

*Awake! Awake!
The clarion is calling
A purpose now is forming
And the pilgrimage will lead them
By the road that seers fared
When leaves to brown are turning
On the ninth day of their falling
Return here with this vessel
To hear my final cry
For each royal companion
There is a worthy champion
And from the ancient Kingdom
Four others at their side*

And so for each of the Fellowship of Twelve, came:

Sir Paullandiss, Sir Ruff, Sir Kal, Paladin Balthazar, Paladin Verrick, Paladin Zilvan, Brother John, Melkeron, Khortaz, Djimm, Wolf, Erf;

And from the ancient Kingdom, four others, two from the Valley Alliance and two from Wolfhold: Sky, Giles, Kevralyn Soulfire, Lathrodec Mactens (Lord Blackwidow).

As we travelled to the Aldonar waystation, we were met by a number of Seeker scouts who directed us efficiently along a cleared route, where we met no distractions. We arrived at a planar portal, and crossed to what turned out to be Murandir, the home plane of many from the Valley. We were then guided to a guarded building which turned out to host a meeting of the Fellowship of Twelve. Present were:

Sir Clavados, Steward of the White Retreat; Sir Vanderloss; Sir Volminor; Taraman; Lord Sebastian; Duke Hanrow, Sir Loren de Hal; Dunstan. Apologies were received from the rest of the Fellowship.

We heard that King Michel had completely faded from the White Retreat. For a while he had lain in fitful sleep but of late, his body had physically disappeared and his essence was no more. Several weeks before, Sir Clavados had come to Murandir. He had with him a soul gem, which

had been given to him several years before, which contained the essence of Rol Soran (a former advisor to King Michel 1000 years ago) captured from the Forbidding Wall. When he was given it, he was told to seek out the last prophecy of Rol Soran.

The problem with King Michel related to the “attack” at Eostarre. At around that time, the White Seers had endeavoured to seek amongst their people (those connected with the Good Sphere) some who could “receive their gifts”, which is why a number of people had suffered bad dreams at that time. At Eostarre, a portal was opened to Orin Rakatha.

At this point in the discussion, the door was flung open as Orlon Tenquil burst into the room. In his arms was the Sword of Law, which he had carried from the Deep Wood. He said it showed the commitment of the Deepwood elves to this quest.

Duke Hanrow then took the soul gem and cast a ritual upon it. The gem started to glow bright colours and a white fog slowly enveloped the table on which he was casting. The Duke then related the last prophecy of Rol Soran, which was to take on greater meaning to us over the next few days. The gem then shattered into five pieces of crystal. Each was linked with a point on the compass (a particular White Seer located on each Plane), which were gathered up and held by Verrick.

There is a path that led to the King. At Eostarre, a hole was torn through another plane, and through this the King had been taken from us. First crossing to the first plane, then to other places, but they cannot go beyond and see no return from that opening. The route would have been lost altogether, if not for the Seers' sacrifice, who have held open the way. They are somehow within the rift and can be found and followed to the King. It was three moons since the rift could last be opened. There are six Seers in total, one is Dreams-of-Shadows, he is the anchor and remains on Orin Rakatha. Pyrion is the Seer on Murandir. He has been here for three moons and had a device that would help us on our travels, however he must stay here to keep open the tenuous chain. Beyond are four Seers. The Seers are “the compass”, the guiding light of the people, but there is only one man so weak at present.

Renewal of the King's favour will set the Seers free. This is an ancient custom that not all of the Fellowship were happy for members of Wolfhold to hear about, for various reasons that did not make any particular sense. Previously those who pledged fealty to the King would receive his favour, however none here felt his favour upon them, nor shining within the White Retreat. Four members of the Fellowship came from ancient times when they swore fealty to the King, and

when bonded with him they bore his favour, however even they no longer seem to bear it. *There are some who question the King's strength, that King Michel was not as he was when they once fought alongside him.* Alorn Verithis no longer sits on the Fellowship as he questions his faith in the King.

Sir Loren said that his own faith had not moved and that he wanted the King fully restored, with which Sir Vanderloss agreed.

Sir Clavados then surprised everybody by saying he had felt a calling and intended to lead the Crusade. He had appointed a new Steward for the White Retreat, which turned out to be Lord Sebastian, an excellent choice. We each then stepped forward and swore an oath on the Sword of Law by our faith and honour to do everything in our power to ensure that the Crusade was a success. There was some chatter and a brief argument as the meeting broke up, then we were informed that the building was not in safe territory and we should take to guarding it.

The Crusading Oath is thus:

Upon my honour and my faith

I pledge myself to the Pilgrimage that lies ahead

To face the peril with courage and with strength

To uphold the Valley Alliance and its Law

To take the road wherever it may lead

To answer in my heart the Clarion Call

May the Spheres witness, and not forget, this oath

Shortly afterwards, we had two more visitors, come to speak with myself and High Priest Lathrodec. These were Dreadlord Araikas, Steward of Wolfhold, and Abadon Dreamweaver, then 11th Sorcerer of House Morfeaglin. Abadon told us that we would see things that, due to our nature, the others on the party would be unable to see or would wish to fight against, although actually these things would help guide us on our path. He also related an old dream about a mirror and two Kings. Dreadlord Araikas mentioned that a number of candidates were carefully considered to represent Wolfhold, and that the final selection had been adjudged appropriate by Lord Raven.

The party was then asked to return the Sword of Law to the Deep Wood elves by the eight most lawful people on the party. A more tactical selection was dispatched to meet with them (for example excluding those people whose presence was considered likely to upset the elves). The group left, fighting a bugbear along the route. They met with DeLane, a Priest serving at a temple of Law. He told the group they must undertake a test that was spiritual in nature. Each person was then evaluated by the elf who chimed a bell, the length of its ring apparently an indication of how lawful that person was. I am told that for all save one the bell rang long, and that the elf looked displeased at the short ring for Giles. The group then met with a knight, Furos Purendor Pilp, who said that the elves have retreated further into the wood as the sphere of Law has passed further away and its influence wanes. *The vast barriers that defend the wood have fallen. We are now on the last quest of Law. He was given back the sword, which he said may be returned to us. The kings of long ago, High King Blaze D'aventure, and others, were lawful men – and now we have a chance to restore the King and the Kingdom. A group stand in our way, they travel on a quest for power and mastery by one who bears an individual right, with the power of Law on their side. This group are from the Empire, drawn from their best. They can plane shift – already three moons ahead. Their seers had shown them that there was great profit in it for them. The Empire were once part of King Blaze's Kingdoms.* The elven knight had with him the Book of Legends. The reason he chose to help us was because we share a common king. Sky agreed to be his Squire should he return.

In the mean time an Empire patrol passed by our building, and were alerted to our presence. One got away and we later found ourselves assailed by a number of others. Some of these were calling upon Geb (an Axian 'God'), drawing greatly on the power of Earth, and others unleashed some evil invocations.

Later we were visited by Counsellor Serbitus, the local ruler for the Empire in this region. He said he was hoping for a quiet retirement and didn't need this sort of excitement in the area. He also had some problems with the Senate, and a local Empire man named Tiberius (due to his birth lines) whom he still out-ranked. He mentioned that a powerful Empire group had travelled to this place about three moons ago – Special Unit 9, led by a Senator Amadeus, third in Line of the Empire. As we were later to discover, it was this Empire group that travelled the planes before us. Tiberius then made an appearance, demanding to know why two of his freedmen had been slain (by our group), and what Serbitus was going to do about it. Serbitus managed to calm him down, and we agreed to resurrect their fallen. High Priest Djimm sat down to do this, but seemed unable to draw the dead men back to the living, despite casting his most powerful invocation. One of the Axians in service to Serbitus muttered something about death magic. It turned out that the next day was a festival of great significance to the Axians, as they would be summoning Apep – the dark god, the destroyer, who dwells in the water of chaos, hiding below the surface of the Great River. Last year a mighty portent had occurred – an eclipse – where Apep had “swallowed the sun”, and they were anxious that their ritual this year would not be disturbed. We promised to stay well away if we could. The Axians were given leave to socialise with us, while Serbitus returned to his dwelling. Lathrodec and Sir Ruff learned to play an ancient Axian game, involving the throwing of sticks and the moving of pieces on a board. Others of the Axians lamented being apart from their homeland (Axos) but seemed resigned to their fate. It seems they have a great fear of cats.

Oddly enough, our next guest was the Rakshassa, Ar-Anwar Ar-Gerithan. As usual he talked about the Ravanon Cult, saying that wherever we would go, the serpent would follow. It seems that the followers of the wolf part of this Cult were linked with a deeper, more subtle, more insidious force, that bides its time and does not reveal itself so easily. These other cultists were linked with a serpent. At this point High Priest Lathrodec remembered that ‘Apep’ was the name followed by the serpent cultists he had met a decade ago while fighting the Ravanon.