

A group of us travelled down to the Ikartharian Triangle, on a matter of some urgency for Hunter Greenshields. We spent a week or so in the wilds until entering the Triangle. Secrecy was specified on this mission, as it was known that there was at least one Alliance traitor passing on things to the Cult of Hate, thus we were to be informed of our task only when we were out in the field.

Me (Draal, favoured of Lolth), Scrope, Sargon, Nerak (Drow Warrior), Felix, Ellen Luin, Puddle, Frazzle, Gus, Simon the Hospitaller, Brains, Hack.

We had been booked into a building by Hunter and turned up expecting to be let in. Imagine our surprise to find that the building had been double booked by a group of Wizards Concillium! Nearing the hut we were attacked by their guardian elementals, and as often happens in such cases things broke down, with us charging in swords swinging and spells slinging.

The Concillium people were forced back and in the end teleported out, using a ritual pre-prepared. It's a little strange to find things set-up like this, but as we had captured the item they used to enhance their teleports, a candlestick, we were not too unhappy. After identifying things and similar research we discovered that there was a magical safe in this building. Being who we are Felix, used the candlestick to enhance his spells, to teleport most of our people in. There they fought a couple of elementals and activated a few wards, discovering a sword in the safe which was recovered before teleporting out.

Identifying the sword we discovered that it was a weapon designed to defeat elementals. Against a normal foe it would be a simple enchanted sword, however when wielded against an elemental it's full powers would be revealed, the magics would churn upon the blade, hotter than even a sword of fire, and even dispel the elemental totally! However such power was not without it's price (as is often the case), whoever bore the weapon for a while would become permanently afflicted with the curse of the weapon, the curse of hatred against elementals.

Resting until morning a sergeant of the Valdemar, who's area and house this was, delivered to us items that had been passed onto him, a box and a sealed scroll case. After verifying that the case had not been tampered with we opened and read a letter from Hunter Greenshields. It told us that he had discovered a way to break the hold of the Cult of Hate, however he required several items in order to do this.

Some Ikarthian Power runes – at least four different ones.

An Ikarthian Blue Bog flower.
Some tainted holy water.
Void matter that had passed through the internal workings of a Minotaur.
Anatomical piece of a creature tied bodily to the sphere of Hate.
The box was supposed to be able to contain anything without it being harmed.

After questioning, the sergeant he told us of an old temple in the area and described the Blue Bog flower to us. At the temple we figured we may be able to obtain some holy water. Whilst preparing to leave a group of Void Goblins arrived and attacked us, these we killed. We resolved that during the day we would hunt for such creatures, in particular a Void Goblin Shaman, as it was believed they used void matter was used for their talismen/foci.

We set off up a hill and reaching the top fought with Void Goblins, these were dispatched with us sustaining only minimal damage. Along this route we discovered a Gold minotaur, prowling, but rather than confront it, we chose to avoid it, hoping to use it later to pass any void matter through it's workings. I scouted most of the way, finding a Blue Bog flower and a Power rune, which I left for the rest of the party to recover. Some distance on we encountered a small group of Wizards Concillium people, with whom Felix entered into some negotiation concerning swapping the sword of slaying elements for some arcane Blue magic teaching scrolls They were to carry his words back to the deputy arch-dean of the White school of magics.

Meanwhile I had discovered a white figure on the path. It was an Ikarthian Ghost, bound to it's duty beyond death. The ghost welcomed us and asked us to advance where we would be greeted by the priests of the temple, there we could freshen up before our audience. Also by the ghost was a Power Rune, which we recovered after a minor altercation with the ghost. I went off scouting down the path, and ultimately the party went another way, there they were confronted by some Void Hoardlings, which were dispatched, and a Shadowsfall discussed some things with the Party. After I returned we continued regrouping and sending out scouts to find more places to go, however, by now night had fallen and we were becoming tired. We resolved to return using a different route when above us higher on the hill a Void Shaman was espied, we charged up and attacked with a long battle ensuing. We were finally triumphant, and captured the Void Matter, putting it in the box.

Travelling back to the Gold Minotaur, encountered earlier that day, we hoped to feed it the power box, but it had moved on. Somewhat frustrated we returned to the way station intending to spend the night, before continuing our search for the required ritual elements in the morning.

About now, things started to go a little wrong. Whilst we tried to rest, there was an almost continual series of visits, allowing us only a little time between each of them. We were attacked by a small group of undead (skeletons and ghouls), and then almost immediately the Gold Minotaur, drawn by the power we had expended turned up. We fed it the box and slew it after a long fight.

A sprite arrived and squeaked at us for a while (annoying little things that they are!). Puddle and Frazzle went off into the woods with this sprite, claiming that they were all going to visit Hunter Greenshields and may be some time.

A group of three Shadowsfall demanded to speak to the members of the White Retreat, when we questioned them as to why, they confirmed the rumour that we had heard that there was a contract out on all White Retreat members, and they were here to see that it was carried out. These three Shadowsfall were soon taught the error of their ways, as we united to sly them.

A short while later two of the leaders of the Cult of Hate, the Morgothian and the Drow, (called Ebony) came storming in and demanded that we hand over to them the items we had recovered for Hunter, we decided that we weren't going to and a fight broke out. They had with them a Spirit of Hate, a creature that could inflict powerful blows that none could dodge, but that was immune to everything we could do. We fought with these and with their more normal minions and somehow managed to drive them off, in particular Ellen Luin's frostbite on the Morgothians leg being a particularly good move as it restricted his mobility and prevented them from fleeing into the night. The Morgothian was slept by Felix and Ebony welded, however the last command of the Morgothian to Snowy (the spirit of hate) was to protect them. We were unable to press our attacks, the spirit driving us off time and again. In the end they made it away into the night.

We then went to rest being badly wounded. By this point most of us were on almost no power and still wounded, in fact a round up of the party revealed we had more Party members than power at that moment, with but a few spells remaining. We did not think that they would be back as we had hurt them plenty. However after a short while Snowy returned seeking the Morgothians mace. It was unable to find it, clutched in Barf's hand where it was overlooked several times. The spirit left. I counselled that we should leave believing that we would be attacked by the Cult of Hate later. They knew of our mission and they would return in force, unfortunately nobody else agreed with me.

A little while later we were attacked in force by the leaders of the Cult of Hate and their prime

minions, as I had predicted. They came storming in, fully spelled up and we were no match for them. The leaders are a Morgothian, a Drow, a Halmadonian and a Necromancer. However they did not slay us all, they tried to inflame our hatred of them, stealing spell books and humiliating people. It became apparent that they were not united, each of them retained their basic natures but that. They co-operated only in furthering the aims of Hate. This reveals to us a weakness that we may at some time be able to exploit. It also clarifies that Hate is neither good or evil, but stands apart. Finally they left so elated by their total triumph that they did not even bother to take the ingredients.

We were now at a low ebb indeed, having been completely trounced and humiliated. How much worse could it get? Then another sprite turned up to squeak at us. I hadn't believed that things could degenerate from where they already were, and I was deeply unhappy to find out that I was wrong. After a while though the sprites voice changed to something that was normal and it said "How I hate speaking in that stupid voice!" and started acting sensible. Things weren't all that bad after all.

We talked with the creature at some length and it was someone (or something) called Alamaran of Alakazoo, - he and his people often went about, disguised as sprites. They were from the world or plane called Alakazoo where the Cult of Hate had originated. In the beginning on their world a being, "The Great Enemy", had come and four weapons were constructed to fight against that creature. The weapons of Hate – one of which we had in our possession, the sword from the magical safe, the sword Felix carried. These weapons were given to four champions who carried them against The Great Enemy, but they were defeated.

It seemed that his people had fled from the world seeking a place of safety and had ended up here, latching onto a spell that was being cast to come through. If they had brought the weapons with them or they had come through by another means was indeterminate. Alamaran was a creature tied to the sphere of Hate himself, so all we needed was a bit of his body to collect another of the ingredients we needed, but how to persuade him of that? It seemed that he knew of Scrope and Alamaran wanted us to arrange a meeting between him and Scrope. Thus the deal was struck.

In the morning we were having breakfast, with only a few of us up when a group of Wizards Concillium turned up and demanded the Sword. Quickly the others prepared themselves as the fight kicked off, the Concillium proved to be a powerful foe as they were well equipped and hit us with spell after spell relentlessly. Little wonder that we were sent reeling but we pressed the attack where we could and with several down or weakened it was hard going. Simon valiantly gave up his life saving another in this fight, as he blocked the blows of our foes with his body.

Although we did manage in the end to drive them off, several of us needed elixirs to save ourselves. A while later the acting Dean of the White College of Magic of the Wizards Concillium turned up to conclude the deal his man had struck with Felix the previous day. After which we teleported home.