

After what seemed like an eternity in hiding with the Elves myself, Nathan, Beran, Verrik, Zephr and Finn eventually returned to the Halmad sanctuary. We arrived there to find it deserted with the wards not in place. Then from nearby we heard the sounds of fighting and followed the sound to find a group of Valley brothers engaged with some bane creatures. Old friends Woolf, Lupus, Tankred and Wolf were there accompanied by Ormond, High Priest of the Sword. We assailed the bane creatures and soon all were gathered and returned to the defensible Sanctuary.

We were troubled by a number of fetches using powerful magics but kept the group safe and the Sanctuary defended. Soon enough though our great enemy, Cardonaris appeared and tried to divide us by claiming that we were doing his work and that specifically Sorcerer Finn was a traitor. I assailed him as he tried to infiltrate our minds, tired of his forked tongue but once again felt his dread.

I was not party to the whole conversation but he made us a number of offers to avert the course we were on (only reinforcing my belief that we were upon the right path) and went on his way.

After a few more skirmishes with Creatures, the Beloved arrived and we were able to speak of how matters had progressed. The Halmads had tracked down Solomon of the Dymwan, owner of the Gem of Dominion a much prized treasure of Cardonaris. We must proceed to his location as soon as possible and take possession of the Gem. He had chosen Fort Humact to stage his final stand. The Halmads would provide a Blue Sorcerer for us, Alonso, to help us on the way. So once the Compound was clear the wards were put up and we took our rest.

Once again my dreams were troubled, haunted by Cardonaris taunts, but as always I rose early and was already breakfasted by the time the first wave of undead broke the perimeter. This time the Bane creatures attacking with Weakness and causing us some problems. We were visited by the Shadowfall and Sorcerer Finn agreed to a contract with them regarding Solomons Body should it come to that. Soon enough Alonso arrived and he began the ritual to teleport to near Fort Humact.

The transport was successful and we arrived close by. We fought a couple of groups of mixed undead before meeting a Dymwan Priest who mocked and taunted as Cardonaris had the night before. We approached the fort and found Solomon and his retinue. Solomon had clearly lost

his mind, the gem finally destroying his sanity. He had his usual crew of Dymwan with embodied Undead but also a witch of sorts who possessed both myself and Nathan. We had some initial skirmishes which went badly and after being freed from the Witches possession by Ormond we retreated to prepare for a more through assault.

Upon the second assault we managed to kill the witch and hold the Death knight though Brother Wolf gave his life in the struggle. Eventually we got to Solomon and managed to beat the Schizophrenia out of him though even when we found what was left of his original consciousness we could extract no cooperation from him and slew him though not before he had bought me to within an inch of my life and stretched our resources to the very limit.

Anyway we finally had the gem but no idea of how to use it. Thanks be to Humact though we had finally made it to the Fort. It didn't feel right though and the defences did not feel correct. I searched the Fort for signs of corruption but found none. Meanwhile, Nathan communed with the Gem and revealed that if we wanted to we could simply choose to enter the gem.

I must confess to making the first of my mistakes here- not understanding what was wrong with the fort I made a rash decision that we should enter the Gem and thus we did exactly that.

We found ourselves imprisoned within a holding area within the gem. A golem of sorts attended us with a limited range of answers. There were scrolls and puzzles that need to be solved to obtain our release. Eventually with stirring work from Finn and Wolf, we attained our release and found ourselves within the demi-plane. We discovered that our unwarranted entry had shattered the structure of the demi-plane and that we needed to discover the shards on the various wings of the plane to gain our freedom.

Some time has passed and I have forgotten most of the details however I have decided to complete the report from my notes.

Within the demi plane we met the following who were trapped:

- Zane Scorpion Slayer ? A powerful Drow Sorcerer who could blind all of us at will and used mighty black magic blades, he slew Sorcerer Finn

- A mind flayer
- A powerful Melnibonaen and retinue
- An "executioner" and his retinue
- A group of Uruks
- A highly trained Samurai
- A Lizard man Prince and retinue

As well as the feral beasts we had encountered before we also encountered a strange Psionic insectoid beast and retinue.

We discovered the reason for the problem of Fort Humact, the Maiden of the Fort had been trapped within the Gem. We met and pledged ourselves to her kneeling to her beauty and purity. I believe she was a manifestation of Humact himself. She gave us a sword, a plain sword- she called it the sacred sword, but I'm not sure, though it was mighty. We took turns to bear it and smite the unlife.

We also tracked down Ankheg and persuaded him to come with us.

We collected the shards, summoned the guide and broke the gem a massive fight ensued and at least Zaneke and The Mind Flayer got away.

After the fracas died down we were attacked by several waves of Shadowsfall. We had arrived within a Shadowsfall base (near Rainbow lake?), obviously they had claimed Solomons body and eventually we managed to parlay with some of their leaders and explain.

We returned to Fort Humact and returned the Sword to the Maiden of the Fort who had returned.

We then returned with Ankheg to the Sanctuary. Ankheg needed to die in order that his role as master to Cardonaris should end. He had decided to do the right thing upon the morrow so upon the eve we celebrated his life and toasted his bravery.

However, in the middle of our celebrations, Cardonaris appeared and ripped Ankhegs heart out leaving his empty corpse to fall in our arms.

Doom descended upon us but soon a plan availed itself upon us and upon the morn we journeyed to Cardonaris realm to destroy Ankhegs heart. His realm was a very bad place to be but thanks be to Lupus skill with Powerhammers we were able to get into Cardonaris ritual and destroy the heart.

Thus once and for all we were able to lay to rest a man whose Mortal soul had fallen into Darkness and opened a portal for others to follow.

Cirith