

# The Aftermath of the War on the Daemaah

## The Citadel Merriccia

### How the Sons of Beergaard revered Antoni Scarloti

In the aftermath of the conflict with the daemaah so many great heroes had fallen on each side and despite the resolve that had been present to fight all of the “Soulless” it soon became apparent that the alliance was sorely wounded and had lost that spirit of conflict which it at first possessed. On the part of the dwarves it was a time for mourning and consideration. Time to consider the direction of the dwarven people on the world of Maenatae. To Antoni the loss of his friend became almost too much to bear and his dread, at first, limited his ability to lead. So it was that in this moment the momentum was lost and all of the allied forces returned to the sanctuary of their own homes and hid therein save Antoni who worse than they did attach himself to Beergaard's family until he was interred and give over to his fathers.

At last Antoni did return to his home in

Merriccia to a country adrift in confusion and fear, questioning its future and the threats which surrounded it. With the energy and forethought he had typically displayed Antoni did embrace the needs of our people and bring them to task on projects to firm up the defenses about the smaller communities under his grace. Men turned from their fears and to the challenges of building and reinforcing their positions over the next few years. The silence of the dwarves and the aelves was deafening in those days. No one said it, but all considered the conflict hastily conceived and ill prepared for the forces which it met. No one would lay blame openly, yet did all blame another privately. All but Antoni who tirelessly reminded both aelvin and dwarven leaders of the cause for which they had come together. He pointed out that the lack of contact proved that it was likely that the daemaah were in no condition to repel an attack and thus was the time right to take the battle to them. Yet no one replied.

So it was with a great surprise that one spring morning Antoni did witness the landing of a great dwarven transport outside of the confines of Merriccia within the waters of the great wash. The purpose of the visit was the final completion of the will of Beergaard. As it was revealed to us, Beergaard had willed that there be a citadel built at

Merriccia and that the dwarves construct a memorial to their travels about the walls of the citadel there. Atop the citadel should rest the new capitol of Merriccia which would consist of a stronghold and such amenities as Antoni or his lineage might desire for their use. Lastly there should be halls laid out for the use of Antoni's line for all time upon the uppermost level of the citadel and in its midst a well set for the planting of the future which the Aelf Jaeoph F'Laerv mysteriously mentioned in the will would gift House Scarlotti in some time of prophesy to be held in secret. There were many such commands for the creation of the citadel which seemed lost in time as it appeared that they were actually prophesies to the future of men and dwarves. In his end Beergaard had left a last scroll to be given to all three races as an addition to the Soort'Baek being a proclaiming of things to come. Not at all clear yet reassuring in its message that in the end unity would prevail and a triumph over the soulless would at last be realized. This message and this gift were delivered personally by the son of Beergard himself, Branan of Haarbrost godson of Antoni Scarlotti and only person ever named as a family member outside of the royal line. His story is one that is fraught with sorrow and trial yet in the end did he find within sadness great resolve and comfort for deeds

committed outside of reason.

## **Branan of Haarbrost – Son of Beergaard**

Now Branan did not make much of a splash within the circles of humanity before the war and the loss of his father yet he was known to Antoni and to the royal court of Coventry. However, the loss of his father proved to be a greater burden than he was capable of bearing up against. So rather than seeing the fate for what it was he recriminated and took all of the minor woes and longings in his own relationship with his father and did work to undermine the connection which his father had shared with Antoni and with mankind. Later he recounted how that he felt that if he could remove the mention of Antoni from the lips of his people that history would change and that he, somehow might take the place of Antoni in his father's heart. Indeed he was convinced that his father did love and respect Antoni above him.

Branan had been an imminent scientist and student of archeology and history upon the world of Maenatae and since the landfall he had used his influence and the name of his father to go into places that no one else would be allowed. In so doing he had become the foremost of all his people in understanding concerning the planet and

the people which lived upon it. In fact it was he who first postulated that from the interactivity of the anomaly within the shell did the energies used in the magicks of the Mae come. At the time it was fully dismissed, but before he died his theory was all but proven. Indeed Branan was one of the greatest minds of the Khrn.

But when Branan returned to Khrnaadin to mourn the death of his father he became increasingly difficult and unhappy and the longer he mourned the worse he became until he began to speak out openly against humanity and most specifically Antoni of Coventry and the members of the Brotherhood. Every opportunity which he took to speak became an embarrassment for the khrn and after so many warnings he was shunned by all but the most fringe of his people. When he was no longer given a podium from which to curse Antoni or his deeds or even the deeds of his father he began to work with his questionable associates to destroy human interests within the realms of the khrn. Frightening off some and bombing or outright destroying others he worked with separatist terrorists in an effort to completely distance the Khrnad from all alien influences. But he went too far. When the authorities finally caught the leaders of the terrorist movement the dwarven people were shocked

beyond measure to discover that it was Branan who had been involved in the cowardly killing and maiming of others.

Branan and all of his conspirators were tried and found guilty and the sentence of death by non combat convened to all save Branan. Of course all who know the ways of the dwarves realize that to die outside of old age or combat is a grave punishment whether it be accidental or on purpose for such deaths and their victims are not recorded in the history of the khrn. In fact in some cases the victims are not mentioned at all in the annals of the dwarven people. Because he was the son of Beergaard and because he was a prince of the Khrnaad Nobility Branan could not be killed directly so he would be set adrift at sea and the forces of nature would judge him. Since the crimes were against Antoni and our people, amongst others, he had been allowed to attend the trials. And with an impassive face did Antoni witness the doom which fell upon the household of his friend and brother, Beergaard.

In a move which surprised all at the trial Antoni stood and claimed the right of a father to make sacrifice of his son's life. Firstly no one was aware that Beergaard had made Antoni Godfather of his son and the executor of his clan's rights. Since the trial and so many problems

revolving about Branán had come up the will of Beergaard was not read upon the end of the anniversary of his death as was custom. When the will was reviewed by clan leaders it was discovered that Antoni was indeed in a position to make the request. In making this charge he was asking the dwarves to allow him to take Branán and make him into the Khr that he should be. To forge Branán and work him and once complete offer his conversion as an offering to Mindanto and absolve the woe from the house of Haarbrost. Although many on both sides of the argument of release did not like the request they had no alternative but to honor it as a last will of their prophet and most honored of all Khrn.

Antoni took Branán, who although young by standards of the dwarves was older than Antoni by some years, and made him to perform every menial task which one could imagine. No activity was too low for Branán to be assigned to. If the Stables needed to be cleaned then Branán received the call. If the plumbing became clogged then Branán took the nod to clean it out. If a diaper needed to be changed, despite the fact that dwarven males distanced themselves from the very young, Branán did it. Shortly he hated Antoni even more than he had in the beginning. Roads were cobbled ditches were dug for every menial task

about Merriccia Branán was there wielding whatever implement was used to rectify the condition. For many months did Branán work in the hot sun and the cold of night performing any task which could be deemed menial or degrading. Yet never was he spoken to without respect nor in a diminishing fashion by any which supervised him or oversaw his actions.

Then one day a team of men came to Branán's residence and moved him and the very few items which he possessed to the castle and into a fine apartment of rooms fit for the most respected of dignitaries. Immediately he was taken out and arrayed in the finest clothing at the most prestigious of dwarven outfitters and always he was treated not as a criminal yet as a respected prince of his people. This did confuse Branán who had determined to not let Antoni or his task masters see him fall or complain. Why was he now being treated so kindly? Why was this man giving him such treatment as was befitting one of honor?

Antoni had Branán brought before him in the presence of the Duchess and his own children and pointed out that he would be taking leave of the training of his own son's in order to embrace the needs of his latest son, Branán. All of his sons, from the oldest to the youngest came before Antoni, bowed and acknowledged him, as



was custom and came to Branan and bowed and replied, “We submit to your need, brother.” This troubled Branan greatly even more so when the Duchess did bow before him. She was so lovely and so charming and he felt as if he were taking the very food from the mouths of her children. He could not bear to look her in the face. His anger was to be focused upon Antoni and his lackeys and they only. Not upon defenseless children and their mothers would he seek his revenge.

When all had departed Antoni told Branan that he would begin his training in three days at the beginning of the week. The first thing he would do would be to learn the five languages of men. Next he would learn of the history of mankind and the cultures of all which came over from the continent of Barjia. Lastly he would learn of the service of men to Mindanto and how he loved men despite their failings. Antoni spoke words to Branan that cut him deep and next to the heart, “At the end of this training you may not be a fit Khrn, but you will be a knowledgeable man if that is all you can achieve.”

True to his word Antoni did begin to teach and to engage Branan in all matters regarding the history of mankind and in the languages which had become the basis of communication amongst our people. At first

Branan labored only to prove that his capacity for knowledge exceeded that of Antoni or any other man for that matter. After a time, however, Branan began to understand that he no longer felt quite as much animosity as he had in the beginning for Antoni. Branan was indeed a scholar and our own historians have pointed out that amongst the dwarven people he has had few if any equals over the span of time. His ability to absorb knowledge was incredible as was proven in his learning to employ the complete Pentablary (the five languages of commerce) in a mere 26 months. He absorbed the history and the scope of men with an unmatched voracity and when Antoni spoke to him of the genetic works and the heights which man had reached Branaan did fall completely under the spell of Antoni's good graces. The vast and powerful empire of men was unknown to all but a very few trusted dwarven leaders and when Branan realized that such a treasure had been gifted to him he was completely the friend to Antoni that his father had been. Antoni, it has been suggested, even went so far as to allow Branan to use the Genetic Construct which was employed to impart knowledge of man's history.

So in the end did Antoni share with Branan the secret which no other before had known and that how Beergaard had, upon his death

and at the very end of his days, spoken to Antoni asking that he be a father to his son Branán. And also to ask Branán to forgive him for putting the needs of the people before the needs of his son. This was a trait which Beergaard had learned from Antoni and his ministrations to Mindanto in his ancient worship form. Beergaard, it was said by those which knew him well, was the only khrn which had possessed the gift of regret. This gift did Antoni now pass on to his godson, the son of Beergaard of Haarbrost, Branán. So Branán learned regret from men, yet he had also to learn to bear it and to grow from it and as he labored with his pain he grew to be far greater than he should have had the woes of his latter years not befallen him.

In the end of those things involving Branán's training Antoni did the unexpected, as was his habit, regarding the return of Branán to his people. He took Branán, against his will, and returned to the Khrnaa'din in order to petition as an offering those things which he had promised to the fathers of the Khrn. He spoke to them of the growth of his god son and how he was fit now to no longer be the son of man rather he had grown and returned to the status and the force of will of a Khr. In his delivery did Antoni so impress the dwarves that they gathered about him and placed

their hands upon his shoulder in a sign of trust. On that day did the fathers of the Khr accept as worship the gift of Branán of Haarbrost, the son of Beergaard I who was a prophet amongst his people. And so Branán returned to his people to lead them in his capacity as Clan Lord of Haarbrost and as if it were possible Antoni, and House Scarlotti did rise even more in the eyes of the Khrn.

# The Gifts atop the Citadel

## Concerning the Royal Court of Merriccia

The city of Merriccia was the first capitol seat of Coventry. Now Merriccia serves a multiple role as the military command center for the Northern March, the primary contact point of all ambassadorial exchange and as a cultural set for the Garden of Humanity and all officers assigned to it from their respective principalities.

Interestingly Merriccia is the only location within the sphere of humanity where there exists an aelvin tree home. I point to this fact as curious because it is well known that of all of humanity the aelves like our people the least of all. One would think that if they were to dwell anywhere at all then it should have been within the confines of some Caradian metropolis. Yet we have long honored the word of Antoni and the request of Beergaard in his final will that there remain a place upon the plateau and a path throughout the citadel which might allow the growth of such a tree as Jaeoph might decide to abide within. Curious it was that Beergaard never mentioned such a thing before his death yet there it was in his last will as if he had

always planned it to take place. So we honor his memory and the relationship which he and Antoni shared amongst our respective peoples by allowing the Great Tree of Merriccia to continue to exist unmolested throughout these many years.

The tree home atop the citadel, as was mentioned, belongs to Jaeoph the Druid Master of Clan Silvertree. It was he who established the Garden of Humanity in its current breathtaking configuration. In days long passed into antiquity it was common to see a visitor from Clan Silvertree traversing the lofty catwalks and high balconies just below the leafy portion of the great tree. Although it is well known that these aelves of Silvertree have the ability to come and to go at will they only do so these days to tend the garden and keep their promise to Antoni or to attend to matters of state. The contact with the aelves diminished to a trickle of communication and only that which was necessary following the War of Fellows. We being so very closely connected to the dwarves were the last to accept truce and fought on the side of the dwarves in a number of actions which the aelves called heinous.

Despite their animosity toward our house they yet revere us as warriors and for the way that the duchess held the great tree under her protection during the war. In fact the dwarves and many of

the royal coat insisted that the tree existed as a platform from which to launch covert operations. The duchess held her ground and insisted that the word of a Scarlotti, especially that of Antoni though he be long dead, spans all time and would endure all conditions. She enlisted the dwarves, despite their many disagreements with the notion, to build the Aelvin Gate in the east end of the Garden of Humanity. Once the gate was set in the east it was connected to a wall which encompassed the great tree which, in those days, only gave its shade to the royal court. When all was complete an intricate dwarven lock was contrived in the midst of the span of the gate and to it there was made a key which when placed therein and turned it would open access to the base of the great tree. The lock itself was only accessible from the side upon which the aelves lived and so when the entire expanse had been completed the key was placed upon the root base and the gate itself closed. No one ever saw any of the aelves upon the high boughs of the tree during the war, yet upon that day which we laid down arms against the aelves the gate was unlocked and the aelves placed many of their special and unique magickal foods at the gate itself. This action has become a tradition looked forward to by residents of the city as the aelves do this every year upon the anniversary of

the cessation of hostilities.

At the time that the Grey Spire was built there were no buildings upon the plateau where the walled city now stands. In fact the stone bailey where the walled city rests was grown by the dwarves of House Haarbrost with the idea of fulfilling the will of Beergaard which included increasing the defenses of the area and establishing a presence amongst House Scarlotti. In more recent times tree of Jaeoph is visible from many miles away having grown some 720 feet above the tops of the Grey Spire especially during the spring when the light of the flowers springs forth. These Flowers which burn yet are they not consumed. It has long been a landmark to those sailors navigating the great northern wash to and from Zamostia. The burning red flowers of the tree in the withering light of eve creating the illusion of a second sun in the sky. The two structures one upon and through the other with the capitol buildings of the Royal Court of House Scarlotti there resting amidst the impressive structure of the Citadel itself. A symbol of the foundation which Beergaard created in his life and the connection which all benefited from despite his death. Yet, unhappily the dwarves retreated from that challenge which he would have them embrace. Furthermore the aelves feared how future



confrontations with the daemaah might afford the dwarves further opportunities to poison the lands with their weapons of war. A silence arose in the court of the allies and it was deafening.

## The Founding of the Citadel of Merriccia

If there is one thing that defines the khrn as a people it is their strength of conviction, which some refer as “bull headedness”. But it is preferred by dwarves to be called in its natural fashion with their own tongue, Khrn'Gklean. The word defines the aspirations of all those things to which they strive as a people. It is used in the same way and for similar reasons as we use the word humanity. Not to define their form rather their condition as a people as they strive to meet those lofty expectations which they have set for themselves. Much in the way that we speak of one's *humanity* when considering their dedication to upholding common law convictions the dwarves speak of *Khrn'Gklean*. This is a condition which is sought rather than a word to describe and so when the Son's of Beergaard arrived at Merriccia with their construction gangs and their immense drop ships loaded with heavy equipment ready to shape the future it was Antoni who reassured his people.

“These are our brothers, our blood. They come not in the morning for combat rather they arrive at the eve of their mourning as our kindred.”

Thus for three years were great pains taken in order to move the Garden of Humanity from its former location on the outskirts of the old city to its temporary home within the lands of the master druid Jaeoph of Clan Silvertree. The location of the garden was deep within the confines of the aelvin community and never had men been suffered to enter this place of seclusion and peace. Yet did they take Antoni and Phillipe in order that they might speak of the safety and the assurance of security for the garden to all men that though the leadership and the resolve of these two men it could be known that the garden was indeed in good hands. The Grand Druid Jaeoph had met and exceeded the desires of both leaders in his show of support for the garden, certainly it would be safe. Also the beauty and honor of the people of the aelves assured the human leaders that they would indeed return the garden to men when the time came to do so. As a just due Antoni promised Jaeoph that upon the return of the garden to its future home that Clan Silvertree would be allowed to place a dwelling upon the plateau in sight of his own home and adjacent to the garden and that home should belong to the Silvertree Clan and be

forever under the protection of House Scarlotti. From the dwelling erected by the Silvertree Clan it was said there shall always be one that might tend the garden and show it the care which Jaeoph then displayed. So for three years great pains were taken to move the garden to its temporary home within aelvindom that the construction might begin upon the great bailey. From within the shroud of their magicks did the druids labor covering the garden and protecting it from the energies of the giver.

Now in those days we had a great pity for the Aelves in that we saw the pain which they bore concerning the sundering of their race. And in witnessing this great sorrow we did, as a people reflect upon our own losses of both home world and lost kin dwelling now in cruel bondage. For many the poignancy was so very bitter that they began to ask, “when shall we return and remove this horror from our people? I only mention this point to allow the reader to understand that we did not always have cool relations with the Mae'n people. There were days in the distant past in which we held them in great consideration if not for their mystery for their sacrifice. With these thoughts in mind it is easier to understand how men would allow such a precious thing as the great garden to be removed by the aelves for any period

of time, let alone the twelve years in which the garden was away from its place and its people.

And so, for the next three years did the dwarves prepare the materials and the base far beneath the surface to support the mass of the citadel which would serve as bailey and the great walls and fortifications of the city itself. Deep within the planet they labored and the rumblings of the work could be felt as minor vibrations for many miles about the location in which they diligently worked on the massive foundations and supporting infrastructure. At great depths did the dwarves connect their power systems to the molten portions of the planet and in so doing ensure for themselves a limitless supply of energy, as was their habit, for this their latest outpost amongst the men of the world. Many of those within the laboring guilds did participate, as they had on so many other projects for the Brotherhood, their tales of great cavernous halls filled with machinery of immense proportions laboring endlessly once set in motion were not unheard of by the men of House Scarlotti, yet did these accounts enrapture those which heard them told for great was the power of the dwarves with their machines in the days of old.

## **Concerning Branan and the growing of the Citadel**

With the lower supports and the infrastructure for self support in place and the garden fully transplanted to its temporary home amongst the aelves the leader of the Son's of Beergaard and Clan Spokesman Branan of Haarbrost arrived in the city to the tumult of all who therein dwelt. For though he had toiled and worked so diligently against men at one time yet did the men of Merriccia above all men realize the sorrow which Branan bore and the works which he wrought in the redefining of himself. For if there is one thing our people respect above all oth things it is that fellow which observes a piteous lot and, reaching down deep within himself, forges a new destiny, a greater end for himself than had been placed upon himself in the first, so that, in the end there stands a new creature where once there existed the destitute and outcast. This dwarf who was numbered as dead, erased from the recorded history of his people. This dwarf which became a man who labored and wrought against unspeakable adversity both inward and outward to his condition to arrive, in the finish, at the gates of that great city of dwarves, Khrnaa'din. This man who now became a dwarf once again fit to carry the name of

his forebears and to accept his place in the history of his people. This son of Antoni and of Beergaard considered royalty to both men and to dwarves calling himself lord of the Scleerran Mountains not by force rather by birthright as a Scarlotti.

So on that day did Branán, of House Scarlotti Draal of Harbrost and of the line of Beergaard I dedicate the construction and the beginning of the Citadel of Merriccia with his father Antoni Scarlotti and members of his clan as was the custom of men and of dwarves. Great were the festivities which began the growing of the walls to that monolithic achievement. And indeed no other creation wrought by the dwarves above the surface has ever approached its beauty nor its impressive size. For many months did Branán remain with his father Antoni as a son held in great regard living amongst us as family. Nothing was denied Branán which he might ask yet did he refuse to partake above or beyond that which was his due as to his station of servant to his father and to men. And he did reveal unto us the power of his father Beergaard in his precognition as Prophet to Baermaac the One in his revelation of the will of his father penned so many years ago before he could have known of the turn of events.

The will of Beergaard of Haarbrost spoke of the salvation of his son by men, of the creation

of the citadel and of the granting of Jaeph of Clan Silvertree a holding therein atop the citadel for all time. The will of Beergaard of Haarbrost was long sighted and undeniable in its rightness and in its foretelling of not only the current future yet promises of a better day to come. The Will of Beergaard of Haarbrost became to men and to dwarves an element within the Soort'Baek to be completely observed as canon and to the aelves it was adopted later once the message of its purpose was made known to them, for they did not understand the drives of men and dwarves. Across the span of time when we would have abandoned altogether the dwarves to whatever their fate and at those times when they held within their halls avoiding our fellowship, to the detriment of we two, it was always one borne later in the fray which would remind both of the Will of Beergaard of Haarbrost and with that recollection return us to that our proper mind for one another. So over time though we be estranged many times and for countless foolish purposes did we always return to our senses and to the joy through that fellowship which we enjoy one with another. For men and dwarves, at the least within House Scarlotti and House Haarbrost are knit together from Antoni and Beergaard and through their children to this day and we cannot deny our brothers though we may

try one another so often.

At the end of yet another three years, making it the midst of the sixth year of its development, the walls and the plateau to the Great Citadel of Merriccia completed there was yet another festive month of recognition for all those which labored and especially they which lost their lives in its creation or passed to their reward for the cause of fullness in years. The royal family was attended and though he was growing old in years yet were the eyes of Antoni Scarlotti bright and afire as was equally the desire in his heart to lead his people, though at times did his arm fail yet did his sons replace that power which once flowed from his own hand. Antoni dedicated the magnificent works of stone and metal to the craftsmen of the Brotherhood and to their cooperation and most especially to his brothers in the household of Haarbrost. It is said that the amazement of those in attendance was unequaled and that the towering frescoes depicting the struggles of the khrn brought tears to the eyes of many human and khrn. It was Branán who spoke during the opening ceremonies describing the frescoes and telling the story of his people's suffering as he moved about the forty mile expanse of walls on his hovering platform. Though the events continued from early in the day till far



into the eve yet did no one feint from following the telling as it was so passionately recounted that none could quit it lest they felt themselves once again pulled to the walls.

Now the great bailey does not serve as merely a mount nor as a support for the many intricate frescoes of stone grown directly into its expansive hardened sides. The bailey itself is a great plateau from the outside which serves as a fortification for all of the many resources that the dwarves field in the northern march. Within its iron forged walls there exists an intricate and elaborate city all managed and controlled by machines of innumerable size and shape. Automation and management of all of the various resources and the mechanical services and systems is automated to a point that approaches yet does not breach the strict governance of machine awareness. For to the dwarves it is anathema for any machine to express its own direction or its own desires through any internal or self serving intellect. This concept or capacity brings back from memory the terror and despair of their people at the cold lifeless hands of the Ah'Khr.

The dwarves, with the exception of the earthen well known as the “Well of Life” in which rests the Great Tree of Jacoph rooted deeply into Maenatae, have a complex city and port

constructed beneath the walls of upper Merriccia. Within this massive completely there rests a number of sections, some open to us others not. One of the sections, the diplomatic sector provides facilities for meeting and housing those which would ally with the dwarves and seek to better understand them. A connection to their stored works and the capacity to learn virtually through the many interactive systems housed about the facility provide resources of study for many of our learned men. Also within the diplomatic sector is the Dwarven & Human Center for Advanced Studies which teaches those elements of their studies which men and dwarves might learn of their past and develop their own futures. This repository houses the only non-human record of the sciences which men once wielded. dwarven and human sages study these records in hopes of some day understanding some elements of our once powerful command of creation. Many other sectors, including the royal quarter which is owned by House Scarlotti and forever is it dedicated to them by the will of Beergaard in which the Duke and Duchess often retire to commune with our dwarven brethren.

So many elements and sectors within the Citadel (bailey) that were needed to be constructed that though the walls and the foundations were

created in three years it took an additional twelve years for the dwarven artisans and human guildsmen to grow the walls and the buildings within the Citadel itself. Additionally the guildsmen and dwarven artisans, at the same time that the interior of the Citadel was being completed, spent three years forming the walls of the upper city, the Grey Spire and the walls of the Royal Court. So it was that night and day they labored and toiled so that there was never a moment that the ground did not shudder nor the air not filled with the sounds of construction. The construction pressing forward it came to a point where the upper level had finally reached a point that the Garden of Humanity might once again return to its home now prepared atop the plateau next to the diplomatic and cultural centers, The Diplomatic Halls of Men.

Upon completion of the Grey Spire and the Royal Court, as though they had the ability to read the minds of men, Grand Druid Jaecoph of Clan Silvertree and his fellows returned with much pomp as they had so many years before. Riding aloft upon magickal creatures and flying about in the form of massive flighted birds did they come and circling the upper city and the Royal Court they did descend into that place reserved for the garden mesmerizing all that beheld them with their

beauty and grace. Once they had for themselves secured the graces of the Duke did they erect their dwellings about the region dedicated to the placement of the garden.

Now during the time which the aelves had nurtured the garden and ensured its continued growth they had received permission from Antoni to catalog every species and to take seed from them that they might mimic the garden in their own midst there within the Aelvin Courts. To this access some were angered in that they felt the seeds and the garden private and our own. Antoni, as he was wont to do in his aging years, was inflexible and insisted that it was he which owned the Garden and he which allowed others access by the word of his forefathers. If any should decide its fate or seek to usurp his protection they would certainly face oblivion. So the aelves placed above the garden an umbrage which glowing a light sickly green in the day and a soothing yellow at night obscured the view of any which looked upon the expanse of land determined to the use of the garden. This too triggered debate and question of Antoni's sense to determine a threat, albeit quietly and away from the ears of the Royal Court, yet did the murmur rise up to the wind. As before the Duke did point out that he was in charge and that it was he which would determine the direction of his

people suggesting that any which felt insecure or at risk were welcome to leave for Caradia, even in those days an insult to any from Coventry.

### **The Druids of Clan Silvertree and the return of the garden**

For three seasons the maen druids labored tirelessly beneath their glowing curtain upon the recreation of the Garden of Humanity. Upon its completion the seven leaders of the most powerful houses and principalities were summoned to the unveiling ceremonies. Though it was believed at the time that Antoni had seen the finished Garden he had not, no human or dwarf had. All looked to the event with great anticipation for there were those now born and speaking which had come into the world and had never beheld the garden or its smells and touch of our home upon the earth. Many longed to worship there as others sought to be married in its glades or had postponed other commitments. For even then as is our custom now men would enter the garden and speak of some commitment or name some task or devote to a cause in reverence to Mindanto and to our home upon the earth and the brothers and sisters yet trapped there in calamity and great pain.

When the druids dropped the cloak at the

command of their leader Jaeph there in the waxing of the morning light the only sound present was that of the natural creatures within and without for even the breath of those in attendance had stopped as they stared at the wondrous beauty of the natural garden. The Glory of the garden in the morning light caused many to weep for joy. Even the druids which had labored within were moved by its grace once completed. The leaders of the seven centers of power and their families were led further into the garden Antoni and the Duchess Maricella entered with his three sons of which Branan was one and attended also. Further inside at the "Well of Life" atop a dais attended by a host of Aelvin Lords and Princes sat Vaesah Fleas'c Ah awaiting the host that she might dedicate the garden and explain its layout to all as a gesture of repayment for the great gift of the seeds of life which were given. It was then that all in attendance realized the significance of Antoni's allowing the aelves to collect the seeds for their use for those seeds and sprouts which were not used by the aelves were now returned to men that others might have access to the many life forms therein. Additionally she explained that the plants all were cataloged with their human name displayed below them and a name which the aelves gave them on the plaque beneath the human name.

Rising and descending the dais she led the group to the center of the garden where a soft white glow rose above the green. In the midst of the the garden the stood a great white tree resembling an oaken birch which the elves valued above all other trees, the Lunactris or “light of the night sky” which in the light of the nearby Phaedor and Pronandrae shone ever so bright and only in the strength of that light could it be handled or could it flower for all other times it's fruit was deadly poison and never could it be touched for it would kill in moments even the hardest of warriors. To many in attendance there arose a dissent and a shock that such a gesture would the elves make to us after allowing them access to our garden and our graces. However the ancient matriarch and soul of her people spoke and revealed that she had read the ancient testament of Mindanto which Antoni had gifted her. And she found that men, as her people the elves, had been born into a garden teeming with life, yet did men have in its midst a tree which they were forbidden to touch for it brought death to them. This was never the case for her people and they had remained in their garden at one with its beauty and the natural elements within it. Sadly though men did err and touched that tree and lost their longevity and the contact with their garden and this

story, she revealed, caused all aelvendom to lament in sadness for men and that great loss which even now they do not understand. So in an effort to recreate their garden and make it significant to the race of men she and the aelvin council decided to recreate, to the best of their knowledge and vision, the original garden from which men sprang, Eden.

Antoni slumped, and some thereby believed he falling yet did Branán catch him and he moved forward to the matriarch. Her guard interposing lest an out-worlde touch her she commanded them to move aside and this command had to be given thrice and forcefully at the last. Branán stopping at the guard waited upon Antoni as he moved forward and fell upon the ground at her feet. He lie there still for some time and all in attendance were quieted and still so that they heard him weep there at the feet of the beautiful and ancient matriarch of the north. Even the aelvin guard seemed to be moved that such a powerful warrior and one that had seen and dealt so much death could act so without thought to appearance or opinion. Reaching down she, taking our duke by the hand, lifted him up, and kissing his cheek drew a gasp from all in attendance. For everyone knew that she was perhaps oldest and most valued of all Aelves and that they regarded her as so very



precious and esteemed in their eyes that they vowed never to allow any to touch her let alone kiss her or be in her loving embrace. And her beauty was so intoxicating and her charisma yet more powerful that none could, if she would gesture, resist her summons. Yet did she lie within the arms of Antoni and whisper to him that he did cease his tears and smile at her and bowing low did back away from her and those graces which no man has ever been given nor ever will take. And all which stood by were in awe such that more than one time was it necessary to speak that they might be moved to continue the tour . And circling about the garden they came at last and again to the place where Jaeoph had planted his sapling that upon that great day his clan might return and prepare it for him to dwell within. It was then that men learned of the habit that aelves had of planting a sapling at the time of the birth of a child that in three hundred to four hundred years it should be ready to be hollowed out and serve as home to they or their spouses family, a point I have covered earlier yet Jaeoph did point out that he had already taken a spouse and it had been decided that since the section of land had been gifted to his clan and the matriarchs had seen a special vision which he was not permitted to reveal that they determined that in the future a member of his clan would indeed call

this tree their own home. Until that day which he could not know being male and unable to see nor embrace the vision of matriarchs would trust in their wisdom against that moment in time for it was said that day should we find our souls merge as one. And this mystery even till this day has survived the centuries since and though many Silvertree clansmen come and go and even Jaeoph from time to time we yet await the revelation of this prophesy, but we know Antoni knew of it for it was said that only the duchess ever heard that which was whispered to him at that moment within the arms of such magnificence and grace and she determined what would take place yet this mystery is kept by the women of House Scarlotti against that day when all shall see it revealed.

And all of humanity embraced the garden and loved it even more than they had before it was moved so that rather than the Garden of Humanity it was renamed the Garden of Mankind. This naming they which so named it did for it was suggested that the word humanity was of our own creation, but mankind was what Mindanto had called us in his garden back upon our home world. Upon exiting the garden itself with Jaeoph and his druids Antoni took all of the leaders and they circling about he removed his gloved hand and placed his arm out from his body toward the

leaders and they, in anticipation of some great moment and moved by the emotions of the moment did place their hands upon his awaiting a decree. Then did Antoni commit the garden open to all members of humanity which might enter it unarmed for all time and so too that land which rests the tree which should one day house the caretakers of the garden, Clan Silvertree against the day of prophesy. Additionally any of the Khrn which might commune here too without the encumbrance of weapons or tools of death might seek sanctuary for a time within the garden itself. So this has been a place of meeting for the settling of disputes and conflicts over the course of time as no weapons are permitted within the garden and though one might be the most acute of scouts it is beyond our capacity to sense a druid hidden within the garden and they will not suffer any to break the code or the rule and threaten the garden. No violence is permitted therein and even the lowliest hare could bring swift death to one violating this code for no man can discern the druids true form when he desireth it not.

## Concerning The interior of the Citadel

Once the finishing works were completed upon the city beneath upper Merriccia, The Citadel of Haarbrost, the clan of Beergaard I and the Sons of Beergaard opened it to House Scarlotti that the kindred of Branar might behold its wonders and those great works which they had wrought. Most urgently they directed the royal family to The Ambassage, an area designed and built especially with the Antoni and his family in mind. No expense was spared and no luxury omitted in its creation. Yet to this day very few have entered The Ambassage for these quarters are said to be hallowed to the dwarves and they look down upon visitors to this place which they prepared and sacrificed for their respected Antoni and his clan. The Ambassage spans a one mile square area which is adjacent to the diplomatic and business districts. The one segment which does allow guests is the great hall and receiving chamber in the area closest to the corner opening upon the Alley of Heroes and adjacent to the Diplomatic Sector. When all was finished and before the dwarves moved in to the colossus the leadership of the

family of Beergaard met with Antoni and his eldest son Aldo. The topics of that discussion never left the room, yet we know that special bonds were made upon that day for regardless the coolness of relations between the dwarven capital of Khrnaad and those of men there have never been angry words between Haarbrost and Scarlotti. Oh there have been long periods where we may not have spoken to one another yet were we brothers. And if any might seek to lay hold on one or the other then they would most certainly fight both despite our differences.

Lastly I point out to the unknowing that within the Citadel there are three levels. Now this is not to say that only three floors exist rather that the city is divided, for the most part, into three segments being the Erdowaine which is the upper levels, the Mehrfol'Gloff which is the middle levels, and finally the Uuder'Gloff which comprises all of the lower reaches of the city. Within the Erdowaine lie all housing for those who live in the city, visit it or have been, in the case of the Royal Family, granted land holdings. Additionally all of the shops and mercantile business and exchange takes place within this segment. Finally there are many social clubs and services which operate within this segment. Within

the confines of the Mehrfol'Gloff are all of the mechanical and support devices which make all of the automated services to work. Though it resembles magick yet it is not more than maqchines doing things which they have been commanded. The military makes its presence in this segment and Dwarven governmental centers also lie in the confines. Additionally this is the place where all of the heavy industrial works are housed. The final level or segment, the Uuder'Gloff though seldom visited or seen by dwarves and even less by any other, is home to all if the infrastructure used to support the Citadel. All of the water, sewage, power or environmental regulation and management devices are housed in this never resting soul of the Citadel. Though many a sage would desire to dig through the Uuder'Gloff the dwarves are loathe to allow anyone most especially a non dwarf into this area and the secrets which this place houses are guarded with a strange diligence. Not so that the dwarves fear their devices be studied or copied as much as their religious approach to the insurance that none of the devices which they themselves have created should ever again become self aware. For this is the heart of their woe and though their contrivances are of great boon to them they have proven, as have those which men created, that only

Mindanto should wield such powers of creation and determination.