

The Soul Well - August 2019 HQ

Report from Wulfric Baneguard

Party Members:

Wulfric Baneguard (party leader)
Lady Kevralyn Soulfire (second in command)
Nerak Soulblade
Lancorin
Lord Giles
Driedyn
Dame Layla Mayfield
Knight Aspirant Casper Meadows
Kyle Om'Pak
Neko Maneki
Caradac
Spark
Vilk Bloodmoon
Davros Epsom
Dayleth
Skalgrim Skyfather
Malice
Edvard Le'voire – a guide sent by the Hospital

Objectives:

- Recover Bill Jingle, High Priest of the Hospital, and any other Orin Rakatha citizens who are being taken as slaves
- Destroy the Soul Well, a construct believe to contain the spirit strength of several hundreds of people

Air Day: We travelled to Dai Fah Dyne lands where we were offered hospitality by Bae Nadim Al Farooq of the Dai Fah Dyne, accompanied by Easterling guards of the Iron Brotherhood tribe. He gave us a number of key pieces of information:

- A number of letters recovered from Easterlings of the Sayid tribe that they had slain (written in some form of script similar to power runes)
- Insight into the nature of the black Djinn we knew to be in the region, to help prepare ourselves to defeat them
- Informed us that these aforementioned black Djinn were particularly strong in a nearby area, suggesting some large source of evil power

The letters were swiftly translated by Dame Layla, Casper and Caradac, and were the source of much information:

- This slave trade was under the instruction of the Savage Chieftain, one of the Nine from

Thranduil

- The Soul Well was a means to trap Spirit Strength, with the purpose being to tie it to the forces of the Savage Chieftain
- Wizard slaves had been used to heavily imbue 10,000 red stones with red magic, which were used to buy 5 years of service of an Efreet
- Good priests were being sent to the Savage Chieftain as “entertainment”
- Valuables stolen from the raided caravans were being stored in The Grotto
- The collars need to have a Possession invocation cast upon them to make them permanent, which the priests of Ungoliant were performing (and we later confirmed that a Unshackle Spirit needed to be cast to undo this)
- The slaves, once collared, needed to be taken to a tattooist to be then linked to the Soul Well

We were visited by the Grey Man from the House of the Weaver who advised us that followers of Ungoliant were at the Soul Well and that we were free to attack them without consequence.

Investigating this great source of evil power we were assailed by many black Djinn. If you encounter them then be warned they will drain the power from you, so care must be taken that people are not isolated, as once downed they will be used as a host to grow another Djinn. Once this has occurred, surgery can be conducted to remove it, which should be done as soon as possible to prevent having to fight the Djinn when it is removed. We observed that the usage of a dispel magic will weaken them when first cast upon them, with larger creatures needing more powerful dispels.

The source proved to be the Soul Well, and was guarded by a number of Easterlings, black Djinn, followers of Ungoliant and a Morgul wraith. Whilst fighting in the vicinity of the Soul Well, we found our guardian spirits unable to protect us. A number of the Easterlings fled through a portal to the Plane of the Sleepless Dead, which was tied to the Morgul wraith and collapsed when we slew it.

During this fight, Skalgrim was struck with a Morgul blade which left a fragment inside him, burrowing towards his heart, with us unable to remove it from him safely. In addition both Davros and Knight Aspirant Casper were struck down, but thankfully their souls were not trapped in Soul Well as it was full (although they felt themselves drawn towards it).

We communed and identified the Soul Well, learning that it was connected to 4 spheres, was full with 1,000 souls, and that to destroy it we had to reverse the ritual used to create it and break the bonds its makers.

Water Day:

Edvard examined the portal, and informed us he could track their path through the Plane of the Sleepless Dead. This path led into the Realm of Pain, the Realm of Bone, the Realm of Disease and Decay, the Necropolis, and finally into the Undying Lands.

This journey proved to be a series of near constant fighting withdrawals, until we were granted

12 hours of safe stay in the Necropolis by a death knight Sir Marias de Hal (as thanks for our peoples actions against Cardinaris). It may be of note that we informed him of the status of Calex Wraithspawn, and he seemed interested in discussions about dealing with him.

In the Undying Lands we were graciously hosted by Fingolfin, High King of the Noldor, for an elven banquet. During this moment of rest we were disturbed by the arrival of a number of elven spirits. They bore a personal grudge against Lord Giles, as they had fallen in battle under command of a Valley group, of which Giles had been a member, when they defeated the Messenger (one of the Nine) some ten years ago. Whilst they came to blows, we were able to find an alternative to aid their passing. We were to defeat the force that had slain them, a group of Morgul wraiths, and so were sent by Fingolfin to a fragment in time and accomplished this task. Unfortunately during this fight Nerak was also inflicted with a fragment of a Morgul Blade, and Neko was struck down.

Fingolfin then granted us leave to travel on to Thranduil, where we were immediately assaulted by a group of Barbarians. Once they determined we were not Easterling forces, and their leader had torn off all of Lord Giles limbs with his bare hands, they greeted us very friendly. Their leader introduced himself as Beorn, and generously offered us the use of his nearby lodge as a place to stay.

In addition he furnished us with a great deal of information.

- Warned us about black trolls (which cannot be killed at night) and cave trolls (whose every blow breaks anything it hits) in the area
- Told us of a witch, Alice, in the area who could prepare a potion to remove the Morgul blade fragments from Skalgrim and Nerak
- Informed of a local flower, Athelas, which grows in corrupted areas and which would be needed in the creation of the aforementioned potion
- Told us of the meanings of the various tattoos which the Easterlings have, their left cheek is their tribal marking, their right used as storing of magics and so also their ranking
- Pointed out a nearby area where there were many Easterlings of the Feyzar tribe

Whilst investigating the area – where we defeated a number of Easterlings, uruks, and priests of Ungoliant - we met an elf from Rivendell. He informed us that his companions had been captured and taken inside a nearby structure. Examination of this proved near fatal for Skalgrim, and the arrival of a black troll prompted another fighting withdrawal back to Beorn's lodge.

I will note for any groups that encounter Easterling forces, they have a prevalence of skilled warriors (shield users be warned), relying on their stored magics for support with the occasional powerful sorcerer. Their priests use the neutral sphere and they make use of the followers of Ungoliant for evil power.

Earth Day:

In the morning Beorn informed us that we would be able to meet Alice that evening, and so we made all attempts to gather the Athelas, for which Malice proved invaluable. We then set out to

investigate the Pit of Despair, the name of which had been all Skalgrim was able to learn the previous evening, as the power of evil is lesser during the daytime on Thranduil.

In order to enter the Pit of Despair, one person would need to be smeared with the blood of a chosen one of the Savage Chieftain, and give their spirit to him. Driedyn volunteered for this task, giving his guardian spirit, and covering himself in the blood of the black troll (which we were now able to slay in the daylight).

We determined that the Pit was an access way to a number of demi-planes, in each of which we would only be able to spend an hour, with the additional time constraint being that we had to ensure we had left the Pit before night fell. And we learnt that we could only leave via one of two methods. The first being for us to get permission from the Savage Chieftain, the second being the successful completion of a magical puzzle. Beginning this puzzle would commence the destruction sequence of the demi-planes. Giving us 5 minutes to complete it and successfully be transported out, or being destroyed along with the Pit of Despair.

We made our way through the demi-planes, attempting to move as swiftly as possible in an effort to check all demi-planes to ensure all slaves had been freed before we destroyed the structure. We travelled through them in the following order:

- Governor, where we slew the governor (a Haradrim tattooist) and freed a valley pathfinder
- Architect, where we encountered a Labyrinth of Xenos enchanter, Mobius, who had been tasked with the construction of these planes, under the instruction of High Enchanter Wayland and who could return to Orin Rakatha with any other slaves we freed
- Punishing Room, found no slaves
- Solitary, found no slaves
- Holding cells, freed two valley pathfinders, one Dymwan, one Halmadan's Heights, and one Rivendell elf
- Processing area, freed one Saldorian, who informed us that Bill Jingle had been taken away from the Pit of Despair to the Savage Chieftain

At this point we heard the beating of drums in the deep, getting louder and louder, and since we knew there were no further slaves held in the remaining two demi-planes (guard room and barracks) we decided it was time to leave. Unfortunately we were unable to successfully complete the puzzle in time, and so Skalgrim bravely swore himself to the Savage Chieftain and in doing so bought our escape.

That evening we met with Alice and she was extremely helpful, both providing the recipe for potions to remove the Morgul fragments and helping prepare potions that would protect us against the aura of the Nine. We also observed a change in nature among both Driedyn and Skalgrim, and we discovered that the Savage Chieftain was able to use his links to them to monitor us.

We were then met by a captain of Rivendell, who warned us that our actions had drawn the personal attention of the Savage Chieftain and that he was headed right towards us. During the night we were assailed by Easterlings and a force of Morgul wraiths, during which time a group

of Hashashin captured Dayleth.

Fire Day:

That morning we met with an Ent, who informed us his daughter wished to travel and set up her grove elsewhere. As thanks for this she would open us routes through the forest to allow us to swiftly reach the 4 lieutenants, who we needed to slay and collect their blood and eyes to reverse the ritual of the Soul Well. They proved fierce opponents, but we prevailed.

That evening we prepared for the rescue of Bill and Dayleth. Edvard prepared a ritual for us that would return us to Orin rakatha. This would send an undead through to us, who once instructed to start would send an individual back every 30 seconds, in a pre-determined order.

With this finalized we set off to rescue Bill and Dayleth. Fighting through forces of Uruks, goblins and Morgul wraiths, before finally taking the field against the Savage Chieftain himself. He attempted to possess both Skalgrim and Driedyn, a fate which Driedyn prevented at the cost of his spirit strength. Bill and Dayleth were swiftly freed, whilst others kept the forces arrayed against us occupied, and we were able to successfully return everyone to Orin Rakatha.

Steel Day:

We had now struck a major blow against the slave trade operations on Thranduil, now we just needed to eliminate the Orin Rakatha side. Our first task was to recover the final piece for the ritual, a key stone. This we had determined was being kept in The Grotto, which Caradac had gained information about through his contacts. This was being used for the holding of stolen goods from the raided caravans.

Our young entling guide was once again able to lead us there. It was guarded by Easterlings of the Sayid tribe, and inside we observed Bilig threatening a Dai Fah Dyne traitor with enslavement. We were able to retrieve the key stone, but Bilig and the traitor escaped (and so still needs to be hunted down) using the powers of the Efreet.

We had discovered that Lord Giles, Spark, Nerak and I had been marked by the Savage Chieftain and so he could track us across the planes. Due to this mark we were able to detect that a large number of Easterling forces and a projection of the Savage Chieftain himself had travelled onto Orin Rakatha. We succeeded in destroying these forces and forcing the projection off of Orin Rakatha, and so he will be unable to return for a number of years.

After a brief excursion to retrieve Dame Layla Mayfield - who had inadvertently strayed into the portal during the fight - from the Realm of Bone, we finalized preparations for reversing the ritual. Skalgrim acted as the orchestrator, with Nerak, Lady Kevralyn, Lord Giles, Spark, Neko, Driedyn, Davros and Caradac were all called upon to take part in the ritual, tackling the physical, magical, power and psionic aspects.

We successfully completed the reverse of the ritual, destroying the Soul Well and releasing all the souls who had been trapped within – including 25 members of the Valley who were able to

return to their bodies.

On a more personal note I would like to commend each and every member of this group, we had many trying and testing fights in a number of difficult conditions which could have easily led to disaster. Whilst this account has highlighted some individuals' actions, it would be incorrect to assume these were the only notable persons. But in the interest of a more concise report I have attempted to limit these mentions. But suffice to say if we had been missing any one member we would have not been successful, or at the very least it would have been at much greater cost to ourselves.

Wulfric Baneguard