

Seasons of War

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Greeting my Lords and Ladies,

Seasons of War is my role playing log of my current (4-16-12) map campaign. We have a very active group and we do many such stories online. Currently there are five chapters in my campaign and 6 more turns to go before the season ends and we find who has won by Land and who has won by glory. So without further ado, my story.

Dramatis Persone.

Major Lords

Lord Wilmont: Grail Knight and overall commander of the armies

Lord Rowan: Grail Knight and bearer of the colors of Lord Wilmont's army

Sir Langton: Questing Knight and General of the second Army

Baron Flemyng: Landed Noble who supports Sir Langton in his Quest and is his Bannermaster

Lord Talgarth: Grail Knight and General of the third Army

Knights

Sir Henry- Close friend and Sir Langton's greatest supporter. Took the Questing Vow when Duke Langton took his

Sir Bandon- Hedge Knight who lost his keep to beastmen. Is well loved by the peasantry who he treats like his favorite nieces and nephews.

Sir Hugh: The Gallant of the "Lances of the Breton" and the bannermaster for Lord Talgarth

Handmadian's of the Lady

Priestess Nedra: Prophetess of the Lady and advisor to Lord Talgarth

Lady Hart: Advisor to Sir Langton and occompainies Sir Bandon on foot in the battle field.

Lady Margaret: Advisor to Lord Wilmont

Maeve: Peasant Girl who has visions in her dreams and leads the group of Grail Pilgrims who bear the former Grail Knight Lord Vimes.

Chapter 1: Lessons

The battered old silk pavilion was silhouetted against the burning village of the Empire. The guards stood wary of the darkness setting in after seeing the horrors of the Chaos army. The Men at Arms became on edge as a clinking became audible from the direction of the town. They dropped their halberds defensively nearly striking the powerful figure that emerged in front of them.

Seeing the Fleur de Lis on his torn tabard and the familiar headdress of the Baron the peasants whooped in excitement to see him alive but were quickly quieted by a look of disgust as he pushed passed his lessors.

Sir Langton was pouring over the battlefield map. His scorched armor harness hung up behind him. Sir Henry, the Gallant of Langton's Questing Knights, spoke reverently and softy to Lady Hart at a small velvet covered side. As Baron Flemyng stormed into the tent.

Sir Langton's head shot up to see who had intruded into his sanctum. His face softened as he saw his army Bannermaster standing before him with the colors of the quest tucked underneath his arm.

"Harold! Thank the Lady you..."

Flemyng silenced him by throwing his helmet at the wall.

"Spare me and the Lady your thanks Alisiter for neither of us want to hear it! You have both smeared my honor and killed a good amount of men today. What did you think to do against the forces of the Eight?! You simply can't charge into combat with them and trust in just your strength of arms to carry you!"

A calm musical voice spoke out. "Lord Baron, you must understand that The Lady does as she will and I assure you there was a reason for the outcome today."

"Was the reason The Mistress of the Water did not aid us today because you failed in your prayer and ministrations?!" roared the Baron as he advanced on her. Sir Henry sat staring stupidly at the confrontation as Langton tried to find his voice. Lady Hart stood still, as if the Knight's tirade and posture were nothing more than a warm breeze. "What good are women if they can't counter the spells of our enemies?" He raised his hand to strike her for her insolence ignoring her status and position. "What reason could she have for sending us such useless wenches and watching us fail in our sacred duty?!"

The gauntlet came down with such force it would knock her to the ground had not another armored hand interceded it in front of a beautiful unflinching face. "Maybe it was to teach arrogant bastards to be humble in front of her and her hand maidens." responded a voice deep and rich like a noble born boulder. "This doesn't concern you Bandon." seethed the Lord. "It concerns me as much as you. No take back your hand, milord, and sit yourself. This isn't the end of the Quest."

With a quick jerk the Bannermaster snatched back his hand and stalked over to a bench and laid the rolled up standard on a table, never taking his eyes off the beloved mountain of the serfs.

"Sir Bandon is correct. I had over estimated my abilities and sacrificed my Knights and men in a blind attack." The former Duke Langton announced, at last finding his voice and showing his thankfulness to the bearded footknight with a supplicative nod. "I will study my errors from today and pray to the Lady that I am more attentive to this endeavor." "That is all she asks of you my Lord." Lady Hart said as she slipped out of the tent. The Questing Lord turned back to his colorman "I apologize to you, Baron Flemyng, for not being able to support your assault. We saw you hold the knight of chaos off and even land a telling blow on him but we thought we saw you cut down." The seated warrior threw his gauntlets to the ground and kicked off his spurs "They killed my horse from under me, those damned forsaken commoners. I managed to fight out of the ranks with the banner. At least my honor was not soiled by abandoning my duty."

Langton hung his head. "It was I who called the retreat. We were outmatched and I thought we had lost you when we charged into to help and you were nowhere to be found. This defeat is mine and mine alone."

"The shame is shared by all of us, milord." Sir Henry amended.

"Let us pray for Lord Wilmont then and when he returns to us he can teach me a lesson being humble."

Chapter 2: Trial of Worth

Lord Wilmont stood upon the top floor of what was once a Empire Inn. Its roof had collapsed years ago from what looked to be an explosion. His stature was that of a man many years his junior, were it not for his receded white hair that hung bound in a long braid behind him he could be mistaken for a knight who had just won his lance.

His eyes, a shocking blue with a perceptible inner light, took in the battle field in front of him. The Orc carcasses were being piled high in several places and the abandoned crude war machines of the goblins were being used as kindling. To the east could be heard the wild praises of Maeve to the Lady as she worked the pilgrims into a frenzy as they lit the desecrated shrine to Sigmar. It has been taken by the Orcs and with their foul filth turned into a idol of their primitive gods. Better it burn and let those low deities know there time will end here soon.

"My Lord has done well today in the eyes of The Lady. You have taken the war to the greenskin and sent him howling back." The voice was calm and clean much like a soft mummer of a stream in summer. Wilmont did not look back. "Was she testing us this day? I sensed a lessening of her presence here. Was this her trying our faith or is there something more sinister at work?" His voice was unmistakeably that of a aristocrat both rich and well enunciated. A voice that was trained to be authoritative as well as comforting and made more potent by being a vassal of his god.

The Damsel stood for a moment as if in quiet contemplation. "You and Sir Langton were tested for your worthiness. You my Lord have not disappointed and have excelled beyond the measure you were given. You fought valiantly and patently, you did not waver and your faith and steel broke the Orc back here."

Slowly the Knight turned to the woman. She was striking in a way only The Ladies Handmaidens can be. Long blonde hair cascaded down her shoulders and ended at her waist. Her gown of indigo hinted a lean feminine form underneath but it was her latent power that took her sharp features and noble posture into a unearthly beauty. Had Edmond Wilmont still have mortal desires he would have been moved. "And what of Sir Langton?" he spoke, looking directly into her moss green eyes.

Though a true worshiper of the Mistress of the Waters and many mysteries were known to her she had not sipped from the Grail as the man before her had and she could not help but avert her eyes from the divine authority that lay in them. "S...Sir Langton has many obstacles in his way and he failed to overcome his first."

The General of the Crusade frowned and shook his head more for disappointment than out of pity. "He will learn. He will rise to the task the Lady has set before him." He turned back to the view and darkness had settled in. He could see the bowmen singing songs as they drank their weak wine. His retinue of Grail Knights were dressing down their horses as Sir Chantry and his household knights did the same. The looks of awe they gave the living saints was nearly undignified. A pile of detritus lay next to the building as a brown haired burly peasant shouted commands to his workers. His siege machine had collapsed early

in the battle and he had the unmistakable look of a man who will not be defeated so easily. The shrill prayers still were being shouted by the bearers of Lord Vimes body as the greenskin idol burned.

"Lady Margaret, what do you make of the pilgrims? I understand their fervor but the woman who leads them seems mad. Her faith borders on fanaticism and only evil can come of that."

"She serves the Ladies purposes. She was given the Water Sight and that is a rare gift amongst our priestess. She may yet play a pivotal role in the outcome of this campaign." came the reply. He was not sure if he sensed a disquiet in her voice and decided then to keep a close eye on the train of worshipers.

"No, I cannot deny their bravery. They stood stoically in the face of that Boar charge. They took all that green deamon could give them and they did not waiver, allowing us to chase him off. Pity he managed to escape."

"Another day my Lord. The Crusade is young and you have done more than your share today. Rest now." She spoke as she turned to walk down the stairs. Lord Wilmont continued to look out into the night until the fires burned down to ash and all fell asleep. All but him as he waited to watch the Sun rise in the morning sky.

Chapter 3: Hope for a Lost Cause

The Keep was hazy in his view as he stood atop the moving tower. He could feel it lurch as it roll over open ground and hear the wooden planks creek under the strain of its own weight. The warriors of the dark powers stood waiting at the crown of their tower with swords drawn and blasted words of power on their lips.

The siege tower smashed into position he saw himself step out and challenge any who dare meet him. His skill with sword and shield were second to none and he had the Lady on his side. The sword strikes came so quickly that his defenses looked nothing more than that of a sack of grain, his stances that of a wooden target. The final stroke came down in flash of sickening yellow steel and he fell backwards. He heard the shouts of his men and knights clashing against the keeps forces as the hazy seen went black.

Sir Bandon sat up with a start and pain in his shoulders and ribs greeted him. He was heavily bandaged with thick pads of cloth covering his wounds that smelt of incontinent cats. He had been cleaned and tended to after the siege and laid to recover in his own pavilion. He could hear his Men at Arms shouting outside but that soon quieted as the door flap was pushed aside and the lithe form of Damsel Hart walked through.

She cracked a smile but quickly her face took on its noble bearing of one of the priestesses of Bretonnia. She walked over to him as he swung his legs out of bed and checked his dressings.

"Sir Bandon," she greeted softly "Do your wounds plague you still?"

"No more than they should. It reeks of a sty in here"

"Such is the stench of the enemy. It took me time to properly tend your wounds caused by a touched blade of the Dark Gods. I had barely recovered from my injuries myself." "My thanks to you and the Lady then." As he looked at her closely as she replaced poultices he could see she had several tears in his gown that were sewn closed and he complexion, that of Ivory had a yellowish tinge to it. "How fare the others" he asked not knowing if he wanted the answer.

Quietly she placed the soiled bandages in a silk bag and walked over to a large basin shaped like a chalice and placed the bag in. She closed her eyes in what Bandon couldn't tell was anguish or prayer and then lit the silk bag on fire.

"They are all gone, all but you and your peasants and Sir Morris' Pegasus." she said as she ritually anointed her hands in the water basin. "What Knights were not killed in the attack on the walls were destroyed by majiks."

There was silence in the dim tent. The Knight recalled vaguely seeing Baron Flemmyng atop of the gatehouse waving his banner proudly. He also recalled hearing his outraged shouting taking on an eerie reverberation as he faded out of unconsciousness.

"So where does that leave us, milady? Is the Quest at an end?" She turned to him and pulled herself up to hold a distinguished posture of a woman of her position. "The Quest of Sir Langton is tragically over but the War is not. You have been in a swoon for many days good Sir Bandon and much has transpired. Lord Wilmont and his man lizard allies have broken the back of the greenskin army and send word that he will begin to consolidate his position." Brian Bandon nodded, taking heart in this news "And we have a new Lord with new forces. Lord Talgarth, one of the is here with one of the Sacred Guardians of the Waters is here with a Prophetess. He brings with him a force with many Knights Errant and the Rock Hurling machines of the peasants. The knights errant are led by Sir Langton's son Sir Ander."

"A strong boy, perhaps if the Lady wills it stronger than his father. May he find the revenge he deserves." he said as he stepped out of bed and walked to his arming harness. "Milady, if there is a war to be fought still and as long as I draw breath you can count on Sir Bandon the Bold to stand at the forefront with you."

Chapter 4: The Rally of Lord Talgarth

Sir Bandon grabbed the Man at Arms as he ran and pulled him down onto his back.

"Regroup! You bastards can't defend yourselves with your back turned! Stop and Regroup!"

His loyal unit of Halberds had broken when they were set on by the great stone Sphinx. It smashed into their rear ranks as they tried in vain to aid Sir Ander and his Errant from a deadly regiment of Tomb Guard. For several minutes the brave peasants and himself held off the Tomb Guard and the Spinx but their numbers dwindled and finally pressed between two unbreakable opponents their nerve gave and they had bolted.

"You sons of Skaven bitches! You hear his lord ship? STAND FAST!" bellowed John Archer warden of the Halberds and unlikely retainer for the footknight. The heavily muscled lowborn grabbed the crude horn from his musician next to him and blasted a single clear note. The serf's training reasserted itself as they quickly snapped to attention and redressed their ranks.

Sir Bandon pointed them back toward the fray they had fled from and saw to his dismay that few Errant from the second group that had followed Sir Ander was being slowly torn off their horses. The proud Pegasus Knights were fleeing and Lord Talgarth was nowhere to be seen after charging headlong into the King of these undead Khemrians. He counted his men and they numbered less then eight along with Lady Hart who seemed fatigued but held her posture tall and proud.

"My boys! My Loyal Blades! We will not slink off to the night as there brave knights are cut down! Ready your arms and we shall show these dead men how the living of the Lady's grace deal with such abominations!" he turned and raised his howling blade to that air "Men at Arms! Char...!" His voice was lost in the sound of a thunder crack and his men as well as himself flinched from the explosion of light behind him.

All was a haze as the pounding of hooves hammered the ground and Bandon saw the colors of Sir Hugh and the unmistakeable holy glow of Lord Tallgarth race past him as if in a dream. He watched as they slammed into the Khemri soldiers who held the Knights errant fast and they exploded before him and the young knights wildly wheeled their horsed out of the way as the Lance of Talgarth erupted through.

The Necro Sphinx roared its challenge and lunged at the Grail Knight as the Knights speared the Tomb Guard from behind. He saw knights fall but all blows against the new commander failed to penetrate his defenses and both the Tomb Guard and Spinx crumbled to dust and yet the momentum of the charge did not diminish.

Lady Hart summoned her strength and threw his blessed power of the Lady toward the Knights and two of the felled men remounted their steeds and rejoined the Lord. The magic she used went wild though and the backlash struck down upon her and jumped to John who was standing in awe of the magnificent charge with his master.

He was blasted off his feet landed heavily. Lady Hart who was unharmed and Sir Bandon ran to him while the men formed a defensive circle.

The priestess looked over the fallen champion and intoned a prayer to the Mistress of the Mists. "He will live." She said simply. Bandon reached down and picked him up. "Looks like its my turn to carry you off." and he heard the cheers as the men gathered around Lord Talgarth who sat like stone in his saddle. None of the enemy remained on the field. The charge had decimated all the resistance left in them. Bandon looked upon the colors of the Rally and spoke " And here we have found victory as only a Knight of the Grail can give."

Chapter 5: Revelations

Hienrich Kemmler was defeated. He saw around him his host crumbling before the onslaught of the Knights. His favorite pet, Krell the Champion of Chaos, had stood before a silent Grail Knight who saluted him and in several bone jarring blows shatter the warlord asunder.

Kemmler looked upon this Lord of Bretonnia with his witchgaze and saw that the light that shined from him was not of that of a mortal using the winds of magic but of something else. Ethereal as he was he took his advantage and gathered Krell's helmet and Axe and vanished as the marsh mist before sunlight, knowing a bit more of his enemy and chuckling at the faux-nobility of it.

Across the battle field John Archer's Armsmen stood strong as a Vampire and his regiment of undead came crashing down with another of skeleton warriors. With Faith and steel they turned aside ranks of spear and even John who was in grips with the Vampire and slowed by its gaze landed solid blows but could not harm it.

As Kemmlers powers broke Hexwraiths howled as they charged the exposed rear.

Sir Bandon seeing the threat pushed his way back and received them with smile and a hungry blade. He met their great weapons and parried their slow cumbersome slices as the Men at Arms shattered ancient shields with halberd and The Lady protected their bodies. The Skeletons began to crumble and the Hexwraiths evaporated as the magics of Kemmler faded. Sir Bandon pushed to the front as he heard Lady Hart call for aid. John had bested the attacks of the Vampire which infuriated it and drove into him.

"Come to me you damned corpse!" Sir Bandon challenged "Come face a real

warrior or do you think you have your equal against untrained farmers? Come to me you son of a whore!" The ranks parted and the Vampire lunged with inhuman speed with its sword high over its head. Bandon knew he couldn't stop it and simply sheathed his sword and welcomed the final cut. The Vampire's attacks were vicious and precise. He fell atop of the footknight and snapped at him in its bloodlust.

"Sir Bandon! BANDON!" Cried John. His senses cleared he took up his pike and with one sweep removed the head from the body of the beast. The few skeletons, with no one to hold them up with magic, crumbled around the Armsmen as they pulled the heavy corpse off their lord. A gasp went up in the crowd as the Knight rose to his feet his left fist completely inside the vampire's mouth. "Milord..." John begin softly "Is it very honorable to wrestle your opponent in a martial challenge?" a smile played across his lips as he said it.

"No, John. Its no more dishonorable then cheating Morr his due and continue on living in undeath." He chuckled. "Now help me get this damned thing off my hand, the bastard tried to bite me..."

Across rivers and plains the Crusade of Lord Wilmont marched into a new war.

"But, Lord Wilmont, is it honorable to attack an allies ally? Up until now an ally to us?"

Lord Rowan, the bearer of the Crusades colors rode next to the Commander of the Bretonnian force. After defeating the Undead of the Vampires they turned their attention to the Ogres.

"We must consider whom we are allies with and whose purpose do they serve, Lord Rowan. We can trust in our Empire allies for as long as neither of our forces impedes the other we work toward the same goal. If nothing else we can trust that our alliance with The Warrior Cuauhtemoc has separated us by a great distance and we again work to the same ends." He grew silent as he approached the explanation of the decision he made. "But the Ogre's sin is greed. Greed for food, wealth, and killing. They are an uncouth and loathsome people who would turn on us as soon as it were convenient and I feel that the Arch-Lectors of the Empire may find it in their best interests to not interfere if they do. So we must make the first move."

The afternoon sun was high in the clear sky and the armor of the knights shone brilliantly. The Grail Pilgrims sang hymns of reprisal lead by Maeve who now bore scars from her reckless abandon of tapping into the Wind of Life. Her survival made the Pilgrims all the more fanatical towards her.

Lord Wilmont sat like stone in his saddle, his long silver hair hung loose over his shoulders. "It would not be honorable, my Brother, if we left out lands to plunder and murder. We have let them know out intentions and if they show up to fight us then they will have shown theirs."

The colormaster bowed his head in concession of the matter and began the next. "So what of this Lord Talgarth? I have not met all of out number but to never have heard of one concerns me." Lord Rowan was young still. He reddish hair had turned more auburn which he kept closely cut. His inner glow was no less then Wilmont's but failed to turn into a sunburst when in the heat of combat like his.

"Talgarth is an old name and the Priestess he arrived with is of the higher order of the Lady's handmaidens. I have my suspicions that he may be Talgarth but not fully."

"What do you mean?" Rowan's green eyes taking on a very youthful look of bewilderment "Is he an imposter? Another Grail Falsehood?"

The old Lord shook his head "No, Lord Rowan. You have fought the Knight of the Lady correct?" "Of course my Lord. Most of us stood against the Green Knight if not as the final Trail of Worth for the Lady...are you saying that..." Wilmont turned to regard his junior "No. Not quite. There are many of Knights of the Grail who served the Lady since King Gilles and not all perished from their mortal coil. Some were simply taken as guardians. The Green Knight is her champion. Lord Talgarth I believe is another of her vessels and the Priestess his guide."

"Was Sir Langton truly set to fail?" Rowan spoke before thinking. "Careful brother, don't blaspheme in my presence. Your above that." Wilmont shook his head "No, Langton set his course and choose his path. His failure was his own and perhaps the Lady can use his death to inspire his son Sir Ander to be a greater man then his father." Lord Rowan looked to the horizon and sat silently for a time. In the distance he could see the great bonfires the Ogres had made to eat the dead of their enemies and their own. After a time he spoke again. "Then let us follow our path to the end then for it seems we are not the only ones who have chosen."

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