

Illyes Journal April 3rd 1663

This is the first chance I have had to put pen to paper since the conflict with the natives came to a head at the festival of Dominion. The following is my account of the events of that festival and the retreat of the Confederacy back to Draxholt.

Holding true to my word, an armistice was enforced on the Friday of the festival but any illusions of a peaceful start to the weekend were short lived. The remnants of the necromantic cabal led the last of their troops in a foolhardy assault on the festival. Camped out on their own as they were, the Flembics would have stood no chance against the tide of undead that swept the field looking to feed on the souls of the living. Faced with little choice I could not leave them to die at the hands of the undead and risk their souls being lost to the gods. A heated debate took place between several members of the Confederacy's ruling council as to my decision to allow Flambard safe haven within our camp; thankfully cooler heads prevailed and Flambard stood with the Confederacy and held back the tide.

Delayed somewhat by the conflict with the undead and various other complications, my marriage to Gaelle finally took place shortly after night fall. Joined by friends and allies and accompanied by Arturo as my best man, the ceremony was short but put the point across that Gaelle was the rightful ruler of Mill'en and had the full support of my house behind her. Those who had their eyes on the throne or simply wanted her gone would have to think twice before acting against us.

As the evening came to a close, something that I had long been working towards became a reality. Having realised that their colony's position was not longer viable, and spurred on by Arturo and Isabella's suggestion, the 3rd Terrino Marines came and asked if I would accept them into House Bakhana. Flambard had truly been defeated: they were a broken people, but one I hoped we would be able to mould into a useful and loyal member of the Confederacy given time.

Friday bled into Saturday and for the most part the armistice had held. It took several heated discussions with the Huntress followers about Bendal-Dolum, and was by no stretch an easy option, but it showed everyone that the Confederacy was not the big evil oppressive state that some would make us out to be.

Saturday was to be the Day of Grievance, a chance for everyone to settle scores before the dawn of a new age of unity.

The day started with a meeting of the Confederacy's ruling council. I asked the former Terino Marines to join us for the meeting - mostly because I wanted to see the look on the Gerosons' faces when they realised that the backbone of the Flembic colony had joined House Bakhana. The meeting itself was fairly uneventful, with some talk of what the next step should be now that Flambard was no longer a threat.

A few minor incidents took place: Jacob Arteman and Augustus Amici both felt the justice of the Confederacy for their assistance of their families' more infamous members. Dandy sent some rather ill-equipped assassins to try and murder me in the market place but they were cut down by Rakshasa in short order.

As the day dragged on, I was made aware of an attempt by Kyle Harkyn to open a gateway back to the Known World. Given our attempts to re-open the Maelstrom gap the previous season had failed, I saw no reason not to allow those who wished to leave to do so. Shortly before he left, taking the majority of the Flembic colony with him, Kyle informed us that he believed that some sort of magical

construct called a magma kraken had been summoned beneath our feet and would likely attack the festival. Given my dealings with the Crew of the Equinox in the past, and my knowledge of the telluric abilities possessed by various native tribes I assumed at the time they were responsible. Later it became clear it was actually Harkyn himself that had summoned the krakens as his last act before he ran back to the Known World with his tail between his legs.

Early in the evening Bendal-Dolum and several other native tribes attacked what was left of the Flembic colonists in the New World. Their target seemed to be Lady Catarina Flambardi. They failed to kill her with their initial assault, but she was left poisoned and with the exodus of the majority of her allies back to the Known World, she had little hope of finding a cure.

Shortly after this attack, night fell on the festival and finally we were faced with Kyle Harkyn's magma krakens. They moved with purpose directly to the Confederacy camp; it was hard to tell how many there were in the dark, but I believe at least thirty and maybe more. Breathing fire so hot it could boil the blood in your veins, they smashed into our front rank. The ensuing melee was brutal and furious, as weapons and armour were melted by the heat of the krakens' blows. The Confederacy held the line and although it seemed like the fight went on for an age, we slowly managed to whittle the krakens down until none were left standing. Battered and bruised, we returned to camp to make what repairs we could to our armour and weapons in preparation for a second assault by the krakens. After an hour or so had passed it seemed less and less likely that we would see a repeat of the previous assault and we began to relax our guard.

Then from out of the shadows an assassin's blade struck at Gaelle. Two Freiboden from the looks of them had made a foolish last ditch attempt to take out the true heir to the throne of Mill'en. My spatha cut deep into the assassin's back as she tried to flee; her partner was also brought down in short order by the Confederate soldiers at the gate to the camp. Although the blade had made it past the gothic plate that Gaelle was wearing, it seemed that the poison that it was coated in had been neutralised by the amulet that for once my new wife had remembered to wear.

A little shaken but otherwise OK, we re-focused and regrouped with several other members of the council, as word had reached us that Marcus of the Crew of the Equinox had been able to take Kyle Harkyn's place as the Master of Magic. It had become clear that with little other choice left to us, we would be facing all out war with the natives if Marcus could not be stopped.

But to add to our problems a fair chunk of the remaining undead had taken up residence on the second floor of the bar and had been causing trouble for some time. Seemingly incapable of acting against the undead without my hand to lead them the various priests, inquisitors and demon hunters had closed off any method of escape for the undead but lacked the stomach to take the fight to them.

Upon my arrival, several shots were fired at me from the balcony and after a short exchange of words with Ponderous (the Necromancer responsible for the majority of the destruction the undead had caused over the last few years) a melee ensued. Calling upon the power of the Merchant I cleared the stairway long enough to allow several of us to reach the second floor. Several of the Assan family and a handful of random undead I had never seen before seemed to be trying to cover Stefano Amici as he attempt to escape. In turn, each of the undead fell to my blade, their souls permanently destroyed by the power of the Merchant's blessing upon me. As the melee ended, there was no sign of Stefano.

Having retired for the evening following the conflict with the undead in the Bar, I awoke early the following morning and took position on the Confederacy's gate waiting for the Crew of the Equinox and their native allies to show their hand.

Reports started to come in that the natives had amassed in the woods and had brought with them some kind of Icon of Coyote - a powerful sacrificial altar that they planned to use to sink half of the New World into the sea, wiping out every man, woman and child in the colonies.

Faced with total destruction members of the Confederacy and the remaining other colonists began to amass to receive the inevitable native onslaught. As the minutes began to pass the skies above our heads darkened and the ground began to shake. Then from nowhere, lightning started striking the ground, wounding many. It had become clear that if we were to stop the native threat then we would need to rally our force and push into the woods to destroy the Icon.

As we entered the woods it became clear that for all the kindness and the hand of friendship we had offered to them, the native people of these lands could not overcome their barbaric nature. Their heathen gods demanded the blood of the peoples of the north. Those who had been our friends and allies turned against us and stood with the tribes of the Deep South.

As we pushed forwards, there were a few minor skirmishes with various Native Eidolons and a handful of Onatakha. I stood at the head of the column as it came face to face with a small group of natives lead by the heretic Marcus who had stolen magic from the world; a short melee followed but through the use of sorcery the likes of which I have never before witnessed; Marcus managed to escape back behind the native lines.

Finally we reached the main native force. The southern tribes were surrounded by those we had not long before offered our hand in friendship to, standing guard over the Coyote Icon and sacrificing the fallen on both sides of the conflict to power its heretical magics. I led the charge into the centre of their lines, my Kazekatana cutting down many of their number. The battle seemed to be going our way, but then from out of nowhere came a giant serpent-like creature. With its huge claws it ripped through our lines tearing flesh and bone asunder, ripping through even the strongest of shields and forcing the bulk of our troops to fall back and regroup.

I found myself facing the beast down with less than a handful of other Confederate troops as the natives closed back in on our position. From behind us, the sound of a volley of muskets rang out forcing the beast backwards. A spray of acidic venom struck me to the floor. Unable to stand, I resigned myself to having to watch the rest of the battle play out without me - I knew that the Merchant would not let me die here. The battle raged on, our only advantage being sheer numbers alone. It had cost us dearly - we had lost Piper, Zan, Quintellus and Dram, and The White Wolves had fled the field.

Suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder pulling me back up from the ground and behind our lines. Hendrick dragged me over to the Lady Amelie who did her best to get me back into the fight. By this time our front ranks had completely stalled; our only choice was to fall back re-group and push again. As I began to relay the orders to the remaining officers, Carlito Rossini appeared in his disguise as Mowak of the Long Grass Tribe. He reported having successfully laced the Coyote icon with caustic bile hopefully destroying it or at least putting it out of action for the time being.

With this information I ordered the retreat back to the open ground of the main camp, but faced some disagreement from Rakshasa who believed we would be better to stand and fight in the forest. Nevertheless, the bulk of our force began to retreat back to open ground in good order with me at the head of the column once again. Then from behind us we heard the screams go up. I am told that the Ophidians used their dark Illini magics to drive terror into our back ranks causing them to break and scatter. A few brave souls stood and held the line allowing the bulk of our force to escape back into

open ground, but there was no illusion: what had started as an orderly retreat was now a full-blown rout.

Battered and bruised, the remains of our forces formed back up in the Confederacy camp. Gaelle, Flip and I took quick stock of who had made it back out of the woods and braced ourselves for the inevitable surge of natives. A few minutes passed and the clouds that the Icon had summoned above us cleared and the natives were yet to emerge from the woods. Our remaining force would likely win in open combat with whatever the natives had left, but it would be costly and we had already lost too many great heroes of the Confederacy. I would not allow anyone else to die for the sake of my pride. With Draxholt less than an hour's march from the site of the festival and in desperate need of reinforcements I gave the order to retreat once again.

It is clear now that the barbaric peoples of these lands cannot be trusted. There is no common ground to be found, no diplomatic solution to this attack on my people. If the Confederacy is to survive then the eradication of the Hives and Tribes of this land is a necessity

In Faith

Illyes Roudec

Legate Of The Evocati
Prince Consort of Mill-en
Sword of the Merchant.