

Twenty-five years had passed since the onslaught began: twenty-five years of aggression and infuriation. While some elves fled south, others of us stood our ground and fought for our homelands.

The humans were stronger, more fierce and better armed than we were, so we took to the woods and nature and began a defense of subterfuge. We would flee our communities at first sight of the marauders, but only far enough to avoid harm. Once darkness fell, we would silently sneak into the very heart of their camps and dispatch the monsters in their sleep. In these raids we would retrieve any weapons we could to supplement our bows in battle.

Those strong enough to take command of groups of defenders decided that anything was justified when destroying wild beasts. These creatures had no souls, and therefore deserved no mercy.

The mages used the very nature surrounding our attackers against them, tangling them up in roots and blocking their paths with bent trees. This tactic led to The Scourge. The human attackers would literally set their surroundings on fire and fight through the ashes. Some were apparently protected from the fire by some form of magic and actually fought from the very cusps of the flames themselves.

Afearsome and awe inspiring sight to behold was the five mounted Flame Riders appearing from the roar of a forest fire only to hack the fleeing footsoldiers to pieces and leave them to burn in the encroaching flames. The riders never stepping foot from the fire onto live foliage, the flames rolling across their armor but never consuming them. These Flame Riders were never defeated, merely outrun, and none of their weapons or armor was ever recovered. Nor was their magic ever recreated by our mages.

Once our mages had failed to create anything comparable to this type of protection, they turned their attention to trying to augment the elf. These delvings into the realm of transfiguration had many failures, but the numbers lost to these experiments were nothing compared to those lost in battle, so the experiments continued.

The first successes resulted in horribly misfigured creatures, but they lived and breathed, and were stronger and meaner than the average elf. Not surprisingly, the mages believed the distorted features to be a boon to the soldier, as it would frighten the humans with it's visage, and cause them pause, in which time, the soldier could cut them down.

After the first battalion was formed, the mages too began going through a strange transfiguration themselves. The more soldiers the mage created, the closer they began to resemble their creations. These changes were a slight shift of color in the skin, and a darker more brooding personality. The mages also preferred to stay in their dark laboratories, and rarely came to see the light of day. Once it was discovered that the Dark Soldiers were allergic to sunlight, the mage's habits became clear. This allergy was not considered a major problem, because the best time to attack the humans was at night. Humans do not have the keen eyesight of an elf, and due to their dark skin coloration, the Dark Soldiers were difficult to see in the shadows of the night.

The sources of the transfiguration were the dark and evil spirits of the woods, and the mage's dealings with them required them to temporarily take the spirit into themselves in order to channel its magics. This physical possession left a taint in the mage's blood, and eventually, after a number of transfigurations, the blood taint thickened, causing the changes in personality and physical appearance. The females were especially effected by this taint and became more aggressive and violent at a faster rate than the male mages, so they were the first to show signs of the Taint.

It soon became common practice to use a volunteer as the mediary for the spirit so the mage could channel its powers, leading to more tainted souls, but preserving the mage's sanity to allow them to produce more soldiers. These brave souls would forever carry The Mark of The Mediary, the visibly tinted skin and would forever be remembered as the heroes of The War.

After the Dark Soldiers were created, The War yet raged on for a hundred years, but, it was because of them that the tide began to turn, and the humans were driven back. Once the majority of the humans were repelled, we attempted to reclaim our homelands, but the Dark Soldiers were bred too short sightedly, and the instincts given to them were to repel all creatures from these lands, and they in their limited cognitive ability interpreted this to include the elves. The soldiers were not under any sort of command or control, they were an act of desperation, so after twenty-five years of trying to reclaim our homes, we acquiesced to the inevitable and moved West, forfeiting our birthlands.

The majority of us now carried The Mark, and had some degree of allergy to the sun's light. To the West, across the mountains, we found thicker forested areas that offered greater protection from the sun and also had a more abundant collection of spirits in the woods. We made this place our home, moulding the trees to serve as homes and communities, getting acquainted with these new spirits and trying to return to our olde way of life.

This turned out to be a futile attempt, as the olde ways required more pacifism than we were presently capable of due to The Mark. Females became the ruling sex because their severe lack of control and excessive tendencies towards violence allowed them to dominate the males of the community. Feuds over trivial matters drove the community to pieces, splintering our once glorious race into hundreds of tiny tribes living in the wilds, constantly bickering and fighting with neighboring tribes.

The Dragons called our Dark Hunters "Kurai Oku Soko" or "Darkness from the Heart", and truly, the Oku (now simply called Orcs) were the products of the darkness in our souls. The price we paid was the loss of our birthlands, and the burden of The Mark that reminds us to this day of our abominable past. We wanted to destroy the evil humans, and in the end, all we did was become the evil ourselves. We must now always beware of our neighbours activities, and are unable to commune like we used to. Also, we cannot enjoy all of nature as we once did, as the spirits of light are now difficult for us to approach with our present aversion to the light.