

### **An account of the Trial of Malcolm Middleton and related events.**

We were stationed on the southern border of the valleys lands when some flashing lights were spotted in the nearby sky and we went to investigate. We encountered hordlings and some greater undead before meeting ex valley sector lord Kettlar von Harzon in undead form. He has a number of greater undead with him that kept reappearing until we had laid him low. He was some kind of undead, when discerned the answer was Kettlar von Harzon. In a very tough fight we finally laid him low, and before he dissipated he muttered something about revenge.

We returned to valley lands where we were visited by a number of sector lords and dignitaries and asked to take on the prosecution of the trial of Malcolm Middleton. We felt that an undue amount of pressure was placed upon us, myself in particular being pressurised by a Michelene Knight to be part of the prosecution, which if he had known me at all would have known that I was the wrong man for the job and I refused.

I had Humacti business on my mind also as during the rescue of Malcolm Middleton from the Wizards Concilium prison a Pentar vampire had also been rescued and a deal struck with Pentar regarding this matter. The Wizards Concilium prison has also raised questions about the laws of Orin Rakatha regarding the holding of prisoners. In the interests of transparency and honesty, these questions interest the Humacti as there are some undead that are held as they cannot be killed. In particular Ancient Vampire Zacharius has been captured but we haven't been able to kill him yet. He is an enemy captured at great cost to the valley and not to be released but held until his spirit can pass into the beyond. A group of Pentar Vampires came to us asking for the release of the Vampire who had been recovered from the Wizards Concilium prison and we released him. They also asked for the release of Zacharius but I refused and they went on their way (presumably to look for Zacharius).

Two strange things happened while we were hanging around in our lands- first, Sorcerer Tornado suddenly disappeared. We began a hunt for him but after a short time he reappeared. He had been forcibly teleported away by the Wizards Concilium for a chat about a forthcoming Waystation Teleportation System. Second a large group of Fay appeared in our lands and attacked White Crow forcing him to the ground and engaging the group before disappearing again. Both of these happenings were disconcerting because our nation is really not safe. It's not like the old tower days where we could retreat to a physical building. Our borders are porous and though there is a bane and a boon there is nothing actually stopping friends or enemies coming or going as they please, or indeed, abducting our

sorcerers.

Lord Velyn Manypage also spoke to us of some work that his father had performed before his death regarding the teaching of magic and he tasked us with following this up to discover what his father has achieved. In the morning we set out to follow Melvyn Manypage's footsteps in order to discover what he had learned. We followed his old route to meet a Reader trader from whom we bought some ritual components. We then continued on his route into an area concealed by the Labyrinth of Xenos. We had a brief encounter with Xenos himself who seemed to awaken from some kind of trance or sleep.

In the hidden area we found a Library, it was very difficult to enter but eventually we did. It was a most unusual library as it was embodied in an entity. We were required to tell it wisdom or a secret before it would divulge knowledge or a secret to us. It gave to us the research notes of Melvyn Manypage.

On the way back to the valley we were assailed by a very strong group of Pentar lead by two arrogant humans wearing black and blue quartered belt loops with a pentagram symbol on them. They had with them a Knight of his Dark Majesty, some aspirants, knifemen and Hepaths. We were hard pressed but saw them off though I think the Humans escaped while we were still dealing with the knight who auto-ressed after we had killed him and left the battlefield. Finally, we made it back to valley lands for a well earned meal.

After our repast we reluctantly took to the field again to deal with Kettlar Von Harzon who had returned. This time we spoke at length before we took to the fight. He spoke of needing revenge against our sector lords and of the loss of the tablet of storms. We tried to ameliorate him in a number of ways however he was never going to be swayed from the fight and this time we defeated him significantly more easily as we knew his retinue and were able to play to our strengths.

Exhausted we returned to the Valley lands again to try and digest what would be required of us regarding the trial. I would like to commend Tornado and Skalgrim for their roles in this matter as they agreed to be the prosecution and defence in the trial and took control of trying to obtain statements from witnesses and to establish the truth of what happened.

During the evening we were visited by Mian of the Dymwan who took an oath from Tornado who will be spending a year as Sorcerer in chief of the Cadre. Mian also took a moment to warn me of a development within his nation. A new faction has arisen the Dakari, named after Arkor Dakari a fanatical anti-Humacti. Apparently we slew his people and now he is sworn to take revenge upon us. I look forward to allowing his people and servants to pass on to the beyond.

I am saddened that Tornado has decided to go on an exchange program with the Dymwan, though I wish him luck and trust him, I cannot help but feel that consorting with Necromancers is not a suitable activity for any Valley member. Anyway we had to go and meet his replacement in order to bring him into the valley lands. This we successfully did although it came at a price as we were ambushed by a strong Shadowsfall group who slew Skalgrim with a touch of death. On this day we also recovered Melvyn Manypage's research notes into the origins and teaching of magic. The research notes indicated that there may be ways to teach magic other than by the teaching scrolls that have been handed over to the Concilium.

During this quest we encountered a solitary Elf from Laire Tinwe, he seemed like a nice enough chap and we had a good chat. However a group of quite aggressive Wizards concilium arrived wishing to apprehend him. We delayed them a while giving him a head start however we didn't feel that it was appropriate to interfere in business between nations that was not our own (when did we start doing this?) though i couldn't help but feel a bit uncomfortable. I wonder what the concilium are up to, they seem to be very active at the moment under their new chancellor.

The trial itself was a bit of a farce. Having asked for certain statements they were only forthcoming after the trial had begun. You would have thought that such important evidence would have been gathered well in advance of the trial and passed to us with plenty of time to see it. The procedure of the trial was unclear to most participants, including it seems the individual presiding over it. Further it was clear that the laws of the Valley are insufficient to cover what Malcolm was charged with and it was also unclear what procedures should actually be within the power structures of the valley hierarchy.

It is obvious to me that the laws of the Valley need a massive overhaul, so much has changed from the old days of "Wolfhold Justice" and cake from Dunstan, and that the laws, structures and procedures that we currently have are not fit for purpose. This is especially true in the light of the fact that we are now the Voice of the Mystics and responsible for the composition and upholding of the laws of Orin Rakatha.

We are now held to a higher standard and as such we should hold ourselves to a higher standard. What with Malcolm Middleton's trial and the question of the Pentar Vampires I feel that, not only are the laws we have for the Valley insufficient, but also the laws of the land. We are incapable of having justice for ourselves or others when we are so outdated and out of our depth. Several of our group who were tasked with presenting the trial were so disgusted by proceedings that they walked out and were also questioning the valley and the role of adventurers within valley life. I myself am deeply dissatisfied and disturbed by proceedings.

I would once again like to thank Tornado and Skalgrim for taking their roles on with aplomb and considering the farcical nature of proceedings acting with great dignity and patience. Following a recess the five commoners who judged the verdict concluded that Malcolm was guilty although I am not sure that they were sure what of, perhaps exceeding his authority although what authority he actually had is unclear. We await the sentencing.

Recommendations following the trial-

1. An overhaul of the laws of our nation.

There should be more laws, with more detail on them. There wasn't a law that covered what Malcolm was alleged to have done. What are the rights and responsibilities of adventurers?

2. An overhaul of the procedures of justice.

I had no idea there would be a prosecution and defence, or a jury. There are no guidelines on sentencing and who is going to do the sentencing anyway? Who represents adventurers? Who decides who is in the jury? Why are there no adventurers in the jury?

3. Making transparent what the new laws and procedures are so that everyone knows.

Before the trial none of us had any idea how it would work and despite being asked to be involved in it no one told us how it would work.

As you can see the trial left me with more questions than answers.

Shortly after the trial had finished I had a whispering wind from Kurt of the Humacti calling for assistance. We were able to Teleport to their location where Kurt had taken up a defensive position against the group of Pentar vampires and thralls who had come into our lands earlier. A great battle was fought and the abominations were destroyed. However, a number of brother Humacti were slain. For this loss I am greatly sorry, I made decisions that were not as well thought out as they might have been. I am hopeful that the issues related to this incident will not be repeated and that with the insight gained changes can be made that will not lead to such an incident occurring again. It is my responsibility and for the loss of life I am truly sorry.

Mat the light of the life watch over you,

Cirith