

The key points:

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- The Dymwan set in motion a plan during the Dymwan War which, unthwarted, would have destroyed all life on Orin Rakatha. Â We thwarted it.

- The production of ores and minerals from the mine has been resolved.Â The Reader have renewed the lease on the mine with the Valley.

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Both of these developments should ensure the production of enchanted/ensorcelled items is resumed.

- The Wizards Concilium have embarked on some major enterprise that requires significant amounts of materials to complete.

- Void tainted individuals continue with attempts to corrupt Nature and the Masters of Lore.

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Once again, the Forgotten and Calex Wraithspawn have some involvement.

- Some elements within the Fortress of Pentar are not fully committed to the War with the Valley

- The Magnum Opus is a group of Master Alchemists from many nations working to achieve a legendary goal which will advance Alchemy greatly.

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Background

This mission was a collision of unfortunate circumstance resulting from two plans gone awry.

The first tale begins long ago, at the height of the Dymwan War, when the Seers of the Cadre cast their gaze upon other paths.Â Although the Dark Wind and the huge armies of the Dead War seemed invincible, what might be done to ensure victory if these two great experiments faltered or, worse still, failed utterly.

When they called up these other fates, they saw that there was more than just a chance of failure and so they laid their plans against the possibilities they had discovered.Â Fifteen plans were laid and, although we do not know of the others, there is one which we know with dread certainty to have been the most dire of them all.

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Miphon Hearst, Sorcerer-in-Chief of the Dymwan Cadre was its architect and he heeded also the prophecy of Sothsaris Vorn, greatest of the Aldonar Seers.

Mal Vorn Wraithsborn was a Champion of the Phalanx, Necromancer of the Family Screaming Soul and Deaths Head of the Dymwan.Â He also had the unusual gift of embodying Greater Wraiths.

Â Chosen as the leader for this "experiment", he was placed in a Stasis Chamber along with some equipment, several undead and a Spirit of Desolation.Â Part of his equipment was Deaths Embrace, a powerful sword that could only be wielded by a Deaths Head.

The other spirits were a Greater Fetch "Buorad"™, three Greater Wraiths, two Greater Warrior Ghosts and a Greater Spirit of Bleeding.Â The Spirit of Desolation was a mighty undead with an insatiable hunger for life, growing stronger as it fed upon any life nearby.

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Ultimately, it would become too powerful to thwart and would consume all life on Orin Rakatha.

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This would leave the entire plane host only to the dead.

The Stasis Chamber was very small and hence the selection of only spiritual undead to accompany him.Â The plan was for the Stasis effect to end after six months but this did not occur.Â Whatever the problem was, we believe that the Stasis was ended perhaps during the Cataclysm when the Orin Rakatha was remade.

On awakening, Mal Vorn and the Spirit of Desolation were weakened and found themselves trapped in an isolated part of a mine, unable to pass the many wards that they found about the tunnels.Â As per plan, Mal Vorn used an Arcane Matrix to further enhance some of his undead, giving them the ability to use powerful fire magics.

Our second tale also begins many years ago but this one springs from the heart of the Valley itself.Â I would urge readers of this mission report to pause now and consult the Forgotten

Apprentices account of Railin, Alchemist and Dark Seer.
largely accurate.

Â I believe the report to be

And so, we come to the present.Â The Lords of Sulphur Town requested a group to travel to a mine in the Spine Mountains.
Reader under a somewhat complex but profitable arrangement.

Â This mine is leased from the
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Once there, we were to assist Governor Dullos with resolving the problems in the mines.

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Those issues were that the yield of minerals and crystals had been very low for several weeks, several miners had been acting strangely and three of them have died.

Air Day

A Valley group was dispatched to the Mines in the Spine Mountains that we lease from the Reader under a somewhat complex but profitable arrangement.Â The group consisted of Baron Silas, Bill Jingle, Driedyn, Vilk Bloodmoon, Frannk, Jux, Xernes, Skalgrim Skyfather, Wulfric Baneguard, Vallen, Davros Epton, Flint Baleforge, Layla, Casper Meadows and myself.

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We were aided by Tornado of the Dymwan, further cementing our good working relationship with their Nation.

We arrived at the Miners Rest, a hostel for those working at the mine.Â After some initial friction, we were able to establish a working relationship with Governor Dullos and his Guard Captain, Bjorn.Â The

problems in the mines seemed to have three causes:

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Undead, Dark Goblins and some miners going "crazy".

We recovered missives from the body of a messenger called Prius who was a Valley member and also working for the Magnum Opus.Â In these missives, we discovered that the Magnum Opus had three Labs which could be accessed by the Gatekeeper using music.

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Each location also had a keyword and a potion that could ease the effects of the transition.

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We discovered that the Gatekeeper was held in the Governors office.Â The creature was some sort of astral creature which controlled spaces of its own devising on the astral plane.

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Several of the group were psionically awakened and conversed with it at length.

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Shortly afterwards, we were attacked by a Githyanki Reaver and his minions.

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They were clearly seeking the Gatekeeper and we declined to cooperate.

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Shouting and the usual dire threats ensued.

Following up on Prius messages, we recovered musical device used to direct the Gatekeeper to open the way to the labs along with some potions.

Also, in the Governors office was a magical ledger. Â Whatever was written in this tome also appeared in paired tomes in the Valley Forge and Reader Nation.

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In the front of this ledger was the contract under which the Valley used the mine, a lease that was soon to expire.

Water Day

We resolved to first investigate the mines as that was our given mission.Â Arriving in the tunnels, we met with the Master Warden, Allyan, who undertook to guide us during our stay.

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Most of the mine was compartmentalised by wards.

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Red Reader wards which we were unable to pass and Blue wards which our guide could open for us.

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We initially met with Valley miners who had not returned when recalled.Â Some worked frantically even when deprived of tools, scrabbling at the stone with their bleeding fingers.

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When we tried to calm them and lead them away, they became violent and had to be subdued.

We rescued a Reader called Benito Allejandro from some Grimlocks. He was a self-confessed drug dealer who, in return for supplies, had agreed to put some drops in the drinks of the miners.

This drug and, later, withdrawal from it were the cause of the madness we observed.

He was supplied by a drow called Zilm Mindwrack who also controlled the Grimlocks.

Further Magnum Opus letters spoke of a modified Zellian drug and more details about their labs.

After a break for food (time moves uncertainly underground), we continued our investigations but ran into some Dark Goblins. They claimed to have a drow prisoner (probably Mindwrack) that they would exchange in return for the elimination of a creature they called the Mushroom Eater.

When we later overcame the creature, the Dark Goblins proved to be duplicitous and so we slew them also.

We eventually met with Zilm Mindwrack, 3rd Sorcerer of House Tilduring for those who care about such things.

Reader wards in exchange for safe passage.

The drugging of the miners was done to keep production levels up.

They had been unaware of the undead problems and also of the side effects of the drug used.

We also determined that Governor Dullos had been kept from seeking outside assistance by use of the modified Zellian drug but he was eventually able to overcome the effects.

Entering the Reader warded area, we became aware of the beating of a great heart somewhere in the earth which periodically cause a massive draining of life from all present. We fought a long, hard battle with many powerful undead, finally cornering Mal Vorn Wraithsborn who hid from us within a Ward of Death.

In exchange for information, we agreed to let him pass.

We were unaware that the Spirit of Desolation which we had weakened went with him.

Having made good progress on all the issues with the mine, we made our way back to the Miners Rest where further research determined that we had just released the Spirit of Desolation. It further transpired that we might be able get information on how to destroy this spirit from a Halmadonian Knight of the Holy Flame called Sir Hector. The only wrinkle here being that he was known to be undead of a type called a Ghost Knight.

Earth Day

We received a message from the Forge that a large quantity of valuable ores and minerals were missing and that we should try to recover them. From a book recovered from Mal Vorn we determined that both he and the Spirit of Desolation would continue to grow in strength.

We had also recovered the ritual components used in the creation Spirit and had discovered them to be enormously powerful and complex. Vilik had touched them and was slowly rotting away. Xernes severed the connection but, in turn, became embodied by a Mummy Lord against whose will he struggled constantly.

Additionally, we learned of a Druid called Silik that had raised a Void Shambler from a seed of some sort. Silik was known to bear the mark of the Forgotten. That Shambler would in turn spawn another, darker Seed.

We knew that he would most likely return that evening.

We decided to investigate one of the Magnum Opus Labs, choosing to start with the Alnwick Gardens. This Lab was devoted to Poisons and Herbal Potions. We persuaded the Gatekeeper to transport us there and, upon transition, were assaulted by a group of psionic guardians. At the Lab, we fought with one Mish Rhum, his assistants and a Thissessin Captain.

The latter escaped though we slew the rest.

We recovered a potion recipe and a quantity of ores and minerals

That night we dealt with the Druid Silik and his Void Shambler.Â On its demise, the Shambler spawned a Void Master which was also dispatched.

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We recovered documents from Zalfirion Nightspell, a void tainted drow, who had held Siliks family hostage to keep him at work on the Void Shambler while Siliks own taint grew.

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The Void Master was to be used to subvert a Master of Lore at a specific Node of Power but we were unable to determine which one.

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We also learned that Nightspell has a spiritual advisor called Vurnith.

The Dymwan agreed to deal with Mal Vorn so that we could have a chance to deal with the Spirit of Desolation.

Fire Day

We travelled to the Frith Wood where we contacted the shade of Sir Hector.Â We chased down a Master Lazaal, a Fetch Lord, as an act of good faith and Sir Hector shared with us a complex ritual that could destroy the Spirit of Desolation.

Upon our return, we spoke with the Gatekeeper and, predictably, the Githyanki Reaver returned, seeking to recover it.Â We slew the Githyanki group with some difficulty as it constantly teleported a small number of us away and tried to overwhelm them before we regrouped.

We also cleared out the arcane Thaumistia Lab where no power worked, recovering more potions and materiel.Â From the recovered materials, we were able to determine a good deal of information about the Magnum Opus. Â Their chief goal was to create Prima Materia (also known as Quintessence).

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They would use this Quintessence in the manufacture of Calculus Albus.

They also sought the Smaragdine Table (or Emerald Tablet) which is widely regarded as the source of all Alchemy. It was believed to have been brought to Orin Rakatha by Hermes Trismagestus from Murandir around thirty years ago. This Table would enable them to work these materials to some type of immortality via Lichdom or a Philtre of Life. This

last was what the Forgotten Apprentices sought as a potential cure for the poison with which Raven had afflicted them.

It is rumoured that Raven was himself instructed by Trismagestus in his earlier days.

We received word from the Dymwan that they had dealt with Mal Vorn, leaving us clear to approach the Spirit of Desolation.

Steel Day

We cleared the last of the three Labs, Annwn, which was dedicated to Cosmic Alchemy and recovered much of the ores that remained unaccounted for.

Next, we set about preparing for the rituals that would destroy the Spirit of Desolation. In a lifetime of adventuring, I have never before encountered such complex instructions and we took some hours simply to prepare for the coming struggle.

I will circulate these rituals separately but it should be apparent even on a casual inspection that they are both complex and precise.

First, we would need to Anchor the Spirit so that, when weakened, it could not simply dissipate and recover as it had at our first meeting. To do so, we slew and collected the essence of a Spirit of Evil and a Spirit of Balance, separating them from the Spirit of Desolation that they protected.

With this achieved, we summoned the Spirit of Desolation which was accompanied by an ever-growing number of other undead drawn to its power. During the summoning, Spirits of Evil and Balance would also be summoned that we would have to keep away to keep the Spirit of Desolation anchored. Failing

to do so would need us to restart and confront a strengthened Spirit.

Three times we were assaulted by undead hordes as we battled with the Spirit of Desolation.Â
Our skirmish groups were able to keep the Spirits of Evil and Balance at bay and the rest of us fought the Spirit of Desolation while protecting our ritualists.

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Ultimately, we prevailed and the Spirit was destroyed.

Finally, we turned our attentions to dealing with Grunwick, the leader of the Valley members of the Magnum Opus.Â We recovered him his Fortress of Pentar allies who had holed up in a fort for the night.

With this, we had resolved all the matters arising from the troubled mine and returned to the Miners Rest to celebrate.Â Whilst we ate, it transpired that the mine lease had fallen due and that the Reader had received a generous offer from the Wizards Concilium.

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To my shame, I cannot recall their representatives name or position but he was something like the Master of Arcane Constructions.

Whilst we were in no way able to match the Concilium bid, we were able to make solid arguments for the Valley to continue with the lease as before and, ultimately, we were successful in securing this important resource for our people.

The question remains, however:Â Why do the Wizards Concilium need these resources so badly that they are willing to pay so handsomely for them? What are they building?

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