

Questing Chronicles. III

Tuesday, 19 July 2011

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The Roth Saga

Part Seven

The armour was truly ancient, cast during the days of mankind's early ascension. Though once heavily decorated with wildly ornate designs, it was now worn, pitted and obscured by the relentless passage of time. The suit of archaic plate armour towered over Lord Roth, standing rigidly upright. A cold, unapproachable sentinel. It stood guardian like within the centre of a vast stone circle, seemingly undisturbed for millenia. At the base of each of the mighty stone behemoths lay ruined, moss encrusted relics of impossibly old weapons and armour. As Lord Roth had come to the awesome monument, he had noticed the ancient arms bore the heraldry, crests and insignia of countless Dukedoms and fiefs. Their detail, histories and legacies stretching far back throughout the centuries. Whether a memorial to these fallen champions or shallow incidental resting place of knights, whose bodies lay where they fell, he did not know. What he did know, was that this was the final destination of his long and arduous journey through Chalons. He was meant to be here, as to what end, the ancient empty armour held the answer. With a prayer to the Lady on his lips he stretched his gauntleted hand to the rusting dog faced helms visor, and raised it open.

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Peering into the deep darkness of the open helm he could discern nothing. It still stood as it may have always done, motionless and empty. With his eyebrow raised questioningly, he stepped back from the strange piece to scan the area intensely for any adversary. When he noticed that through the rusted fissures, cracks and breaches of the armour a green liquid began to seep to the surface. Suddenly the helms visor snapped down with a sharp clang, and the armour began to move. It raised its arms skyward with a series of squeaking noises and jerking movements. The rusting, pitted helm rose up in silent supplication, as more and more green liquid began to well up through the armours integral flaws. A wet gurgling scream burst forth from the helm, spraying more of the foul liquid onto the moss covered ground; where it began to saturate the very earth with its evil presence. The flowing liquid began to flow towards the armoured figures hands, where it followed some invisible path upwards. Before coalescing and seeming to harden and become a filth encrusted sword.

The Lord Roth felt his gorge rise at the stench emanating from this foulest of beings. Gritting his teeth he stepped forward towards this disgusting abomination and drew the ancient and venerable broadsword of his noble line.

"Tainted and foul one, your presence shall not be tolerated within the sacred land of The Lady." roared Lord Roth in righteous fury.

The dread seeping creature seemed to notice him now, for the first time. Lowering its festering gaze towards him, Lord

Roth saw the red glowing eyes of his foe and the eternal malice behind the ceatures burning gaze.

"Come mortal." it wheezed wetly. "It beginsss again once more."

As the festering agent of Chaos raised it's weapon in mock salute, The lord Roth leapt to meet him. With his sword flashing wickedly in the sunlight, he bellowed.

"FOR THE LADY!"

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The Roth Saga

Part Eight

The dull metallic ring of of the combatants blades sounded almost hollow in the vacuum like silence that filled the ancient stone circle. Again and again their weapons rose and fell with increasing vigour and frequency. What had began as a deadly duel of skill and finesse had quickly descended into a brutal battle of tenacity and attricion. There was no need for defense in this brawl like melee, the opponents simply stood a few paces apart and stoically bore the brunt of each of their attacks.

Lord Roth drew deep, ragged breaths into his painfully burning lungs. The foul stench emanating from his unwholesome advesary made each needed breath almost unbearable to draw. Sweat ran down his un-helmeted face in profusion, leaving his light grey hair and walrus like mustache completely saturated and limp. And yet for all of his tiredness and all of the abuse he was putting his body through, Lord Roth stood before his opponent completely resolute and seemingly indominatable. Unfortunately the same could also be said about the Nurgle champion who had thus far matched him blow for blow.

With his teeth bared and gritted, Lord Roth dug deep of his reserves and managed to muster the strength to press forward and renew his attack. With rapid swipes of his blade Lord Roth bore down upon the furiously defending Chaos knight. Each successive blow rained down faster and faster, at a truly blistering pace. His opponent stunned and reeling, sank to one knee as thick green liquid spilled from the ancient breaches within the ruined armour to saturate the well trodden grass with its tainted filth.

Lord Roth could not land the finishing blow on his enemy as he had also sank to one knee, a searing pain had lanced his chest. His eyes were screwed shut in agony as pain continued to erupt from him as he drew short, shallow breaths into his aching lungs. As quickly as the pain had flared, it soon abated. With his eyes still tightly shut he continued to breathe slowly until the phantom pain was mastered. After a time, he rose to his feet and gazed upon the kneeling figure of the Chaos champion. The ground was covered in the befouling pus like matter that had spilled forth from the broken and rent armour of his adversary. Gone was the colour from the recently green tinged armour, returned as it was to its original reddish rust covered state. The air of evil, and the feeling of malice had dissipated from the ruined armour and once more it seemed to be truly inanimate.

Lord Roth paced around the rusting suit, trying to fathom what had actually occurred here. He had not landed a mortal blow upon his enemy, and in his heart he knew his task was still unfulfilled. Sighing heavily he turned his attention to the stone circle encompassing him, perhaps the key to his fate lay there. As he began to make for the standing stones he heard a hissing sound coming from all around him. His head snapped around and scanned for the source of the noise that permeated the air of the ancient site. A chilling breeze had begun to pick up and scatter the thick moss that had been churned up by the two combatants earlier struggle.

The decaying rents in the ruined armour whistled eerily in the wind that was now swirling with gale like force through the area. Suddenly Lord Roth's head whipped to the left as his straining senses detected what he thought was a voice on the wind. Concentrating hard he realised that there were several voices speaking in strange tongues that he could not decipher masked within the howling gale. Breathing deeply Lord Roth bellowed in an effort to be heard above the blowing wind.

"Show yourselves foul spawn, Her will shall be done this day!"

The wind stopped. So sudden was its passing that the Lord Roth nearly dropped his sword in shock. Gripping his broadsword tightly in a two handed grip he took a defensive stance as he awaited his next trial.

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The Roth Saga

Part Nine

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The silence was broken abruptly by a myriad of mixed laughter. Laughter as sharp as glass cracking, as guttural as the rawest throat clearing, as sibilant as the slither of any snake. The lord Roth stood defiantly in the circle of standing stones, awaiting his challenge

"The Decaying One has fallen....."The growling voice came from all around Lord Roth echoing and reverbating back and forth for long moments after the voice had ceased.

"As he was fated to do....."Came a new speaker, it's voice ever changing in pitch and accent.

"Who shall be next to face the human....."The growling voice demanded.

Several minutes passed in silence in which Lord Roth took the opportunity to sink to one knee and pray to the Lady.

"His web is in twilight...This human's fate was laid down eons ago....."Replied the ever changing voice now tinged with notes of surprise.

"What! How can this be?...We have been tasked to stand in eternal vigil of the Stones." demander the raw throated voice.

"Millenias have passed with us bound to this place. How could one of our number fall!....."The growling voice was now roaring in uncontrollable rage.

It's other worldly screams seemed to shake the very core of the stone circle itself.

"It isss true...thisss mortal iss fated to another coursse...one more important than the guardianssship of the Ssstonesss." Came a new sibilant voice to the converse.

"And what would you know of The Fates deciever...you who are made of lies....." Sneered the growling speaker.

"I know that we ssshall perisssh this day if we tessst the mortal....." hissed the sibilant one.

"Perhaps for the first time the Decietful One speaks the truth...The Changers plans for this mortal do not end here...which can only mean that he cannot fall here....." The everchanging voice spoke.

"Yesss, we must take our leave of the Ssstonesss...though it painsss me to do sso...hss hss hss."

Lord Roth sighed heavily, he felt if some huge weight had been lifted from his stoic shoulders. He did not know why or how, but he knew that one of the speakers had departed. It's fell presence and evil essence, had simply dissapated into nothingness. It was truly gone.

"The Decietful One flees!....." Bellowed the growling voice in sheer fury.

"He has made his choice, Blooded One...as must we....." Reasoned the everchanging voice.

"And what shall be your path Formless One?...Will you flee from the fate of this mortal?..... Demanded the growling voice in outrage.

"No...i shall depart to see the ending of the mortals path...you may well kill him Bloodied One...but the mortals final fate shall not be here....ere...er...r." The everchanging voice faded.

"ROAAARGH!.....Flee...run from your tasks, You serve your masters poorly...as ever...I swear before the might of Khorne

himself this mortal's skull shall be gifted to my master this very day.... I shall fulfil my task and guard the Stones!"

The Bloodied One descended to the material plane and its raging essence began to possess the ancient suit of plate armour. Dark red blood began to seep from the rents in the archaic armour and somehow invigorate and animate the lifeless husk. The joints and plates creaked and squeaked loudly as it rose to a standing position and raised its right arm to the sky. Lord Roth, with a prayer on his lips waited for the unnatural spectacle to be over with growing impatience. His body was trembling in righteous fury at the taint emanating from this evil entity, his disgust written plainly on his seething face.

Blood seemed to gather around the armoured right fist of the chaotic golem, and resemble the shape of a single bladed axe. The thick coating of blood began to coagulate and harden into a highly polished sheen, that shimmered in the dappled forest light. Finally a fountain of blood burst forth from the helms visor as the Blooded One drew its first breath.

"Skulls for the Skull Throne!" screamed the the Bloodied One in benediction to its dark master.

Slowly the Bloodied One raised the blood encrusted axe it bore and pointed it towards Lord Roth.

"I have seen your skill mortal, i have seen your resilience, and your capacity for rage." spoke the Khornate champion.

"We are not so different mortal.....You and i are one and the same.....Fate alone has dictated our choices.....Know only that i am you and you are I." stated the Bloodied One with finality in its growling voice.

Lord Roth took in his adversary's measure as he began to advance towards the animated armour.

"You see similarities where there are none spawn. Your presence has tainted these lands too long. It is time your existence ended filth."

At these words the servant of Khorne snarled in fury and leapt to meet the Bastonian knight.