

## Sun Day – Realm of Battle

We needed to locate the Realm Lord and ask his permission to enter the Hall of Heroes. We also needed to recover Suliman's body which we knew was somewhere within the Realm.

We fought our way past a number of barbarians and the Realm Lord's retinue, and a Herald of the Realm Lord asked us to declare our own Herald, challenge and combatants. Quicksilver took up the role of Herald and announced that we would enter into three one-on-one combats fought by Toshiro, Khortaz and Puke.

We were invited to the fight location; all around us in the trees were large flags bearing different heraldic emblems. Three heavily-armoured warriors stood to meet our challenge.



Toshiro fought first and was eventually slain. Khortaz was offered terms (to the death, or to the yield) and chose to fight to the death. During his combat he was offered a number of opportunities to yield yet did not take them. After many heavy blows he cast a Heal upon himself which appeared to demoralise his opponent. Showing no mercy he fulfilled the original terms of the battle and slew the warrior with aplomb. Puke fought last, but was out-matched by a nimble warrior who struck him some painful-looking blows to the head.

We then obtained an audience with the Realm Lord, whom Gravesong recognised as having

Suliman's body. It is worth noting that during our mission, the spirit of Suliman, the Child of Light, Moon and Stars had been embodied within Gravesong. Gravesong/Suliman challenged the Realm Lord as Suliman wanted his body returned, and a powerful fight ensued with the Realm Lord raining down many mighty blows upon Gravesong. But each time he was beaten down, the spirit of Suliman would call forth his own power to heal Gravesong and in the end it was the Realm Lord who fell. A vicious battle with his remaining troops ensued.

Suliman and Gravesong both disappeared, the only clue to their presence the regalia (sword and shield) of the Realm Lord. Puke sensed its power was waning and that someone would need to take up the mantle of Realm Lord by the end of the day, or there was a real chance that the Realm could fall and we would have no way of returning from the Hall of Heroes. Merely picking up the regalia and declaring oneself a Realm Lord had little effect.

Returning to Lord Cardinaris's Lodge, we were greeted by the combined forms of Gravesong and Suliman – resembling Gravesong whose visage had turned completely golden, as Suliman was last seen. Sulisong, as we now called him, informed us that the position of Realm Lord could only be claimed by a challenge in battle and that we should expect contenders and their retinues.

Duly, three contestants arrived: Sir Ballentyne, the knight who was deferential towards Puke; Vissim, who pretended to have never heard of Agoth but was identified by Ezekial as one of their undead; and "Lord Ugg the Invincible", a barbarian. Some of the party 'interviewed' them, trying to find the most worthy amongst them by our standards. We then faced each foe in combat and defeated them all.

That left the 'choice' of Realm Lord to be one of our group, and Puke took up the mantle once more. To travel to the Hall of Heroes, we needed the agreement from the current Realm Lord that we could travel upon the Path of Heroes; this being now a matter of course we headed to the appropriate location, by a giant fallen tree.

With Aruna leading the chanting, we began the ritual to summon forth warriors who would meet us in heroic battle and send us to our deaths:

*Lo there do I see my father.*

*Lo there do I see my mother, my sisters and my brothers.  
Lo there do I see the line of my people back to the beginning.  
Lo they do call to me.  
They bid me take my place among them in the halls of the Beyond.  
Where the brave may live forever.*

## Sun Day – The Hall of Heroes

We were each awakened by one of three men who called themselves “the brothers”: we had arrived in the outlands as opposed to the Hall itself, out of sight of “the masters” (who from their descriptions were the Agothians). Despite Quicksilver’s resignations and Sir Kal’s acknowledgement that – yes, it was a trap of sorts, but we were going ahead anyway -, we summoned Lord Cardinaris’s Lodge to the Hall, to buy ourselves some time away from our Agothian foes and recovery in this Realm.

The brothers, dressed in uncomfortable-looking hessian garbs – one of whom was joyful and ‘nice’ to the point of irritation, one of whom was surly and rude, and the last who seemed the most normal – escorted us a way and pointed out “the library”: the place we sought that would have the answers to help us defeat Otion Wraithchild and, hopefully, Agoth.

The Lodge had impressively materialised itself rapidly as we found it did in all Realms, close by to the Library. Within the Library was “the librarian” – a man who wrote every little detail down with his own ‘take’ on how things were perceived; a couple of books; and rather usefully, a large chest brimming with scrolls. The librarian permitted each party member to withdraw one scroll from the library at a time; there were six rune-sets and so we launched into an evening of deciphering with Aruna, Quicksilver and myself spending many hours sifting through and translating what information we had available while Puke instigated his own scroll-sorting system in the library itself.

Of the books within the library, at the centre of the librarian’s table was a huge book with an animal skull embedded in its front; this skull was identical to one on Lord Cardinaris’s altar within his Lodge. Inside the book was a mass of neatly-enscribed silver runes, diagrams and so on but we had not the time to investigate this also. This was the Book of the Dead, authored once by Cardinaris himself. The Lodge had some sentience of its own, for merely intoning the

name of this Book caused one of its construct servants to pause, consider (as if a drone of the Labyrinth of Xenos) and say “yes, he’s interested”. We already knew that Cardinaris sought to recover this book, for purposes unknown.

We also later discovered within the Library a Book of Translation (which would automatically translate the runes, for as many pages as there were blank pages within its covers) and a Book of Keys, which contained a number of “words of power”, one on each page.

During the evening of translating we were interrupted on a few occasions. On the first, an indistinct, nebulous form slid into the Lodge, grabbed Ezekial who vanished. He returned not much later in a state of some distress. Apparently he had been returned to Orin Rakatha as an Agothian Soul Hunter and killed a member of Wolfhold while in that form.

Later, we were assailed by the memories of an Aldonar Claw, the Eagles. It turns out that somebody had been remembering them: not Quicksilver, as the only older adventurer on our party, but the sentience of the Lodge had been whispering words into the night, calling them back. Fortunately it was a weaker version of the Claw - not fully remembered -, with Quicksilver being somewhat scathing about the abilities of this 'Bonedancer'.

Another, darker visitor, came that night also. A shady form of Lord Cardinaris himself appeared in his throne, clutching the Staff of Doom, which had remained in the Lodge. He had not yet the strength to go forth and claim the book he sought (the Book of the Dead) however he took great pleasure in attempting to call forth the memory of Erelan Black.

Lord Cardinaris was pleased with our progress to date, and seemed even more so when we said we intended to strike at Tiresias, Tower Leader of the Catacombs of Agoth. As we had no counter for Tiresias’s greatest ability, to shift people at will, Lord Cardinaris offered us some help: he would plant a ‘spark’ of himself within a volunteer that would prevent Tiresias from such an escape. Lord Cardinaris would also see through that person’s “eyes”. Randolphin volunteered and initially appeared to be rendered slain before recovering his health. Sir Kal later went to confirm the spiritual influence of Randolphin but in gazing into the eyes of Cardinaris through Randolphin was stripped of his faculties for a while.

Lord Cardinaris ordered his constructs set down ‘anchors’ so that the Lodge be bound in the

realm of the Hall of Heroes.

By midnight we had translated all the Agothian scrolls using the Book of Translation and had the information we needed to travel to the Void and complete our mission. It transpired that "AgOTH" was in fact an experiment set up on the Void as an alternative to gaining control of a Realm on the Plane of the Sleepless Dead. Over time, as it sucked in more and more souls, it gained in sentience and in power. At the heart of the experiment was a necromancer Gil, who had once fought some elves known as the 'Rehyan'. This fight had led to some amalgamation of spirits/bodies being flung across the worlds and contained the clues to the origin of Gilrehyan, Sorcerer of the Red School.

## **Moon Day – Hall of Heroes**

As we arose, we were met by three individuals wearing Shadowsfall garb. One was a warden, who in his former life had upheld the laws of Orin Rakatha and now seemed interested in upholding the rules of the Hall of Heroes instead, his former life consigned to history. He was displeased as all those living were unnatural to this place and he wished rid of us, and them. We managed to convince him that this was also the end we sought and that, should we be able, we would try to seal the Hall of Heroes forever so that the living and the dead would nevermore be able to cross to each others' realms.



Ezekial also tried communing with Lord Cardinaris's altar, as he was requested. Fortunately Khortaz was on hand for the consequences, with Ezekial rapidly succumbing to a fatal disease, bereft of his mind, and dying: all simultaneously. Neither had he learned anything about the items upon the altar, which Cardinaris had requested be left undisturbed.

More memories arrived for breakfast. Initially they could not recall themselves but it did not take much time around us for the red-garbed humans to start remembering that they had once been Saldoreans. We destroyed that group then, and then a much more powerful group later. We inferred that Lord Cardinaris was also trying to call forth Duke Jurgen Zarn, a former Saldorean enemy of the Kern Valley Alliance.

We were also assailed by a group of 'worms': the librarian had entered his library to find it in such disarray that he thought someone had deliberately sought to destroy his precious scrolls and had therefore called forth the guardians of his library to recoup all the scrolls. They indiscriminately collected every piece of paper and irritatingly muddled some of the useful scrolls with the less, although Quicksilver and I had undertaken to safely store the important Agoth-related scrolls the previous night. I chatted to the librarian for a bit and he gradually started to remember that he had indeed allowed us access to the library and the mess within was not a deliberate attempt to sabotage his work.

It is perhaps worth noting that the librarian was constantly privy to so much information that he was forever writing it down and would direct you to the scrolls to find answers rather than answering any direct or indirect questions himself. He also often appeared to forget who people were, and needed constant reminders of everyday things. Also of interest was that many of the scrolls within the library came direct from our own archives, along with all the errors and perceptions that the authors of these reports brought into their writings.

While we had a pressing urgency to travel to the Void, Sir Kal was reluctant to leave while the Hall of Heroes was unsafe, as all these memories were being stirred up. We decided to try and take the initiative and call them to us, rather than being at their whim. The ex-Shadowsfall Warden had told us that if they were 'defeated', they would take longer to re-emerge. So we started to recall more of Duke Zarn, seeing as the Saldoreans were already plaguing us.

Unexpectedly, two members of the Sacred Swords of Humact appeared within the Halls, these

being Cirith and Tancred. According to Cirith, Lady Mortifera had fallen and subsequently – in Dreadlord Araikas's absence - somebody had withdrawn the Wolfhold forces back to the Towers. Cirith and Tancred accompanied us as we set out to face an enemy that turned out to be Erelan Black and a more powerful Claw than before.

Erelan Black thanked Puke and Lady Mortifera for returning a soul vessel to Orin Rakatha (as usual Puke had no recollection of performing this task) that would allow him to return in mortal form now that his spirit had been called forth. He demanded the Necronomicon which we refused to hand over, and thus he opened battle with the commanding words “by the power of my voice, die!” directed at his old adversary, Quicksilver, before trying to pummel the prone ice elf into the floor. During the fight, the Claw’s trogamor teleported away in search of the Necronomicon, which Sir Kal had left in a bag at Lord Cardinaris’s lodge. Once he had this in his possession, I am told Erelan Black turned tail and fled into the tall undergrowth (I was casting high magic at the time so did not witness this), and could not be found despite a pursuit in many directions.

I believe Sir Kal and Khortaz banished Cirith and Tancred from the Hall of Heroes by using a modified version of “dismiss undead”. Sir Kal, Quicksilver and Khortaz later arrived at the Lodge confused as to their identity, and what they were doing here. Perhaps it was the repeated castings of Cosmic Good invocations that had drawn them closer to the Life Sphere, but we were able to restore them by reminding them of their past.

Before we could travel further there was another issue to deal with. “The Brothers” turned out to be the three ‘parts’ of Nathan, former High Priest of the Grey Wardens, who a few moons ago had nobly sacrificed himself in a ritual to prevent the evil aspect of Set from gaining power over Orin Rakatha. Nathan’s form seemed regularly under threat by groups of Set worshippers, though we helped dispatch these each time they appeared during our stay. The brothers, while prepared to fight these creatures, were continually being weakened as Nathan’s great spirit strength ebbed away and they sought a different place to hide from Set. We suggested a suitable location and it is our hope that he is safe there, now.

We suffered an Agothian fight: our location had been found by their outlying troops. During this time, Quicksilver found himself manifest on Orin Rakatha as a form of Agothian undead. On this occasion, Otion Wraithchild looked into the undead’s eyes and said “this one’s not right”, before banishing the undead and thus returning Quicksilver back to our group.

With the area currently clear of hostile forces, we began to make preparations to travel to the Void. We were already aware that in this place: tending, meditating, the gifting or melding of power would not work; furthermore a person without any power in their body would turn into a 'husk', effectively becoming a mindless zombie. We had been advised not to travel there at night, and the Chorien had warned us we could spend no more than eight hours in the place. We were also forewarned that for every couple of spell-durations upon the Void, our very life would seep from our bodies unless we undertook certain preparations.

Thus, we found a suitable empowered, open bowl and cast into it a wizardry spell of every standard colour of magic. Each person in our party then placed a drop (or more) of their blood within the vessel, thus ensuring their health would not be weakened by their mere presence upon this place of Darkness.

To travel to the Void from the Hall of Heroes, all persons there travelling needed to focus on the location which we wanted to visit (in this case, Otion Wraithchild's Soul Garden) and a High Priest from each Primary Sphere would beseech their Aspect to assist them in travel. The journey to the Void itself could take anywhere between a spell duration and three days depending on the faith of the High Priests. Khortaz, Teppic and myself invoked our respective Spheres and our group appeared far away in another world: the Void.

# Eternal Night (Part 2) by Kevralyn Soulfire

Last Updated Monday, 09 November 2009 20:27

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