

The Time of Reckoning

Leaf Fall Moon, The 5th Year after the Cataclysm

Like most active adventurers I was called to muster in support of the Time of Reckoning where I and my group were sent to the Desolations Edge Waystation to provide security and information for the dignitaries passing through to the Central Isle. In what was either the celestial fates shining on me or another example of the strange coincidences those people seem to generate I was assigned to travel with my old companions the Witchfinders. In typical fashion Frank was voted leader by their overwhelming numbers by dint of being out of the room when the nominations were held.

The Group consisted of;

Frank	Sorcerer of the Black School and Party Leader
Albert Von Henken	Witchfinder Sergeant, Reaper Priest
Otto	Reaper Priest
Doktor Tannenbaum	Hospitaller Priest
Anton	Archer
Ulrich	Archer
Damien Von Torsz	White Path Priest
Gruber Von Stolburg	Green Wizard
Helga	Scout
Kreiger Rekke	Warrior
Drake Von Newt	Reaver
Braccus	Sorcerer of the Red School
Myself, Neko	Monk of the Middle Way

Sadly, To the disappointment of all, Gunter did not make it.

Earthday

Much of the day was quiet with various dignitaries passing quietly through to us the Teleport

Network in order to make their way to the Rainbows Landing. Several patrols were undertaken but nothing of interest was found. Until darkness fell.

As we returned from a sweep we found ourselves under attack by a number of undead spirits several black and wraithlike and one particularly powerful spirit in white which Krieger and I engaged and destroyed but leaving Krieger dangerously close to death.

After that bit of excitement, we settled down to see what would occur next and we had a visit from the magistrate of a local village that provided support for the waystation. They had been having issues with various ailments such as crops failing, animals born with two heads, just the sort of thing that our friends the Witchhunters are expert in sniffing out. Having resolved to interview and investigate three women accused of these crimes they began preparing for a trial which would be part of their great Octoberfest celebrations.

FireDay

The day dawned grey and drizzly with very little going on given it was the Time of Reckoning. Still our friends the Witchhunters were all in remarkable spirits despite having a somewhat heavy night as a warmup for their cultural celebrations today.

Breakfast was nearly interrupted by an assault from some hordlings who set themselves up outside and demanded we give them our Sorcerers. Frannk was still in bed but Bracus was around so things inevitably degenerated into a fight. It seems the Wizards Concilium actions last moon have angered the Hordlings greatly.

Regardless of the damp weather we set off to investigate the (alleged) three witches plaguing the waystation which resulted in a short walk through some farmland until we came into the outskirts of the village proper.

Despite supporting the waystation the Hordlings were still very much in evidence and we dealt with a few of their patrols throughout the day.

We also had to fight our way past large numbers of the Spirits that haunted the area. These we now assumed were 'witches familiars' or similar damned souls drawn by the witchy ways of the local hags (alleged).

After a few hours wandering through the drizzle we came across a ritual mat, several candles and some skull devices laid in a secluded wood and sitting a little further away in a clearing was a couple of the local heavies accompanying the first (accused) Witch.

The rest of us took a few minutes rest while Albert and Ulrich lead the interrogations about what the lady was doing in the area and why she was laying evil rituals around the place while Damien and Krieger investigated said ritual. Something seemed to start infecting anyone interacting with the ritual making them highly amorous and in some cases very creepy. Drake and I made sure we were positioned well away from the main group to avoid both becoming afflicted and the overly familiar approaches of our adventuring companions.

After some time it was decided that the accused would be brought to the Mayors home where the widow of the previous Mayor (Also one of the accused) lived. Albert declared that a public Trial by Trial would be carried out for all three women in order to demonstrate the fairness and balanced approach to Witch Trials ahead of the executions.

With initial investigations done we headed back off towards to Mayors house fighting our way through some more Hordlings on the way. Arriving back in time for a spot of late lunch.

Delicious.

Over lunch we received the first of an ongoing series of messages describing the situation at Rainbows landing and with the Time of Reckoning in general. I will not repeat them all here but instead refer you to Jeremiahs Journal for the details as they are no directly pertinent to our mission (until the very end).

The Mayors wife also made an appearance at this point and her potential witchery was investigated which lead to a laboratory of potions being discovered in a cellar that was absolutely crawling with Rats and Spiders which we ended up fighting for quite some time. Also more of the strange spirits would appear now and then for unclear reasons.

Once the cellar team had recovered the considerable stash of herbal and alchemical equipment from the lab our resident experts began to examine it while the room was rearranged for the public trial ahead of the evenings meal and from what I assumed from experience of

Octoberfest with the Witchhunters before a considerable amount of drinking. The final accused was brought in shortly ahead of the trial beginning and she was utterly barking mad. Fortunately she had excellent fashion sense and chose myself as her defence council. Drake represented the lady with the casting equipment while Anton stepping away from this companions usual position chose to eloquently defend the Mayors wife.

The principle elements of the case boiled down to;

The men of the village required herbal aid in the bedroom department from the mad woman

The men of the village were bloody idiots and left chickens to be eaten by foxes and then called it prophecy because the Mayors wife had told them to put them away before they were eaten by foxes (and they didn't)

The casting mat was _another_ form of marital aid for one of the men and the lady he gave it to was very friendly.

That the mayors widow kept feral cats (vicious creatures too but still surely evidence for the defence rather than prosecution?)

In a most gratifying and surprising result (given all the discussion about the type of executions we were going to have) all three women were found not guilty and as the verdict was read out the Magistrate (who had invited us hear to investigate) was instead summoned (no pun intended) to stand before the court. Before he did however he called upon his infernal pacts of darkness damning himself from his own mouth and possessed Krieger to kill the Mayors widow.

Meanwhile Otto having been informed of the potential problem by Albert leapt after the fleeing Magistrate and brought him swiftly to justice. For a fleeting second his skill, speed and talent made him look a bit like Gunter in the right light. . it was that good.

It seems the entire thing was a ploy for power where the Magistrate was trying to take control of the village and used his own witchery to set the other women up to try and remove the widow. Despite having slain the witch the beginning of the celebrations were interrupted a number of times by villagers that were seemingly possessed by hepatic powers with symbols carved into their flesh. Obviously, this witch was part of a wider coven that the Witchhunters are wrapped up in.

The OctoberFest celebrations continued late into the night while further updates came in on the Time of Reckoning which sounded very bad. We were asked to watch out of River people and protect them as well as continue to monitor and protect the waystation.

Steel Day

The day began in good form despite the night's celebrations although the background concern about the outcome of the Time of Reckoning and the lack of news weighed on some of our group.

After breakfast a Thessessin appeared with news from the waters that a River Person was in trouble some distance away. He implored us for help and offered to assist our rapid transport down the river to her.

We swiftly prepared and moved out travelling rapidly down the waters to what appeared to be a natural cove on the river. Helga and I spread out to scout the area and quickly spotted a running figure in the bright colours of a river person being harried from multiple directions by Shadowsfall. These individuals were well armed and powerful although they bore no contract marks suggesting they were operating under their own direction.

We engaged the shadowsfall in several locations spread around the a body of shallow water. Helga and I dealt with one particularly keen fellow who was bearing down on the traumatised River Person and then proceeded to guard her while our disparate groups finished off the scattered assassins.

It seems that the Shadowsfall had attacked the boats and killed many of ferrymen before the survivors fled and had been running for a day and a half harried all the way by Shadowsfall hunting parties.

We set off again disguising our new charge with coat and hat from Damien (being sure that his outer garb had not Valley Symbols) expecting further attacks. We dealt with more hordlings rambling around attempting to keep things quiet as we made our way quickly back to something approximating safety.

We then came across a group of the Circle Aflame who announced that they had lost their Nation lands at the Time of Reckoning and that it was clearly the Valleys fault and then proceeded to attack us. We dealt with them but it was concerning news which was quickly ratified as new messages began to appear regularly from this point on informing us that almost

all Nations seemed to have fallen as a result of not presenting their status.

Not far from the main trade route back to Desolations Edge we came across another group of Shadowsfall clearly looking for someone. They spent some time eyeing up our group and searching for their target but the adhoc disguise seemed to confuse them. Clearly believing we were interfering in their business they attacked anyway once again splitting up allowing us to pick them off in smaller groups.

We moved on quickly past some Hordlings only to be attacked by a rabid Shadowsfall on his own screaming and running almost straight on our weapons. Most strange. It was an ambush that may have worked a few moments before while we were distracted with the Hordlings. With that we escaped the local environs and returned on the trade route back to the waystation for a well earned lunch and a nap.

After lunch we headed back to draw off some of the Dehori forces who were apparently attacking some members of the Sacred Sword nearby in order to allow them to destroy the ringleaders while we cleared their chaff.

The chaff turned out to be pretty potent. A large group of spirits lead by a mighty pair in a Spirit of Cursing and a Spirit of Fear accompanied by many Wraiths and Spirits initially went through our group like a scythe through wheat until a meagre few of us managed to pull together and hold the Greater spirits off while Doktor Tannebaum got many of our companions back from various states of unconsciousness while Damien and Gruber dealt with the Greater Spirits.

After this battle our resources were lower than they had been all mission and we scabbled around to move power and do some quick meds where we could. Having done this as efficiently as possible we pushed ahead and found the Necromancer and his entourage that we dealt with swiftly and with far less trouble than his spirity minions (when the front line may be armed with more than 3 daggers things do tend to work better).

With our work complete we headed back to the waystation for a well earned dinner and a nap (or two).

During the evening we were interrupted by the Asgard who had also lost their Nation and were

not happy about it so wanted to commit suicide by combat (as far as I could tell, they certainly didn't achieve anything else of use).

After dinner the Blue Sorcerer from the Wizards Concilium who we had been speaking to for the past couple of days was revealed to be under attack while attempted to return to the ex-Concilium lands (yes they lost their Nation too). We went to see what was going on and it turned out to be spiders so they absolutely deserved the beating they got. There were also a number of House of the Weaver assassins with them Spiders (or vice-versa) which we also slew. I was not clear on the point of the attack?

Returning to the waystation for a brief nap and a chat (and possibly to finish up the dregs left over from OctoberFest) we thought our mission was drawing to a close. Instead it was revealed that not only had the Kalid regained their lands but they were moving into the area of the Dragur Forest and Marsh remarkably close to the Desolations edge. A teleport Specialist was apparently on their way to extract us before things turned dog-shaped (we extend our sincere thanks to Zephyr for the extraction).

We settled in at our new location (the New Inn waystation comfortably nearer the Valley) for a quick nap and a final snifter when we received a visitor. Kiara, Oracle of the Darkwind within the Fortress of Pentar (who sadly kept their lands) appeared before us and gave us a vision.

It turns out that the Oracle handover did not occur last month as it should have done. Instead Talon Stormherald (Shadowsfall Leader) did something which masked the connection between the Oracles and their mystics which left Brae as the sitting Oracle. Judge Flam called on the power of the Mother and Father who responded by destroying Brae (despite the protections he would have and the fact that Flam and Brae both confirmed that Shadowsfall will not attack eachother even if one is of the Rise. This then correctly ensured that Kiara was the sitting Oracle. They then revealed that the Shadowsfall had captured or killed many of the River people to prevent the Time of Reckoning being successfully completed. Only a few Nations made it through. Dire times indeed. We shall see what the next moon brings.

Mr Neko