

THE PRESS CRAWLS BACK FROM THE GUTTER

Wanted For Murder

An interspatial randomly occurring magical anomaly is today being sought for the death of the Guildleader Of The Black School Of Magic. In no way is this anomaly related to or in alliance with Dalvain Spellword or Saan Starstealer. These two fine upstanding Drow were present but according to a spokes-scumbag "Poor little Dalvain is very upset at present and could not possibly make a statement".

In the meantime the Black School of Magic advises all of its members to stay away from each other for health reasons which for the ever social members of the Black School may prove to be a problem especially with the annual picnic coming up.

Love Triangle

The rumour of the love affair between that well known cuddly bunny, Thoran, and Puddle, a sprite of dubious marital status can be confirmed today by our intrepid reporter.

Despite Thoran being a bit of a spicky evil chap Puddle has been heard to comment that "He's really sweet and has a huge weapon that he lets me hold when he's not using it." Frazzle may be attending the marriage ceremony as Thoran's starter.

For Sale

Buy My potion Bottles coz They're ace, just like me. They only cost 1 gold each an if you don't buy 'em Thoran'll get you splatt splatt.

Contact puddle for all your bottle needs.

Glam Group comeback tour shocker!

Those well known Glammy-tarts the Chosen have announced the dates of their latest plane-spanning world tour in a surprise guest appearance at the Wizards Concillium A.G.M and flower arranging show. All members of the group looked fantastic and their new light show received many compliments.

Several fans were reportedly overcome with emotion at finally seeing their idols in the flesh. With the tour imminent the hospitallers are advising that people remain calm and drink plenty of fluids.

Their new manager, Shaitan, is believed to be very pleased with the groups new material, describing it as their best ever. "These boys are going to be huge" said a spokes-tart for the Chosen "They've got some knockout new outfits that will leave people absolutely stunned"

The Chosen's biggest fans, Draal and Lathrodec were heard singing along enthusiastically and may be starting a fan club.

Gutterpress New Look

Hello and welcome to the Valleys most loved and best known source of reliable, honest information.

Our all new look is brought to you courtesy of The Yellow Guild so if you have any complaints they should be forwarded in person to Lord Velteyn.

PROBLEMS

Dear Uncle Prong,
Recently, whilst out on patrol I was butchered out of hand whilst going about my job. All I want to do is have a quiet drink. What would you suggest?

Upset Spiritual
Warrior

Dear Squire Jeff,
Get yourself a pair of rubber wellies, or a new job.

Dear Uncle Prong,
I'm a big evil warrior in love but other people, especially my big brother, take the piss out of me. What can I do to get them to accept my new girlfriend?

Confused, Wolfhold

Dear Thoran,
I'm sure Araikis would be more willing to accept Puddle if you let him share. Perhaps you could take Puddle on a double date with Arakis and Frazzle?

LOVE IS IN THE AIR ?

MESSAGES

The Azard-an were going to join the pact.

Then their representative was killed.

Then they changed their minds.

Quicksilver has been made an information specialist.

This came as a surprise.

Good start there then.

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EDITORIAL

Thanks go to all the contributors for this time's QUAD. Tarry who has finally spilt the beans on the Chosen and what they were up to, Pip who saved me a job by sending a full length, technicolour, version of the Wizards AGM and an edited (ie fewer black bits) version which you have here and Pat for resurrecting the Gutter.

Of late there have been requests for back issues of QUAD by some of the new players, and SFB has some available but I would like to at least get a full set if at all possible, so if you have any of QUAD's 1 to 15 then contact me and I will arrange for a copy.

Best Regards
and I do look forward to hearing from you

Paul

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1998 Adventure Prices

Heroquest usually run the following length adventures with the relevant prices -

Adventure length	Price to Members	Price to Non Members
8 hour	20	25
36 hour	60	75
Themes	40	50
72 hour	120	150
5 day	160	200

Other adventures are priced individually, such as Heroquests etc

Membership for 1998 is 25 pounds and expires on 31-12-1998

Note the above prices are only if the money is received in advance (at least 7 days)

There is a 10 % charge on top of the above prices for people who pay on the day

The charge for cancellation is 50 % if cancelling within 7 days of the event

There is also a charge for youth hostels (or similar) where used, this is normally 5 pounds per night

Monsterring

The following credits are available (cumulative) for Monsterring

8 hour	4 pounds
36 hour	10 pounds
72 hour	20 pounds

Themes - you can monster the Saturday daytime of a theme and play in the evenings for half the normal price and your character will get half the points for the theme (15)

CONTRIBUTIONS

AKA HOW TO GET SOMETHING PRINTED IN QUAD

The best and only way to get your submissions printed in QUAD is to send them to me in the first place. If the material is suitable then it will be used, so send me anything and everything that you can. **I want write-ups of quests, notices, adverts, letters and plenty of scandal.**

Please send all material to

QUAD
C/O Paul Evans
Rose Cottage
6 Charfield Road
Kingswood
Wotton - under - Edge
Gloucestershire
GL12 8RL

The policy of awarding articles of any substance with a five gest reward will continue, whether the article is published or not. I will endeavour to make these payments as speedy as possible. An SAE guarantees a swift response and the return of any valued material where appropriate.

QUAD should be published for each of the Theme Weekends in 1997 and the deadline for material to be included is therefore 7 days before the start of the theme. Obviously material on floppy disk is preferred as I am not a good typist and the QUAD will be processed more quickly.

RIGHT TO REPLY

If there is anything that you would like to take issue with in this edition of QUAD then please write to the above address. I want any comments, criticisms, queries, questions and suggestions.

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SHITTY'S BIT

Welcome to Quad 33, thanks again to Paul Evans and all the contributors - keep the articles rolling in. All articles of 1 page or longer will receive 5 Gests payment. Any article less than a page will receive 1 - 4 Gests, determined by the Editor.

Most of the adventures for the rest of the year are now booked, but if you wish to book others then do not hesitate to contact me. We are particularly looking for monsters for the low level five day in May.

Mark Roberts (SFB)

Heroquest is run primarily by Mark Roberts and any questions bookings letters etc should be sent to

**Heroquest
14 Grove Crescent
Barnwood
Gloucester
GL4 3JJ**

Please remember to include a stamped addressed envelope with all letters, this will ensure a prompt reply. I can also be reached on the **phone 01452 546871**. Office hours are:

Monday		5 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Tuesday	12 p.m. - 2 p.m.	5 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Wednesday	12 p.m. - 2 p.m.	5 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Thursday	12 p.m. - 2 p.m.	5 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Character Death

An integral part of Heroquest is the fear of death. One of the most enjoyable parts of an adventure is coming out of an encounter alive, when you had thought that you had died, especially when the party is victorious. To achieve this there must be times when characters die - which is the main reason that we decided to have multiple 'res' chances in the first place. So on to death, it is great to talk about a heroic death that one of your characters had, but I have noticed an increased tendency for players to talk about what they feel to be an unreasonable death. A moments thought to all referees and monsters out there - when you are about to kill someone's character make sure if it was your character you would not spend the next five or more years moaning about it, particularly if the character was helpless (paralysed etc.). Give the players a fighting chance.

Players also take note, referees make mistakes, as do monsters, it is a referees job to allow for any mistakes and if you approach the ref in time out in a reasonable fashion you can expect to be treated the same. No one likes a moaner!

QUAD - Back Issues

We still have copies of Quad 18 - 31 inclusive. These are available at £1 each, bartering is accepted (I need potion and treasure phys reps as always, we also need some A4 paper for the printer if anyone can get any cheap).

Any members from 1997 who do not have Quads 26 - 31, send me an A4 SAE and I will send the relevant issues.

T - Shirts

We also have some long sleeve and short sleeve Heroquest shirts for sale in various colours, price £10 and £7.50 respectively. Also available in white for only £2.50.

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Heroquest 8. The Great Lord of the Dark

5 Day October 5-10

The Participants

Mu'ul, Seer Priest.	Damandred, Chosen High Priest.
Ishmalin Dark Path Priest.	Ishmael Chosen High Priest,
Rakshavin Grey Gauntlet Priest.	Rhavin Chosen High Priest,
Rakshal, Reaper Priest.	Aginor, Chosen High Priest.,
M'wagi, Monk	Mesanna, Chosen High Priest.,
Glen White Path Priest	Balthamel Chosen High Priest.,
Kaden, Yellow Sorcerer	Asmodean Chosen Sorcerer.,
Chorley, Scout	Moghedien Chosen High Priest
Tamisan Dark Path High Priest	Sammael High Priest
Hero Draal LolthsPawn, Thirteenth Priest of House Tumdurgal, Sorcerer.	
Hero Nerak SoulBlade, Nineteenth Warrior of House Tumdurgal.	
Hero Kalraan ShadowWolf, fourth warrior of House Tumdurgal.	
Hero Lathrodec WidowMaker, first High Priest of House Tumdurgal.	
Hero Ariakis, Patriarch of House Ashkavon, WolfHold Ambassador, High Priest.	
Twilight, Grey Warden Priest.	

Arrival on Homeworld

We had collected the penultimate seal on the prison of the Great Lord of the Dark, the last was on Homeworld. Cast out of the Towers Orin Rakatha was not safe for us. It was awash in a sea of undead and the Halmadonians knew some of what we were about. Our choices at this time were limited, we would travel to Homeworld and there free the Great Lord of the Dark.

Through Tel'aran'rhiod we ventured, through the World of Dreams we travelled bodily, emerging onto Homeworld. The journey was long and somewhat troubling, along the way Twilight was taken away from us, he would rejoin us later, but for now he was missing. Here on Tel'aran'rhiod the Great Lord of the Dark made good on his promises, providing us with teachings and magic and knowledge that would otherwise have been unavailable. We felt a magical field close in around us as we emerged from Tel'aran'rhiod. Mu'ul investigated this and discovered that it was a warding of some kind that prevented anyone from Homeworld from bodily travelling onto Tel'aran'rhiod. This was why there had been little interference from Homeworld, this mystical field kept them all imprisoned. We were trapped on Homeworld unless we could somehow remove this field.

Day One: The Ogier Grove

Scouting around we soon established that this area was Andor, one of the great nations of Homeworld. From my dreams I knew this area, and I knew of a Darkfriend, one Elias, a somewhat prosperous merchant. A small group went out and investigated the nearby village, whilst the rest of us prepared for any combat. Contact was made with Elias and we all moved into his home without incident. He had been contacted in his dreams by the Great Lord of the Dark, and had been told to pass us a message. We were instructed to sleep and put our dreamselves into Tel'aran'rhiod, there we would find further instruction awaiting us.

We interrogated Elias at some length about the state of the country and world as much as possible, he had some knowledge, but not all that much. In summary it appeared that there was a lot of trouble in various places, the Andorian army had been mustered and was at Tar Valon. We inquired about the local area, seeking to ensure that we (or rather our bodies) would be safe whilst our dream selves wandered Tel'aran'rhiod. Finally after being satisfied that this was not some sort of trick we slept and dreamt our way onto Tel'aran'rhiod.

Awakening in a house we searched and discovered a note written in the Old Tongue, a note that was swiftly translated. The note was from Nae'Bliss, instructions and information. Outside the house lay an Ogier Grove, we were directed to find a waygate key that lay within the grove, held by the guardian of the grove.

Venturing outside of the house we were assaulted by ghostly Andorian warriors, guardians of some form challenging us, sensing the evil aura that clung to us. We discovered that we could not cast magic or power while within the Grove, this made the battle a little tricky, but retreating to the house to cast our spells and invocations proved a viable tactic. Having destroyed the Andorian dream guards we began to search the surrounding area, but had discovered nothing, when a light was espied approaching us.

The light was borne by a figure who gestured for us to follow, we were lead by a circuitous route to the heart of the grove, some ten to fifteen minutes distance away and there we confronted the guardian and attendant creatures. These were unranked undead of some form, and quite powerful. The guardian though was much more powerful than they were. Hampered by our inability to cast spells and invocations we fared poorly in the combat, and were forced to retreat. Fortunately the guardian was tied to the heart of the grove in some way, so we were able to make our escape. Back to the house we went to heal and cast. After considerable preparation we set out again to confront them. This time, forewarned and prepared we did not fail, we fell upon them and slew them, but at the cost of Rakshavin's life. The guardian was searched and the key taken. Having completed our mission we stepped out of Tel'aran'rhiod and re-entered the real world once more, where all was quiet. Setting guards for the night we slept till morn.

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During the night we had all been visited in our dreams by the Great Lord of the Dark, as he had set forth his power, strengthening us, teaching us. Come the morning as we broke our fast we pooled our knowledge of times past and times present as revealed to us by the Great Lord of the Dark.

The world was in turmoil, the plans laid by the Great Lord of the Dark had come to fruition. From the Blight in the North emerged the armies of Trollocks and Myrdraal in great numbers, numbers so great that these nations would be overwhelmed. In the West nations were set against each other their smouldering mutual hatreds inflamed by the Great Lord of the Dark's servants. In the South a foolish quest was called to distract many would be Heroes. In the East, where we were, nations were going to war with each other. Darkfriends high in the councils of power brought chaos and confusion, subtly ensuring that peace would be defeated. The world was aflame, trouble, strife and discord on every side, the forces of the creator were set against each other, scattered aimlessly across the land leaving us to act to free the Great Lord of the Dark.

In the dreams sent by the Great Lord of the Dark, some of the Chosen saw the path taken by the final seal through the ages, a path that lead to Tar Valon, the home of the Aes Sedai. The Chosen had the lore to travel the Ways, remembered from long ago and knew that there was a secret waygate within Tar Valon, poised like a dagger at the throat of the Aes Sedai.

As the powers of the Chosen returned so did their memories of times gone by. Aginor related a story of the War of Power when the Great Lord of the Dark had been imprisoned. The War of Power took place between the forces of Darkness and those of the Light a thousand years ago. At its culmination, when victory was in sight for darkness, the forces of light being all but destroyed, a command to the Chosen was issued by the Great Lord of the Dark, a command they had to obey, to come to the Great Lord of the Dark now! They came, the Chosen of the Great Lord of the Dark, the 30 most powerful men and women of that age. They found that the Great Lord of the Dark was being attacked by powerful strangers from off plane, come in the hour of victory. Strangers that they now recognised by their battle cry as Halmadonians. The fight was brief but intense, until with but one word of power uttered by the leader of these strangers the Chosen were laid low. Their powers left them, they could not think, could not gather their thoughts, their minds rent asunder. As they reeled in shock, recovering from this word of power, the seals were used, binding them away from the world for an age until one of the seals was broken, while at the same time, trapping the Great Lord of the Dark in Shayol Ghull.

Day Two: Through the Ways to the White Tower.

We permitted Elias to live, judging that the danger of him being questioned and revealing us being lesser than that of attracting attention by him being found dead. We thought on these matters and set off in search of a Waygate which may always found near to Ogier Groves. After travelling for some time we were met by the figure we had seen last night, this time awake and aware, not a dreamer. Another darkfriend, one who had been sent dreams by the Great Lord of the Dark, sent to guide us today as he had done last night. His name we took from him and named him Fifteen, for that was the order in which he was to announce himself when we were checking to see if all were well. He took this name given to him by the Chosen of the Great Lord of the Dark and bore it as a badge, a mark of honour. His family had served the Great Lord of the Dark for generations as guardians of a Waygate under the guise as merchants, his task was to escort us there.

We travelled for half a day with Fifteen towards the Waygate, dealing with some minor annoyances (Shiernans, Whitecloaks, Andorians, Cairhienans) along the way. These were no match for our power and were dismissed easily or turned to our cause. Though the weather had turned inclement our spirits were not borne down. Rain and cold would prove to hinder armies and great numbers of men more than they would an elite, small group such as ourselves.

Arriving at a set of caves to which Fifteen had guided us, we ventured within. Deep into the heart of the caves we ventured, and now the lore of Fifteen failed, for he knew no more than to lead us here, he knew not of the exact location of the Waygate, save that it lay yet further within. Leading us on the way, perfectly at home within this dark domain, I espied a group of figures, unranked undead, guardian spirits of some form, set here to ensure that no travellers might accidentally come upon the gate.

We battled these guardians, our might easily surpassing theirs. Some few hurts were taken, but nothing of consequence. In truth, the battle but warmed us up, dispelling the cold from the rain that had clung to us up until now. We pressed on until we came to the gate itself, carved into the living rock of the cave. There a scroll in a magically sealed tube was discovered, wielding BaleFire, a beam of power impossibly bright in this dark cave, Rakshavin destroyed the tube. Inside was a scroll in the Old Tongue containing the final piece of information we required to open the way to Tar Valon.

The ritual of opening was began, those not involved in the ritual noticed that the lights we had left behind us to show if anything approached were going out one by one, that the darkness was drawing in. Nothing more could be seen or heard, tension began to rise. Then the way was open, quickly we all entered including Fifteen as the gate behind us closed, our only way out now would be into Tar Valon. Whatever it was that was behind us was too slow we had made our escape into the Ways.

The darkness of the Ways was total and unrelenting, the candles we held to light our path gave off but a faint light, swallowed up in the unending dark. Our relief was short lived, we began to grow tense and nervous as we travelled the Ways in silence.

A sigh. A whisper, as of silk drawn over flesh broke the silence. Our pace sped up, we clustered together huddling in the light, away from the terrors of the dark. A breeze was felt, flowing over us, greedily caressing our limbs, a harbinger of what was to come. Machin Shin. The Black Wind. The darkness of the Ways, the reason why nothing and no-one used the Ways. We had hoped not to encounter the wind, a hope that was not to come to fruition. The whisper of breeze became the roar of the wind, we

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could hear the voices of those who had been lost to the wind before, voices carried by the wind, voices that were the wind. The voices that whispered of the unending pain we would feel, the voices that cried of the unrelenting agony that would be ours, the voices called of the doom that would fall upon us, the voices that called of the ceaseless torment that was to be our fate.

The darkness coalesced ahead of us, and the wind reached out for us, clawing, rending, tearing, ripping. Back we were driven by the force of the wind. Machin Shin was upon us and we fell back before it. We tried to hold its form back, but no man can hold the wind as it moved among us, our blows were ineffectual. As fast as we could we stumbled backwards on the path desperately trying to hold it back, somehow trying to fend it off.

Then a change. Those who had been at the back, having prepared themselves, leapt forwards into the fray, into Machin Shin. Fell power burning in their hands, they unleashed it upon the wind. And the wind drew back. Daunted for a moment by our might. That was all we needed. We could harm Machin Shin! We pressed forwards into the wind, taking the fight to it. As fast as we had retreated before now we pressed onwards even faster. Our weapons charged with might, priests and wizards unleashing their spells and invocations without let upon the wind. Onwards we charged into it, as we rent the wind asunder, our confidence fully restored. Machin Shin was destroyed!

A cheer rang out from us as the wind dissipated. Fools that we were we cheered into the darkness, into the silence before the storm. Before we knew what was happening the full fury of the storm that was Machin Shin was upon us. Moving among us the wind rent us asunder splitting us into twos and threes. No line could hold against this, certainly not after we had squandered our resources against the breezes. We fled into the darkness driven away from each other. Some were felled, left to lie on the floor, to the un-tender mercies of Machin Shin whilst their erstwhile comrades fled for safety.

I recovered consciousness a little while later in a room having been borne to safety by Fifteen. There was only one place we could be, in the basements of Tar Valon. We took stock of our situation. Glen had been slain the battering of the wind had caught him at the last moment as he had emerged from the Ways. Ariakis though was not among us, his body lost, left behind in the Ways, dropped by Ishmaelin in his terror to escape. We could not return to the Ways at this point for we had no power or magic left, but resolved that we would rest the night, and then return through the ways to recover Ariakis body in the morning.

The door into the room opened, an Aes Sedai was there, we were about to attack him when he fell to his knees and spoke the oath of allegiance to the Great Lord of the Dark. A Darkfriend Aes Sedai, one of the Black Ajah! Justin was his name, sent here by the Great Lord of the Dark in his dreams to await for us. With him was Twilight. He had been separated from us on Tel'aran'rhiod as we travelled to Homeworld.

Justin, of the White Ajah, Justin of the Black, had dreamed of those who would be sent to him in the White Tower of Tar Valon. So following his dream he came down to the cellars of the Tower to find us. He told us that there was no immediate danger and described the structure of the tower. It was partitioned into shared and private (Ajah) areas and many doors were warded. Our most pressing need was to sleep, as we were exhausted, our reserves drained, at a low ebb with one of the group lost. Justin was assigned the task of determining where within the White Tower the seal lay.

We retired for the night, deeming it best to rescue Ariakis in the morning, when we would be strong once more. We slept and as we slept we were drawn into Tel'aran'rhiod. In Tel'aran'rhiod Nae'Bliss came to us and attacked us with three Myrdraal, in our weakened state we sustained many grievous wounds, but no more deaths. After a while Nae'Bliss stopped the attack. He told us that the Great Lord of the Dark was displeased with us over losing Ariakis and that we must attempt to recover him, until we had recovered him we would be punished in this way every half hour.

Our minds somewhat focused by this we decided to attempt a ritual of summoning, to draw Ariakis to us using his dagger, the dagger of the searing flame that he had loaned to Ishmaelin. Assembled the Chosen called upon the power of the Great Lord of the Dark and began the ritual of summoning, calling Ariakis from the ways to Tel'aran'rhiod. Setting the ritual components up they prepared the calling. In unison they set forth their might, the flows of power in the chamber intensified as the chanting grew and grew. The flows coalesced into the heart of the chamber as the power grew becoming almost visible. The ritual completed, the power dissipated, and Ariakis lay there upon the floor before us, dead.

Again the power of the Great Lord of the Dark, the Lord of the Grave, was called upon and Glen resurrected Ariakis, but he had been touched by contact with Machin Shin, and some form of possession held him. We managed through strenuous efforts to purge him of most ill effects returning him to normal. Then we slept.

Day Three: War In The White Tower

In the morning Justin came to us and told us what he had discovered. The seal lay within the White Ajah's research area. As a White Aes Sedai he could enter that area, but had no knowledge of what was going on inside - he was not one of the researchers. He would be able to return in 8 hours and let us out of this area, his duties as a member of the White Ajah would tie him up until then. There was a rumour, he also told us, of Darkfriends in the Tower and the Red Ajah were conducting a search. He had to divert them to ensure that they searched the research area before they came to these quarters. Fearing that this would not work we disguised ourselves, coming up with a cover story to explain our presence and unusual appearance. Fortunately our play acting skills were not put to the test as Justin did divert the searchers as he had planned. We dashed into the research area just a few steps ahead of the Red Ajah searchers who had come into our quarters.

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Chorley scouted the area while the rest of us remained silent in the entrance. He discovered that most of the doors were warded in one way or another. From behind one that was not came the low rumble of voices. Opening the door we saw that there were a number of Aes Sedai and their warders breaking their fast. One of the warders suddenly looked up "Darkfriends" he cried "Darkfriends in the White Tower." With that, battle was joined. The battle was furious on all sides Nerak, Kalraan and myself pressing the attack, none of them escaped, all were slaughtered. Now we saw the Aes Sedai and their Warders in battle for the first time. The Aes Sedai using their magic to support their Warders and attack us, the warders defending them from harm. The White Aes Sedai had powerful Ice Javelin spells, far more potent than we normally expected, their Ice Javelins never missed, much as a Bolt, and always struck the head! The Aes Sedai and Warders seemed to be linked in some way, allowing them to share magic and invocation effects between them, lessening the effects on either. We prevailed against them by splitting the Warders away from the Aes Sedai so that the weaponless Aes Sedai could be slaughtered and no longer support the Warders.

After the battle we continued to search and identify the wards upon the doors so that we could gain egress to the rooms. Thus went most of the day, opening the warded areas, or having someone emerging from them to join in battles already raging, or in some cases beginning them. Mostly we fought Warders and White Aes Sedai, but not exclusively. There were many others here, Andorian soldiers lead by an Andorian general, Yellow, Green and Grey Aes Sedai were also around. The Andorian general working in concert with the Aes Sedai was fearsome, so highly skilled was he that he could break bones on almost every blow. Kalraan, Nerak and Brains spent much of the fight standing back up after he had broken their various bones dropping them to the floor time and time again. We had cleared most of the rooms when in came a small group of Red Ajah, investigating a report of a disturbance. Somehow, someone must have escaped carrying a tale of our activities. This small group was slain.

We had but one door remaining to open and had not as yet discovered the seal, having searched the areas we had captured thoroughly. Then from out of this door came a figure, the door swung shut behind him before we could get in. The figure prostrated himself before us calling out his oath to the Great Lord of the Dark, another Darkfriend! This one was an accepted of the Green Ajah. He had been attendant upon the leader of the White Ajah, an Aes Sedai who was within the room. She had been studying the seal that was stored therein. At our command he opened the door and we confronted her.

In the first few moments she was annoyed, but as things grew somewhat more tense she unleashed an arcane bolt upon one of us with but a word, and upon another a Cosmic Power Hammer. Clearly a woman not to be trifled with. We were daunted by the powers that she held at her fingertips, and sought to negotiate with her, in the end agreeing to let her go, deeming it the wisest course to avoid a fight as warning of our presence had already been raised earlier. She left, leaving the seal behind. The Green Accepted was sent out to the other Darkfriends in the Tower to raise them to action, to cause confusion – and maybe to buy us time. After they had left we entered the room and recovered the final seal. At last we had all the seals, the breaking of the prison of the Great Lord of the Dark could not be far off!

While we were identifying things a powerful, prepared force of Red Ajah entered this area and demanded our surrender. Red Aes Sedai, Warders and a Salamander confronted us. The battle broke out and we held them in a passageway until a firestorm was unleashed. Charging out of the firestorm we fell upon the foe. They were mighty and the battle raged all over this part of the White Tower, round and around, swinging from one side to the other. At times a few from one group would break off and try to get around the back of the others, sometimes these groups would find each other and another battle break out until one or the other retreated to their main force. Ultimately we prevailed and the attackers were destroyed.

These powerful foe though had drained us to our depths, and several of us had been elixired to save our lives. We retreated to one of the more defensible upper rooms to recover our strength, recast spells, and heal the wounded. Sometime around now Kalraan vanished, we believe that he had been drawn into Tel'aran'rhiod by some unknown means. There was little we could do about this as we were unable to enter Tel'aran'rhiod ourselves at this point.

While recovering a disturbance was heard in the distance and a small group left to investigate. A further battle ensued with another powerful force of the Red Ajah, and those able to fight went to join in this battle. Left behind, defenceless, were myself, Ariakis, Glen, Mu'ul and Brains. A short while passed with sounds of combat in the distance and then into the room came a Warder. He glanced around seemingly amazed that we were all helpless, and with a war-cry attacked. Ariakis and I were broken from our mnemonics, Glen slain while casting and Brains slain waiting for curing following an elixir. Mu'ul, out of sight was left unmolested. Ariakis fled, leaving me to face this Warder alone. Using Black magic I had weakened him to the point that I felt able to defeat him when Mu'ul emerged and caused him to flee in Terror before I could slay him!

We joined the others in the battle that had already been raging for more than half an hour, a battle that was not going well for us. Many had already fallen, leaving only a few holding the line against Aes Sedai, Warders and another Salamander. Then from the back came another group of Warders and Aes Sedai, trapping us in a small area. Outnumbered, weakened and attacked on both sides the spectre of defeat, death and failure loomed large.

High Priest Lathrodec set forth his power as had not been seen before. Wielding his art Lathrodec felled four of the Aes Sedai and Warders in twice as many seconds, turning the face of the battle, transforming what was looking like certain defeat into a hope of victory. Our confidence was restored by this turn of events: that of the Aes Sedai shaken by the sudden reversal. We pressed the attack upon the Aes Sedai, using up almost every last scrap of magic and power available to us. We prevailed, but at dreadful cost. Those still alive gathered up the bodes of the slain as we retreated into the depths of the white tower to hide and recuperate. Still alive and conscious were myself, Nerak, Lathrodec, Ariakis and Mu'ul. We managed to bring Ishmaelin around somehow, all the others being dead.

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More than the 8 hours had passed by now and Justin had not returned - this did not bode well for us. Trapped in the White Tower, the enemy alerted to our presence, more than half of us dead, the rest weakened such that any fight would surely slay us - we were in desperate straits. The Green Accepted returned carrying news that the Black Ajah had risen as per our instructions and were causing much confusion. He also carried unwelcome news that the Red Ajah had begun preparing an elite force, including the leader of the Red Ajah, to cleanse this area of Darkfriends for they had linked the troubles with us. This force was likely to be more powerful than any that we had faced so far. The Red Ajah force was nearby, and we could not exit this area without passing through them. We could not pass into Tel'aran'rhiod as the warding over the world stopped that. A certain degree of unease, not panic, spread amongst us. Unless we could find a way out soon we would all be slain, our quest fail, and the Great Lord of the Dark remain imprisoned for another thousand years.

Mu'ul was about to begin his identify of the seals, for there lay some hope, when Ishmaelin called him away with an alternative plan. The two remaining High Priests of Shi'Tan began to call upon the power of their master. Around us the bodies began to stir, the dead were returning to life, for such had been Ishmaelin's plan. "For my master is death's master" was but a part of their calling of the Great Lord of the Dark and so he showed his power, aiding his servants.

We began to recover ourselves, shifting power around to make sure that we could function effectively. Now it was that Twilight and Mu'ul began the identify of the seals. One by one the powers of the seals were discovered together with the method by which they could be destroyed. Not only were these the seals of the prison of the Great Lord of the Dark they also restricted the powers of the Chosen and others of his followers. We already knew that they had to be destroyed in the correct order, but until we had them all we were unable to identify the order. The first seal was already broken several years in the past, for such had freed the Chosen from their prison. The second seal was the one that prevented creatures on Homeworld from shifting bodily to Tel'aran'rhiod - this was our way out of the White Tower. The third restricted the ability to move great distances on Tel'aran'rhiod (called Travelling) almost instantly. The fourth restricted the abilities of the Chosen to rank four invocations at vocal length. The fifth halved their power. The sixth restricted their abilities to cast cosmic invocations without invoking. The seventh and final seal was the one that held closed the prison of the Great Lord of the Dark.

The identify revealed that we could break the second seal using BaleFire alone, Rakshavin was able to summon up BaleFire, and using it rent the second seal asunder. As he did so we felt the world change around us, like a stone dropped into a pond, the ripple of the seal's destruction passed over us, freeing us from it's restriction. Wasting no time we used our Ter'angreal and sent ourselves bodily into Tel'aran'rhiod, escaping from the White Tower. Sammael decided to leave behind the Green Accepted within the tower, instructing him to continue in his works disrupting the Aes Sedai, but the body of Fifteen we brought with us to resurrect later.

Our investigations into the second seal had shown us that using the Ritual of Breaking could break it, and so we immediately set about doing so. The Chosen assembled and together performed the Ritual of Breaking, with that the seal was destroyed and it's restriction lifted. One more step closer to freedom for the Great Lord of the Dark, now we could Travel on Tel'aran'rhiod. We Travelled to a place far from the White Tower in Tel'aran'rhiod, deep into the blight where the only forces were those of the Great Lord of the Dark. To destroy the next seal we needed a Cuendillar weapon, something we did not have and a matter for us to deal with in the morning. Safe for the night we healed ourselves resurrecting Fifteen and we slept in the World of Dreams.

With the destruction of the seals the bonds upon the Great Lord of the Dark were weakening, and he was able to contact us more clearly than before. In the World of Dreams it seemed that we were with the Great Lord of the Dark as he spoke to us. He was pleased with us, with what we had accomplished so far, the destruction of two seals the collecting of the others. Lavish with his praise he granted us knowledge and gave us what strength he could through the bonds that held him still. He granted us visions of the world as it was and had been, showing us that which we wished to see.

Homeworld was aflame. The armies of Trollocks and Myrdraal were winning in the north. The armies that should have come to aid the Light were drawn into conflicts with each other, the long laid plans of the Great Lord of the Dark proving fruitful at this time. The Aes Sedai neutralised by the rising of the Black Ajah, torn by internal power struggles. Past these things we looked as we searched in our dreams for the rare Cuendillar weapons, weapons needed to free the Great Lord of the Dark. Three weapons we saw, a spear, an axe and a sword.

The Cuendillar sword, know as *Callandor*, the sword that was not a sword, lay in the heart of the Stone of Tear, the most formidable castle in the world where it had been for a thousand years. Though there was trouble in Tear, the vigilance of the guard on *Callandor* was not lessened but had been sharpened. Warded about and guarded, that was a trap, there would be no hope of obtaining that sword. That left the spear and the axe, we tracked those through the world of dreams watching as they passed from hand to hand, noting their presence, their location. We watched as the spear was finally taken by Halmadonians beyond the world, where we could no longer see it. The third weapon, the axe, was also taken by Halmadonians - but somehow the axe had been lost by them. Here our vision clouded - blocked, perhaps. Someone had it, we could not perceive them clearly but could see that no deliberate trap awaited us, more that it was held as a prize in some way.

With the weakening of the bonds on the Great Lord of the Dark the Chosen were strengthened, their long forgotten skills returning to them. As we viewed the Halmadonians in our visions, Aginor - who was held to be a master on Tel'aran'rhiod, was able to perceive another presence, a Dreamer, hidden, watching us. Over the past several years this presence had been felt, spying on the Chosen. Aginor was able to sense that the hidden watcher was now blocking our dreams. Further, he was a White Seer

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from Halmadon's Heights. Kalraan rejoined us in the night, called to our presence on Tel'aran'rhiod, the mystery of what had pulled him away remaining unsolved. Kalraan spoke not of what had happened to him.

Day Four : Seeking A Cuendillar Weapon

In the morning we awoke and conferred about the dreams to decide our next course of action. We discussed these at great length finally deciding that we would go for the axe, choosing to take the one that did not have the feel of trap about it, aware though that it may be that there was a trap, but one we were unable to perceive. But first the spying presence of the Dreamer had to be dealt with.

Using their newly enhanced powers the Chosen began to perform a ritual of summoning, Ariakis and Twilight who were now familiar with this ritual joining in. Laying out the ritual components and assembling their casting mats around them, they began. Together they called on the power of the Great Lord of the Dark and began to summon the Halmadonian seer. Those of us not involved in the ritual prepared ourselves for battle fearing that the seer would bring others with him.

The power of the ritual began to build, it grew and grew as the summoning intensified. With each iteration of the invocation more and more power was invested in the ritual, building up the strength of the calling. The form of the seer was then seen being pulled to the ritual site, he was trying to fight it, but the combined will of the summoners was far greater than his alone and he could do nothing but answer it's call.

Fear evident in his eyes he stepped into the centre of the circle, and was held there in stasis. On and on the ritual continued, so that he might fully appreciate his perilous position. Terror etched on his face the seer strained to break the stasis, but there was no escape for him. Then silence for just a few moments, the summoning complete. And almost immediately, the silence shattered by the chanting of vocals as the ring of evil priests closed around him from all sides. Unleashing the unholy might held within their hands time and time again, the seer's body writhed and twisted in agony. He screamed, but for him there was to be no escape. As one the ring of evil priests stepped back to reveal the broken form of the seer upon the ground, dead.

Afterwards High Priest Lathrodec used his necromantic powers upon the spirit of the seer to ensure that it would be some time before he could impede our progress once more. The Dreamer dealt with it was now time to seek out the Cuendillar Axe. Travelling, Aginor lead us close to the axe from his memory of the dream. Here we stepped out of Tel'aran'rhiod back into the real world, seeking always to move closer to the axe - or so we thought. Later we were to discover that the Axe was still on Tel'aran'rhiod and that we had simply stepped through to another place in the World of Dreams.

Following the path of the Axe we came across a group of bandits who foolishly challenged our might. One amongst them was revealed to be a Darkfriend, he survived and led us to the place where they were based. Ishmael beguiled the leader of the bandits. We then questioned him about the area discovering that there was a group of buildings that treasure seekers often investigate, treasure seekers that never returned. There were also a number of realistic statues in and around the buildings. The bandits never approached. Determining that this was of interest we sought out its location after preparing ourselves.

As we approached the buildings a storm broke, lightning briefly illuminating our surroundings in what was otherwise a gloomy night. We saw the statues distributed around the site, very realistic we thought, arousing our suspicion. We were not surprised when one moved to attack us. We fought the statues on and off around the buildings for some time. We discovered that they could not be destroyed, but sufficient damage could deactivate them for a while, after which they would reactivate. The statues were all different, Halmadonian, Whitecloak, Warder, Andorian and some I did not recognise.

Searching the buildings we determined that one, a mill or something similar, was the one of interest. It was well defended, the statues not being haphazard guardians but placed logically. Entering the mill while the storm raged on outside we ventured up towards the top floor, only to be driven away by some sort of horrific creature, a woman who had snakes for hair and who commanded the statues. Drawing her outside of the building where our numbers could tell in a more open area I was the first to be taken by her as she turned me to stone with a glance. My form was then animated and brought to attack the others of our groups, my spirit being forced out of my body elsewhere.

As the lightning broke around us Kaden repeatedly found high magic shocking grasps springing, almost unbidden to his fingers – and while effective against the statues, it served only to slow down the snake-headed woman. The others quickly combined their might to strike her with a ritual BaleFire to destroy her. Pressing on into the mill they confronted her again, where Lathrodec was turned to stone. The BaleFire had **not** destroyed her, simply driving her off for a while until she reformed. This cycle was to repeat time and time again, as the party tried to search the tower to find the item.

In the end they were successful, Twilight gaining access to the upper area, breaking the ward around the axe and retrieving it, while Nerak entertained a growing host of statues. The cost of this encounter was high, a major attack by the Medusa leaving most turned to stone; Glen and Aginor were trapped by the statues and slaughtered, and Kalraan had again disappeared. With Twilight's call that he had the axe the remaining four of our number withdrew, taking the body of Aginor with them but unable to locate Glen, to be met by Nae'Bliss and escorted away, leaving most stoned in the power of the Medusa.

After being stoned by the Medusa, I recovered to find myself in a massive chamber with the spirits of the various other statues, I was disarmed by them, Lathrodec being treated the same, a nameless dread overcame us both and we were totally helpless. When

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several of the others joined us, having being turned to stone in the attack, we were freed from the dread that held us. A fight broke out, stopped by the medusa.

Contemptuous of how easily she had captured us, she was pleased that we had fought, delighted even. She told us that she would let one of the groups go providing we fought and entertained her. Those she had had as statues before, as all were followers of the Good sphere had refused to fight for her pleasure. But our two groups, so diametrically opposed, had no such problems. A battle raged across the chamber between the two groups, myself, Demandred, Chorley, Mwagi, Lathrodec and Kaden against the five good warriors. We prevailed, making sure that we took great pleasure and providing a spectacle for the Medusa in our victory. Pleased with our performance she let us go, back to the World of Dreams, where we rejoined the others.

Reunited, and having retrieved the Axe, we were now able to destroy the seals, and one by one we set about doing so to free the Great Lord of the Dark. Rakshal was returned to life by Shi'Tan, but Glen was still missing. The fourth seal was destroyed by striking it with the Axe. The fifth seal was next, BaleFire and the Axe were used together to destroy this. The sixth and penultimate seal was shattered next using the Ritual of Breaking and the Axe.

This left one seal, the final seal on the prison of the Great Lord of the Dark. To destroy this we must strike the seal with a Cuendillar weapon to weaken it, then use BaleFire to weaken it further, and finally we needed a full circle of thirteen high priests or sorcerers of Shi'Tan performing the ritual of breaking to unmake it. The only problem was that we did not have thirteen with the loss of Glen, and some of us had not yet mastered the spell/invocation required. I proposed that we use a Ritual of Summoning to call forth Glen that he might return and we resolved to do this in the morning as we had insufficient power at that time, having striven hard all day.

We slept for the night, safe in Tel'aran'rhiod. Again we saw the Great Lord of the Dark in our dreams, pleased with what we had achieved he hungered for his freedom. Knowledge and powers he offered. The knowledge I took, for we all needed to know the Ritual of Breaking. The powers he offered I rejected, for to accept them I must bind myself to him alone. I am priest of Lolth: it is to Her I call, it is to Her I am loyal, it is Her that I serve. Ariakis and Twilight accepted the gifts offered by the Great Lord of the Dark, as did the Chosen. Kalraan did not rejoin us, while we would miss him in combat, he was not needed for the ritual.

Day Five : Freedom for Shi'Tan!

Come the morning we were preparing to destroy the final seal and free the Great Lord of the Dark. Nae'Bliss arrived early with Myrdraal and Trollocks and said that he had discovered some information and that now was not a good time to destroy the seal. He stated that other off-worlders had arrived intent on ensuring that Shi'Tan was not released. Following the discovery of the Dreamer we had expected the Halmadonians to interfere. Nae'Bliss took the seal from Mu'ul and made to leave. Astonished that the seal should be so easily relinquished Nerak halted his departure, questioning his motives and authority for such action. In Nerak's dream he had been congratulated by Shi'Tan and informed by the Great Lord of the Dark that no-one should prevent His release. After a few moments of hesitation Nae'Bliss called upon his powers to strike Nerak, but nothing happened. We took it that Shi'Tan had deserted Nae'Bliss and battle was joined. The fight was short but bloody, Nae'Bliss and his creatures were slain but Nerak too was slain, pressing his attack upon Nae'Bliss to make sure that he did not escape.

Ariakis resurrected Nerak after the battle and healed him! Whilst this was going on the Chosen assembled to perform a ritual of summoning, to call forth the spirit of Glen. Those not involved in this ritual or the resurrection of Nerak were on guard against another attack. The Ritual of Summoning was a success and the spirit of Glen was summoned, it was embodied within the body of Fifteen, as we needed a form to contain it. Now we were complete! We had the thirteen spellcasters capable of performing the ritual of unmaking, and free Shi'Tan. We were almost ready to begin.

Before we could start, however, other members of the Chosen not in our group appeared, intent on stopping us. First came Semirhage with servants, Myrdraal and Trollocks. Then came Bel'al and Graendal, with elementals and Myrdraal. They clearly thought that they knew something that we did not as they repeatedly suggested that we didn't know what we were doing and that we would fail if we proceeded now. On all occasions battle broke out as we were unwilling to deviate from our path. We were pressed hard but were a match for their might. The Great Lord of the Dark was with us and not with them, some of their powers failed them, proof that he supported us. When the battle turned against them they sought to flee, but on each occasion we sought to prevent their escape. Semirhage was cut down by a rain of blows while Kaden killed one with a High Magic Lightning Bolt. Bel'al and Graendal eluded us, however, stepping from the real world into Tel'aran'rhiod.

Assembled in a circle around the casting mat we began the ritual. Everything devoted to this one task, leaving Nerak alone to guard us against anything that might happen. On and on we called, building up the power, building up the might to destroy the final shackle that held Shi'Tan imprisoned, to free the Great Lord of the Dark, to free Shi'Tan.

"The Great Lord of the Dark is my Master and most heartily do I serve him to the last shred of my very soul.

Lo, my Master is death's Master.

Asking nothing do I serve against the Day of his coming, yet do I serve in the sure and certain hope of life everlasting.

Surely the faithful shall be exalted in the land, exalted above the unbelievers, exalted above thrones, yet do I serve humbly against the Day of his Return.

Swift come the Day of Return.

Swift come the Great Lord of the Dark to guide us and rule the world forever and ever. Neither innocence nor purity are defence against the howling heart of evil."

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At the height of the ritual with all the power summoned the seal was shattered. Stunned we fell back. The world changed. We felt the presence of Shi'Tan, the air around us rung faintly with the presence of the Great Lord of the Dark.

While we had been in the ritual Lanfear, one of the more powerful among the Chosen, had come to visit. She had spoken with Nerak, claiming that she supported us, and that her forces were holding off Whitecloaks in the area. She sought to be hailed as the new Nae'Bliss, and promised to return later.

Slowly Shi'Tan's presence was being manifested, the shackles broken, he was now free. He spoke to us, calling out words that resonated all about us, coming from everywhere and nowhere. We had to remain here to defend the Great Lord of the Dark as he manifested himself, for until he was fully formed he was vulnerable. In addition, we had to seek out and destroy some of the Chosen who had fallen from the way, those who were not loyal to him. Semirhage we had already killed, Lanfear we were expecting back, Bel'al we would seek out on Tel'aran'rhiod and Graendal was outside. As we emerged from the summoning chamber we heard sounds of combat. Nerak was fighting Graendal in the courtyard. As we joined the battle was soon over.

Now it began. Slowly through the day Shi'Tan's presence grew more and more powerful as he became manifest, always the air around us rang with his might, we could feel it growing. Throughout the rest of the day we fought off wave after wave after wave of attacks by the different forces. Aes Sedai and Warders, Whitecloaks, rogue Chosen, the attacks came thick and fast, no sooner had we fought off one wave but that several minutes later another would come. People took whatever opportunity they could to rest and recover their strength, for most of the day there was almost always someone either in meditate or mnemonic.

Lanfear we sought to convince to join us when she returned, but she was not willing, demanding to be Nae'Bliss. In the end we had to slay her and her entourage, there was no other course. When the waves of attackers lessened we took the opportunity to step into Tel'aran'rhiod and travel to Bel'al and there slaughtered him, denying him the chance to flee. That was the last of the Chosen not in our group. We stepped back into the real world hoping that nothing had happened while we had left the Great Lord of the Dark unprotected, fortunately everything had proceeded as planned.

As night began to fall, as darkness grew the Great Lord of the Dark's power began to manifest in full, but until all was complete Shi'Tan was still vulnerable. It was now that the Halmadonians came. Our slaying of the White Seer had deprived them of vital knowledge of our plans, it had delayed their arrival by precious hours. Led by a Grand Knight this most fearsome of forces confronted us, powerful warriors, priests and mages they were fully prepared for battle.

Both sides knew that there was no backing away from this fight, the Halmadonians were determined to destroy the Great Lord of the Dark, and we were determined to delay them long enough for the full power of the Great Lord of the Dark to be manifest. It could be that every second would count, so we tried to delay them with words as long as possible, but all too soon such banter fell away leaving only the speech of steel clashing against steel. The Grand Knight and his primary aid were warriors without peer, shrugging off the heaviest blows as if they were mere pinpricks, their squires were also potent warriors and in any other company would have shone. Their priest an excellent healer, covering them at all time, their mage well skilled in both offence and defence. We were forced back, step by step, to the building desperate to hold them off, but they were powerful indeed, and we were overmatched. Finally at the doorway we managed some sort of line of defence.

There was no holding by either side, the magics and powers flowed freely without let. One of the squires we managed to slay three times, but each time they recovered the body and resurrected it. Our evil invocations would not touch the Grand Knight, rolling off him as water off a ducks back. Our line was sorely pressed, but somehow it held.

On and on the combat raged, occasionally they would withdraw for a few moments to heal up and then come back at us. After about half an hour or so of this combat, Twilight suddenly began to cast cures at a furious rate, as fast as he could speak he was casting, from person to person he moved, strengthening the line. The amount of power he cast was unbelievable, somehow he was tapping into the power of Shi'Tan, and at so close a proximity he had almost infinite power available. Up and down the line he went casting cures on the combatants, strengthening the line, again and again he cast without let, through his massive healing frenzy he directly caused us to hold, as long as we could survive for a brief while against the Halmadonian attack we would be cured to full. Ariakis was also strengthened in this way, but the Halmadonians were well defended against his evil power.

After the fight had been raging for an hour there came a sudden flare of power from the chamber where the Great Lord of the Dark was manifesting. At that time we noticed that all that remained in the line fighting were the none-Chosen. As the fight had raged, one by one the Chosen had been called down the Great Lord of the Dark and one by one they had sacrificed themselves to him, returning power to him. We knew that we had to hold on for only a few more moments, perhaps as long as five minutes. So too did the Halmadonians. They redoubled the intensity of the attack upon us, but with

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Twilight moving up and down the line casting cures on us without let we were able to hold the line, although we were driven back into the building. Suddenly there was a moment of complete silence, and the power that Ariakis and Twilight had was gone. Shi'Tan was manifest, his power complete, we had bought the time needed. We had succeeded.

The Halmadonian Grand Knight unleashed to power of the Artefact he bore, the Talisman of Ages upon us. He had saved it, knowing that he would need it against Shi'Tan, but now Shi'Tan was fully manifest there was no point in saving its power. The power of the Artefact drove us out of the Homeworld, back to Orin Rakatha.

Too late though, for we had succeeded, and a new Avatar of evil has ascended.

Draal LolthSpawn, Thirteenth Priest of Lolth, House Tumdurgal

The Story Behind the Story

We communed with Shi'Tan and now we understand many things that were not clear to us.

A Thousand Years Ago...

Shi'Tan was a man who had sought to transcend his mortal limits to become a Sphere or at least an Aspect of the Sphere of Evil. He called or tempted to his service many, the most powerful of these he named the Chosen and granted them great power in his name. In order to achieve his objective he needed the support and worship of many mortals. Having established his power base on Homeworld, those who followed the Light set themselves against him and thus started the War of Power. The Chosen were not privy to all of Shi'Tan's plans and fought each other at least as often as they did the forces of Good, weakening Shi'Tan's forces and causing his plans to go awry. Then before he could ascend, when victory in the War seemed imminent, strangers came from off-world, Halmadonians. They could not destroy Shi'Tan for he was too powerful so they devised a plan to imprison him. They deceived Shi'Tan concerning their intent by mounting a last ditch attack on his base and by making their armies appear larger than they were – including many banners of those not present. When Shi'Tan saw this he called the Chosen to his defence. Then the Halmadonians unleashed their trap. They set in place the seals, imprisoning Shi'Tan and banishing the spirits of the Chosen for a thousand years. The Halmadonians knew that one day the seals would be broken and they prepared for that time a way to destroy Shi'Tan. For this was fashioned The Talisman of Ages – an Artefact designed to destroy a creature of evil in a weakened state. Thus they waited for the seals to be broken.

Recent History...

After a thousand years, when they deemed Shi'Tan to be weak enough after long imprisonment, the Halmadonians broke the first seal, affording Shi'Tan some limited freedom. He was then able to summon the spirits of the Chosen to possess bodies that he deceived into accepting them. This time he made sure that the bodies that they inhabited were weak, so that the arrogant Chosen had to learn to work together rather than against each other. This was vital – for had the Chosen worked together long ago he may have achieved victory then before anyone had had the chance to interfere. The Chosen progressed in their quest to free their Lord under the watchful eye of the Halmadonian Dreamer. Soon, all the seals were recovered as the Chosen were guided, both by Shi'Tan and by the Halmadonians. At the critical moment, however, the Dreamer was summoned by the Chosen and slain, preventing the Halmadonians from knowing precisely when all the seals were broken. If the Halmadonians arrived too early the true nature of their plan might be revealed and the summoning of Shi'Tan may be delayed until greater protection could be arranged. So the Halmadonian Grand Knight guessed when to strike. He guessed wrong. The Grand Knight and his entourage attacked too late and we were able to hold him long enough for Shi'Tan to ascend. Had he attacked earlier we may not have been able to prevent them from using the Talisman of the Ages to destroy Shi'Tan. The final twist was that in order to ascend, Shi'Tan had to release all his active invocations so that he could achieve full power. This meant that all the Chosen had to sacrifice themselves for Shi'Tan's success because the possession that he maintained on their bodies were his invocations. This is also why we had been required to hunt down all the rouge Chosen and slay them. This in turn was why a number of non-Chosen had been selected for this quest – so that they could hold off the Grand Knight when all the Chosen had been recalled.

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Herbal Potion Descriptions

Beneficial Potions

Cure General - This rank two potion cures ten points of total life damage and must be consumed by the recipient of the cure.

Cure Locational - This rank two potion cures ten points of locational damage only when applied to a damaged location. This potion takes the form of a poultice or cream.

Cure Disease - This potion will cure an appropriate disease if consumed by the diseased individual. The effect is otherwise identical to the cure disease invocation as follows:

Rank 1 - Minor Disease Rank 4 - Medium Disease Rank 7 - Major Disease Rank 10 - Deadly Disease

For cure minor, medium and major disease recovery is achieved within seconds of consuming the potion. The cure deadly disease potion must be massaged gently down the throat of the victim within five minutes of contracting the disease. Recovery from the disease and unconsciousness occurs five minutes after the potion is administered.

Remove Pain - Consuming this potion relieves all pain for a period of 15 minutes, effective in a matter of seconds and whether inflicted prior to the consumption of the potion or during its effect. This does not allow a broken limb to be used normally but does allow casting.

Stop Bleeding - Consuming this potion accelerates the blood clotting process such that all wounds on the recipient stop bleeding within seconds of consumption, regardless of the severity of the wound. The effect of this potion is almost instantaneous, affecting those wounds already inflicted, but not affecting any wounds yet received.

Poison Antidote - This potion provides general antidote against damaging poisons, specifically blade venom. The antidote must be consumed prior to venom damage being suffered (being 30 seconds after venom is introduced to the body). It is not necessary to consume adequate antidote to completely negate the effect of the poison for it to have a beneficial effect. Venom antidote can be consumed prior to venom being introduced into the body, providing protection for the following 15 minutes. This duration cannot be extended. Poison antidotes can be stacked, and can operate against higher ranks of blade venom than the rank of the antidote. For example, Roger the Ranger encounters a group of assassins who he knows use blade venom. Before entering combat he drinks 3 rank 3 antidotes providing 45 points of venom protection for the following 15 minutes. During the fight, Roger takes hits from 2 venomous blows each carrying rank 4 blade venom, totalling 60 points of venom damage. The net effect of the poison and antidote that Roger suffers is 15 damage.

Miscellaneous Potions

Strength - This potion confers strength on the drinker for 15 minutes. The recipient's strength can still be modified by various other spells and effects.

Double Strength - This potion confers double strength on the drinker for 15 minutes. As the potion wears off the drinker suffers a certain amount of kick-back damage, depending upon the rank of the potion.

Dexterity - This potion enhances the dexterity of the drinker by one point per rank of potion up to a maximum of five points of dexterity for 15 minutes. The duration of the effect may be doubled by reducing the effective rank of the potion by one rank. Thus, at ranks six to ten where the enhanced dexterity is limited to five points, the duration of the effect must be increased. When making a batch of potions the herbalist must specify the effective rank and duration of the potions, which must be identical.

Elixir of Life - These potions enable an individual who is technically dead (life points less than zero) to recover without the loss of a resurrection chance if the potion is applied to the individual within the required time limit. The ranks of potion, time limits and negative life points from which recovery is possible are listed below.

An elixir must be administered to the victim by sprinkling the liquid over the heart.

Potion Rank	1 Minute	5 Minute	Potion Rank	1 Minute	5 Minute
1	-1 to -5	n/a	6	-1 to -30	-1 to -5
2	-1 to -10	n/a	7	-1 to -35	-1 to -10
3	-1 to -15	n/a	8	-1 to -40	-1 to -15
4	-1 to -20	n/a	9	-1 to -45	-1 to -20
5	-1 to -25	n/a	10	-1 to -50	-1 to -25

QUAD XXXXX

After an elixir has been successfully applied the victim is on six total life and one per location. Further, the victim is in a weakened state in which combat, spell casting and invocation casting are not possible and in which the victim requires assistance to move. Recovery from this weakened state can be achieved if the victim rests for a number of days equal to the negative number of life points from which he has recovered. Alternatively, recovery can be achieved by expending ranks of good, neutral or druidic sphere curing on the victim as follows:

Cure Applied	Days of Rest Averted	Cure Applied	Days of Rest Averted
Cure Wounds	2	Neutral / Druidic Cure Rank 1	0
Cure Serious Wounds	4	Neutral / Druidic Cure Rank 2	2
Cure Critical Wounds	8	Neutral / Druidic Cure Rank 3	4
Cure Grievous Wounds	16	Neutral / Druidic Cure Rank 4	8
Cure Mortal Wounds	32	Neutral / Druidic Cure Rank 5	16
Heal	50	Neutral / Druidic Cure Rank 6	32
Total Heal	50	Neutral / Druidic Cure Rank 7	50

Harmful Potions

Insinuating Venom - This may be applied to a weapon so that it enters the victim's blood stream through a wound. Thus the weapon must inflict actual physical damage (not just power or magic damage) to the intended victim, bruising damage is inadequate. Blade venom takes effect 30 seconds after the venom is introduced to the body, other venoms take effect immediately on introduction to the victims body.

Blade Venom - inflicts the stated damage 30 seconds after the venom is introduced to the body. All the venom damage is suffered at the same instant. The appropriate rank of poison and damage inflicted must be stated when the victim is struck. During that 30 second period the poisoned creature will be aware that he has been poisoned as the venom in the blood circulates affecting progressively more of the body's main organs. Venom damage may be prevented (not cured) in a number of ways.

- The rank 2 neutralise poison invocation negates all damage from venom of up to rank 5 if the invocation is applied after the venom is introduced but prior to damage being suffered.
- The rank 6 neutralise poison invocation negates all damage from venom of up to rank 7 if the invocation is applied after the venom is introduced but prior to damage being suffered.
- Poison antidote negates a certain amount of potential venom damage if drunk prior to damage being suffered.

Sleep Venom - This venom lasts for 15 minutes and is effective against ranks of character or hits of monster as follows.

Rank of Venom	Character Rank	Monster Hits
3	16	32
4	32	64
5	64	128
6	128	256
7	256	512

As with the spell, the victim is merely asleep and will be woken on suffering a minimum of one point of damage (real or bruising)

Slow Venom - This creates an effect similar to the slow spell and lasting 15 minutes. It may only be removed by a neutralise poison rank six (or above).

Ingestive Venom - Must be taken orally. All ingestive venoms take effect 5 minutes after consumption. Consequently all uses of such poison require consultation with the ref. The victim will be unaware that he has been poisoned until the effect takes place or, in the case of venoms causing loss of consciousness, until the effect wears off or is removed.

Ingestive Sleep - Causes the victim to fall into a deep sleep. The victim will be woken on suffering a minimum of one point of damage (real or bruising).

Ingestive Slow - This creates an effect similar to the slow spell and lasting 15 minutes. It may only be removed by a neutralise poison rank six (or above).

Paralysis Venom - This causes the victims muscles to become set and rigid for 15 minutes.

Neutralising Venoms - The rank 2 neutralise poison invocation negates all damage from venom of up to rank 5. The rank 6 neutralise poison invocation negates all damage from venom of up to rank 7.

QUAD XXXXX

Letters to the People of the Valley Alliance,

**From: Master Braith, MWC, ThD, MTh, BTh
Professor of Portals, Purple Faculty of Magic, West Tower of the Wizards Concillium Acting Administrator
of Faculty, Purple Faculty of Magic, West Tower**

I wish to record my thanks for the strong support given by the Valley Alliance at the recent Concillium AGM. The firm chairmanship of Lord Veltain on the second night was particularly fruitful, and I thank him, and other members of the Cabal, for their attendance.

Thank you to each of the Sorcerers from the Valley Alliance who contributed to the Ritual of Exclusion:

Lord Finn Darkflame,
Giles,
Scrope,
Quicksilver,
Draal Lolthspawn,
Tornado,
Sargon of the Temple of Earth Magic,
Maelstrom, Envoy to the Grey Faculty,
Tallian of the Temple of Earth Magic,
Daz the White,
Asalam,
Sarek,
Aradel,
Theodosius.

The contribution of Puddle, Cosmo, Rowena and Myrkel, wizards from the Alliance, is also noted with thanks.

I trust that the Guild Leader of the Black School of Magic is fully recovered from the spontaneous combustion triggered by his proximity to the concentration of magic in His Highness Lord Sarn Starstealer and Dalvain Spellsword.

Finally, a sad note on the fate of Sorcerer Kirien of Halmadons Heights. It appears that the words "I still thee", uttered by the Chosen, are a powerful curse, as Kirien has been cut off from all access to both power and mana. There are no healers more skilled than those in Halmadons Heights, and I look forward to reporting Kirien's eventual recovery from this curse.


Braith

WANTED

***Copies of old issues of Quad (issues 1-8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17 and 18)...
Don't want to be parted from your issue and no access to copying?
Send me your issue and I will copy and return it.
Also wanted - copies of any dungeon write ups.
Send to Pip care of QUAD or when you next see me.***

QUAD XXXXX

A Moment in Magic

Celebration Theme, February 6-8

With the Annual General Meeting of the Wizards' Concillium once again being due, I was sent to attend and observe. Not all of what occurred is dealt with here but for those who wish to know the full details then it is available for a price. Those gathered for this meeting were: Tornado, Rowena, Cosmo, Lathrodec, Scrope, Melkeron, Daz, Darian, Quicksilver, Draal, Lord Finn, Thoran, Dark, Puddle, Giles, Sister Mary, Phaid, Crystal, Myrkel Early in the evening, a meeting was called for all those of Wolfhold. His Highness, Lord Starstealer made comments regarding the seeming lack of support for His Highness' house in the War against the Dymwan, and many of those present pledged their support in this matter. Starstealer confirmed that the Duerger had now joined the Drow tower and were under the protection of his house.

Also of importance that evening were the deaths of Opal of the Reader/Azard-An, and (apparently) the Guild Leader of the Black School of Magic... Opal was found dead on the stairs to the guest quarters - investigation revealed that she was killed at the top of the stairs by a single dagger wielded by a black-faced creature with pointed ears, then pushed down the stairs. The apparent death of the Guild Leader of the Black School of Magic was another matter, although it seems that it was this event that caused the number of dark creatures to appear without warning and attack all those within the building. According to the only witness, Lord Starstealer, Dalvain Spellsword was the attacker, and had escaped via teleport. A group would be gathered in the morning to follow the teleport, and if they were unsuccessful, a contract with the Shadowsfall would be effected.

When morning arrived, a large ring or amulet was discovered in the grounds by Scrope - this amulet was investigated, and eventually was believed to be the focus of an individual identified as 'the Many-Hued One'. The group who intended to follow the teleport and speak with Spellsword began to gather when Janzarak of the Wizards' Concillium appeared and made an announcement. It appeared that the AGM was a screen for a ceremony that had begun some time ago, and at several different locations. This ceremony required that as many Wizards and Sorcerers as possible contribute as high level a spell as possible - the actual spell was not important, as the mana would be assimilated by the ceremony. A token must be left by each contributor to focus the mana of their spell. The ceremony, when complete, would have the effect of removing all defensive sorcery from all Dymwan Sorcerers. Janzarak requested that all those Sorcerers intending to depart with the group seeking Spellsword contribute their highest level spell before leaving. The ceremony would continue throughout the day, and was expected to complete some time in the evening. The Sorcerers of the departing group pledged their spells, and departed on their quest.

During luncheon, while Janzarak was preparing for the final stages of the ceremony, more visitors arrived - not the least notable of whom was one who dressed and spoke strangely, and identified himself as Gau Lung - third under-secretary to the Ministry of Culture of the Celestial Bureaucracy. It seemed there was some unease at the events concerning the Dymwan - the Celestial Bureaucracy were unhappy at the massing of armies by the Dymwan and their conquests of so many Towers. He was equally upset that the Valley Alliance and Free Towers Pact should consider a similar move to destroy the Dymwan - the preference of the Celestial Bureaucracy was that the Dymwan be merely 'culled'. This would restore the necessary balance to the realm.

Shortly after luncheon was finished, the ceremony was disrupted - on investigation, Janzarak lay on the floor, apparently unconscious, within a chalk circle. All else within the room seemed as it had been, until a wider view was presented. A creature, which identified itself as a Guardian Hepath sat within. This Hepath gave its name as Nethalarkin, and said that no-one may set foot within the room until its task was complete.

Those of us who had remained discussed the options, and many things were tried... The wards on the entrance were discerned, and dispelled... It was determined that magic could penetrate the room, and Rowena determined that physical form could also penetrate, by passing her arm through the entrance. The Hepath seemed not to care what action was taken, even dragging Janzarak to the entrance and passing his body out. One of the facts brought forward by Tallshanks, having spoken with Janzarak's unconscious body, was that if the targeting of the ceremony was not completed, the spell would return to its source point through each of the tokens - effectively ridding all those Sorcerers who had contributed of their defensive spells...

An interesting occurrence during this afternoon was the attack upon Dean Rajan by one of the Shadowsfall. The other Shadowsfall were astounded by this action, and when it was discovered that the attacker had a contract with the Dymwan for Dean Rajan, she was summarily executed by her comrades. Shortly after this, Seamus appeared at the side door - a creature had also appeared and was threatening. It was very powerful, and had magics of many levels. The fight to subdue it was long, and once it was determined that it was a magical construct made up of all 8 elements, dispels were used to lay the creature low.

Once a way had been found to enter the room safely, the tainted item disrupting the ceremony was identified and discovered to have been left by Theodosius, a wizard of the Red School... Once this item had been found, the Hepath disappeared. Janzarak was revived in order that he be able to complete the ceremony, and the hunt was on for Theodosius.

Interestingly, a scroll was delivered to Sarek of the Yellow school by a Drow. "To all loyal members of my family. There are a number who are aware of the magic. They are known as the Fraternity. They must be hunted down and destroyed. Sarn Starstealer." While this was occurring, Theodosius had been found, and was quite upset at the treatment he was receiving, denying all knowledge of any of the matters put before him. A dispel was cast upon him, and a Fetch (the spirit of a dead Scout, and retaining some of that Scouts' abilities) was released - the ensuing fracas was short and well executed. It seemed that Theodosius had no memory of any events since the night before - it was possible that the Fetch had killed Opal, then taken over Theodosius.

QUAD XXXXX

The hour was now late, and the evening meal was served before the AGM was due to begin – there now being many matters to discuss. The questing party had just returned, having successfully completed their task – Spellsword had affirmed his innocence of the attack upon the Guild Leader of the Black school, and had vowed to return himself when the hour was right to confirm this. The adventurers had met with many fearsome creatures during their travels, not the least of which were several trolls who had the power to strike with the force of seven men in each blow. Draal had suffered a great loss during the day – a creature he fought stripped him of his mighty strength permanently.

Janzarak appeared and confirmed that he had been able to salvage the ceremony with the help of others from the Concillium, and that the spell had been released upon the Dymwan – all their defensive magics would now be removed.

During the AGM, the matter of the apparent death of the Guild Leader of the Black School of Magic was discussed. No resolution could be found, as Spellsword had not returned to defend himself, but he was given until the close of the meeting to return, or the Shadowsfall contract would become valid. During this time, it became apparent that any defensive magics previously cast were being reduced at steady intervals. It was determined that the effect was localised to within a short distance of the building, but the source and cause were not established.

The discussion centred on ways and means to strike at the Dymwan, and this seemed an appropriate time to bring forth the item that I had been given to deliver to the meeting. I told those present that I had an item that was known to be property of, or connected to, the Arch Chancellor of the Dymwan. This was seen to be of great help, as we had already proved that it was possible to track a person by teleport – if it was possible to track the Arch Chancellor of the Dymwan, he could be attacked whenever we wished. I handed over the bag containing the two vials to Asalam, a Sorcerer of the Blue school who had effected the previous teleport of the day, for his study. Lathrodec and Kirian of Halmaddon's Height also wished to examine the items and were given permission to do so. Giles vowed to gather a party to seek out the Arch Chancellor at the earliest opportunity.

When Spellsword arrived, the matter of the attack on the Guild Leader of the Black school of Magic was resumed. Spellsword invited Starstealer to confirm his accusation, and at this point, Starstealer said that, as he had had time to reflect upon the matter, it seemed to him that it was possible that the cumulative amount of mana of the three Black Sorcerers in such close proximity must have caused the outflow of energy, and that from his position in the room, this seemed to come from Spellsword, although it had, in fact, not. Spellsword agreed that, now that he had perused upon the matter further, he concurred that this must have been the case, and that from his standpoint the energy had appeared to come from Starstealer in the form of a magical dagger. They also concurred that the Guild Leader of the Black school of Magic should be revived, so that he could also confirm this occurrence...

Several other minor points were raised, although one of note was made by Seamus on behalf of Gypsy Fred. She had been resident in one of the Towers now conquered by the Dymwan, and she and others now Towerless like herself sought refuge with the Free Towers Pact until their Towers could be returned to them. With this the AGM was concluded, and a dessert was served in the dining hall. Lathrodec and Asalam had concluded their investigations of the bag and its contents, and Kirian now had possession for his determination. The reduction of magic continued – defensive spells were now down by four levels, the wards on the building had dropped, and no spell cast had an effective level of more than one.

Shortly after dessert, there was a most unusual occurrence. There was a flashing of lights, and a number of men appeared in the room. They announced themselves as the Chosen, followers of Shaitan, and proceeded to thank Draal and Lathrodec for their assistance in certain matters, and also Lord Velteyne for his support of various ventures, and finally the Seers Guild for their support also... They stated that Shaitan would take his rightful place, and that his sphere would taint all other spheres. They began to chant and suddenly Kirian, who had been standing close to the front of the assemblage was targeted – a Still was cast upon him and his spirit was removed from his body. With this, the Chosen departed as suddenly as they had arrived, and it seemed that they had been the cause of the reduction in magics, as the effects dissipated with their departure.

Since Kirian was unable to provide any further information on the bag or its contents, Asalam discerned the potion in one of the vials – the other being empty. It proved to be an alchemical potion, and I determined it as being an Elixir of rank 5.

In the morning, Asalam collected together the necessary items for the teleport ritual, and the ritual was begun. He was assisted by Tornado, as this was a greater ritual than the one of the previous day. Close to the end of the ritual, a large group of Dymwan warriors suddenly appeared among us. Each time a group of Dymwan were dispatched, more powerful Dymwan appeared. Many of our number were seriously hurt, and those with healing skills were sorely tested. It seemed that the Dymwan were tracing us back along our own teleport ritual, so Asalam and the other Sorcerers made to de-sanctify all the items and break the ritual. The Dymwan continued to appear, and those with warrior skills protected the Sorcerers while they continued to break up the ritual. The most powerful creature sent by the Dymwan was one who drained the spirit strength from the body at range. It is not certain whether it was this creature or simply the accumulation of all the blows he had sustained, but when the final blows were struck, the last spells cast, and the ritual dispelled, Giles lay dead.

Virana

FORTHCOMING ADVENTURES

Below is a list of adventures already confirmed for the rest of 1998. Feel free to book any other weekend for an adventure and if you cannot raise a full party we will fill it for you.

APRIL

3rd - 5th, Easter theme weekend, Street.
26th, low level 8 hour.

MAY

8th - 10th, 36 hour Kinver.
13th - 17th, basic low level 5 day, Steps Bridge.
24th, low level 8 hour.

JUNE

12th - 14th, low level and introductory theme. Kinver.
28th, low level 8 or 24 hour.

JULY

10th - 12th, 36 hour Kinver.
25th - 26, Aradel - Hunter Greenshield 24 hour.

AUGUST

7th - 9th, summer theme weekend, Kinver.
20th - 23rd , 72 hour low to mid level, Ystrafeltde.

SEPTEMBER

6th, 8 or 24 hour.
18th - 20th, pre Heroquest 36 hour, Shining Cliff.
25th - 27th, Pearl Island

OCTOBER

4th, 8 hour.
24th - 30th, Heroquest IX. Devon.

NOVEMBER

8th, 8 hour.
19th - 22nd, Sargon 72 hour, Dimmingsdale

DECEMBER

4th - 6th, Xmas theme weekend.
20th, low level 8 hour.

AUGUST 1999

Heroquest X, at a site to be confirmed , the campaign has already started for this adventure , you may have a character you wish to use or now is the time to start one.

Follow-up mission to the Dark Node

Undertaken by:

Amethyst, Jarkor, Ariel, Daz Darkwash, Bounce, Lenor,
Comfort, Persil, Vellandil, Caedere, Blaze, Sarios, Creon, Virana.

Having gained some small information on our previous mission, we were sent to reinforce this as far as was possible.

Early on into the journey into the lands where the Dark Node was located, we came upon a hooded figure who requested an audience with me. We stood aside and he identified himself to me – I had been seeking information regarding the location and he said that he may have something of interest in this matter. We spoke for some time, during which the rest of the group dealt with some undead, assisted by a Khalid, who also passed on some information. The name of this Khalid was Sarin – he was of the Legion of Dothlodos, and a Green specialist. It appeared that there was some squabbling between two Drow houses – House Gurthel (9th House of Annach Morannanil) had become aware that House Alzor (7th House of Annach Morannanil) knew of the existence of the Dark Node, and that they had allied with the Dymwan in order to make use of it. Apparently some of House Alzor were at the Dark Node at this time. Sarin gave us a Rank 6 potion of Poison Immunity which he said would aid us if we were to fight the Drow at the Dark Node – they had a spider with them.

We continued on, seeking those of House Gurthel whom we had met on our previous visit, and who Sarin had told us were still present. On returning to their cave, there was no sentry on duty, so a number of our group descended to search the cave.

Distracted by the arrival of Sarin and the information he had provided, I had neglected to pass on the information I had gleaned from my source, and from prior research before setting out that day, and it was at this time that this was discussed. I told Amethyst and the others of the group of the increase in effect of any black magic cast from the Dark Node – the spell must be begun with the casters hands upon the central rock within the Dark Node, and can then be released. This spell will automatically increase by one level in effect (and damage to the caster). The unconfirmed reports of various creatures present in the location was also related.

It seemed that our questing group within the cave had met with some success, as when they emerged, they reported that they had met with Serath Sunbane, the 20th Assassin of the 9th House of Annach Morannanil. He had confirmed Sarin's statement to us regarding the presence of Alzor Drow in or near the Dark Node cave, and stated that there may be a boon from House Gurthel if House Alzor was destroyed.

We decided to hasten to the cave, as dealing with Drow in daylight is eminently preferable to the alternative. Along the way, we encountered a Troll (which proved troublesome), and then discovered a Dai-Fah-Dyne trader, apparently paralysed, seated upon a pile of logs in a valley. As we went to his aid, a Rank4 Ghoul appeared and attacked us, causing paralysis and affecting those with a poisonous bite. It seemed that we were only able to deal with this creature by means of powered damage, and as we had no powered weapons, I agreed to do this. However, if we had been able to stay clear of the creature, the Dai-Fah-Dyne would have been able to empower a weapon for us that we could use to slay it – as it was he revived and made the offer just as I dealt the final blow to the Ghoul. Still, the offer stood, and Amethyst had a mace empowered for one hour in case we met up with any more of a similar nature. This Dai-Fah-Dyne, who gave his master's name as Lord Arak Vambassa, exalted Sultan of the Southern Marches, said that he and some of his comrades had been on a mission in the area, on their master's business, and had been led into a trap by a Khalid. Blue Wizard, whom he believed were in league with the Dymwan. They had encountered a dozen Dymwan and their undead, and had been unable to hold them off.

We continued along the path, meeting no other creatures, and ascended the near side of the ravine. Moving along the top, the scouts informed us that there were indeed Drow at the mouth of the cave below, and that one bore the lightning symbol upon his cheek that we had been told was the mark of the House of Alzor. Amethyst called down to them informing them that we wished to speak with them, in the spirit of the Free Towers Pact. They were unwilling to have us come near, but Amethyst, Ariel and the others convinced them that the dimness of the cave was required in order for our Black casters to mnemonic and rest. They allowed four of our number within the cave, but shortly afterward their spider, who did not seem to be completely in their control, made an offensive move upon Amethyst, and then paralysed me. Jarkor moved me to a safer location where I was able to view the action until the paralysis wore off. The three Drow and their spider seemed at first to have the upper hand, but the group rallied valiantly and eventually defeated them.

QUAD XXXXX

Having defeated the Drow and their creature, many were weary and low on power, but we decided to take a closer look at what the four who had entered the cave had seen. Upon the central rock a cloth had been placed, upon which rested a chain, a goblet, a pouch, and a scroll tube. Next to the rock were some weapons. Comfort, one of the Elves of the Many-Coloured Mountains, and I were the closest, and as I looked upon the items my vision dimmed until I could no longer see. At this point Comfort also exclaimed that he was blinded. Our vision returned as we were helped from the cave, and others sought to remove the items from their positions. In doing so, each who touched the items became very weak, and required assistance from the cave. Having retrieved all the items – the pouch contained three bottles which I made an attempt at identifying. One contained some type of blood, the other an oil of an alchemical nature, and the third was herbal – plants or roots of some kind.

It was decided that those that required it should meditate and while I and others did this the scroll tube was opened and investigated. It contained two scrolls written in power runes, and a third in runes of the night. The others attempted to decipher the runes of the night while I translated the power runes. A full transcript is not included here, as instructions for a ritual of summoning were part of the documents. (Anyone wishing a full transcript should apply to myself, in care of the Seers Guild, Wolfhold Tower.) Suffice it to say that along with these instructions were some details confirming the knowledge of the Dark Node by the Drow, and that they had been seeking exclusive use of it.

Ariel summarised the events and information we had gleaned from this and the previous mission, hypothesising that the Dymwan who had disappeared through the portal on our previous mission was in fact stuck there – we would be able to use the ritual to gain entry to the ‘safe house’ where he was, hopefully defeat him, and thereby gain further knowledge of the Dark Node and its powers.

After some discussion, it was agreed that this would be our course of action. The ritual required one of specific talents to perform it, and I was the only one present who could do this. I set up the ritual, and began the invocation. On its completion, I became very weak, but I was able to command the sentinel who would convey us to the safe house.

Upon our arrival, it seemed that we were all blind, but in fact it was only that it was so much darker within, and we had to adjust our eyes in order to see. Ariel cast strength upon me that I might provide what aid I could within this place. A Power Wall had been erected around one of the larger areas of the cave system, and the Dymwan we had previously met was within there. As the scouts ranged further within the caves, more undead were discovered. Some of these could be dealt with but others we could only avoid until we were able to pass through the wards and attack the Dymwan. A long fight ensued, but eventually we were successful, and while the others tended wounds and searched the caves, I spoke with the dead Dymwan, aided by a Bless from Vellandil to prevent his return. I learned that his name was Malvineous. He was quite arrogant, stating that he would return, and that soon hordes from the plane of the Sleepless Dead would be coming. The only information I could draw from him was that he was one of the Cadre, and was binding the Darkness into undead to further the cause of the Dymwan, before the Bless began to wear off and I knew that he would soon rise again. We would not be able to hold him back a second time, as we had exhausted almost all our power and magics in the previous battles, so I warned the others and commanded our return of the sentinel.

Once out of the Dark Node, the others were able to check through the items they had found – a notebook written in strange runes, some baubles, and other items. The items were distributed among those who could best use them – the notebook required translation, and copies were made so that Amethyst, Vellandil and I could each attempt an independent translation.

Note: This has now been done, and a copy of the translation can be obtained from myself if the others cannot be contacted for any reason.

Virana