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22nd Earth 2150R

BATTLE OF MARIGOLD HILL

ELKIANS IN FULL RETREAT!

Village of Briddip, North Elkia

Elkian forces are in full retreat after a disastrous engagement with Sardinian scouting parties at Briddip. It is reported that Sardinian light cavalry units numbering some 500 men captured the village of Briddip on the afternoon of the 19th Earth and began entrenching themselves in key positions on Marigold Hill and Ormara's Ridge, two rises of higher ground to the north of Briddip.

The militia in Briddip fled before the Sardinians entered the village and raised the alarm with the authorities in Fort Dauntless. A regiment of Elkian foot-soldiers led by Knight Commander Bael Halford had recently mustered in Fort Dauntless and Commander Halford moved quickly to meet the Sardinian threat.

The Elkians marched on the evening of the 19th and formed ranks to the east of Briddip at midday the next day. Halford's regiment included the "Black Arrows" a company of elite archers and shortly after midday they began to launch repeated volleys into the Sardinian forces on Marigold Hill. At around 8ASR, the Sardinians positioned there appeared to be routed by the arrow fire and the majority of the forces withdrew behind the hill, leaving a smaller shield-wall composed of 100 Trezkillian elite soldiers to defend the slopes of the hill facing the Elkians.

Halford immediately committed a force of 500 men (half his regiment) to a full scale attack on Marigold Hill and led the charge himself, with his better-trained soldiers. This proved to be a tactical mistake. The Sardinians who were

positioned on Omara's Ridge had secretly been withdrawing their forces while the assault on Marigold Hill had been underway. They had 'recruited' commonfolk of xxx and put them on the ridge under guard while most of their men retreated into the vale behind the ridge where they had corralled their horses. To Halford's observers it appeared the Sardinians on the ridge were simply holding ground and not committing forces to support their comrades on Marigold Hill.

The cavalry mobilised and swung around to the south of Omara's Ridge and struck at the Elkian formation that was still positioned on the field below the hills. These men were mainly new recruits and militia and, without Halford there to direct their defence, the sight of 200 horsemen thundering at them at full charge broke their ranks. Halford, seeing the peril his men were in from the cavalry attack, hastily gave commands to withdraw from the fight with the Trezkillian Sardinian shield-wall and to attack the cavalry on the field below. As soon as this occurred, the main Sardinian force, which had positioned itself just behind the summit of Marigold Hill, received the signal to attack, cresting the hilltop and charging downhill at Halford's force, which was in disarray as it tried to go to the aid of the men on the field.

What followed was a pitched battle on the slopes and around the base of Marigold Hill. By 10ASR, the Elkians had withdrawn eastward and formed a defensive knot in the wheat fields of Buttertree Farm, using its fences as protection from cavalry charges. Halford was wounded during the fight at Marigold Hill and had been taken to the

Buttertree farm-house for treatment. The Sardians surrounded the farmland, cutting off any retreat and sent a Trezkillian Invigilator to offer surrender terms to Commander Halford.

Halford's response was to lead a charge with his personal guard against the main force of the Sardians to the west, while his remaining forces struck east to try and break the cordon surrounding the farmlands. Halford and his men were slaughtered but forces who attacked the cordon in the east broke out and approximately fifty men managed to escape across the Sweettrout stream before the Sardian cavalry intercepted the remaining Elkians.

The latest reports from Briddip warn of an immediate threat to Darringmoor. The Sardian legions of Black Widow and the Sundered Skull have now arrived in Briddip and the cavalry that won the Battle of Marigold Hill are reported as having been resupplied and reinforced and that they have moved northwards. It has been reported that they are only ten miles from Darringmoor at the time that this broadsheet goes to print.

Panda Killer Gang on a Rampage!

Darringmoor

Locals believe there is a Sardellan gang associated with the Panda Killer inside the city walls. This gang of thugs are alleged to be operating from the local Darringmoor cemetery. A number of strange occurrences have been witnessed in this vicinity. Mistress Reebing the wife of our esteemed carriage maker Charing Reebing has noticed some very strange goings on in the area.

On the night of the 13th Earth a man was seen in the midnight hours. "My wife heard some noises coming from across the road and she asked me to have a look. I could see a man who looked like he had been drinking in the cemetery. Every now and then he would look about. He just looked shifty," commented Charing.

Our local Darringmoor guards have confirmed that soon after this sighting, a man with a thick Sardellan accent was taken for questioning along with a very shady looking Dwarvin personage. Due to lack of evidence they were unable to keep them in custody but are monitoring their movements.

Then shortly after dawn the Reebing family heard more commotion from the cemetery. "It sounded like a cart going backwards and forwards. There was shouting and terrible screams. The screams were the worst..." said a shaking Mrs Reebing. "I told Charing not to go out. I was afraid, in case the Panda Killer was looking for new victims."

Early the next morning when Mistress Reebing was walking her beloved dog she stumbled upon a large pool of blood. "What is the country coming too when it is not safe to walk the streets at night!" said Mistress Reebing.

Our local Major has responded to citizen concerns by doubling the guards in this area. She has assured the Darringmoor Dart that the Panda Killer is still in custody and awaiting trial by the Justicator. However, something is going on in the cemetery and it all started with the Panda Killer. Perhaps the Panda Killer is a Sardellan Spy working with a cell of comrades – right inside our fair city?

Fitting Funeral for Bausntle Marlooka

Darringmoor

On the 13th Day of Earth the young Master Bausntle Marlooka was given a lavish farewell by his grieving parents Sarn and Verity in the finest Ormocean tradition. This ceremony was held on the family estate, in the Grand Ballroom. Here the recently departed waited quietly for his guests to offer their last goodbyes, leave mourning gifts and feast lavishly in his honour.

A large number of family and friends attended this event which was an absolute credit to the family. The eulogy was given before the majority of the mourners left, leaving the immediate family solitude for their night vigil. Bausntle's younger brother Cran Marlooka, made his parents proud, delivering a lovely speech about the young Bausntle's short life. The young Lord was a popular bachelor and his untimely death in a freak riding accident will certainly be ablight on the Darringmoor social scene for years to come.

Feature Article: The Shadow of Darkmoor Returns?

Many centuries ago, our fair city of Darringmoor was known as Darkmoor. In xxx the city fathers elected to change the name and shake off aspects of the region's black history. Many residents are completely unaware of the terrible times and fell creatures that once haunted Darkmoor, giving the area its more sinister name. Larren Spindelthrift, resident sage and owner of The Darringmoor Curio Shoppe has undertaken research into some of Darkmoor's darker days and presents some of his key findings here. Spindelthrift warns that there are signs that the evil forces that once dominated are rising again and has tasked the Protector of Darringmoor to be vigilant.

The following information has been taken from Spindlethrift's book, "Darringmoor's Dark Secrets" which is being published by the Darringmoor Dart and will be available to the public next March.

Records from the personal archives of the Empress Taranae in the Imperial Museum, Jasper

Kallad Thuul, who was numbered as one of the most powerful necromancers of the Serpent Kings and his terrible reign during the Darktime was detailed be a number of chroniclers of that age, including Eronthale of Thander (who is considered a most reliable source). Thuul was involved in a series on protracted wars against rival sorcerers (which included none other than the notorious Gauroth the Abhorrent). He eventually had to flee north to the region of Estaran, which is now Darringmoor, where Thuul busied himself with creating defences to repel his rivals in case they moved against him. Records show that the local population were enslaved to build a fortification called Hurudaarg (the Grim Hall), the ruins of which are located at Horror Hill, near Little Briddip. Stories from those who survived the slave pits of Hurudaarg tell of the creation of a secret army of the Undead, made to challenge the armies of Gauroth and his allies.

Eronthale says, "Kallad Thuul smote the earth so that the walls between the worlds were made thinner and breath of the Dead flowed forth" It is not clear what he meant by that but it in later years it was discovered that the area of Darringmoor was beset by dimensional instability.

Eronthale credits Thuul with the creation of this anomaly but the great cleric and Scholar Abbott Rallid, later proposed that this was caused by a meteor strike thousands of years before Thuul came to the north and the weakness was already there and simply exploited by him.

Thuul is said to have died at the hands of the undead creatures he sought to control. Folk tales sy that he still inhabits the ruins of the Grim Hall in the form of a Lich.



"Turning Back the Shadows", by Abbott Farlan Rallid

"Turning back the Shadows" is a well known work amongst clerical circles that documents the terrible period in Darkmoor known as the Time of Shadows, when numerous and varied undead creatures roamed the region unchecked. It also is one of the most definitive attempts to catalogue the many types of undead creatures and contains numerous drawings and descriptions of the powers of these creatures.

Research conducted by Abbott Rallid between 829R and 844R and detailed in his book, found that there were multiple areas of dimensional instability that he referred to as "Sirrit's Veil" (known also by the locals as the keenings) across the region of Darkmoor, that made it easier for creatures from other realms to cross between the

worlds. Darkmoor had become a place haunted by all manner of undead for centuries (an era known as the Time of Shadows).

Darkmoor was black mark on the map of the emerging Kingdom of Sardell,, successive regents being unable to effectively deal with the constant incursion of undead creatures. No sooner had royal guards been sent to eliminate the threat, a new threat arose. The problem was the keenings and they had to be shut down. Abbott Rallid convinced King xxxx to resource a contingent of Ormocean Priests and Siritar Paladins to base themselves in darkmoor for an extended period and it was through his work that Rallid and his associates came to understand the nature of the keenings and, in consultation with arcae masters in Jasper, they eventually devised constructs that effectively closed the gates between the worlds and ended Sirrith's Veil.

During the time that Rallid occupied darkmoor there was a heightened period of terror, as the creatures of the shadow worked to destroy the priests and the good folk of darkmoor town. The ferocity and ceaselessness of the attacks led to the construction of the "Sanctuary" a network of underground tunnels and chambers beneath Darkmoor, warded by the priests and protected by the paladins, where the populace could seek refuge during the night, when the undead were most active.

In 844R, after three years of relative peace and inactivity Abbott Rallid declared Darkmoor a safe town and retired to Jasper, though the church has retained a strong presence in the area ever since. Darkmoor was renamed Darringmoor in celebration of the defeat of evil in the area.

The Keenings, a study by Priest Caldwellin of the Church of Theydori (Page 321 (In Summary)

Although Rallid's belief that Sirrith's Veil was destroyed and the doors between the worlds permanently closed I find evidence that this assumption is false. My visits to the outlying regional areas that surround Darringmoor city have discovered many places of disturbance that locals say are the old keenings. The 'cracks' may have been 'plastered' over by the Ormoceans but they have not been repaired.

What is more, I find that there is a common thread of stories that started around 3 years ago concerning the Dark Walker, a figure of evil who haunts lonely areas and steals people who wander the roads at night, replacing them with soulless shells. I was introduced to one of the soulless and I am convinced there is something to these stories.

People in the countryside have dusted off their teardrops, those old trinkets that people used to give as wedding gifts once upon a time. People I have talked to swear that they shine with a blue light when the Dark Walker is abroad.

If you want to learn more and are interested in acquiring a copy of Larren Spindlethrift's book "Dark Secrets of Darringmoor" you can purchase a copy from yours truly Elly Twinfirbling, at the office of the Darringmoor Dart, 27 Inkwell Way, Darringmoor.

Mystery 'Guests' Ruin Wedding

Crowscall, Forest of Mourning

A report from Crowscall tells of a midnight skirmish with skeletons that attacked a wedding party celebrating in the village. One of the heroes of the battle, Tomas, said that, "it all happened so quickly. I know folk around here say we are making all this up, but its Ormocea's Truth – it really happened. You can come and see the bones we piled up in the midden!"

Tomas said that the village was lucky that there were visitors at the wedding feast who had some skills with a sword. They were able to provide protection for everyone and, although there were a few cuts and bruises, there were no casualties. It was a mystery to everyone why Crowscall was attacked and who summoned these creatures.

The village elder, Marrad blamed the whole thing on the 'Dark Walker', saying that the keenings are back and we all have to flee to Sanctuary in Darringmoor. Our correspondent did note that Master Marrad did smell of Ashfold Sweet!

Friends of Tomas left to track a wagon that was seen in the vicinity prior to the attack. It was a distinctive yellow and red in colour. Nothing has been heard of the group that went to look for the wagon.

The good citizens of Crowscall have petitioned their local lord, Rhenmarden for a company of guards to be sent to provide protection for the village.