

I am the first, and it is by my hand that the Sword was forged. I am bound within and give it strength, and it is only by my hand that the Sword may be torn asunder.

I am the second, and it is by my art that the Sword became more. I am bound within and give it skill.

I am the third, and it is by my will that the Sword gained power. I am bound within and give it purpose, and it is I who shall choose the wielder. The Nation that was lost shall be reborn, and moulded to my desires.

By my art, and my faith, the wielder was set:-

*Of noble blood the birth run true, only he may hold –
and once our tests are overcome and battles fought and won.*

*Once before, the Sword was drawn by one whose blood was not true,
and his spirit was rent and trapped within the blade.*

*In three moons' time our quest will end: a new lord will arise;
standing tall with Sword in hand, our People as the prize.*

Then our quest will end - and perhaps we will see you again, the final time...

The Mor Silvani

Freed from their long-standing enslavement upon the Forest of Unshed Tears, the dark elves ('mor' meaning dark) had been seen to arrive upon Orin Rakatha over the last year. We had

helped free a noted healer - named Nilaz – who had been recaptured by the Jade Champion of the Sol Silvani almost exactly a year past: this at the behest of Kelnozz Hatch'nett, Skin Shriever of the Mor Silvani. Nilaz was apparently a symbol to their people, and named after their Prince of long ago.

Earlier this year I had written to Kelnozz Hatch'nett requesting a meeting to talk of things pertaining to the Mor Silvani. He brought with him and gave to us a Shadow Disk (of value to the Ritual of Ashes), and spoke of the Sword, Karn'ak Zol Alain ("the heart of the Nation"). The Nation in question was the Mor Silvani people and he indicated that he wished the Sword destroyed. He said that he would be in touch with us once more at Harvest Moon, via the druids in our Alliance.

For those of you unfamiliar with the history of the Mor Silvani: a millennia past upon the Forest, one man and his followers chose to combine the Spheres of Nature and Necromancy. This was regarded as a heinous crime, for which the Mor Silvani faced either death or enslavement. Any nobles left upon the Plane were executed. Thus there were none among the Mor Silvani who could wield this Sword.

The Mission

The following people set out with Prefect Balthazar:

Wolfhold: Kevralyn Soulfire, 11th Wizard of House Tumdurgul; Tarot MindFire, 1st Paladin of House Tumdurgul; Daark, High Priest of the Dark Brethren;

White Retreat: Cadet Verrick, Spiritual Warrior of the Order of King Michel; Cirith, Humacti Priest and Seeker; Myrrh, White Wizard; Zephyr, Blue Wizard; Beren, Crusader; Pod, Crusader; Woolf, Crusader; Owajawar, Crusader;

Valley Alliance: BloodBark, Spiritual Warrior of the Order of Knights Martial; Lupus, Grey

Gauntlet Priest; Molly, Hospitaller.

Entering Kalid Lands

A Pathfinder escorted us to Kalid lands whereupon found ourselves assailed by a group from the Crimson Feast. Not much later, we were attacked by some more including a werewolf that bit Lupus. We found some scrolls indicating that the Shadowlords had requested their involvement in the matter.

We headed towards a Dai-fah-Dyne camp just within the Shadowdells, West of the Matted Breaks, and close to a Kalid Tower. There we met one attired in Dai-fah-Dyne colours who offered us refreshment. Although I expressed my surprise that she did not wish to charge us for this, she said that it was her role as host to see that we were comfortable. As I had only asked for water, I thought no more of this at the time, but nevertheless chose to decline her offer.

We heard some howling in the distance, at which point Lupus decided to join his new-found lupine friends, from which he was eventually rescued.

A Delegation and Assassination

While resting within the camp, we were visited by a most august group of people from the Alliance, including Dreadlord Araikas and Sir Faldor Steel. They spoke with us a while and were about to leave, when one of the group collapsed to the floor, dead. At this point, Balthazar was also struck from behind (I believe by the one who had presented herself as Dai-fah-Dyne) and fell to the floor unconscious with only half of an hour's passing to live, should he not receive immediate treatment. Upon the table was left a symbol of the group known as Eclipse: overlapping circles of white, grey and black, with a dagger on the central intersection.

The Shadowlords

With Balthazar taken away from us, I suddenly realised that he had still upon his person the scrolls we had obtained to fight against the Shadowlords. The night was late and we had been promised Shadowlord company so I decided to cast a protection versus weakness on Tarot. Minutes later, one of the Elserri (Shadow Riders) whom I believe I have previously met, strode into our camp and shadow-shifted a great number of us away before that we had time to react.

We found ourselves in a secluded area of forest, surrounded by a very large number of dark figures: a group of Shadowlords and shades. After some initial chaos (weakness and blindness from the shades), the leader of their group spoke (or rather, shouted). It transpired that he was Uzar DayBlight, Legion Commander of the Kalid Shadowlords and had aspirations to wield the Sword himself for which he claimed the birthright. He named himself an “elf of dusk and dawn” and then challenged a drow from our number to fight him. Immediately the Paladin Tarot MindFire of the Fell Knights of Ushaz sprang to his feet so to meet him in combat. After this fight, the Legion Commander turned his attention to myself and made various threats with regards to how he would treat me on the morrow. Some further blows were scattered among our number before that they departed.

Kelnozz Hatch'nett Arrives

At some point Balthazar returned, restored to health, with no loss of spirit strength. As the night drew on, another dark figure entered the camp. This time it was Kelnozz Hatch'nett, the Skin Shriever, accompanied by a small retinue. He informed us that Jezzra Hun'ett - the Soul Shriever - had been working with the Shadowlords to help them track us, and that the same no longer had the interests of the Mor Silvani people at heart: now giving first allegiance to the Kalid; and that the Shadowlords were still observing us closely.

He then cast an invocation around the camp that surrounded it in thorns and transported it a distance three days' hence. The thorns would recede the next morning when we were to anticipate the arrival of Nilaz, the healer whom some of us had previously rescued.

He also told us about the origin of the Shadowlords... fugitives from the Forest of Unshed Tears. When the Spheres were combined and retribution was to be exacted, the noble families of the Mor Silvani fled the Plane. It seems that they took up residence upon the Kalid Home Plane before more recently coming to Orin Rakatha. My first encounter with them being last Hunting Moon.

Karn'ak Zol Alain Appears

Most of the party had departed to rest when the manifestation of the Sword appeared to Tarot, trying to tempt him into wielding it. The Sword was created by Vhaerun, Patron of Warriors and Hunters and hence was desiring of a warrior as the wielder.

The Next Day

We arose, and later Nilaz joined us in our camp. Two green elves appeared at the edge of the clearing, apparently they were unnerved by Nilaz's physical appearance and did not wish to venture close.

We departed, anticipating to meet Guardians of Flesh, Spirit and Element who had been set to guard the Sword. Almost immediately, we fought a long row of red figures who it seemed were the physical forms of guardians. A strangely-accented towerless person told us that he had seen some other Drow (who each wore a gold star) nearby, who had also been engaged in combat with similar figures.

Pressing on, we did indeed meet a group from House Morfeaglin and more importantly the 3rd Priestess of House Arduval, 1st in line to the Throne of Annach Morannonil. It seems she was there in an observatory capacity, as she was concerned about reports of the "use of shadow". At some point Lial Hardstrike, 9th Warrior of House Morfeaglin, decided his sword arm was in need of some exercise and so combat ensued. Having taken down most of those present from the 6th House (who had not fled) we ventured forth and came across my old acquaintance

Abadon Dreamweaver, 12th Wizard of House Morfeaglin with some others from his House. He had been expecting to face the Guardians of Spirit next and had thus summoned forth a group of Nightmares. Would the Humactis please note that these are undead. Tarot MindFire, 1st Paladin of our House took on Lial Hardstrike in one-on-one combat (although apparently there was no honour in the duel because Hardstrike had already proved he had none) and slew him without much ado. Wizard Dreamweaver and the Morfeaglin contingent left but promising to send a delegation the next day to parlay with us for the Sword so that it could be taken back to Annach Morannonil.

Proceeding, we came across the Guardians of Spirit. Whilst we were fighting these, we were assailed from behind by more of the Shadowlord Legion, whom we killed. After this, most of us went to meditate, as the Guardians had been powerdraining us and removing our spiritual protection amongst other things. Afterwards, we met two of the green elves once more. Apparently they found the presence of drow somewhat alarming. They informed us where the Sword was located, and said that they had placed nearby a powerful artefact of the Good Sphere to counter the Evil in the area. This artefact could be used to retrieve the souls of those lost on the Plane of the Sleepless Dead.

Following their directions, we encountered and swiftly defeated the Guardians of Element. After this I mnemoniced and we set forth towards the cave in which the Sword was said to be found.

As we approached the cave, we came across a large group of Kalid, which we killed.

At the Cave

In the vicinity of the cave, we observed that no power or magic could be cast. The entrance to the cave was covered by a large and most beautiful spiders web, there was also a ward that I determined to be of unlevelled magic and unranked power.

Behind the web stood the avatar of Vhaerun: a masked figure with glowing eyes. He wanted the Sword to be claimed, and wondered if any would venture forth into the cave to do so. I observed that quite frankly the spiders web looked good where it was and shouldn't be disturbed: this

drew a derogatory remark from the avatar about the Spider Queen and listening to Her followers.

Balthazar decided to pass through the web (getting slightly poisoned in the process); this triggered the appearance of the Guardians of Flesh as well as the First bound within the Sword. Without the capacity to cast healing invocations, the party collapsed at this offence and the avatar eventually called off the Guardians against those who were “unworthy”. The final two elixirs were used, nevertheless five party members died (Owajawar, Woolf, Cirith, Pod and Lupus).

When we had recovered, we were assailed again by the Guardians of Flesh – this time fighting them further away from the cave’s entrance and defeating them all.

The party then invoked for a spiritual fight, before High Priest Daark pointed out that the Second bound within the Sword was the one associated with element. I cast a large blade, and Myrrh used the Book of Fire to cast another; these we gave to others. Minutes later I cast a large firebolt at the Second, which destroyed it and ended the fight.

Verrick then triggered the ward for the third time, calling forth the Third bound within the Sword: the High Priestess who would choose the wielder. I believe she took on both Balthazar and Tarot in single combat, during this time Verrick invoked the Good Sphere in front of the Good artefact. The party wizards, realising that a large fight against spirit was not going to be forthcoming, rejoined the group and found Tarot, BloodBark, Woolf and Daark standing behind the ward. The avatar was asking for any others who would “follow” Paladin MindFire; due to a lack of information about the proceedings I chose not to step through the ward. At this point the Sword was claimed by Tarot, and those others – his “followers” - formed up around him as his guard. All the Good Sphere casters next felt compelled to invoke in front of the Good artefact. We then returned to the camp.

The Sword

Kelnozz Hatch'nett returned with some Mor Silvani guards. He told us more of the Sword. That

it held within it the status of the Mor Silvani people, and additionally would not function well in our Towered Plane... That those who had pledged themselves to the Sword and its Wielder had in fact now pledged their status to the Sword, and this was bound within. That the inherent properties of the Sword meant it would cause status leakage, that would be unpreventable. [On a related note, one might recall that the Hold of Azad was closed by the Shadowsfall due to "status irregularities"].

The party then split, most opting for the Sword's destruction. Any who were considered a threat to this end had their skulls smashed by the others (and Mor Silvani Guard in attendance).

Kelnozz Hatch'nett then began the ritual of destruction, sacrificing the life of Nilaz his healer in the process. He attempted to summon forth the First of the Sword, but instead was surprised to find Barf (formerly a member of the Alliance) to have materialised. Barf proclaimed, "you have killed a child of Chaos" and asked who would stand against him. At this: Balthazar, Verrick and Myrrh stood together, at which Barf said: "Three of you? Is this the best that the Valley can manage?" and then vowed to return on the morrow, before disappearing.

The healers restored consciousness to the fallen party members and allowed Tarot to take back the now-lessened Sword.

The End

The next morn, Kelnozz Hatch'nett joined the group as we faced a large group of Chaos creatures. Barf was present, although he simply disappeared after we had slain the rest.

The Skin Shriever carried the Sword to a different secluded cave, whereupon he began reading from some scrolls to enact the Sword's destruction.

"By ancient pacts, I call forth Grim Stonehand... I am child of Vhaerun... Let the work of Vhaerun be undone... Nocturno, Spiriantor, Obtuus, Zol, Alain, Delang..."

The First of the Sword, Grim Stonehand – its maker – was indeed summoned forth, and bid to strike the Sword. After several powerful blows that caused the earth to tremor, it finally was torn asunder and the ground shook in a mighty earthquake.

At this point, the elite Guards of the Mor Silvani arrived. They are like their brethren but of pale faces and wear a brown tabard upon orange/yellow material. They had come to pay homage to the new Soul Shriever of the Mor Silvani: Kelnozz Hatch'nett, who now wore a golden crown of thorns upon his head. Pausing slightly to give a brief acknowledgement, he passed on and was escorted away by the guards.

We returned to the camp before leaving Darklin Reach for the Towers.

I have recorded the runic symbols that were marked upon the Sword, if any are interested then they should contact me.

By my hand,

Eymeric'Dir Kevralyn Soulfire
11th Wizard of House Tumdurgul
4th in line to the Throne of Annach Morannonil