26 Fourthmoon

Firstly, I would like to briefly apologize for not writing a chronicle detailing what happened last moon. I have no explanation for why I did not do it.

We began as we always do by speaking with Maírion. He described that our reputation had improved somewhat based on us going into town and helping a few of the local settlements last moon. Despite our efforts, however, the outpost was still facing resource-related woes. The @ is currently 22. He described that if it ever dips below 20, we would lose the ability to fund key (non-specified) research projects and functions. The stone and crystalline we secured last moon had arrived successfully, and construction on the tower was able to begin. The tower still needed protection, due to the hauntings and the continued presence of outside mage schools.

To that end, Maírion asked us who had invited the Nelenor people to help. We all stared at him blankly. He described that they were being extra active, and alleging that we had invited their presence. Whether or not this happened is unclear to me, but I suspect the Nelenor people were maliciously misinterpreting something we said to them when we went into town. Regardless, Maírion frustratedly expressed that they were our problem now, and asked us to explicitly show our displeasure at their presence as clearly as we could.

Maírion described that the weather is improving as spring is approaching. The snows are thawing some, which helps a little bit with the travel problems, but is seemingly a drop in the bucket compared to all of the elemental damage that has affected our roads. Overall, travel was still quite difficult. Additionally, we were told that we should anticipate all of our "guests" (even beyond the extra active Nelenor mages) to be more out and about.

Here were the missions for the day, along with my notes from Maírion's descriptions:

> Protect, investigate, and help rebuild Outpost Tower

- This will likely take more than one moon, if we were to contribute it would probably go faster. There were also some rumors floating around about what kinds of things might be popping up that we could ask Samaníl about.

>Hauntings, disturbances throughout the outpost, investigate

- This is not necessarily spirits but also connected to the scape problems we have been experiencing for some time

>Return to town, search for work ledes for Outpost

- We sort of did this last moon, but Maírion reminded us that we missed out on finding larger projects that the outpost could help with. Our researchers had done some work finding things to do over the moon, but Maírion told us they lack the rumor-sifting abilities that we have

>>> Clear mountain passes blocked by elemental terrain

- We've managed to temporarily clear these before, but we need to deal with the root problem by shattering the affected terrain[1]

>>> Disperse remnants anchoring red ley line

- This is in the wake of the impending volcano we managed to clear out previously. Our help is needed to clear out the red-aligned creatures that are stoking the flame and strengthening it, as well as to clear out the affected terrain.

For the next two missions, researchers have come back with problems from various local villages., We can potentially help them in exchange for services or other resources we have been lacking.

>>> Village reports soul fear feeling from central well

- Village is known for hunters, alchemists, and ingredient gathering. Sort of insane to ask them to retrieve what is presumably a morganti weapon or tendril that is scared / dangerous from their well, so we would need to help them.

>>>> Green Vraak'Shai sighted near village - fighting?

- Concerning to have the big Vraak'Shai with morganti fighting, and very close to a village. This village was known for mining and herding.

>>>> Reports of fighting at checkpoint in foothills

- This checkpoint is a big problem for us since all kinds of fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, and other materials come from further down the mountain and nothing is coming up. We also can't get news in/out until this is resolved.

>>>>> Dragon sightings rise sharply over the moon

- Local dragon priests have been able to identify a place in the mountains that appears to be the center of sharply increasing dragon activity.

The first mission the group went on was tending to the alleged fighting at the checkpoint down the mountain. I did not go. On the way they appear to have brought in some lizardfolk refugees who had been affected by earthquakes up in the Hallhars as well as manifestations of extreme exposure to elemental energy (rashes, etc.). There were about 200 in total who came in throughout the day. Other than that, the group seemingly trudged through various elemental terrain effects and the usual smattering of colored taluses on the way down.

I was told that the group encountered some Illion military who had set up the checkpoint, and a few mages from the Syenon Mage School who were dropped when trying to go through. We learned that the soldiers' orders were to not let anyone or anything associated with a mage school through on account of all the fighting. Apparently we are approaching (if not already in the midst of) open civil war between the schools. News of this has been unable to reach us due to the aforementioned checkpoint. These orders were allegedly made by the current regent of the Illion region. Some of the details here may be murky. Shensi stayed behind in order to wait for the captain of the battalion to arrive so she could question them.

The group did not learn what the Syenon people were up to or what they wanted.

[1] I believe cracking the terrain causes the magical energy to come out, but I did not write this down and am not 100% certain this is the case

Afterwards, we spoke with Samaníl. They focused on the individuals who had been previously briefed about the goings-on of the checkpoint, and noted that the pattern allegedly didn't line up and that there was something missing. I was not one of the briefed individuals, so I was not really sure what to make of that.

Since we did not have much time before lunch, we opted to go help at the tower since it seemed relatively quick. On the way we encountered a few mages from Nelenor. They were quite rude, and insistent that we had asked for their help. They had seemingly just been in a researcher's study and had taken some things. I tried my hardest to be a little aggressive and put my foot down. I repeatedly asked them to leave and didn't listen to their (forgive me) bullshit.

My meager attempts at aggression were nothing compared to the aforementioned researcher who came out shouting offendedly that they had been in their study. They used a flame ray cascade to drop all of them (and kill a few of them and us who were already wounded). We searched the bodies of the Nelenor mages, sorted out what stuff belonged to the researcher, took the rest, and continued to the tower.

We patrolled the tower. We were able to carry the stone and crystalline to the base and get some of the construction done. Here's a smattering of events and things that were there:

- There were invisible forces randomly using apparently primal abilities, such as people suddenly entering a duel with nothing or being randomly disarmed
- Spells sometimes boosted, deboosted, detonated, or didn't work entirely
- A few little Nelenor mages made a tentative break for the tower and were knocked out and treeformed.
- An archmage from Neleonor arrived. I attempted to knock her out, it didn't work, and she use "Sorcery of Pyromancy I obliterate you" on me. I felt my spirit and body explode into many, many pieces. All of the items I was carrying were destroyed as well.

I was told that we wrapped up shortly after the archmage arrived, as operations at the tower for the day concluded. The good news is we finished before the archmage was able to do much of anything besides blow me up. This was quite fortunate for the fate of the tower. Who knows what kind of destructive spell she could have been able to cast.

To that end, my philosophy on some of the outside mages has changed some. I think I've been too cowardly about them for too long. As uncomfortable as it is for me, it feels like it is worth it to put our foot down and "stand on business" as it were. I've taken to aggressively asking the Nelenor mages to leave or straight up not giving them the chance and hitting them.

This adjustment was also informed by the observation that if we weren't able to get news in and out, then perhaps our visitors were unable to also. I was previously worried about political backlash if we were too mean to them, but for now we seemingly have an opportunity to strike at them while they are informationally isolated as well.

My spirit was so scattered that I was told it took the entire duration of the next mission to summon me. To that end, a different chronicle may be able to provide a more accurate/detailed report of our goings-on during this period.

The party spoke with Mirion next. They decided to head out to the village where the Green Vraak'Shai had been fighting. They encountered the usual smattering of gnomes and taluses on the way. There, they encountered a greater demon and the Vraak'Shai fighting. It sounds like they did a great deal of talking and attempting to communicate with the Vraak'Shai. I believe the demon was slain, not morganti.

An interesting detail Zhe Needle told me was that the morganti sword the Vraak'Shai was wielding was pretty quiet. He spoke to it with bardic speech and it whispered quietly, and also portrayed a feeling of ascent. It was particularly noteworthy to me that the sword was seemingly not as terrified as I would imagine one would be. My previous understanding was that the Vraak goings-on were terrifying to morganti. I suppose, then, that the morganti's fear has to do with the world being "punctured" as it were rather than the Vraak in and of themselves. The "ascent" feeling is also noteworthy, and could be connected to the worlds being brought together.

We also later learned that Vraak'Shai have previously possessed morganti, and even brought it to their world long ago, so this is not without precedent.

The party also encountered a very famous old lady on the road. We later agreed to not publish further details for the next 100 years.

When I was finally reformed and summoned, we spoke to Maírion again. The conversation was relatively short, and I don't remember much. My notes were also less helpful than I was hoping they'd be. I wrote two bullet points: "Duties are a fundamental force of nature" and "Bridging the gnomes something something".

Regardless, we decided to head out to investigate the dragon activity.

On the way out of the outpost, we found many Lizardfolk outside of an inn, attempting to find a place to stay. The innkeeper was trying explain that the inn was almost entirely full, but there was a bit of a language barrier. Envar was able to translate, and I believe offered to have them attempt to stay in the outpost in exchange for helping us build the tower. I am unsure the specific details that were worked out, if any.

Next, we descended into a dark, dark canyon. It was difficult to see and know which way would lead us forward. Min walked with me with magetorch while I went around the space and searched for the way forward. Once I found it, we were all able to leave with no issues. There were sonic moths in the darkness as well as a few villagers (miners?) who were trying to go home. We guided the villagers out as well.

Once out of the canyon, we encountered an individual we were later able to confirm was the elven goddess Yavanna. She was walking towards us, looking up towards the sky and stars. She commented something along the lines of "I have never seen them so entwined before", seemingly in relation to the world. I unfortunately missed what she specifically said, but remembered the word entwined. She also commented that she was called to verdant and growing places. Perhaps a good omen for the state of the Vraak world.

We chatted with her for a little while. She asked us what we had seen and what we knew about the Vraak. We described our interactions and she asked us if we thought the people in the other world experienced joy. I said that I hoped they did. We asked if she had worshippers over there and she did. We asked if they express joy when they pray and she said "often". Someone asked if she could send a vision to them and she said that she could, and asked us to make sacrifices. Min sacrificed his right eye so they could see, and I sacrificed my left ear so they could hear. A very expensive diamond that I believe was given to use by the Naurë river's Elithu was sacrificed as well.

I have taken up worship of Yavanna since this encounter. I was touched by the way she spoke, and felt a resonance with her calmness and kindness. I also found her general domains of nature and growth to be things I appreciated as well.

The last thing we encountered before making it to the place the researchers had noticed was a few green Vraak imps fighting a group of fairies. I think we rushed through this because we were worried about time. I do not believe anything particularly noteworthy happened. We killed the imps.

Afterwards, we had a brief discussion regarding "playing sides" as it were. Icarium thought it was interesting that we were defending the green Vraak'Shai against the demons yet totally in favor of killing the littler Vraak creatures. I wasn't sure what to make of this. The Vraak'Shai seems less... aggressive towards us, at least for now.

There were a few dragons at the mountain passage. There was one that was green with silvery tips, a rosy and blue one, a vaguely bronze one, one that was mottled with various shades of gray / silver, and one that was blue and white. We spoke with the green and silvery one.

Elethir took incredibly detailed notes about our conversation with the dragon. To that end, I will list some of the moments of the conversation here.

- We asked if it needed help searching. It said that it already found what it was looking for. We asked what it was doing here and it said it was "masking".
- It came down and asked it for gifts. We gave it various items and some mana as well.
- It commented that it was not often that a gate or portal to another place opens up.
- It told us that our world would try to kill the Vraak, and that we should see that it does not do so.
    - This explains why many worldly demons have been trying to kill the Vraak'Shai.
- Our world is apparently breaking, and if we didn't act soon the ground would crack and burst.

- I asked if bringing the king back would be helpful in regards to the world not cracking and it explained that he had one key and we had the other.
- We apparently need many hands to build what we require, and we have few.
- When asked about how the Vraak'Shai got the morganti, the dragon commented that a deal had been struck long ago.
    - We later learned this had to do with an exchange the Riverfolk of Syenon had made with the Vraak long, long ago during what I believe is the first contact made with the Vraak. Thousands(?) of years ago.

The conclusion I came to from this conversation is that we must continue our urgency in regards to getting the tower built. I think we should tend to it every moon until it is done. I would also love to try to learn about what state the King is in there and/or what he is up to before we go.

In the evening, we had a somewhat secret meeting over dinner. Details about said meeting are unable to be published for 100 years.

I also meant to ask Lathíl (the morganti researcher) about his interpretation of what Zhe Needle told me, but did not have time. I am writing this mainly as an act of reminding my future self to follow up about this.

Thank you for reading. I look forward to the next moon.

Amarthiel Eldasilquendil