

*(March 2003)*

Those who travelled to the Hold of the Azad-An were:

Wolfhold: Lady Virana of the Dark Seers; Harlequin Voidstalker, 9th Wizard of House Tumdurgul; Kevralyn Soulfire, 11th Wizard of House Tumdurgul; Lancorin Bloodcall, 16th Assassin of House Tumdurgul; Roban Dreadbane, 19th Assassin of House Tumdurgul; Tanis Shadowsclaw, 20th Assassin of House Tumdurgul; Puke Scumgrief, Priest of the Reapers; Devin Amber, Reaper Acolyte; Mirabellaninani, Sprite Scout;

White Retreat: High Priest Melkeron of the White Path (Party Leader); Archmage Quicksilver; Prefect Balthazar, Micheline High Priest; Myrrh, White Wizard; Zephyr, Blue Wizard; Verrick, White Path Priest; Kal, Micheline Priest; Khortaz, Humacti Acolyte; Crion Airos, Veteran Crusader; Ozriel, Crusader; Doric, Seeker; Caradac, Seeker; Woolf, Warrior; Cad, Seeker;

Valley Alliance Tower: Daedalus Ebonheart, 13th Sorcerer of House Tumdurgul; Sky, Ranger; High Priest Shard, Grey Warden; BloodBark, Priest of the Grey Gauntlets; Lupus, Priest of the Grey Gauntlets; Melieth, Black Mage; Runt, Hospitaller; Cuddles, Hospitaller; Jack, Druid; Tersius, Druid; Belas Knapp, Ranger; Gillan, Ranger; Ruhk, Ranger; Thumper, Ranger; Thulelantir, Ranger; Gutrot, Ranger; Mira, Ranger; Borenson, Ranger; Run-with-Wolf, Ranger/Pathfinder; Abbishanti, Pathfinder; Nethris, Pathfinder; Corwin, Pathfinder.

## **Belem de Traverney**

We had gathered together so that we might question Belem de Traverney about his actions, prior to his trial. Many were unaware of his crimes: ordering the deaths of a large number of members of the Kern Valley Alliance, based on his subjective opinion as to whether it was merited (regardless that they had often already been tried by the Alliance). Belem arrived escorted by Rancor the Humacti Wizard, readily confessed to the crimes (as indeed he has done before), and absolved anyone else of any guilt. He did not answer the more interesting questions that might implicate any others, and he stated that he was quite prepared to die (I believe that the word describing his intentions is "martyr").

He was assassinated.

Verrick had been sharing a drink of water with him, and noticed upon his return that the drink had a distinctly unusual flavour. They were both struck down by the poison, but Belem had consumed far more than Verrick and died his final death. At this stage, those present were milling around both inside and outwith the building. A cry went up from inside - "Stop him!"

which was echoed back by a number of people. It was then followed by the inevitable question - "Stop who?" - to which noone had an answer. A "talk to dead" invocation revealed I believe some surprise on the part of Belem, in that he had not been anticipating death in this fashion. His body was returned to the Towers.

## A Cry for Aid

Arkis, a Blue Sorcerer of the Azad-An, teleported to our gathering. He impressed upon us that the Azad-An were in great and urgent need of our aid, and that serious things were afoot. Upon arrival at the Hold of the Azad-An, we beheld a large number of hordelings, goblins and trolls surrounding the tower. We laid waste to these, and eventually were invited inside the Hold, where most took of some refreshment eagerly provided by the Gatekeeper.

Within the tower, a meeting was taking place between Azad himself and some representatives of the Shadowsfall. Other senior figures of the Azad-An were also present, such as Lord Farrell (Head of Training, one of the Council). Another of the Shadowsfall was seated within and tried to engage me in discussion concerning the philosophy of Law. He was also most curious as to where we had previously been that evening. Needless to say, I politely rebuffed his attempts at conversation.

It transpired that the most senior son of Azad - General Athlung Halle, who was 2nd in command - had defected along with his followers to the Kalid.

## Shadowsfall Declaration

The meeting concluded, one of the Shadowsfall stepped forward with a proclamation concerning the Azad-An. He named himself Judge Helm Brighthand, formerly a Knight of the Shadowsmeet. Despite Quicksilver's protests that he was not of our time, he announced:

- \* The Shadowsfall have not forgotten the rights, the laws, the ways of Orin Rakatha.
- \* The words used by the Azad-An in their defence are weightless.
- \* He finds Azad guilty of crimes of status irregularities: that the status pledged to him was not rightly his.
- \* He rightfully declares that this tower is closed, and that all leave this tower.

He proceeded with a ceremony (that involved a ritual outside, and the reading of a scroll within), that caused the Tower to shut down (a process that took a couple of days). He also indicated that he is not the only one from the Shadowsfall tower with this ability.

Brighthand then informed us that the Ikarthians paid the Shadowsfall to enforce the contract of the Ritual of Ashes. And that if the Kern Valley Alliance do not complete the Ritual by the time once known as "Burning Night" this year, then he will return to Wolfhold and judge that status cannot be held there.

He departed with two others (whom he named as Adjudicator Luke and Adjudicator William) in tow.

## **Offer from the Kalid**

Following the Shadowsfall announcement, Lord Gezrin of the 4th Kalid Legion, stepped forward and spake thus:

\* The Kalid Nation would like to offer their sympathy and a hand of friendship to the Azad-An at this difficult time.

\* Athlung Halle (Azad's traitor son) has been named as a Hero of the Kalid, and a Legion Commander.

\* Those who dwell here, should they be capable of navigating the hordeling throng outside the tower, are welcome to join the Kalid and will be paid 10 Gests per point of status.

Azad flatly turned them down, and departed with his loyal retinue to attack the Kalid.

## **Initial Aftermath**

The Gatekeeper of the Tower, who had formerly appeared in Azad-An attire, now wore undistinguishable colours. He offered the Tower to the nearest person - Harlequin Voidstalker - and asked for somebody to rename it.

## **A Meeting Foreseen**

A Priest of the Dark Seers arrived the next morning: he had foreseen that a group from the Alliance would attend a meeting of the Kalid and Azad-An, and had arrived to escort them to this place. The group - generally those without status - departed, encountering Kalid and hordeling patrols along the way. They "attended" the meeting in spirit form, and came upon in part-way through. The details were thus:

Athlung Halle (Azad's son), had been accepted into the Kalid: one of his senior officers was present on his behalf. This officer was meeting with some of the Kalid Steelwind. The ex-Azad An were informed that they were not fit to join the Steelwind, by an ogre magi of the Tower of the Sword (his attendants included two blue elemental creatures). The ex-Azad officer tried to negotiate which Legion that they could join, but gained no ground in this matter; he then made the mistake of asking this particular Kalid Legion (who are notably honourable) for aid to kill Azad himself, as revenge (blood-feud) for the fall of the tower. The ogre magi clearly despised this officer for turning on their own liege lord, referencing "the Honour of the Steelwind: Damyo".

The help the officer sought was to teleport close to Azad himself, and slay him: this was refused, as the Steelwind considered this a dishonourable way to resolve a blood feud. The

officer then accused the Kalid of being afraid to help, at which point he was struck by the ogre magi, and the meeting was effectively at an end. A powersight cast revealed the presence of those from the Alliance, and they fled the scene in spirit form. When they returned to their physical bodies, they found themselves under attack by another group of Kalid, causing the deaths of several of the group.

## While Back At The Tower...

Some of The Reader made an agreement with us that we would ensure the gate to the former Azad-An Tower was guarded during the day.

BloodBark and Caradac went off to talk with some people, we were suddenly informed that they had come under attack. Apparently the Azad-An whom they had accompanied there had betrayed them to the Kalid; a High Priestess named "Halueth, Chosen Ne'hem'sen of the 4th Trueblood Legion" used a crystal ball to immobilise them before they were attacked. The Kalid broke Caradac's back, and struck BloodBark so severely that his life began to ebb away - interestingly enough, they then applied an elixir to him. The rest of us came upon the Kalid and fought them. Caradac then became most unco-operative with relating what had happened, presumably at some embarrassment over the whole incident.

The group sought to access the sub-plane which was accessible from within the Tower. Crossing forth the boundary four-at-a-time, a creature set various puzzles and challenges for those present. It liked to talk in rhyme, and when it became unhappy at an answer given by Sky, it banished him to the Plane of the Void. Sky was later recovered.

During the day various people arrived at or departed the Tower. One of these was a Sorcerer of the Black College of the Wizards Concillium, named Var Generale. He was interested in speaking with Quicksilver. Another was a Mor Silvani Shriever named Berygon Holph'al, who had previously been resident within the Hold. He informed me that hundreds of their number (the Mor Silvani) have been accepted into the Kalid; he was the only one of his race present in this Tower.

Another arrival was Serbitar of the Ravanon, he was joined by a number of people attired in green, including a Knight of the Dark Lady. Also with them was a wolf. The Knight challenged several of those present to a duel, eventually taking on simultaneously Quicksilver, Kal and Woolf. He was unaffected by battle magic spells, and eventually Woolf required an elixir. During this challenge, the wolf "slipped its leash" and terrorised/savaged a number of people spectating.

## The Shadow Disks

Later that evening, Daedalus Ebonheart, 13th Sorcerer of House Tumdurgul, and Lady Virana of the Dark Seers, arrived to cast a superposition of rituals to determine more about the nature

of the Shadow Disks which we have so far obtained.

## **News from Annach Morannonil**

House Tumdurgul is in ascendancy. Our strength has been recognised within Annach Morannonil and we are now 4th House.

The Beleg Aratar is: Arduval, Durguloth, Agraathan.

## **Battle With the Kalid**

Sorcerer Arkis teleported us to where the Kalid were preparing to engage Azad in battle. Our presence saw that the Kalid were slain; Azad and retinue were unharmed. Seamus was disappointed to lose his hat, apparently an item of some value.

## **The Fall of the Tower**

That night and the following morning, the Tower boundaries had crumbled further, and the place became overrun with hordelings. Those who continued to dwell inside were forcibly ejected by some blue creatures. The Gatekeeper no longer acknowledged our presence.

## **A Gain for the Alliance**

Having finally solved the puzzles the previous evening, we were able to all journey to the sub-plane connected with the former Tower of the Azad-An. There we met with The T'an, a distinguished Grey Sorcerer. After some discussions, he agreed to join Wolfhold, and provide the Alliance with a number of valuable Grey Magic teaching scrolls.

I navigated the group through the Tower through to where the scrolls were located, and we recovered them, while coming under sustained attack from great numbers of hordelings.

By my hand,

Kevralyn Soulfire  
11th Wizard of House Tumdurgul