

Silverfern Star

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WAR RAGES IN ROKAR

Hank Granger, Journalist

Those experienced with the internal politics of this northern nation undoubtedly read the title of article in same vein as other statements like; "Rain Falls in Fallstav". While it is true that Rokar is a warlike nation which practices open battle between Thanedoms as a matter of day to day politics, this war is like no other.

The Forces of Great Thane of Kamal Bullstrike are currently embroiled in a civil war against armies lead by Thane Feindhaller and their foreign J'Teth allies. On each side, dozens of smaller Thanedoms have thrown their lot in with one side or the other as the factions square off in pitched battle.

Despite the size, ferocity and gravity of this nationwide conflict, very little "collateral damage" is being reported. As Lady Jaramillo of Mergrim, ambassador to Rokar, said; "This is the most civilized civil war I have ever heard about, much less seen. No farms are being burned, no crops destroyed... castles are taken but their towns are not being looted. Soldiers fight and die, and the survivors return to their farms to wait for the next season of battle without being hunted or accosted by agents of the other side. It is absolutely insane!"

The Rokarian Civil war has been described as a "Nationwide Duel" between opposing nobles. Forms of battle and honor, which the Rokarians call "The Honin", prevent the warring parties from allowing the war to split out into people's day to day lives. The roads are all open to travel, markets and towns within a half mile of the battlefields are unalarmed and uninvolved in the warfare besides sending throngs of spectators who cheer for one side or the other. Spectators who support opposing sides do not take up arms against each other, although gambling is rampant. There is no trickery, nor any deceit.

However, that does not prevent the actual battles themselves from being some of the bloodiest and most vicious displays of violence inflicted from one sentient creature on another. When ordered to fight, Rokarians fight. When ordered to hold a battle line, they will do so until the last warrior dies. They fight with perfect courage, with appalling ferocity, and unparalleled skill. It is undeniable that the greatest warriors of the world hail from Rokar, mere soldiers of any other land could not fight so hard, for so long, with such skill, and with such discipline.

Thane Tedrick Feindhaller, and allied Thanedoms have grown much stronger, especially after their alliance with the J'Teth. The use of "magic" in Rokarian battles is not prohibited by "The Honin," however, up until this civil war its use was marginal and tightly managed. Many Rokarians are calling this conflict "The War of the Wand" due to this new change in battle tactics. As a result, scholars and wizards are being looked upon with greater respect- instead of being ridiculed for their frail limbs and skinny necks.

In this conflict the "Feindhaller Faction" has been able to pull out legendary feats of magic in every engagement. Working more spells of grand design, and tremendous power, than lesser wizards can even understand, and have allowed the much smaller Feindhaller

army to make great strides against the Great Thane. Fire has rained from the skies, pits of Demons have opened up behind enemy lines, bolts of lightning have taken the lives of scores of warriors. Additionally, warriors of Clan Feindhaller have been gifted with magical armor and weapons greatly enhancing their already fearsome skills and abilities.

"It is the Nexus they Control" Lady Jaramillo (Of the Great Thane's camp) explained, "As a result of the last Thanemeet, Clan Fahr lost custody of their Freehold to Clan Feindhaller. Part of those lands included a 'Nexus' which their J'Teth allies have used to great effect. In that respect, the outcome of the that Thanemeet has played perfectly into the J'Teth and Feindhaller hands. They are nearly undefeatable with that source of magical power bent to their will. But note, I said "nearly." We will find a way and they will die."

Many Rokarains sow blame at the house of former Thane Hagrid Wolvespar for that outcome, claiming that the interference of the "Foreign Mercenaries" he sent to the Thanemeet allowed Clan Feindhaller, and by extension the J'Teth, to secure this important resource. The former Thane Wolvespar resigned his authority due to the scandal and is now living in Fallstav under an order of execution which will come to sentence after his daughter graduates (or flunks out) of her Middlehaven school.

Hagrid did not deny that his mercenaries were responsible for the J'Teth getting their hands on the nexus; "Those adventurers from Middlehaven had saved my daughter, and I had a Honin debt to repay. They needed to go to the Thanemeet to save one of their own, and I attempted to explain our customs to them, but the rigors of the Honin are very difficult for Softlander folk. They violated our customs, but also made deals which allowed Clan Feindhaller to claim victory over Clan Fahr. I do not think they fully understood that the J'Teth were allies to that clan, despite the fact that the Feindhallers have never denied it, and that the Nexus was also at stake. I think it just slipped their mind, and the J'Teth took full advantage of their inexperience, disorganization, and naivete. However, despite these mistakes, their intentions were for the good."

The grandness of the scale of this war is greater than any other within recorded history however. The heralds of Great Thane Kamal Bullstrike have made offers of new lands, trading routes, and promises of intermarriage with Clan Feindhaller. To date, all these offers have been politely refused leaving many to suspect that Thane Feindhaller expects to be able to bring Great Thane Bullstrike to a state of ultimate defeat, taking the country for his own people.

In the laws of the Honin, despite the Great Thane being Thane Feindhaller's liege Lord, such action is perfectly permissible and normal. It is in fact, the same means Kamal used to wrest the country away from his own father twenty years ago. It is not uncommon for a lesser Thane to declare war against the Great Thane. In fact, the Rokarians consider it a great honor. Such states of war are often employed for political leverage and to influence policies of state.

IN THIS EDITION:

CIVIL WAR IN ROKAR

VEDISH KHAL NEWS

NIGHT OF THE
TRAVELLER

DEMON DEFEATED

REPORT FROM THE
CHILDREN OF THE
COVENANT

...AND MUCH, MUCH
MORE



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WELLS SPEWING UNDEAD AT VEDDISH KHAL?

What is Veddish Khal? Veddish Khal, the first week's end of Firstfrost, is known to be a time in which it is said that the veil between our realm and the Greylands is the thinnest. As such, all manner of undead creatures are extremely active that week's end. Necromancers deem it a time to celebrate and often make full use of their arsenal of powers. The superstitious greatly fear this holiday. Youth of all ages, on the other hand, deem it a time for frivolity and sweets. They dress in frightening costumes of their own- some say the costumes were originally believed to blend in with or scare off undead creatures- and go "trick-or-treating," seeking out sweets. Notably, fewer children were seen trick-or-treating this cycle, though it is unknown if their parents refused to permit them to go after the horrors perpetrated in Fisherman's Wharf a cycle ago by undead and the Toymaker alike, if it is a side effect of Sylverfern's population decline or both.

The source of the extreme amounts of undead is believed to have been found. It is said to be "necrogeysers," which have been described among other things as tears in the veil to the spirit world and pools of necromantic energy. Vordis have a degree of protection against necrogeysers due to their special anti-magic properties, though their magic resistance can be temporarily worn down, but any other mortal that enters a necrogeyser's field is instantly slain- and shortly after raised as undead. The necrogeysers reanimate any

deceased creature within their reach, ripping their souls from the Greylands and forcing them back into their body's decaying flesh. One necrogeyser was apparently taken down a cycle ago and another one this past Veddish Khal by the efforts of the adventurer population of Sylverfern.

It started when the Red Hand came across the necrogeyser in the Fisherman's Wharf area while investigating the source of the undead. The Red Hand is an organization that uses an inverted Dromidigen symbol as its mark and indeed has many Dromidigen followers, though followers of other gods are said to be part of the Red Hand as well. They knew a way to take down the necrogeyser, but it was protected by the very undead that it was raising. There were too many undead for them to fight on their own, however, so they went to look for help. They found adventurers and a battle with undead was joined. The goal? To clear a path for someone to disable the necrogeyser, whether in the form of a self-sacrificing divine intervention by a powerful Dromidigen priest to heal the tear or a Vordis planting a special package that would disable the necromantic field. The package, we learned, needs to be made of ten grams of bone dust of a hero, ten grams of the ashes of a virtuous man, ten grams of ground gold dust wrapped in a cloth and steeped in holy water.

The initial plan was for those present to fight the undead and clear a path for the Vordis Henbane to get into the

field and place the packet, hopefully avoiding getting felled by undead in the process. They reckoned, however, without possibilities like a group of undead lingering inside the necromantic field, being after all immune to its fatal effects, to prevent him from planting the packet. Henbane took grievous wounds and had to be extricated from the fray for healing. The fact that some of these particular undead had poison capabilities exacerbated matters; the potions of Council member Lord Samson Bordeaux were what saved several people from death. To make matters worse, the necrogeyser appeared in an area that would be treacherous for even people training in fighting with wooden sticks, as there was brush and brambles everywhere, many a tripping hazard and no space to spread out or room to slip around back, putting pay to the majority of the plans the group had made.

It is entirely possible that Mondrigror followers fought alongside villagers and Dromidigen followers to put down the necrogeyser as suggested by the testimony of one person that flashed a Mondrigror holy symbol. "The geysers are things that should not be, they should be stopped, and that is something upheld by all."

Multiple people reported that ultimately the necrogeyser was taken down by Lupin Shadowsun saving the life of a non-Vordis Red Hand member by throwing himself into

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CONSTABLE'S CORNER

Wasted Walrus Wasted by Undead

In the afternoon on the fifth day of Firstfrost off the shores of Fisherman's Wharf, taking advantage of the strengthened powers of necromancy for Veddish Khal, a foul necromancer unknown with access to ships created hordes of undead imbued in protection against sunlight and set them loose on ships to assault the tiny village of Fisherman's Wharf in Lord Lockhart's barony. The brave fighters on the ship managed to put down several shiploads of undead but not without grievous losses of their own. Several of them were pulled ashore half-dead from drowning and some fell into a water grave. The ill-fated ship itself, the Wasted Walrus, was mortally wounded by the relentless undead and sank beneath the water in the shallows to the depths of the lake.

It was quite the sight to behold from ashore, according to an eyewitness that elected for anonymity who had been in Fisherman's Wharf. "What I watched was the Wasted Walrus destroyed the first bone ship then another one came out of the blue and ambushed them destroying the boat. But luckily it was an eye for an eye thing. So the Wasted Walrus was beat up pretty badly at the docks but they were able to sink both bone ships. I heard a few people were killed in action sadly. But you know how all that magic mumbo jumbo is, they came back alive... so they didn't really

die." He added "so now I believe the Wasted Walrus is under repairs and some people are pretty upset with the captain's orders."

A few interviews with people who had participated as part of the crew confirmed the suspicions of the eyewitness ashore. It also appears that the captain of the Wasted Walrus did not know everyone he hired beforehand, nor did he introduce himself to everyone strongly enough for them to remember details. "I don't remember the name, it's a good thing I don't remember because the captain is a sorry excuse for the title" One of them seemed to be experienced with naval travel and battle. "We left shore, the captain allowed too many people on board that was the first problem. We were crammed in there a boat that should of held ten or fifteen held twenty something people. I was in the back of the ship, it started to fall apart several of us tried to hold it together but we decided we would rather die fighting then holding wood. Later my friends told me I was stabbed and then drowned. The captain didn't listen to anyone not even the ocean. I hope the captain reads this because I'm cursing him with the black spot!"

The man later disclosed that his name is Argus Myzan and that he is the former Captain of the Red Devil Pirates and had served 15 to 20 years on that ship. According to Myzan, the people

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ANOTHER CHILD MISSING

In the beginning of Sunsleep just after a blizzard hammered Sylverfern and most of the town was digging out their homes, only one of two young boys that typically found work where they could in the western part of Sylverfern turned up to work. The older of the two boys, Thomas Hargrove, age 10, thought that 6-year-old Frankie Blye had merely been sleeping or else woke before him, went out and found work helping someone else clean up after the foot of snow on the ground. After a couple of days when Frankie didn't return to the old barn in which the two lads would hide and sleep, Tommy eventually went to the town guard to tell them his friend had vanished without a trace.

The member of the Sylverfern guard to whom the child was reported missing was guardswoman Private Edythe Trotter. "It is troubling how many children from the area have gone missing as of late. "I only hope that little Frankie turns up safe and sound- against all odds, given that he has now been missing nigh on two moons," she stated in a recent interview.

Trotter with the help of two other guards spent several days combing Sylverfern trying to see if anyone had perhaps taken in the lad from the snow, but nobody had seen hide

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Allies of the Great Thane report that he is in "High Spirits", leading his armies into the fray with great enthusiasm and special kind of "Warrior's Joy" that only Rokarians truly understand. He was reported to comment (as part of a pre-battle speech); "On the Battlefield is where our honor is forged. I give thanks to Rashyer himself that I am permitted to prove my valor in such a way twice in my own lifetime. The Gods have given us great foes, we honor our enemies, and their destruction will be Glorious!"

Smaller Thanedoms are mobilizing to join the armies of both sides in this "War of the Wand", and while a few have chosen to remain neutral the vast majority of Rokar is involved in the conflict. Despite the high casualties on both sides, there seems to be no limit to the numbers of young warriors seeking to make a name for themselves (quite literally) in what is likely to be the greatest war in their lifetime.

WHAT IS THE NIGHT OF THE TRAVELLER?

Barbara Firman, dedicated worshipper of Dabith for 25 years

The Night of the Traveller, sometimes called the Day of the Traveller, is soon to be upon us. Along with being a major holiday treated with the utmost of respect in the kingdom of Middlehaven, is a greatly sacred occasion to all those who are worshippers of Dabith, the god of travel. The Night of the Traveller typically falls during the winter. It often takes place during the first or last quarter of the moon near the beginning of Earththaw. This cycle it shall be falling on Soul's Day the tenth of Earththaw.

As per tradition on the Night of the Traveller, doors are open to all of those who are in the midst

of the journey. We that follow Dabith conduct holy ceremonies to manifest our reverence for Dabith's day. Priests of Dabith renew their rituals to protect roads and inns, the havens of all those who wander and journey. Many a caravan sets out during the Day of the Traveller. Innkeepers and the more hospitable nobility, such as Sylverfern's own Lord Lockhart, throw lavish feasts on or near the Night of the Traveller in a show of respect. It should be noted that even followers of other gods of the Covenant (such as Lord Lockhart, a known Rashyer follower, and his Valkorian wife) typically treat this holiday with heavy respect.

Every cycle, I, other worshippers

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BELEAGUERED HEROS BATTLE THE BONESTEALER

At the beginning of Firstfrost an alleged major demon was obliterated by local adventurers. This demon, rumored to have been released sometime around the Vernal Equinox though its origins are unknown, was apparently one that terrorized Middlehaven under the reign of King Quintarus Stormreach a century ago. It was subdued and imprisoned by the infamous Mondrigror-worshipping Lightkiller Clan and sealed away only to eventually break free. Due to their heroism in putting down the demon lord, the king rewarded the Lightkillers by granting them freedom to worship Mondrigror with impunity forevermore under the condition that they remained otherwise law-abiding, concealed their faith when outside their own lands and did not force people outside the Mondrigror faith to participate in their religious practices against their will.

The battle was bloody. However, either the Sylverfern adventurer population got used to fighting demons or else planned unusually well for their standards, for there were very few casualties. Nonetheless, gathering information was an arduous task. A plethora of villagers had to immerse themselves in lore from various sources that they would not specify in order to ascertain how to put an end to the dread creature. Once they had their information, they began a ritual that would force Bonestealer into the area to kill it. "A lot happened I just remember many demons

rushing from a portal," explained Argus Myzan, a member of Sylverfern's adventurer subpopulation that was present for the intense fracas.

Others seemed to perceive the battle as preceding the ritual that would spell the doom of Bonestealer. A second person, Lucien, added "There was a huge battle, then a magic ritual was done to join the two halves of the Greater Demon Bonestealer. Then the hero Kincaid sacrificed himself to kill Bonestealer. Though the Divine sought fit to reward him by returning him to life." There are people that would refer to the phenomenon involving the warrior Kincaid as a Vishar, though Lucien insists that it was a one-time boon granted by Lord of Death Dromidigen, possibly because Kincaid is a follower.

For some reason it seems the people of Sylverfern have hitherto been held to blame for the supposed demon release though it is unclear what they had to do with it. Others claim that the demon was released in Blutmund. Nonetheless the Lightkillers assisted the town in combating the druggermite, shadow wights and other dread creatures unleashed by the liberation of Bonestealer. It's also under debate whether it was Bonestealer or a different demon lord responsible for the abduction and subsequent impersonation of Lord Lockhart and the farmer Alex. The latter evidently chose to disappear into obscurity and possibly altogether left Sylverfern

right after rescue for reasons unknown though one might speculate that remaining in Sylverfern is too stark a reminder of the trauma. Several people suggested that it was summoned by a fool that dabbles in the exceptionally evil and illegal magic of diablerie or who sought to bargain with it. As for the link to what happened to Lord Lockhart and Alex, Anonymous explained, "multiple victims were found missing bones, and I was told that Bonestealer was the one making the flesh copies."

The battle lasted at least a quarter of a bell and appears to have been a blur. Argus Myzan paraphrased it as "the fight, the structure surrounded by claw demons, the lich hanging around" When asked about what a "lich is," he clarified "an undead that walks the earth but has full cognitive abilities. He is such a hassle but he is a dangerous force." It was then asked whether this lich that watched the fight with demons as though it were a Rokarian pit fight had been created by a necromancer. "I don't know but he made a dangerous enemy with the Prairie Dogs, an adventuring group where no quest is too big. We have a healer, we have an elf who can use a shield and then we have me, the planner."

Others identified as combatants that stood out in addition to the Prairie Dogs and Kincaid the warrior were the Mo'Raak Syr'Laran, who went right on the front lines and was nearly slain, Lupin

Shadowsun, Nightshade, Rye Felhn, the elf Van, Gabriel Halewood and a fellow referred to as the Muscle Wizard. On the healing side, the doctor Zar Quinn brought a Vordis called Emberlyn back from the outside of Dromidigen's gate by quick, skilled surgery on the wound that would have otherwise caused her death. Fern the Court Doctor also stanchd the blood flow of many. Local priests were active in keeping people alive as well. Cyrrah Kettarr, a Priestess of Shalli, was one of these, and she expounded upon some of her prayers and the effects they have in battle with various unnatural creatures. "The prayers of a Shallian Priest harm undead for as much as the same prayer would heal a comrade. If I were to cast Healing Circle, for instance, my friends would be healed three wounds, while the Undead would take three wounds in damage."

Whether it was indeed demons or some other cause of all the recent murders in Sylverfern, they seem to have declined drastically as we are no longer constantly hearing news of people being torn to pieces, eaten alive or meeting some other grisly end. Sylverfern still has more than its share of problems but one might tentatively call it a safer place to live. Our neighbor Blutmund, which also has been besieged by demons, has also suffered far fewer loses in recent weeks. Let us now hope that this threat has been curtailed permanently.

OUT OF CONTROL

News is about the facts. The fact is that two Children of the Covenant representatives were undertaking an important mission to look into a dangerous heretical artifact, what, we would not presume to ask. While at Nancy's Tavern while they were eating lunch and were accosted by a man in black and a bird mask who was screaming "Praise -Lost God's Name-" (Editor's Note: for what should be obvious reasons, the actual name has been redacted.) and did a little dance. When the two CotC representatives chased after this deranged man they were ambushed by seven people wearing masks. None of this has been altered nor can it be denied. What cannot be further denied was that Lupin Shadowson claimed to be the leader of the attack and took responsibility for the planing of it. Now if you stand behind this fool then

let me further lay out that when questioned about this incident on a later date he denied any knowledge of events, showing that he is nothing but a coward with no honor except when it suits his own selfish needs... but I digress.

Because the truth is empty without getting all the sides my agent attempted to interview those who were said to be at the incident. Most lied and denied being at the event and staunchly calmed that all the citizens there were "law abiding."

However, when you look at the facts they spell out a different story. The question them becomes how deep does this corruption and blight go? Unfortunately, the answer, without a doubt, is to its core. When my agent questioned Councilman Gabriel not only refused to answer any of his

questions but attempted to bribe him. A Councilman bribing an agent for the paper what is this world coming to?! This is an assault on the truth and everything that the Silverfern Star stands for!

Readers, I have provided you with the facts, what you do with them is up to you, but I for one will not allow these immoral individuals and corrupt politicians to threaten our lives. Both Gabriel and Lupin claim to be of the people, for the people, but they have both proven to be unworthy of our trust and support when they drag war to our homes and attack peaceful members of the Children of the Covenant. This is a cry to become educated, dear readers, and do what must be done to insure that your way of life is not destroyed by ruffians who only have their own twisted interests at heart.



WORD OF RUL? CHILDREN OF THE COVENANT? WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Down south in what is now Occupied Fallstav back in the year 312, a woman named Ava Bainard wrote an article explaining the similarities and differences between the Children of the Covenant and the Word of Rul, the two principal factions in what would become known as Perin's Coalition Forces. Much like what is going on with Sylverfern now, they were attracted to one town in Occupied Fallstav, Fenlund, by rumors of various artifacts.

The less educated among the population often mix up the Children of the Covenant and the Word of Rul, an error that could have dire consequences for anyone that mistakes one for the other. For the sake of the health of everyone in Sylverfern, I as a follower of Rul (not to be confused with a Word of Rul member, they are a particularly fanatical and extremist sect of worshippers of my lord Rul and not all Rul followers believe their dogma) hope to spread information on the two groups for the sake of not only the present but posterity.

The Word of Rul, as mentioned, is a sect of Rul followers that places emphasis on maintaining law and order by force, ensuring that laws of the land are followed to the letter and that nobody is using any magic deemed dangerous. They are extremely influential in Perin. In the eyes of the Word of Rul, only alchemy and dwarven runecasting are acceptable and consequently those are the only two schools

that can be used in Perin without imperiling one's life. They look down on all other forms, particularly the art of necromancy that was outlawed by the Stormreach dynasty before it died out, a law still upheld by the Council of Great Lords. Their fear and abhorrence of magic stems from the J'Teth invasions; Perin suffered by far the most of the four duchies of Middlehaven.

The mage-hunters of the Word of Rul are known as Seekers. They have a talent for identifying magic upon people. They are also skilled at discerning when someone is lying to them and do not take kindly to falsehoods, to put it lightly. If they deem you cagey, they may well force you to submit to a search against your will. Nobility struggling to maintain law and order among their subjects often call upon the Word of Rul, knowing its agents pay them all the respect garnered by their station of birth and will enforce every edict with no hesitation. Additionally, they deem Rul the one true god. To them, all other gods are merely demigods that either support or oppose Rul. They abhor followers of Mondrigror, the Immortal Knave and, ironically enough considering some of their methods for enforcing law and order, Heketa. They only grudgingly accept followers of Rashyer, Avareen and Shalli. Larisca, to them, is a goddess of knowledge and only knowledge, though she happens to be associated with alchemy, the one tolerable magic in their eyes.

The Children of the Covenant are a different breed altogether. The Chosens among them have similar powers to pandeific priests and hold all 11 gods equally in reverence. They however place the Covenant at utmost importance. Like regular pandeific priests, they have the symbols for all gods on their holy symbol. If you see a checkered background, you are dealing with a Child of the Covenant. Pandeific priests have a pale blue background.

The Children of the Covenant enthusiastically share tales of all 11 recognized gods in the lands through which they travel, teaching people that are struggling how to worship whatever god best suits them and even sharing their talent for healing. They enjoy answering questions of faith, particularly over ale.

Children of the Covenant most often visit areas where there is said to be religious strife, whether it encompasses ending a religious war or to silence heretics and people that preach about false gods. They also collect and destroy pre-Godwar knowledge that they deem meant to be forgotten such as lore and artifacts of the Lost Gods. A surefire way to attract them is by spreading idle tales and wild rumors of things like demon summonings and Godwar artifacts.

They hold the law of the Covenant above the law of any nobility and even the royal law of Middlehaven. When on a mission, they very much adhere to the saying "the end

justifies the means." The best way to handle paladins and grand marshals on a mission is to stay well out of their way and not draw their attention. If you have heard rumors of Lost God artifacts, it is in your best interest to keep them to yourself and not further spread them. They do not care about pittances such as noble titles, nationality claims, or local laws. Interfering with their missions is ill-advised. The fortunate will get off with being brought up on charges, put on trial and inflicted with a mild punishment. Do not get in the way of Children of the Covenant (oft abbreviated as CotC) on a mission unless you have a death wish or happen to be one of those people who actually enjoys flagellation, dismemberment and other means of torture- the CotC do not hesitate in using torture to get what they want. Rumor has it they may even resort to outlawed schools of magic if they deem it necessary, though there is nothing to solidly corroborate this.

My advice is to remember these differences and know what you are dealing with. It is the Children of the Covenant that seem to be the current concern. Even spreading rumors of forbidden artifacts can get you in grave trouble. Don't be an ignoramus. If you happen to stumble across forbidden knowledge, it is best to forget it. And most definitely do not ever bellow praises to any of the lost gods into a tavern.

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or hair of them since the day before the blizzard unleashed its snowy fury upon the town

"Tis really scary that Frankie was there an' then just wasn't no more," young Tommy Hargrove told us. "We'd be sleepin' in different bits of the same ol' barns an' now I feel all guilty-like cuz I ain't hear nobody snatch him."

The missing boy Frankie Blye is about three feet tall and has curly brown hair. According to Tommy Hargrove, he has an interest in insects, spiders and frogs. His favorite things to do for fun are climbing trees and wrestling.

Edythe Trotter offered the following advice for the town as a whole. "Pay attention to who all of the children are by wherever you live, even - and in this latest rash of kidnappings ESPECIALLY - the vagrant children that do not seem to have parents or whose parents are generally always working. And the ones whose parents are in prison or the asylum or are otherwise. If you notice that one of those children suddenly stops appearing with no explanation as to where they went, please let the town guard know. Those are the children whose absences go unreported or undiscovered until it is much too late."

OPINION PIECE: SEPARATISTS NEED TO BE TRIED FOR TREASON

The Separatist movement has become a scourge upon the very fabric of our society! I do not understand why these buffoons have been permitted to carry on so long. Someone needs to shut them up for good. Perhaps a good whipping would set these hooligans straight! Trying to disintegrate the kingdom is nothing short of treason in my mind's eye. Why is it they haven't been put to trial yet? Must be nice, being a noble or the fruit of a wealthy merchant's loins, you can get away with disturbance of the peace, warmongering, trying to disrupt the very order of the kingdom and just about anything else.

They might not be selling our secrets to the J'Teth Empire but all the same they are rabble-raising little wastes of air. The duchy in Fallstav was in trouble enough as it as coinwise and now these little dunghills have Werdill on the verge of seceding? These children are going to rue existing once they witness the results of their folly. If Middlehaven loses Werdill, we will be absolutely ruined.

So why doesn't someone stamp out the vermin?

And if it's because "they're just kids," well, what do you reckon they'll be like as adults if left to go unchecked? They need a swift, harsh lesson in the importance of unity and Middlehaven remaining Middlehaven and not four little kingdoms. You'd think these so-called educated children would've learned something from the bards in tales pertaining to the fall of the Soldarian Empire!

Question of the Moon: What is Your Opinion on the Separatist Movement?

"I'm not for it. I don't like the idea of an unchecked Perin. Life there is dangerous as it is."

"Idealistic fools who are caught up in J'Teth collusion to divide the kingdom when we need unity most. The horrors of jteth invasion will cure them of this misplaced fervor."

"M'mama has smarts, n' she says we need ta separate, er else there'll be lots a bleedin', and bleedin' is bad. I don' see why y'all being all stubborn like. It only takes a moments or two ta sort."

FROM COUNCILOR FELHN: RESPONSE TO ABSENTEEISM CLAIMS

To whomever wrote to the paper regarding the Council's absenteeism, I thank you for your boldness in speaking out. You are correct, many of us have been absent, and you are correct, it is unacceptable. I, in particular, was waylaid delivering taxes to Vrengar that, from our understanding, were not accounted for properly during the last year by parties unknown. That was before my tenure as treasurer, and Councilor Halewood insists we paid the tithe. While I do not know who was at fault, I acted to remedy the situation, and my return was plagued by some mild troubles on the road. I must say, for my part, that I am sorry for my absence, though I understand that means little. In addition, it must be said that while we may not be at the manor house, it does not mean we are not in the barony. I spent some time seeing as much of the barony as I could, to get a better understanding of the individuals living here and the state of things on the whole. I cannot speak for the absences of other Council members.

The Council is working to remedy the disrepair situations mentioned in your letter. I had called to use money enough to fix both the bridges and the manor house, and but those funds were delayed by the Fleshheart business of a few moons ago. In that time, the situation fell further into disrepair. There is, on this side of time, not much to do about that situation but fix it. With the further disrepair, that is more difficult, but possible. Solutions are currently being worked on and put into action. I am planning an update on these solutions in the next Star, as we find out which ones are working.

I also agree that we should be capable of making decisions when we have a minimum of Council members, and indeed a quorum rule is in place. Unfortunately, two is not the threshold for that, and for fairness

in decision making we must stick to that. We are not Lord Lockhart, and no single one of us has the power to make decisions for all of us. We are a council for the people of the barony, and while each of us has some power in the matters we oversee, we cannot make such decisions of power for others unless a majority of us agree it is the right course of action.

The matter with Councilor Bianchi is one of mistakes made with the best of intentions. As our citizens know, and as was reported in the very paper you were published in, we in Sylverfern deal with threats many would not dare to imagine in their nightmares. This business with Fleshheart is proof of that. If you had not seen what we have seen firsthand, would you not be skeptical? I know I certainly would have been. Councilor Bianchi's tales of demons and fae, while unpleasantly reasonable to those of us that live here, were doubted by her family, and understandably so. They called her mad. In their position, I might have done the same. They want what is best for her, and that is admirable. It is only unfortunate that, in this situation, they were assuming her madness incorrectly.

As to the matter of the Battle Toads, given Praag's continued absence, we are seeing if we can secure a replacement for him from their ranks. The remainder of the Council members are in the process of choosing a second -or have already done so- in case they are absent or otherwise indisposed.

Once again, thank you for writing in about this. I, for one, appreciate your candor. As a Council brought together for the people of this barony, we have a requirement to serve the people. While we have made errors in the past with our absenteeism, we are working on solving the problems so the barony as a whole -and its people- can be healthier.

ATTACK ON THE CotC BASE

Hank Granger, Journalist

It behooves everyone to remain vigilant during the Veddish Khal season, and the holy who revere the gods are no exception. At night, while the Grey Season was high, an army of undead abominations rose from the black waters of Boar Lake on enchanted boats to strike at the Children of the Covenant's base of operations in Fenlund.

This base, located deep in the "Disputed Lands" is a former adventures tavern previously known as "The Coventry Inn." It is neither especially close nor especially far from the water, a mere five miles from the lake, which proved to also be a short walk for an army of the dead.

Very few people saw the boats rise from the black waters of Boar Lake, most were revelers near Nancy's Harbor Cafe in the village of Fisherman's Wharf. Accounts are sketchy at best, but it is claimed that just before nightfall the ships rose from the waters- which flowed out of them and around them as if by magic. Each boat was rough hewn, but contained a few dozen undead. Magical runes cut into the boards of the craft were apparently used to aid the boats navigation.

At the CotC base, several hundred attacked at once while a smaller group of much more powerful and sentient creatures came at them from the road. Their messengers were captured and slain, leaving the Coventry Inn cut off from all help. The second group were allegedly Cultists who had slipped into the border of Perin and hiked their way to the tavern overground. They were what appeared to be living creatures. Many were humans, but some appeared to be half human half sea creature hybrids. To see their twisted forms drained the sanity of many of the nearby common folk, who broke and ran at the first site of these abominations.

The boats supplying the undead provided a powerful distraction, and muscle. However it was the Cultists who were the real threat to the Pandeific Paladins of the CotC. They used magic themselves, and superior tactics (at least compared to zombies) to batter down the base's defenses and neutralize the holy men and women who were using the power of their Gods to keep the armies at bay.

The Coventry Base only had a few dozen Paladins stationed there, as many had left to aid the commonfolk during the night of Veddish Kahl. By all accounts, the people of Fenlund were suffering an unusually high plague of random undead attacks themselves for the season, which was thought to perhaps be due to Ancient Artifacts called "Necrogeysers" that had been deployed by the enemies of Perin in the surrounding region.

Captain Blaze Lightbringer of the CotC had this to say; "It was clear that the undead attacks on Fenlund were intended as a distraction, and it worked. Our base was severely understrength as the majority of our Paladins were assisting farmers and other Perin citizens."

During the attack, the physical "Coventry" building, never designed as a fortress, withheld much of the force of the attack. Today, windows have been broken, and walls battered and rife with cracks and holes, but the structure still stands and is sound. "They gave us everything they had. Our prayer singers and their spellcasters went head to head, and anyone who could put up a sword was being employed to beat back the waves and waves of undead. We held them, but it was a very close thing. If they had been able to bring their true force to bare against us there is no question that the Base would have fallen."

Near the CotC Coventry base sits an enormous cluster of flat topped wagons and over a score of captured horses, as well as an enormous pile of digging tools, leather straps, ropes, blocks and tackle. When asked Captain Lightbringer admitted that the attacking force brought these supplies, but would not comment on what they were for.

Speaking with an information consultant on magical matters later, the following theory was put forth (the source's name has been removed at his request); "It is all of like this, the Cult of the Drowned is wanting the secret Nexus which is under the CotC base. Is very powerful, and being very useful. Like all Nexi, it is -physically- the large mass of the mage stone maybe 30 feet to a side. Is possible to be digging such a thing up, then drag it to the lake and drop it in. After that? The cult would be able to do what they are wanting with the thing- which would probably be very, VERY bad. Of course, moving the stone would also be disrupting local leylines very badly. It make storms, maybes earthquakes, and cause certain beasties- like Anthropods- to go all crazy. In the better lights of this, is probably not the worst thing for the CotC to have the rock... for now."

The Drowned Cult attack on the Coventry Base ended in the early morning, when the CotC defenders were reinforced by Sir Tarsis, a Commander in the Word of Rul, whose forces were following the trail of a large undead force in the area. The Perin Knight was nonchalant about leading the attack which finally broke the siege; "At that time the defenders had done most of the work. Most of the force had already been defeated, we just put the last nails in the coffin." he joked.

When asked, how did he know the CotC needed help, Sir Tarsis answered; "We were alerted to their presence by the signs of a tremendous sea battle. We saw one ship taking on a mob of those vessels the undead were traveling in. The first few it blew up for us, slaying dozens of the detestable things. Unfortunately, it was finally surrounded by two ships and badly damaged. Even as it sunk, it destroyed the vessels which assailed it."

Captain Lightbringer was asked if he knew the identity of their mysterious benefactors; "Based on the reports, It is clear that the ship, a clipper by design, set out from Nancy's Harbor at Fisherman's Wharf. Only the first wave of boats made it past them, and after they engaged, no more of those cursed vessels got through. We would have been dead meat if it wasn't for that, and our base would have been captured by the 'Drowned' cult."

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Grievous Blow Struck to Occupied Fallstav Resistance

A major blow was dealt to the Fenlund Resistance on the second day of Winterdeep when a large unit of Children of the Covenant paladins and warriors launched an assault on the Fallen Fens, managing to locate and attack two "safehouses" (really one makeshift edifice and one campsite) At the same time, another group initiated a SECOND attack from further west, creating a bit of a pincer effect on the unfortunate freedom fighters hiding from Perin's Coalition Forces in the fens.

The Children of the Covenant were evidently armed with testimony from a source they considered extremely reliable regarding the presence of the "heretic breed of rebels," allowing them some degree of precision. They were able to round up nearly 20 people in the first safehouse, a makeshift edifice in which they'd crowded to escape the cold. They blocked one entrance and managed to smoke the rebels out the other entrance right into their waiting arms, weapons and chains, coughing too badly from smoke inhalation to even put up a fight. Once they'd rounded up and chained all of these rebels, they were sent off to an unknown location.

At the second "safe haven," an all-Vordis camp of around two dozen, the Children were met with more of a fight as the alarm had apparently been raised to this encampment. Two at the camp forced the Children to kill them in the fighting, thus ensuring neither of them could give away information. Around ten others, the youngest being around the Vordis equivalent of nine years old and the oldest two being under the effects of "the pale" were captured and sent to a fate that remains yet unknown. The rest of the camp escaped.

The assault launched by the group going a second direction located another camp. This one was also all-Vordis but much smaller. Later on, a participant in the Fenlund resistance discovered there were nine bedrolls and a significant amount of blood spattered all over the ground. There was very much evidence of a struggle. There was also a large pile of ash giving testimony of bodies being thrown in a pile and burned. It remains unknown whether anyone was able to escape from the campsite.

Luckily for the Occupied Fallstav Resistance, the Children of the Covenant apparently had incomplete information and so a good number of them did manage to evade their clutches by seeking shelter in places within the fens that the CotC cannot easily reach. Nonetheless, this is the biggest blow they have dealt since Mayor Saberhorn and his "accomplices" Connall and Andruzules were arrested in Sylverfern Firstfrost in 314, accused of plotting to attack a Perinite Count. (The trio were acquitted of these charges in Forrestwake of 315.) There is no certainty that the captured rebels have survived, considering the Children of the Covenant paladins' swiftness to put heretics to the headsman's block or the noose, but there have been no public executions either.

of the lord of the roads, messengers and travel, and particularly priests of Dabith issue emphatic warnings that Dabith in the past has anathematized all of those who would profane the holiday by bringing harm upon their host or guest, inflicting the scourge of a curse upon the fools who dare to attack a traveller or someone granting hospitality. Banditry is a rare phenomenon on the Night of the Traveller as even hardened brigands fear incurring the wrath of Dabith by assaulting travellers. "Killing the messenger," as those who are couriers and messengers by profession are heavy travellers (and frequent worshippers of my god) is also very ill-advised.

Shelter must be granted to even your worst enemy. No matter who they are. It does not matter if the enemy is a childhood one, a rival merchant or even a generally very hostile person from a place like Perin or the J'Teth empire. Take comfort in the fact that if the one you grant hospitality hurts you or your kindred, they are the ones who shall be cursed by Dabith.

Dabith curses those who dare attack others on his day, particularly travellers, but self-defense and defending a helpless ally is permissible. If you and a friend are on the road together and bandits come to attack your friend, your friend may raise a blade to defend themselves, and if your friend is outnumbered or visibly the inferior fighter, you are permitted to come to their aid.

Additionally, arrests are generally forbidden according to the lore of Night of the Traveller unless they are done to stop someone who is caught red-handed initiating an attack against another. If someone has a bounty on their head, bounty hunters are not permitted to initiate a capture according to Dabith's tenets, especially if the crime for which they are sought does not

involve causing harm to another person.

It is not unheard of for trials to be held on the Night of the Traveller, however, particularly for people who are not interned in prison. In the case that a trial is held on the day, those who are wary of Dabith's wrath typically refrain from using force to ensure the accused turns up for their trial. Resultantly, their turning up on their own without the need for "persuasion" is often therefore be seen as a mitigating factor by all except the most iron-fisted. Conversely, NOT showing up for one's trial becomes an aggravating factor after the Night of the Traveller when a bounty is placed on them to compel them to face justice. Therefore, only the very foolish "take advantage" of Dabith's law on the Night of the Traveller to dodge a trial.

If the sentence is death, the execution is delayed until after the Night of the Traveller for very obvious reasons.

Four years ago, when the town was celebrating the victory of what is now called the Battle of Sylverfern, the manor house was in full splendor, Lady Lockhart was visibly pregnant and Lord Lockhart was in perfect health and full strength, the Lockharts threw a major celebration of the Night of the Traveler at Lockhart Manor. This was before Lorelei and Lisbeth were born, before the kidnapping that resulted in Lord Lockhart melting down the family silver to enable their rescue, before Lady Lockhart left with the twins to live with elves, before Lord Lockhart's nephew Hunter Silverhart even came to stay with him let alone that financially devastating kidnapping and before his Lordship fell desperately ill and formed the Council to

temporarily serve the town in his stead.

For those who were not present, the celebration was kicked off by the famed Dabith priest Monard conducting a ritual to honor the holiday and protect those present in the manor house. Treats called Dabith wheels were provided to all of the guests, which included many heroes from the Battle of Sylverfern, family friends of the Lockharts, and plenty of passing travellers that included orcs and Perinites (Remember, the war was still on. These were primarily Children of the Covenant) that knew Lord Lockhart would be cursed if he turned them away. The Night of the Traveller was where the armistice started to form, as Perin and Fallstav could discuss their differences and terms without coming to blows in observance of the holiday. There was also a youth present with a warrant and Wanted Posters on them for their capture but as that person was not seen causing harm they were left untouched.

Not that the night was without violence. There was the failed murder attempt on the Vordis Henbane where the perpetrator only managed to render him temporarily unconscious until he was healed. (Some claimed he died but as he is walking

around to this day, quite alive, that is obvious balderdash.) And nobody can possibly forget the fact that Lord Lockhart's now heavily disgraced brother, about whom there seems to have been no news for the past four cycles as though he vanished entirely, conspired with a servant and necromancer named Judy to murder both his brother and sister-in-law. Fortunately, that failed and no guests were harmed. Both are believed to be cursed if they even still live.

Before the violence there were games aplenty, as Lord Lockhart's stewards recollect. There was the pickle-spitting contest, won by a fellow called Aramis. In a fighter's melee, a priest of Larisca (possibly what would be future Councilman Gabriel Halewood) emerged victorious. Then future Captain to the Guard Mairi Cobbletoss took the win in a bardic competition. Henbane won the game of riddles. A girl called Emma won the fruit balancing challenge and possibly the board game of aim, though Lord Lockhart's stewards are uncertain on the victor. The short of it? Don't attack anyone on the Night of the Traveller. You are to grant shelter to even your worst enemy. If you are a noble, guard or licensed bounty hunter, do not make any arrests unless your quarry is currently trying to harm someone. Raise a blade or bow only in self-defense or in the defense of an immediately endangered friend or relative.



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the necrogeyser with the packet that had been made for it, getting gravely wounded for his efforts by the necromantic energy. Despite this, the Vordis is very blase about his heroism, saying "I closed it. The end."

Others lavished praise unto the Vordis Lupin. "The valiant efforts of many heroes closed up the geyser, but the one who did the deed was one Lupin Shadowsun. I want to make sure people know the good he did for all.

It remains to be seen whether there are more necrogeysers in the vicinity or if they are all closed, as rumors say there were three and only two are known yo have been closed.

BUSY WINTER PROMISED FOR OCCUPIED FALLSTAV

Article Submitted in early Longshadow 317

I am one of the people on the newspaper staff that has relatives in what is now Occupied Fallstav. Just as the Children of the Covenant were granted permission to cross to our side of the border to conduct their investigations in this village and others, so I was permitted to finally visit my cousins after a cycle of the borders being closed. Praise be to whoever is responsible for the events leading to the truce, any and all individuals, for I have missed my cousins! Back to the topic at hand...

I have some information since apparently they want to try this new thing where they show papers other than the Coventry Crier (the Fenlund newspaper now managed by Coalition forces) at least some degree of openness. I was allowed to return home after a lot of questioning by border guards as to why I was there- naturally I explained about my relatives in their territory and they fact-checked that, though they did notice my Rul holy symbol so were as friendly as one could possibly expect from Perin to a Fallstavian because of that. They also asked what I knew of the attack in Fisherman's Wharf- that was the first time I'd heard of it. They recognized my astonishment as genuine, so they let me go, though not before they asked what I do for a living. I told these three border guards- one Child of the Covenant accompanying two Rul followers like me, though they are of the Word of Rul- that I am a writer and reporter. I was not surprised when they asked whether I planned on writing about my visit in the area, but I was surprised when before I could answer, they expressed ENCOURAGEMENT to do so since the area IS mostly pacified and in the words of one of

them "our neighbors to the north clearly need an example of how to successfully maintain law and order"

So here's what I saw. What could be called their town guard, the Perin occupants, has been extremely busy. I saw quite a lot of them out at a time- there a couple of times where I saw more Perin guards than there is people on Sylverfern's guard! Must be nice for the leaders of the area, being able to afford that many people to enforce even the insane laws that manifest the differences in view between the Word of Rul and other Rul followers like myself and some of my fellow staffers. I also noticed many, many communications between Children of the Covenant. I was unable to get close enough to hear anything- at least anything new, but Sylverfern was definitely mentioned multiple times which makes me very nervous. I also heard the words "send out scouts" but couldn't catch the context of the conversation.

The Word of Rul is hardly thrilled about the issue either, it appears. The two Word of Rul guards expressed wishes to discuss things with superiors, giving me food and drink and asking the Child of the Covenant to stay with me. I ate and drank while I waited, trusting to my lord Rul that they are at the very least decent enough men of Rul to not do anything dishonorable like drugging or poisoning me even though being detained for a conversation that so far had no "extras" (and wouldn't have any "extras" it turns out) was mildly nerve-racking because part of me worried I'd have something like what happened to Guardsman Fergus happen to me just for being there. Sure enough, it was just normal food and drink.

To my surprise, Knight Commander Sir Tarsis (Word of Rul) himself showed

up, the same general, I later realized, that had led the raid on the Barony of Blutmund that involved burning several of its farms on the very same day the barony's lord, Count Pierre Polignac, would later be slain- 11 Earththaw 317. Perin was deemed responsible for the attack, though Perin's Rul followers have directly denied having anything to do with the Count's death. Sir Tarsis informed me that he was just there to give me a statement for the newspaper, even handing me a quill, ink and parchment and having me write this and swear an oath to our mutual god to make sure it is published. "You Fallstavians have serious concerns on your side of the border; Dangerous heresies which directly threaten the lives of your own citizens, even if we do nothing. We know, and are prepared to take action if necessary, but I hope it never comes to that. Your leaders have a limited time to prove that you can manage these kinds of problems. I pray to Rul that they are equal to the task."

The Child of the Covenant of the trio told me, in the final before they released me to watch me cross the border, that from what he heard "there are plans" and to "tell your friends and loved ones that we are more than ready and prepared to deal with heretics and hopefully only the heretics."

One thing is for certain- this winter promises to be busy for the Children of the Covenant. The only question is, what are they up to and has it got anything to do with the attack that was launched against them by some of the outsiders that came to settle in this village in recent years?

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The ship was later identified as "The Wasted Walrus," under the Command of Captain Khajj E. Tamir. Upon hearing the news Captain Lightbringer was immediately grateful; "Those Fallstavians really saved our bacon. I hope their casualties were light after all that. I know ours weren't though, and we didn't have to swim for our lives. Odds are a lot of them didn't make it. I pray that they are received by the Gods and have gone to the Greylands as heroes." After that Captain Lightbringer made a religious salute by touching his hand to his heart and then head, which he explained is a sign of respect and a prayer for the dead.

Further investigations; we managed to speak with one of the surviving defenders of the CotC base. Hieronymus Darklore, a Mo'Raak gentleman, who explained that he had joined The Children as a religious calling after his merchant business fell apart. "The CotC do not judge me for my horns and scars," he explained more completely, "I lost my business when a group of commoners in Fallstav attacked me because of my race. They left me for dead, and I crawled away. The CotC took me in, healed my wounds, and offered me comradeship and training..and it was with both that we survived this Cultist attack, praise the Gods!"

Mr. Darklore was able to offer insight as to why the Cultists

used zombies as the primary undead in their attack force; "It is really very simple. Zombies make excellent undead for ship battles. Think of it; they do not need to breathe, so drowning is not a problem. They are extremely strong and physically very hard- nearly impossible- to beat down by conventional means. Next, well..." Darklore paused and needed some urging to go on, "They ROT. This is actually an advantage, because Zombies are always bloated to some degree. This enables them to become more buoyant in water. They are not natural swimmers of course, no undead are, but their strength and buoyancy count in their favor. Besides, few undead are 'nimble' in any fashion."

When asked about the zombies lack of intelligence and ability to pilot the ships, Darklore thought about it for a minute before replying; "I don't think that would be much of an issue. The ships are clearly of a magical origin, based on their ability to rise out of the water and travel so quickly on the surface. It would not be difficult for the spells which manage that to also allow them to navigate. Also, while normal zombies... lack nearly everything in terms of wits it is quite possible to Grey, or even Black, bind a few of the Undead so that they would have the intelligence and skills to navigate a simple vessel."

Mr. Darklore was asked if he

would expect to see an undead attack like this again; "Why yes, certainly! The 'Basseyn Zla' are very robust in southern Fallstav or in the Protected Lands. If the Cultists had the ability to create them before, they probably still can. I would be very curious to see the particulars of their ritual." Then he quickly added, "It would make things much easier to find a way to stop them...to make a 'Anti-Geyser' in a way, so that the energy does not channel outward like that."

Captain Lightbringer ended the interview by adding; "The Cult of the Drowned can try that trick again, but this time the Children will be ready. We are rebuilding the Coventry base and reinforcing it strongly, and we are constructing defences so that an attack of this kind cannot possibly work again. Moreover, we now know what the Drowned Cult really wants, which makes our duty much simpler in that regard. The Gods are with us, together by the Covenant we are strong."



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who proved the most heroic on that ship were himself, Kincaid, Gilraen and Van.

The heroine Gilraen, who bears a Vyrroon badge, indicated that the Court Doctor, Fern, is the reason most people still draw breath. She herself used her own last healing spell to get Fern back on her feet. She, too, had a plethora of criticism about the way the Captain managed the ship. Gilraen says tragedy would've been avoided with "more ships, a better sense of command, and a better combination of types of warrior." An additional flaw she pointed out was that "there was no chain of command and that the captain did not listen when the whole of the ship was saying we needed to return to land before we sank." However, she does not hold the Ra'Kasha entirely to blame. It was a mess but the people participating were as much to blame as the captain, we could have done more. t was chaos. I tried to keep others alive and defend the ship. I could hear Kincaid over the others but that is normal." Gilraen said.

The Captain of the vessel himself, later revealed to be the Rakasha and Pirate Lord Khajj Tamir, a native of the island of Grimdom'vok and renowned for his role in the victories against J'Teth on Grimdom'vok, was unable to be reached for comment.

Adventuring Gear

Adventurers have it rough sometimes, and the right sort of gear can make a difference. I am Silas Flynn and I make trades all over, Fallstav, Perin, Mergrim and Werdill - around the Fallen Fens and inside it - I am there. I can't say my prices are the lowest, but I have the best stuff and given time I can get anything you ask for if the coin is there...and I wouldn't have lived this long if I asked too many annoying questions. Faire Trade is all I seek and you'll find it coin well spent.

If you're in the area around Sylverfern, come see my newest franchise apothecary. Ask for Ruggz.

Other franchise opportunities are available. If you have a desire for honest coin, we might be able to come to some agreement.

-Silas Flynn,
Traveling Merchant.



PERIN PROPAGANDA AT IT'S BEST?

Disclaimer: This article is NOT a recent one, nor was it even one of ours. This article was published in the Sunhammer 316 edition of the Coventry Crier, the local paper of the village of Fenlund in Occupied Fallstav. That paper is known to be under the control of Perin at present. The events described took place in the year 316. This was the attachment to the letter titled "We're Bringing Our Perin Problems Upon Ourselves"

Bandit Mob Raid, Robs Campsite; Border Guard Slain

By Almanzo Burgio

On 28 Bloomingtide, a brave border guard of the Word of Rul was brutally slain while striving to safeguard all under the protection of His Grace the Duke Perin. The brave fallen warrior, Lieutenant Baris, was lethally butchered after happening upon a horde of masked ruffians brutalizing and robbing a small camp of Children of the Covenant soldiers during a surprise attack. Another Word of Rul border guard, Corporal George Willenthrop, accompanied Lieutenant Baris in attempts to aid the injured Children of the Covenant and was also savagely beaten, though he survived the attack.

That afternoon, a team of Coalition soldiers had set up a campsite not particularly far from the border between Perin and the duchy of Fallstav in order to rest. These soldiers also had an accused criminal, an inventor named Stanleal, in custody for questioning. Stanleal is suspected of aiding heretics and criminals in the Protected Lands- and worse, developing weapons to make these malefactors even more dangerous. He was even rumored to be designed weapons that harm many people at once. The Children of the Covenant squad was resting before beginning preparations for supper when they were approached by a lone visitor who transpired to be the harbinger of a ferocious raid.

"My comrades and I were relaxing when this man came up to speak to one of my fellows. It sounded as though they were looking for bets to an outcome on a duel," said Private Tennile Ostrander of the Coalition. "We stood to see what this was all about when all of a sudden I felt a sharp explosion of pain at the back of my head and then just saw blackness. Next thing I knew, I was on the ground with the back of my head hurting something fierce and most of my fellows were not only unconscious- a couple of them bleeding- but were tied up as well. For some reason I'd been left unbound, so I released my brothers and sisters-at-arms from their bonds. We'd apparently been attacked by brigands. Nobody seemed to know where they'd come from though. Could be Bandit Queen arse-biscuits, could be rebel scum out of the Protected Lands, could be factionless marauders." Private Ostrander at this point shrugged her shoulders. "Same difference, really, they're all the dregs of society."

Ostrander, like most of the group, had been clubbed on the back of her head, knocking them senseless. A small number of raiders then descended upon the campsite while the rest engaged the Children, ransacking the soldiers' belongings and pilfering several helm. Even more disturbingly, the valiant soldiers had recently confiscated heretical literature and locked it away to prevent such perilous lies from falling into innocent hands. The plundered campsite was extensively scoured for the seditious literature but it was nowhere to be found.

Before the bandits left, two border guards came upon the scene and endeavored to aid the injured Word of Rul soldiers- Lieutenant Baris and Corporal George Willenthrop. Willenthrop, like the Children of the Covenant, was left alive but Baris was viciously cut down and

slain. "I came upon the camp of the Children after Lieutenant Baris raised the alarm. Most of them were down, and a few were battling armed men wearing cloth masks. We engaged the raiders, but there were too many. I was struck down and my leg was broken. One of them, a tall man I identified as their leader twisted my leg savagely and yelled into my face. "Stop crossing the border!" the raider demanded, and twisted my leg again. I was confused, the Word of Rul has protected the border from Fallstav raiders and bandits. We keep the lines, we do NOT cross them. These men were the ones crossing the border and attacking us! Their leader asked if I had heard him, and I answered yes. Then he called upon divine magic and healed my leg, not completely but enough that I wouldn't lose it, and they started to go... I didn't realize it at the time, but during that exchange must have been when one of them murdered Lt. Baris. Those bastards!"

In addition to the several helm in losses and treacherous literature passing into dangerous hands, the prisoner Stanleal was taken into the company of brigands. "I am highly concerned that such a dangerous man as this Stanleal is at large once more," stated Corporal Thomas Bolingbarke, "and I pray to the gods that we bring this heretic and the murdering ruffraff who dared challenge us thus to justice sooner rather than later for the sake of maintaining the peace. It is not good news for the world to have someone like that teaming up with other lawless ruffians. Unless they killed him- which would be no loss to the world- but I doubt it."

One can only hope that the escaped prisoner and the dishonorable louts are brought to justice soon.

MISCHMETAL'S MYSTICKAL MECHANICKS, MUNITIONS AND MERCENARY MERRYMENT

PERIN CITY MERCHANT'S QUARTER, BORDERING THE CITY MILITIA BARRACKS.

TRAVELING MERCHANTS WELCOME. CATALOGUES AVAILABLE.

XX

"IF YOU CAN MAKE IT, WE CAN BLOW IT UP."

ROKARIAN BANKS

Back in the spring of 317, an entirely new concept came to Fallstav first and eventually Middlehaven as a whole- that of a bank, a service in which a secure way is offered to store coin. The mastermind behind this is Rokarian Thane, Derric Maythmar. The bank has, at this point, spread to all four duchies of Middlehaven, with the greatest foothold in Fallstav and Perin. We of the Sylverfern Star had the honor of meeting with Thane Maythmar to discuss his achievements with the bank and expound upon how much it has developed. "It has spread furthest in your Fallstav and into Perin. The other two I have recently gotten a foothold into, and Werdill is proving a bit challenging to grow, only because it seems that the richest of the nobles already possess their own treasuries that they feel is secure enough for their coin. However, I have been able to convince them with knowledge of the ease of trade my system allows." Even the very high-level nobility of Fallstav have begun to see merit in the bank system. It is said that Duke Bertram Fallstav himself participates in the bank.

At present, Thane Maythmar is by far the friendliest of the Rokarian thanes when it comes to his thanedom's relations with the duchy of Fallstav. Many of the other thanes remain immensely distrustful of the entire duchy, especially Sylverfern as the town from which the people directly responsible for the 'Wolvespar incident' back in Winterdeep 316 originated. For those unfamiliar with the story, the Wolvespar incident happened when a group from Sylverfern had traveled to Rokar on a mission to rescue Lord Lockhart's nephew Hunter Silverhart, who along with visiting noble Lord Malcome Greysmoke had been kidnapped by the Bandit Queen and then sold into the illicit slave industry when Lord Lockhart was unable to pay. (His treasury had already been depleted to almost a zero balance by the combination of his twins being kidnapped at birth and the excessive, irresponsible gambling and carousing of his disgraced brother Lorenzo.) The then-Thane and then-Ambassador Hagrid Wolvespar had offered to gain the rescue party's entry to the Thanemeet, at which the two abducted nobles were to be sold on the slave market. He'd considered himself indebted to Sylverfern because they had saved his then-16-year-old daughter Elizabeth's life in Heatwane 315. The youth had detoured to Sylverfern's Festival of Flowers with a friend from school (Vrengar Finishing Academy) and the girls had become separated. After the two teenagers split up, Elizabeth Wolvespar was captured by the Cult of the Drowned to be used as a human sacrifice. Despite these events and the disastrous end to the Thanemeet involving the blatant violation of local law by Lord Silverhart's rescue party as guests in Rokar, heavily disgracing the now-former Thane Wolvespar in the process for him to be facing a death sentence, Thane Maythmar is magnanimous enough to reach out despite the major foul-ups on Sylverfern's end in Rokar.

Thane Maythmar's bank employs safety measures such as heavily locked lockboxes, deposit bags and a record book of account numbers. He issues bank notes to account holders that match their account number. Every member of the bank has their own unique account number. The bank is, in short, a free way of guarding a person's coin against would-be bandits. To this day, nobody has succeeded in stealing from the Thane's bank. The same cannot be said of many a Fallstavian noble's treasuries, particularly Lord Lockhart's, whose treasury was dealt a death blow by a lone rogue of the Bandit Queen almost two cycles ago.

Along with the establishment of the bank comes the possibility of being handed a bank note rather than coin in exchange for an item by someone that has elected to deal only in bank notes. However, it has been revealed, complete with fact-checking, that the option does exist to attempt to cash in a bank note. Opening an account with that bank note at the time of the cash-in is also permissible and in fact strongly encouraged.

The Thane's bank has much more to offer than just individual accounts for nobles, merchants and anyone else that wishes to open one. His offerings are bountiful. Thane Maythmar explains, "we also offer a 'Last Will' service, where, with guidance from either myself or a representative of mine, an account holder can write a will, and detail the effects thereof. Should the account holder pass all things written in their will shall be distributed as written within the will, and the distribution shall be taken care of by myself or a representative available. A group account is also available, where a common "pool" or treasury

for a group can be made. Guilds, Government bodies, or just groups or families can benefit from it. Many can deposit into the account, and who can withdraw from it can be limited as well."

Thane Maythmar also gave much forethought to the various things that could go wrong. One possibility contemplated was that of someone mislaying their account number. "If someone loses their account number, several things can be done depending on the circumstance. the most common, misplacing your blank notes, can be corrected by coming to myself or a representative and requesting a replacement. If you cannot remember your number, then other forms of identification can be accepted, such as signatures, or personal signets, will allow us to properly identify you and give you your replacement. Of course a charge of one florin will be made for the copy, to cover some costs."

Another common possibility, particularly for those that don't track the comings and goings of their coin very closely, is someone spending more than they actually have in the bank. "It is a hopeful idea that those with accounts would make the effort to know how much money they have... However, people can make mistakes, even the most honorable. We do send messengers, or alert them the next time they either see myself or a representative, that they have... 'Went into negatives' due to their use of their blank notes. They will then be told how much, and we shall give them up to two moons, after they have been alerted of course, to repay it. Should they not be able to deposit enough to offset the amount their account will no longer be able to be accessed and messengers will be sent to find them. Coin, favor, or blood, is the requested repayment. Of course, things are handled on a case by case basis. Should someone be actively paying it back, extensions can be made, provided they communicated with either myself or a representative."

A less common but more damaging possibility is that of someone fraudulently misusing someone else's account by either impersonating the account number owner, forging bank notes with their name and stealing their bank notes and using them to buy large purchases and other withdrawals from a person's account without their permission. "If someone falsely uses another's account, which I imagine you mean withdrawal, since I am sure no one would mind a few extra coins suddenly appearing into their account, then there will be major repercussions. Should someone be found doing so, they will be labeled utterly dishonorable by the Honin, the laws that govern Rokar, and thus they will be labeled criminals. Typically, we send... messengers, to locate and explain to the honorless swine, that they can either pay for their crime in coin, favor, or blood. The person who was wronged, those with their money taken falsely, will have their coin replaced while the investigation is undergone. Should, however, their claims be found to be false, they shall be labeled as liars and thieves, and shall receive the same treatment." It was apparently that the very idea of someone committing such an act is affronting to the Thane as someone that values honor and truth highly. Local merchants that have started to use the bank that we contacted in generally think very highly of the institution. One bank member is Hadvar, had this to say: "It be a wonderful service. It be allowin' me t'pay some o'me suppliers without havin' t'count out coin, or be carryin' coin through areas I don't want t'be caught with. I be Hadvar the local blacksmith. I also be the guildmaster of the Crafter's Guild that be about to open," the half-dwarf explained.

An merchant of alchemical goods called Varana also expounded upon his pleasure with the bank and heartily encourages others to make use of its services. He is a Rakasha that comes from outside the Middlehaven kingdom as a whole and has offered his custom since before its inception in Middlehaven. "The bank is a very good idea for merchants and most anyone, considering that it effectively is a place that guards your money for free. Beyond that, the bank hasn't yet failed to protect said money and Rokarians tend to be very trustworthy individuals. It also allows for large transfers of money to be done far more discreetly than handing over a large pouch of coins."

The bank has consistently grown in Sylverfern since its inception. Whatever this means for the future of the town, the duchy and even the kingdom at large, it seems to bode a bright future- as well as a much harder time for bandits trying to gain easy coin.