

Word had reached me of an ad hoc patrol being assembled for a mission to the place known as the World Window. Sergeant Orlando and a number of people from his regular patrol were to be present and I had been ordered to join them as they set out.

I was somewhat displeased to learn that he and his people were in fact joining the gypsy Yana's rabble for this mission.

Once the entire patrol was assembled we consisted of:

Warriors: Squire Arithis of the Eternal Order Spirit Warrior of the Fell Knights, Sergeant Orlando, Lupacuore of the rangers, Kalliste also of the rangers, Ruele a drunken sot of an elf, Caleb also a drunken elf, Jynx a barbarian warrior, Kit of the crusaders.

Priests: Dibbler who is the most filthy hospitaler I have ever met, Akarra a healer of the white path, Yana gypsy fishwife, Anushka who still has a fetish for dead body parts, Nero silent and resentful minor criminal sent out on patrols because of some crime.

Mages: None

Scouts: Hurmurmurmer a lizardman with far to long a name but a good scout, Jarrad who has given up pretending to be a mage and now claims to be a scout and Elbow, goblin ratter and scout.

We set out towards the base point of our mission at the world window and had gone less than half a days travel when scouts met us and gave us new orders. We were to the sanctuary inn in the fallow hills and await new orders there. We changed course and pushed onward towards our new destination for some days.

Drawing close to where we thought the inn was located we entered deep woodland and followed a well-used path between the trees. A few hordelings got in our way and were crushed.

Then our scouts reported the path ahead blocked by figures, it was too dark to see any colours under the trees and they were not sure of numbers but thought about 6. They stepped out to

block our path and demanded we hand it over to them, the item we had was what they wanted. They were outlaws without colours or symbols but they seemed well equipped to be bandit scum. Many wore light armour of an unusual pattern and all seemed well armed.

They demanded the item and attacked us when we would not hand it over, forming a fighting line on Sergeant Orlando we held them and were able to flank and then surround them. Once they were down we checked them and tried to question one who still drew breath. He gasped again that they would take the item and then died.

We treated our wounds and moved onwards. Shortly thereafter we came upon a lone outlaw seemingly being guarded by a skeleton. Much as the monk's man I had met last year he said he did not know why it guarded him and had no memory of travelling to this area. After we smashed the skeleton he was examined and his minor wounds treated. He had what seemed to be some form of disease that may have been caused by a claw like wound on his arm that would not heal. He left after being unable to answer our questions.

Walking onwards another mile or so as we passed through the deepest darkest part of the woods we were attacked by some lesser undead and destroyed them although several of our warriors were left unmoving due to the claws of a ghoul.

Finally we came in sight of a cluster of buildings that was the inn. We were directed to the closest and found it to be a somewhat small and cramped lodge suitable for half our number and already full with folk from all three cities. We dropped our packs and make ourselves comfortable in the warmth. We spoke with those present and finally were informed that visitors were here.

Black Rod of Wolfhold and the assistant guild leader of the pathfinders.

Black Rod explained that this inn was normally held by the drow but was in the process of being transferred to the Alliance, we had use of but a single building as the others were still in use by the previous owners.

Black Rod asked who was in command of the patrol and when informed that Sgt Orlando had been named as leader was not happy with this. He said I was to command this patrol and to ensure the mission we were to be given was successful.

Our mission had been a deception, we were sent here to receive our real mission. Some moons ago Wolfhold had become aware of a traitor passing information to house gurthel. I had seen this traitor myself while escorting an ambassador not long ago although such was his skill at disguise that he could look like anyone now.

In order to draw him out a lure was set up. A patrol was publicly assembled to carry an item of psionic power that gurthel were known to want. Then it was leaked that this was a trap and that the real item was being carried by a small ad hoc patrol that would be at the sanctuary inn. Our patrol was to be the bait in a trap set to catch this traitor. We were given an item that would be detected as psionic if checked for such and the trigger for a ward that would enclose a large area preventing passage in either direction for a full day. This had to be activated at noon on the following day and we had to ensure the traitor was close by. Once he was trapped inside with us we were to hunt him down and return him to the city. I enquired did they want him alive or dead, Black Rod said either would do.

We were also asked by the Selena of the pathfinders' leader to contact a local mistweaver. We were to arrange for a meeting between her and Tav cashback, assistant guild leader of the valley merchants to set up a hordeling free area around the slave fair to be held nearby within a moon. Black Rod said this was permissible but was secondary to our main mission, which was the traitor. As such no more than six people could be spared for this task.

They then left. The item which was the bait I took myself, the trigger for the trap went to the lizard man who we are now calling number eight as he was reasonably competent and fast if such is needed.

We settled down with guards posted while I spoke with some of the others and updated my notes with the days travels.

Figures seen in the darkness moving towards us. Red garbed demonic figures, humans in black and armoured. Some of the creatures felt only the bite of magical blades, others were only harmed by power. They came straight in and when asked what they wanted replied your deaths. Battle ensued and we drove them back and slew them with only one or two of their tougher warriors proving much of a threat.

We had no sooner cleared away the bodies than undead shambled out of the darkness led by a dymwan who refused to answer my questions. No 8 was blessed and sent after what we took to be a ghoul while we held the rest at bay. Aside from some painful invocations from the priest they were dispatched easily.

Several visitors, firstly some shadowsfall who came and went, then a scout from Wolfhold checking on us.

Then a shadowsfall captain named Eridan who had a small group of trainees. He had been watching us for several hours and managed to sneak past our guards. I must note that over the course of this night several times people easily made it past the guards which is why I spent much time on watch the next night.

Anyway he was curious as to our presence in what is normally a drow inn. He seemed a most pleasant chap which is to all reports unusual for the shadowsfall but I suspect this may well be simply a way of gaining information.

We spoke of much and he had heard of the iron star but considered them an insignificant threat. I told him news of the alliance that was public knowledge around the cities but which had not reached this far and in return he told me of the area.

To the east of us is a Dy fa dyn inn guarded by easterling mercenaries. To the south can be found a kalid inn. This hall is currently used as a training base where the first sorcerer of the Doth lodas is training his most advanced students. West is another Dy fa dyn inn but leased to the Reader. There has been some tension here as the Dy fa dyn accuse the Reader of breaching a contract and say they should not be there. More about this is not known.

The final information he had related to actions performed in the valgrim pass and was important to Yana and Anushka. A group from the Alliance had been there some six moons ago and had bought or allowed something into this world from the nether realms. This creature was creating an abyssal taint upon the land, which was spreading. This effect made it easier for creatures from the abyss to be summoned here. He did stress it was important that we knew of this and of

the towerless who were involved in the pass.

His students then left and he bluntly asked why we were here. I explained briefly the official mission we were on, that of carrying a psionic item to this area.

We retired for the night. Due to lack of space I slept in the main room but the inn was warm and I found plentiful bedding to be comfortable.

Come sun up I rose and enjoyed several cups of coffee. The others slowly began to rise.

An Alliance scout came out of the woods and began running towards us across the open field, she spent much time looking behind her as she ran and I called to arms expecting trouble. She reached us and reported that a group of warriors and some sort of red creatures was on the way here. By the time she had finished we could see them ourselves as they cleared the trees and advanced.

A mix of the same armoured warriors and red creatures we had fought before. They closed with us and despite the alarm given as soon as the scout had been seen many of the patrol still had no armour on. Jynx and I advanced to meet the attackers, I tried to speak to one, and his reply was "die" as he swung a blow at me. The others came out to fight, some in half armour, Ruele came running past without armour and Sergeant Orlando had not heard the alarm as he emerged from the toilet area defenceless. We suffered much hurt here as it took time to assemble everyone and many were not fully armoured. We used much healing as a result of this attack.

A scout came out of hiding and said she was here to guide the small group to contact the mist weaver.

I had decided that because the mission to contact the mist weaver was very much of secondary importance I would not weaken the main patrol by sending anyone but the least capable of our number. I had thought to send Sergeant Orlando to command this mission so there was some one competent in charge to give it a chance of success. On speaking to him however I had to agree that his skill would be missed from his normal role of centring the fighting line. That being the case the only other group leader available was the gypsy Yana who I was happy to send. The team for this secondary mission was therefore: the scout elbow to talk to the hordelings on

their own level, the warriors Ruele and Caleb who were our least experienced and after their drunken behaviour the ones I could most easily lose. Dibble as the healer, Yana to lead them and Anushka to keep Yana company. This group departed on their task and the remainder of the patrol set out upon the primary mission.

We set out and quickly located the trail we were to follow. Some distance along this trail our scouts reported movement ahead and counted at least half a dozen of the red creatures and outlaw warriors. They closed us and we engaged. This battle was a shambles. Several of the attackers came round our flank and I ordered the scouts to hold them off, suddenly it seemed as if half the warriors had vanished from the front line as they engaged the flankers and we came under ranged attacks from a drow mage. Both sergeant Orlando and myself felt the bolts of magic cast by the mage although the good sergeant could the brunt of them. Finally the one at the rear was chased back and the other warriors answered my calls. The scouts were able to keep it away, I prevented any more from flanking on that side and we were able to defeat them. The mage fled at speed with Jarrad in pursuit.

Sergeant Orlando needed an elixir and everyone was sorely wounded. While Akarra tended our wounds Jarrad returned to report more drow ahead.

I ordered the sergeant withdrawn and for everyone else to make ready to fall back if needed.

The drow approached and demanded the item, one of them then cast a spell to reveal its presence and commanded his men to take it from my body when I refused to hand it over.

This time we fought much better. The warriors held the line well, the scouts chased off the beast that tried to flank us and we held firm despite the heavy use of magic by the attacking drow. Several of the attacking warriors were cut down and the others were pinned. I was able to force the mage and his guard back till the guard died under my blows. The mage made a break past me toward the group but by the time I had turned to pursue he was dead. Even with both Kit and Lupa slowed and sergeant Orlando still weakened by holding firm and by acting together we defeated a stronger enemy and suffered less hurt.

On the drow mage was found a scroll from rethmar sunblight 1st wizard of house gurthel to shadren venomweaver 15th sorcerer of house gurthel:

*I have successfully completed negotiations with the bloodmoon mercenaries. Their leader is one named Turnarcrath – he is an impressive warrior but nothing compared to our finest. Turnarcrath has agreed to portal over a sizeable number of his warriors for the duties previously agreed upon and informs me that a number of his men – the disblaad are highly skilled in the summoning and binding of creatures from the nether world. They have been informed about the size of each of their groups so as not to attract any undue hordeling presence.*

*Our latest information from moonlight states that the Kern valley alliance group travelling to the testing grounds with the true items will be resting at the sanctuary way station in the fallow hills from fireday evening onwards and for the duration of the tests. It is supposed that Eratin Mindcage will either be travelling with them or meeting with them at the way station – if he is there, moonlight has assured me that he will not fail a second time in disposing of Mindcage.*

*My duties here will not impact upon attending you at the Mount Grimm sepulchre in Bone Moon.*

We can deduce three things from this, firstly that house gurthel are employing off world mercenaries, and these outlaws known as towerless are forbidden under the Laws of this land. The traitors name is moonlight and that he will be in the area and finally that they are up to something on mount Grimm. The latter point is not relevant but knowing the source of these outlaw warriors and that they are in the service of the drow of gurthel is useful. Certainly something to be mentioned to the next Shadowsfall we meet.

Aside from minor skirmishing with more of the outlaws that I will not detail we pushed on along the trail. Finally coming to an area where it opened out into scrub land with numerous paths and clearings.

We had travelled but a few hundred paces across this area when we heard shouts ahead and our scouts returned to report numerous lesser undead and what looked to be several Dy fa dyn. Forming up and drawing closer we could see a pair of Dy fa dyn calling for help and surrounded by a mix of lesser undead. Battle was joined with most of the undead falling readily. While the line held the bulk of them the scouts and myself were able to isolate and destroy them one by one. Only the unusual ghoul caused problems as being armed with a sword we at first did not spot it. Also the fact that its paralysing touch was carried through the sword marked it as something more capable than the usual ghoul.

The Dy fa dyn were now able to leave the power ward they were hiding in and explained they were gathering herbs and berries for the potion makers at the slave fair in a few weeks time. They finished and left the area.

A wolfhold scout approached us, he said the area was clear in all directions and he had been sent to meet us. He had been at the inn when we first arrived and had been asking many questions about the members of the patrol. He also reported he had seen others of our patrol on a path lower down the hill and they rejoined us a short while later.

They reported that they had not found the mist weaver but had left messages for it with the hordelings.

We searched the area and could not find an area that looked to be the ward activation point. Then I felt the item I carried pulse with warmth and tug towards a patch of bare rock. I followed its pull and stepped onto the rock and was staggered by a terrible pain behind my eyes.

As others turned to see what ailed me the wolfhold scout slit Dibbler's throat, called how strong do you think this ward is and as he fled said he would return with more mercenaries. As he withdrew through the woods more of the mercenaries came out to engage us and the scout was able to flee. We quickly cut down the mercenaries and turned to pursue the traitor for it could be none other.

We found him in the company of drow warriors of house gurthel and attacked them. Due to the terrain, a steep hill and narrow paths through the scrub bushes we became split into several smaller groups covering against attacks from several directions at one. The traitor proved once again how fleet of foot he was striking at one group then fleeing to attack another. We held firm with some of our fastest chasing the traitor while the remainder fought the drow. The drow found themselves cut off from each other and we were able to move from one front to another to concentrate on and slay one enemy after another. The remaining few scattered and the fight became widespread with the few remaining foes surrounded and cut down.

The traitor, moonlight, was harried by Elbow and then found Yana who had wandered away from the fighting. He attacked her and struck her a near mortal blow but such was his intent to murder her that he missed our approach. I engaged him, he turned to flee only to find our scouts on his back. We cut him down without mercy and Elbow took his head from his

shoulders. The remainder of his body was cut to small pieces and scattered to prevent his resurrection.

Then we paused to regain our breaths and treat wounds of which we had more than a few.

Not more than 5 minutes had passed and we were still treating our wounds when the scouts I had sent out reported bull headed figures on one of the paths heading towards us. We gather everyone together and prepared. When they came into sight it was a line of bull headed figures in single file with a single silver faced humanoid in the middle. The silver figure held a very obvious scroll out in front of itself. These were creatures of the labyrinth of xenos.

They were not behaving aggressively and seemed to be ignoring us. I ordered everyone off the path and out of the way. Several of the patrol called for attack, saying we should take the scroll. I said this was nothing to do with our mission and to leave them alone. Scarcely had these words passed my lips when Elbow ran after them and stabbed the last bull man in the back. They turned and the last few attacked us quickly followed by the remainder. The silver faced one stood back casting hammers of power over a far longer range than is normal. We quickly formed up and held the creatures at bay while slaying them. Once again the wisdom of a solid battle line and fast skirmishers became clear as we held of the bulk and were able to isolate and slay one after the other. Only the silver one remained and he was only hurt by weapons of power. I charged this figure taking two of its hammers then chased it round calling for other with powered weapons to engage it.

With the fighting over I called Elbow forth and explained to him what my orders had been and that his actions had they led to harm of any member of the patrol would have been against the Laws of the Alliance. I made sure he heard me and he seemed most contrite saying that he had been told to do it. No one admitted this but I suspect it was either one of Yana's rabble or the two troublesome elf warriors in our midst. Caleb was most vocal in calling for an attack when I ordered us to stand back. I shall watch him for any further signs of disobedience or chaotic behaviour.

The scroll had unlevelled magic upon it and I ordered that it not be opened. I put it in my own pouch to safe guard it.

We walked the miles back to the inn and did so this time without interruption. Presumably we have killed anything hostile in the immediate area although I did not relax my guard.

Back at the inn we were able to rest and eat in the relative warmth. After a short while Caleb came to me to ask about opening the scroll taken from the bull men. He was insistent and offered his services to break the seal. My only excuse here is that lulled by the warmth of the building and a full belly I allowed him to overcome my normally sound judgement. I granted him permission so long as it was done a distance away.

He took the scroll and walked across the field stopping many paces away. Then watched by the other scouts he opened the scroll and fell to the ground. Most of the patrol rushed to him while I stood back. When he was brought to the inn he recovered fairly quickly but now had a magical rune or sign upon his forehead. I was able to translate the scroll over the evening but for completeness will include its main points here:

*From High Enchanter ?ermorides to Chrystos.*

*I require an update as to the situation regarding the search for the six swords of xenos.*

*I am aware that some of our communications have been intercepted presumably by the thieves and in anticipation of such, I have ensorcelled this letter with a mark. If one of your men open this scroll before you notify me of such and the mark shall be removed.*

*If however whosoever that opened this scroll was not Chrystos, nor one of his men then beware. The mark of xenos is now upon you and we shall hunt you down.*

It would be churlish and petty of me to say I told you so and not being such I will not say it.

Later that evening it began to snow heavily which made the job of guarding more difficult although with two braziers alight outside we did not lack for guards at this time.

Someone from the shadowkeep arrived and walked in, he had come for the warmth and to get out of the weather for a while. He was trapped here and was anxious to move on. He was travelling to our cities ready to buy slaves at the fair to be held shortly. He had other business in the area but would not say more about it, he had heard of the iron star but his people were not bothered by them and had no known dealings with them.

I was called outside, some people looking for the man with a hand on his chest. Several Dy fa

dyn including the herb gatherer from earlier. I invited them in and we spoke a while. They were also trapped here and had approached us because they were sought help. They had caravans on the way and they could not get in or out because of this strange barrier. They offer money if we could remove it. Ruele started to bargain with the woman and got as far as asking for some money up front. I silenced him and said I would have my scouts check out the barrier in the morning.

Then a horde of gypsies arrived looking for Yana and Anushka. Thieving scum the lot of them. Any item in the inn was taken by them usually with a loud exclamation of "oh is that where I left it". Even obvious items such as shields or cloaks were taken and when the owner tried to claim them back they often claimed the item was theirs and that the missing one must be somewhere around. Were it not for the fact that their presence was important to Yana and Anushka I would have called for the slaughter of the whole pack of worthless wretches.

Due to the presence of the vagabonds and thieves inside the inn the patrol gathered outside by the fires. Elbow and Jarrad remained inside with the Alliance gypsies. After a while I went in to see what was happening and Yana asked me to stay outside, as the talks were private. Then the gypsies left taking more than a few stolen items with them and Yana came to me. She wanted to know what I had written in my journal about the vision of the twins and the gypsy king we had witnessed the year before. I told her to which she exclaimed and then went to follow the gypsies who were now some distance away. It seems she had missed a number of details of importance and had not discussed them with the gypsy seer who had come here to talk with her.

More hordelings arrived with a message, the meeting with the mist weaver is set for this inn in ten days time.

An Alliance scout arrived. A strong force of mercenaries had attacked the scouts holding the perimeter of the inn, many had been slain and the mercenaries were heading this way. They were many in number and well equipped. We were advised to withdraw into the woods while the scouts kept an eye on them.

I ordered everyone to gather his or her equipment and valuables and assemble outside. This took some time as people were reluctant to stop eating or had forgotten where they had left weapons or cloaks. Finally however we were moving and made it into the woods. We pushed deep into the woods with our scouts ahead of us finding a suitable path. We found a suitable spot and settled down while our scouts held a wide perimeter on watch.

I must commend the scouts of this patrol for their Stirling work this night, they were constantly on the move covering our flanks and rear and finding paths through the difficult terrain.. They were also in every fight with the enemy skirmishers.

Sergeant Orlando's people and the elves proved able to move and hide silently. Yana's rabble were unable to do anything without talking and each of the women was wearing many bangles and decorations that made a constant noise. Were it not for the Law I would have simply separated them from the patrol and used them as a decoy.

Mercenary scouts found us and one shouted our location before he was slain. Several other mercenaries attacked us as we withdrew attracting more attention to us. After several such running fights the scouts offered to act as decoys and draw off the mercenaries while the rest of the patrol hid. I agreed and we separated.

Finally we were able to get the whole group silent and hiding when Ruele came crashing through the bushes calling to us. He reported that loads of Shadowsfall had arrived and were fighting the mercenaries. The others were on the path and we should rejoin them there. We returned to the main path and reformed the patrol. Captain Eridan was there and I spoke to him, he had lost a number of men but had the mercenaries on the run. I reported to him the contents of the letter found earlier about them being bought here by portal and he said several of his men may have seen this. He would go to investigate this himself.

We rested on the path and listened to the sounds of distant fighting. After a while an Alliance scout came up to report. The area from here to the inn was safe but there were still small groups of mercenaries in the area so it was not safe to wander around. I roused the group and we set off for the inn. Before we left the woods we saw figures moving across our path and moving behind us, ordering the others ahead I held rear guard with a handful of the warriors. The figures did not attack us and we reached the open fields and returned to the inn.

I stood guard while the others rushed in. Several went to make food or just to get warm. There was a deal of complaining that the inn had been cleaned out. A number of the patrol, Yana's people predominantly, had managed to leave valuables behind despite my specific instructions to gather such and take them with us earlier. The mercenaries who were either after loot or still-hunting for the psionic item, which was safe in my belt pouch, had taken anything they found. Items such as money and small valuables were gone along with Yana's journal, which contained her many notes on missions and on what she had learnt on the gypsy prophecy and

several voodoo dolls she had made. She came to tell me that she had lost these and that one of them she had made in my likeness. Apparently these items are used to enhance casting directed at the person they are made to represent. For her to confess to having made such an item would be cause for me to watch her more carefully but without bringing in someone to help with the task I cannot watch her more closely than I already do.

After a while as I stood watch I saw a glow of light appear and then fade away, it seemed to be some distance off far beyond the trees so although I kept watch over the area I did not raise the alarm at once. Then a few minutes later the glow rose again and this time I heard chanting and a shouted voice summoning something.

I called out the scouts and set them off across the field to check and set about mustering the patrol. This took several minutes and I was still trying to get the healers outside and ready when the scouts reported many of the drow and mercenaries performing a ritual of some kind.

Finally ready we advanced across the field to the woods and at the far side we found the ground sloped away to form a dell, within that was a blazing fire with chanting figures around it. A skirmish line of drow and mercenaries stood between us and the ritual.

I call for an attack and ordered anyone who could reach the casters to disrupt the ritual. Caleb was able to get behind them using the trees but failed to hit with his crossbow, so frantic was his pace of fire however that he broke his crossbow in the effort.

We were held at bay by the skirmish line who matched us for numbers and blocked each advance. Then suddenly the fire exploded in a shower of flame and a great red demonic figure now stood there. Tall and heavily built, face like some troll from the nether realms and wielding a pole arm as tall as myself. His followers made much of his arrival claiming he would destroy the world and such like. He and his summoners then withdrew while the others held us back. Several of us were sorely hurt and we had been without healing since dusk. While pushing against the enemy one of them struck me with an invocation that stole my energy and I collapsed.

I came to in the middle of the field to find myself being dragged by Elbow. The rest of the patrol was scattered around me and the creature was gone. We were in no state to fight on so I sent

the scouts to check the site of the ritual and make sure they had all gone and called for a withdraw to the inn.

Captain Eridan arrived shortly after this asking for more information on the mercenaries. He also wanted to know what my part had been doing in using the orb to activate the ward that had prevented passage across this area. He had caught and interrogated several house gurthel drow and it seems that moonlight who had been present at the briefing yesterday had given them a full report as to our mission. He knew of the decoy item and the ward that we had activated and told me of them.

As leader of the patrol I accepted full responsibility for the actions of each and every member. They had followed my orders in this matter and as such I was responsible. He said he knew I had been following orders and demanded to know the name of the person who had issued my orders. I told him that the person who had given the orders had done some yesterday but gave no names. I suspect he knows full well since moonlight could scarcely have failed to mention it but he shall have to rely upon his own sources for proof. He said he was disappointed and the matter would be taken up with the leadership of the Alliance.

It is times like this that I find myself troubled, by my honour I will not lie but is it honourable to not answer when to answer would be to lie. If the penalty for remaining silent is a troubled mind and lives saved then I think I can accept that.

The Alliance scouts returned to report that they were back in position and that the area was once more quiet. I went into the inn to find many sitting nervously waiting for another attack. I told them the area was under safe eyes and sent them all to bed. I retired myself.

The following morning was brisk with frost on the ground and a chill in the air. Nothing two tankards of coffee could not handle though. Awake, armed and armoured, I stood watch as the others rose and readied themselves for the day.

With the ward falling at noon we had several hours to make ready, my plan was to be at the barrier as it fell and move away from the inn for the day. The Alliance scouts in the area could call us back to the inn when Black Rod returned or when we received fresh orders but in the mean time we would be safely hidden from any remaining drow and mercenary attacks.

Unfortunately the drow decided to attack us at sun up and we came under attack while many were still breaking their fast.

A mixed group, mercenaries, drow and creatures assailed us. A hard fought battle where the priest Nero fell, victim to a bolt of magic that threw his charred body to the ground in a single hit. With the attackers dead and our wounded treated I made haste to leave. Before I could get everyone moving however another group of drow and mercenaries arrived, larger in number and led by the demonic troll we saw summoned last night.

They stopped some distance away and the troll sat down. Presuming he was casting I had no choice but to call the patrol to advance, what ever he was doing had to be interrupted.

The scouts reported he was indeed casting but the spell was quickly done and once again the delay in getting everyone outside had been costly, even advancing with people still in the inn we had been too slow and the demon troll cast his spell. A bolt of fire, huge in size and hot enough to melt armour, flew between us and at a distance of more than 50 paces struck me full on. I was thrown back and nearly knocked from my feet with more than half my health gone in a single strike.

Dibbler was close by and was able to heal my considerable wounds.

With the enemy now up and advancing towards us we were in danger of being out flanked so I ordered a steady withdrawal, we could make a stand at the inn using the buildings to guard our rear. This was prevented when some of the faster running enemies got behind us and slowed us enough for the troll to catch us. From this point on we were circled.

A hard fight indeed. The demon troll struck with a magic blade, the blows of five men of fire, and was impervious to normal weapons. The mages amongst the drow kept up a steady barrage of magic's and several seemed to favour shocking grasps. One mage striking with the magical blows of four men and casting shocking grasps through his sword at the same time. A champion among the mercenaries struck blows as hard as mine and was well armoured.

Our healing ran like water and was swiftly all but gone. Our scouts were hard pressed in the circle and chased down by faster enemies when without. On we fought. One mage foolishly rushed closed to cast against us and was sorely wounded. Their champion attacked and I along with others drove him off with many wounds. I commanded that we concentrate our attacks on the wounded and any isolated ones.

Jynx and no 8 were able to catch one wounded enemy and cut him down, no 8 again along with Caleb caught one of the drow mages and slew him. I pushed into the enemy lines accepting several blows and slew the wounded caster then later did the same along with Sergeant Orlando to take down the champion.

On we fought, every man and woman of the patrol held firm despite the odds and the strength of our enemies. Our wounded and dead littered the field along side drow and mercenary fallen till only the troll remained. Those with magical blades surrounded the creature and fought it. Watching the battle I could see our warriors were near their end, their blows were few and far between. I stepped in, taking the magical blade that Jynx held and engaged the troll. Parrying its many blows against me I struck hard and fast and the others inspired by my actions increased the speed of their own attacks. With magical blades striking it from every side it soon fell before us and we were able to take stock.

With the battle done I was able to look around and see the fallen, Elbow, Lupa, Ruele and Kalliste were all dead, Caleb was down but still lived as was Sergeant Orlando and Nero's body was still at the inn. Those of us still standing were staggering from wounds and exhaustion after a long hard battle.

To bring to an end the days troubles Yana stormed up to me and once again started ranting at me for taking Jynx's weapon in the fight and leaving her defenceless. Since the weapon I had taken was from one off the drow anyway I fail to see how I left her defenceless and what kind of warrior has no backup weapon. Clearly Yana was once again indulging her personal need to rant against the discipline and order I am trying to bring to these patrols. Her own chaotic nature must fear my Lawfulness and rebel against it at every turn. Anyway with such inconsequential interruptions done we were able to gather our many dead and wounded and return to the inn where the Alliance scouts were able to arrange a meeting with a more powerful patrol including a healer able to restore life.

Once more at full strength we have returned to the cities with the traitors head. Most of the patrol immediately went in search of a tavern while I finished my report. I shall search them out later and remind them we are on patrol in a few days providing security for the trade fair.