to allow them to be teleported to a beacon, and were programmed to detonate on arrival, serving as a crude form of artillery. While this assistance proved less beneficial than could have been hoped, the assault team was successful in defeating the White Mantle presence within Shaemoor and slaying Aily in his lair, although the citizens of Shaemoor suffered heavily when the arrival of the assault team triggered an ineffective uprising.

The third of the Mursaat, Koril the Malignant, had taken refuge in the Temple of Tolerance in D'Alessio Seaboard. Thanks to the infiltrator Dinas and his allied agents within the White Mantle, the assault team was able to land in Hakewood without the White Mantle contesting the landing. Before taking his leave, Dinas reported that he had been transferred to Demetra as part of a White Mantle buildup.

Unlike the Temple of the Unseen, the defences at the Temple of Tolerance had not been reinforced by a Mursaat tower – in fact, the healing shrine that had been present in the main courtyard had been removed. Instead of relying on static defences, Koril had arranged some form of warning system to alert a constant stream of reinforcements to come to his aid should his position be threatened. In the end, however, the assault team was able to fight off the waves of White Mantle reinforcements until the number of troops close enough to respond began to dwindle, allowing the killing blow to be delivered on the third of the surviving Mursaat.

However, his compatriots had not been idle.

THE LAST BATTLE

Before a follow-up to the assault on the Temple of Tolerance could be planned, Dinas arrived in Lion's Arch with the news that the Mursaat and the White Mantle had massed their forces in Demetra and were preparing to march on Lion's Arch. Immediately on receiving this news, Salma dispatched messengers to bring the Shining Blade troops in the Talmark camp to Lion's Arch, to retrieve the asura Zinn and Blimm and the products of their research, and to warn the villages on the Mantle's warpath to evacuate. The warnings arrived just in time, with the inhabitants of Nebo Terrace escaping just before the White Mantle army swept through the province. Unfortunately, the asura had not had time to complete their protection golem, requiring the unstabilised power core to be rushed to the capital in order to grant whatever incomplete protection it could provide. For the inhabitants of the Ascalon Settlement, things were even closer. One family had not been collected at the muster, requiring Captains Langmar and Greywind to lead them into hiding to the east while the rest of the Ascalonians fled to Lion's Arch with the White Mantle and their Peacekeeper allies hot on their heels, barely making it through the gates before they were closed against the attacking army.



With the White Mantle surrounding the city and unwilling to allow Kryta to bear the burden of a conventional siege, Salma decided on a desperate gamble – she would shore up the defences within Lion's Arch to provide a killing field for the Shining Blade archers before opening the gates and inviting the Mantle inside.

This gamble paid off. The surviving White Mantle leaders, Inquisitor Toriimo and Confessor Isaiah, lead their troops in turn into the city and were slaughtered. With their failure, their Mursaat masters took over the battle, sending in the remaining Mantle troops in support of increasing numbers of their own Jade constructs.



Toriimo declared that he would burn the city to the ground. In the end, he was the one who burned.



Confessor Isaiah's reign meets its end on the point of a hero's blade.

Against the waves of Jades and the Mursaat themselves, the defenders of Lion's Arch had some advantages – favourable terrain, the availability of resurrection magic for many of the defenders, and the fruits of Zinn's incomplete research – a defensive enchantment similar to Infusion with the power to turn Spectral Agony back on its originator. Nevertheless, it was on the heroes of the Flameseeker Prophecies, equipped as they were with their own armour infused by the Seers seven years before, that served as the linchpin of the city's defence.

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History of the War in Kryta

After two of their number and their most powerful unit of the new Jade elementalists were broken on Lion's Arch's defenses, the final two Mursaat lead one last attempt to end the defiant stand of Salma and her followers – and shortly thereafter, the Battle for Lion's Arch ended with a second defeat for the Mursaat, leaving Lazarus the Dire as that race's only known survivor.

Interestingly, despite the climactic nature of this battle, the Peacekeepers did not appear during the final siege. Perhaps they refused (or were not trusted) to participate in a battle of this intensity, or perhaps the White Mantle delegated them to maintain the grip on the countryside while saving their best troops for the assault. Either way, this means that despite the decisive defeat of the White Mantle's core forces, it is likely that packs of Peacekeepers remain in hiding – possibly to put aside their weapons under the new regime, or possibly to cause trouble at some later time.

THE AFTERMATH



With the conclusion of the battle, Salma gave a speech thanking those who assisted in the overthrow of the Mantle, and announced her plans for the future defence of Kryta. The Shining Blade would be downsized in order to serve as the Krytan royal guard, joining any other willing volunteers in the the new standing army of Kryta, the Seraph (named in Dwayna's honour). More significantly, Salma also declared an amnesty for former supporters and members of the White Mantle, even offering them positions in the Seraph. Time will tell if this will prove to be an inspired act of forgiveness or whether further trouble will follow.

However, the final stages of the war were not without losses, as Captain Langmar and Lieutenant Thackeray went missing after seeking to distract a White Mantle army from escaping refugees. At the time of writing this treatise, a shallow grave believed to be Langmar's has been located by the search parties, while Lieutenant Thackeray remains missing. Also missing is Evennia, last seen at a camp outside the gates of Ascalon waiting for an audience with King Adelbern.

The most significant figure to remain unaccounted for, however, is the last known surviving Mursaat, Lazarus the Dire, who remains at large and no doubt up to no good. I fear that perhaps efforts to weaken him by disrupting his attempt to reconstitute himself in the previous year may have backfired, by driving him into hiding when he might otherwise have revealed himself where he could be cut down with the remainder of his race.

Or perhaps his presence may have tipped the balance the other way. Perhaps, for now, we should be content with what has been achieved, and in the confidence that whatever Lazarus may try in the future, the now united nation of Kryta will be ready.



Surrounded by foes, Oizys the Miserable lives up to his moniker...but not for long.



Koril the Malignant meets his death

By Draxynnic

THE SHINING BLADE

Offer protection to the weak. Give solace and shelter to those who need it. Be ye a salve to the wounded.

-Shining Blade credo

The Shining Blade were a group of royalist freedom fighters who opposed the one "True Government of Kryta" known as the White Mantle. They believed in the Old Gods (now Six Gods) and wanted to see the bloodline of King Doric on the throne of Kryta again. Thus they rallied under the young Princess Salma and defended her with their lives. The history of the Shining Blade is just as old as the White Mantle's; however, they made their presence known much later.

THE FAILURE OF THE DORIC LINE:

My father... the king, was always very kind to me. But when the charr attacked, he abandoned my mother, and all of the people of Kryta, in their hour of need.

-Princess Salma

The Royal Line of Kryta was a shining one. Descended from the great Doric, first king of the united humans of Tyria, the line continued uninterrupted for centuries, until the year of 1070 AE, when the charr attacked Kryta after their successful invasion of Ascalon. King Jadon was a noble king, but in his heart he was feeble. After he had seen that even the proud Ascalonians and their great wall could not stop the felines, he abandoned his people in their darkest hour. Because of this, the broken Krytans flocked to Saul D'Alessio, savior and hero of Kryta, who destroyed the invading charr armies with the help of his unseen gods. The new faith and its enforcing order arose and assumed leadership over the lands of Kryta. The White Mantle's reign had begun…

Even the weak-hearted Jadon left his legacy, and it was a good one. Before his cowardly escape, he often visited a priestess called Berea in the Temple of the Ages. Later, the woman gave birth to a daughter named Salma. And as I mentioned earlier, the king was noble and had taken good care of his children, legitimate or not. According to the journal of a royal scribe, the young girl was granted special dispensation from the royal treasury. Salma became the symbol of the rebellion nine years after the failure of royal line.

THE UNSEEN MENACE:

…the White Mantle and their masters are a threat to all Tyrians, not just Krytans, and not just humans.

-Councilor Vaylor

The true nature of the White Mantle was known only by a few. Their tyranny was not so outstanding. Those who believed in the Unseen Ones received special privileges, but other



The Bloodstone, as seen in the 'Bloodstone Fen' mission (Prophecies campaign).

than this, they hadn't shown any signs of oppression. The only "price" for their protection was the Chosen (a group of people with exceptional magical aptitude), whom they took to the Grand Masters in the Temple of the Unseen – that was the official explanation for the taking of these people. The truth was much more painful though. In order to empower their "gods", the White Mantle led the Chosen to a bloodstone (a terrible relic from the time of the Old Gods) deep within the Maguuma Jungle and sacrificed them atop of it.

There were some people who wanted to see a heir to the Doric bloodline on the throne of Kryta again. They searched for something that could prove how evil the Mantle is, and all of their promises and sayings are lies, including the divinity of their unseen masters. After a small time they got what they wanted. Once they followed the Mantle and the Chosen to the bloodstone, only to see the aforementioned, ugly truth. It gave the push for them to arm themselves and begin a guerrilla war against the fanatics and their unseen demons. At the beginning they could do very little damage against the zealots, although even that was enough to raise the ire of the Mantle. The government began to spread their propaganda about the rebels, which effectively influenced the populace, thinking of the Shining Blade as murderous ruffians.

The Blade were very few, while the Mantle were many. They could only recruit several Krytans; they could not find allies and their attacks against the oppressors did not do serious damage. Until the day when they found a group of Ascalonian heroes…

By Thalador Doomspeaker

THE SHINING BLADE

A NEW HOPE:

The truth about the White Mantle will reveal itself. And you will be faced with a difficult decision.

-Evennia

In the year of 1072 AE, Ascalonian refugees arrived through the Shiverpeaks. They searched for a new home in Kryta, since Ascalon was in ruins and under constant attacks by the charr legions. A small band of the foreigners helped Justiciar Hablion in eradicating a large undead army. Because of this, Hablion allowed them and their people to settle in the province of North Kryta. However, the same Ascalonian party's heroic deeds did not end. Confessor Dorian himself bestowed the title of Mantle Knight upon them. What's more, they were asked to help in finding the Chosen near Shaemoor and leading them to Loamhurst. After their arrival, the Chosen and their Mantle guards left from Loamhurst toward the jungle. But this time, the Shining Blade intercepted them, killing Justiciar Rhynnon in the process. There was a little "miscalculation" in the plans: the deceased was the younger brother of Thommis, one of the founders of the White Mantle. In his grief, Thommis commanded numerous White Mantle troops and began hunting the Maguuma Jungle to find and kill his brother's murderers. The Ascalonians followed them and found the trace of the escaping Blade and the kidnapped Chosen. They chased them through the Wilds, but after saving the Chosen from spiders, they were captured by the rebels…

There they met Evennia, leader of the Shining Blade, and the rest of the inner council, including Markis (who wanted to kill them, because they were the allies of the Mantle). Evennia saw the potential ally in them, thus she asked Saidra – another member of the council – to take the Ascalonians to the bloodstone. There the confused Knights of the Mantle witnessed the cruelty of their previous allies. Justiciar Hablion murdered a group of Chosen, sealing their souls in crimson-coloured statues, which were intended to be taken to their demonic masters. The small Ascalonian party felt guilty for the death of the innocent villagers. If they had not taken the divine Eye of Janthir to Loamhurst, all those people would've not been killed in the name of the Unseen Ones. The furious heroes stormed the bloodstone, ending Hablion's villainy once and for all.



Evennia

That day the Shining Blade made their first, major victory against the fanatical devotees of the unseen "gods" thanks to their new allies. However, their victory came at a price…

REVENGE OF THE WHITE MANTLE:

The Shining Blade have already been broken over the knee of the White Mantle.

-Vizier Khilbron

With the death of his brother in arms, Confessor Dorian declared war on the Shining Blade and the traitors. A White Mantle infiltrator deeply embedded within the organization gave away the locations of the Blade's bases throughout the jungle. A vanguard, lorded by the infamous Mantle commander called the Demagogue, attacked the base at Quarrel Falls and the other one near Ventari's Refuge, threatening Councilor Vaylor, a high-ranking Blade leader. Fortunately, the Ascalonian heroes – energized by the will to redeem themselves – arrived in time and defeated the attacking battalions. Vaylor then ordered the party to discover the fate of Elder Gretchen, the leader of the "Denravi project", and her people. Gretchen and some Shining Blade scouts survived, however, the White Mantle continued into Aurora Glade to claim Denravi for their own – another betrayal from the infiltrator's sake. The Ascalonians went after them and were able to secure the Henge Portal, scoring against the Mantle again by killing the threatening Demagogue.



The Demagogue

With a new base of operations and two major victories everything seemed to be fine. Evennia tasked Shadow, a scout, to guide their Ascalonian friends to Riverside Province. There they were given a bold mission: to steal the Scepter of Orr from the Temple of the Unseen.

Acquiring the Scepter was the easy part - thanks to Dinas, a Shining Blade spy who masqueraded as a White Mantle priest. Escaping the enraged Mantle was much tougher, though the Ascalonians safely reached Evennia.

While they were taking the Scepter to Vizier Khilbron (advisor to King Reza), the traitor - who was no other than Markis – led his Mantle comrades into Denravi. Only a few Shining Blade survived the raid. These survivors fled toward the Shiverpeaks. Markis' treachery did not stop at that. He told the White Mantle that the knights whom had betrayed them were to visit visited a monastery in Sanctum Cay. The zealots boarded the island, captured Evennia and cut off the Ascalonians from escaping. The Vizier raised a ship from the depths in order to make another escape route for himself and the desperate group. They sailed eastward, in the Crystal Desert's direction. Khilbron told the Ascalonian band

By Thalador Doomspeaker

that if they truly wanted to battle the religious cult and their unseen "gods", they would have to ascend and claim the gift of True Sight.

In the meantime, the broken Blade continued to flee from the pursuing White Mantle. Saidra and Evennia were waiting for their execution atop another bloodstone within the Shiverpeak Mountains. However, the Ascalonians returned and broke them out of their prison. Unfortunately, the sound of the exploding cell door alarmed the Mursaat – the true name of the Unseen Ones which was revealed by the Dragon Prophet, Glint – and their constructs. To give a chance of escape for Evennia and their liberators, Saidra drew the attention of the Mursaat to herself. Her sacrifice was not in vain, since the small group did escape on a Dwarven ice ship.



It was time for the Shining Blade to avenge their fallen brethren. They knew where the traitorous snake, Markis was heading… They chased him through the iron mines of the legendary Moladune, stopping at a mysterious individual. The person called itself the Seer, and claimed that its race fought the Mursaat in the past. The Seer believed in the Flame-seeker Prophecies and thus helped the true Chosen – the Ascalonians – in infusing their armor (a technique that protected them from the Mursaat's agonizing touch). Now they could face the demons head on. They killed several of the Mantle's gods on their way to the traitor. By the end of day Markis was dead…

One last battle remained from the Shiverpeaks campaign. The battle of Thunderhead Keep. The Ascalonians joined Jalis Ironhammer, king of the Deldrimor dwarves, in a brave mission to retake the fallen city from the hands of the Stone Summit, the evil cousins of the Deldrimor dwarves. They successfully raised the flag of Deldrimor over the keep, but the hard part was yet to come. The Unseen Ones and their disciples arrived. Through many waves they besieged the city, the Mantle and their unseen gods could not penetrate the keep. The last assault was led by Confessor Dorian himself, but he faced a similar fate like the rest of the Mantle army…

DEMISE OF THE UNSEEN ONES:

I know that behind it lies the only chance we have of defeating the Mursaat.

-Blade Warrior Olivio

The Shining Blade had survived and had won important battles against the White Mantle, but it was time for them to regroup. Before doing this, two agents were sent to the Ring of Fire where the Ascalonian heroes headed. Shadow tasked them with assassinating the last members of the White Mantle's inner council who were preparing to meet their "gods" in secret. The Chosen killed them and proceeded toward their destiny. Through a series of battles they gained foothold in a small garrison near the Mursaat's mighty Onyx Gate. Blade Warrior Olivio briefed them before the heroes continued on to finish off the demonic Unseen Ones. They succeeded, but by doing so they unleashed the titans upon Tyria. This was the Vizier's intention all along, as he was no other but the Lich Lord behind the undead invasion of Kryta. His desire was to rule the world, but these dreams were shattered quickly, when the true Chosen slew him atop the bloodstone – which was surrounded by soul batteries. The absorbed energies shut the Door of Komalie once again, preventing the horrors behind the portal entry into the mortal realms.



The Lich defeated

The remaining titans attacked the human kingdoms and the Shining Blade, but they were stopped eventually. The Ascalonian heroes had done what the Seer's entire race could not – they had defeated the Mursaat - , however, their job was still unfinished. The Mantle was not yet defeated…

THE KRYTAN CIVIL WAR:

In the wake of the White Mantle, my home, Kryta, is wracked by civil war. Factions and sub-factions are destroying our nation.

-Livia

The White Mantle suffered severe losses when the veil of godhood was lifted from their pantheon. This revelation plunged Kryta into a civil war. Even though the Mantle was a

By Thalador Doomspeaker

broken shadow of its former self, the Shining Blade was still losing the war. In order to turn the tide they sent agents all across Tyria to find new weapons, allies and magic.

In the year of 1078 AE, a Shining Blade necromancer called Livia joined Gadd, a renowned Asuran golemancer, hoping to find something that could help her faction and Kryta. She was right about turning to Gadd. Livia learned a great deal about necromancy and a way that could liberate Kryta from her oppressors, however, their splitting with Gadd was quite "stormy".

On the other hand, Bartholos - the new leader of the Shining Blade – and his aide, Saerin, recruited foreign adventurers and mercenaries for a quest to seize special crystals (an arcane and spectral one) and a shimmering essence from ettins lurking in a cave system that was infused with the power of a bloodstone – the very bloodstone where the Mursaat had planned to execute Evennia and Saidra. The essence was used to make the Blade members' sword sharper than any other on Tyria. The arcane crystal proved to be perfect in making arrow heads, while the spectral one's true powers were not revealed by Saerin. According to her, it would be invaluable in turning the tide against the Mantle.



Livia

Although the Blade's hands were full of enemies, Livia joined a group of foreign heroes – among them the same Ascalonians who had defeated the Mursaat – to stop a rising threat in the heart of the world. Together they defeated the Great Destroyer, the ancient nemesis of the dwarves. The fact that Livia played a role in the death of the Great Destroyer was far more important than many had originally thought. She met the Ebon Vanguard, a group of elite Ascalonian soldiers during her travels. The Vanguard later helped in restoring the monarchy to Kryta.

This was the time when the true Chosen learned that Saidra's ashes had been recovered by the Deldrimor dwarves. A fellow Shining Blade member by the name of Kaira laid the heroine's remains in Sparkfly Swamp. Adventurers can find this site, and if they lift the urn that contains her ashes, they'll feel her courageous spirit giving aid to them.

The first round of the war favoured the Shining Blade, but the war itself was far from over. It was just the beginning of the end…

RETURN OF THE SHINING BLADE:

I won't discuss operational details, but I will say this: soon the Shining Blade will face the Mantle, and our grievances will be settled with magic and steel.

-Bartholos



The camp in Talmark Wilderness

One year later the Shining Blade returned to Kryta. They made their camp in Talmark Wilderness where all of their leaders were stationed. Bartholos, Evennia and Watchman Arad, representative of the Lionguard who brought a special "guest" with him. Princess Salma, heir to the throne and the Doric line, took her rightful place beside the people who fought for her and Kryta's freedom. Evennia returned as something similar of a politician, guiding the young princess as her aide and adviser. A visitor could see other similar faces as well, including Shadow, Councilor Vaylor and Alari Doubleblade (a particularly nasty woman who took the fingers of her victims as tokens). The latter was very successful against the White Mantle, as she was blackmailing a White Mantle member to give them information seven years ago (these actions were confirmed by the fact that the Mantle placed a bounty on her head).

The Blade started operating within Kryta's lands once again. However, they were still few compared to the Mantle, whose numbers were doubled by the disgusting bandits called "Peacekeepers".

In order to balance the scale, Salma ordered Evennia to make contact with the Ebon Vanguard and ask for their help. The princess also ordered Livia to find some Asuran inventors that could build something useful in the upcoming battles against the oppressors.

Evennia had a hard time convincing Langmar, captain of the Ebon Vanguard, to join the war on the royalists' side, but in the end she agreed to help. Officially, without the agreement of King Adelbern, the Vanguard could not have gone to Kryta. To show that they are taking the alliance between Ascalon and Kryta seriously, Langmar and an elite group called the Ebon Falcons went to Kryta; however, Langmar told Evennia that she should gain audience with Adelbern if the Shining Blade wanted additional reinforcements from both Ascalon

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THE SHINING BLADE

and the Ebon Vanguard. After this point all we know about Evennia is that she safely reached Ascalon City – where she met Ambassador Zain, a representative of the White Mantle – but the king did not want to grant an audience to her. Sometime after this point she disappeared.


Zinn

Livia can be considered lucky. She didn't even have to enter Rata Sum, the Asuran capital, because two brilliant, exiled asura happened to meet her. She took them to the camp, where the identity of one of the asura caused a little chaos among the Blade. Zinn was the infamous asura who created R.O.X., a high-tech golem that was programmed to kill the young Salma. After settling this little dispute, Livia, Zinn, Blimm and their half-witted golem protector, G.O.X., moved to Divinity Coast through a secret river passage, where they set up a lab for the Asuran geniouses. They were tasked with creating a special weapon that could either protect anyone fighting the Mursaat or damage the demonic beings. Well, the asura believed they could combine both into one device...

Shortly afterward, some Shining Blade, Watchman Arad and Councilor Vaylor escorted the princess to Lion's Arch – without a single drop of blood being spilled – where she was greeted by both the citizens of the city and the Lionguard. Finally, Salma could assume the throne. Though the war was not yet won...

In the days to come, Salma gained the alliance of many. Captain Langmar and Lieutenant Thackeray (leader of the Ebon Falcons) arrived in Kryta and offered their "unofficial" help to her, while many adventurers and mercenaries from Ascalon, Elona and Cantha took bounties from her majesty. These bounties wished the end of White Mantle justiciars, officers and Peacekeeper gang leaders. In less than a few weeks the bounty hunters made short work of both the bandits' and the Mantle's leadership.

Salma sent these brave men and women on more dangerous tasks. First, they slew the pet inquisitors of Toriimo: Lashona, Bauer and Lovisa. After seeing these great successes, the difficulty of the missions grew. The princess got word of Mursaat leaders hiding in fortified, holy sites of the Mantle. Willem the Demeaning was assassinated in the Temple of the Unseen. Aily the Innocent was crushed by "raining" golems near the Fountain of Truth. Koril the Malignant got tossed out of one of the towers of the Temple of Tolerance. May I notice that this mission would've been a suicide one without the help of the still active Shining Blade spy, Dinas and his group of undercover Krytans who were loyal to the crown. He told interesting news to the heroes: the White Mantle were sending troops to Demetra every day. Dinas and his group headed there as well, promising to update the Blade and the queen as soon as possible.


Demetra as seen in the Bonus Mission Pack.

He was true to his promise. A few days later he appeared in the Lion's Arch Keep bringing grave news. The White Mantle had amassed their armies at Demetra, the headquarters of both the Mursaat generals and Confessor Isaiah. They were determined to end the war that had already taken its toll on them. Their intention was to kill the princess, shattering the embodiment of hope for all the Krytans who wanted their future devoid of the White Mantle and their demonic gods.

The young, but strong princess did not flee like her father had done before. She commanded the foreign heroes to tell Bartholos and Livia about the approaching Mantle army. She also feared for the settlements that were unfortunate enough to be between Demetra and Lion's Arch: Beetletun, Nebo village and the Ascalon Settlement. Thus she asked the adventurers to warn them as well.

This quest was dangerous and time was short. The heroes told Bartholos, who ordered the Shining Blade to man the fleet that was anchored at Stingray Stand.

The foreigners told Livia; however, there was a little problem regarding the secret weapon. While the asura were successful at combining both functions into one device, the core that was intended to be installed into a golem was not fully functional - what's more, the golem was not even assembled. Fortunately, the genious asura reconfigured the core before the battle to provide some protection against the lethal spectral agony. In the meantime, the heroes warned the Elder of Beetletun who evacuated his people to the safety of Shaemoor.

Livia and the two asura met their escort outside the village. Lieutenant Thackeray and Captain Langmar also joined them in their run to the capital. Behind them the White Mantle army and the terrible jade soldiers appeared on the horizon. The escapees warned Elder Sobel and the people of Nebo village in time, who evecauted to Bergen Hot Springs.

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The Last place where they had to stop was the Ascalon Settlement. Captain Greywind, the veteran leader of the settlers had already prepared his people for the flight. However, a family and a farmer had not arrived to the meeting spot, thus Greywind, Thackeray and Langmar went on to find them, launching the evacuees and the heroes before leaving. The White Mantle were on the heels of the group by the end of the run, but everyone managed to safely reach Lion's Arch. The guards quickly closed the gates so the city could prepare its defenses.

As the sun went down, more and more Mantle arrived, storming the gates of the mighty city…

THE BATTLE FOR LION'S ARCH:

Come midnight, we open the gates to draw them in, and then funnel them through that glorious choke point while our archers rain down the fury of the Krytan people upon their heads. Wave after wave, they shall feel the sting of our arrows. And when the Mursaat run out of fools to send, they will personally enter battle and our moment to end this will be nigh.

-Princess Salma



Bartholos and his men arrived in time. The asura began to remodel the core. The city's inhabitants helped the defenders in the preparations. Salma wanted to fight this battle on her own terms. Her plan was bold, but there was a high chance that it would favour them. During midnight, she ordered the defenders to open the gates. The surprised Mantle charged into the city, only to be killed by the blades, arrows and magic of the unified defenders. As time went on, more and more Mantle entered the city.

Even though they were greatly outnumbered, nothing could stop the royalists from defending their queen and their beloved ones. The Six Gods have long left Tyria, yet their blessings and their strength were inside the besieged warriors. While the Unseen Ones were overseeing the battle, they did not inspire their disciples, instead, they invoked fear in their hearts. Ironic, isn't it?

First, High Inquisitor Toriimo then Confessor Isaiah fell dead to the ground. The White Mantle got more demoralized than ever. Near the end of the battle, the White Mantle got completely replaced by the jade soldiers of the Mursaat. Seeing that their forces were repelled one by one, the more impatient Unseen Ones led some of the waves themselves. Because of this, Lucent and Oizys died very soon. In response to their deaths, the Perfected and the Cairn constructs were thrown into the battle, however, Blimm and Zinn activated their secret weapon that redirected some damage of the spectral agony to the source, while it still protected the injured from certain death. In the very end, Talios, the Mursaat general, his favourite physician, – according to Dinas – Ambrillus and their jade entourage assaulted the city. At this moment the defenders fought with everything they had. The fury of the Krytan nation was enough to defeat the Mursaat leaders once and for all…

VICTORY!

Thank you, my friend, for everything you have done for us.

-Livia

On the next morning Salma made her triumphant speech. She thanked everyone who longed for peace and the end of the oppression. Livia assumed leadership over the Shining Blade, since Bartholos had stepped down and had become the leader of the newly-founded national army of Kryta, the Seraph. The Shining Blade's role had changed: from the point where Salma had claimed her birthright and had taken her rightful throne, the Shining Blade became the royal guard of every king and queen of the tropical kingdom.The Shining Blade's deeds will never be forgotten, Without them, all Krytans would still suffer under the yoke of the Unseen Ones and their fanatical devotees.

I know that there will be hard times when the Shining Blade will be called upon again, but until then let us all enjoy an era of peace and justice.

Long live the queen!



Princess Salma

Syra Rauminen

Ascalonian refugee, Proud member of the Shining Blade

By Thalador Doomspeaker

THE MURSAAT

Unseen, but not unheard.

Amongst the enemies in Guild Wars, one holds a special place in the hearts of the community. Introduced as temporary villains of Guild Wars Prophecies, the Mursaat gained a large following to the point of player made events being held to keep them living in the final chapter of Guild Wars and (after Eye of the Norths release) the upcoming Guild Wars 2. Like many of the elder races, the Mursaat are no exception to the "must have mysteries" rule, and thus, their beginnings and past are yet to be revealed fully.

Here we take a look at the Mursaat detailing what we do know, how they played their part in the story, as well as whether we'll be seeing them again in the near future.

Saul and the Unseen

It was in the days of the Guild Wars that a drunken gambler, Saul D'Alessio, turned to robbing merchants in order to pay his debt back to the gambling guild, the Lucky Horseshoe. However after finally repaying this debt, he was caught by one of his victims, tried, and exiled from the kingdom of Kryta. Taken into the forest and left to die, many thought they had seen the last of D'Alessio, but they were wrong. Weeks later he returned to Kryta draped in white robes healthy and ready to begin spreading the word of what he found in that forest, word of the new gods he had given himself to.



What Saul had seen in that forest he described to many - a city of towers reaching into the heavens and creatures the likes of which he had never seen before. These creatures would become the driving force of the White Mantle, gods to rule in the place of the Five that humans had worshiped since early days. They were nicknamed by the populace as the "Unseen Ones"due to their tendency to never show themselves despite the Mantles insistence that while the citizens could not see them, they could see the citizens. The Unseen were always watching.

Some believed these so called gods did not exist, that they were another tale from a drunken fool who had delved into madness. But they did exist, though they were not the gods Saul thought they were...

The Mursaat

A race of humanoid spellcasters, one could mistake them for angels due to their wing-like appendages and golden appearance. The Mursaat had found their most devoted disciple in Saul, the one who could further their plans to preserve themselves... plans that would not present themselves fully until later. Unlike the other races, the Mursaat are amongst the elder races that could be traced back beyond the appearance of the humans.

Another odd thing about their race comes from their affinity to spell casting. Unlike humans or charr, who are skilled in both the magical and the martial arts, the Mursaat are strictly magical beings. They do employ the use of swords and bows. For this, they depend upon strange golem-like creatures known as Jade Constructs. Like their masters, these jade units float above the ground; however, they rarely use spells to vanquish enemies, instead depending on physical force. Jade units are made up of Jade Armours, powerful hammer wielding warriors, and Jade Bows, masters of marksmanship. Rarely seen are a third type, the Jade Cloak, who unlike its predecessors, make full use of magic and bear a green shell rather than a purple one.

The Mursaat are a force to be reckoned with, but the full extent of their power does not solely lie with the mastery of magic they possess or their relentless jade soldiers. Their true power is an ability that all Mursaat and jade constructs are able to use, a powerful spell able to destroy living creatures. The ability known as Spectral Agony.

The Power and Enemies of the Mursaat

Spectral Agony is a terrifying spell that is able to destroy a person in seconds. While many believe the power is able to be used only by the Mursaat, some speak of Saul D'Alessio being gifted with the ability in his final hours, indicating that the spell can be passed on to those the Mursaat deem worthy enough to control the power. Despite its power, Spectral Agony is not completely unstoppable and defense against it is possible. Long ago, the Mursaat were involved in a war with a second elder race known as the Seers. The genderless Seers, like the Mursaat, were unlike any other race. They were grey-skinned, had four arms, and like the Mursaat, could float above the ground with grace.

However, the Seers were no allies to the Mursaat, and the unnamed war that started between them ended with the Seers being wiped out and their civilization being forgotten through time. Only one known survivor remains to this day, roaming the remote regions of Tyria. However, it does not move without purpose, as sometime during the war the Seers successfully found a way to defend themselves from Spectral Agony.

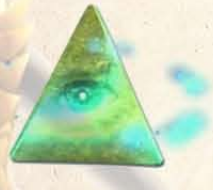
The ritual of the Seers made to combat the effects of Spectral Agony is known as "Infusion". Infusion involves taking a certain essence from a rare beast and infusing it within an object

By Free Runner

such as armour, thus allowing protection against the spell in combat. Only one type of beast is said to produce this essence. This creature is known as the Eidolon; it is said to be made from malice and shade which provides it natural immunity against the agonizing touch of the Mursaat. The Seers hunted these beasts down, using their spectral essence to withstand the Mursaat, in an attempt to have a chance to fight back.

THE DEMISE OF THE MURSAAT

It was in 1072 AE that the Flameseeker Prophecies began to unfold. These prophecies, compiled by the dragon Glint, were known only to a few beings, the Mursaat included. However unlike others, the Mursaat had everything to lose if the prophecies came true - their race would fall. Knowing this, they began to plot ways to stop the prophecies from being completed. But who could do this? The answer came to them... Saul D'Alessio. Using Saul, the Mursaat were able to gain the divine status they thought themselves worthy of to the desperate humans of Kryta. The founding of the White Mantle would allow them to intervene upon a piece of the Prophecies, the Chosen who would cause the downfall of the Mursaat.



The Eye of Janthir

Using an object known as the Eye of Janthir, the Mantle would seek new recruits worthy to join them. Searching the villages of Kryta, the Eye of Janthir would test peasants and those lucky enough to pass would be taken to study with the Unseen ones. Or so it would seem to the families and friends of those taken, as the Eye of Janthir was no mere recruitment test - it was a test to seek out the foretold Chosen. The Mursaat used the Mantle to sacrifice those Chosen on a nearby Bloodstone, both powering the doors that held the Mursaats fated destroyers back and getting rid of those who would open the doors.

However, the Mursaat were foolish to leave the task of getting rid of the chosen to the Mantle. The true Chosen slipped through the grasp of the Mantle and continued on their long journey, unknowingly moving towards the Mursaats greatest fear. Pulling out of Kryta, the Mursaat began defending the Ring of Fire Islands, the place where the Door of Komalie resided. The Chosen, with the help of a Seer, gained infusion and fought through the Mursaat's defenses finally making it to the door. There the foretold Flameseeker opened the door and allowed the monsters waiting behind it to enter Tyria. The Titans were the demise of the Mursaat that the Prophecies had told of, and they slowly began invading Tyria. These new terrors were immune to Spectral Agony; therefore, the Mursaat were destroyed by the Titans who rampaged through Tyria like a newborn plague. The Mursaat had failed to stop their fate and fell like the prophecy foretold.

THE LAST MURSAAT?

Despite the Mursaat having mostly been wiped out by the Titans, all was not lost. One of the Mursaat leaders, Lazarus the Dire had not fallen with the rest. Lazarus escaped from the Titans rampage by splitting himself into aspects and infusing each one within his dedicated Mantle followers. The followers graciously allowed their god to enter into them, believing it to be a gift of power. Six years after the Door of Komalie had been opened, Lazarus finally began to make his move. Remnants of the Mantle moved throughout the Tarnished Coast, and the members who had received Lazarus's "gift" had began dying.

The process to remove each aspect by Lazarus killed its host and the final host had long since understood the gift he had received was merely a curse. The lone Justiciar sought the help of a genius Asura named Glayvin, hoping he would get rid of the aspect without killing him. Glayvin the Asura failed to remove the aspect, instead corrupting it in the process. Now without hope, the Justiciar brought Lazarus out for a final confrontation. Having gained all his aspects, Lazarus the Dire appeared, killing the Justiciar who had served his purpose. Lazarus turned to those aiding the Justiciar and prepared to kill them when his power began to twist upon itself. The aspect Glayvin had unintentionally changed backfired on Lazarus harming him in the process. Weakened and enraged, Lazarus swore revenge on humanity for what it had done to him and his brothers. Countless generations would suffer for what they had done to the Mursaat... and with that, Lazarus fled into the darkness.

THE UNSEEN FUTURE

In 1079 AE, the fight between the Shining Blade and the White Mantle over the future of Kryta turned from small battles into a full-blown civil war. Under a new confessor, the White Mantle attempted to keep its grasp on Kryta... and the surviving Mursaat were behind them. Seven survivors besides Lazarus the Dire remained, attempting to take shelter within Mantle forts as their oppression swept over Kryta. The new queen of Kryta learned of their survival and began dispatching heroes to destroy the Mursaat once and for all.



By Free Runner

THE MURSAAT

Unseen, but not unheard.

Willem the Demeaning and Aily the Innocent were the first of the survivors to be taken care of, Willem hiding inside the Temple of the Unseen and Aily taking refuge within the walls of Shaemoor. Scared by their deaths, the White Mantle began to regroup their forces in the village of Demetra, allowing a group of heroes to slip into the Temple of Tolerance and destroy another Mursaat, Koril the Malignant. With three Mursaat killed under the White Mantle's noses, the time had come for the final decisive battle.

The White Mantle marched across Kryta to the city of Lions Arch. It was there where the queen's forces clashed with the White Mantle for rule over Kryta; however, the Mantle had not come alone. Alongside the Mantle the last four Mursaat, Lucent the Spectral, Oizys the Miserable, Ambrillus the Guardian, and their presumed leader Talios the Resplendent, unleashed their wrath on the forces of the queen. Each one fell one after the other on the battlefield, ensuring the defeat of the White Mantle once and for all. All seven of the reported survivors had fallen, and Kryta would move on to a new age, no longer under the rule of the Unseen or the White Mantle. But the Mursaat are not extinct yet... for Lazarus the Dire still remains somewhere in Tyria.



A Mursaat, as seen in-game.

Will the revenge against humanity Lazarus spoke of be carried out? Nobody can know for sure, but one thing is certain: the Unseen will return.



Saul D'Alessio and the Mursaat

By Free Runner

The White Mantle

In our faith, we are blind
In the Unseen, we seek true sight
'In ourselves, we find obedience

"Peasant's Prayer" from the Book of Loam

The White Mantle. The name of the militarized religious cult is enough to strike terror into the hearts of those who believe in the Six Gods or follow the rightful heir to the tropical kingdom's throne: Princess Salma. But why, you might ask. Let us delve into the history of Kryta in order to discover the rise, the reign and the fall of this group.

The Legend of a Fallen Man:

...and that, children, is the story of how Saul D'Alessio drove the charr from Kryta.

- Inquisitor Lovisa



When I first heard the stories of Saul D'Alessio I was amazed by it. However, he was not always the pure-hearted savior of Kryta. Before the charr invasion of the coastal nation, he lived a sinful life. Unable to pay the bet he lost, he began robbing merchants who were traveling on the road from Beetletun to Shaemoor. Although he repaid his debt to the Lucky Horseshoe – an international gambling guild -, one of his victims called him out and he was tried as a thief. To ensure that he could never return, the local authorities blindfolded him and rode out with him for three full weeks before dropping him off.

Saul stumbled through the jungle, waiting for death. Instead, he found the Unseen Ones. On the fourth day of his wandering, he entered a city of massive towers that seemingly reached into the heavens. The architecture was astonishing, and the inhabitants of this divine place were unlike any he had ever seen. The radiant creatures were tall and thin with wing-like appendages that fluttered even in the slightest breeze. The broken Saul dropped to his knees. He believed he had found his true gods, and the gods, in return, had found their first disciple.

They cured Saul in both body and soul as well as gave him knowledge and wisdom. Then they sent him back to Kryta to help his countrymen and to spread the teachings of the Unseen Ones.

When Saul returned, things were chaotic in Kryta. King Jadon had fled from the throne, abandoning his people in their darkest hour. The Krytans were leaderless, hungry, and worn. Day after day they suffered losses at the hands of the charr. It was no surprise that the reborn Saul could rally his defeated brethren. He became the messenger of hope. Even though no one ever saw his mysterious gods, the people believed that they did truly exist. He and his followers saved many defenseless Krytans from the brutal felines, however, the invaders were many. They could not have hoped to defeat them in one large battle. In order to give hope and a chance to rally for the Krytan people, Saul and his most trusted disciples devised a desperate plan: they would assassinate the charr leaders under the cover of night.

Eight men and women appeared in the village of Demetra on that fateful night. Saul and his most devoted followers – Dorian, Hablion and Thommis – wore white robes and armor, embroidered with golden thread (the "regal attire" that they would use during their reign). They moved through the charr war camps, evading enemy patrols as they proceeded. After reaching the main camp, they killed Rox Ashreign, the charr leader and his lieutenants. However, the sounds of their battle alarmed the other charr. Seeing that "puny" humans had killed their generals they sought revenge. One by one the charr mobilized their camps, moving against Saul's single band. D'Alessio knew that there was no escape. He led his disciples in prayers to the Unseen Ones one more time.



This time, their gods answered their plea. Appearing before the desperate group, they promised to protect Saul and gave him their greatest "blessing", the power of spectral agony. They warned him though, that their aid would come at a price, but Saul faithfully agreed. Fighting shoulder to shoulder with their unseen gods, Saul and his servants repelled the furious charr hordes. The charr's glorious plans of conquering Kryta failed that day. Their armies broken, the surviving members of the invasion force retreated through the Shiverpeaks.

By Thalador Doomspeaker

Kryta was secured. However, the Unseen Ones were true to their promise. They demanded their due for their help. The most devoted followers (the ones I had mentioned earlier) of the faith could continue to worship and serve their new gods, but the rest of the witnesses had to die, for they had seen the true power and brilliance of the Unseen Ones. Saul watched as his "gods" struck down his allies, realizing that the magnificent beings were neither good nor kind. They took Saul with them in order to ensure his silence. As he faded from the eyes of the mortals, he knew that he had betrayed his own people to new, harsher masters. He was never seen alive again.

Saul's legacy is tremendous. If asked, many would only connect the founding of the White Mantle to his name, however, there were many more deeds he had done before he disappeared. Despite the true nature of those that had inspired him, Saul was a good man. He loved his country more than any other and believed in equality. Even though he was the leader of a new faith, he defended the old one. Sometime before his disappearance, he formed a special edict which protected those who believed in the Old Gods (now Six Gods) and the hub of their faith, the Temple of the Ages.



The Temple of the Ages as seen in-game.



It is true that he was invaluable in the rise of the White Mantle, although I think it is unfair from the Shining Blade to call him "Saul the Deceiver". He will still remain a hero and champion of Kryta.

THE RISE OF THE WHITE MANTLE:

You have led us to the true faith. Kryta will never be the same.

-Justiciar Hablion

By defeating the charr, the White Mantle were celebrated throughout Kryta. The Krytan people thought of them as the wise and benevolent defenders of Kryta. After all, the Krytans were disappointed with the royalty and the "Old Gods". The king abandoned them and the Five Gods didn't help them in their hour of need, whereas the Unseen Ones showed themselves to Saul and his disciples. Dorian, Hablion and Thommis assumed control over the nation. Dorian was chosen to be the confessor – the highest rank in the White Mantle's order – while the two warriors became the first of the Justiciars.

THE REIGN OF THE WHITE MANTLE:

The White Mantle serves the greater good of all.

-Confessor Dorian

In the peaceful years after the defeat of the charr armies, the White Mantle's numbers were bound to swell. Many more have joined them and helped in spreading the teachings of the "Silent Saviors of Kryta." They built monuments and temples for their gods. One of these monuments is presumed to be near Demetra, where Saul D'Alessio died (at least that was the "official" explanation for his disappearance). Another of these monuments is the Fountain of Truth, near Shaemoor, which is also the housing place of the Eye of Janthir. Legend tells that Saul visited the island of Janthir whose inhabitants possessed the gift of True Sight. When he returned he brought the Divine Eye with him.

One of the White Mantle's holiest scriptures are also stored in the province of Shaemoor. The Tablets of Janthir contain the teachings of the Unseen Ones, conversations, and journals of various White Mantle members, prayers, oaths, and volumes of wisdom. It is unknown how the White Mantle acquired these, but some speculate that it is another gift from the island of Janthir, just like the Divine Eye.


The Temple of Tolerance

The temples of the White Mantle are well-known in Kryta. The Temple of Tolerance can be found in D'Alessio Seaboard, while the Temple of the Unseen – where the so-called Grand Masters resided – stands in Riverside Province.

The White Mantle positioned Justiciars in the major towns and provinces of Kryta to enforce the law. While they served as protectors, the true governing was the work of the provincial governors – of course, I don't even have to say that they were appointed by the Mantle. The only city that they could not fully influence was Lion's Arch, as it was still defended and run by the less-popular Lionguard. All in all, through these decrees they solidified their rule over the lands of Kryta.

By Thalador Doomspeaker

The White Mantle

The Krytan people felt safe under the protecting hands of the Mantle and their unseen gods. To them they were the root of law and order. However, there was a certain social "difference" between those in the order and those outside. If you were part of the "one True Government of Kryta", you would receive more food, better clothing, access to books and other privileges simply by following the rules and teachings of the Unseen Ones and fulfilling the orders that were handed down by the confessor.

The White Mantle did not become idle during the years of peace. Since the end of the last guild war and the charr invasion, they maintained a high level of vigilance. Every member of the order had to train in either one of the martial or the arcane arts. They also kept large stockpiles of weapons in their temples – in the case of emergency…



Which, of course, came sooner than they had thought. In the year of 1071 AE, Orr sank to the bottom of the sea. However, the thousands that died that day did not pass into the afterlife peacefully – or more precisely, something powerful did not allow them. The walking dead marched into Kryta, taking shelter in the swamps and bays of the land. Their assaults were relentless. Every day they ambushed traveling people or defenseless villages. The Mantle marshaled its forces against the undead.

During these times the first refugees from Ascalon arrived. While they awaited at the Gates of Kryta, a small party went to negotiate with the ruling power – namely: Justiciar Hablion. He and his forces were fighting a large undead force that occupied the swamps in the vicinity. Hablion made a deal with the Ascalonians: if they helped him in clearing out the swamps, he would give their people passage into Lion's Arch. By the end of the day, the Ascalonian settlers had a place they could call their own, and the White Mantle had new allies – for a time.

The said Ascalonian party continued to amaze the White Mantle. They secured the Scepter of Orr (for which the Confessor himself bestowed the title of Mantle Knights upon them) and helped them in finding the Chosen with the divine Eye of Janthir, and taking them to Loamhurst.

The undead weren't the only thorn in the Mantle's side. A group of rebels who called themselves the Shining Blade assaulted the caravan that was taking the Chosen from Loamhurst to the Grand Masters. The Blade killed Justiciar Rhynoon during the ambush. Thommis, who was the deceased's brother, flew into a fit of rage. He ordered a large portion of the Mantle's forces to invade the Maguuma Jungle, determined to wipe the Shining Blade from the face of Tyria. The Ascalonian party was pursuing the kidnappers of the Chosen through the Wilds, although in the end they were captured by their "quarry".



Instead of killing the allies of their archenemy, the rebels showed the painful truth to them: the White Mantle didn't want to train the Chosen, instead they sacrificed the innocent villagers atop a magical artifact from the time of the Old Gods. All in the name of the Unseen Ones.

In the end, the small group caught Hablion and his entourage in this horrible act, and slew them in return.

The Mantle strikes back:

When these heathens attacked the White Mantle they chose their fate. Now it is for us to deliver upon them what they have asked for.

-Confessor Dorian

The death of his right hand gave the final push for Confessor Dorian to declare war on the Shining Blade and the traitors.

Speaking of traitors, the Mantle had an infiltrator deeply embedded within the rebel group. It was one of the Blade's inner-council members, an individual named Markis. He sold out his "friends" three times. After Hablion's death he gave away the locations of all the Blade's bases throughout the jungle. Then, he told the Mantle about the ritual with which they could gain access into the Henge of Denravi, the place that the Shining Blade planned to be its next base of operations. The Blade and the "redeemed" Ascalonians were able to defeat the Demagogue – the person overseeing the Mantle's push into the jungle – and his armies. Eventually, they secured the Henge and everything seemed to be well.

However, Markis' third attempt proved to be successful. He led his comrades into Denravi from the other way around, nearly eradicating all of the rebels in the process. Also, he told the Mantle that the knights who had betrayed them previously are taking the newly stolen Scepter of Orr to a monastery in Sanctum Cay. White Mantle ships hit the shore of the island, taking the Blade's leader, Evennia, as a prisoner. Thanks to Vizier Khilbron, one of

By Thalador Doomspeaker

The White Mantle

the last survivors of Orr, the Ascalonians were able to avoid the Mantle's grasp.

Now that the Mantle had nearly destroyed their enemies, they pursued the surviving Blade members into the Shiverpeaks. However, there was "something" they had not yet accounted for. A group of xenophobic dwarves, the Stone Summit, hated everything that was human. The Mantle met heavy resistance in the mountains. Sometime during this point the zealots' unseen gods finally appeared (possibly, they foresaw the closing of the Flameseeker Prophecies – that they feared so much – drew near). Together they pushed the Summit and the Deldrimor dwarves eastward. Until, the Ascalonian adventurers returned…

They broke out Evennia from her cell and did serious damage to the Mantle's war effort. The following encounter, they didn't stop at facing only the Unseen Ones' fanatical devotees. Somehow they were able to withstand the devastaing powers of the "gods" and killed several of them. The small band of heroes also avenged their Blade brethren by slaying Markis, the traitor. The end of the Mantle's war in the Shiverpeaks was close.



At this point, the Stone Summit held Thunderhead Keep. The Ascalonians wanted to help King Jalis in retaking the keep, while the White Mantle wanted to raise their flag over the the capital of the Deldrimor dwarves. The Ascalonians were the first to arrive. They recaptured it from the hands of the Summit, although - shortly afterwards - the cold-hearted dwarves mounted an offensive, hoping to seize the city once more. Their siege failed because of two reasons: the defenders and the fact that the Unseen Ones and the White Mantle appeared on the scene. The surviving Summit retreated in order to regroup for another attack.

Although the combined forces of the "gods" and their zealots were much tougher than the Summit's attack, they failed utterly. The Confessor led the very last wave against the defenders, but - like the rest of his army before him - he was defeated.

The Fall of the Unseen Ones:

The crossroads will come, a hiccup in time when the rest of history has not been written. At this juncture, when the fate of the world hangs in the balance, the forces of evil will rise. It is at this point, that the chosen ones may fail.

-Scroll of Seeing

The White Mantle was nearly defeated. The final blow to the old leadership happened when the same Ascalonian heroes killed the last surviving members of the Mantle's Inner Council: Argyle, Bolivar and Cuthbert. These three men were planning to meet their gods to discuss their next step; however, they never reached their destination.

The worst was yet to come. The White Mantle basically lost their pantheon as well. Again, "thanks" (not from the Mantle's point of view) to the very same Ascalonian heroes.

The Beginning of the End:

At his heart, every man has inside him a place of darkness. The challenge of the righteous man is not only to recognize in himself that which he seeks to strike down in the wicked, but to understand that he too is wicked.

-Verse 3, The Book of Confessors

A few Unseen Ones still survived. It's still a mystery how they did so (archivists speculate that they broke themselves into aspects, infusing those "shards" into their followers, then when the time was right they reclaimed them, killing the hosts in the process). Seven of the known survivors hid in Kryta, while the last – Lazarus the Dire, one of the greatest generals of his race, who fought alongside Saul D'Alessio – went into hiding after the last aspect he was trying to reclaim got damaged. This Mursaat – the true name of their race was revealed by the Ascalonian heroes – has never been seen again.



Even the seven survivors were enough to rally the shattered White Mantle. One of Dorian's disciples, Justiciar Isaiah became the next Confessor. He was not as kind as Dorian had seemed to be. His special decrees "helped" in making the White Mantle more infamous and unpopular than ever. He hired bandits and scoundrel from the outlands and beyond in order to enforce his own laws. Ironically, he named them Peacekeepers. Then, he appointed former Justiciars to the rank of Inquisitor. These men and women scoured the land for rebels and villagers who disobeyed the rules of the Mantle and the Unseen Ones. Last but

By Thalador Doomspeaker

not least, Isaiah issued the Proclamation of Public safety, which basically ruined the business of many Krytan merchants.

While the White Mantle were busy fighting in the countryside, Princess Salma – daughter of King Jadon and Priestess Berea, true heir to the throne of Kryta – and her company easily entered Lion's Arch. The citizens of Lion's Arch welcomed the return of the princess with open arms and hoped she could organize a campaign against the "new" overbearing Mantle. After this event, Salma gathered more and more allies each day including: the Ebon Vanguard, two brilliant Asuran inventors and foreign adventurers from Ascalon, Cantha and Elona.

The White Mantle couldn't do anything about this. They still considered themselves to be the one True Government of Kryta, so they saw it fitting to forbid traveling to the "heathen" city of Lion's Arch for the Krytan people. They didn't realize that the majority of the Krytans supported the young princess. In the meantime they began filtering troops to Demetra, where both their mortal and divine leadership was stationed.

Salma gave special missions to her new allies. In the first "turn" they killed High Inquisitor Toriimo's minions (I think we all knew how the former Justiciar reacted to this). The Princess was pleased with the successes, thus she sent the skilled adventurers on more dangerous missions. The objectives of these operations were the assassinations of the Mursaat leaders. In less than a month, three out of the seven survivors were dead. The Mursaat general, Talios the Resplendent decided their response: the total destruction of the royalists and the death of the "pretender" Salma. On the last day of the war, the White Mantle, the Mursaat's jade soldiers, and the Mursaat themselves rose from their headquarters in Demetra, determined to end this conflict once and for all. Their charge began. The Mantle army left none standing in their wake, as they wanted to punish everyone who had betrayed them – especially the Ascalonians. Fortunately, the villages in the path of the army were warned in time, and thus their occupants had been evacuated before the furious Mantle arrived...

The rays of the setting sun sparkled on one of the greatest armies ever assembled in Tyrian history. The gates of Lion's Arch were locked, but they couldn't hold for long. To the Mantle's great surprise, Princess Salma opened the front gates to initiate the first attack. The Mursaat and Mantle generals quickly sent in their first assault wave. The Battle for Lion's Arch began...

THE FALL OF THE WHITE MANTLE:

Unlike the Old Gods who have abandoned you, our gods are with us here today to ensure our victory!

-Confessor Isaiah prior to his death



It did not matter how large their army was, the defenders were stronger, as they were energized and motivated by all the things they fought for: Kryta, their Queen and the Six Gods. On the other hand, many of the White Mantle's soldiers did not want to fight, as they were either forced into battle or were cowed by the presence of the "Unseen gods" The royalist army fought valiantly, and even though the size of the attack waves grew, they repelled them. Toriimo and Isaiah were killed in the early stages of the battle. Seeing this, the zealous White Mantle became enraged and stormed the city along with the inhuman jades.

Eventually, the less ardent Mantle fled the battle after seeing the death of their esteemed leaders. In the end, only the Mursaat leaders and their jade soldiers remained. However, one by one they fell to the arrows, blades, and the magic of those who fought for freedom! Talios, Ambrillus, Oizys and Lucent were dead. The Mantle had no gods to fight for, no priests and military commanders who could rally them. Many White Mantle surrendered to the royalists, finally seeing the truth, and cursing themselves for being blind through so many years. These Mantle joined the Seraph, hoping that one day they could redeem themselves.

However, I fear that the "true" White Mantle is not yet defeated (those who survived the battle or were not present). It's true that it'll take them decades if not centuries to muster a credible threat, but they are still dangerous. The religious cult will still search for their false gods... and if they find Lazarus... Dwayna protect us.

Qui-Dor Sethiroth

Canthan Minister of War, Former White Mantle member, Co-founder of the Shining Mantle, Proud member of the Seraph

By Thalador Doomspeaker

Costume contest results!

Winners of last issue's costume contest

Courtesy to GuildWars2Guru

'We are the Shining Blade, we bring Peace to Kryta
and Peace we shall follow.
Who shall we follow?'

Gr Rawr from **the United States**
has won a White Mantle
Costume code



The answer was:

Princess Salma

(Salma is a feminine given name derived from the Arabic "salima" meaning "Peace.")

Congratulations to both!
Have fun with your prize.

Meize Seiitsu from **France**
has won a Shining Blade
Costume code



The End of the Mantle

It was a stormy night when it happened. Not storming of weather with rain and lightning. No, it was storming of blood and screams. That night was horrendous – so much bloodshed, so many limp bodies. Friend, ally, enemy. None of that mattered by the time it ended. It was called a war, a battle of a war at least. Instead, all I saw was a slaughter. We shouldn't fight each other like this, no matter how much hatred and pain there is. No matter how evil one side is.

What I saw shouldn't have happened.

****

"Hey, Ithaqua! How is everything going?" A tall black-haired man in a polished white jacket strode up to the monk overlooking a map of Kryta on a table.

"Hello Malchior. I still can't figure out the White Mantle movements." Ithaqua Zhar said as he scratched the shaved hair on his head. "It makes no sense to me – they're spread out everywhere and taking rather unimportant locations. These places definitely hold no strategic value either. What about your end?"

"Recruits are now very slow coming in. We have less than a several dozen men. The White Mantle clearly outnumber us and there doesn't seem to be any more of them who'll see that order's erroneous ways. Communication from Sethiroth in regards to relations with the Shining Blade are not sounding promising either," the elementalist in the pointed hat explained. "I should be the one in Qui-Dor's place; I have ties with the Lionguard at least. That would help in having the Shining Blade believe we're not their enemies."

"And I had friends among the Blade!" snapped Ithaqua. "It doesn't matter who went where, as long as Salma is convinced. We don't need the trust of every Shining Blade and Lionguard member. Was there any mention of her regards for us in Qui-Dor's report?"

"Yes, she's letting him stay in Lion's Arch while she sends off select individuals to assassinate the mursaat leaders. According to him, three of them – Willem, Aily, and Koril – were already assassinated. A fourth assassination is intended to occur sometime after he sent the message. In fact, it probably happened already."

"The White Mantle won't sit around much longer then. From the last reports, they're stationed around Riverside Province, Twin Serpent Lakes, Kessex Peaks, Loamhurst,"

"Loamhurst, Sheamoore, and Hakewood have been liberated during the assassinations." Malchior cut Ithaqua off.

"That'll change things… With that, the last place they're stationing at is Demetra."

"And according to Sethiroth, there's a lot of them there."

"That's a holy site for the Mantle. A mursaat or two are probably held up. They're most likely just trying to protect their leaders. Sanctum Cay and the beach south of the Gates of Kryta are potential bases for the White Mantle. Lieutenant Kevyn Moss!" Ithaqua shouted to a nearby middle ranked member of the Shining Mantle, "Send a couple scouts to Sanctum Cay and the Gates of Kryta. Tell them to send immediate word if they find any White Mantle in those areas."

"Yes sir!" Kevyn saluted and left down nearby stairs as soon as Ithaqua turned back to the map.

"Malchior, why don't you go to the Shining Blade camp and try to convince Bartholos to allow us to share information and troops. It would be far more beneficial that way."

"Agreed. You were in the White Mantle the longest, so you should be able to crack their strategy soon, right?"

"If there is one…"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean just that. I'm starting to doubt they have a strategy. The whole thing just looks like either one big diversion or, more annoyingly so, random acts and positioning. Isaiah doesn't seem to be that good of a leader. It's like everyone in the White Mantle with a high enough rank were told 'do whatever you want' - their positions have shown just as much." Ithaqua looked up as he finished seeing that Malchior had already left and he was talking to himself. He merely shook his head and returned to the map.

Where is the common factor? I met Isaiah before. He's not the brightest match in the box but he's not this incompetent… Ithaqua thought to himself as he studied the table map, moving markers to simulate movements of forces. His eyes began to hurt, but he simply ignored it on the premise that he didn't have time to rest. *Temple of the Unseen, Divinity Coast, and Temple of Tolerance were all hit… three of their holy sites, and three of their Unseen Ones were attacked and killed. There are forces mobilizing to the north at Demetra, the fourth and final holy site. No assassination can occur but…* Ithaqua paused as he moved the pieces again, moving pieces from the attacked sites to Demetra. *Why build a lot of forces up there? Even if the mursaat are there…*

By Konig Des Todes

The End of the Mantle

"Sir! I have a report, a scout just came in after I sent off the scouts and Malchior left." Lieutenant Moss ran up the stairs with surprisingly hard breathing.

"What is it?"

"Additional reports from the fields. All of the reports are about the White Mantle and Peacekeepers – they're conjugating in Demetra. Almost all of the forces are in Demetra or heading there. Only a few seem to be stationed in Kessex Peak. All of the White Mantle's bases are abandoned."

"Of course. Darn it, why didn't I see it sooner!" Ithaqua pinched the bridge of his nose and walked to the steps where he could be heard by others. Many of the Shining Mantle were apparently trying to listen in as they were paying attention to Ithaqua already. "Mobilize all troops! We make for the Shining Blade camp then Lion's Arch. We have to make sure the Shining Blade and Malchior know of this."

"Sir, what do you think they're going to do?" Kevyn asked, raising his eyebrow as he followed Ithaqua.

"It's obvious. A full on assault on Lion's Arch. Why else would they pour every member into one spot except to begin an assault? And there's no other target that they know the location of – or should, at least. There's going to be a lot of casualties through this method. Perfect for a race that doesn't care about us humans."

"I see. I'll go make sure others nearby know and send a messenger to rush to the Blade's camp."

Isaiah you fool.

Ithaqua hurried to grab his gear as the camp of former White Mantle members scattered to get organized. Several minutes passed as he thought over the past nine years of his life, focusing on the first time he met Saul D'Alessio when he returned from his exile. Hearing someone behind him, he quickly spun around, his former White Mantle robes that had the emblem altered swung freely as it hung from his shoulders. "Are we all ready to move, Lieutenant Moss?" Ithaqua asked as he turned back around and grabbed his trusty staff, a momento from the founder of the White Mantle.

"Yes, we're ready when you are… Are you really going to wear that into battle, sir?" Kevyn asked, pointing out Ithaqua's white jester hat.

"Yes, it is a memento from an old friend. I never leave without it anymore. You'd be surprised how many blades these 'silly' bells have stopped. Let's be off, shall we? Double pace men! We don't know how much time we have!"

The men all made a quick salute, as the habit was drilled into them when they joined the White Mantle, and rushed out in an orderly fashion to a stockpile of boats at the edge of a river. When they reached the first bridge that led to the Shining Blade's camp, a man hollered down to the man with the jester hat.

"Sir of the Shining Mantle! I have a message from a Malchior Devenholm! He says that he waits for you in the Cursed Lands. He wants to pull a surprise attack on the rear of the White Mantle! He also said to tell you the situation with the Shining Blade – Bartholos has taken them on ships to Lion's Arch in order to boost their defenses!" As the man was shouting, Ithaqua recognized him as a man named Hurc.

"Understood, thank you!" Ithaqua yelled back to the top of the bridge as he left earshot, and ordered the men steering the ship to land at the beach. "We'll have to travel through the Black Curtain in order to avoid the White Mantle stationed in Kessex Peak."

Without waiting for the rest of the boats to land after him, the monk began marching off the beach and into the large swamp. Keeping a steady pace, they quickly made it to the Temple of the Ages, where they found a unit of theirs guarding the priests and priestesses.

"Sir Zhar, what are you doing out here?" Lieutenant Osborne Raclaw, the man in charge of the unit, asked after he saluted.

"The White Mantle are gathering all their forces in Demetra, and reports say they're intending to march on Lion's Arch soon. We intend to catch them from the rear." Ithaqua quickly explained, then turned to the men, "You get a ten minute break here, we can't take too much time! If your unit is ready to move on, head to the Cursed Lands and meet up with Malchior! And we'll need your help as well." The monk turned to face Osborne as he finished.

"Understood, I'll get my men. I'll also bring some priests if they wish to come, in order to help with taking care of wounds and carrying wounded men just in case." Osborne saluted once more and left Ithaqua.

"Lieutenant Moss!"

"Yes sir?"

By Konig Des Todes

The End of the Mantle

I'll be heading over to the Cursed Lands now, so I can gather the situation. Make sure everything's in order here. And keep a couple men here, in case the White Mantle in Kessex Peak attack."

"Understood." Kevyn saluted once more as Ithaqua left to the east, meeting little resistance (most likely due to the White Mantle and Peacekeeper's previous clearing of the area). In a matter of minutes, he found the scout that Kevyn sent to Malchior. The scout led him to where Malchior awaited.

"Ah, Zhar, you made it. I've had the area scouted and we've found the Peacekeepers. But there are no signs of the White Mantle." Malchior said, for once having his pointed hat off and at his side.

"They've probably split into two groups. How far are they?"

"Southeastern reaches of Nebo Terrace. It seems that they didn't have enough of tormenting the people there before. I would have done something, but they outnumbered my unit ten to one." Malchior slumped up against a nearby tree, obviously upset over not fighting the brigands.

"All of our men should be here soon. I had them rest up for ten minutes at the Temple of the Ages. We've emptied out our camp and I'm having Raclaw's unit join. Just wish I didn't send those scouts out so soon."

"It'll be fine. Once our men get here, we'll finish off these so called Peacekeepers. Well, speak of the devil."

Ithaqua turned as Malchior finished to find both lieutenants followed by what was, at least, most of their men.

"Everyone but four men who we've left to guard the Temple of the Ages are present, sir. Most of the priests and priestesses have joined as well." Raclaw reported to Ithaqua.

"Good, let's move, the enemy seems to have split into two, leaving their Peacekeepers nearby. We don't know how long they intend to stay separate, so let's take this time to strike now." As Ithaqua, the men, and women of the Shining Mantle hollered in anticipation and agreement, Ithaqua turned to his elementalist friend, "Malchior, lead the way."

"About time," Malchior said as he re-donned his pointed hat. He then smiled and began a jog towards Nebo Terrace. "Keep up everyone!"

It was a surprisingly short distance to where the Peacekeepers were holding up. Just through a small valley and up a hill, the entire Peacekeeper army, if they could be called such, stood bickering among a group of Krytan houses. The Shining Mantle had the element of surprise, but they were going to fight an uphill battle if they didn't take it up and personal. Ithaqua looked at Malchior and signaled for him to lead his men quietly to the north. Malchior nodded in response and moved out, followed by man after man. They made little noise – which was good – and the Peacekeepers did not notice.

Ithaqua waited until those who went with Malchior were positioned behind cover. Once Malchior signaled the okay, Ithaqua led his men up the rest of the hill and towards the houses, keeping silent to allow more distance to be covered before the inevitable.

"Darn it, enemy attack guys!" One of the Peacekeepers said after spotting Ithaqua's group. "Grab your gear, now! We have a battle on our hands!"

Other Peacekeepers swore as they rushed to their weapons and some to their armor as well. Malchior waited behind cover until all the Peacekeepers' attentions were on Ithaqua's group. Then he disappeared.

The head of Ithaqua's staff met the head of the first Peacekeeper to meet his group, knocking his teeth out as he fell to the ground. Swords clashed all around Ithaqua, arrows flew past him, just to strike down either foe or ally. Ithaqua was a monk, yet he never got used to the feel of a battle, let alone one like this.

Yet another brigand fell to the force of Ithaqua's staff head. A war cry sounded to the north. Turning, Ithaqua saw that Malchior's group had cut off the Peacekeepers who were beginning to retreat, boxing the fake lawmen in. The Shining Mantle had pushed past where Ithaqua now stood, so he took the opportunity. Bowing his hands, he put one foot behind him and chanted an incantation. As he extended his left arm, he lifted his head and finished the incantation, directing holy magic into the center of the remaining Peacekeepers.

Victory was in sight. Many of the Shining Mantle were now too far for their swords to reach the enemy, or had too many allies blocking his or her line of sight, so they stood and cheered on those in the front.

A large crash sounded throughout the battlefield as a large chunk of the ground hurled forward, crushing Peacekeeper and Shining Mantle alike.

"It's the jades!" Malchior shouted over the cries of agony from foe and ally. A meteorite

By Konig Des Todes

The End of the Mantle

crashed down inches in front of the elementalist, knocking him off his feet. A dozen jades approached the group out of the springs.

“They were held up in the springs!” Ithaqua shouted, “Get back, they have the same magic that the mursaat do!” Before Ithaqua could finish, many of those in the front froze as a second green jade appeared. This time the jade came from behind where Malchior attacked.

Arrows were shot through the sky and landed in the middle of the Shining Mantle, barely missing Ithaqua. He tried to run along with his fellow men, but as he did he was held back at the neck and fell flat to his back. His robe got caught by arrows. One of the jades came up on him with a hammer. As it pulled its arm back, a fireball struck its head knocking it clean off. Ithaqua looked to his right to see Malchior rushing to him.

Rolling to his side, Ithaqua grabbed a sword of a fallen Shining Mantle and cut his robe. He saw Raclaw’s face twisted with agony, an arrow pierced right through his chest. The monk wanted to close the eyes and mouth of the man who’s sword he just grabbed, but he had no time. Dozens of jades were appearing, and if he wanted to live, he had to leave his fallen comrades behind.

“Come on Zhar, let’s move!” Malchior shouted as he pulled the monk with him. The jester hat still on the monk, he regained himself and ran. The Shining Mantle retreated.

Once at the Temple of the Ages, the Shining Mantle began to get treated by the remaining priests, priestesses, and monks.

“Sir Zhar.” Lieutenant Moss approached the miraculously unharmed monk. “Scouts report the jades have stopped pursuit. They killed off any Peacekeeper we didn’t, and now they’re heading east, most likely to Lion’s Arch.”

“We’re too broken now to fight the jades… How many of us are left?” Ithaqua kept his head down, glad to be alive yet sad that so many around him died.

“Only a fraction of before. The jades caught us off guard. We might have been able to make a dent in them if we didn’t fight the Peacekeepers, but… We have no defenses against the mursaat’s magic here.”

“If reports are correct, Salma had an asura to help with that. They should be fine without us – or with us, right now it wouldn’t make a difference.” Ithaqua took a deep breath after he finished, stood up, and shouted loud enough for everyone to hear. “Alright, listen up! That was terrible luck that we faced, and we’re probably all injured – if not physically then emotionally or mentally. We’re going to heal up here and then make way to a beach. We’re going to sail into Lion’s Arch and pray to the Six Gods that they preserve the city. Understood?”

The entire temple echoed with a thunderous “Yes sir!”

The sun set on the temple as what was left of the Shining Mantle rested and then slept. Before the sun rose, they rushed southwest to where they left their boats and, within an hour, set off to Lion's Arch. Ithaqua and Malchior pushed the order to keep moving without rest. With enough speed, they managed to navigate through the coast of the Sea of Sorrows to Lion's Arch with ease and managed to get to the city by sunrise.

Countless bodies littered the main square of the city, slowly being moved by those still alive. The Shining Mantle were too late and the battle was over, and won.

"The Shining Mantle are here!" A woman shouted out. Turning to see who yelled, Ithaqua saw a female Lionguard waving at them. Bartholos and Sethiroth were quickly approaching.

"Brother Ithaqua, Brother Malchior! How are you two?" Sethiroth said as he saluted the group. "Why did so few come?"

"And why are you so late. Bah, just like a Mantle, refusing to do anything good." Bartholos grunted as he surveyed the newly arrived group.

"We encountered jades and the Peacekeepers. We managed to wipe out most of the Peacekeepers before the jades appeared. When they did... they slaughtered many of our men. We had to spend most of the night recovering."

"The Peacekeepers are no more?" Bartholos asked, appearing shocked.

"That's right, those we didn't finish were killed by the jades it seemed. There was a good number of the Peacekeepers, we managed to catch them off guard outside Bergen Hot Springs and prevented them from coming here." Malchior stepped up to Bartholos as he explained the Shining Mantle's actions.

"How are things here?" Ithaqua asked Sethiroth, ignoring the warrior and elementalist.

By Konig Des Todes

The End of the Mantle

"The mursaat, Toriimo, and Isaiah have been killed. I killed the confessor myself even. We've won the battle and the war now. Might not have happened if the Peacekeepers appeared, so thanks for your support from elsewhere. Salma has news for us. She told me to get the rest of the Shining Mantle and I was about to leave. We'd best report to her majesty." Sethiroth turned as he finished, heading to the keep of Lion's Arch.

Ithaqua turned to Kevyn and told him to help with the bodies, and to send some men to Nebo Terrace to give the fallen Shining Mantle a proper burial before the animals get to them. After that, he, Malchior, and Bartholos followed Sethiroth to Salma.

"My queen,"Bartholos said as he kneeled before Salma, "the Shining Mantle leaders are accounted for."

"Ithaqua Zhar and Malchior Devenholm. I trust there is a reason you were unable to aid us in our time of need?" The queen asked the two leaders.

The three leaders kneeled next to Bartholos. Ithaqua and Malchior explained what happened to Salma and the others in detail.

Salma simply nodded in response. After a few moments of silence, she spoke. "That is good news then, and I am terribly sorry for your loss. However, I hereby request the disbanding of the Shining Mantle."

"Your majesty? If I may be so rude, why?" Qui-Dor Sethiroth asked as he looked into the queen's eyes.

"I will form a new group, the Seraph. A group of Blade and Mantle. It seems only right to have the Shining Mantle disbanded and join the Seraph. Their establishment will be made official in my next speech after Lion's Arch is cleaned up after the battle, in a few weeks time. Bartholos here will lead them, and I want you three, and your men, to help ease tension between the former White Mantle and the former Shining Blade."

"Understood. I accept your wishes." Ithaqua said, followed by agreements from Qui-Dor and Malchior.

"Then the Shining Mantle are no more."



By Konig Des Todes

Bar Jokes with Arghore

A charr, a norn and an asura enter a bar...
Charr: "I killed this great White Mantle boss today, Amalek the Unmerciful. Did you guys kill him yet?"
Norn: "Nope, he was already dead before I could even get close."
Asura: "Same here, the local wild-life got to him first..."

A charr, a norn and an asura enter a bar...
Charr: "I'm glad we saved those kids from Lovisa!"
Norn: "Agreed, that mean woman had them under some sort of spell."
Asura: "I don't really like kids, so I'm glad we could just leave them there..."

A charr, a norn and an asura enter a bar...
Charr: "The Queen surely knows how to keep our spirits up."
Norn: "Yeah she knows exactly how to stimulate us to keep fighting."
Asura: "Three Krytan brandy please."



A charr, a norn and an asura enter a bar...
Charr: "I am glad we didn't inform our special allies about the location of our camp."
Norn: "Yeah... still they were a great help throughout a large part of the war."
Asura: "Agreed! Mergoyles FTW!"





By Arghore

END OF THE LINE...

CAPTION ATTRACTION!



Tyria's Best Dance Crew!
- Hiten Patel



Send in the caption for this screen-shot to caption@guildmag.com

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- PAX & GamesCom
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- Title Hunters
- The Norn

... and more!

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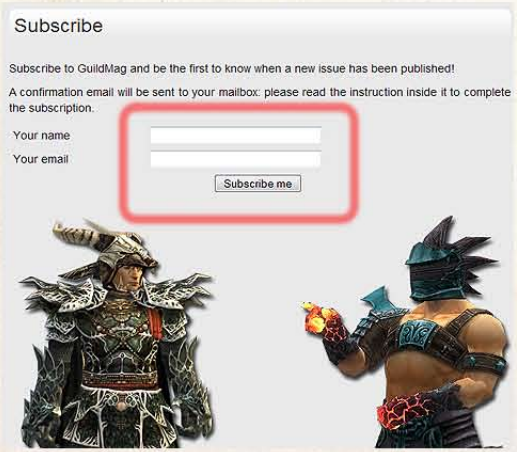
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Back to the cover

GuildMag @ gamescom

On the 19th of August, GuildMag's Dutch Sunshine, Jonny10, Asuran and Arghore will be attending GamesCom in Cologne, Germany.

We've been giving you subtle hints to something 'special' for a while.
Now it is finally time to announce we'll be doing an interview with ArenaNet on the spot at GamesCom.

GuildMag is a fan based magazine, we're avid players, just like you. Therefore we want to give the fans a chance to let us ask their question to ArenaNet on their behalf.

Send your question to *interview@guildmag.com*. Be inventive and original, we'll be picking three questions to take with us.

The deadline for submissions is on the 15th of August.