

The lads and me have been with the Kern Valley Alliance for a number of months now since being recruited on Murandir with most of the clan ending up in the recently renamed "Fortunes Keep". This therefore was our first mission out with some sort of clue about what Orin Rakatha was all about. The general gist was that at some point in the not too distant past someone from the alliance bugged up some ritual or other and released "The North Wind" which is now blowing about causing all sort of nuisance across the breadth of the land. In particular a strange elemental cloud had apparently formed over the Summer Meadows and what is apparently a fairly large group of adventurers was sent out to investigate.

Our group:

- Jon Barleycorn - Druid and party leader
- Drokak Greyspire - Dark Path Priest
- Gomerick Greyspire - Grey Path Priest
- Ivak Duhm Greyspire - Trainee
- Nobby Greyspire - Journeyman Scout
- Kelvin - Mage of the White School, Accountant & Voice of Reason
- Colin "the Brave" - Priest of the Hospital
- Doghair - Grey Path Priest
- "Strap on" Molly - Priestess of the Hospital
- Huran - Red Mage
- Huran's wife/sister/daughter/niece/granddaughter/aunt/2nd cousin etc etc (sorry I missed the name - Blue Mage who wasn't well so we didn't see much of her
- Tarquin - Grey Gauntlet. Professional floor investigator!

The other group:

- Rancor - Grey Sorcerer, Humacti and Hero
- Obelisk - Rock, Warrior, Hero.
- Leitha Faye - Crusader Veteran
- Spingle - Goblin Warrior, Tower Namer, all round good laugh
- Bracken - Drunken Scout
- "Captive" Jack - Also known as Captain. . lead a group of pirates.
- Beren - Ginger Dwarf
- Lei Fung - Warrior
- A Large group of pirates with names like "Plank", "Bloody Mary" and "Vomit". Can't say I caught all the names but those boys sure could drink.

## FireDay Evening

We set off from the halfway house on a scouting patrol on the look out for anything cloud related

and generally poke about and find out what was going on.

Before we'd gone more than ten minutes Nobby spotted four shadowy figures ahead and we moved up to investigate. Turns out these things were some kind of hostile planty elemental type creature. They hit like angry bugbears on a three day drinking binge and caused foul diseases and vicious wounds in addition to their blows. The fight got messy fast with the realisation that aside from Ivak everyone else was either "2nd Rank" or "Flanker" which meant a somewhat ill defined fighting style. In the end the final one was battered to pieces and sank into the forest floor and Molly tended to Tarquin who was taking his first (of many) trips to the floor close to death.

Not knowing what the appearance of these creatures heralded, no one could really define what they were, we carried on.

It wasn't long before we got a report of four shadowy figures on the path ahead. Before we had a chance to speak to them lightening crackled from their bodies into our armoured bodies and we had a fight on with what seemed to be small animate thunderclouds! Most disconcerting! Fortunately for us Kelvins initial fears that these may be creatures only affected by magic turned out to be paranoia and we dissipated them in the usual fashion (repeated heavy blows to the head). This seemed more like the type of thing we were expecting so we figured we were in the right sort of place.

Not too much later we met more cloudy/windy type creatures but this time we were more prepared having been told to expect four shadowy figures along the path. These ones seemed to use a mixture of cold magic and evil power to hassle us but they were ultimately dealt with in the same fashion as the previous group.

We rested a brief while at this point, passing around hipflasks and taking stock of the situation ("battered" was the general feeling) when Nobby came running back from his scouting mission warning us that there were four shadowy figures lying in wait to ambush us.

As we approached we could hear what could only be described as a castrated minotaur bellowing in the bushes, some of which were oinking (the bushes that is). It turns out the "Hambush" was a group of Goblin-like Hordlings who blathered on about a "Warlord" and complaining that unless they went out and died heroically he was going to kill them off permanently. It seems that the area was suffering (possibly due to the lack of a Mistweaver) and the Hordlings had started fighting amongst themselves while this "Warlord" seized some power of his own. All very confusing.

While we recovered from the vicious battle with the hordlings (read: we picked Tarquin up from the ground again) Nobby went off tirelessly scouting ahead for us as he did for the duration of the mission. This time he returned quickly warning us that there were four shadowy figures ahead barring the way.

As they came into sight they declared themselves members of the Earthwarp (some confusion over whether they were still Kalid, they ain't they are in the Shrouded Tower which doesn't really

have a group adjective) and a fight kicked off in typical fashion (“get off our path”, “piss off this is our lands”, “what are you doing”, “we’re just meddling and doing evil rituals so push off” etc etc) and our usual frenetic scatter to the winds fighting style once again proved to be to our enemies benefit as several people were beaten into the floor and generally made a mess of. We rallied eventually and with some well timed axe throwing and a couple of invocations we tipped the balance and eventually put them all down.

At this point we decided to meditate in some nearby bushes. With nearly everyone down Nobby and I kept watch.

Close to the end of the meditations we saw a number of figures shambling towards us. It seemed that some undead had wandered out of the Aldonar tombs to give the living a kicking. In a slightly more organised fight (aside from Gomic and I playing “who can get hit by the big zombie the most”) we put the undead things back to rest and patched up the fallen (yes you know who by now).

Nobby came back almost as soon as we were ready to set off warning us of four shadowy figures making their way in this direction.

The two scouts we met (also from the Earthwarp) were not interested in violence (shockingly when outnumbered 5 to 1) and were quite happy to tell us that they were busy ferrying messages between groups of earthwarp in the area under the orders of their bosses-bosses-bosses-bosses-bosses-bosses-boss someone called “The Unseeing” apparently. In the end however Jons enmity of the Earthwarp won over the liberal minority and the orders were given to put them in the ground.

It was then that Nobby announced that four shadowy figures carrying lights were approaching. Turns out this was the other group coming back from killing and looting an Earthwarp group. They were carrying a focal object of some kind with them which warranted more study. So as a large group we set off back to the halfway house for beer and cake. For some there was also an early night for others it was quite a late morning (Nobby I am looking at you!).

## Steelday

It was a slow start on Steelday with many of the group laid low by excessive drinking and late night debauchery. Sadly I broke myself early and missed most of that. A few Bacon butties eaten and people started to doze off again obviously feeling full from their hearty breakfast. Some people seemed unduly worried about this situation and proceeded to kick people awake. Gomic and I found some comfy chairs and made the best of it.

As it turned out the sleepiness was herald to the arrival of a large group of spirits of the north wind who entered the building and drove most outside. Apparently Gomic and I were missed in the chivvying and were left dozing for some time. By the time we awoke many of the spirits had already been dissipated and we waded in to help clear the rest out.

Orders arrived in the guise of a sorcerer from the blue and green schools. Jon was told to take us lot on patrol to try and recover the remaining focal items that the Kalid were using to hold a bit of the North Wind in the summer meadows. So we sent Nobby off for a scout in the right direction and loaded the beer up.

Nobby returned with the news that four shadowy figures were guarding a path up through some tightly packed gorse so with no point in subtlety we set off to talk to them.

The figure on the path declared himself a champion of Sandaster and gave us some bollocks about earthwalkers being eliminated and that we were lower than low because we lived under the ground not over it. Needless to say diplomacy broken down heavily at this point and a fairly stiff fight resulted.

Nobby returned having not, as previously speculated and boasted about by Sandasters ponces, dead in a bush after all. He had spotted 4 shadowy figures in a clearing ahead apparently guarding something on the floor behind them.

The figures turned out to be a small group of Earthwarp with a large earthy elemental beast thing which acted as a bodyguard. They were protecting a small ritual site with what was clearly a focal object thing on top. We offered them the chance to hand it, and any other valuables, over but as per usual they didn't go for it so Jon gleefully said it was killing time.

Given the terrain this fight didn't suit us and it ended up with a Tarquin having a nap (again) which gave us the chance for a beer while it pulled himself together.

Nobby meanwhile had spied four shadowy figures over the rise and down in a small dell. From the description we suspected more evil and cold windy spirits. They were and despite ongoing attempts to form up on some rather sharp barbed wire we put them down and decided that it was time for a med and power shuffle. During this brief pause we sent Nobby back for more beer as we were practically out at this point.

There was some confusion at this point as to whether we were pushing back or moving on further with the patrol. As it turns out it was a bit of a both as we took a meandering path through the woods checking for more Earthwarp.

Nobby spotted four of them being shadowy in a bush ahead so we cracked on and cracked their heads taking another pile of casting kit and loot from the elemental guardian in the bottom of a pit.

The remainder of the patrol was much of the same. More spirits of the storm, some more kalid, another pile of ritual kit which we added to the pile. We continued in that vein for a couple of hours until the beer got dangerously low and we headed back to the halfway house to resupply and eat lunch.

When we got back we handed the retrieved items over to the Sorcerer for investigation and got chatting with the other party. Turns out the "Warlord" we had heard mentioned had got a small

group of Ogre Magi in the area. The other group had killed four of them but one had fled wounded. Once we had eaten we were to go and sort him out while they went off and did something else.

Lunch was great.

We set off on the most convoluted route ever to try and locate the Ogre Magi in question. We fought our way through more of the Sandaster blokes (which were apparently memories of previous windy things brought forth by the north winds presence according to some anyway), Wind Spirits, Cold Spirits, Hordlings (Trolls and Goblins) and generally had a bit of a kicking.

Nobby went off ahead and came back with a report of four shadowy figures. So we engaged the Ogre Magi (and his five mates) in question and the darkness of the mines took him whole (in the back while Ivak kept him busy). He was claiming to be the Warlord which didn't quite tie up with our description of an eight foot tall killing machine with a bodyguard of warrior trolls that killed forty Shadowsfall as though they were a team of Tarquins. But who are we to argue?

Job done we headed back thinking fondly of more beer and dinner.

We met a few troublesome spirits on the return but nothing special.

Back at the halfway house we found out that the other group had located the trouble making Earthwarp ritualist and kicked their heads in which would apparently disperse the cloud (more on this later) and had plans afoot to go to the plane of sleepless dead for some reasons that completely escape me.

We had dinner which was great and beer which was also great.

During dinner there was some ho-ha when three Wolfholders arrived and announced that Raven is going back to Murandir to form the Dark Brotherhood again while Arakis was taking over running Wolfhold proper rather than as a regent. Everyone from Wolfhold was asked to sign a bit of paper declaring where their allegiances lie. Being in Fortunes Keep seems to have paid off so far cause lets face it either way that list is trouble.

After dinner it wasn't at all clear to me what were supposed to be doing. The other group set off to the plane of sleepless dead to find some dead lizard or somesuch meanwhile we left the warm comfortable beer filled room why exactly? I can't recall at all (as I said dinner was great so was the beer).

Anyway we set out and did. . stuff. . . Oh hang on I remember. It was so horrible I blanked it out.

During dinner we had arrived on Tharanduil and we set of do some politicking with the local Arnorians. Barely two hundred yards from the halfway house Nobby spotted four shadowy figures in a keep on the side of the road. As a result we got our arses totally handed to us by a bunch of spoggy patrol Morgothians who hit as hard as the Ogre Magi we fought earlier.

Frankly I see where Tharanduil gets it's rep from and I for one don't plan on going back.

Needless to say we pressed on carefully. Gomic and I managed to do some fast talking to get some wild Uruks to clear our way of further Morgothians and we eventually made our way to a fallen castle where Jon and Kelvin tried to offer the Arnorians the crappiest sounding deal I've seen since some bloke called Quentin tried to sell me a cart when we first arrived at Fortunes Keep.

Despite the aforementioned crappiness things seemed to go well and everyone went off to talk to the people who could actually make decisions.

We bumped into the returning plane of sleepless dead visitors who were complaining that one of their blokes was dying of poison. Not realising it wasn't really fatal we wasted the only item of neutralise poison we had (well Ivak had) on it to shut the bleating up. The other group were leading around a dead Lizard who was being obnoxious. We left him behind and headed back to beer as things were getting dangerously sober by this point.

On the way back we were assailed by a large force of four shadowy Morgothians and Uruks that Nobby spotted a mile away. With much "watching of flanks" and chivving by Leitha Faye things basically turned to mayhem. The purple boys formed a little group near the back and lured Uruks in one by one to be poked to death by team Pokey (Hurun, Kelvin and Jon). Once they were successfully killed and looted, now utterly desperate for beer, we ran back to the waystation listening to the crys of the stragglers who were in serious danger of being left behind on that sphere-forsaken plane as the halfway house completed it's transition back to Orin Rakatha (or was it Murandir. . the beer was very good).

## SunDay – The Deluge

Morning arrived and the pirates and associated hangers on were pretty much decimated by the nights drinking with only Spingle, Leitha and Obelisk making an appearance aside from to collect a bacon sandwich while looking very green.

The Sorcerer from the previous night returned to give us the cheery news that the Storm Cloud seemed to be breaking up, unfortunately it was going to be all over us. We were given enough warning to scoff breakfast and have a beer before the trouble really started.

The morning the consisted of repeated waves of four shadowy elemental things each lead by a lord or lady of some kind. Windy ones with an Archer Lord, Cold ones with a really cranky Bride, Lightening ones with a lord in very fancy pyjamas and a black one that made everyone really really weak and have us much amusement.

We fought off each wave in succession with varying degrees of success. When we finally felled the last one with power running low (the Hospittalers had both been broken out of their meds during a particularly dire fight by a brave and selfless scouting action!) all four of the lords and their respective retinues appeared on the horizon and proceeded to advance and give us the

biggest shitkicking we'd had in a long while. The fight raged on for ages until eventually we pulled our thumbs out of our arses and started doing things Greyspire Style (surround one enemy, beat it to death without worrying about the rest of the battle) once a few fell things turned in our favour and we had some beer and rejoiced that the weather had improved and the summer meadows was once again a burning hellhole with the gaze of the sun punishing us continually with it's heat and light. .. wait why did we do this again? It's always either too cold or too hot up here so I guess we can't win either way.

Anyway the Summer Meadows mission was a resounding success. Leitha Fay finally got a sword he's been wanting for ages and we made some profit (although not a lot it has to be said) and Tarquin only nearly died forty-seven times. So everyone is a winner.

Oh and Nobby's scouting is great. Regardless of what people say.

Drokal Greyspire