

Living Story Lore Interview November 2014

As we await Episode 6 in the second season of the Living Story, the team at ArenaNet were kind enough to share some answers to lore questions that may clarify some of the speculation and theories currently circulating. Many thanks to Ollannach for securing this interview and to Angel McCoy (Writer), Scott McGough (Writer), Bobby Stein (Writing Team Lead), and Leah Hoyer (Narrative Director) from ArenaNet for taking the time to answer these questions for the community.

GuildMag: How are the survivors of Prosperity reacting to the destruction of their town? Is rebuilding in the cards at all, or are they just going to leave?

ArenaNet: The residents of Prosperity didn't see the Mordrem coming until it was too late. Many of their people are dead and many buildings destroyed. So long as Mordremoth and the Mordrem remain a threat, it would be foolish of them to try to rebuild. Many have already skedaddled. Those who remain have personal reasons for doing so, like burying family members or an unwillingness to leave their homes.

GuildMag: Are the Seraph still interested in investigating the copper smuggling ring, or have they now decided they've done all they need to there?

ArenaNet: The Seraph have their hands full with spreading Mordrem. Suddenly, the smuggling ring seems much less important. They have not, however, forgotten them. They continue to track the ring as best they can, but the ring's members scattered to the wind because of Mordrem.

GuildMag: Faren seems to chase everything in a skirt. In the party scene, we find that he apparently has a fan in Minister Merula. If someone were to try setting them up, how would he respond, and why? (And for that matter, what makes the 1324 AE wall calendar so coveted?)

ArenaNet: Faren certainly is...generous with his affections, and Merula definitely has a bit of a crush on the rakish nobleman. All things being equal, Faren would respond enthusiastically if someone were to set him up with Merula. He's notoriously bad at committed relationships, however, so we'd all have to wait and see how and if such a scenario would play out.

As for the 1324 AE wall calendar, its popularity among Divinity's Reach Faren fans is due to its rarity (it was a small print run) and its content. Specifically, the calendar made liberal use of images featuring Faren in tastefully alluring poses, wearing tastefully enticing outfits (including but not limited to his stylish red beach briefs, as seen on the shores of Southsun Cove and in Scarlet's cauldron).

GuildMag: Why does Minister Arton think the bandits are connected with the Mantle?

ArenaNet: Minister Arton didn't expound on that. Whatever his reasoning was, it didn't convince Caudecus to take additional action.

GuildMag: Councilor Phlunt's claiming of Taimi's device has stirred some controversy among the fanbase, but as yet we don't have much context to judge what exactly happened. What usually happens with a prodigy's invention when it is claimed by their college in this way, particularly (as is important for asura) when it comes to assigning credit?

ArenaNet: While an asura is a student, any device they invent can be seized by and belongs to the college. This works on the same principal as company proprietorship over anything you invent while working for that company. The college has the right to further research the device and to employ it in any way they see fit. The fact that Phlunt is also claiming some credit for the invention is just because Phlunt is a jerk.

GuildMag: Starting in Episode 2, we see attacks from Mordremoth starting with vines erupting at a waypoint (having travelled there down a ley line) after which as well as mobile vine enemies, free-moving mordrem such as the wolves, husks, and Thrashers/Leechers appear. How do the latter group of Mordrem appear at the attack site? Are they carried by the vines, carried as seeds that rapidly germinate on-site, or are they corrupted from local flora and fauna? Or do they appear by some other means?

ArenaNet: There's still a good deal of research happening to try to figure this out. However, what observation has revealed is that Mordrem do seem to emerge from the ground.

GuildMag: Just how large is Marjory's family?

ArenaNet: Marjory comes from a big lower-class family. She has three sisters, one of whom was just killed by Mordrem (Belinda). Her mother is still alive, as is her father, though her parents are estranged from one another. Both her surviving sisters are married, though we have never heard whether they have children or not. She undoubtedly has aunts, uncles, and cousins all living in Divinity's Reach or nearby. It's likely that some of her grandparents are also living.

GuildMag: Since Mordremoth's name has been found by research in sources left behind by the elder races, has the Deep Sea Dragon's name been similarly discovered? If so, what is it?

ArenaNet: Mordremoth's name is known in certain circles and has been for a long time. This includes anyone in the Durmand Priory and anyone with an interest in the dragons. It's only the common citizen without access to higher learning that hasn't heard it—until now. Now, everyone knows it. There is some information about all the Elder Dragons in this ancient document, but some of that book was damaged and not all of the original information survived the centuries.

GuildMag: What is the relationship, if any, between the skritt of Skrittsburgh in Brisban Wildlands and the skritt of Dry Top?

ArenaNet: The skritt of Dry Top are cut off from everything in Brisban Wildlands—on purpose. They came out here to make their own community. They're oddballs and have no reason to go back to Skrittsburgh at this time.

GuildMag: In Episode 3, we see an invasion of Iron Marches. This is significant as the Iron Marches also contains a significant portion of the Brand, making this a location where minions of one dragon are possibly subject to corruption by another. Have any Mordrem wandered into the Brand, and if so, what was the result?

ArenaNet: To date that region has seen no interactions between Mordrem and Branded. Current theory among Tyria's dragon researchers is that Elder Dragons would fight (at least via their minion proxy armies) if they expanded into each other's territories, but so far this theory has not been confirmed.

GuildMag: Why is it a concern that the Avatar of the Pale Tree stops breathing when it's simply a projection the Pale Tree employs to speak with humanoids, and why do the Menders care about attending to the avatar specifically as opposed to the Pale

Tree as a whole? For that matter, why does the avatar fall unconscious rather than simply dissipating?

ArenaNet: The menders are tending to the avatar primarily as a diagnostic tool to determine how badly the Pale Tree herself is injured. The avatar is a strong indicator of the Pale Tree's state of mind and health, like the proverbial canary in a coal mine – if the bird shows signs of distress, something's wrong. When the avatar drops like a puppet with its strings cut, the menders work on both it and the Pale Tree to identify and ultimately treat the problem. The avatar is not an independent being with independent life, but when it stops breathing it means the Pale Tree herself is in dire straits.

So the menders are absolutely tending to the Pale Tree itself as well as the avatar. Just as the avatar is used to represent the Pale Tree and make her more accessible in dialogue scenes, we use the treatment of the avatar to represent and make more accessible the treatment of the Pale Tree herself (which is more difficult to show in game).

GuildMag: How was Aerin corrupted by Mordremoth, having been so high up in the sky?

ArenaNet: It's only conjecture that he was corrupted by Mordremoth, but it's worth mentioning that he wasn't always on the ships.

GuildMag: When the Mordrem attacked Fort Salma, their goal seemed obvious – krait obelisk shards were being stored there. However, their targets at Concordia and Iron Marches are not as clear; though we see caravans moving magical artifacts, they don't seem something to be powerful enough to merit the Mordrem's distant attention compared to, for example, the Durmand Priory or Rata Sum. What were the Mordrem after in those two places?

ArenaNet: The most powerful artifacts won't be common knowledge. That stated, Mordrem don't always attack with the sole purpose of consuming magic.

GuildMag: Though the waypoints have been saved, the vines could still be tunneling beneath the ground – but now we have no means to track them. Are the vines continue creeping along? And will the destroyed waypoints ever be restored?

ArenaNet: Many Tyrians worry about this, especially in light of recent events. Where will they pop up next? What will happen when they do? What will they destroy? Will we ever be able to fix what they break? How many people will die next time? Will it be someone I love? These are all questions that cause many Tyrians to lose sleep.