

The Sacrifice of Immortality

By Ingrid Bean and Shane Donohoe
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*Tell me a tale of love across the centuries,
And of the war it caused.
Tell me a tale of the grief of creation,
And of the immortality we share.
And tell me why you'd give it all up.*

One thousand years ago, Queen Ulthua came east across the sea to plant a tree, build an Empire and uplift the Humans from their barbarism. Five centuries later her daughter, Iovir, turned against her and the war began. Now, after centuries of war, the Dark Queen is defeated: but the past is rarely clear, even to those who lived through it, and the future never ends for elves.

If you could understand your past would you choose a different future?

A tale of queens and warriors trying to reconcile the past and determine their future.

Games rating system:

Summary: A collaborative story in the spirit of J.R.R. Tolkein and Gay Gavriel Kay about the family at the heart of the struggle of the Age.

Seriousness: On the serious side

Genre/Setting: A generic fantasy world of elves and humans.

Movie Rating: M

System: Systemless

GM Style: Probably needs 2 GMs who know the characters well and can help players develop a story that tugs on the heart strings

Number of players: 5

Previously run at Phenomenon 2011 as a Triptych

Arly

Facts about Arly	Questions to the player to add flavour:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arly is a Warrior of Note: she is young but has already made her name in the battles against the Dark Queen. ● Loves an elf. Perhaps the first human to do so? ● She is arrogant (with good reason) about her ability as a warrior and tactician. ● She is passionate and fierce ● She wields the blade Anguish, handed down through her family, but originally crafted by Tenerim. ● She planned the assault that led to the capture of Iovir, at a fearsome cost ● Lay with Tenerim in Iovir's dungeon after they were captured during the assault. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How does Arly feel about the last assault and its dire cost? Tragic? Regrettable? Lives well spent? ● Is her family politically important? ● How did her family come to hold Anguish? ● What do the orcs call her? ● What about her allies? ● What would be a just fate for Iovir?
	Questions Arly wants answered:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why is Tenerim being distant, since escaping the dungeons? ● Why did Iovir go bad, and why didn't they just kill her? ● What now, after the wars?

Arly of Brenelis:

They may say I'm out of place calling her my sword sister. She is their best general and the heir to the throne after all. But screw it. We have fought side by side many a time. Yeah, yeah, I'm just a short lived human. But she doesn't care. I'm good at what I do, and she appreciates my skill. It was my idea to take the fight to the Dark Queen, and we planned the assault together. It was my idea to get Tenerim to craft a weapon to destroy the Dark Queen. She was worried how it might affect him, but I'm talking about winning the war here. The Elves have plenty of time to find peace eventually. But I aim to see it in *my* lifetime.

Arly of Tenerim:

Elves and Humans are different peoples. They do not fuck. They do not fall in love. They just make mournful cow eyes at each other for centuries at a stretch. Well screw that! He is so full of sorrow. They all are, but him especially. They think they hide it from us, possibly even from themselves, but even with thousands of year practice they suck at it. In battle he is like an artist, all grace and deadly skill. It was in battle that I first knew. We fight so well, side by side. But as ever, I saw an opening and took the opportunity. Foolhardy, some say, but it works. I admit, that time I was hard pressed by the orcs, but nothing I couldn't handle eventually. When he broke through to me his face lit up like the sunrise. That was when I knew he loved me too.

Arly of Ulthua:

I'm no student of history, but Queen Ulthua the Blessed is one impressive elf lady. Generations ago she came from across the sea, threw down the Barrow Kings and brought us peace and prosperity. Until her daughter betrayed her, anyway. Iovir has been making war on us and the elves for hundreds of years, and I, for one, am sick of it. Not that I've been around nearly that long, but you'd think that the woman who took out the Barrow Kings could kill one little Dark Queen and her orc army. Took a short-lived human to do it though, didn't it?

Arly of Iovir:

Iovir. The Dark Queen. Creator of those orcish scum. Slayer of countless good people and true. I don't get why Brenelis didn't just kill her; maybe she wants to show off her spoils first. I'm proud to have been the one who brought about her downfall. Now maybe we can get back to that time of peace and plenty the histories talk about.

Iovan (to be played by Arly's player during relevant flashbacks)

Facts about Iovan	Questions to the player to add flavour:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Beloved of Ulthua● Direct, Passionate, Fierce● Father to Iovir and Brenelis● Mentor and friend to Tenerim● Iovir left with her human lover, Rohan, after Ulthua forbade her from seeing him● Died at his daughter's hand, at the heart of this tragedy, causing this whole war	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● What sword did he wield? Did he craft it, or did Tenerim make it for him?● How did he feel about Iovir having a human lover? Did he agree with Ulthua that Iovir should not see Rohan? If not, did he back up his wife anyway? Or did he argue on Iovir's behalf?● Why did he ask Tenerim to remain outside when he went to talk to Iovir?● How did he contribute to his own death at his daughter's hand?
	Questions Iovan wants answered:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Play Iovan to find out about what you, as Arly, want to know

Tenerim

Facts about Tenerim	Questions to the player to add flavour:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A Master Smith and excellent warrior. ● Loves a human ● Crafting anything of worth requires something of himself, the crafter, and may give him a glimpse of its future. This can be an emotionally painful process, especially with weapons. ● Iovan was his mentor and close friend. ● He crafted the sword Anguish in his guilt and grief over Iovan’s murder ● Anguish is now held by Arly ● Feels the weight of grief from all the deaths during this war, particularly from those weapons he crafted. ● Crafted the weapon Deliverance to destroy Iovir. ● Lay with Arly when they were captured during the assault on Iovir’s stronghold. ● Had not lain with Arly until they were captured 	<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding-bottom: 5px;"> <p>Questions to the player to add flavour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Was he surprised, when he first met Arly, to see her wielding Anguish? ● What did he see in the crafting of Deliverance? ● What would be a just fate for Iovir? ● What does he see for himself and Arly? </div> <div style="padding-top: 5px;"> <p>Questions Tenerim wants answered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why did Iovir go bad? Was it inevitable, did Rohan cause it or was it something they did? ● “What does that mean for me and Arly? Is Iovir's doom now mine?” ● Why did Iovir kill Iovan? ● What now? Can there be any joy in the making, this side of the sea? </div>

Tenerim of Arly:

Elves and Humans are different peoples. There are good reasons why they do not fall in love with each other. You are so vibrant, so forthright. So intent on taking life by the ears and shaking it 'til it gives you what you want. I don't wonder that I didn't see it: we just don't see humans that way. It was in battle against the Dark Queen's orcs. We fight so well together, but when you see an opportunity you can't help but take advantage. I saw you surrounded, and it spurred me on. I lost sight of you, and then I broke through. Seeing you holding your own nearly brought me to my knees in relief. That was when I knew I loved you too.

Tenerim of Brenelis:

Sister of my heart. My friend. I sorrow for you that you must fight your own sister: I know you were close when you were young. I see that you push yourself: trying to live up to her legacy now that she won't. But you don't need to try and be your sister. You, as yourself, are more than good enough.

Tenerim of Iovir:

When we were much younger we were to be married. I knew we weren't in love, but I would have made you a good Consort. Besides, I would have done anything Ulthua and Iovan asked of me. When you chose to run off with your human lover my pride was wounded, but not my heart. Ulthua eventually realised you weren't coming home of your own accord and she sent me to find you. When I couldn't bring you home, Iovan and I tracked you to the stronghold you'd set up with your lover. Iovan insisted he speak with you alone. Oh how I wish I'd ignored his order. I saw him fall at your hand, and in my grief and guilt I fled to tell my Queen her husband had been murdered. What is it like to love a human? Did his aging make you like this?

Tenerim of Ulthua:

My Queen. I followed you here out of love, but I never sought to get between you and your husband. Everyone loved you, I not the least, and Iovan was my mentor and friend. Yet he's dead because of me, because I let him face his daughter alone. I don't think he would have begrudged that we comforted each other in our grief. Though the passion faded after time, the regard remains. With all our history, how can I tell you of my love for a human?

Brenelis

Facts about Brenelis	Questions to the player to add flavour:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Hunter ● Knows and loves Rindalan, has wandered and fought over much of it ● Brenelis is Ulthua's heir. ● She carries the blade Liberation, made by Tenerim during the war with the Barrow Kings. ● She also wields Deliverance, the blade made by Tenerim to destroy Iovir. ● Feels the weight of her responsibility as heir and resents it, though she's never admitted it. ● It is somehow her fault that Ulthua found out about Rohan ● Was at Iovir's mercy in the last confrontation, but it was Iovir who surrendered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What was her relationship with her father, Iovan, like? ● Did she ever meet Rohan? If so, what did she think of him? Does she blame him? ● How does she feel about the Western Isles ● Was she ever tempted to join Iovir, at the start or later? What got in the way? ● How long has she wanted Iovir dead? Did Arly have to convince her?
	Questions Brenelis wants answered:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why did Iovir kill their father? ● "Is that still my sister?" ● Can Iovir be redeemed, or must she be slain? ● Is her mother's heart broken, and what is left to gain this side of the sea?

Brenelis of Arly (Human Warrior of Note):

I've fought alongside Humans plenty of times, but they live so briefly I've rarely called one friend. It's impossible not to like Arly. She just gets in your face and insists that you notice her. She's a brilliant fighter and tactician, though she's too impatient to be a good strategist. She was the one that suggested (forcefully, I might add) that we take the fight to the Dark Queen. Perhaps we have been complacent in our war against my sister. Arly was also the one who suggested that Tenerim craft a weapon to destroy Iovir. I would never have asked him, knowing what such crafting costs, but it was a good idea whose time had long since come.

Brenelis of Tenerim (Master Smith):

Tenerim was engaged to Iovir, before all this came to pass. I know they weren't in love, but they seemed to be happy enough with the arrangement. At least until the human came along. Tenerim was also Mother's lover briefly; after Iovir killed Father. They're still close, but the war has changed him: I suppose it changed all of us. Mother tells of the joy he once took in crafting. But since the war it weighs him down. The weapons he makes are marvellous. Each one a work of art; beautiful, well balanced, deadly. But he dies a little inside each time he makes one. I had never before thought of his gift as a curse, but in a time of war it is. He *sees* what his creations will do, what they will bring. And what weapons bring is pain, destruction and death. I hated to ask him to make the weapon to destroy Iovir, but Arly persuaded me that it was necessary.

Brenelis of Iovir (Dark Queen):

Oh, Sister. We used to play in the gardens; you and I. Climbing the trees: urging each other to greater heights, neither one willing to be the first to lose their nerve but neither one wanting the other to fail. We'd whisper secrets together and dream of when you would be queen, and I your greatest hunter. But things didn't quite work out the way we planned.

I remember when I first found out about your human lover Rohan. I knew Mother wouldn't approve, but there was a guilty, romantic thrill of rebellion. And of course: how could I not help my sister?

And then Mother found out. I know why you left. I don't understand why you did all that came afterwards. And I don't know whether I can forgive you for leaving me to be your imperfect replacement. And for everything that came after.

Brenelis of Ulthua ("the Blessed"):

Mother. I remember sitting at your feet, Iovir on your knee, as you spoke of your plans for this continent. You wanted to aid the humans: help them find their glory. But for all that you couldn't let Iovir love one. Why did you have to refuse her? I was happy with my place as second daughter: I never wanted to be heir. But when Iovir left, after everything that happened, I knew that you needed me: even though you've never thought that I'm good enough.

Iovir

Facts about Iovir	Questions to the player to add flavour:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Dark Queen. The Sire-slayer. The name whispered in the darkness and in childrens' stories for all this long, grim age. ● Fell in love with Rohan (a human) against her mother's wishes. ● When her father tried to force her to come back home, she killed him. ● Her dark magics keep Rohan and herself alive: when she sacrifices a human or elf their life force goes to sustain her lover, and the remains of the sacrifice becomes an orc. Or something worse. ● As a consequence of this practice, Rohan slowly changed and has for many decades, if not centuries now, been an inanimate stone statue, though his heart still beats and their love is still strong. ● Despite using humans as fuel for Rohan's immortality, insofar as she is able, Iovir treats her soldiers well. ● Had Brenelis under her knife in the last battle, but did not strike. Iovir surrendered instead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What does Rohan look like now? Is he human shaped? A shapeless mass of dark stone? Or something else? ● How are the sacrifices performed? ● Why did she kill her father? Was it intentional? ● Why did Iovir not kill Brenelis? Pity? Grief? Echoes of her father? ● How does she feel about Rohan, the wars, the sacrifices? ● What now? Does Iovir expect to be killed, or does she seek forgiveness? Or does she expect an apology?
	<p>Questions Iovir wants answered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can I make allies here? Or find some tension to exploit? ● Why did Brenelis tell Ulthua about Rohan? ● Does Ulthua still think of humans as scum? ● What is between Tenerim and Arly? ● What now?

Iovir of Brenelis:

Ah, Sister. We used to play in the gardens; you and I. Climbing the trees: urging each other to greater heights, neither one willing to be the first to lose their nerve but neither one wanting the other to fail. We'd whisper secrets together and dream of when I would be queen, and you my greatest hunter. But things didn't quite work out the way we planned.

I remember when you first found out about Rohan. You knew I was engaged to Tenerim, but you promised you wouldn't tell. Ha! So much for sisterly trust! Did you speak for me when she forbade me from seeing him? Did you speak for me when she sent Father after me? Were you happy to take up the mantle of heir when I left? You were happy enough me meet me on the battlefield when it came to that.

Iovir of Tenerim:

I know we didn't love each other, though I understand why Mother wanted us to be together. But I'm surprised you were such a slave to your heart – I thought I was the only fool for love. How long did you wait to jump into Mother's bed after I killed Father? And now I see you making cow eyes at a human: Mother will have a fit when she figures that one out. Ah, but who am I to criticise choices of the heart? I remember the creations you used to make and how much of yourself you put into them. Was it hard to convince you to make the weapon to destroy me? What did you see in its creation?

Iovir of Ulthua

Mother. I remember that you loved me once. I would sit, wrapped in your arms as you told me stories of the Western Isles. Then you'd speak of your plans for this new world, and how I would continue in your footsteps to improve the lot of the humans. You wanted so much for them; yet you still saw them as less than us. I know you'll never admit you were wrong but if you'd only been able to see them as equals, as good enough for you daughter to love, it wouldn't have come to this.

Iovir of Arly

Rohan and I didn't set out to change the world, though we did. Arly, on the other hand, *is* out to make a difference. I can see the fire in her eyes. Was she the one who spurred the infiltration of my stronghold? The one who urged Brenelis to take the fight to me? And when she looks at Tenerim I see a different sort of fire. I wonder if her ambitions don't go the way Mother's and mine did.

Ulthua

Facts about Ulthua	Questions to the player to add flavour:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ulthua is as close to a leader as the elves have, indeed the humans call her “elf-queen”, but picture Elrond more than Oberon ● Ulthua came to Rindalan to save the humans ● She loved her husband, Iovan ● She is proud, and does what is right ● She refused to let Iovir love Rohan ● The Eternal Tree is withering, dying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why did she refuse to let Iovir love Rohan? Simple pride or to spare her daughter pain? ● How does she feel about humans, since? ● What does it mean that the tree is dying? Is it tied to the elves immortality? ● Does she harbour feelings for Tenerim since their brief affair? ● Is she proud of Brenelis? ● How did Iovan's death and Iovir's betrayal change her? ● How does she feel about her life’s work? Has she wanted to leave, like so many have done? ● What kept her here, and does it still hold her?
	<p data-bbox="673 712 1152 745">Questions Ulthua wants answered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is Tenerim hiding? ● Can Iovir be redeemed? Can I forgive her? Should I? ● What next? Is there a way to make good the damage my fractious family and my own pride have wrought? Is there any peace for me short of taking ship again for the West? ● Have we made a difference to this land? Has it been worth it? Was there a way to avoid all this? ● Is it all my fault?

Ulthua of Iovir

My bravest, strongest, smartest daughter. My heir, my hope for the future. My betrayer, slayer of my husband, my greatest foe. Why couldn't you see that I only wanted the best for you? That I only wanted the best for everyone? I sat you on my knee so many times. Talking of home, and of building the future of this new world. And you threw it all away out of stubbornness over a short lived human.

I weary of this place. I had such great hopes for it; for you. It is such hard work to be *Good*. Sometimes I envy you the simplicity of your choices. You have no need to concern yourself with whether you are doing the right thing, the right way. It must be so easy being the Dark Queen.

Ulthua of Brenelis

My daughter, I know you were close you your sister: you would have been Iovir's greatest general. I hoped for a long time that she would come to her senses and return home, but after she killed your father it became clear that you must be my heir and stand against her to defend us all. I know you do your best to live up to what your sister should have been.

Ulthua of Tenerim

You followed Iovan and me here out of love and loyalty. You would have made a fine pair with Iovir. Iovan was proud that the boy he mentored matured into such a man as you. I know you blame yourself for his murder at his daughter's hands. But none of us guessed that Iovir was already so far gone to the dark when you and my husband went to bring her home. I loved my husband, but it was so natural for us to comfort each other. I doubt Iovan would have begrudged us our brief respite from grief.

Ulthua of Arly

A human Warrior of Note. She is such a fiery little one – all passion and impatience. Brenelis thinks highly of her combat ability.

● **Player Material**

● **Before Choosing Characters**

Something to say before we choose characters: You've got to love your PC. All of the PCs have done things that may be considered "bad", that they may be ashamed of, that the other PCs may accuse them of. In fact, part of the game may become "who's to blame?" But it's really important that you, as a player, are sympathetic to your character. The game won't work otherwise. It'll also help if you, as a player, can be sympathetic to the other PCs (even if your PC really isn't). So if you read your character sheet and can't figure out a way to love your PC, let us know and we'll try to help.

● **A History of Rindalan**

In the last age before the Elves came oversea this continent of Rindalan was beset by the Barrow Kings and humans bowed under the weight of their rule. Men huddled in crudely built shelters and made war on each other for the amusement of their overlords.

From her far Western Isles, Ulthua the Blessed heard the sorrows of mortal men. She gathered her husband Iovan and those of her people who would follow and sailed across the seas on a mission of mercy. At Storms Haven Ulthua the Blessed planted a sapling of the Eternal Tree to sustain her people and spoke with the leaders of Men.

As Ulthua spoke of a war for freedom, Tenerim, Iovan's student and friend, made his name as the greatest smith this side of the sea. Turning from his beloved tools and artwork, it was he who crafted the blades, called in the elven tongue Release and Liberation, in which he saw the salvation of the humans. A great war was prosecuted and the Barrow Kings were cast down.

In the peace that followed, the elves taught the humans many skills of hearth and harvest and their kingdoms flourished in peace and prosperity. Humans and elves alike celebrated when Ulthua bore her daughter, Iovir, and again when her second daughter, Brenelis, was born. But the peace was not to last.

Some say the elves brought strife within them, some that it is a curse of this sorry land which claims all who dwell here. Whatever the cause, but it was but few lives of men before Ulthua's own daughter Iovir turned from her. Iovir, sire-slayer, called the Dark Queen, raised up armies of fell beasts and grim men and the world knew war again.

Some of Ulthua's people, losing heart, set down their labours and followed the call of the sea back to those peaceful isles. Many more are fallen here, and were given back to the stars. As the Eternal Tree slowly wastes away those that remain build no more, but ever strive to right some of the wrongs of their wars: seeking some light amid their grief.

● **Of Elves and Mortal Men**

Humans dwell in all manner of (fantasy) society, from tribes and empires, kingdoms and city-states. Some short-lived, some lasting since before the Elves. Some are tightly loyal to Ulthua's side or Iovir's, some shift allegiances with the tides of war. Most of them are grim...

Elves don't really form factions or hierarchies. They form communities, which might be close-knit towns like Stormhaven, or much looser bands of forest wanderers.

Two things set mortal men apart, and cause the Elves much wonder. These are **the Veil of Life**, how quickly and easily it passes from us, and **the Veil of Memory**, that during our short span of

years even our greatest griefs and joys fade from our recall, and lose much of their sting. This last veil, the Elvenfolk of Rindalan have come to call a blessing. For Elves do not forget. Their greatest sorrows, hundreds of years on, are still as fresh as the moment they occurred. Their greatest joys, too. But, knowing they'll never experience them again, they are, at best, bittersweet.

● Magic

Magic is, more or less, what you, the players make of it. That said, elven magic is not the stuff of fireballs, but more the magic of crafting, or growing. Our favourite example is from Tolkien: the Ents came into being because the Elves wondered what it was like to be a tree. So they woke them up to ask.

Iovir, being the Dark Queen, may have different types of magic.

● Game Explanation

This is a game about questions. The big question is: What would you give up immortality for?

We may not answer the big question directly: we will sneak up on it in little bitty questions. History knows of key events in the War of the Elf Queens. We, the writers, know of other pertinent, but secret, events. But neither history nor the writers know *why* those events happened. What were the motivations and reasons behind those acts? You, the players will help us answer those questions.

You each have your character: Ulthua, the Blessed; Iovir, the Dark Queen; Brenelis, Hunter of the Light; Tenerim, the Master Smith; and Arly, a human Warrior of Note. The relationships between and the actions of the characters are operatic in nature. That is, the story is full of misunderstandings, missed opportunities and mistimed occurrences.

The game's present is on the remains of the battlefield outside the Dark Queen's stronghold when Brenelis presents her sister, in chains, to their mother, Ulthua the Blessed. This family reunion will prompt the characters to reflect on their histories and try to justify their actions. These reflections will be run as story telling flashbacks. For each event there were only 2 or perhaps 3 characters present: these are the **focus** characters for that event. You can have more characters present if you like, but we've found it to be much more powerful when there are only a few.

One of the focus characters is the **guilty party** – the character who must justify/explain their actions. The focus characters will tell the story of that event with the understanding that specific things must happen in each scene. The characters not directly involved in telling the story are **witnesses** and may contribute suggestions and questions to the scene, but the control of the scene lies with the focus characters. For each event the witnesses will have questions they want answered. Some of these questions will be written on your character sheet: some will come up during game play. The answers to these will contribute to answering the big question: What would you give up immortality for?

● **Wibbly-Wobbly Timey-Wimey Stuff**

When playing the flashbacks, don't be too specific about time. Don't say "It was 2pm last Saturday", but rather say "a few days/hours/years later". This enables us to squish events in around each other as necessary.

When playing a flashback, be aware of the outcome you're aiming for – play to the conflict: play to be *right*, not nice. The events are **known facts**, but we're exploring the reasons behind them. If you find yourself having trouble playing it to the known conclusion, feels free to skip forward in time until a point where the event can happen. For example, in the scene where "A father is killed" we often find the focus characters sitting down for tea, and wondering how it comes to be that one sticks a knife in the other. If this happens, skip forward a few days/years whatever to a point where the conflict comes to a head.

Play to the witnesses: that's who you're trying to convince.

Also, in a magical, metaphysical way, once a flashback has been played all the PCs now know the truth of it in the present. This is regardless of whether that PC was actually there.

● **System**

The system is designed to encourage participation in the game.

Every time an event scene is played, the witnesses will each receive one token. Tokens can be spent on behalf of yourself, or on behalf of one of the focus characters. The scene ends after all the tokens are spent.

The tokens can be used in the following ways:

- To ask a question that a focus character must answer by the end of the scene.
- To add a twist to the scene that must help explain the event.

To start a scene, state your question, name a person and ask them "How did this come to pass?". We'll then figure out who was involved, when and where, and what is known to have happened.

To give an example of play: We know that Brenelis never joined Iovir. We don't know whether she wanted to and was somehow prevented. Was that accident, misfortune or intentional action by someone else? If she didn't want to, it could have been for several reasons - jealousy, ambition, agreeing with her mother, disagreeing with her sister, thinking it would all blow over... whatever. We (Ingrid and Shane) have no idea what the reason is, and we're keen for you to make it up and tell us.

Feel free to come up with some ideas now, but don't get too attached to them. Leave room for them to bounce off other players ideas during the game, and let's see which ones win out.

- **GM Notes**

- **The Game Begins in the Present** (for the GM to describe/summarise for the players)

The game's 'present' is on the remains of the battlefield outside Iovir's stronghold. Some time ago, a few days maybe, Arly planned an assault on the stronghold to finally bring down the Dark Queen. This massive and costly battle enabled Arly, Brenelis and Tenerim to get into the stronghold itself. Whether the assault brought down the walls, or whether it was a distraction to let them sneak in may come out in play. Once inside, Arly and Tenerim were captured and thrown in the dungeon. Brenelis, whether captured and dragged, or by fighting her way through, made her way to her sister's throne room. There was a confrontation and Iovir surrendered.

Now, Brenelis, with Arly and Tenerim, brings her sister before their mother, Ulthua. Ulthua, where do you receive your daughters? (On a hill overlooking the battlefield? A pavilion? Amongst the dead?) Brenelis, is Iovir actually in chains?

Who speaks first?

Other points for GMs:

The GM's role in this game is to draw out the stories from the players: prompt them to ask questions, and frame scenes to answer them. You may need to demonstrate the framing of a flashback scene once or twice, and cue the use of tokens.

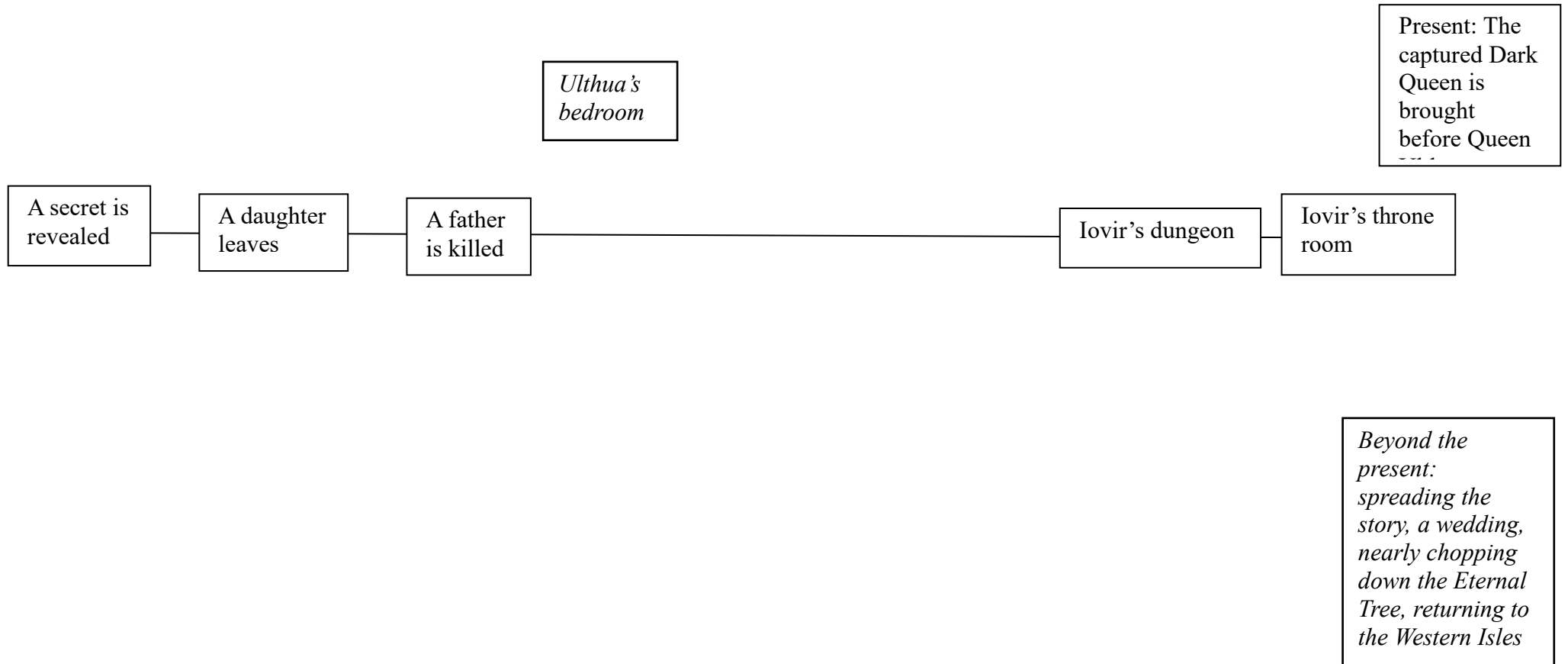
The timeline page (below) may help players (and GMs) to keep track of the history – the flashbacks certainly do not have to occur in historical order.

The relationships page (below) can be seen by the players, but they should note that some of the relationships are not known by their characters.

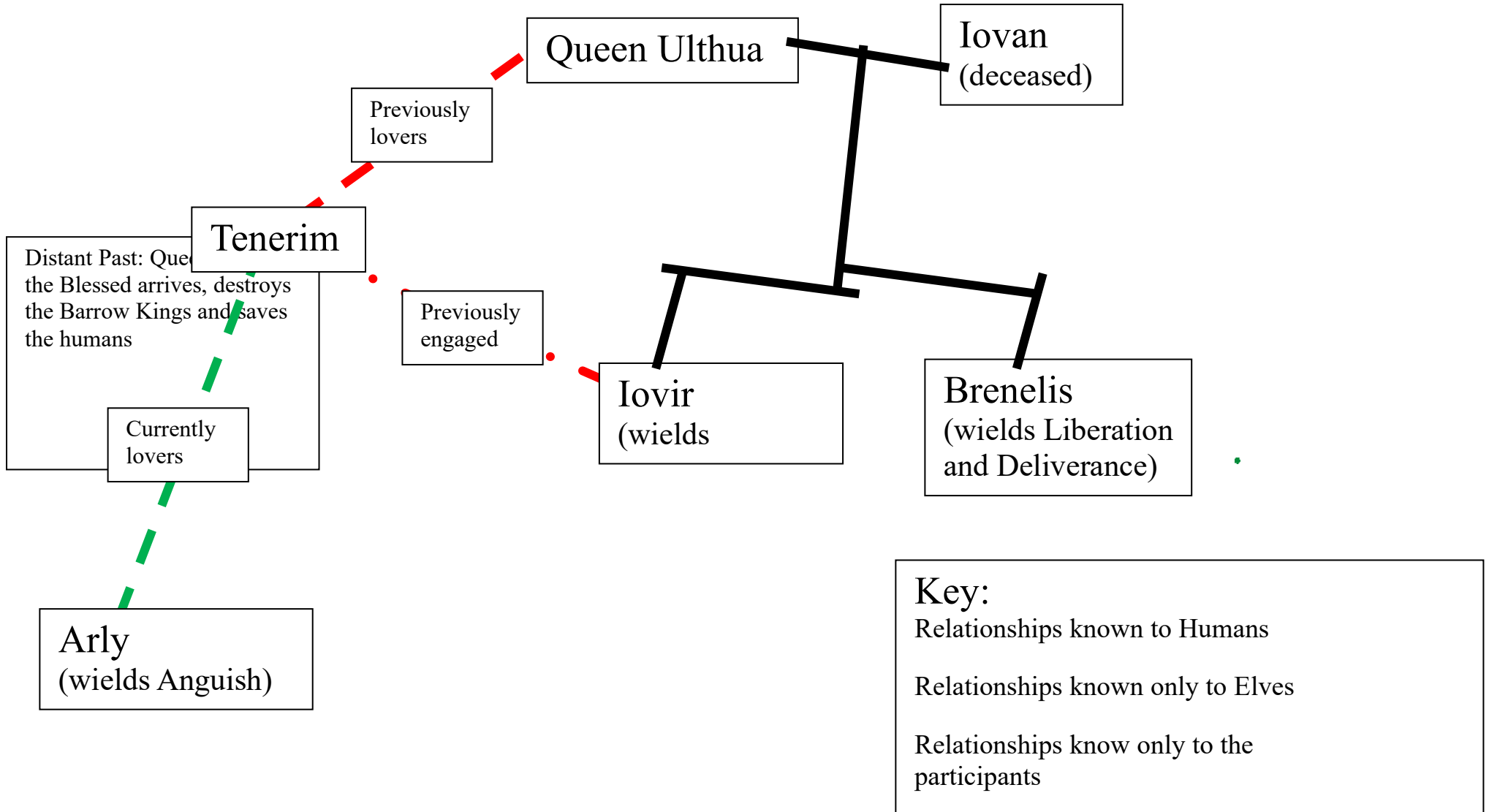
The tree is dying. For each elf (and human?) Iovir turns into an orc, it severs their connection with the tree, which weakens it. The change was slow at first, but now the tree is (nearly) dead. We want an impetus for the elves to leave – if the tree of immortality is dead, they must choose to go and remain immortal, or stay and live out a mortal life.

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Timeline



Relationships



Timeline *(to Guide the GMs – not for the players to see)*

(The order we imagine the scenes might show up. The actual play order is up to you).

Iovir slays her father, Iovan

Present: The captured Dark Queen is brought before Queen Ulthua

Ulthua argues with Iovir

Brenelis reveals her sister's secret

Arly convinces Brenelis to waste thousands of lives

Tenerim does something stupid in the dungeon

Brenelis confronts Iovir in her throne room

Distant Past: Queen Ulthua the Blessed arrives, takes down the Barrow Kings and uplifts the humans

Guilty Party: Brenelis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Event: A secret is revealed/A sisters' confrontation
Guilty Party: Ulthua	<input type="checkbox"/>	Event: A daughter leaves
Guilty Party: Iovir.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Event: A father is killed
Guilty Party: Arly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Event: A massacre is planned
Guilty Party: Tenerim.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Event: A taboo is broken

Locations:

Iovir's throne room

Ulthua's throne room (perhaps a clearing or grotto, elfy-nature style?)

Iovir's dungeon

Iovir's throne room

Storms Haven (the Elven capital)

● **Our Favourite Stories from 2011**

Stu as Iovan: "I've come for the child." Iovir kills him defending her daughter. Then Brenelis steals her away. Arly is her descendant.

Daniel Ryan as Tenerim in the dungeon to Arly: "I need you to hold me in this day. Every day. Forever."

Tina Ryan as Iovir trying to figure out why she surrenders to Brenelis: Sitting on her Rohan's lap, monologuing whether all this has been worth it. Making us cry.