

Notes from the Mission to travel to Gilden Far to assist High Priest Hagan of the Humacti and to explain dreams experienced by several members of the Tower during Wind Moon.

Team Members: Sir Kal (party leader), Randolphin (2nd), Ezekial Bramble, Cerredwin, Renown, Aruna and myself Ichabod. We were joined part way through the mission by Giles, Brother John, Smudge, Colin the Brave, Vallan and Kakarot. Our guide was Jeremiah.

Background:

Several people had experienced vivid dreams which could be categorised into two distinct types.

- A figure in a Humacti robe and hood in a darkened room leans over a large map of Orin Rakatha surrounded by books, scrolls, a scrying orb and a bag. He opens the books, sighs, and with some bearing on the Ikarthain Triangle he consults the scrying ball and says "Just what I'm looking for". He takes a second, smaller, orb from the bag and peers at the area around Gilden Far. He then says "All things must return to whence they came".

- A dark menacing figure, thought to be The Chorian, beckoned the dreamer to come to Gilden Far where "All things must return to whence they came".

Earth day

After a considerable walk to the area of Gilden Far we approached our destination a few hours after nightfall and encountered the lonely figure of Priest Polis from the Humacti. He was surprised at the small size of our group and we assured him that others would follow on in due course. He said that Pathfinders with him had discovered a small building nearby, infested with undead, but may yet make a suitable base of operations.

On route to the building we encountered, not unexpectedly, some Uruks from Barad Tirgul. These attacked us and were slain. At the building there was a collection of the walking dead, Skeletons and Zombies. These were accompanied by a Dymwan scout/assassin whom Cerredwin and Myself were going to speak with but the sight of our armoured companions made him take fright and he fled. The building itself was warded shut and just outside were the ashes of a dead Dymwan. Randolphin dispelled the ward whereupon an assortment of elementals (automated guardians of the place) appeared and attacked us. These were to be a regular occurrence (morning and evening) during our stay.

Once inside we were greeted by an undead spirit named Albert who resided within to serve 'the master'. He blithely assumed we were the master's guests. The building had some kind of deathly malaise upon it as when within it we regularly contracted diseases of increasing unpleasantness. In the corner of the room was a bloody dagger which when touched caused copious bleeding from the throat. Albert eventually ventured forth that his brother had been slain by a throat slit from that very dagger and we surmised that Albert has been the slayer given his remorsefulness over his brother. There was also a magical portal within the room which, once identified, we discovered led to 'the vault'. Within the vault was all manner of boxes, scrolls, items and assorted paraphernalia. Also within the vault was another spirit, presumably Albert's brother. Eventually a throat slit on Albert's brother with the ill fated dagger

was sufficient to expel both spirits, and malaise, from the building.

Now the building was secure, the vault was addressed in more detail with Sir Kal taking on the greater responsibility for trap detection and removal - the hard way. A great deal of information was obtained and I will try to précis the essentials here:

- Details for creating soul vessels.
- A number of rituals, particularly for placing spirits (both willing and unwilling) within a soul vessel.
- The Necronomicon.
- Details on the Staff of Doom.
- Basic information on the casting of rituals.
- A treatise on the power of names and numbers with relevance to rituals.
- A very long boring essay on experimentation – this was discovered to be an encryption key.
- An encrypted diary, presumably the building owners, that would decrypt itself if held up in front of the owner whilst saying his name.
- The first part of a key.
- Three large boxes. The first containing a number of corrupt potions and one with 3 doses of Dismiss Greater Undead. The second was the Box of Evil which contained the diary. The last box we could not open without a further 3 parts of the key found above.

About this time a small group approached the building, surprised to find it occupied. They refused to identify their tower so we were forced to slay them as towerless. One had upon him another copy of the long essay (above) and an encoded message. This was eventually translated to read:

The building has been activated. Enables security.

About this time we were assailed by a group of Barad Turgul Uruks, a High Priest with a Black/White face and a number of Morgul wraiths. The leader escaped us but the others were destroyed but he was heard to say that he desired to be release so we thought this may be the local spirit we intended to release.

Before retiring we were visited by the Humacti spirit seen within the dreams. This is presumably an avatar of Humact as he said that he had taken the form of a long dead Humacti High Priest in order to visit us. He said to us that there were nine remaining spirits left over from the Agoth experiment. All the Vere and soul gardens had been destroyed (he was wrong on this point) but some of the first (and most powerful) spirits used to create them, the first of each garden if you like, remained, and had been unable to be pass on to the beyond. These would be desirable to those keen to extract power from these spirits essences so he would like us to undertake to find each spirit and facilitate its release. One spirit was in the local area as its essence was tied to something nearby. We would have to locate the spirit, pacify it, find whatever was binding it and then find some way of releasing it.

Fire day

A long period of identifying the purposes and uses of the items retrieved the night before was interrupted by a pathfinder running across the field outside which heralded an attack by a group

of Kalid who were pursuing her. There was also an attack from the buildings elements guardians.

We established that the part of the key we had could be used to locate the next, by the casting of a whispering wind upon it. Also, each part of the key acted as a fetter upon the spirit we were trying to release. We would need to destroy all three fetters upon it before we would be able to gain its trust.

We set off for the first fetter, encountering Barad Tirgul Uruks, Kalid and a group of the walking dead, all of whom were eliminated. Then we came upon a Shadowsfall Justicar who was interested in the different groups in the area. In an exchange of (some) knowledge he informed us that there were Kalid, Barad Tirgul, Labyrinthe of Xenos and towerless activity in the area. He was particularly interested in the towerless and we informed him of those we met the previous night.

Approaching the first fetter, we again encountered the Morgothian spirit with a black and white face who was suspicious of our motives but was fairly keen for us to remove the fetter. This was located within a ward which I quickly recognised as a ward of holding as described in the book of rituals we'd obtained. Regrettably, the instructions for dispelling it had been left with the pathfinders at our lodging and I had to run back, dodging a Dymwan scout, to retrieve it. The outer guardians of the ward had the ability to re-energise themselves and had to be repeatedly killed until the ward was destroyed.

Shortly, after a rest we moved off to towards the second fetter. On the way we encountered some Labyrinthe of Xenos minotaurs and ogres who were seeking our items. A little further on we met and destroyed a small group of Kalid 4th Legion before we approached the second fetter. This time the removal of the guardians and the destruction of the ward proceeded much more smoothly and we obtained the second key. The Morgothain spirit informed us that the last fetter could only be removed at night so he would return later.

On our return to our lodgings we met with Danak Sanak, a High Priest, loyal to Lord Carfleen of Barad Tirgul. He was interested in our mission which we gave little away on. Also he re-iterated that Lord Carfleen required The Valley to stay out of the business of Barad Tirgul. We also touched upon the Uruk problem and assured him we had only fought in self defense. Interestingly there was a representative of The Dreadlord with him but he said little and gave away no hint of his mission.

Finally, tired as we were at this point, we met some Labyrinthe of Xenos drones on the great field with two very long range effect drones. We were gladly joined in the fray at this point by Smudge, the first of the late comers.

Back at the lodging we were joined by two more stragglers, Vallen and Kacarot the goblin and they were soon showing their mettle when another round of elementals attacked.

Later that evening, after dark, we cast another Whispering Wind to enable us to locate the last key/fetter. We followed a short series of roads to a small copse filled with the walking dead. The Morgothian spirit was there and fought us as he was being controlled by a Dymwan who announced himself as Calix Wraithspawn. In a long scrappy fight the undead were mostly destroyed, then revived by the necromancer, and while we destroyed the last fetter Calix managed to leave cloaked in an aura of Repel Life. It was at this point that Randolphin, not being strictly alive anyhow, bravely tried to disrupt his departure but the High Priest's undead slew him for his final time.

We carried Randolphin's broken body back to our lodging. On the way we encountered a Labyrinthe of Xenos drone who offered to take away the broken body but we decided to hold

onto it, although we were unsure of exactly what we could do to bring him back ourselves.

Upon our return to the lodging we discovered Brother John, Giles and Colin the Brave, the last part of our group, had arrived.

Now that we had all the keys to the remaining box, Kal opened it. It was trapped with a mass psionic effect which seemed to wipe our minds completely and physically scattered us across the dark field outside. Knowing neither ourselves nor our comrades we had to spend considerable time learning about ourselves and learning to trust each other again. I found this a particularly disturbing experience and I was very glad when my own memories gradually seeped back into my mind. Our lodging had become infested by some humanoids which were eventually dispatched.

The box contained a large, pointed, translucent crystal which was identified as the essence of a Vere. We also determined that the essence of the spirit we sought to release was contained in the crystal. Whether it was the entire contents was not clear. We developed itching marks on our arms that Brother John identified as unknown but beneficial.

Steel Day

Mysteriously, Randolphin came back to life, although he still discerned as dead.

In the morning the Morgothian spirit arrived and introduced himself as Lanis Fermain of Barad Tirgul. He perceived Kal as a commander of Morgothian mercenaries and the rest of us as his troops. He said we were to accompany him to a ritual he was to perform to create a bridge to Thranduil so that the Witch King could pass over to Orin Rakatha. This was the will of Lord Carfleen.

When ready we followed him to a gate where he met with a Morgothain of The Houses who attempted to dissuade him from his mission which was unsuccessful. Following that we encountered and destroyed two sets of Agoth worshippers. Finally we arrived at a ritual circle where more worshippers of Agoth greeted us. Lanis engaged them in combat and received a soul corruption whereupon he collapsed. After we had slain the remaining Agoth minions we promptly awoke in bed.

After a second breakfast Lanis again arrived and we played out our part as Morgothain mercenaries again. It was clear to us at this point that we would need to intervene with the corruption of Lanis rather than merely bear witness to it. The following encounters repeated themselves although this time, before the finale, we met a Duegar named Banyl Ironmind from House Agraathan until recently part of the tower of Annach Morannanil. He pointed out what we'd already guessed, that we'd remain trapped in this 'dream' until we could alter the ending. He also said that our bodies lay fast asleep on our beds and had done for many hours. We would not awake until we had resolved matters in dream. If we could not, then he and his men could awaken us but it would be a painful experience. Thanking him for his advice we moved on to the group of Agoth worshippers.

This time around Kal and I persuaded Lanis to remain at the rear while we dealt with the intruders, rather than letting him approach and confront them. This agreed to, he gave us 5 minutes to remove them. Forewarned of their abilities, it took little time to neutralise them.

We then again awoke within our beds, late in the afternoon, with the rather gruff voices of the Duegar about us, helping us to revive. We spoke again with Banyl Ironmind who pointed out that if we had not been able to escape the trap then whoever had set it would have returned to find us all asleep in bed. Banyl requested to examine a number of our minds in order to extract what information he could regarding the originator of the trap. The Duegar are currently stuck on Orin Rakatha, with the fall of their tower, but eventually intend to return to Murandir when

that becomes possible.

After a much delayed elemental attack, a lone pathfinder came running to us with news of a group of Kalid organising themselves across the field and if we were quick we could catch them out. Kal, Renown, Ezekial and I arrived first and engaged their vanguard, with Kal bravely rushing forth into their midst to disrupt them as much as possible. When the rest of our group arrived the Kalid leader formally announced himself as Talon, a commander of the 4th Legion. The Kalid group was highly organised and difficult to put down, but down they did eventually go.

Later, in discussion with Kal, we determined that we would need to bind the spirit of Lanis within the already prepared soul vessel found in the Vault two days earlier in order to provide respite for his tortured soul and to enable us to more easily return it to the tower where we may be able to release him to the beyond. It seems the only way to release him would be to destroy the Vere essence crystal but we had no way to do that directly. Kal, Smudge and I prepared the ritual area we would need so that we could perform it when the spirit of Lanis returned.

Shortly after finishing the ritual area a number of Xenos drones arrived to harvest the Vere essence crystal.

We were visited by a High Priest, Lashrak Darkreign from Barad Turgul who had come to discuss the fate of Lanis. He wanted the spirit to be removed. I believe this would be because he is direct evidence that The Houses of Barad Turgul (the lords and regular folk) conspired with the Catacombs of Asherai (Agoth) to betray him, thereby stopping Lanis completing the planar bridge that would allow the Witch King to return to Orin Rakatha. This would be in direct contravention of their tower leader's orders. Kal suspected that we would need to appease Lanis's spirit before he would allow us to place him in the soul vessel so he initiated an attack on Lashrack that saw him killed. I privately disagree with this action since he had come to parley with us and I don't think it was necessary to avenge Lanis's conspiritors. As soon as Lashrack had been slain, a larger group of Barad Turgul troops arrived and his body was recovered, although at some cost to them.

Immediately after that there was another round of elementals attacking us.

After a short rest, one of the Duegar arrived to warn us of the imminent arrival of 'a massive psychic wave' at our location. Before we could prepare effectively, Tiresias, the ex tower leader of the Catacombs of Asherai and last remaining member of the Cadre responsible for the Agoth experiment, appeared before us. He declaimed Kal as a thief for breaking into his property, stated that his staff had been activated and demanded back his property (the Vere essence I believe). Kal refused, so psychically Tiresias jumped us to the field and, together with his elemental gaurdians (is this the correct term?), started to decimate us. After a short, confused fight Tiresias and his minions disappeared, his time having run out. With the help of Priest Polis I managed to recover the diary found in the Vault from Randolphin and in the presence of Tiresias I said his name and the diary was decrypted.

When we had suitably recovered, I read the decrypted diary to the party and these were, in my opinion, the main points:

- Tiresias has remained on Orin Rakatha to tidy up some loose ends and has become trapped here with the closing of off plane travel.
- He has created a 'child' which is kept in the Nursery with wards.

- His child has grown over time and is probably becoming too powerful for Tiresias to control in the long term.
- He used his child to access the Plane of the Sleepless Dead, via the Aldonar Tombs, and retrieved one of the Vere essences (Lanis).
- He believes that travel through the Plane of the Sleepless dead may be a viable way to get off Orin Rakatha.
- He is hiding from both the Dymwan and the Labyrinthe of Xenos.
- He has been hiring the Kalid as mercenaries.
- Erelan Black gave him the Necronomicon in exchange for details on the remaining Aldonar.
- He will attempt to use his child to retrieve further soul garden essences from the Plane of the Sleepless Dead.

Lanis arrived with two Morgul Wraiths but he had embodied the Black Breath so performing the ritual on him would have to wait until the following morning. We discussed with him how he might aid us against our foes. The biggest threat to us seemed the Morgothians who had been reported massing in several camps. He left us to harass the smaller camps to thin out their numbers.

The Dymwan Calix Wraithspawn arrived to speak with us. He confirmed that the Dymwan were hunting Tiresias and would dearly love to get hold of him. They offered us the three essences held by Cardinaris at the Oasis in return for handing him over to them. He also brought with him a letter from a Dymwan named Xoriayn, see below. Kal agreed to talk with him again should we get Tiresias in our possession.

A Labyrinthe of Xenos High Enchanter name Pochanti arrive. The Labyrinthe are hunting for Tiresias so that they could reintegrate him with the Hive Mind. They offered help with dealing with him (although not in finding him) in return for us handing him over to him. Again Kal made no direct bargain but agreed to talk with them should we find Tiresias at a later date.

A naming day spirit arrived with a cake to celebrate Brother Johns naming day. After consuming the cake He and Cerredwin exhibited extreme giggling.

Lastly that evening we were again visited by the Humacti spirit, or avatar, to congratulate us on our work done so far. He said that he had discovered that there was still one soul garden in existence, a fact we had already discovered from Tiresias's scrolls, and that there was an essence there. This soul garden had remained undetected as it has been partially merged into the mirror realm, or dark pass, on the Plane of the Sleepless Dead. While we were discussing this he collapsed to the floor and vanished. Some said it looked as if he had been struck. Not common behaviour, in my mind, for an Avatar of a sphere.

Sun day

The day began with the usual attack of elementals followed shortly by a collection of tough Barad Tirgul Uruks.

Kal then performed the ritual to draw the spirit of Lanis into the soul vessel to give him some respite and to make him easier to transport back to Fortunes Keeps.

Moving off we encountered a strong force from Barad Tirgul led by Danak Sanak. He upbraided us for meddling with Barad Tirgul business in direct contravention, as he saw it, of the agreement made with by High Priestess Sasha at a recent meeting she had with Lord

Carfleen. Kal gave little ground in the argument stating that, as we understood it, the agreement only extended to the Uruks roaming loose upon Orin Rakatha, which we have honoured.

Needless to say it came to a fight and we were victorious. We then made our best possible speed back to the tower.

Letter to Calix Wraithspawn from Xoriayn

Further to our initial discussion, as far as I have been led to believe there are nine remaining Spirits (or Focal Spirits as they are referred to), that are in a state of flux as a result of the demise of the Agoth experiment. This information has been supplied by the Cadre, although not sure where they got this from, Lord Cardinaris I presume?

These Spirits are incredibly powerful and should we be able to control them, then they would be a significant addition to our declining resources, acting as focal points or "conduits" for lesser Spirits and associated Walking Dead. Indeed some of them can even open up small connections to the Plane of the Sleepless Dead to summon forth their own allies, albeit this ability is limited and cannot be performed often.

I am told that all nine of them are of the "Spirit" class rather than the Walking Dead, which is what you would expect I suppose considering the method of their "creation". From what little information we know they appear to be split between the Dread Spirit variety and Ghost (Phantom or Spectre). Considering that they all have fetters, it is surprising that they are not all Ghosts, interesting point to ponder, perhaps we should compare notes?

It has been confirmed that Lord Cardinaris has secured three of these Focal Spirits and they are currently within the Oasis. I hear that Lord Cardinaris is in negotiation with them and that they are also being studied by what remains of the Cadre and certain members of the Chancellery. I presume that any further information gleaned from them will be shared? I would be keen to be given greater insight on how we can manipulate them, or even be allowed access for my own research, for the benefit of the Dymwan naturally. From what I can gather not all of them are compliant and some are resisting attempts at integration. It would be useful to confirm what binds them and how they can be brought to task.

We are aware that five of these Spirits still reside upon the Plane of the Sleepless Dead, either serving or bound by various Realm Lords; I am unaware which realms, but Presume that Lord Cardinaris is aware? I have submitted a request to the Chancellery for further information on this matter and have an audience shortly.

I am told that the Inquisitors have received word from one of their Watchers near the Ikarthian triangle about the final Focal Spirit and you are being despatched to investigate? I am surprised that you would respond so willingly to their summons, surely it is a waste of your time to venture forth based on nothing more than rumour, perhaps I could assist? I could liaise with this Watcher in your stead should you so wish? As always I stand ready to serve and work together for our mutual benefit. Perhaps if you could delay your visit to the Ikarthian triangle we can discuss the situation further once I return from my meeting?

Xoriayn

Location of the remaining soul garden essences

First Essence

Plane of the Sleepless Dead

Realm of Disease and Decay

Realm Lord (yes)

Second Essence

Tombs of the Dymwan

Cardinaris

Unable to be reached

Third Essence

Plane of the Sleepless Dead

Realm of Pain

Unknown (yes)

Fourth Essence

Tombs of the Dymwan

Cardinaris

Unable to be reached

Fifth Essence

Plane of the Sleepless Dead

Realm of Disease and Decay

Realm Lord (yes)

Sixth Essence

Tombs of the Dymwan

Cardinaris

Unable to be reached

Seventh Essence

Plane of the Sleepless Dead

Realm of Battle

The Grove (no)

Eighth Essence

Gilden Far

Protected

Obtained

Last Essence

Plane of the Sleepless Dead

The Mirror Realm

Last Remaining Soul Garden (yes)

Note to Tiresias from Xoriayn

My lord I have examined the link between the essence and the spirit as commanded. They are intrinsically linked and in order to fully utilise the essence one must pacify the spirit. I have commenced construction of a vessel to temporarily house a spirit so that it becomes more pliant and malleable. A simple ritual to bind the spirit within the vessel will complete the process and prime the essence as required. Needs dictate that I return to the tower but I will brief you further upon my return. I have written the ritual details in the spell book for use.

Xoriayn