

It has been one thousand years since one man N'rahn combined two spheres upon the Forest of Unshed Tears. Another, the Master Hierophant enslaved the Mor and set the elves in endless war. To undo the work of N'rahn the Decayer – when we fought Kerney Oakrot – Gaia sought to enlist our help to harvest the cyst upon the Forest, which we must lance to restore the balance. Our role was to collect essence of Heart, Body, Mind and Soul which we found and not being bound to the Plane we could act where others could not act. The disease took form and was slain as the sickness came to claim the land.

Six moons had passed since Gaia, an avatar of Nature, had appeared to us upon the Forest of Unshed Tears. The druid Bella Rossi now felt the calling to return...

Wolfhold: Kevralyn Soulfire, 11th Wizard of House Tumdurgul; Lancorin Bloodcall, 16th Assassin of House Tumdurgul; Puke Scumgrief, Priest of the Reapers;

White Retreat: Spark, Red Sorcerer (Party Leader); Prefect Balthazar of the Order of King Michel; Woolf, Crusader;

Valley Alliance: Nathan, High Priest of the Grey Wardens; BloodBark, Knight Defender of the Order of Knights Martial; Bella Rossi, Druid; Caedere, Druid.

We retraced our steps to the North-East of Orin Rakatha, to Redfern Forest: first coming across a group of hordelings who had “lost” the mists, and then some towerless who talked of the Summerlands being nearby – a place from which those who went did never return. Ignoring their warnings not to venture forth, we proceeded down a slightly familiar route and were rewarded by encountering some voidstalkers and arboreal undead.

Hierophant Sunset

We made our way to a nearby building, and set up camp there only to be attacked by Hierophant Sunset and his group. After a short but vicious fight comprising a number of tectonic eruptions he halted proceedings and complained bitterly that the Blood Pact that had been made had been broken – that his secret group (who did not desire the war between Nar and Sol) had been exposed to others. Bella expressed his surprise (although

I'm sure I can recall someone mentioning something to the Sol Silvani about the activities of this Hierophant when last we were there) and Sunset announced that he would normally have killed us, save that for Gaia had a task for us to complete. We were to collect four essences from the Tombs of the Dead and combine them into a construct, so that the cyst could be harvested. Our work would be an important part in upholding the balance in the Forest.

We learnt that all the Hierophants had recently been spending time at a moot. And that the Nar and the Sol had been destroying lots of undead, leaving none for the Hierophants to command.

Rollu, formerly the Valley Druid

We later found ourselves besieged by a number of undead including the perennially-irritating will-o'-the-wisps which we still could not deduce how to kill. Eventually the attack was called off when Bella realised that Rollu was present and called out his name; apparently the undead had mistaken Lancorin for a Mor Silvani and Rollu had come to rescue him.

This was to be Rollu's last evening upon the Forest of Unshed Tears, he had now freed all the Mor Silvani – there are no more left upon that Plane. He would the next day be departing to take up his place in the Kalid Earthwarp Pulse Sect, (although he is not – as previously misreported by Bella – the head of this sect). Of course the Mor Silvani are currently enjoying interesting times, what with their former Soul Shriever Jezra Hun'ett now in exile. Rollu was interested to learn of the Kalid Shadowlords, I explained that they had deserted the Mor Silvani people when the Nar and the Sol embarked upon their regime of enslaving and killing the Mor all those centuries ago; unsurprisingly he did not seem particularly impressed with their actions declaring that he did not approve of *“those who leave people behind”*

. Of course the circumstances of his own death are well-known.

Duke Estorith and the Sol Silvani

The next morn, we had partaken of our break fast when a large group of Sol Silvani led by the Duke Estorith arrived and began attacking our group seemingly unprovokedly. We slew them all, as they deserved.

Tombs of the Dead

We were met by Noushmou, a strange creature of subnormal intelligence, who had been sent to guide us by Gaia. After a small battle with two guardians of the bridge to the Tombs, we entered only to be attacked by a number of undead and one of the dead Sol Silvani we had killed earlier, who recognised us – crying *“I know you!”*. The living are perceived by the dead who live within the tombs as *“wrong”*, because they *“do not belong”*, and the dead are drawn towards them.

During this time, our leader Spark was engaged in a conversation with a menacing entity that transpired to be a former Hierophant of the Forest. With horns of an animal, and a face of leaves, he had a rather disturbing appearance. He believed that he had spent far too long waiting to return to his land and so – after talking to Bella and BloodBark – he was eventually partially convinced that we might have a task to do, although could not comprehend our motivations. He placed upon us all the *“Mask of Death”*, which would make us appear as dead to the dead, so that they would not disturb us while that we were within the Tombs.

BloodBark warned us that we should not forgo our disguise in front of the dead by speaking our own names, for the dead do not have names. We learnt also that the dead carry memories from their former lives to the place, but their time within the Tombs is then forgotten whence they return back to the Plane. And that you will no longer find Mor Silvani within the Tombs, now that they have departed the Forest of Unshed Tears.

Collecting the Essences

Heart... Journeying further, we came across a tree surrounded by a number of guardians. Bella and BloodBark both felt drawn towards this tree, they were restrained while our priests invoked; we then destroyed the guardians who caused a number of people to bleed profusely and stopped the hearts of others. We found the first "bottle" which contained within an essence which we deduced to be The Heart.

Not much later, that same dead Sol Silvani elf (who we had killed both upon the Forest and within the Tombs) arrived. He recognised us once more, but was puzzled that this time he no longer felt the urge to kill us, that we somehow did not feel "wrong" (this was due to the protective Mask of Death that we had all received).

Mind... After continuing our journey, we came across some psionic guardians, who hit our minds with their powers, and pressed us hard. Lancorin obtained the bottle containing the second essence: that of The Mind.

At this stage, we felt the need to meditate and mnemonic, so our guide took us to a shelter where we rested briefly. We were also attacked by a number of yuanti, who possessed a wealth of venomous daggers.

Soul... Dusk began to fall as we departed, coming again across the preliminary guardians who preceded every essence that we had so far sought. At this time I rapidly began to feel unusually unwell. Darkness now covered the land, and we carried on a short distance before some Spiders announced their presence with a few webs, drawn to the place. The reason for all this became quickly apparent, as a SoulSpider almost twice my size arrived not long after. The Spiders and SoulSpider then attacked the rest of the party who felt obliged to defend themselves, I was later informed that a number of them had been killed including Prefect Balthazar whose good spirit could not save him. Thus the essence of The Soul was so collected.

The Mask Slips

With resources now minimal, we found the undead converging upon us once more. Fortunately they departed once we became still, leaving the party as either paralysed or

inches from death. Returning to our shelter, the leafy-faced Hierophant arrived informing us that our Mask of Death had effectively worn off, and that the only way to protect ourselves within the Tombs would be to give him a permanent measure of power so that he could continue to channel the Masks. With more undead swarming towards us, we had little choice – the newly-received Masks protecting us from their blows.

Despite that he had earlier mocked the powers of the Master Hierophant, Kerney Oakrot, it transpires that the Hierophant had been somewhat humbled when he sought to go up against him, gaining a lesson there.

He also questioned once more our intentions – as outsiders – in helping in the business on this Plane. Bella tried to give some explanation of “*the Valley way*”, evidently this being to help anyone who appears friendly, and additionally tell all to any passers by in the hope that they too are both friendly and know something about whatever it is that we are meddling in at the time.

The Next Morn

Troubled no more by undead, we arose to find a swarm of them in our camp. Although their blows could not affect us, we decided to dispose of them anyway, although these actions confused two dead people who were also present – “*what are they doing? they must be new here*”, etc. Save for the Hierophant (who felt his return was overdue), most of those within the Tombs seemed to have little concept of time or distance.

Noushmou then arrived bringing with him the druid Caedere, who joined with our party. Not much later we were attacked by some yuanti (the snake-people) who had with them three elementals (yellow, white and red).

Body... We departed, to face a number of waves of guards – the first doing purely physical damage but the second and third groups had with them those casting brown magic. It culminated in a large fight involving a Hariad Queen whereby we retrieved the essence of The Body.

Before Sunset

We knew that we were to perform the ritual as the sun set. Having obtained all four essences we made to refresh ourselves in preparation for the eve. During this time, some more dead approached – two dead Sol Silvani and a dead Nar Silvani who both felt drawn to the place. We attributed this to that Caedere was with us, and he had not received the Mask of Death. Spark engaged them in conversation (it transpired that the Sol Silvani had been killed by some will-o'-the-wisps) and eventually they left.

The Hierophant returned, he placed the Mask upon our druid before surprisingly taking exception to my note-taking – not quite comprehending the value of a notebook as a repository for information, and rather rudely casting it across the floor.

Nathan then communed with the four bottles containing the different essences, identifying which was which, and the order in which they should be unleashed. Within each he could sense the cyst, and said additionally that the essence of the Mind was leaking or transmitting in some way.

The sky darkened, and we left to go to the ritual site. We were waylaid by yet more yuanti and a medusa; the leader of the group indicating that she was displeased that we had earlier killed her major-domo. Those who had been turned to stone were temporarily granted movement by the 'Remove Paralysis' invocation, although they became transfixed again a couple of minutes later.

The Green Knight, the Cyst, and Gaia

To create the construct, we unleashed the essences: Balthazar was first, with the Body. BloodBark followed with the Heart and then Spark with the Mind. Finally, I stepped forward with the essence of Soul: heart, mind and body give form to an entity but it is the Soul that completes a person, that makes you what you are. Seconds later, a voice thundered from

the heights of the castle – *“I am the Green Knight! Who has called me here?”* Bella indicated that he had been summoned to right the wrong with the Plane, and the Knight strode forth surrounded by a large number of warriors and engaged us all in battle. The fight ended in single combat between Balthazar and the Knight; the latter falling to the floor... and suddenly maniacal laughter permeated the air. The cyst had taken form – it sprung forward and ran into the Forest leaving behind almost all of us in the throes of a Fatal Disease.

It was at this point that Gaia once more appeared, flanked by Noushmou and another similar creature. His words on this occasion were to indicate that we had indeed done as had been asked, but must now face the cyst before it spread its sickness to the Forest. That the cyst was stronger at night and so we should wait until the sun returned before we made to slay it.

We retraced our path through the Tombs of the Dead and returned to our original shelter. We were attacked again as we arrived, I believe it was another group of elves. We killed them all, of course. Now most of us were still suffering the effects of the Disease, although we had been saved from death due to the Masks that had been placed upon us. Nathan put several into meditate and expended a large amount of power in curing us all.

The Nar Silvani

On our last excursion within the Forest, a number of us had been ‘Bloodmarked’ by Arathi Vasselielle, Champion son of Allani Vasselielle, also Champion of the Nar Silvani. The latter had been slain before by a group from the Alliance, but had since been resurrected by the Nar Silvani. There was no escaping his fate this time, and despite our greatly limited resources we slew their entire party. The change we had brought upon the Forest meant that they were not immediately granted life once more: they went to meet their deaths.

With his remaining power, Nathan warded the building in which we were staying and we took our rest.

Dawn Passes

We arose with the sun in the sky, and the Hierophant we had met within the Tombs met with us. He also released the Masks of Death and returned the power we had each given to him. I believe that Nathan invited him back to our plane and our Towers, the Druid Sect lacking in High Priests who can teach their art.

A horde of undead next bore down upon us; Nathan repulsed them out of the warded area, and we slew them all.

Our druids then felt drawn towards the source of the wrongness upon the Plane, and led us to where we might fight it. Caedere appeared from within the trees, challenging the cyst with the cry *"I am a force for nature"*. The cyst cried the unholy word Contagius, which affected a good number of the party, before we fell upon the cyst and disgusting creatures that it had summoned (including a spirit of disease and white elemental). A long fight followed – but eventually the cyst succumbed.

The End

We followed our original route across the Plane. As we left the Forest, we turned to see that which had previously existed behind us no more – a different scenery.

Thus ends another chapter in the history of the Forest of Unshed Tears. The Spheres of Nature and Necromancy are no longer combined there. Those upon the Plane will die a normal death – not being resurrected by the Forest. And there are no longer any Mor Silvani upon the Forest... they have been recalled on Orin Rakatha by their Spiritual Head and Soul Shriever Kelnozz Hatch'nett, who declares that no more shall they be trodden upon and ignored.

By my hand,

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