

Mage Knight Faction War

Drakor looked over the battlefield, his ice-blue wings flapping lightly to cool him from the heat of battle. He had fought alongside Draconum, Drakona, and Scalesworn on his way south to Prieska, and had faced warriors from across the Land once he had arrived. Hissing his pleasure, he remembered the Troll he had defeated in single combat and the Rivvenheim Elf he had turn limb from limb earlier that day. The young Draconum Ryjalon approached him, interrupting his reverie.

"The prisoners have been gathered, Drakor. Not a promising bunch, most were too frightened of us, so I put some of the Scalesworn to watching them. I doubt we will find more than two or three worth the trouble." Drakor nodded, about to turn away until he remembered the words the Drakona Priestess had spoken to him in the Valley of the Egg. Her lean limbs had twisted as if blown by a light breeze as she spoke, bidding him to go south, telling him that he would find a great warrior who would aid the cause of the Draconum in the war-torn lands of Prieska.

Drakor turned from the young Draconum before him, his reply slipping between his jagged teeth. "I will see them."

Standing before the assembled prisoners, Drakor could see the truth behind Ryjalon's words. The prisoners were a huddled knot of humanity, wearing the uniforms of the Atlanteans, the Black Powder Revolutionaries, the Dark Crusaders, or no uniform at all. As Drakor stepped before them, he opened his mouth, revealing his serrated teeth and allowing a drop of venom to slide from them and fall to the dusty ground where it hissed and sputtered in the dirt. As one, the prisoners stepped back from the pair of Draconum, their shuffling retreat revealing one more prisoner, a Forest Troll of great size, his arms manacled together before him and several seared wounds visible upon his body. The Troll was sprawled upon the ground, and Drakor realized that the Elemental was wracked with pain from his wounds and unable to stand. The blue-skinned Draconum opened his mouth in the dragon-man equivalent of a sneer, turning to leave, sure that the Priestess had been wrong.

"Wait, Dragon-man." It was a deep voice that stopped him, tight with pain, but sure and strong. Drakor turned back, and cocked his head to one side, studying the Troll as the injured warrior tried to push himself to his knees. "Wait. We fought today, and you bested me. I would learn from you, if you will have me."

Drakor hissed his surprise, "You would become Scalesworn? What of your allegiance to the trees?" The Troll shook his shaggy head, his voice rumbling between his tusks as he replied.

"I recognize a superior fighter when I see one. Your cause must be strong to fill you with such power. If you will have me, I will join you and yours." The dragon-man paused, well aware of Ryjalon's eyes upon him, and of the Drakona Priestess's words to him in the Valley far to the north.

"I will take you as Scalesworn, Troll. You fought well, for one not tutored in the Draconum ways of combat. Perhaps we will put you to work training our Whelps, for now. Ryjalon, strike off his chains and have him healed."

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Rayden Marz watched as the dust-clouds of the invading armies trailed into the Prieskan sky. The attack had been sudden, and had come from all directions at once. Although the Prieskan people had already defeated the Shadow Khans and the Solonavi, this latest assault had not just been a single faction's army, it had been everyone who descended upon Prieska. Luckily for Marz and the Prieskans, the invading armies had been almost as interested in striking against one another as they had been in attacking the Prieskans.

The army of Draconum and Scalesworn that had swept in out of the north had pounced on a force of Elven Lords and Elemental Freeholders and had nearly destroyed them. The Draconum in turn had been attacked by an army of Atlanteans out of the Roa Vizorr town garrisons, but they had fought off that assault without too much trouble. A force of Moonborn out of the Galeshi Desert had struck at one of the strongholds held by the Prieskan people, but they had in turn been set upon by a force of Orcs, who had distracted the Dark Crusaders long enough for Marz's Order of the Crescent Sword to relieve the defenders. Perhaps the oddest battle Marz had seen in Prieska over the last month was a group of Black Powder Revolutionaries he had found moving through a mountain pass. He had set his own forces in ambush, only to see a small army of Amazons leap upon the Revolutionaries and drive them off.

Whatever the result, the armies were gone now, but they had left death and destruction in their wake, and by all accounts there were scores of men, women, and children missing, carried off by the invaders. The Prieskans had held together through another attack, but whether they could deal with the aftermath remained to be seen. Marz had faith in his people, however, they had survived worse, and he was sure they would face worse still before they found the freedom they strove for.