

Our small group consisted of myself Colchis, Kell, Smut, Shard, Dreams of Shadows, Anyana, Althea, Magpie and Wyndy were called together by the Grey Sorcerer/Green Wizard Maelstrom Arrowhope, to travel into the Brocklands to investigate the possibility of there being a Node of Grey Magic there. Maelstrom sent one of his men, Hike Rangeworthy, to be our guide. Our passage to the Brocklands was long and for the most part uneventful, but our encounters became more pronounced as we entered the area we were seeking.

We first encountered two Ogre Magi who had been injured in an earlier fight, and as payment for some curing we were informed that we were entering the lands of the Broken Bone Ogras, who would not be too pleased of our presence there. We were also told of steel elementals who were very tough. We moved on and soon met what seemed to be a fire elemental, that we easily destroyed. Whilst defeating this elemental we noticed a figure further down the path, but by the time we were able to move on it had gone.

Unfortunately we soon got ourselves trapped within a power ward and saw a Golden Minotaur watching us. In order to pass through the wards we had to solve several puzzles, four in total, two of which were easy and the final two difficult. After several attempts the answers appeared and we could pass the wards. The delay had meant the minotaur had walked off. A little way down the path we met two Broken Bone Ogras who attacked us and caused a little problem.

Moving on we crossed into a valley and across a river following a path. Along this path we met what appeared to be Maelstrom, but was a being of magic. It fired arrows at us that always inflicted large damage if they hit and sometimes held magical effects such as vanishing animate and inanimate objects. This being was defeated by dispelling the magic aura on some small clay pots that it carried and smashing them and then the creature.

We then encountered two Thissessin who informed us that their master wished to speak to us, but would do so in a few minutes time. We were instantly suspicious but as we were members of the Free Towers Pact didn't press an attack. While we were waiting a Shadowsfall appeared and informed us that someone was casting down the path. It was at this point that Dreams informed me that a few weeks ago the Thissessin had declared war on the Valley Alliance because of a defilement of one of their temples.

This news was told too late as their Master finished casting and released a Chain Lightning spell upon some of us. Wyndy, Althea and Magpie were floored, all killed. Magpie was elixired by Smut, but the others were beyond help. The two Thissessin were cut down, but their Master escaped. Our dead were ressurected and the party meditated and mnemomicked. More Broken Bone Ogras arrived and after some debate kicked us severely, splitting the party. The Ogras

told us to leave their land and that they were fairly sure that no node of grey magic existed in the area.

We began to make our way back, and almost precisely where we fought the fire elemental, Hike left us to prepare a hostel that he knew of. We then met a female Reader named Silk who informed us that a Necromancer was pretty close. If we assisted her to pass and be on her business she would reward us with potions. The Dymwan attacked along with a shade and a ghoul. The party were split by freeze with fear and paralysis, which Silk countered with potions. The Dymwan called the shade back to him but the ghoul had been cut down by Kell. I faced the Dymwan three times and three times he cast fear on me. The fourth time he attempted to kill me with fatal disease but was inept and I deflected the lunge. As the rest of the party joined the attack I dropped sword and shield and let the mighty elements harnessed by the Yellow Guild flow through me, time and again burning his body with shocking grasps. He died screaming. Then it all went wrong.

It later transpired that Silk had given us a catalepsy venom that was on the rim of the potion bottles and we collectively suffered from a dream-like state of blurred and fuzzy sights and sounds. We all awoke in a room around a table that was laid for a meal. A man there, who called himself Samson the innkeep, informed us that our friends had brought us there some two days earlier. They had told him that we were injured and that we needed rest. We were near the river Rundig some 150 miles from where we had been. For the next half hour we recalled memories of our collective dream. We thought that we had been used for an experiment by four people. One dressed in blue, one in cream robes and one non-human, the fourth was unidentified. Some personal possessions were missing, but were later found.

Samson then served a meal telling us that our friends had paid for the board and lodging. At this point Hike, Sister Mary, Kadere and a seeker arrived. They informed us that we had been missing for four days although to us it seemed as if it were the same night. After we had eaten, a search of the building uncovered three unlevelled magic boxes that were secured. Each had markings on them. It was whilst we searched for keys to unlock them that we noticed each of us had been marked on either the left or right forearm by a magical tattoo which said "be bound to do my bidding. By my ancient law obey."

There were also four distinct symbols, three of which corresponded to the boxes, the last was thought to be the initials of Wayland Wickham, the high enchanter from the labyrinth of Xenos. Kell identified the tattoo to be part of a larger ritual to control something. The boxes he identified thus: the wooden box - "Earth is my commodity, I buy and sell it for great journeys", the black box "I am the fourth wolf that makes the earth burn" and the metal box "Tempest abroad. I await

in the place of crowning.” Only when the ceremony was complete would the boxes open.

The following morning we decided to return to the Towers, but were attacked by the same Shadowfall and Thissessin Master from the day, or four days, earlier, along with Silk and the Drow. The Shadowfall seemed to be acting against his will and the Thissessin Master could not cast his spells. The ensuing fight culminated in their deaths along with the death of Magpie at the hands of the Drow. All of our attackers had the same magical tattoo. Obviously something was not right.

Not far from the hostel we encountered two steel elementals, who could only be damaged with pure steel weapons doing the damage of two men or less. Anything greater that was not protected, shattered on impact with them. After a lengthy fight the elementals were destroyed and immediately we were all compelled to gain possession of a bag from a man called Jaffa ben-Assim, taking it to the top of a hill and leaving it there.

We saw a Dai-fah-Dyne group approaching and Kell considered it wiser to tell of the compulsion, rather than fighting. After a detailed and lengthy debate and trade, we gained ownership of the bag, which was warded and contained some earth. We discovered that it was the wooden box that was compelling us. After agreeing to owe Jaffa a major debt, we deposited the bag and left. This is a serious problem that will not go away in a hurry and crosses many Towers and peoples. All that have been afflicted by the magical tattoos may still be susceptible to further compulsions.

I suggest that from now on we should investigate this problem and be prepared for people we meet behaving in seemingly contradictory manners that may be detrimental to our aims.

Be vigilant and gain any information that you may.

Colchis, Wizard of the Yellow Guild