

The mission involved escorting Durantir, a researcher from the Green School of magic, to the Open Gauntlet way station so he could perform various ritual investigations into two spirits (one red, the other green) that appear there. We were also tasked with a secret mission to talk to an individual called Iban about the fall of the Azad-an. The original group sent on the mission was relatively large but due to unusual mist activity only a small number of the group managed to get to the area to do the mission.

Party (after split): Kylar (leader), Kelvin (myself), Ivak Duhm, Tarquin and Anibeer Greybeard.

## **First evenin**

After the group was scattered by the mists those few of us remaining with Durantir decided to carry on with the mission so we continued on to the way station fighting hordelings (who appeared to be trying to be martial and failing) and spirits of cold and evil. Upon arriving at the way station we met Gurdin, and ex-Azad-an who currently runs the place for the Reader. As our cover for the mission we were there to participate in the Fight Circle which is a regular event there. Most of the group sign up to fight. A Morgothian called Garth Durant appeared to sign up. He challenged Kylar and was soundly beaten. It seems that individuals of high status are encountering very heavy Hordeling resistance in the area so are not able to attend the fight circle. A local herbalist/alchemy called Deema arrived selling various wares and a Shadowsfall investigator called Yuri made her presence known, asking questions as usual. Later on that evening a large wolf attacked the party and several of us were bitten. It later transpired that it was in fact a werewolf.

## **First Day**

In the morning we were attacked by Hordelings that were again attempting military formations etc and failing miserably although they provided us with an excellent demonstration of why not to fight in a Hedgehog formation. Poppy the Pathfinder arrived to tell us that she knew the location of Iban's camp so we set out to find it. On the way we fought Hordelings (more pseudo-military bumbling), spirits of cold and evil and a group of Kalid. We also met a lone Troll who said he was looking for a shaman with a red hat that he was supposed to be guarding. While waiting at the camp a couple of Shadowsfall arrived asking what we were doing there. We talked with them and they told us that an aspirant is making a mist walk to Valgrind pass (to our west) and that we are currently in the middle of a large, circular cordon of very tough hordelings that is around the aspirant, moving west with it. We also met some towerless who all claimed to be various valley heroes. They were babbling about having been told by the dragon spirits about the Dark One and that they'd come to capture Darrell Silverarm.

Upon returning to the way station we learned that the aspirant's name was a mist shaman called Fyzel and that the individual known as The Warlord was known as The Mistlord and seems to be marshalling hordelings. A sneery Kalid arrives to sign up for the fight circle and is beaten in a superb fight by Ivak. His knife man associate used some paralysis venom to beat Ivak in the following fight.

We surmise that we might be able to talk to Fyzel and hopefully try and set things right what with the KVA having recently killed a Mistweaver so we set out to find it. On our travels we encountered some strange forest spirit creatures making bird noises, a hordeling with a rock troll, hordelings that perhaps had just been "reborn" which got tougher as you damaged them and required healing to put down, some Kalid who said Daius sent them to ambush Ivak and kill him to take him out of the tournament which they weren't happy about as it's dishonourable (they tell us they saw two trolls leading a being with a red hat on a rope ahead), two more trolls and a magical forest creature then we caught up with the trolls leading the captured mist shaman. After defeating the trolls and freeing the shaman he offered to help us and give us information. He told us that the Mistlord hates the towers and wants to see them destroyed. There are also several Mistweavers that are sympathetic to the Mistlord. The Mistlord's words seem to compel Hordelings without a connection to the mists. Fyzel suggested we kill him so that the Mistlord has to spend time finding and preparing a new aspirant so we did so. On our way back to the way station we encounter yet more spirits of cold and evil then once back at the base some more fight circle competitions (including against a Dymwan called Pestilans) occurred. Deema showed up again and told us that those bitten by the wolf have Lycanthropy. He said we could gather Wolfsbane in the surrounding area and if we brought him a whole bag full he'd make us a poison to use on the Werewolf for free as it has been plaguing the area for some time eating servants. So we quickly hastened out in the failing light to pick the Wolfsbane. Ivak proved to have a knack for gardening and found a nice patch of them but we were attacked by spirits of cold and evil during the picking process. We managed to fill the bag we'd been given but Deema wasn't about to hand them over. Later in the evening, while we sat in the way station, a person appeared in our midst and cast an earthquake. After it had finished he seemed satisfied that he wasn't under threat and introduced himself as Scholar Vilmius. He asked many unusual questions verifying if certain past events had happened as if unsure of "when he was". He is a member of the Collegium Magica in the College of Spatial Correspondence. He said he was here because "the path had been opened". Halfway through the conversation Bracken arrived and told us that his associate, The Observer, has been investigating the Scholar's area of influence and had created a beacon so that the Scholar could get here. Bracken is receiving orders directly from Veltyn who is collaborating with The Observer. The Scholar suggested that we find out if any of the Shadowsfall we encounter are from The Archive group and, if so, to think of something innocuous when questioned. The Scholar's area of expertise is the plane of Myths and Legends. He sees parallels in that he's had dealings with the KFW and that they had contact with an Illithid also. [Illithid is the racial name for Mindflayers it seems] Vilmius left with Bracken to go and talk with The Observer.

Some time later the red spirit appeared. It appeared to be acting out past events and it went over to the fight circle. We followed it and encountered the wolf which lurked about while we observed the spirit. Duranir carries out a ritual on the spirit while we hold off the wolf. The spirit disappeared and a sudden lethargy descended upon us. We chase the wolf off and return to the way station then retire in need of a good rest.

## **Second Day**

Upon waking our surroundings have changed and Duranir is nowhere to be seen. We seem to

be near the halls of the Azad-an which are currently operational. This is presumably a result of the ritual. We were treated by the locals as potential recruits. A sergeant arrived to train us sporting a ferocious moustache. (though not as fearsome as Voktin's I might add) We were taken on a training run by the sergeant to fight constructs with various different abilities to test our skills. During the training we encounter a Shadowsfall by the name of Uriss. His name is familiar from recent reports and he confirms that his recent missions have been to do with the Valley. The Sergeant can't see him. Uriss tells us that we are stuck somewhere. He isn't inclined to help us so we carry on fighting the constructs. After we got back to the Azad-an halls and had lunch the green spirit appeared and that was the last I remembered before waking up in our accommodation near the Open Gauntlet. Apparently we had slept in and missed breakfast. So the red spirit seems to have put us into some kind of dream state. Some Halmaddonians led by Squire Alan arrive to have a team combat and we lost to them. A few Morgothians come for food and to register for the group combat. They say they will return later with a fourth member. A Shadowsfall Investigator by the name of Alari pokes about asking questions about the scholar to which we give vague, but truthful responses.

From the local Azad-an we learned that Azad could resurrect people more times than would be normal but their status would be diminished. This possibly led to the fall of their tower through "status irregularities", i.e. not having enough. There was an elite group called The Resurrected.

We came up with a theory that Azad might be the Mistlord.

Iban turns up. He is a shabby old man who babbles about giving his status away in return for alcohol. A Shadowsfall under contract arrived and was asking questions about the scholar. Iban is obviously worried about this but decides that it's a good time to walk outside on his own just after the Shadowsfall has left (and is likely standing just around the corner) and is promptly murdered by said Shadowsfall. We looked for a suicide note, as he obviously had a death wish, but found nothing...

We were attacked by yet another bunch of spirits after which the green spirit turned up again, sat in Gurdin's large chair. It pointed at me and the next thing I knew was that we all awoke in a misty place with only the green spirit in sight. It walked off so we followed as we had no other option. The spirit would occasionally make short speeches which seemed to be illustrative of some quality or aspect of the Azad-an. We met a group of Azad-an who thought we were Kalid. After we defeated them the spirit indicated that this demonstrated that the Azad-an would fulfil contracts or die trying. We found out from another group of Azad-an that the Kalid declared war on the Azad-an, vying for the contract to protect the Reader, and that the nature of Azad himself had something to do with the fall of the tower. Azad-an means "beloved of Azad". We met a Reader who, thinking we were Valdemar, wanted to offer us the contract to protect them as the service the Azad-an were providing was getting steadily worse as it seems there was a disparity between the ideals of the Azad-an and the implementation of said ideals. We then encountered a group of Kalid who appeared to be attacking Azad himself who was calling for aid from the Valley. This illustrated the fact that allies came to help the Azad-an including the Valley. We were then informed that Azad's sons weren't loyal and that those in power plotted and worked for their own aims rather than those of the tower. Next we found Lady Subodai talking to Rednow Ffuts (they did not acknowledge our presence) about Azad being irresponsible and

spending his time drinking and wenching and that they lost too many people fighting the Kalid and the Dymwan to fulfil their contracts. The Valley offered to help fulfil the contracts. We travelled on and met a large group of Shadowsfall who asked us what we were doing here. We had no idea but apparently ignorance is no defence and they attacked us and killed us all. We awoke in the same place we had fallen when the green spirit arrived all very badly injured. While we recovered Deema returned with the Wolfsbane poison and instructed us on its use. As darkness fell we hear the werewolf howling and some Hordelings appear saying they are trying to capture the wolf. We can't allow this as we need to kill it so we go out and defeat the Hordelings. We then moved off into the night looking for the werewolf. After a short while we find it but the area is still swarming with Hordelings so we ended up fighting them as well while using Wolfsbane poisoned weapons to kill the werewolf, an endeavour which went very well. We retired for the night, lycanthropy free.

## **Third Day**

The Kalid team turned up in the morning led by Daius. Our team lost to them so they claimed the armour prize but Ivak fights and defeats Daius again thus winning the weapon prize. The Kalid lurked about a bit looking to cause trouble perhaps be were on our guard. Poppy then arrived to tell us a large group of Shadowsfall were on their way. We quickly made ourselves scarce and defeated a group of Hordelings with a few trolls amongst them. Then we set off to rejoin with the rest of the group and return to the towers.