

The first time of reckoning after the cataclysm had been called and all those peoples who wished to gain or retain a nation must present their status to the mystics at the central isle. Numerous adventuring groups had been assigned to assist at this time and this is the recounting of one of them. Led by Khandis, it included Kyle, Kurt, Kellorin, Ceth, Juxs, Verrick, Smudge, Malice, Lyryssa, Caradac and myself, Ichabod in the capacity of scribe. **Earth day** Travelling with a priest of the Brethren we approached the New Inn waystation, confident of our security so close to our own lands. This confidence was misplaced however as we were set upon by a group of Knights of our Dark Lady Assassins (knife men) and some lizardmen wielding poison.

Shortly after that a strong force of Khalid were met, not on their way to the Time of Reckoning as we hoped but there to test the mettle of the Valley Nation. They were led by a sergeant Marin and fought well but we're eventually overcome. Kurt experience significant vision problems during the fight and was forced to drop out.

Within spitting distance of the waystation we met what we initially thought was a mist weaver as he was accompanied by hordelings, but he said he was of The Land and had come down from the mountains to try and find out what was happening with the mists. He was Ulgar Stormcloud, son of the father. We told him what we knew and that they would be fixed as soon as could be managed. The hordelings had to be slain.

Once at the waystation it soon became clear that all was not well as our Brethren priest collapsed, poisoned. Caradac examined the food and drink on offer and discovered a two part poison, one in some snacks and the other in a blue drink. Eating both caused death. We never established who poisoned the waystation food.

Lord Lazarus Steel was present and made several announcements as well as discussed the time of reckoning with us. He unveiled the new map of Orin Rakatha as determined by our scouts, that Jeremiah Clearwater would acting in his stead and that we should consider the laws of Orin Rakatha in case they need revision.

There were several Khalid true blood outcasts there hoping to be accepted into our nation and after a lengthy interview with them one Elias Stormborn and his three fellow companions were duly granted nation status by myself and Khandis. They swore their status to Lazarus Steel. It amuses me that, as a nation, we can express so much hate for the Khalid nation but when it comes down to individuals they are really no different from ourselves and once they are 're-badged' they cease to be as sinister as most believe them to be.

Some Dai-Fah-Dyne arrived with their caravan, requesting space at the waystation which we allowed. There was some issue later on that our skirmishers had been displaced by them but ultimately room was found for all (and their goats).

We were tasked, By Lord Steel, to proceed to the periphery of the waystation to meet with the River People.

On the way we were assaulted by more Knights of Our Dark Lady assassins and green elementals.

At the rendezvous point we found an abandoned River People ritual with a force Khalid Kabiti. The ritual components originally belonged to a River Person named Madrigal and was used to escape from an enemy via some kind of portal and we later presumed that they had escaped through it to safety. **Fire day** After a restful sleep and breakfast we were disturbed by a Mistweaver and some hordelings who had come to remind us that Raggamuffin had said that the mist gates had to be fixed and to push home his point he intended to give us a literal spanking. Inevitably a fight ensued, but during it a group of Knights of Purity arrived. I

attempted to intercept them with conversation but they pushed past me, sighting Khandis and immediately assuming he was evil. The knights were a very tough group, their leader being Sir Danlore. They were however, corrupted in some way and used evil invocations against us and their blows drained the essence of those hit. Eventually, after a pause in the fighting, caused mainly by many of our number losing their spirit power, Sir Verrick challenged Sir Danlore and it was accepted. Sir Verrick expertly bested Sir Danlore and the remaining enemies retired as agreed.

A while later a Halmadonian Adamancer arrived and discussed the problem of the corrupted knights and he said that they had been dealt with, by which I believe that he meant that they had been added to the Halmadonian prison.

Since there had been no contact with the River People we were despatched to the vicinity of the Rainbow's Landing waystation, which is normally summoned into appearance by the River People, to check whether it had appeared or whether the River People were there.

We had been informed that the land's creatures seemed to be rising up against us and we soon encountered a group of rampaging animals including dogs, rats and other animals.

These were closely followed by a group of Khalid Kabiti who invoked the Condor as they attacked.

A little further on we met with a Pordaradrim Druid named Deptone who said he was concerned of a disturbance in the nature force. He pointed us in the direction of the spreading darkness or blight which, rather forebodingly, was the same direction as the Rainbow's Landing waystation. After another group of wild creatures were fought off (definitely not green elementals) we met with a group who called themselves Northmen or Sneverhime. They were under the control of the shaman Ulgar Stormcloud and were hunting some corrupted druids who have been performing rituals to corrupt it. We agreed to look into the matter for them and they were happy to report back that the matter was in hand.

While taking a break to meditate we were overrun by a large force of Knights of Our Dark Lady but we eventually defeated them.

After being warned of the dark druids in the area, we encountered a couple of groups of incensed animal and plant creatures and a lone druid with a couple of treants and a shambling mound. Defeating these we came across three druids performing a ritual in a small hollow between hillocks, defended by a powerful spirit of nature. Entering the hollow caused the ground to rise up and ensnare any who entered. The druids were draining the life out of a sacrifice by calling on Amon-tep. We disrupted the ritual by blessing the sacrifice. The druids were angered by our interruption and attacked together with some more treants and nature creatures. Once the enemies were defeated we still had to deal with the ritual itself which remained. Caradac asked the spheres for guidance and we had to eventually give it the blood of an elf and a human so thanks to Malice and Ceth for their somewhat painful sacrifice, which drained all their blood.

Getting close to the previous location of the Rainbow's landing waystation we anticipated the culmination of our mission but we were, it seemed, to be denied again. Instead of the waystation and meeting the River People we instead found one of the Eternal's from the Halls of Sutek named Kasan Wati. He claimed to have dealt with the River People, so we assumed the worst for them (although later determined they had most likely escaped through their ritual). We tested his resolve and the power of his troops but he could (being a former tower leader) more or less ignore our defense and strike wherever he chose which made it hard to mount a proper attack. Verrick was understandably very keen to continue the fight but we eventually retired in

good order with only Ceth being slain (from a single word from Kasan Wati).

We returned to the New Inn waystation but had to deal with some further Khalid of the Condor before we could make safety.

At the waystation we were met by Lord Manypage to whom we delivered the news of the missing River People and Rainbow's Landing waystation. He was understandably distressed and promised to forward the information to the rest of the lords. We were later visited by The Grey Man, from the Tower of the Weaver. He said that there was to be a vote of no confidence in The Valley being responsible for the Time of Reckoning and keeping the laws. The Valley currently had little support and needed to show strong leadership to win over some of the wavering nations. The vote was being put forward by the Halls of Sutek and they were being supported by The Fortress of Pentar and the Kalid nations. In support we had only the Halmadonians and the Dymwan.

I asked The Grey Man about the welfare of the Beholder and he said that he was doing well and was able to advise them on matters of history and is a member of the nations council.

A Reader representative arrived to discuss the status of the Gest and although I wasn't present for the conversation it was agreed that their nation should continue to oversee its administration. The child Ison and number of people from the Fortress of Pentar arrived but wished to talk rather than fight. They suggested that they would be happy to support us in the vote upon the condition that we return the being named Zakarius to them. I have not been personally involved but apparently this is the spirit of a vampire that is/was part of the Pentacle. We declined their support. Ison himself seemed to be trying to put a brave face on things, given his predicament, and didn't want to drawn into any 'difficult' discussions. After a short period he seemed to have a kind of fit and a number of Hepaths appeared around him and attacked. During the melee, the Pentar forces retreated.

After nightfall, and Smudge and Caradac had retired to their beds, we were informed by the Darkbringer that there was some kind of concentration of Hepaths not too far away and that we need to act to remove them. Also the Darkbringer had a meeting to attend and we had to provide protection for him. We fought our way through three waves of Hepaths until we arrived at a ritual site. They were summoning a greater Hepath of some kind by invoking Balor. Once the Hepaths and Pentar nation members were slain we continued on to the Darkbringers meeting.

The Darkbringer met with the Aldonar Lich, Marcus Armitage, the one time royal astronomer to the King (possibly of All Elements?). Reading between the lines of the conversation it seems that the Darkbringer had previously asked the Lich to intervene with 'The Prince' (who I infer to be Erelan Black) in the matter of re-incorporating him somehow. Perhaps the Darkbringer's shadowy nature reflects only a slight grip on the stuff of reality. Marcus said that the Prince didn't think the process would be a success but suggested that he might be able to accomplish through magic that which the Prince could not through necromancy. I assume that means the creation of some kind of elemental body and transference of his remaining spirit into it. I believe the Darkbringer accepted the proposal and will leave the Valley for an indeterminate period of time.

On our way back to the waystation we met a solitary Shadowsfall who did not reveal his name but we agreed should be called John. He said that the Valley had committed treachery by kidnapping their Judge, Talon Stormherald, which seemed rather incredulous, but we thanked him for the warning.

Later, back at the waystation we were visited by two Dymwan, Marius Seren, whom I had last

met on the Dark Pass plane and Chancellor Untapt. They declared they were supporting us in the vote of no confidence. There was also a discussion about the nature of the spheres and Cardinaris' belief in the all encompassing life sphere. A Valley member named Xernes was present (who, it seemed had once been a servant? of Lord Mian) and they managed to teach him to a neutral version of the commune with spirits invocation. In the same vein they spoke with Sir Verrick and, although he was initially sceptical, they managed to persuade him that there were many different paths to communicating with the spirits and they wished his help to try and communicate with the spirit of Cirith, who had been trapped, with several of his compatriots, on the Plane of the Sleepless Dead, when Cardinaris was banished from the plane. They had an interest in the final destruction of Cardinaris and wanted information on his strength there from Cirith.

Verrick created a hallowed Ground and then, with the help of the Marius and Untapt, performed a version of a spirit summoning. It was a very atmospheric moment and few thought it would succeed but then, before us, a vision of Cirith appeared. He spoke in that distant manner of spirits and couldn't quite believe that he was back on Orin, however temporarily. Cirith said that Cardinaris was contained in his citadel with the Humacti laying siege but he is ever growing in strength. Marius inspected Cirith's spirit and suggested that they would fail within a calendar year. Eventually his time had run out and Untapt and Marius banished the spirit back to the Plane of the Sleepless dead. A very moving moment which filled me with a wish to travel to the aid of Cirith and, who knows what other spirits might be trapped there. **Steel day** Our first contact of steel day was a group of Court of a Thousand Swords who announced that their Lady was coming, and arrive she duly did. It was the Black Queen, accompanied by Calex Wraithspawn. I had to forgo the pleasure of catching up with Calex (although I think we was only stating his opposition to us) as at the same time a delegation of Saldorians arrived led by one Predot Mar. I had a lengthy discussion with him where he 'justified' his nation's 'conversion' of people into the Saldorian nation. He agreed that any kind of coercion or mind control was out of the question and all that they did was create 'areas' where people were inclined to be friendly to each other. I assume that this may be related to the good sphere befriend invocation, but it may well be a red herring. He was willing to exchange ambassadors but I suggest whoever the lucky soul is to go to their lands, they should be suitably mentally fortified.

The Shadowsfall named 'John' arrived back to say that a group was coming to arrest those members of our group that had participated in the kidnap of their leader. He said both Kyle and Kurt were involved (which was physically impossible) but also Kylar, Delta and Kiara among others. The Adjudicator arrived and although we protested our innocence he did not believe us and we declined to let them arrest our fellows so the inevitable fight played out.

It appeared that various tower leaders were being kidnapped and held in temporal bubbles of some kind in an attempt to stop them showing support for The Valley. We were directed to the nearest one. On the way we were engaged by another Knight of Our Dark Lady who invoked Kasan Wati to flee at the fights end.

At the ritual site there were three banners representing Mist, Mind and Necromancy. Using the banners led us inside the bubble/ritual where we had to fight various hostile groups, namely The Chaos Jester and Hordelings, Otion Wraithchild and some Agothians and Judge Amos and some Shadowsfall. I was rather more distracted by a vision of Lord Manypage (details redacted).

Returning to the waystation we were visited by High Priest Andrew who was grateful for being freed from the bubble and offered to work on breaking the remaining two. He said that he had

been accosted by a group of Khalid.

Njord Forgeson arrived and announced that he was now head of The Forge. Also arriving were the Celestial Bureaucracy and Keisora Dynasty who revealed the location of their towers.

Most importantly we were visited by Kiara and the Black Pharaoh himself, who spoke of how we might deal with Kasan Wati, who seemed to be leading the conspiracy against us. He said the Eternals were aptly named and we would not be able to slay him in a conventional sense. The best we could do would be force him to be reborn and to do this we would have to force to eat himself. Apparently Kasan Wati was present in three of his key followers and we have to slay each one and get a willing volunteer to eat part of them and then allow himself to be eaten by Kasan Wati. Bravely, Shard volunteered and nobody argued too hard against his self sacrifice. Fortunately, the three targets were not too far off and we set about slaying each one. There was a Knight of our Dark Lady and retinue, a priest of Set and his worshippers and a poisonous serpent who was spawning. Each was a tough fight and by the end of the last we were all sick of being poisoned.

Retiring for dinner at the waystation we met some Thisessin who complained that a number of their people were missing in Saldorian lands.

Shortly after dinner a pathfinder named Jordan arrived breathless and told us of another Valley group nearby including Kylar so we set off to investigate. At the fort there were Kylar, Kiara, Obelisk and Driedyn who were acting in a very odd fashion. They seemed to be dark versions of themselves, full of spite. It seems that on a recent mission they went planar travelling (possibly to the shadow plane?) and somehow this created shadow version of themselves. It is clear that these were the Valley members responsible for kidnapping the Shadowsfall leader. We were going to do the honourable thing and dispel these shadows but Shard pointed out that Kasan Wati was expected shortly so we backed off to conserve our resources. These shadows remain to be dealt with. Shard began a ritual that would attract Kasan Wati and his minions and we all prepared to defend it. He duly arrived and we engaged him trying not too hard to protect Shard but eventually he broke through and Shard was killed and eaten. This in turn then killed Kasan Wati. Approaching to inspect his body, he invoked an eternal dying curse upon myself and Sir Verrick that travels between us.

Finally returning to the waystation after checking the shadow party had departed we were visited by Delta and Kiara and there were announcements.

- The valdemar colours will be used by The Valley when on the business of the Mystics
- The vote of no confidence failed but we have only a single year to prove ourselves to many of the other nations.
- Irwin stepped down as Baron of Darkholme to take up residence in the Temple of the Four Winds.
- We have accepted all the people into our nation that we are allowed too until the next time of reckoning.
- Kiara is no longer a Baron of Darkholme but a seneschal of the Black Pharaoh and any who wish to connect to the evil sphere must do so through him. Isn't that a bit strange?
- Raninin has taken Kiara's place as Baron.

So overall a success, in that we scraped through the no confidence vote despite the fact that the River people are still missing and it seems that the Halls of Sutek and the Khalid joined

forces against us.  
Ichabod.