

(Harvest Moon PC05)

By Mr Neko

A group was gathered with a number of objectives in mind. The principle one was to recover Bill Jingle and other captured Valley members following their capture by Easterling forces while our other was to investigate and meddle in the Easterling activity where it conflicted with the Laws of Orin Rakatha.

The group;

- Wulfric Baneguard Reaver & Party Leader
- Skalgrim Skyfather Grey Warden
- Driedyn Oracle and High Priest of everything
- Kyle Ompaq Sentinel Guildleader
- Caradac Fireapple Skirmisher
- Vilk Bloodmoon Barabarian and Baron
- Casper Meadows Fell Knight Aspirant
- Lancorin Bloodcall Monk
- Nerak Soulblade Reaver and Baron
- Dame Layla Mayfield Guildleader of the Knights Martial
- Giles Guildleader of the Grey School
- Spark Red School
- Davros Epton Hospitaller
- Malice Druid
- Kevralyn Soulfire Matriach of the Drow
- I, Mr Neko Monk of the Middle Way

It was a long and difficult quest and it has been several moons since I travelled so my memory of such things is now clouded but I shall do my best to recall the salient points however the most important part of this report is probably the names above so you can ask them about what really happened.

### Rescuing the Lost / The Soulwell

First and foremost it should be clear that we recovered Bill and a number of other missing/captured/kidnapped individuals from many Nations. It seems that the Easterlings were using dark rituals to tear the spirit strength from individuals and storing them for future use in a Well of power. Given the nature of Tharanduil these souls could be used to enhance or save those who may otherwise have found their mortal (or immortal) lives coming to and end upon that plane where the metaphysical nature of the spirit is somewhat different.

Bill himself was found traumatised but alive having been used as a healer by the Easterlings due to his unique ability to call upon the Good Sphere even in the presence of the darkest of Evil beings.

### The Portal Stones / Links to the Well / Travels on the Plane of Sleepless Dead

Our investigations began at the home of the Bae (one of the DFD persons of import). He was

working with a number of off-plane mercenaries of an Easterling persuasion using them to protect his caravans and perform other duties as required. We discovered that the markings on the faces of these people determine both their clan (family?), relative power and type of training based on the number, position and pattern of the dots tattooed upon their flesh.

We started by investigating the local area where a number of individuals were known to have gone missing where we quickly located a stone pillar which pulsed with an ominous glow. We determined that this stone could drain spirits of those that died nearby and was siphoning them off to somewhere so we decided that we would track this activity to its source.

This decision lead us on a merry dance through the Planes of the Sleepless Dead. We passed through the Realm of Disease and Decay, The Realm of Pain, The Necropolis (I think) and probably several others I cannot recall. Each of was bad as the last with the journey proving taxing both physically and mentally however we did eventually find our way to the source of the troubles.

### The Undying Lands / Hunting for Flowers / Don't get Stabbed by a Morgul Blade

Our plane hopping travails lead us to Tharanduil or certainly as close to it as you can get on the Plane of the Sleepless Dead when we appeared in a sunlight glade with several fine tents one of which was laid out with a feast of nuts, berries and lembas bread. Several Elven spirits were present inviting those of similar blood to enjoy the food and shade while the rest of us took a well earned nap in the sunshine.

This peace lasted a few minutes before an much angrier figure appeared and confronted Giles about a decision he apparently made years ago to send this elf and his people to find the Morgul Wraiths during one of the previous Valley missions to Tharanduil. It came to blows and Giles was struck down in single combat although he did not appear to have the fighting heart he usually has in this particular engagement. After this unpleasantness it was agreed that we could leave and be about our mission.

When we appeared on a living plane once more we found ourselves immediately surrounded by Morgul Wraiths and several of us were slain while a number of others found themselves stabbed with fragments of fell blades remaining in their bodies. Over the course of several days these fragments were working their way into the hearts of those struck threatening death and transformation if we didn't find a way to resolve it.

Fortunately we were put in touch with a local Hag who directed us to collect Althas flowers from the bushes (many were prompted to grow upon Malices grove which was handy) which we used to make a poltice of healing which drew the fragments out and saved our companions from a fate of undeath. It was not without its trials however which nearly resulted in a fight between two of the group.

### The Savage Chieftain / He'd have gotten away with if not for those Meddling Valley members and their stupid Cat.

Working from a somewhat safe location we had begin to seek our further clues and areas that we needed to investigate. Through this activity we discovered that part of the ritual being performed to create and maintain the Well was also being used to weaken the barriers between the realms to allow the Savage Chieftain to walk up on Orin Rakatha once again presumably so he could reap a toll of spirit strength far greater than they were managing through stealth and kidnapping.

We spent a full day hunting down and destroying four of his key warband leaders each of whom

were a difficult foes in their own right (especially his martial commander who we decided to face without most of our mainline warriors). Once these key support figures were removed we assaulted the main base where the Soulwell was believed to be.

As the assault began we found ourselves surrounded by Morgul Wraiths this is when a huge figure strode from the woods and began laying about itself with fearsomely powerful blows. The larger half of the group held off this behemoth (the Savage Chieftain) and it's minions while a group of us infiltrated the dark woods on the search for Bill. The battles on both fronts proved to be taxing and once we had scooped up Bill and the other things we needed to disturb the rituals we began a slow, steady fighting retreat. Our exit was already prepared but we'd be dismissed one by one leaving dwindling numbers to defend themselves from the growing throng of Wraiths who continued to pour forth at the call of their Savage master.

We were successful however and the retreat went well and eventually every one of us was back in our camp enjoying a glass of wine and a well earned rest.

The next day however the peace was broken as scouts informed us that the Savage Chieftain was roused to anger and had been gathering forces to track down and destroy those that interfered with this plans. While we attempted to flee his shadow chased us down through the planes of sleepless dead until we faced this projection of his power on Orin Rakatha itself by the Portal Stone we had originally used to begin our journey.

Despite being a shadow or projection of some kind the Savage Chieftain was still an enemy of ridiculous power and had numerous allies carried in his wake. The battle raged for hours until eventually the stone cracked and he was driven off.

Given the effort required by such a being to travel this way it is believed that it will struggle to return here for quite some time which can only be a good thing.