

Being an account of the events that took place during the recent mission in the third week of Cold Moon, to retrieve certain items from the recently revealed (from the mists) Wolfhold and attending the White Moon Celebrations.

As it is my first attempt at such an accounting I ask that you forgive any apparent slights that may be perceived from my wording. Some of them could well be unintentional.

(Spelling also is not my strong point, especially in relation to names!)

Following a call for those willing to seek out certain missing items, and to represent us all at the White Moon Celebrations, a small group set out. While I failed to query specific titles/rankings, the party consisted of the following members:

Drokal Greyspire – combatant caster of the spheres

Gomeric Greyspire – restorative caster of the Good Sphere (The Legend\*).

Anebir – Caster of enchantments and other more sorcerous effects.

Vallen – Warrior, of the Iron guard I believe

Kakarog – Warrior, Goblin and dedicated floor investigator

Alariel – Warrior and Veteran of the Rangers Guild

We were later joined by Kudos – Diplomat and member of the Pathfinders I believe.

(\* An explanation of 'The Legend' can be found later in this report. But he is. Really.)

Initially we were also accompanied by the Pathfinder Smithmun Crux who guided us to where we needed to be.

The party agreed that Kudos should lead us following a vote with all present unanimously calling 'aye', with nary a single word raised in opposition. We resolved to congratulate Kudos on his appointment as soon as he arrived and learned of it, and in the meantime agreed that Gomic would be the interim leader.

## **Earth Day**

Following a long days travel we neared our destination, only to be confronted by a large group of Hordelings, which from the comments of my companions were a welcome sight despite the obstacle they presented, as they were acting much more like they felt Hordelings should, contrary to relatively recent past events where the influence of the Mist Lord had caused them to act quite unnaturally. This did not however distract us from disposing of them forthwith.

Shortly afterwards we met a group of Valdemar Khalid, who's sergeant was most confident that they would soon be welcome back in their tower. Assuming any of the carrion animals that have since fed on their corpses have headed that direction, she could well have been correct, although not necessarily in the expected manner.

We then met in short order yet more Hordelings followed by a large group of varied undead, including at least one Zombie, Ghoul and Skeletal Warrior who were accompanied by a caster and at least one other who drained the blood from his victims, draining Anebir dry and severely weakening myself while I was helpless from the Ghouls assault. Both the caster and the Blood Drainer escaped although the other undead were summarily destroyed and pounded back down into the ground where they will hopefully remain.

Weary from our journey and the recent conflicts and with Gomic sorely drained of power with which to cast healing and other invocations we arrived out our destination and gladly settled in to rest and prepare for the coming days challenges. We were soon graced with a visit from some members of the Celestial Beaucracy who had come to welcome us and begin preparations for the following days White Moon Celebrations. One, by the name of Chow Fat, was very chatty and stated that no less than their Minister of the Interior was expected the next day.

Later in the evening we were also visited by a Dai-Fa-Dyne lady who had some dealings with Drokal as she had some minor enchanted items for sale, as well as an individual who called himself Sorcerer Zacharius of the Yellow College. While their time with us on this occasion seemed innocuous enough the Sorcerer was seen to cast some truly impressive magic's almost offhand, while the lady trader seemed to make some blunders in her dealings – I suggest you watch for later mention of these two in this report.

Finally, a pathfinder by the name of Dorrin came to let us know that the area had been secured and we could rest safely and notified us of the next step of our mission, namely to enter the Training Grounds in the area of the Brethren Temple to retrieve an Urn and its contents.

### **Fire Day**

Having bounded out of our beds bright with enthusiasm for the coming day, we were re-visited by the pathfinder of the night before who told us that a key was needed to get past a ward guarding the Urn. This was believed to be in the possession of High Priest Dragonoff who had last been seen by our pathfinder guide Smithmun during the evacuation of Wolfhold. This key was believed to be a Brass Amulet worn by the High Priest – if we could find him or his body we would likely find the key.

Following a hearty breakfast we therefore headed off to the area where Smithmun last saw the High Priest in the hopes that we could track his movements and find the key.

Heading towards the area we believed would give us our best chance of finding him, we espied

a group of Hordelings ahead and prepared for combat, only to pause as Drokai had what I can only call a fit, repeatedly exclaiming on the Khalid tabards these Hordelings wore, and how utterly happy and overjoyed he was to see Khalid Hordelings. Never before have I seen a group so happy to meet Hordelings, especially ones who seemed to have retained enough of their memories (albeit corrupted and enfeebled) as to try and present an organised front, while proving totally inept at doing so! They did however manage to incapacitate Anebir, although we are to this day uncertain if this was skill, luck or due to him laughing so much he paid no attention to the threat, no matter how weak!

Hordelings dispatched and the laughing temporarily subsided (although a whole new range of taunts was employed) we met a group of actual Khalid – identified as probably being from the Tower of Night and Day. These were forcibly removed from the lists of those Khalid likely to see their towers again, although at a high cost to Gomerics healing reserves.

Some way further on, nearing the training grounds buildings we encountered some more Hordelings loitering near a couple of bodies, one of which was later identified as High Priest Dragonoff. The High Priests body appeared to be subject to some serious affliction, Cursing all those who touched it, even if they did so with a stick or other proxy item. The other body was highly diseased and had seemingly died in some discomfort as a result. We were however able to retrieve the Brass Amulet from the High Priests body and arranged for the body to be brought back for the proper funereal rites. Eventually Drokai was able to convince himself that suffering a horrible debilitating disease wasn't a worthwhile cost for trying to retrieve the armour from the other body, and we moved on the buildings, albeit with much looking back and self-doubt.

Unexpectedly we found the buildings guarded by a group of spiritual undead who provided us with a stiff challenge, freezing some of us stiff with fear from time to time and causing some degree of chaos. Kakarog, having seen Anebir lie down earlier felt that this was a good chance to show off his floor investigation skills and eagerly leapt forth to do so, with some impressive success going by the THUD of his body hitting the floor!

Having restored Kakarog to what we assumed was his version of life (he wasn't babbling quite as much as a few minute before and his nose had resumed its stately progression around his face, rather than the torpid lack of motion it had just recently displayed) we moved to investigate the building – which we believed to be the main training building for the area – more thoroughly, only to be faced with yet more Hordelings, some of which I am sad to say wore Wolfhold colours. To spare Vallen additional discomfort as he had trained here in the past, these were swiftly dealt with, with some vigour I may add. Extra care was taken to ensure that every possible threat present – current and future – was dealt with. Happily only one presented a real

threat when she went berserk, but she was swiftly put down.

Within the building we found a selection of scrolls, which appeared to be of the last days of a Wolfhold member who stayed behind, chronicling his feelings as the last few left, right up to the point where the mists were at his feet and the transformation to a hordeling began. I have these scrolls yet and will be happy to produce them upon request. There was also a complicated and involved note translated by Drokai, I believe written in runes of Power. Oddly however he was somewhat upset and muttered a lot about 'bloody timetables' and 'poor spelling'.

At this point Kudos arrived and expressed his delight at the news of his esteemed role as party leader!

We then progressed into the grounds themselves, Anebir having dispelled the warding on the door preventing passage. Shortly thereafter we found a doorway protected by a warding that caused serious wounds to all those who passed through (in either direction) beyond which were a group of highly aggressive wraith creatures contesting access to a more powerful wraith who lurked in what can only be called a lair.

Following a long running combat, with almost every member of the party incapacitated at some point from the spiritual draining abilities of these creatures and with Drokai being horribly maimed by the greater wraith we succeeded in destroying them all and were able to access the lair, wherein we found the Urn we sought and a nice suit of armour that Drokai claimed. Both items were of course heavily trapped, causing some discomfort to those retrieving them, and the Urn itself conveyed a Major Curse constantly on whoever was carrying it. Given that I was (I believe) the hardiest there (and more importantly as I had a bag that I could fit it in) I found myself as the designated Urn Bearer.

Having withdrawn back to the training building we were unexpectedly assaulted by a group of Morgothians who burst in on us. Somewhat peeved by their rudeness we took it upon ourselves to chastise them. Should any others visit this area in the future, my apologies for the bloody mess that we left behind.

Heading away from the area we were accosted by a group who we believed to be Atoff (Atop?) – I'm told they are also known as Axioms? They came seeking to destroy a powerful evil item

that had recently come into our possession which they planned to destroy with the powerful scrolls of Firebolt they had with them (I'm told that these were of the 8<sup>th</sup> degree of mastery and thus quite powerful). As the bearer of the said item I had a warm fuzzy feeling about the whole thing as you would expect and took care to ensure that during the following conflict I fought as defensively as I could. Even so the greater curse from the item I carried nearly caused me require the first ever Heal invocation I have needed to date, although we won the 'dispute' in the end.

The rest our journey was uneventful, apart from a group of 4<sup>th</sup> Legion Khalid and a number of Xenos salvage/reclamation annoyances. Popular place this we thought! No shortage of variety at least! Finally however we arrived back at our lodgings to be greeted by some friendly Celestial Beaucrocity members wishing us a Happy New Year (of the Dragon)!

Our evening was soon utterly ruined however when two Shadowsfall visited – one who went by the name of Declin (or similar), the other preferring to remain anonymous. While reasonably polite their very presence was something of a dampener, given that they were insistent on knowing what we had found. Due to his late arrival, and some confusion in conveying our orders while being constantly attacked, Kudos was not aware that we were expected to keep all details utterly secret and let one of the Shadowsfall see the Urn. Having viewed the item, the Shadowsfall then left after stating that such an item of power was probably what was attracting so many enemies, and specifically Hordelings, to us, and left with the ominous message that they would 'be watching'.

As an aside, being the bearer of the urn, it was 'nice' to hear that every enemy in the area was almost certainly homing in on it – and therefore me – at that time. Sort of makes you feel popular in a bloody, painful sort of way!

Shortly afterwards, Tang Long of the Ministry of Administration (CB) arrived to formally celebrate the White Moon with us. He brought with him some very welcome gifts, and the most enticing female (they called her a Geisha I think) who although mostly silent was somewhat entrancing. Given that the evenings celebrations soon led to a large game of dice and given that I was eliminated first, I feel that she may well have been a ploy by Tang Long to give him an advantage, but I would say that should there be the need for any future missions where she might be encountered, I would be happy to volunteer!

Ahem, anyway.

Tang Long asked that we assist Sorcerer Zacharius in a New Year ritual where they summon the spirit of the year (in this case A DRAGON) to bless them. Being keen to promote relationships between our two peoples and not at all inebriated and thus devoid of good sense, we agreed.

Once the dice game was over and everyone was fed and replete, we wandered out to a nearby field to assist and witness this yearly rite of summoning. Imagine our surprise then when as the Sorcerer muttered his way through his ritual we were attacked by a number of elementals! Happily, with much (relatively wild) waving of our weapons, some of which were even enchanted, we destroyed the attackers and settled down to watch the completion of the ritual.

Then the Dragon Came.

Oh.

Bugger.

Curiously it didn't eat anyone, although it did veer close to some of us a number of times, only avoiding collision (and a quick snack?) due a hasty stumble away by the tasty morsel it had headed towards. Then, even odder, it stopped and talked to us! And talked, and talked and talked...

Even those of us with the best memories struggled to remember anything of its words, so heavily laden with meaning, import and no doubt enchantment they were! Luckily we were told that a Pathfinder nearby had managed to note down the words as they were said as all our group could recall collectively were these few snippets:

Dome of Pleasure.

Drink the milk of Paradise.

3 times round

Chung-Po will Burn.

The sky will be blackened with the arrows of the Windlords (Skylords?).

Honeydew.

Good Fortune! (Peace).

Irrespective of our complete and utter failure to properly record the words of the Dragon Spirit – which by the way stated it was Wong Na-Jong from Sho-Lan, Kudos managed to engage it sufficiently in polite and suitably subservient conversation that it eventually left without even partaking of a Goblin-snack!

Somewhat bewildered we staggered back to our lodgings to meet Smithmuns replacement, a particularly furry pathfinder named Little Howard. Gomic chose this time to set us all at ease by announcing that we were all under some form of spiritual influence apart from himself and Kakarog, a finding that Kudos confirmed. Always nice to know!

While coming to terms with this we were assaulted by some black garbed figures, each of whom appeared to wear a red hood. While our initial assumption was 'ninja' we soon realised that these were mere assassins, and upon capture (although when caught alive they quickly killed themselves) they were found to have the Eye of Horus on their faces, which I am told makes them Axioms, apparently calling themselves the 'Ashen of Atok'.



The final excitement of the evening was a random passing attack from a Mummy, calling herself Unak Sunamoon, who was demanding we return her heart. This visitor caused much chaos and exhibited some truly evil effects. She was of especial frustration to myself as, following discussion earlier in the day I had removed the Urn from my immediate presence to avoid suffering the effects of the Major Curse, only for her to stomp in and subject me to a Major Curse.... I decided to accept my fate and retrieved the Urn as if I was to be cursed, I may as well ensure the item was as safe as possible.

However it soon became apparent that it was the Urn, or its contents that this mummy was seeking, and nothing we could do seemed to have a significant effect on it. An inspired use of the powerful scrolls of firebolt we had retrieved earlier that day did manage to drive it away at few hundred yards, but it was obviously recuperating and heading back to destroy us all and retrieve the item.

Presented with three options, namely 1) All die horribly and have the mummy leave with its item, 2) Give the mummy its item and hope it left us alive to report that we had utterly failed our mission or 3) destroy the item thus living to report the failure of our mission but the successful destruction of a powerful enemy we chose option 3, with both Kudos and Anebir utilising every last bit of aggressive magics they had between them to finally manage to destroy it.

Sorely wounded, deplete of any form of magics and lacking the ability to cast any further restorative spells we retired to salve our wounds and see what the coming day had for us!

## Steel Day

Shortly after a somewhat subdued breakfast we were visited by a group wearing the former Wolfhold colours, led by someone I can only refer to as an utter Git. Seriously, working together for the greater good should not express itself by ranting at one's fellows for daring to save their lives by the only means they perceived available to them at the time, even if it means failing to return an item (albeit a powerful one) to our tower. I would therefore like to thank the individual who called himself 'Fury' for uniting us as a group in our loathing for him and his despicable attitude. I'm sure he will take offence at this, but when Valley members place items (that were lost to us anyway before our retrieval) over peoples lives, I feel quite justified in reviling their very existence. However, personal feelings aside, we handed over the Urn, devoid of contents as it was, and the angry man left.

Shortly after another angry man arrived, this time a pathfinder who quickly mellowed when offered coffee. He notified us that the remaining two items we needed to try and retrieve were:

- 1) A Bound Angel who was encased in stone and within a null magic field within the catacombs and
- 2) 2) A vial stored in a box that was likely trapped both physically and spiritually/mystically.

Eager to try and show that we were not in fact utter failures we set off, meeting one Justinian on the way, who stated he was of the Order of King Michael (yes it was queried if he meant Saint and he clearly said King), who had come to bring additional information and some assistance to enable us to complete our mission in relation to the Angel, as the stone it was bound in was far too heavy for us to move. He gifted us with items to remove the casing, and remove another affliction upon the being whom he named as Fairfax, while impressing upon us that despite any differences of opinion as to HOW to do things, he agreed that it was vital that Fairfax be returned to the tower. Having passed on the items and his advice, he withdrew as a large group of Hordelings approached.

Being somewhat wound up from the night before, we annihilated the Hordelings, holding a good fighting line with even Anebair releasing some inner pressure as he beat no less than three of them into the ground on his own!

In a slightly more cheerful mood we were shortly afterwards confronted on a narrow path, a steep hill to one side and a lake to the other, by an organised group of Saldoreans, who were there expressly to kill us and taunt us – not necessarily in that order. A prolonged combat took place with many spells of destruction and harm, together with a number of organised pushes but ultimately leading to many dead Saldoreans with Drokai chasing (briefly) after the sole Saldorean survivor, their magic user, graciously allowing him to escape to spread word of our might, rather than use any of the many, many means he had available of preventing the escape!

Having recuperated from this combat we noticed a group of Valdemar Khalid on the other side of the lake, who we assumed had watched our conflict with interest. They seemed unwilling to

approach so we prepared for a fight and moved along the path, watching them mirror our movement until we drew within hailing range.

Being the brave, doughty warriors that they are, outnumbering us significantly and being fully prepared for a combat they... stood there and tried feebly to taunt us. Eventually we realised that if we wished to make any progress at all that day we would have to progress forwards so moved to engage, resulting in another prolonged combat where they displayed some truly effective abilities, happily to no lasting effect thanks to our effective and organised healer duo Gomic and Kudos.

The last Khalid having crashed down, knowing that he and his had failed and now were nothing more than a hearty meal for varied forms of wildlife, we met a pair of Shadowsfall, one of whom we had met the previous night although it was the one who had chosen not to give his name. They seemed fully aware of what we were doing and seeking, and sought to draw us into telling them more, although we did not. Again repeating their warning that they were – and had been for some time – watching, they left us to carry on our way. Curiously they failed to mention the two Urukai just round the corner.....

Having climbed a steep hill, battled two HUGE enemies we found that not only was this not the way into the catacombs but Kakarog had decided he wanted a closer look at the grass in the area, I assume in an attempt to recruit the worms and various other bugs to his cause of power and advancement! He was however reminded that it wasn't his time and that being beaten by someone twice your size was not a good enough excuse to get out of going back down the hill with us! We remain unsure why these Urukai were there – they stated that their master had left them there with orders to let none pass – who their master is we have no idea!

Having backtracked down the hill so we could climb a different part of it, we were confronted by a large group of mixed spirits (wraith types) and elementals, lurking in and around the null magic area. These were slowly destroyed, with the last few elementals proving particularly troublesome due to their weakness effects incapacitating various members, but we ultimately prevailed and with our strength restored Vallen and I were just able to drag the statue out of the null magic area to enable Kudos to break the enchantments holding it.

The angel – Fairfax – was somewhat upset, and expressed this by aggressively casting a Mass Heal invocation instantly upon being freed.

Following an initial greeting from Kudos, Fairfax would only deal with Gomic as the only untainted representative of 'good' present. He gave unto Gomic an amulet that would protect him from becoming tainted in the future, and would enable him to be summoned 3 times, before leaving but not before having agreed to attend the tower upon our return subject to Gomic giving his oath that such an agreement was not a trick to return him to captivity.

Amazingly, in a protected area behind where the Angel had rested while encased in stone, we found the box we sought! A success that warranted a lunch break indeed!

As we left the area we met a group of Halmadonians, apparently Knights of Purity who stated that they were the ones who had originally summoned Fairfax to this realm and therefore everything to do with him was theirs. They then nobly and bravely robbed Gomic of the amulet, with the leader being most self sacrificing by turning and legging it while leaving his troops to die. Which they did. We were therefore somewhat amused to find that same paragon of virtue and goodness requesting our aid against a troublesome group of Khalid that had got in the way of his flight.

Given that they were Khalid, we agreed to a temporary truce while we systematically beat down the opposition, including what appeared to be a tame wolf-like creature and its handler. I was told later that the Khalid group was a mixture of Crimson Feast, Valdemar and Sword Sworn. However, once the combat was concluded, the Halmadonian reverted to being an idiot and we had to forcibly remove the amulet from him, although Gomic did graciously allow him to keep his life, although little gratitude was shown for this boon. Something about retrieving the angel/related items being his life vow or quest and that he would 'meet you again in the future' .

This lunatic sent on his way we met some Hordelings, which was nice. Especially when they threw their shields on the floor in front of us to make a 'shield wall'. We were still hard pressed to determine who the greater idiot(s) were – the Hordelings, afflicted by the Mists as they are, or the Knight of Purity.

Having successfully returned to our lodgings a messenger burst in warning us of a Werewolf in the area. This caused us some consternation as we had no silver weapons, but some members felt that as it was not a full moon these would not be required. Shortly after this messenger left the 'werewolf' came, and was beaten into the floor post haste. And there was much rejoicing!

(Apart possibly from Anebir who had been thoroughly sniffed by the wolf yet had shown no fear, more a kind of excitement...)

To put us in our place, a surprise attack by a Labyrinth of Xenos group which included many many sleep spells, and a couple of Bull Men got our blood flowing. Which was nice.

(As an aside, I would like to commend Scout Zoren for his initiative and skill in finding our group when we were unexpectedly required to move to a different location temporarily. His tracking and pathfinding skills were spot on – very good job!)

Having discussed our day with another Valley group who seemed to have had just as hard a day, we were then visited by Sorcerer Zacharius and the Lady Dai-Fa-Dyne together. They seemed to be somewhat more... assured than before, to my mind at least phrasing their 'requests' much more as orders and following private chats with some party members we noticed some very odd behaviour, where some of us suddenly and quite irrationally wanted to take possession of the box with the vial inside, or to use it for various reasons not within the remit of our orders. This rather more dodgy couple then left having expressed their desire that we attend a meeting later that night between 'various parties in the area'. No further explanation was given and some group members seemed exceptionally keen to go, despite not knowing what it was and knowing that leaving would mean abandoning the rest of us and the items, contrary to our mission terms and Valley Law. It was therefore obvious to the rest of us that these were under an external influence that had manifested when the Sorcerer and Trader came to visit.

In the middle of an intense debate where the party leadership changed to Gomic as the only one we could trust absolutely as unafflicted and protected from affliction we were rudely interrupted by a group of Martok Khalid. By rudely I mean that the (somewhat large himself) leader accused Kudos of being fat in an attempt to lure us out of our well protected defensive location. While unsuccessful, it did raise our ire and although the creatures did manage to break in, as well as causing some confusion with one of their handlers sneakily pretending to be one of us in the dark and nearly decapitating Drokak in a surprise attack, we ensured that they would never call anyone 'fat' again.

Our discussion then resumed and it became apparent that whatever was influencing our fellows it was of sufficient power as to cloud their judgment completely, leading them to head off to the meeting when a Purple Guard came to collect them regardless of the logical arguments that

had been expressed just moments earlier. So confused were they that they failed even to take a light as they headed into the darkness. As Anebir, who at the time was carrying the box with the vial, went also, I accompanied him to ensure the security of the box as best I could.

Arriving at the meeting it was then we began to realise that the Vampire calling himself Sorcerer Zacharius had enthralled Kudos; the vampire known as Cadditch (the blood-drainer we encountered in combat the first night) had enthralled myself and Anebir (to me he appeared to be my Guild Leader until such time as the enchantment was broken later); the vampire known as Maurishka (the Dai-fa-Dyne) had enthralled Drokak and Vallen, while the Vampire known as Gorlach had not enthralled any of our number but had brought some bestial minions to this 'Vampire Conclave'.

Seemingly this conclave was to determine which vampire would receive the vial, which contained some sort of special blood or similar, which they all desired. They agreed to some form of 'old rules' contest where there would be a single spells durations grace before combat commenced. Our respective masters then led us away at haste to various locations and prepared for a long, cold, dark night of stealth, flurries of combat and from my groups point of view at least, a lot of running.

Happily, while this was ongoing, Gomerick – The Legend – had chosen to go and summon Fairfax – The Angel – for assistance and had managed to set up a blessed safe area where he and Kakarog were able slowly to capture and bring our various members to for Fairfax to cure and remove the affliction.

After some considerable time we were all freed and were able to witness the sight of three of the vampires – Zacharius, Cadditch and Gorlach – battling it out in a three way fight. Cadditch fell and Gorlach swept up the prize only to be hacked down by Zacharius, who was then congratulated by our group, who eventually (and with much running around again)defeated him, although not before he shocked Drokak into unconsciousness with a fearsome touch attack. We retrieved the box, tended to Drokak and headed back after thanking Fairfax, wary that we had not seen Maurishka fall at any point. However, after some time we deemed it safe to rest and retired for what remained of the night.

## Sun Day

Having breakfasted and as we prepared to leave, a scout notified us that one of the vampires was holed up nearby regenerating his wounds of the night before and that we had the opportunity to destroy this one permanently at least. It was verified that Maurishka had fled safely the night before, and that Zacharius and Gorlach would also be regenerating but with their locations unknown we decided that ridding ourselves of at least one – and one who had pretended to be the head of one of our guilds nonetheless – was a worthy task so we headed off to destroy the one we knew as Cadditch.

Initially we faced only minor opposition, but then came across the building where Cadditch had taken shelter which was much more heavily guarded by no less than two skeletal warriors, a ghoul, some spirits and a few human minions.

A prolonged and painful fight took place, with the skeletal warriors disarming those of us able to safely harm them a number of times as well as the other enemies cursing, paralyzing and otherwise incapacitating us, including some broken bones. Finally however the last fell and Drokal entered the building, first staking then cutting the heart out of Cadditch. Success!

A long weary tramp home, but with the vial intact in its box and with the Angel Fairfax returning to the tower voluntarily we returned in good spirits to await our next missions!

Alariel, Veteran of the Rangers

(My apologies of this is overlong – I am new to this reporting, if you wish more concise reports in the future I will endeavour to oblige but would hate to miss anything of import)

