

When worlds collide mission report

By Ichabod, Wizard of the Blue School.

Group

Randolphin - Sorcerer and party leader,
Jack - Druid,
Kalliste - Champion ranger,
Irwin - Champion corsair and battle caller,
Anthrax - High priest of the Chorien,
Sutnac - High priest of the Chorien,
Garret - Master scout,
Vallen - Priest of the reaper sect,
Woolf - Humacti warrior and priest,
Ichabod - Wizard of the blue school,
Shard Farsight - High priest of the warden sect.

Mission

The group was tasked with acting on the information gained on the recent Gilden Far mission on behalf of High Priest Hagan. This principally involves finding access to the realm of The Dark Pass on The Plane of the Sleepless Dead, locating the Soul Garden there and retrieving from it a Vere essence crystal.

Earth Day

Our group had travelled to the vicinity of the Aldonar Tombs in order to join up with an Humacti group who had already established a base of operations there. On the outskirts we encountered a Darkholme scout name Saladine who announced himself a contender for the position of the Baron of the Darkholme scouts. He required our assistance in completing a ritual in a location not far from where we were and we acquiesced. After a short walk we encountered a number of Kalid of the 4th Legion, who were slain. Further along we met a larger force of Kalid, who had with them two dreamers. These were slain by Saladine during the battle. Saladine started his ritual. It was intended to invoke the Dreadlord to appear and Shard later mentioned that it sounded very reminiscent of the ritual The Chosen used to invoke the Great Lord of the Dark. Regrettably, Saladine did not complete his third recitation of the incantation as a large (15+) force of Kalid appeared. We suspect they were the force being projected by the dreamers and had now been forcibly returned. After the Kalid were slain we realised Saladine had disappeared and only a package and letter remained. The letter was from The Darkbringer to The Dreadlord entreating him to return to the tower. It seems he has

been absent for some time. The package contained a missive from Lord Carfleen to The Dreadlord asking him to join him, sweetened with the promise of great power. With little else we could accomplish regarding this, we continued on our way to meet with the Humacti.

Before the Humacti camp we encountered a number of elementals of varying colours who posed no great threat to the group.

At the Humacti camp we met with Woolf, who was to continue on our journey with us. He said the Humacti had left before us to commune with Humact nearer the tombs. Shortly, Damian of the Humacti arrived to give to me the good aligned Aldonar artefact (totem). Our tower had agreed to act as an intermediary between The Dymwan and Halmadons Heights on the matter of the Aldonar totems. The Darkbringer had asked me to ensure that the meeting went smoothly and to extract payment of a loan of the totems for 1 month. I agreed with Randolphin that he would speak with the Dymwan representative, one Halborn Blight, and I the Halmadonian, Truthseeker Mayvar, whom I had met with before. We agreed to speak with them separately and to get them to individually agree to our terms before the meeting took place.

Within a spells duration we moved a little way out of the base to await the delegates. Halborn arrived first and Randolphin spoke with him. Then Mayvar arrived and I spoke with him. He was even more surly and self assured than I remembered him. He quibbled about the arrangement we required but acquiesced if the Dymwan were to give over theirs first. As the two parties approached there was some taunting between the two. Halborn gave me their totem but Mayvar did not and began to attack the Dymwan. I tried to stop the fight but it seems the Sorceror was more than a match for the Halmadonian and he was soon dead, scorched under a number of pillars of flame. The Halmadonian second took charge, a High Priest named Foster, and called a cease to the fight. He subsequently agreed to the terms of the agreement and gave us their totem. Randolphin gave a promise on behalf of our tower to honour the agreement we had made and that we'd not use it against the Halmadonians. I also promised for myself. Halborn said that the totem he had given me was the neutrally aligned one and was required to control the other two. Foster said that the totem they had given was the evil one and the most powerful of the three as the evil sphere was in ascendancy. The groups departed and we returned to the Humacti camp.

Back at the camp, Priest Polis of the Humacti made a welcome visit. He said that Hagan had been communing with Humact and had fallen down, unable to be revived. They had secreted him within a cleaned tomb with some attendants to keep him safe. Further, he said that the Humacti thought that the spirit seen in our dreams may well not be of Humact, rather as I had begun to suspect, but they knew not what it could be. The plan to recover and release the essences, however, is still a good one and they'd like us to continue. We agreed. Polis said that the Hospitallers had examined Randolphin and concluded that he was dead. The magical energies keeping his body working and 'mind' functioning were gradually decaying and would last no longer than 6 months. Further damage to his body would lead to increased entropy and loss of ability. We discussed whether he may be saved in some way. I conjectured that if we found a spirit with no mind, or one whom wished for oblivion, then it may be possible to find a way to merge Randolphin's mind with this spirit and force it to inhabit the constructs body once again. There were a lot of ifs in that conversation however.

Our mission on Orin Rakatha now complete, we asked Anthrax and Sutnac to summon the Chorien to facilitate transport to the Dark Pass. They had thoughtfully brought one of the Kalid, still living, to provide the soul the Chorien would require as payment. The Chorien appeared as

a cowed figure with a scythe grasped in his skeletal fingers. He asked why we wished to travel to the Dark Pass and he approved of our plan to destroy the Soul Garden there. He also said that it would be a one way trip. Anthrax and Sutnac introduced Vallan to the Chorien as a promising priest but I don't believe that Vallan dedicated himself to him. The Chorien would also transport the 6 Humacti and their camp to the Dark Pass in the morning. Anthrax and Sutnac would be guided to a symbolic crossing place to make the transfer.

Fireday

A Lampblack arrived and curtly asked for the three totems we had collected. These were given over into his safe-keeping.

We departed to follow Anthrax and Sutnac to the sympathetic crossing point the Chorien had selected. On route we encountered some Kalid 4th Legion, who seem to be infesting the Aldonar tomb area, and some Dymwan. The Dymwan had a letter from 'Number Seven' to Sir Drakken, who we later discovered to be a Death Knight. It informed him that Xoriayn had set up a perimeter on Dark Pass and that Wraithspawn was returning to Orin Rakatha.

Symbolically, we jumped across a small river and shifted to the Plane of the Sleepless Dead. The area seemed very like where we had left. It was well named the Mirror Realm, although the Chorien had advised us that it was not a reflection and we would not meet ourselves.

We soon had confirmation of our arrival on the dead plane by an attack of undead with some unusual blood creatures that could attract life and draw blood from living creatures. They were also able to repair the lesser undead around them. Shortly after that we encountered a white faced creature dressed in white and green. He introduced himself as Gith Anmar Mithyaki, one of the Githyanki race it transpires, who serves the realm lord on Dark Pass, Janus. He confirmed, when I enquired, that the gold faced Dymwan on Dark Pass are in fact of the race of Aldonar who were thrown here during the catastrophe (actually I laterly learnt this is not the whole truth). I discussed Randolphin's situation with him and he confirmed that it may be possible to merge his mind and a vacant spirit together but suggested that a young, weak spirit would be required to be dominated and I would not countenance such a thing. The Gith noticed that Randolphin had a cord of mind travelling from his body back to Orin Rakatha. When he asked about us and our purpose I told him that we were seeking to release a spirit (or spirits) to the beyond and he said he would need to consult his master Janus about us. He said that our Humacti companions had been taken by another of his kind.

We travelled to where the Humacti camp had arrived on the Dark Pass to find it occupied by Dymwan led by one Calix Wraithspawn, whom I had met at Gilden Far. He wished to speak with us to find out what we were up to. He told me that his adjutant, Xoriayn, had found the Soul Garden and had taken a force to secure it with the aid of a Dye-Fah Dyne merchant named Darius Sophene. In return, I told him that Xoriayn was a traitor to him and showed him the evidence I had recovered at Gilden Far. He said he had to return back to Orin Rakatha to report to Cardinaris, but that he was happy for us to continue to pursue Xoriayn and the Soul Garden. He said our best bet to track Xoraiyn was to find the merchant as he'd know where to find the Soul Garden.

After a short rest we set off in the direction that Calix gave us to find Darius Sophene. The area was infested with groups of undead and blood creatures and we finally met up with Darius being pursued by a final group of these creatures. Grateful for his release, he gave us his full

name, which was Darius Sophene, Sultan of the Ruling Crescent of the Northern Marches, and further directions towards the area of the Soul Garden. He suggested that we tread carefully as there were many blood creatures in the area but if we went quietly we may escape their notice. We thanked him and moved on towards an area of woodland.

We next encountered a group of aged Halmadonians. They said that their mission was a kind of active retirement from Orin Rakatha and that they had taken it upon themselves to stay in the Mirror Realm and attempt to help the mortals trapped here. The mortals on the Mirror Realm are effectively bred as blood stock for the vampiric gold faced Dymwan (Aldonar) who controlled the realm. Since they have been here, they have noticed the arrival of a benevolent spirit whose influence has helped improve their standard of living. They were very reticent about the removal of this spirit and the possible detrimental effects on the locals. They also said that the local mortals did not perceive their condition and that we should endeavour not to enlighten them. The Soul Garden was within the local area but that we would have to search for it.

Starting our search for the Soul Garden we encountered a solitary Dymwan High Priest who wanted to know what we were up to and when we were evasive, he influenced Irwin to take the party leadership and to tell him what was going on. During the confusion, he managed to slip away alive. A little further down the path there was a group of more combative and shortly dead, Dymwan.

Walking on we saw, through the trees a number of creatures in green and black. These turned out to be poison creatures aligned to Set, possibly placed there by an Axion watcher. They were attempting to find an entry to a rather ramshackle area that had a large ward surrounding it. Once the creatures had been dealt with we found we were unable to cross the ward so although we had found the Soul Garden, we were unable to enter it.

Heading back to our camp we passed through the local mortals. They split themselves along faction lines, some of them resembling the towers of Orin Rakatha. They seemed very busy with their own affairs, which curiously seemed to follow the recent history of the real Orin Rakatha. Two factions were of particular help to us however. Firstly, the Shadowfall faction were able to de-taint the potions we recovered from Gilden Far so that they could be used by the locals on the Mirror Realm. This gave us some trading power (other than muscle). Secondly, the seeress of the Jewelled Pavillion had a vision and performed a play of it which indicated that we should help them and they would help us. I believe their help to us is contained in the play they performed but this still remains a mystery to me.

The Shadowfall faction also gave to us some scrolls in a rune set I had not encountered before. Once deciphered this turned out to be the history of Marius Seren, an apprentice and colleague of Cardinaris from before the Great Catastrophe of the Aldonar (or more properly, the Ral). This information took some time to decipher but basically detailed his early years with Cardinaris, the move to Orin Rakatha where he was exiled from the Dymwan tower and joined the Elementalists in the Aldonar tower. Subsequently, it deals with the scheme of Dymwan to entomb the Aldonar and Marius' attempt to hide the Aldonar royal family by secreting them on the Realm of Dark Pass where one named Janus (one of the Ral thrown there during the great catastrophe, incidentally when the realm itself was created) was realm lord and not in the tombs. Regrettably, although Janus allowed Marius to do this, he eventually betrayed him as the Royal Family were overcome with vampirism. At a more recent point, when Cardinaris embodied the Plane of the Sleepless Dead, the presence of the Soul Garden seems to have accidentally created the Mirror Realm within Dark Pass. This history was recorded by one

Amorteph, who may be an Axion.

Woolf experienced a dream of a Humacti under attack. A little later the Humacti spirit arrived to speak with Woolf. It seemed that it does want to be released from the Soul Garden and that there is also only a single jar remaining in the garden, which is his. He also said that the spirit of Nathan was there.

Darius' scouts arrived to say that they had located Xoriayn, not far from our camp and he was undertaking some kind of ritual. We undertook immediately to intercept and kill him. Before we could reach him we had to overcome more undead and blood creatures and Kalid. Also we encountered the Aldonar Chancellor of Janus who was most upset that Anthrax and Sutnac had briefly battled several of his kin among the faction camp earlier during the day. He advised us to leave the Dark Pass by nightfall the next day.

The ritual was successfully broken. I believe it was designed to ultimately destroy the spirit of the Humacti so that they could enter the Soul Garden. On Xoriayn we found a letter from Tiresias alerting Xoriayn to our interference at Gilden Far. It also stated that Tiresias was to arrive on the Dark Pass via the Realms of Pain and Disease and Decay. Presumably, he was visiting there to retrieve the essence crystals he needs.

Steel Day

Over breakfast I spoke with a Dymwan (the whole area had a strange suppression effect so there was no conflict of any kind) named Rigor Mortis, who claimed to be of family Seren. This surprised me and I enquired about his heritage but he became rather frosty so I dropped the matter.

At camp, the group of Halmadonian retirees passed through saying that a large force of Dymwan and entered the plane and they would destabilise the area if left unchecked so they were going to intercept him. We agreed that we would follow after them. I regret that now I did not make them wait for us as they were, I believe, slain.

Passing by some dead Dymwan, we encountered Sir Drakken, a formidable Death Knight of the Dymwan. With him was a banner that produced evil sphere invocations and remained on the field until Sir Drakken was defeated. During the fight the faction members arrived on the field and Sir Drakken took a few moments to deal with them, all of them that is. Significant credit goes to our front line for not folding in the face of this mighty opponent and it was a victory well earned. After his defeat we took a number of colours from the fallen banner, including a Halmadonian tabard and a Humacti tabard. Shortly after this fight there were a few Dymwan reinforcements but they were too late to aid their master and easily beaten.

We continued on to the Soul Garden where we were met by the spirit who invited us through the ward and into the partly collapsing enclosure. The spirit of Nathan was there but the sight of Shard with us caused him great agitation. The Humacti spirit removed Shard back to Orin Rakatha.

We settled down for a discussion about whether to release the spirit, my slight concern being for the welfare of the mortals of the Mirror Realm. We all eventually agreed to open the jar and release the spirit. The jar disappeared and the crystal we sought remained. Nathan was concerned that it would leave him unprotected and less able to protect the evil spirit or power within him. It appears that at some time past Nathan bravely chose to take part of the power of Set into himself from the Rod of Yugantir, I understand. Now that we had exposed Nathan

from his hiding place we would have to deal with this power or he would not allow us to take him back to Orin Rakatha and obviously leaving him on Dark Pass to the mercies of Janus was equally undesirable.

We returned to camp to ponder on this quandry and while there, a rather decrepit and disfigured old man walked towards our camp. To my amazement this turned out to be Marius Seren himself! A living piece of history like none I'd ever met before. He came to arrange a bargain. he wished us to assist the factions in their mission (to defeat the realm lord of battle). To do this we would have to target a number of Dymwan that were acting as anchors during the fight while the faction members dealt with the other undead and the realm lord himself. In return for this he would provide us with the information required to remove the power from Nathan and bind it into a gem. He would then generously take this gem and keep it safe for us. We instead insisted that we keep the gem to avoid it falling into the wrong hands. He warned us that it may have some malign effect on the keeper.

We decamped to the faction base where Irwin, who had come to have a low opinion for these 'cattle' as her termed them, gave a less than rousing battle speech and I wondered that any of them subsequently chose to follow us to the field. But they did, they were brave despite acting under delusion - or perhaps because of it?

On a great field an epic battle ensued with many combatants on either side. As a group we sought out and destroyed the Dymwan but whilst doing so we were then encircled by a horde of undead that the factions had been unable to handle. A swirling melee ensued with us and the factions eventually being successful.

On our return to camp the faction of the Jewelled Pavilion accompanied with us and it was at this point that we fulfilled our bargain/prophesy to them by by defeating some Aldonar spirits and retrieving their weapons for them.

Randolphin and I conferred and we decided that, if willing, we would attempt to place the Humacti spirit into the Soul Vessel that Kalliste had delicately crafted to accurately resemble him. The spirits name was Simon Thatcher.

When we realised that we needed a High Priest of the good sphere and we had none, the Humacti spirit called upon Humact to endow Woolf with the rights and privileges of that rank. There was much cheering for High Priest Woolf.

I prepared the necessary circle, with Jacks help, for the ritual and then orchestrated the Humacti spirit (who was required to created Hallowed Ground) and Woolf (who had to perform the rest of the ritual). The binding was successful and the spirit passed into the vessel.

Several group of poison creatures attacked us, presumably attempting to get to Nathan. This set our minds to performing the binding on Nathan.

Next, Vallan Jack and I prepared the ground for the ritual to remove the power from within Nathan and bind it into a flawless gem, that Marius had provided. During the ceremony a group of poison creatures together with one larger, more powerful one which was the manifestation of the power. We had to bind it into the circle but needed to wait until a blindness affecting Randolphin had run its course. Once bound, Jack and Vallan completed the ritual and the evil was contained within the gem. Nathan subsequently felt much better and more like his old self.

After a period of respite where some team members went carousing with the faction members, a Githyanki servant appeared to said that his master wished to speak with us regarding our missing Humacti. After a long wait while certain of our group were rounded up, we eventually left to meet with his master.

The master was one of the Aldonar vampires who said that our Humacti colleagues had been 'very tasty' and that he'd like to sample some of us. I was very sad to hear that Priest Polis, who had helped so much at Gilden Far, was dead and I felt that we should have done more sooner to locate them. A battle ensued where we were pressed hard but were ultimately victorious. I expected to be harangued by 'The Chancellor' for killing one of his kin but instead a demur group of vampires arrived and instructed us to leave. We speculated that perhaps the vampire we'd killed wasn't very popular and they'd wanted him out of the way.

We decided to leave the way we came, by Anthrax and Sutnac invoking the Chorien. On the way to the transfer point we encountered a group of zombies who were more of a threat than they rightly should have been. Once the Chorien was invoked, he didn't appear, but we did transfer back to Orin Raktha, appearing next to a group of Dymwan. After a short confused silence both sides attacked but they posed no great threat to us.

A short walk saw us back to the Humacti camp where we had started a few days before. We were met by Simian of the Humacti, to whom I had to break the news of his missing comrades. Around the camp fire we mulled over events and discussed what remained for tomorrow which was only to retrieve High Priest Hagan from his 'tomb' and to escort the Humacti back to Fortunes Keep.

Sun Day

The morning brought news that Hagan had been retrieved from his resting place so we would not need to help with that.

Some Kalid 4th Legion arrived to claim our scalps but they were unable to take them from us.

Before we set out to return to the tower Jack taught us a rhyme, a round in fact, that would grant us all a small boon of obscurity for a few fights. In fact he said that after he passes to the beyond (but only after), any party leader will be able to use the round to invoke the same protection once per mission. The round was;

Jack is calling, Jack is calling
Nature hear us, nature hear us
Leaf and stream, leaf and stream,
Praise the green man, praise the green man.

The name of Jack would be replaced by the party leaders name.

The round was sung, with varying accuracy, and we set off and almost straight away accosted by elementals and this gave a warning to the wise that Tiresias was near.

Shortly further on we encountered the Humacti looking vision/non-avatar. He was pleased with how we were progressing and that we now had two essences. He emphasised that in order to defeat Tiresias we needed to find and exploit any weaknesses of his. I was already of a mind to do this, since before the mission began, and I said that although we had been looking we had as yet discovered none. I told it that I suspected Tiresias' child may be a weakness we could exploit and I asked it whether he knew of its nature. He was quiet on this point and both Randolphin and myself had the same thought that this may well be a projection of the child itself. My thoughts on this are that the child is an unwilling captive of its father and is seeking some means to freedom. I guess that it requires us to gather the essences either so it can use

the power to escape or that in denying them to Tiresias, it will grow strong enough to escape. I strongly considered an assault on the 'child' there and then however it was likely only a projection and events interrupted with its disappearance and the appearance of Tiresias and a group of elementals.

The fight against the elementals went well but we were unable to affect Tiresias in any way. He demanded the essences but of course we denied them to him. There were enough of us to stop him overwhelming anyone in particular. We taunted him with his likely failure while waiting out the spells duration of his astral projection.

After he had disappeared, the itching on our arms, in the same place as the mark gained at Gilden Far, was noticeable and all present had been marked with a similar design although it was a like an unfolding of the original shape into two mirrored halves joined together. I wondered whether playing with the new shape, by doubling it again might lead to some insight but this has not yet proved to be the case.

I spoke briefly to Randolphin about what our next move might be regarding Tiresias, his weaknesses and the child. As Tiresias was once part of the Labyrinthe of Xenos, they may know the significance of his enchanted staff and may be able to provide us with some way to depower it. It is possible the Duegar we encountered at Gilden Far, Banyl Ironmind and his men, may have some insight on how to find him or reduce his powers of the mind. The child remains a possibility to destabilise Tiresias, if it was released and ran amok, or was killed, but I'm unsure of that path as at the moment it seems mostly beneficial to us although I'm wary that that might change in the future.

After that, we returned to the tower.

Ichabod.