

## North wind, light to variable, becoming hard later.

Or

## Troubled Times at the Summer Meadows.

### First night

We'd been sent to the Halfway House way station in the summer meadows to investigate the dark storm clouds hanging over the area. Having no better plan we began with a late night patrol to flush out what we could.

The group split into two parts based loosely on how much of a kicking you could take and whether you wanted any healing or not. The groups were:

Me (Spingle), Rancor, Sutnac, Anthrax, Obelisk, Beran, Lei Fung, Leitha Fae, Ceth and Captive Jack and his motley crew of fresh faced corsairs.

The other group was:

Jon Barleycorn, Kelvin, Molly, Colin the brave, Ivak Greyspire, Drokkal Greyspire, Gomic Greyspire, Hraun (and his companion - whasername), Tarquin, Doghair and probably some others.

We found plenty of elementals lurking about and eventually a group of Kalid Earthwarp. They were pretty tough but were dealt with promptly and afterwards, while I was searching the area for booty, I came across another Earthwarper, a bint apparently guarding a box with a skull on. She was a bit grumpy that we'd killed her mates and just as I was getting her more chatty a big bunch of her mates turned up an' gave us a fair beating. Plenty of long spear action. After they were dead too she was a bit more chatty and said she was guarding a beacon that had something to do with the storm clouds. I couldn't get anything more out of her as the decision had been taken to remove the beacon and 'deal' with her. After that we hoofed it back to the way station.

The other group had run into some Earthwarp scouts, random undead, more elementals and some hordelings spouting on about a Warlord in the area.

### **(Oh my god it's the) Next morning.**

Breakfast and then hanging about with little clear idea of what the powers that be want us to be doing. No direction from our nominal leader, Rancor, so we lark about 'till another sorcerer turns up to chivvy us into action.

Causal Riverwind is coordinating things and allocates two goals.

- i) Dob over more Earthwarp and get the rest of the beacons. This is apparently easier than...
- ii) Head off over the meadows and track down the warlord and/or his minions.

So off we set to do the latter.

Meeting some horde goblins I managed to have a civilized chat with them. They tell me that the other hordelings are all fighting each other and the goblins are being killed in a way in which they don't come back when the mists roll over them. I sympathise and say we'll kill off the brown boys in the area which are threatening them and just as they are shuffling off the path to let us past Anthrax rushes past me and puts one on the ground! Apparently Jack has delusions of command and gave the nod.

The rest of morning involved the killing of hordelings and a group of tough Earthwarp until we had a really comical fight against some ogre magi on a little hill top. They were very keen on killing the goblin!

Stroll back for lunch after a beguiling interlude in the shade of the trees by a babbling brook. During lunch some Wolfhold blokes turn up and announce that Lord Raven has gone (been pushed) back to Murandir to re-found the Dark Brotherhood and that the Dreadnought is going to be Wolfhold tower leader. Every wolfholder has to decide whether they are going stay or go and their choice will be marked on 'The List'. I reckon that'll cause plenty trouble for a lot of people.

It seems to me that every day life is returning to the Valley peoples as it was nigh on twenty years ago when we fought against the plots of the dark brotherhood, the shark cult and the Empire.

The other group had successfully tidied up all the other beacons so we had proper bag full.

### **After a gut busting lunch**

A Casual visit from our sorcerer friend and one quick identify later left us with the knowledge that there was one more (master) beacon, embodied in a tough dude hereabouts and he'd need a good kicking in order to break the enchantment. We set off, following some sylphs in order to find him. The other group was delegated warlord kicking duty as there was an ogre mage claiming to be him (or a minion of his) in the area.

After sylphing along for a while with only some elementals to bother us we met a small group of Earthwarp who we duly kicked. Before we got our breath back (or any curing done) another bigger bunch appeared complete with a Sorceror/High priest type, some really tough elementals, who needed blunt weapons and some regular tough warriors.

After a bit of girly 'get out of my woods' from Letitia (I reckon there's more than a bit o' goblin in that one), a messy fight ensued that proved fatal for a couple of people. The beacon dude went down fairly early suffering from a disease but whilst being power stolen managed to release stored sorceries knocking down Anthrax. Also, when he died he kind of exploded taking Ceth and Rancor with him. Sometimes it pays to be front rank. Anthrax escaped death but I reckon he was lucky. The end of the fight saw me one blow away from death myself, so all in all a bit close.

On the way back to the waystation we met some Mordorians who wanted a chat. Apparently they're being squeezed between the Arnorians and the Angmarim and reckoned that if we'd get the Arnorians to ease up on them and they redoubled their efforts against Angmar then the witch king would likely withdraw his forces from the tower of the All Seeing (by pulling the All Seeing himself out). So win win then. Except there are a fair few if's there for my liking. Also if the All Seeing pulls out of the tower that doesn't mean he will take his men with him, who are all disposed Kalid and the like. No mention of where they're like to go. Perhaps we could make up with some of them and invite them to help keep our status up now that it is steadily dribbling away to Murandir.

At some point we had a fun time destroying the beacon skulls with predictable nasty results to those who stepped up to the mark. Well done Leitha for being the first! Apparently breaking them by the waystation was bad advice (Causal, I'm looking at you here) as all the magic kind of splooged into the surrounding area and didn't dissipate.

### **One great dinner later**

After dinner with Dunstan of the White path, a very affable chap but you have to watch your plate, the waystation headed off to Thranduil for some further business. The other group were going to put the deal to the Arnorians and our diminished group (the pirates, Rancor, Beran, Lei Fung and Jack having gone off to party) were heading off to the plane of the sleepless dead to

visit a recently dead Lizard alchemist on a secret mission for the Corsairs.

With Leitha nominated boss, myself, Anthrax and Sutnac (re-christened Susan) hung back, swigged some grog and tried not to get killed too quickly. Ezekial Bramble and some Wolfhold bloke (I forget his name) came along. Leitha and Obelisk did a sterling job soaking up the damage to get us to our target.

Negotiations concluded we headed back out of the POTSD bringing our ghostly lizard friend with us. Sutnac discovered he was poisoned after getting too friendly with him (note to self, never hug an undead). Much was made of saying goodbye until the whole thing blew over and Ivak produced a neutralize poison from under his beard and all was well again.

While returning to the Halfway house we were attacked by a big bunch of Morgothians (or the like) and a big fight ensued. For some reason I took a lot more damage than expected, my tough skin letting me down for once, must be 'cos Thranduil is harder than most other places.

Morning yet again

No returns from the previous night's partiers so a reduced hit squad for the morning.

Basically we had to hang around and beat up anything that turned up until the magic in the area had dissipated and we could go home.

Predictably we had four waves of elementals (dark, lightning, air and cold) and much hilarity was had by all as they all took an age to put down, especially the comical weakness fight when we had no sorcerer to back us up.

Fortunately Causal turned up in the nick of time before we had a revisit of all four of the hardest elementals and an extremely gruesome fight.

### **In conclusion**

The summer meadows are free of the storm clouds.

The Corsairs advanced towards their primary goal.

Hopefully we'll see the end of the Tower of the All Seeing soon.

Promotion and slaps on the back all round!

Spingle,

Ranger,

Tower Namer,

Occasional Ambassador to the Goblin King.