

Extracts from the Journal of Irwin, First Mate of the Black Scab

Part III - Murandir

Sun Day 20th Day of Planting Moon 16 AR

I write this entry on Murandir, a brief entry this time. Most Valley folk seem to hold this place in high regard, it is the homeland that they fled from. I find it drab, it has endless trees, it has never stopped raining the whole time we are here. We are lodged in a tavern called 'The World's End'. This seems to refer to 'the world ending' when the Senatus Empire expelled the Alliance from Murandir. John and Betty run this place. He seems to be a Gauntlet High Priest, she a Master Scout. We suspect it is a hotbed for an underground resistance. Some of the locals are bitter that the Alliance abandoned them.

Present are:

Me (First Mate, Corsair/Black Numenorean, Iron Guard Veteran)

Sutnac (Bosun, Half-Orc, Brethren Priest)

Anthrax (Surgeon, Half-Orc, Dark Path)

Niamh (Cook, Half-Teleri, Green Wizard)

Flint (Seaman/Navigator, Corsair, Brown Wizard)

Nobbe (The Cabin-Boy, Corsair, Warden Priest)

Zug (Half-Orc, Archa)

Myrtle (Gnome, Brown Wizard)

Scissor (Thissessin, Warden Priest)

Mingin Rose (Half-Orc, Veteran Ranger).

The alliance seems to be re-engaged in diplomacy with the Empire, who seem to be withdrawing from Murandir at King Paulandiss's request. Rednow Ffuts has sent us to try and secure trade through the World Window with Murandir. Through some creative voting in the name of 'democracy' we ensured the Wizard Myrtle was elected leader, so she would take any blame for our actions. We have waded knee high through the blood of fallen bandits and smugglers over the last few days. Sutnac and Anthrax are getting good at turning up and dropping enemies with a touch at the right time now. Some of the smugglers bore the same mark as 'Munks Men' on Orin Rakatha.. Captain Aposteth of the Empire garrison was a collaborator with these smugglers, we slew him after he killed his garrison commander K'Fraï. We dispatched the task efficiently but without enthusiasm. We also met drow, hordelings and some tribal types.

Some folk have commented that some us have the mark of 'Old Magic' on us. 'Old Magic' seems to be ancient and powerful, originating before we came to understand magic and power in terms of the schools and spheres we have now. Niamh had written to Duke Hanrow about it, he wrote some stuff about us being of uncertain provenance and allegiance, but he'll help us anyway as he sees our path coinciding with that of the Valley. He said we might learn more of the 'Old Ways' from 'Wise Old Bob' on Murandir. We asked after him everywhere, we did not find him.

The interesting stuff: Last night (Steel Day) we were visited by High Priest Mastin of the Wolfhold Necromancers Sect. We had previously received orders from Arcturus Stormfist to

help Mastin if he arrived. He said he was here on the business of the Necromancers sect, they are pleased with us, having returned the fine black sword we recovered from the vault to them. I asked him about the blade, he said it was centuries old, and made by a master craftsman of 'star ore' from a another land but said no more (*Later note: unknown to us as yet the sword is Anguriel the sword of the Sindar Lord Dagor Starglade*). Upon examining the blade the Sect realised it was cursed in some way, and still tainted by the dark heart of the smith that forged it and they decided to return it to the Watchers Sect of Halmadons Heights. This really annoyed me, do they know how much blood we shed to break the Vault! I long for that blade in my hand again. In transit back to the Halmadonians, it had been stolen by unknown assailants. Mastin returned tonight (Sun Day), he explained he was meeting someone, and he would need a live elf for a ritual, we were only to happy to help. He asked Niamh if she would willingly agree to be the sacrifice, she said no. He said he was being tracked by wood elves trying to thwart him, if we ventured out into the woods they would most likely ambush us, perhaps we could take one. We did so, a difficult running skirmish occurred, they used a lot of magic to slow us down and harry us, we power-drained one to the floor and withdrew to the Inn. A couple of the softer members of the group had wanted no part in this so stayed with Mastin in the Inn (Niamh and Myrtle I think). Fools! They had been attacked by other elves, Mastin lay on the floor, his throat cut, bleeding to death, we just managed to save him.

Mastin's guest was Amrath, Herald of Dagor Starglade. He was different to other elves here, hes from Thranduil I suspect. He looked down on us, he told us little of his master or his mission. Him and Mastin took the power-drained wood-elf to the private upper room of the Inn. We listened at the window. They seemed to be performing a ritual or something (*Later note: I think the ritual allowed Dagor Starglade to leave Thranduil*). Both emerged pleased with their deal and left.