

Those consumed by the Shadow Disease roam Orin Rakatha as Shadow People, their essence and vitality lost to an entity known as 'Hope Giver'. For they have been struck a number of times by either a Shadow Apprentice, or Ikarus's Shadow itself, who did appear upon our Plane last Burning Night upon the failure of the Ritual of Ashes. Within the Alliance, an interim measure was proposed by Derlin, Head Librarian and Scribe to Raucus, whereby those afflicted by the Disease would store part of their essence within a 'Hepath' sufficiently strong in the element of Darkness, so that they would not fall completely to Shadow. This Hepath dwelt upon a splinter plane created by the Chaos Jester, a plane of Nature and Darkness; and so we departed to the World Window.

A Dai-Fah-Dyne 'Problem'

Travelling in small groups, we arrived at the Dai-fah-Dyne 'Departure Lounge' (having met a few hordelings and undead close to the building). There we met Kimik Ali and Tarik Ali of the Northern Marches, who informed us that there was a small 'problem' and that we would have to wait for their master, Wenzel Harberforkington, to answer our questions. When asked what rank this Harberforkington held within the Dai-fah-Dyne they replied that he was neither a Bey, a Vizier nor Sultan. It transpired that the World Window was already booked to allow thousands of Mor Silvani to return to Orin Rakatha, and that (co-incidentally enough) they were travelling back from the Shadow Glade. Apparently it is not breaking the Laws of Orin Rakatha to take money to allow the towerless to travel to and from this Plane via the World Window: the Shadowfall are well aware and in fact take a cut of the profit. The presence of the Mor Silvani in the area had meant that the Dai-fah-Dyne were not as troubled as usual by undead (this time being All Hallows Eve, when the Plane of the Sleepless Dead passes over our own).

During one of my most recent missions, we encountered a group of monks named 'the Kithane', who had travelled to Orin Rakatha so to try and join the Kalid. Tarik Ali confirmed that a group of monks had recently come through the World Window, and that sometimes the Dai-fah-Dyne are approached by small groups of people from other planes to use the World Window to visit here, although that does not occur too frequently. He also mentioned that the Saldorians have paid the Dai-fah-Dyne a large amount of money to ensure that nobody uses the World Window to travel to their Plane.

A Mor Silvani Problem

Some small commotion outside heralded the arrival and departure of a delegation of Mor Silvani

honour guards (they of the pale faces and wearing tabards of brown trimmed with orange), who had arrived with a message that they wished to give to the 'strongest warrior' present, and was thus received by Prefect Balthazar. A copy of this message is below:

To the peoples of the Kern Valley Alliance

Despite some minor misunderstandings between our two peoples there is no ill will harboured between either side. Indeed, without your aid the Mor Silvani would not be where they are now and I would not be the Soul Shriever. Therefore, I wish to repay your aid to my people.

The Mor Silvani have returned to this world and established ourselves in force. We have found a new home and will defend it with zeal and fervour. Our home is off limits to all Towered and Towerless alike unless an invitation is given by myself. Because you have aided my people in the past I give you forewarning to enable you to avoid this area and any potential conflict with the Mor Silvani. I would be saddened to learn that some of your people had been slain due to their ignorance of current affairs.

My people have settled and claimed the area known as Icarus Keep and the Icarthian Triangle to be their new home. It suits us well and is ideal for our purposes. Any who enter the Icarthian Triangle uninvited will be slain and returned to Nature's embrace – effective immediately. You have been warned.

*Kelnozz Hatch'nett
Soul Shriever to the Mor Silvani*

This should come as no surprise if you have read my report from Harvest Moon last year, notably the paragraph:

"Of more interest to me was the influx of Mor Silvani in the area. Although he did not deign to answer the question when spoken from my lips, he did tell others that potentially hundreds of

Mor Silvani will be crossing to our plane (almost enough for a tower...). He said that currently all they desire is a life of peace, and a life free from slavery, but would not answer the same question regarding 10 years hence, except to say that they had no retribution in their hearts. Draw your own conclusions.”

Shadowsfall Announcement

Two Shadowsfall arrived at the building, to announce that the Time of Reckoning was to be held in 7 days time, at the Isle of Greymir.

The Rakshassa

A masked figure swathed in red suddenly appeared in our midst, talking of “blood for blood”. It seems we were due for an audience with his master, whom he named Ar Anwar Garathang (the term ‘Rakshassa’ apparently caused offence), the Lore Master. Maven, of Wolfhold, was the first to offer himself in this respect and the figure duly cut and bound his hand. 13 people were sought, 12 being a mystic number (blood taken from 6, the other 6 their ‘mates’), the 13th being the ‘sacrifice’. The dwarf Beren acted as sacrifice, although I do not believe that he died. We were then transported through time and space to the lair of Ar Anwar Garathang, whom we visited as two groups that each consisted of 3 blooded.

The Rakshassa appeared, saying that “your people did a service for me yesterday” (in fact, it was a year ago), and that he wanted to gain from us a token of our commitment to his cause: “I want to understand you, what would you give your sword for, your life for?” Trying to explain further, he suggested as an example “that the darkness and the world without will be the world within... a promise is not what I require but what I desire.” Eventually he intimated that some sort of personal sacrifice would be considered satisfactory; Maven’s offer, given on my behalf, was perceptible as the only genuine sacrifice. Ar Anwar Garathang then spoke.

“The commitment is firmly made, and I have the results of the experiment that you did yesterday. I am concerned by the results, which suggest the influence of ‘the wolf’, shall we say... the dark shape that rises in the blackness within House Dranath... But not as I had

expected. I had expected to be able to seek out and destroy the one or two in whom it had arisen. It is much worse. I perceive the power, the strength, the might of the wolf risen in Dranath. There is a power arising that in its entirety I recognise of old. The power that scarred me, that gave me these marks upon my face. This power now rouses and wakes in Dranath. It returns and comes again once more. It is powerful and dangerous... the power of the beast; the power of the cult that should not be forgotten: the wolf cult. It arises within the House, deep within. It is not one but a great strength. There is something within the House. They are feral creatures... they resemble the dark elves as they were when they were first formed. The dark elves are different now, having passed through many ages; but those in Dranath return to that old strength. A primeval force of old return to... 'Orin Rakatha', as you call it, who bear traces of this force of old."

He then sounded a chime which indicated the end of our time with him, and saw in the second group. High Priest Daark of the Dark Brethren tells me that the bindings upon a force containing 'the wolf' had recently been broken, and that when Daark enquired as to the representation of the form that had been broken, Ar Anwar Garathang silently showed him a sword. Thus, there is now much speculation that the Mor Silvani, the dark elves, freed since the destruction of the sword Karn'ak Zol Alain, are the ones to whom he was referring.

An Undead Problem

At some point, Wenzel Harberforkington (a tall, bearded human) made his entrance at the waystation. Apparently there are 4 waystations close to the World Window, one of which I witnessed last year being sold to the Reader. The other 3 are under Dai-fah-Dyne control, one for each of the other Marches. The selling of the fourth caused some confusion with regards to the control of the operation of the World Window, which had previously cycled through each of the four Marches.

We became aware of a number of rank 7 fetches outside, which were reciting a list of names whom they were interested in knowing the location of. This list being: "Wolfram, Grappathatch, Melieth, Puke, Kal, Ko Suyama, Soulfire, Taigan-San", and seemingly of interest to someone within the Kalid Steelwind Legion. Shard Farsight controlled one of the fetches and discovered that an Oni was awaiting the answers. Intriguingly, the fetch apparently felt it had failed in its mission and asked if it might destroy itself, which Shard permitted it to do. The Steelwind, although they are known to perform the Ritual of Harrowing upon those who have betrayed their honour, are not known to possess Necromancers among their ranks for this purposes. It is suspected that these fetches were created by those of the Dothloadass Legion, and the way in

which the different Kalid Legions work with each other is of interest.

A Halmadonian Problem

Two of the groups had departed through the World Window, when we were visited by a delegation wearing the colours of Halmaddons Heights. Their leader announced himself as Sir Pontius of the Knights of the Order of Purity, a group dedicated to upholding Law and defeating Chaos. They demanded penitence from the Red Wizard Gilrehyan, for they believed him to have helped destroy the Sword of Law upon the Shadow Glade many years past. Gilrehyan said that he would accept punishment but refused to condemn his actions, eventually the Knights attacked us all. We required information of them, so some were allowed to live. One of their Order then said he regretted attacking an unarmed man, as he had done in that fight.

As we stood by the World Window, Sir Pontius said that we must speak with the hepath named APU HAB. The place has been torn by the Chaos Jester's actions. To speak with APU HAB we must obtain the permission of two who claim realm: APU ILLAPU, and CONGAN HAB.

We then named ourselves to some stones, which we set into the walls of the World Window, so that we might successfully return. A guide upon the Shadow Glade saw us to a nearby building, which we guarded throughout the night.

The Groups Depart

Three groups from the Alliance set forth the next morn: one led by the Druid Tersius, another by High Priest Silverheart, and the third by the Seeker Priest Cirith. The latter group comprised the following:

Wolfhold: Kevralyn Soulfire, 11th Wizard of House Tumdurgul;

White Retreat: Cirith, Seeker Priest; High Priest Djimm Daggoreth of the White Path; Cadet Verrick of the Order of King Michel; Myrrh, White Wizard; Gilrehyan, Red Wizard; Woolf,

Crusader; Pod, Crusader; Beren, Crusader; Caradac, Seeker;

Valley Alliance: High Priest Shard of the Grey Wardens; Knight Defender BloodBark of the Order of Knights Martial; Lupus, Grey Gauntlet Priest; Halomi, Pathfinder;

and we were to seek an audience with Apu Hab himself. We fought some creatures of Nature, and then some undead who by their very presence caused us to be ensnared.

Further along the path we came across a group of 3 Mor Silvani of the Elite Guards. Comments were exchanged, but no conflict ensued, mainly because there are too many pacifists among our group. Words will not always serve our interests. One of their number, named Jihad, observed that I had “no kith” and was thus not a true dark elf. Obviously, this is because drow are a more developed and advanced race.

The Pax Silvani

Venturing further, we were beset by two ‘pine brothers’. Whilst cutting them down, an elf who had befriended these beasts raced in to cure them. He then asked to speak with us, not having had much conversation in the last three years.

His name was Sir Thalios of Talimey, Knight of the Order of the Pax Silvani, and he still wore the colours of Halmaddons Heights. He was one of many who had travelled to the Shadow Glade with Sir Ariel, Grand Knight of the Order of Purity, more than three years ago at the time of the Grant Conjunction. He sought one being who had great strength in nature: Apu Illapu. When he had arrived to the Shadow Glade, it had already been tainted by the Chaos Jester, but the forest was as it should be - the Forest at the Edge of Twilight, where it was never day, never night - eternal twilight.

But the chaos in the land changed many things: then came the sun, and Twilight’s Forest grew in abundance and the darkness was gone... to grow slightly in the fleeting moments when the sun sets but not long enough for to gain a foothold. And thus the land was no longer equal and as it should be. I believe he wished to persuade the realm lord Apu Illapu to break his bond with the land, but since the coming of chaos outsiders were unwelcome, thus his position was already awkward. And things had become increasingly difficult over the past year...

A year ago, around the time of All Hallows Eve, the Mor Silvani came to the Shadow Glade in great numbers. They twisted the nature here with the seed of chaos, and over the passage of the last 12 moons he has fought against it, to be a thorn in the side of the Mor Silvani. When I asked him, he confirmed that the Mor Silvani were indeed responsible for the undead upon the land: they bring forth the unlife, and Apu Illapu grows forever enraged.

He told us that Congan Hab, and Apu Illapu were the Shadow Glade equivalent to a Realm Lord on the Plane of the Sleepless Dead. They are the representations of nature and darkness on this plane, but do not have the equal strengths that they once had. And that Apu Hab is not truly a hepath, but a union.

Seeking Apu Hab

Travelling further, we were attacked by more creatures with split green-black faces, who attacked us with both dark magic and invocations of nature (notably tree-charm). The Pax Silvani then showed us the entrance to a series of dark, underground tunnels in which we might find Apu Hab. Equally, he might also be found within a nearby forest. Naturally I volunteered to travel to the Land Below, and others of slighter build were compelled by virtue of their size to join with me. There were a number of wards over different areas of darkness to the underground; Verrick decided to strike a well-placed bell near one such area as it was declared that we had no time to properly identify all the areas that were recognising as unlevelled magic. This caused two bugbears to burst through another entrance; while the party fought them off I took a closer look at one of the areas of darkness. Just as an elemental is in some way a condensation of magic, here was an area of condensation of the element of darkness, which was seemingly impassable. Our group then fought our way through to enter one of the more welcoming entrances, a number of large rats and corrosive substance plagued the entrance, two Spiders lurked further in.

Travelling through progressively narrower tunnels, we came across a web which had unlevelled magic upon it. My identification showed that to slightly disturb it would cause the element of darkness to collect upon it, should it be overly disturbed this darkness would be released upon the person who did so. Later, Pod triggered this trap and suffered a large darkbolt in doing so. Beyond this web, Woolf encountered a Spider that completely cocooned him in a web, injected poison into him and then started eating his head. Calling back to the entrance, we managed to obtain a potion of antivenom that I knew was possessed within our group, which Verrick

administered just in time to Woolf. We proceeded further to a small chamber wherein we found Apu Hab: a small Spider lurking at the bottom of the dark pit, with red glowing eyes. He said that we must present him with two tokens (rings) before he would speak with us, and asked Verrick - whom he had heard casting - if he (Verrick) could make him 'whole again'. He allowed us to depart so to obtain these tokens: we returned back through the series of tunnels and back into the cold lands above, where eventually all our three groups congregated and debated what action to take.

After much discussion, Cirith decided upon that which Shard Farsight had suggested an hour previously, and we went to fight against the Realm Lord of Nature – to extinguish his candles that held back Darkness – which would bring balance to the Plane. The Nature Realm Lord - who had offered to bind and coerce the weakened Lord of Darkness to do his will - declared that we had made the wrong choice, but could not halt us destroying his minions and achieving our goal. During this time, Harry and some others took to the Lands Below to speak with Apu Hab, the creature of the darkness, and present him the tokens that had been obtained from the two 'realm lords' by the other parties. Returning to the entrance to the Lands Below, those afflicted by the Shadow Disease gave some of their essence to Apu Hab, and we departed through the World Window. There we made our way to a nearby waystation.

Evening Events

While I was meditating or mnemonicizing, apparently a Dai-fah-Dyne trader arrived declaring that to meet end of year targets he would be offering potions and so forth at a discounted rate, and was making a list of all that we were interested in. Later, a group wearing the colours of the Azad-An-Reader (green and red) stormed into the building and attacked this trader. Not stopping to check whether they had successfully killed him, they left declaring "our work here is done", leaving most people non-plussed as to the situation.

I am also informed that the Shadowsfall arrived, and that Wenzel Harberforkington persuaded them to arrest our White Wizard Myrrh, saying that "he is of more interest to you than I am".

Yet more fetches were outside, Balthazar called for some of us to follow its instructions as it had High Priest Silverheart unconscious at its feet with a knife to his throat. Thus, Puke, Kal and I stepped forward where it could see us all; the fetch looked at us all closely, observing myself it said, "ah, that explains the name", and a few seconds later sped off into the darkness.

Delegation from the White Retreat

Duke Hanrow, King Michel's Advisor; Lord Sebastian, Marshall of the Order of King Michel; Sir Arren Hardwicke, Adjutant to Lord Sebastian; and Taraman, Head of the Seeker's Guild arrived bringing with them Moregar's Inheritance. Despite this artefact, I listened to their address to some of those who had travelled to the Shadow Glade, most of the Wolfhold contingent deciding that a period of enforced guard duty was more preferable.

Lord Sebastian announced that King Michel wants to see more of his officers out in the field, and had thus asked all members of his Court to journey forth.

High Priest Silverheart promoted Cirith to High Priest of the Humacti Guild, which was swiftly followed by Taraman promoting the latter to Master Seeker.

Lupus, Priest of the Grey Gauntlet, was awarded the Order of Merit for defending Zephyr against the Ikarthian Ghosts.

We heard that comradeship, trust, friendship and sacrifice are that which being in the White Retreat is all about, and that those there stand by all members of our Alliance come what may; for all our towers strive for a common goal.

It is King Michel's command that all is done to save Wolfhold. And that the contract with the Ritual of Ashes should be fulfilled, for it is in the King's name.

The Kalid now have twice the influence they did before, for they are buying people off instead of fighting with them. The leaders of the Kalid Nation are becoming more involved in Orin Rakatha politics, and there is a rumour that they have established their own court - akin to the one to be found in the White Retreat - an example of their changing ways.

Following Events

A Spider arrived not long after seeking out myself; while I was away some of the elemental constructs (People of Air and Fire, Children of Fire and Stone, Brothers of Water and Stone, Daughters of Air and Water) arrived declaring that they would 'dance' at the Ritual if we could prove ourselves to them. I hear they selected certain people for each of the four teams, unsurprisingly my services were in demand from more than one group.

The next morning, we were assailed by two large groups casting lesser forms of elemental magic, which we took down without much ado.

Another Dai-fah-Dyne Problem

We were startled when an earthquake shook those within waystation, and some Dai-fah-Dyne stormed in and dealt blows to our number. After talking briefly with one of them, he said to himself "their puzzlement seems genuine" before speaking with his master. This latter was Bey Nazier Kahn, whose tribe looks after that particular waystation.

We learned that Wenzel Harberforkington is outcast from the Dai-fah-Dyne and wanted, with 150 Gests upon the presentation of his head. He has many debts, and borrowed much. Apparently his actions had caused those who had been booked into the waystation (Mor Silvani again – do they possess a tower?) to be stranded upon a far plane (the Shadow Glade), and that these few hundred were greatly displeased with the situation.

Cirith then said that he had handed over 150 Gests to a Dai-fah-Dyne in service to Harberforkington (the one who was attacked the previous night by the Reader), this is not the first time that Cirith has been duped into handing over plentiful sums of money. Might I observe that when an offer seems too good to be true, then that is because it is.

We also learned that all 4 waystations are back under Dai-fah-Dyne control, and that two weeks ago the Dai-fah-Dyne actually sold a tower in the Eight Hales (the nearest tower to the Kern Valley Alliance), although they did not disclose to whom this was sold.

The Final Trial

The leaders of the four elemental construct races arrived with a few others in tow. We were divided into two groups: "the hunters" and "the hunted". We had to demonstrate our skills in hiding/fighting with the heads of each race observing that all possible effort was engaged. During the combat, apparently Kal managed to obtain the swords of the Shaman of the Children of Fire and Stone. We were adjudged to have passed their test. They will dance again at the time of the Ritual of Ashes.

By my hand,

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