

The Travance Chronicle

VOL. 5 No. 1

The Husk and Null Edition

JANUARY 1216

Notes From Baron Sylus

Martial law is the imposition of the highest-ranking military governor as the head of government.

I have authorized, during this State of War, the Warlord to rank above all others besides myself. The Guard reports to their Captain, who reports to the Warlord.

The hierarchy during a State of War: Baron, Warlord, Lord Blackthorne, Lord Weaverforger, Lord Tartaros, Lord Silverbow, Lord Von Kreuzdorf.

If there is any confusion, on the above or anything else, please seek out Baron Sylus or Seneschal Maxwell.

Information on the Husks

Compiled by Dr. Ilana Darkwood

Husk Behavior

- Husks are shells. Their insides have been replaced with Null.
- Immune to mental effects because they are a shell.
- Seem to focus on individuals the person knew.
- Curiosity has been an observed trait and they can be directed with enough stimulation (noise/lights).
- Slow, jerky movements until they are within range to engage a target.
- General Husks take at least 30 blows to drop.
- All at least seem to be able to cleave an individual.
- Being able to pierce armor hurts the Husks more.

Known Husks of Allies/Travancian Subjects

Lord Aleister Tartaros of Drega'mire

Abilities

- Mage (Sorcerer) (Favors Warlockery)
- Healer
- Warrior
- Cavalier (Vanguard)
- Master Warrior (Protection)
- Arch Caster (Valence/Battle Caster)
- Access to Arcane Tattoos
- Access to Pentir Magic
- Access to Earth's Blood (Druidics)
- Resistant to Poison (Possibly Immune)
- 'Magic' Ward (Either from the Null or Pentir magic)
- Warlord Capabilities (Assumed from Null)

Strategies

- Barrage him with Magic Suppression
- Dispel his Druidic Defenses
- Destroy Battle Casting Focus (possibly Turtle Medallion, but he changes it often)
- Chaos Warrior attacks
- Destroying the Casting Focus is a temporary thing and not gravely detrimental
- Arquebus attacks, possibly any ranged

Count Sebastian Everest of Winterdark

Abilities

- Berserker
- Warrior
- Scholar
- Fire Fury

- Access to Mirrormere's abilities
- Creates vortex (Did anyone notice if he had to stand still to create it?)
- Healing (possible Husk trait)

Strategies

- Disrupt Count from creating the vortex.
- Break through vortex and attack him at the center. Planar traversing (Occultist/Elemental Warden/Mist Form).
- Utilize Psions to attack him directly.
- Inflict as much damage as quickly as possible.

Sorel Argentblade of Terafess

Abilities

- Gold Dragoon (Legionnaire)
- Cavalier (Vanguard most likely)
- Druid
- Warrior Monk
- Draconic Flight/Fire (Can a Belmont prevent his flight if they mark him?)

Strategies

- Sorel has been away a couple of years now, above information may be partially inaccurate.
- Piercing his armor is essential to defeating him quickly.
- A Huntsman can cause a wound that bleeds to Sorel's wings which should cause them to weaken for a short amount of time.

Recovered Travancian Husks

All were stronger and capable of withstanding many attacks.

Arkelian

- Heard a voice: 'I had heard a motherly voice ask me "Did we win?" and then the same voice telling me "Only the pure may walk the path."'

Billiamm

- Called upon Sir Daniel's dragon spirit to empower him (they are cousins).

- Also heard a voice: "Twas a woman's voice asking me a question and the same woman talking, waves crashing or something."

Orion, Rose, Vyth'Nar

Unable to obtain accounts

Priority Husks as reported January 20, 1216

Erik Huronson- Chaos Warrior, Berserker

Ib Flett- Fire/Illusion Mage, Arch Caster

Dennis Brand- Ranger

Lady Angelica Tartaros- Soul Warden, Sorceress

Assorted Observations/Suggested Strategies

- The Husks may be resistant to magic-infused strikes. More observation required.
- Distract and divert Husks with illusionary scripts and alchemical fireworks (lights and noise). Both Lord Tartaros and Count Everest seem unable to detect individuals hiding through natural means (I can tell you attempting magical concealment around them is a bad idea).
- Separating Lord Tartaros/Count Everest (these Husks seem drawn to another, most likely through familiarity/that inherent trend wherein they seek out individuals known to the former person).
- Use a rotating set of magical walls
- Establish a set of impassable shield walls marshaled by the Vanguards
- Use of a magical Gate to forcibly remove one from the field
- Establish a druidic ritual which would hinder physical movement
- Use of Laurent-Belmont abilities to tether one to the field
- Use of Templar abilities to sequester one to a specific location/target
- Prepare a battlefield with traps
- The Husks seem to be deteriorating

Information on the Nulls

Compiled by Dr. Ilana Darkwood

Null Observations

- May have aversion to natural sunlight. More observation required (A 'sun bomb' was referenced)
- Will note Null strands were witnessed night and day.

Nulls

- Capable of pulling individuals closer to them.
- Followed by purple 'Wisps' (Wisps can drain individuals of their health and use it to revitalize their 'allies').
- Wisps can also pull individuals towards them.
- Wisps can be destroyed, but others replace them.
- Nulls can be subdued. Five-Ten seconds at a time from personal observation.

Red

- Caused wounds that could not be immediately healed.
- Immune to/Reflects attacks from the back or side. Attack from the front.
- Can see those able to hide themselves in shadow.

Green

- Uses casting potential of a target as a weapon against them.
- Can see those hiding with magic.
- Mimics spells.

Blue

- Absorbs martial prowess and uses it against others (focused attacks. It was able to use Vortexes, but not regular spells).
- Causes individuals to break into a frenzy.

Orange

- Shuts down divine and druidic castings.
- Corrupts faith (always in favor of darkness).

Purple

- Destroys Items.
- Uses creative potential of a target as a weapon against them.

December 11, 1215

Author: *Gabrian Grottings*

Described by witnesses as ethereal sparks or flickering lights, the Wisps heretofore have been observed accompanying the Nulls. In his encounter with the Blue Null, Master William McKraegar described the Wisps as entities which "leaked off" from the Null, noting that they could be dissipated given enough force but that they were quickly replaced by new ones.

Sir Danny McKraegar, Knight of Kaladonia, likewise made some keen observations concerning the Wisps just before the Proper was evacuated. In an interview he described having seen a Wisp enter and freely animate a fallen corpse, transforming it into a Husk. When he engaged the Husk in combat, he noted that the Wisp was able to exit the corpse and siphon the life energy of those around it, using this stolen vitality to heal the Husk, which continued its assault against him.

While Master William McKraegar fought valiantly against the Blue Null, he was eventually slain and later observed as a Husk. While he was eventually returned to his normal condition by Belegchand, who brought him through the Thocus, he admitted that he had no memory of his time spent as a Husk. Despite his lack of memory concerning the experience, a medical autopsy, performed by Dr. Ilana Darkwood, revealed that a Wisp had animated his body while he was in Husk form.

On a final note, the author would especially thank Sir Danny and Master William McKraegar for providing accounts which lead to the above information, as well as for their selfless service in defense of our people.

Chronicle Edited by: Lorebi Simon

With assistance: Tholia Burdorn, Dennis Brand, Amizor Wuzwir

Events of the Feast of December 1215

In December of the year 1215, Travance gathered its strength together in pursuit of a purpose that seemed to many to be hopeless: the defeat of the dragon Tellegrim. Having come to Travance, it was evident to the town that either he would die or we would. And so, the town gathered and marched to the battlefield, accompanied by the fae known as Corsair. What was found there, however, has changed much about what we know about existence itself.

Arriving at a wall and closed gates, the town found a massive dust cloud pouring over from the other side of the wall. It became apparent that this dust was the remains of Tellegrim's undead army. Shortly thereafter, Tellegrim himself was witnessed fleeing the site, clearly wounded. The wall's gates opened and Travance saw a number of glowing entities of various colors. Corsair became visibly agitated and demanded to know who had brought these entities here. Before more could be understood, however, one of the entities managed to take hold of Corsair and destroy him.

The author would like to reiterate what happened to make a point about how dangerous our new foes are: They destroyed Corsair with seemingly very little effort. It is understood by many that the fae hold a strength comparable to (and likely exceeding) that of the gods. That Corsair could be so easily annihilated should serve to show us that we must exercise utmost caution when dealing with these entities.

After the destruction of Corsair, a retreat was ordered and Travance spent most of the night fleeing and hiding from these entities (which we now know to be called the Null) as they marauded about the proper. It should be noted that while research upon the Null was attempted, very little could be determined. Seemingly all references to the beings have been removed from recorded history. It is known to us that they are the power that was sealed in the obelisk that Balfurous had been attempting to break when he was slain at the end of 1214. It is also known to us that the beings Miranda and Fionna sealed the Null into said obelisk, but almost all other details are seemingly impossible to find.

The next day, Count Winterdark and Lord Aleister had evidently been turned into husks of themselves, devoid of their souls or minds, and began attacking Travance. They were supported by the husks of a number of other townfolk as well. While the townfolk were put down and had their souls returned to them through the phokus, Lord Aleister and the Count are still at large. Also of note, those who had returned through the phokus had almost unanimously spoken of hearing voices in the spirit realm, all asking the question: "Who won?"

That night, Travance attempted to fight back against the Null, but the effort was met with failure as the Null proved to be far too powerful and resilient. Another retreat was ordered, and the town was forced to abandon the proper and fall back to Valdalis. After arriving at Valdalis, Kartat and Knight Captain Magnus made an announcement to those assembled. The time had finally come that they were capable of divulging the paladin secret (up to this point, it seems they were literally incapable of speaking it to another). The secret amounts to the following:

The universe was created by beings known as the Anastazi. Their purpose in this was to determine whether to make worlds of good or worlds of evil. In order to determine this, light and dark were created in equal portion on Arawyn and made to do battle. When the battle ends, the Null would be released to undo the world and the Anastazi would make more worlds in the image of the victors.

Whether or not a victor was determined is currently unverified, but the Null has certainly escaped its captivity. Since then, we have been in near constant movement. If any concrete information becomes known to you about the Null, please seek out a scholar so that they may record it and spread said information. Take heed, however, that we require utmost veracity in these accounts. Unconfirmed rumor and hearsay can be ultimately ruinous in this matter.

Hold faith that we will learn how to confront this foe, and that we will unite as one to do so. Light, dark and unaligned all equally call the Null their enemy.

May the Story last evermore,
Illyrin Soral

To the people of Tearance:

In this dark hour, before I say anything else, I want to speak to you directly. I wish you all good fortune going forward. Much has been lost and the trials we face going forward will likely be worse still. Few crises ever begin with the worst of the situation. This will not be an easy time for any of us but I have faith that if any people can get through this, I believe that you can.

While the few reports I have been able to receive from the rest of you provide me with a portion of the grand picture, know that everyone is doing their part and that we will all meet again soon. Your homes and friends are not undefended, even if it is simply by the people of the land who we normally rise to protect. Exemplary and ordinary people alike are protecting their loved ones, their homes, and standing up to those forces that seek to destroy us.

I am sure some of you have had your thoughts drift to the state of your faith. Or the admonitions of my fellow Loudwys for your beliefs in the divine. I cannot speak for them, but I can clarify my own position. I have never held their powers or existence in doubt, merely their intent. People whom I trust have claimed to have met their gods, but I've never found these stories to be proof of divinity. Merely power and presence. Any man or woman who claims that their power alone gives them rule over others should be regarded with suspicion. What they meant for us was rarely clear and not something it seemed we ever had much say in the matter of.

While it seems that my suspicion is justified I am in no way happy with this turn of events. What it does

prove to me is the one thing that I HAVE believed all this time. Your faith is better served in the people around you, those who stand shoulder to shoulder with you in the battle line or share a meal with you at feast. These are the people who still fight to survive. Being mortal may mean you have more to lose, but it also means you have something to live for and defy the fates before you to seize the future you desire.

You're not alone. That is the important thing to remember. While things look hopeless, remember that there are others out there who are fighting as well. Your paths may never cross, and some battles may be lost, but people are not merely laying down and letting destruction overtake them. This is true of the companions you had in Tearance and it is true of the people in lands beyond. The sheer will and perseverance to live and fight against destruction is not a sole virtue of the heroes of Tearance.

But it IS something that you excel at. It doesn't matter how powerful this new foe is, or what they are capable of doing with what seems to them as relative ease. When has that ever stopped any of you before? The number of people who can laugh and say they have beaten you is small indeed. And they don't last long after doing so. It's not that this new foe is invincible and unstoppable. It's that you haven't found a way to do it yet. Some may say death is something that cannot be fought, but that means it's true for our foes as well. And if it does come for us we do not have to go quietly. Or alone.

I will rejoin you all when I can. For now, good luck in your own battles. I will carry on the fight as well. Yours, Samuel Reynolds

A Barden Borne by Squire Zebtech Taddlesworth

I am not particularly eloquent, but I feel I must pen this piece regardless.

Since the Nulls and the Husks, tools of the Anastazi, ran us out of town, I have seen much co-operation between the subjects of Travance. There has also been disagreement and strife on the tavern walls in every land we've travelled through.

Facing annihilation from an uncaring and indifferent foe, we must band together, regardless of moral code. There has been and will be talk of not sullying hands, of heads held high, to stick to all that is good in this world and not work with that which is evil. This, to be blunt, is folly.

In the beginning, the Anastazi created this world with good and evil. The intention was to pit each side against the other, and so, for ages, good and evil have been opposed by design and intent. This problem is beyond the scope of light and dark. In this fight, whether a being is good or evil is irrelevant. We must only focus on not playing into the hands of the Anastazi. By good working with evil, and evil with good, the designs of the Anastazi will be upset, since we were meant to remain at odds.

At the end of this all, Travance will keep on existing. In Travance, we do what we have to, so the burden doesn't fall to others. Maybe our names will be stained forever in the history books for doing so, but it will be our contribution that has saved the world of Arawyn and all of its inhabitants. Sometimes, just as with Bloodtide in the past, personal morals must be set aside for the greater whole. But with this responsibility, we must know the difference between the hard path and the wrong path. And if we choose the wrong path at any time, that is a burden that Travance must collectively share and not let fade from our memories.

Travance, we are freed from a life of servitude to the whims of the Anastazi. Let us remember that the freedom and the power we have comes at a price.

Why We Fight by Grimkjell Eirson

I have little to say about the Nulls or Husks that is not already covered by anything Ilana Darkwood might write or say.

I will rather say to you why we should fight on, and how we should face these days, even as annihilation threatens us. It faces us not with hate but indifference. We are as Hneftall pieces being swept from the game board at the end of a game. But we shall endure and our destiny is for the first time our own.

Now is not the time to say that the end justifies the means. For they surely do not. It is in these moments between life and death, in the dark, that we must make choices to endure. Whether we can do so with our head held high, able to face each other, or whether we "Did what we had to do", and in so doing stain our honor and our souls will stay with us forever, as long as one exists to remember us.

We will rebuild someday and we will have to be able to trust each other. How can we trust those that in extremes will sacrifice anything on the altar of necessity? Society is built on more than power. There is an understanding of just treatment and respect between the individual. Lord and subject, Knight and Squire, King and Duke, chief and huscarl, husband and wife, brother and sister. All of these are built on a foundation of more than just strength and domination. So even in desperation, remember the guidance that the priest and priestesses of the Light have given. Remember your codes and hold even more tightly to them now. They are not simply burdens to be discarded at the first sign of a trouble but a shield for your soul and the world that will come after this one, to protect yourself and those that you hold dear.

I will not belabor this point overmuch. Draw your swords, prepare your hearts, and cling to those you hold dear in the struggle that has come. But understand that we have gone beyond the question which was asked by those that created this world, and we are our own, and will stand on our own now. It is up to us to make sure that we live lives worthy of song. Beyond the bounds of light, past the depths of darkness, what could possibly await us? Our every action will be the answer. Let's make sure there is no path but for the one we make ourselves. We are free. Let us also be noble.