

The Gavyn Kyle FILES

BY JOSH COLÓN • ART BY ANDREA UDERZO AND NÉSTOR OSSANDÓN

KRYSSA, CONVICTION OF EVERBLIGHT

This latest investigation forced me to venture substantially farther north than I have in quite some time. You are well acquainted with my professionalism and the great lengths I will go to see a job done, but for the sake of full disclosure, I may begin adding an “extreme temperature” clause to future contracts.

As for the subject of this dossier, gathering intelligence on any Nyss prior to their people’s exodus is never easy, doubly so for one currently serving Everblight’s blighted army. Regardless, through a combination of military reports, interviews with my ever-expanding Nyss contacts, and an unusual new source, I managed to surprise even myself with the amount of intel I could gather on a relatively new warlock named Kryssa.

Kryssa’s early life demonstrated discipline tempered by compassion, traits that marked her in the eyes of her peers and elders alike as a source of hope for their people’s future. Long before being blighted, she established a reputation as a paragon of a rarified Nyss martial order. As these documents illustrate, however, the coming of the Legion of Everblight did not merely destroy her potential future but corrupted her virtues toward a dark purpose. If nothing else, Kryssa’s new life as a servant of Everblight highlights both the tragic destruction of a noble culture and the terrible threat the rest of western Immoren faces. Once one of the great champions of the ryssovass, Kryssa now leads an army that seems a twisted mirror of those she once commanded, blighted and bent on the destruction of the Iron Kingdoms.

My previous investigations into the blighted Legion have been challenging, so I have endeavored to strengthen my sources among the surviving Nyss refugees. Making contact with the Hylluwyrr, a one-time influential



Nyss shard now living on the outskirts of Porsk, I offered them my extensive expertise in exchange for their cooperation. I proposed to look into the whereabouts of friends and family members missing since the Nyss’ flight from the Shard Spires. While the majority of these efforts resulted in dead ends or tragic news, I did manage to achieve a few successes. These deeds ingratiated me to the insular Nyss, who not only opened up about what occurred to their people but also put me in contact with notable individuals who would otherwise have turned me away. The value these new contacts provide to this and many future investigations cannot be understated, outweighing any lost wages my charitable works incurred.

Perhaps the greatest advantage to making inroads among the displaced Nyss was earning an audience with Caelyph Maelwyrr. He is an aransor—a term for elder priests of the Fane of Nyssor who also serve as leaders of their communities. I spoke to Maelwyrr in his personal

KRYSSA SUMMARY

Aliases: Before being blighted, Kryssa was referred to by other ryssovass as "Sylvyr," which means "True Blade," a term of respect not easily earned. Since becoming a warlock, Kryssa is now known as the "Conviction of Everblight."

Born: Exact date is unknown, though interviews with members of the Gwylan Shard place her year of birth around 571 AR.

Family Status: Deceased or scattered. Her father Kryssor and older brother perished protecting their shard from Vayl. Kryssa's mother, Aeralyth, led the few survivors of her tribe elsewhere. Their present status is unknown, though I suspect they relocated to Ios.

Training: Like that of other ryssovass, Kryssa's training began at an early age. Her line includes respected ryssovass leaders who would have prepared Kryssa to meet the exacting standards necessary to join that group.

Blighting: Kryssa was blighted alongside the majority of Nyss in 605 AR. Soon thereafter, blighted ryssovass began to refer to themselves as legionnaires, serving as Thagrosh's honor guard.

Notable Achievements: Highlights include leading Thagrosh's personal escort, commanding the rearguard during the Legion's retreat after the fall of Pyromalfic, and winning several engagements against Rhulic forces on their own soil. It is significant that Kryssa managed all of these accomplishments before becoming a warlock.

Warlock Investiture: There was a noteworthy escalation of dragon activity over the skies of western Immoren in late 609 AR. My sources theorize this was related to attacks on Everblight's forces and preceded the attack by Toruk the Dragonfather against multiple dragons in the skies above Ironhead Station in Cygnar's Wyrmswall Mountains. Kryssa became a warlock shortly before this clash, when her predecessor fell to the dragon Scaefang.

Authority: Kryssa quickly earned a place among the officer ranks of the legionnaires as a blighted Nyss, though she remained subordinate to one named Captain Farilor. Kryssa's standing has changed after becoming a warlock. Farilor still commands the legionnaires, but as one of Everblight's generals, Kryssa now outranks him. Not much is known of warlock hierarchy, but it is assumed Kryssa is subordinate to individuals such as Thagrosh and Vayl Hallyr.

kohtass, an ornate and comfortable Nyss-style tent, in an encampment outside Khardov. I found him to be somber and imposing, despite his age and apparent blindness. As one of the last remaining bastions of Nyss culture, the aransor had profound knowledge of the ways of the ryssovass, as well as of the historical connections between Kryssa's shard and that order. I should note that according to experts such as Corvis' Professor Pendrake, the discussion of Nyss religion with outsiders has long been taboo. I am uncertain if this tradition has diminished since the abandonment of the Shard Spires or if this was a measure of the trust I had earned.

The following is a transcript of Caelyph's words as they were translated from Aeric by his granddaughter and attendant, Leyisa.

As a people, we stood a long and lonely vigil, awaiting the time when our slumbering god awoke from beneath the ice and snow. For time untold He protected us, and now it was up to His children to keep Him safe, no matter the cost. So, we sacrificed our connections to Ios and to the outside world, hoping that isolation would be the key to keeping Nyssor safe. The way of the Nyss became the way of solitude, and the ryssovass became the guardians of our seclusion.

More than mere protectors of our secret mountain passes, the ryssovass were the first line of defense for our people. For while the Father of

Winter never revealed the source of his ailment to us, in our hearts we feared a great evil would one day come to finish what it started. And so we clad the ryssovass in our heaviest armor, borrowing precious steel that would otherwise have gone to swords, and forged for them our sharpest and longest blades. Trained to fight as one, the ryssovass maintained the discipline and skill bestowed through the legacy of Gwylan, the first ryssovass.

A hero to our people, Gwylan stood alone in our earliest days, protecting our tribes from the beasts and barbarians of our new frozen homeland. For his courage, the elders bequeathed Gwylan's line to be its own shard, and his lineage continued a tradition of service to the ryssovass. Of this last generation, it was Aeralyth and her children who directly carried Gwylan's blood in their veins. Held in high regard they were, even for members of the already respected Aeryn tribe. Of all Aeralyth and Kryssor's children, I heard most about their daughter. The elders said the Winter Father blessed her with a mind as sharp as her blade and conviction as deep as the mountain snow. Many saw in her great potential and hoped she would one day rise to leadership. Then Vayl the Blight Witch came, replacing that and all other hopes with never-ending despair.

—Caelyph Maelwyrr

After speaking at length with the aransor, I set out to find any remaining members of the Gwylan shard, a task that would have proven nearly impossible without my newfound Nyss contacts. Eventually, I located Vycenth, a Gwylan ryssovass now selling his blade as a bodyguard for hire in northern occupied Llael. Relatively affable for a Nyss warrior, Vycenth passed on this anecdote about his cousin Kryssa after I had introduced him to a bottle of Skirovi uiske.

It seemed like she always had something to prove. She would stand guard longer, put in more hours practicing blade and spear, and wear her armor longer than the rest of us. At first, I thought it was because she was younger, having earned her mail three years earlier than the next-youngest ryssovass. For a while, I even wondered if she was motivated by blind ambition. But in the end, I knew my cousin. Only one thing ever drove her: her sense of right and wrong, of good and evil. And to Kryssa, there was no greater good than protecting others. If she pushed herself beyond the rest of us, it was only to be at her best when called by those in need.

Yes, stranger, I chose my words precisely. "Those in need." Even outsiders. Does it surprise you that a Nyss would lend aid to those outside our tribe? To be honest, it surprised some of us as well. Now that we are scattered, this is more common, but in our homelands we did not care to risk our necks to help another, and those who intruded on our lands met swift death.

It was several years ago, although now it may as well have been a lifetime, that we stood vigil on the southeastern pass near our village. From the nearest tree line we saw them, barbarians called Bolotov, over a dozen of them armed with crude axes and spears. They came toward us with clear intent to trespass our markers and commit harm. Neither side spoke the other's tongue, but when we drew our swords and formed our lines, they knew our intent. Before the first blow was struck, Kryssa stayed our hands.

She saw what we did not—a woman of their people near their leader, the mud on her face streaked with the tracks of tears, holding an empty bundle of fur. They traded vague hand gestures, pointed ahead to where they intended to go, which was not toward our village. After some time, Kryssa came back to us and told us to watch but not interfere. She had discovered the Bolotov had lost their young ones to a competing tribe in the area—likely the savage Vindol—whom they tracked and chased. They had no interest in us, and so we let them pass. Had Kryssa not been with us, their blood would have been spilled without a second thought. They were no real threat to us. It is a lesson I remember now that we must rely on the kindness of others to survive.

After that, we called her Sylvyr, or "True Blade," because we knew her blade's bite would only find those who deserved it.

The above story brought insight into who Kryssa was before the fall of the Nyss. It was more difficult to learn details about the displacement of Vycenth's people. In past research, I have learned many scattered details of the coming of Everblight, but most of that has been jumbled, told from the perspective of a confused people fleeing for their lives. What follows may be the most descriptive account I have so far been able to obtain.

The winter's storm came from the northwest, but as those of us who survived would eventually learn, our doom had been among us the whole time. When our scouts did not return, Kryssor gathered the most skilled ryssovass to guard the pass surrounding our village. Three score of us stood unmoving as the blinding wind and frost blew around us.

Then a beast, all mouth and fangs, sprang from the snow and devoured Mynwyrr before he could draw his weapon. More appeared, so many we could hardly believe it. Eyeless things they were, and yet they could see through the storm better than we could. We held fast, remembering our training and moving our blades as one. Just as we got a hold of the situation, Vayl the Betrayer appeared out of the snow, escorted by a pair of hellish creatures far larger than the ones we had faced.

Kryssor and Vayl exchanged brief words before the witch wove some kind of spell, and half our numbers collapsed in pain. Kryssor picked up a second great sword from a fallen comrade and ordered us to charge the witch. Her larger dragonspawn fended off our attacks, protecting their mistress, but Vayl herself stood back, as if merely biding her time. By the time we realized why, it was too late.

Behind our flank our debilitated allies rose, but they were changed. Strange growths appeared on their bodies, and their blackened eyes shone with a strange malice. Only a handful of us remained, including Kryssa and her father. Kryssor managed to drive his swords into one of the larger dragonspawn, killing it, but before we could press our advantage, Vayl unleashed a sorcerous torrent of frozen wind, ending Kryssor's life where he stood. Knowing our fates were sealed, we now looked to Kryssa for command. Without hesitation, she ordered three of us to run and warn our village of what we had seen. Every fiber of my being hated the idea of fleeing, but I knew it had to be done.

Kryssa fought like a whirlwind, bringing her spear to bear against beast and former ally alike. For a brief moment I wondered if we might somehow seize an unlikely victory, but then I looked closely at my cousin. Growths already spread on her skin, and her eyes grew darker by the moment. It was clear that as she fought to cut us a path of escape, Kryssa also fought an internal battle for control of her will. We shared one last look, and as I left, she charged toward Vayl in a last-ditch effort to bring her father's killer to justice. I saw her fight her way past Vayl's beasts, bringing her spear a mere thrust from the witch's throat, but then both figures disappeared into the misty storm.

We eventually made it back to the village in time to warn the elders. Just as disbelief began to lead to action, cries rang out from our people. Dragonspawn ripped through our homes and mauled anyone attempting a defense. Among them marched our former ryssovass, now blighted and moved by some dark will. My aunt Aeralyth mustered our reserved ryssovass and swordsmen, and we fought with all our might to buy time for our families to flee.

Aeralyth led our remaining Ryssovass against our transformed kin, battling with a fire no doubt fueled by the grief of losing her husband and children. But finally I saw all strength leave her when she found her daughter Kryssa still lived, commanding her blighted ryssovass next to Vayl herself. With a movement of her hands, Vayl made over half of our warriors and villagers collapse as my ryssovass had on the pass, and I knew then we had to retreat. Aeralyth and I were the last to flee our village, and as we ran, I asked my aunt about her daughter. Without looking back on our ruined homes, Aeralyth said, more to herself than to me, "My Kryssa is dead. What wears her armor is a mockery of my daughter's memory."

Vycenth informed me that most surviving Nyss suspect Vayl poisoned several of their people's wells and water supplies with blight-tainted blood, using her sorcery to activate the blight once enough time had passed for a suitable amount of the population to be exposed. If these suspicions are true, then every settled area in western Immoren is vulnerable to a similar attack.

Gathering information on the movements of the blighted Legion has always proven problematic, especially in its earliest days. Besides countless smaller skirmishes and raids, I have had trouble finding reports of major armed conflicts with the forces of Everblight, other than one. In spring 607 AR, a substantial battle occurred southeast of Scaleforth lake in an ancient ruin known as the Castle of the Keys, a portion of

which had been seized and occupied by the Skorne Empire. There, the blighted Legion apparently clashed with Skorne as well as with a large gathering of the blackclads of the Circle Orboros. I have spent years attempting to piece together the way this conflict unfolded. What I do know is that it culminated with the death of the dragon Pyromalfic and the absorption of its heartstone by Thagrosh, Everblight's leading warlock. I have had the following Cygnaran Reconnaissance report in my records for quite sometime, but after prepping for this assignment, I was pleasantly surprised to see its relevance to this investigation. As an old mentor used to say, "Coincidence only seems like luck to the ill prepared."

To: Captain Lucius Rawley

Captain,

After several days, my scouting teams report no further escalation of hostilities between the three fringe groups battling northeast of Ternon Crag. All armies seem to have broken into smaller skirmish forces, mainly harassing the others only as each force collides during what appears to be prolonged retreat actions. The exception was one of the larger blackclad groups, who seemed bent on chasing down the blighted Nyss and their few remaining dragonspawn.

The most notable engagement between these two groups occurred this morning. Just after sunrise, I personally witnessed three of the blighted Legion's leaders—two of the female blighted Nyss and the hulking, brutish abomination mentioned in my previous report—slip away from the main force and into a cavern mouth in the foothills of the mountains south of Ios. The main army column moved west and eventually into eastern Llael, luring most of its pursuers in that direction. A group of the blackclads following an argus—no doubt used as some sort of double-nosed bloodhound—broke off and closed on the cavern's entrance.

Before they could reach the opening, a unit of surprisingly disciplined blighted Nyss in heavy armor emerged to intercept them, forming a line to cut off the druids' advance. The battle descended into a maelstrom of flashing Nyss steel and thunderous druid magic. The lead blackclad and his argus went head-to-head against the Nyss leader, a female wielding a spear with a curved blade. The Nyss leader was clearly the superior warrior. By the time she had killed the argus, the battle was over.

Though the blackclads fell, I noticed that their deaths were delivered with cold efficiency unlike the butchery I've seen from other blighted warriors. The remaining armored Nyss

encircled the last living druid, the young leader. As I watched, the boy knelt wounded and began to plead for his life. Without malice or hesitation, the lead female Nyss circled behind the druid and in one quick motion pierced his heart with her spear. He was dead instantly. As the unit stood guard over the cave's entrance, I wondered: had I just seen a merciful death?

My scouts and I kept an eye on these armored Nyss until they moved on and joined a larger blighted column seemingly headed north. Additional reports suggest that most of these blighted Nyss appear to be heading for Rhul. More updates to follow.

—Swift Sergeant Alexa Owens

Based on the above document, as well as several other reports on the blighted Legion's movements at that time, I saw no alternative but to move my investigation to Rhul's borders. While this is not the first time an assignment has taken me inside the dwarven kingdom, there is always an extra element of caution required when gathering information in Rhul. The Stone Lords are vigilant against spies, possessing one of the finest intelligence gathering apparatus in western Immoren. Their spymaster appears to enjoy unraveling my disguises, perhaps as a form of sport.

It was no particular surprise when I received the following letter while staying at the Smoking Furnace Inn just outside of Brunder. It goes without saying that I did not announce my presence and was employing an ironclad cover identity.

Dear Mr. Kyle (aka Hamish Gilroy),

First, allow me to say what a pleasure it is to see you return to Rhul. I believe it has been nearly thirty-one months since your last visit to one of our cities. Welcome back!

I am afraid that your recent investigations concerning the blighted Nyss do not sit well with some of our periphery clans, especially those preoccupied with maintaining security and avoiding political embarrassment. Still, while some advocate for a forceful and permanent end to your "meddling in Rhulic affairs," there are others, like myself, who have a profound professional respect for your skill and accomplishments. I was able to receive authorization for a mutually beneficial exchange of information.

Below you will find a list of several individuals with military and political influence throughout the Iron Kingdoms. In exchange for copies of your files (we have listed only those we are reasonably sure you have investigated), not only will we permit you to continue your current assignment, but I will personally provide you with any of our documents that we find relevant to your investigation.

I hope you will agree to these generous terms, as it would be a sincere pleasure to aid in one of your intelligence-gathering operations.
—Tordek



Clearly this letter is meant to steer my investigation in the direction the Stone Lords wish for me to maintain. As annoying as I may find being coerced into sharing any of my hard-earned dossiers, I have to admit the prospect of not antagonizing the Stone Lords while inside their homeland—as well as receiving direct aid during my assignment—proves too good to pass up. I will accept this offer. I should hasten to reassure you that none of the dossiers that you have financed were included in this demand, as I would, of course, never dream of undermining your confidence. The requested dossiers were largely rendered outdated, and their seizure was primarily a matter of preserving Rhulic pride and respect. A symbolic gesture.

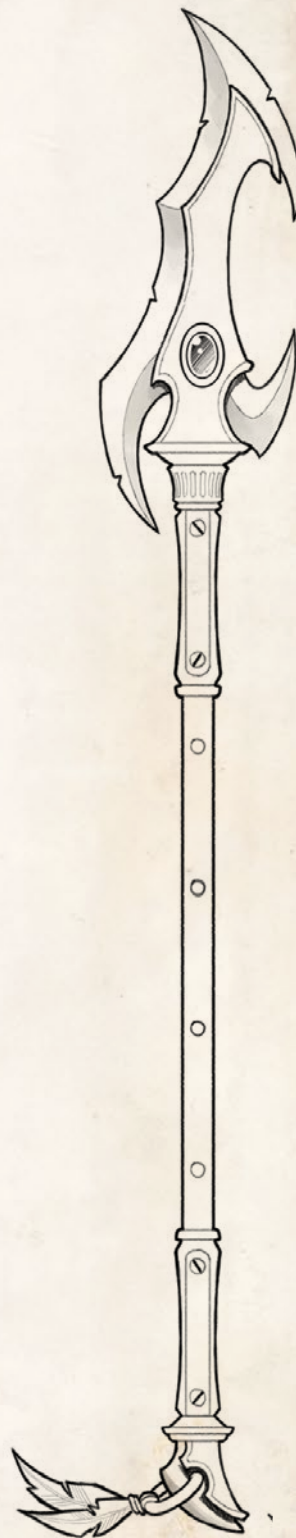
As an aside, I have reason to believe the dwarf who contacted me is one of Bulin Jhord's cover identities, younger brother of the clan Jhord's Stone Lord and the Rhulic spymaster mentioned previously. The following correspondence between two Searforge Commission administrators apparently fell into his possession. Several years ago, the mercenary Gorten Grundback had been hired to protect a Rhulic outpost from increasing Legion activity in the area, and this document was apparently supposed to be a scheduled budgetary status report between a field clerk and a Searforge official. While I am sure there are many more documented cases of Everblight's forces causing havoc within Rhul's borders, this particular missive features a blighted Nyss matching Kryssa's description. This is one of several documents I received from my new Rhulic contact, and I must begrudgingly admit that I may not have become aware of this document otherwise.

To: Budget Commissioner Berrak Axehand,
Commissioner,

After several uneventful weeks at the garrison protecting the village of Heffgrun, we came under attack by the force of dragonspawn and blighted Nyss rumored to have devastated Leffenworn and other settlements to the south. Luckily for Heffgrun, the meager defenses of this outpost were bolstered by the presence of the mercenary warcaster Gorten Grundback.

Our defenses were breached by blighted Nyss and draconic creatures. They tore through soldier and villager alike, gaining vicious momentum with each kill. It quickly became apparent that we had been overrun, and I believe death would have been certain if not for Grundback. Gorten managed his warjacks brilliantly, commanding them to alternate between blasting apart the enemy and shielding the villagers. Despite his best efforts and our attempts at makeshift barricades, it became apparent that fleeing

was the only recourse left to us. Grundback and a few squads of brave High Shield Gun Corps maintained a rearguard, allowing many civilians to escape, as well as a few soldiers to warn other garrisons.



I am not too proud to admit that I was frozen in fear, hiding in the cupboard of one of our kitchens and praying to the Great Fathers for protection. Eventually, the sounds of fighting and gunfire ceased, and that is when I realized my mistake in not fleeing. The blighted Nyss and their dragonspawn cruelly hacked at those too slow or wounded to escape. I will never forget the screams of the dying. Oddly, I could see from a crack in my hiding spot that a group of heavily armored Nyss, led by a female with a strange spear, seemed to be doing another type of killing. They were still monsters, but this group seemed to give our people quick, clean deaths. After all the horror and brutality I witnessed that day, a part of me was thankful for the twisted mercy of the act. After two days of maddening fear and cowering, I became reasonably certain the blighted raiders had left and I made my escape to the nearest stronghold.

But to answer your question, Commissioner Axehand, that is why I will be late submitting this month's budgetary report. I hope to be back on schedule next month.

Searforge Administrator Sven Greyhelm

Bulin Jhord (still under the guise of Tordek) put me in contact with a mercenary tracker by the name of Brun Cragback. Cragback had been hired by the Stone Lords to do some work related to the blighted Nyss about a year after the incident at Heffgrun. Locating the dwarf and his polar bear companion in a small hunting lodge near Hellspass, I was able to convince him to speak to me for a small "interview fee" (receipt enclosed and totaled into my charges).

While relatively forthcoming despite his terse nature, it was clear early in our conversation that prior to our meeting, Brun had been contacted by one of Clan Jhord's agents. My guess is he had been paid to limit what he told me as to not divulge any of Rhul's recent military actions against the Legion.

Despite his best efforts, I was able to glean quite a bit from my conversation with Brun. Based on what he told me, as well as some informants not even Bulin Jhord has found yet, it indeed seems that the Stone Lords sanctioned increased military actions against the blighted Nyss within their borders. I do not know the specifics, except that it apparently took years for the Rhulic Moot to come to consensus. The closest mention I've come across so far, besides a series of larger skirmishes near Old Wick and Thundercliff Run, is an engagement referred to as the Battle of Frost Forge. I believe the following account of Brun's reconnaissance mission took place mere days after that particular battle.

We'd been tracking their stink for days. The elves were always better at hiding their tracks, but no one was good enough to get past Lug's big snout. My . . . er . . . employers told me the blighties were high-tailing out of our lands, that they shouldn't be causing a fuss, but that I should keep an eye on 'em just the same. No fuss. Tell that to the ruined village they left butchered on the second day.

Managed to catch up to them on the fourth day, keeping a low profile behind a snow mound. At first they looked like one big happy blighted family, but it didn't take long to see a disagreement brewing. The small force was composed of two sides, the blighted elfies with their heavy armor and big swords and the crazy-looking ogrun war party with their bigger polearms. I started closing in to get a better look. Ol' Lug gave me the worried eyes, as usual, but I knew how to keep from being seen, especially in the snow. I got close enough to hear them. I speak some ogrun, and it was clear they were mad. Their war chief was almost nose-to-nose with the pointy-ear's leader, a female with a wicked spear. He accused her of lacking faith, said that it was their duty to collect meat for the cauldrons or something. To my surprise, the armored elf leader responded in pretty good ogrun. She told him that the attack on the village had been unnecessary, that their duty was to return to the rest of their army, and that the killing of outsiders could only be ordained by the Messiah. Well the war chief didn't take too kindly to that and challenged the elven leader, I think he called her Kryssa, to a duel.

It was one hell of a fight. Even with her heavy armor, the elf was faster than the ogrun, and the ogrun was damn fast. The war chief swung his polearm in deadly arcs that would've cleaved the arms off a steamjack. But he might as well have been swatting clumsily at a mongoose. In no time, she closed inside his reach and hit him upside the head with the butt of her spear. She even offered him a chance to stop the fight. The big bastard just kept coming. She must have cracked him a half-dozen times in his stupid ogrun skull trying to teach him a lesson. All it did was send him into a rage.

With a bellow and a lucky sweep, he knocked the elf off her feet, sending her spear flying. I figured she was done for. Just as he made his killing strike, the nimble bloody elf rolled away. In a blink, she rolled back to crash her weight against the blade's flat where it sunk into the ground, jarring the haft so badly he lost his grip and stumbled. The elf was on her feet and took his weapon in both hands to spin it once through the air, separating his head from the rest of his body. It was beautiful and horrifying all at once.

She retrieved her spear and commanded both her armored kin and the blighted ogrun to move out. Believe me when I tell you everyone obeyed, even me!

Brun Cragback

Perhaps the most notable entry in this dossier comes from the following classified Cygnaran military report. Several months ago, agents of the Cygnaran Reconnaissance Service managed to capture a blighted Nyss warrior alive. They eventually enlisted the expertise of Lynus Wesselbaum, associate professor at Corvis University, who knows their tongue and is one of the leading experts on dragonspawn and the blighted Legion. The following is a copy of his notes.

Subject condition appears to be deteriorating. The blighted Nyss, which I have identified as belonging to the "strider" subspecies, has entered a near-delusional state. I do not know if this is some unidentified illness, a result of maltreatment from his captures before I arrived, or some other factor. Regardless, it is clear that all I can do is jot down the ailing strider's words, no matter how incoherent. There might be something to learn about blighted psychology from his dying musings.

The following has been translated from Aeric (language of the Nyss):

"Talys ordered us to scout ahead. The Great Hunt was ongoing. We had to be careful. No one could have known the dragon Scaefang would come. It came looking for the piece of heartstone. Even from miles away we could feel the heat—the flames nearly took the breath from our lungs. We arrived too late. All our brothers and sisters charred beyond recognition. All of Talys' blood spawn dead, too. We searched frantically for Talys, but all we found was ash. Grieving, we hurried back to the Messiah. He would know what to do. It was only when we saw Azrael that we knew there was still hope. Azrael lived. Azrael knew she died. Azrael knew that the piece of his/her/His heart endured. We followed Azrael for days. Finally he found her, found the shard that gave him life in the chest of another. We found Kryssa.

"She bled from where she had stabbed her chest with His heartstone. She kept moving forward, as we had kept moving forward, as Azrael had kept moving toward her. Twice the dragon returned, seeking the shard, but Azrael kept her hidden, and we kept them hidden too. After a long march we reached the prophet; we saw the Messiah. Kryssa should have died, yet she didn't let herself, wouldn't let herself until the

heartstone was safely returned. Now she could die. She knelt at his feet and offered the stone to him, though it would kill her, so he could find someone worthy. But Everblight is wise.

"Everblight rewards the faithful. The voices of the god and prophet spoke as one and bade Kryssa to rise. He called her worthy. Christened her the Conviction of Everblight. Said that she would learn to wield the power. She would be one of his (generals/leaders/chosen). Another piece in the undoing of the world. I had never seen anything as beautiful. I die content. I know I am worthy. Kryssa thanked me, and my life and my death have meaning."

-As dictated by Lynus Wesselbaum

CLOSING STATEMENTS

Kryssa represents the greatness of the Nyss tragically corrupted to serve a dark will, and the fact that she has now been empowered by an athanc shard and elevated to leadership within the blighted legion speaks volumes of Everblight's awareness of her worth. The blighted legionnaires demonstrate a discipline and combined arms approach that is otherwise unusual in Everblight's forces. It is clear that Kryssa has proven to be an exemplar of the traditions of the ryssovass, and it is interesting and potentially significant that Everblight has taken one of these warriors in his leadership circle. What this means to future Legion stratagems is anyone's guess, but perhaps they will draw from the ryssovass to create a more disciplined and regimented army structure. It's also possible that sort of organization will remain exclusive to the legionnaires.

Kryssa herself has proven a most unusual personality within the blighted ranks. Based on her past behavior, it is clear that honor and even compassion were among her defining traits. How much of these aspects of her personality survived her transformations remains to be seen. Only after learning her story did I truly become aware of the tremendous loss Nyss culture has endured.

I would like to think that Kryssa's rise as a leader and warlock might represent some fundamental change for Everblight's Legion, but I doubt this is the case. Instead, the dragon is undoubtedly strengthened by her intelligence and conviction.