

### Those present on the mission:

- **Token** (Aspirant to the Iron Guard) Half Orc Fighter.
- **Amber** (Aspirant to the Rangers) Elven Warrior.
- **OO Might** - Half Orc Warrior
- **Chile** (Aspirant to the Red School of Magic) Elven Mage
- **Okami** (Aspirant to the Monastery) Human Scout
- **Touche** (Aspirant to either the Michelliners or The Order of Saint Michael) Elven Priest/Warrior
- **Idrissa** (Aspirant to either the Neutral Path, The Wardens or The Grey Gauntlet) Dromite (like a big bug) Priest/Warrior
- **Karla** Human Priest and leader of the group.
- **Skillgannon** Human Warrior
- **Maggot** Half Orc Scout
- **Poke um** Young Human priest
- **Horizontal Hengyst** (Aspirant to the Blue School of Magic) Human Mage
- And obviously myself

Of those present, I have little to report, other than most seem to be fairly competent, and seem to be of little importance at this time. Karla obviously has aspirations to lead a group in the future, and several have begun to plan their future guild memberships.

### Orders:

Orders for the group were received from the Shadowsfall as follows:

*Calling all adventurers. A challenge has been laid down by the Shadowsfall to all Towered groups upon Orin Rakatha. Each Towered group has been asked to send representatives to meet with the Shadowsfall and participate in a series of "challenges" in order to determine who is the Premier Tower upon Orin Rakatha.*

*The winners of the series of challenges will receive a great boon from the Shadowsfall and each contestant will receive personal financial reward.*

*This is the second such challenge that the Kern Valley Alliance is aware of; the last one was several years ago and was won by a group from the Kern Valley. It has been decided that the Kern Valley will answer this challenge and defend their title of Premier Tower.*

*The Challenge is only available to those without Status and who have not yet sworn fealty to a Guild. The Challenge will commence the fourth day of Harvest Moon.*

*Any adventurers interested in representing the Kern Vally Alliance at this event should forward their details to Rednow Ffuts of the Merchants Guild.*

Additionally, I was instructed to meet the party on their way, and was to find the names of the mentors of all of the other groups attending, and was to attempt to ensure that all encounters with The Kalid ended in conflict.

For convenience I have listed the groups present and the names of their mentors below:

1. The Kern Valley Alliance - Mentor: Ringull
2. Barad Tirlgul - Mentor: Arthurus - Anti Paladin
3. Wizards Concillium - Mentor: Neodyn
4. Anach Morannonil - Mentor: Melinass
5. Reader - Unfortunately the Reader were extremely drunk most of the time, and couldn't remember the name of their mentor
6. Kalid - Mentor: Paranthoss
7. Dymwan - Mentor: Priest Trakbone
8. Easterlings - Mentor: Osama Abdul
9. Saldorians - Very hostile throughout, and wouldn't tell me the name of their mentor.
10. Celestial Bureaucracy - Mentor: Ho Fan Chu

### **Report:**

Since I journeyed separately from the Kern Valley Alliance party, I arrived before them, and

decided to scout out the location before the party arrived. There were a large number of groups of Shadowsfall in the area, and one such group picked me up quite quickly, and insisted that I stay with them until the rest of my party arrived. I used the opportunity to quiz the Shadowsfall guard about the proceedings, and to try to find out any useful information. Unfortunately he was particularly tight lipped, and refused to tell me anything, beyond the fact that his name was Serith.

When the party eventually arrived, they were challenged by the Shadowsfall, and introduced themselves. I slunk into the party, and it was some minutes before they challenged me on who I was. The Shadowsfall guard left us, giving us directions to the building where we were to be staying. Almost immediately, a group of hoardlings arrived, and attacked us without any real warning. We fended them off easily, and continued up the path.

I was scouting, and quickly came across a shape in the bushes, who claimed to be from the Sonnes De Ville, a group of organised towerless. He ran off up the path after chatting for a minute and trying to find out who we were. Further up the path was a group of Valley alliance goblins and other hoardling types, who said that they had been scouting out the area, and had been sent packing by the Shadowsfall.

Myself, Okami and Chile continued to scout, and unfortunately, in his eagerness to prove himself, Okami led us in the wrong direction (despite protestations from myself and Chile) and an uneventful spell's duration or so later, we found ourselves by the building, without a sign of the party in site. Okami went off back down the path to look for them, and another spell's duration went by, before I heard the sounds of combat in the opposite direction to the one that Okami had gone in. I followed the sounds of combat, and located the party, just cleaning themselves up after an encounter with a group of undead. They claimed that they had also been attackd by a group of the Sonnes De Ville, and a group of Kalid, and I reassured them that the path was clear behind me. At this point Okami also arrived, and we made our way back up to the building in safety.

At the building, we met Adjudicator Karen Hai of the Shadowsfall, who explained that we were the last group to register, and that the building we were staying in was not a waystation. He also explained the rules of the competition to us. Each of the groups present had to think of a challenge for the other groups to take part in. The challenge must be achievable by an unstatused group, and we would be asked to prove that it was possible. The next day we would be taking part in the challenges of each of the participant groups, and each group would also have to take part in our challenge, whatever that should be. Satisfactory completion of each task would be rewarded with tokens (a maximum of 50 tokens for the satisfactory completion of

each task) Participants would not be allowed to fight each other within 200 metres of an allocated challenge area, except where the fight is a declared part of the challenge. Outside of this 200 metre area, groups would be permitted to attack each other.

Adjudicator Karen Hai also informed us that The Kalid had attempted to enter 5 groups (1 for each of their towers) but had been told that this was not possible. The Kalid were therefore annoyed, and we should be on the look out for the 4 groups who had been denied entry, who, though the Shadowsfall were dealing with them, may still be in the area causing trouble.

We were also told that there would be a Rules Coordinator called Quintoss, who was from off plane, and was therefore completely neutral in the proceedings. Quintoss would be there to ensure fair play at all times, and to settle arguments.

Karen Hai also told us that there would be additional, bonus challenges, set by the Shadowsfall, and that we could win tokens by successfully completing these challenges. The first challenge was to locate a group of towerless in the area who were wearing red sashes, and kill them, bringing back the red sashes as proof.

With this, Adjudicator Karen Hai left, telling us that we needed to inform him as to the nature and name of our challenge in the morning. He also informed us that our mentor had not yet arrived, and we considered this a little suspicious. We left almost immediately to take part in the Towerless challenge, leaving Idrissa and Touche back at the building in case our mentor arrived, and encountered the Towerless a short walk down the path. It was almost completely dark, and dispatching the towerless was a difficult task, due to the difficulty in seeing them, however, we accomplished the task eventually, and returned to the building with the red sashes that the towerless were wearing.

On arrival back at the building, Idrissa and Touche were talking to a representative of The Kabal - Mistrill of the Blue School of Magic. Mistrill was discussing the strange events surrounding The Towerless - Monks Men and The Sonnes De Ville, and the large number of Towerless wearing the same outfits, shiny sashes and tabards. After finishing her conversation with Touche and Idrissa, she left.

The rest of the evening was fairly uneventful, with the party sitting around and deciding what our

challenge was to be. We went through a number of suggestions, before Touche, Idrissa and Karla came up with the idea of a challenge to be called "KVA" which was to be short for "Kiss Valley Arse". The challenge was to require participants to kiss one of the group's Half Orcs, in any one of a number of different locations, including the hand, the foot, the arm pit and, predictably, the buttocks. Points would be awarded according to the place that was kissed and the manner of the kissing (e.g. a peck was worth less than a full on snog with tongues) With the points eventually allocated, it was time for us all to retire to bed.

We were woken in the morning by the sound of fighting outside. When I emerged, it turned out to be another of the Shadowsfall's bonus challenges; Hoardlings had been sent to attack us, and the Shadowsfall were deducting tokens from us the longer that we all stayed in bed. Fortunately, we were fairly quick to rise, and won quite a number of tokens from the Shadowsfall for dealing with the Hoardlings.

While we were eating breakfast, Rules Adjudicator Quantoss arrived, and checked with us that we fully understood the rules of the contest. He was an oddly dressed fellow with a number of strange mannerisms. Apparently his brother had adjudicated the contest which took place 6 years ago, and is still residing somewhere in one of the Valley Alliance's taverns.

The Reader were hanging around our building also, and Touche managed to goad them into gambling for tokens by tossing them against a wall. The player whose token landed closest to the wall was the winner and received the other tokens used in the game as a prize. Touche won, and managed to swell our token pot by 1.

Shortly after the gambling and breakfasting had finished, Barad Tirgul arrived. Their challenge was a one-on-one fight to the death, and Token was chosen to undertake the challenge. After a promising start, the Barad Tirgul champion, whose blows appeared mightier than Token's, emerged the winner, and Token was tended back to health.

Then it was Barad Tirgul's turn to undertake our challenge. They chose to go for the maximum number of tokens, and went for a full on snog on the buttocks of Maggot. Maggot seemed to particularly enjoy this, and Barad Tirgul sadly performed well, winning themselves a full 50 tokens.

With this challenge done, we packed up supplies for the day, and headed off in search of our first challenge, which was to be led by the Wizard's Concillium.

On our way to find the first challenge, the scouts including myself saw some red clad figures with white faces advancing up the path. This was the first time that I had met the Labyrinth of Xenos, and their Drones wasted no time in assaulting us. They easily lived up to their fearsome reputation, assaulting us with great brutality, and being particularly difficult to put down. However, we eventually championed them, and after healing ourselves up, were ready to be on our way again. It did occur to us to wonder why the Labyrinth of Xenos were in the area, since we were not aware that they had a team, and had been informed by The Shadowfall that the area was being kept safe from intruders. When we asked our Shadowfall companion, he informed us that the Labyrinth had attempted to enter a team, but that The Shadowfall had decided that their creations were unsuitable to enter the competition. The group we had met were clearly annoyed by this, and had set out to make trouble.

After travelling on for some way, we met The Wizard's Concillium, whose challenge it turned out was to decipher the rules of their challenge, which were written in a bizarre rune set, and then to carry out the instructions. Hengyst seemed particularly adept at the deciphering, and was quickly making strong head way. While Hengyst was deciphering the runes, one of the Wizard's Concillium came to speak to us. He told us that the Wizard's Concillium were sworn to something called The Northern Alliance, which included The Kalid and The Saldorians. Not all of The Wizard's Concillium are happy as members of The Northern Alliance, since they feel that The Kalid have too much influence, and we were told that their Mentor would like to meet us later on in the day to talk with us.

By this point Hengyst had finished translating the runes, and it turned out that the instructions were to kill each of the 5 elementals in front of us, who were all wearing wrist bands. We would be rewarded with points for every wrist band that we successfully liberated from the Elementals.

Just before we started on the Elementals, there was a noise in the bushes, which heralded the arrival of Ringull, our mentor. There was little time to talk with him until after the elementals had been dealt with, however.

The Elementals seemed particularly hard to kill, since they had numerous magical effects which crippled the party, and it was only by the skin of our teeth that we managed to destroy them and claim our wrist bands.

With this done, I had a few moments to speak with Ringull before we moved off in search of The Kalid's contest. It turned out that Ringull had been "unavoidably detained" in some way, but he refused to discuss the reasons why he had been detained any further. Later in this report I will discuss other elements of Ringull's behaviour which I feel makes him seem very suspicious, and like somebody who should be kept an eye on.

Part way down the path, we encountered some more figures in red, but this time it was not The Labyrinth of Xenos, but The Saldorians, returning victorious from The Kalid's challenge. The Saldorians were being confrontational in their own unpleasant way, and were standing off the path, clearly waiting to attack us as we walked past. We decided to take the lead, and attacked quickly and efficiently, killing most of them on the path, and chasing down the one who fled, and killing him, taking his pouch full of tokens. There was also much suspicion raised amongst the group that The Kalid might simply have let the Saldorians win, since they are part of The Northern Alliance together.

Further down the path we came across The Kalid, who were their usual unpleasant selves. They explained that their challenge would involve splitting the group into two halves, who would then have to defend themselves for a total of 10 minutes. If at least one member of the party was still standing after 10 minutes, then the group would be considered to have won the challenge. Since the challenge already focussed on fighting, and the challenge was within the 200 metre exclusion zone, I felt that there was little point in attempting to instigate hostilities.

The group was split, and The Kalid went straight to the half of the group that I was not in, and proceeded to attack them. This went on for a few minutes, before we saw The Kalid approaching our half of the group. We defended ourselves well, but unfortunately I was quickly taken out by a chap casting spiritual hammers at me. By the time I regained consciousness The Kalid had left the area.

We cured ourselves up as best we could, and myself, Okami and Chile went off to scout out the path. We came across a Sonnes De Ville scout, who was lurking around the bushes. Okami went back to inform the rest of the group, and myself and Chile remained to see what he wanted. He was particularly cagy, and told me that his name was Bertram. He insisted that he meant no harm to the group, and scouted round the outside. The group seemed to have little interest in him, and seemed to be ignoring him, but I had my suspicions, and kept an eye on him. He came closer, and was obviously counting our numbers and attempting to gain an idea of our capabilities. As the group moved off, he called to me, asking if the Elf who was with us

was named "Ringull" This is the second reason for my suspicion of Ringull - How should the Sonnes De Ville scout know his name unless he had, in some way, been dealing with the Sonnes De Ville? I have my suspicions that Ringull may have some connection to The Sonnes De Ville, and may have been dealing with them.

Anyhow, the scout moved away from the group up the path, and sat down cross legged, and appeared to be casting something. I mentioned this to the group, but nobody seemed interested, so fearing for our safety, I decided to move up the path and knock him out of his casting. Just as I approached, he looked up and cast something at me, which made me fall instantly to sleep.

I awoke to find Ringull kicking me awake. He seemed annoyed, and berated me for allowing this to happen. I have my suspicions about why it was that Ringull had moved up the path away from the party and towards the Sonne De Ville scout, but since I was asleep I have little knowledge of what it was that he was doing.

I rejoined the party, who were busy completing the Dymwan challenge. The Dymwan had hidden items around a forest, which was patrolled by skeletons, zombies and ghouls. We had to retrieve all 10 items from the forest in 10 minutes. We achieved this with relative ease, although Touche fell to a ghoul and had to be nursed back to health.

The Dymwan seemed particularly friendly, and was more than happy to discuss the competition, and how little they wanted The Kalid to win.

With our tokens in our pouches, we headed back up the path in search of The Easterlings, who were to provide our next challenge.

A long walk up the path, we encountered The Easterlings, who seemed friendly and talkative. Their challenge, it turned out, was to have five of our party fight them to the death. They informed us that they really didn't want The Kalid to win, and that they would therefore take no pleasure in fighting us. We tried to bargain with them to just let us win, but they seemed pretty decided on the fact that they would simply take no pleasure in the combat.



Fortunately, The Easterlings were easily defeated, and we received our tokens from our Shadowsfall companion and left in search of The Saldorian Party, from whom we expected trouble.

As we approached the Saldorian challenge, there was a certain air of hostility, both from our party, and from the single Saldorian who was there to present the challenge. The challenge required us to hunt down and kill some hoardlings, who were in the forest. We slew the majority of them, however 2 of the hoardlings presented us with their Valley Alliance passes, and told us that the Saldorians had captured them and stripped them of their Valley colours. We immediately stopped the fighting, and complained to The Saldorian representative, and our Shadowsfall guide. The Saldorian denied everything, however the Shadowsfall Guide insisted that the matter would be properly investigated, and that if it were found that the Saldorians had been involved in misconduct, then we would receive the tokens for the challenge.

The hoardlings were allowed to leave, and shortly afterwards the Saldorian left, looking annoyed. I kept an eye on him as he walked off, and just as he approached a bend in the path, 2 hoardlings figures (the same ones we had just released) appeared and killed him. As I ran up to see what was happening, they threw me the bag that contained the Saldorian's tokens, and ran off. Unsure about how the Shadowsfall guide would view this acquisition of the tokens, I waited for a diversion, and slipped them to Karla with a quick explanation of what had happened. She accepted them, and hid them somewhere about her person.

The journey back to our building was uneventful, and we returned to the building in time to eat lunch and relax for a bit.

I kept an eye on Ringull, who seemed very interested in finding out what we knew about The Sonnes De Ville, which I found highly suspicious.

The next noteworthy event was the arrival of The Celestial Bureaucracy, whose challenge was mental. We had to solve puzzle and answer questions, and we did surprisingly well at this. Karla proved to have a great deal of knowledge about our tower and others, and Po Kum Young proved that he was good at lateral thinking. The Celestial Bureaucracy refused point blank to undertake our challenge.

Soon after the Celestial Bureaucracy had left, a representative of The Easterlings arrived, and offered us 100 tokens in exchange for a future service which would not in any way affect the Valley Alliance. It turned out that the task that The Easterlings had in mind would involve killing members of The Northern Alliance, and the task was accepted by Oo Might, Maggot, Skillgannon, Karla, and Okami.

While the Easterlings chatted to us, a representative from The Dymwan was talking to Ringull. It turned out that he wanted to offer to work together to defeat The Kalid in the competition, since our groups shared a mutual interest in not letting The Kalid win. He offered to take all of our tokens, and add them to the Dymwan's winnings, which would allow the Dymwan to gain a significant advantage over The Kalid. We refused the offer, since we felt that we would be more than capable of winning the competition, and shouldn't be giving The Dymwan our tokens. With our refusal, The Dymwan representative came and poked me, asking whether I was interested in the sphere of Necromancy. He told me that his name was Talbert, and that if I was interested in learning Necromancy, I should come and speak to him at the Dymwan Tower. With this he left.

Another visitor arrived, this time it was The Kalid Mentor. He was looking for our mentor, since he had already "dealt" with the Barad Turgul mentor. Our mentor was conveniently unavailable, and despite my efforts to encourage the group to attack The Kalid mentor, nobody seemed interested, and he was allowed to leave.

After the Kalid mentor had left, it was time to go and meet the Wizard's Concillium Mentor, and we packed up and left for the short journey down to his location. On the way to meet the mentor we were attacked by a number of Kalid, which we fairly easily overcame, and eventually met the Wizard's Concillium mentor in a secluded spot. Ringull spoke to him for some time, and it emerged that the Sonnes De Ville were interfering with an Air Node, and the Wizard's Concillium wanted us to go and stop them the next day. The Wizard's Concillium Mentor also voiced his concerns that the competition was deteriorating into The Northern Alliance versus everybody else.

During the conversation a Kalid Scout was spotted watching us, and all of the party except for Chile, Maggot and Myself went off to chase him down (I wished to stay and keep an eye on what Ringull was talking about).

During this time, Ringull set up a clandestine meeting between the Wizard's Concillium, the

Kabal and Aran Muranteer.

While the party were gone, and large group of angry looking Saldorians arrived. Myself, Maggot and Chile were seriously outnumbered and when the Saldorians attacked us we thought we would be instantly killed, however, Ringull cast magical skins on us, which meant that the Saldorian's blows were only bruising us. Though we fended off the onslaught and killed the Saldorians, Chile was put down and needed tending, and myself and Maggot were almost killed (one more blow apiece would have killed us) Just as we had finished off the Saldorians, the rest of the party arrived back, carrying the unconscious remains of the Kalid scout, who Ringull immediately killed before we had a chance to question him, which seemed a little odd.

We returned to the building tin time to speak to the Shadowsfall, who informed us that the Saldorians had been expelled from the competition, which was probably why they had attacked us. They also informed us that the Drow had forfeited, and we would no longer need to complete their challenge. The Shadowsfall presented us with a further challenge to test our courage, where they asked us to fight their mightiest champion. We took it in turns to enter the fight circle, but there was not one of us who could take more than 2 of his blows without being killed, so we failed. However, the Shadowsfall informed us that the contest had been to test our courage, and that we had succeeded since we had faced a foe who we had no chance of beating.

The Shadowsfall then asked us to see if we could all take on their champion, and that if one of us still stood after 5 minutes we would be considered winners. We accepted the challenge, and much hilarity followed as we strove to avoid being hit by him. It was only Idrissa, who was running around in a confused way in the middle of the field, and managed to avoid him through sheer luck who managed to win this challenge for us.

This done, we had our dinner, and then began to relax for the evening.

After dinner, The Shadowsfall came back, and told us that they had another challenge for us. There was a group of Dai Fah Dyne Towerless down the path, and they wanted us to bring back their head cloths, and if we did this then we would receive more tokens. We set off down the path, and quickly found the Dai Fah Dyne.

Unfortunately there was some disagreement among the group, with more goodly members having an objection to slaying the Dai Fah Dyne, who told heart wrenching stories of their children and families. I waited nearly a spells duration before getting bored of this, and simply deciding to start attacking them from the shadows, and when I did this several other members of the party also joined me. The Dai Fah Dyne were dispatched in short order, and we started back up the path with several members of the party complaining about what we had just done. A short distance up the path, we encountered dark shapes heading towards us. It turned out to be more of the Labyrinth's creations, and we engaged them and slew them relatively easily.

On arriving back at the building, the Reader had set up their challenge for us, which was a series of drinking competitions. We won most of these, and then decided to take part in some gambling with the Reader, at which we did fairly well, and won quite a number of tokens.

During the gambling, a Dymwan appeared, and began speaking with Ringull. Almost at the same time, The Shadowsfall arrived, with Quantoss in tow, and informed us that it was time to count the tokens.

We undertook a bit of crafty underhandedness, by counting the tokens into piles of 10, but only actually including 9 tokens in most of the piles (Touche refused since she said that it was cheating) We were still short a few tokens in order to beat The Kalid, but at the last moment, Ringull presented us with a pouch stuffed with tokens - apparently The Dymwan had decided to support us after all.

With the competition won, and The Valley Alliance declared the premier tower on Orin Rakhatha, there was much celebration, and we settled down to play cards and amuse ourselves for the rest of the evening.

During this time, I spoke with Ringull, and found out that he was not actually from this plane, and was not even a proper member of The Pathfinders! This was the final nail in the coffin, and I presented him with the fact that The Sonnes De Ville Scout knew his name earlier. He became very defensive, and shortly afterwards he left to sleep in the bushes for the night.

The rest of the evening passed uneventfully (except for Token winning a substantial amount of money gambling).

The next morning we arose early, and went off to deal with the air node.

On the way we encountered some Sonnes De Ville guarding the path, and carved our way through them. We also encountered some Air Elementals, who we also dealt with. Finally we came across the ritual site, which was well guarded. Myself and Ringull snuck around the back, and Ringull cast a spiritual hammer, which disrupted the priest who was casting on The Air Node. He seemed angry, and quickly set up again, out of our sight. I went off to distract the guards, and there was a little bit of fighting, before the ritual was unfortunately completed.

With the ritual completed, and the party too injured to consider taking down the remaining Sonnes De Ville, we left the area, and returned to the towers.

### *Recommendations:*

1. The Sonnes De Ville are clearly very active, and aggressive towards the Kern Valley Alliance. Their intentions are not currently clear, but they have a great deal of potential and need to be dealt with.
2. Ringull is suspicious, and from off plane. He appears to be in league with the Sonnes De Ville in some way, and needs to be kept a very close eye on.