

# 19-DEC-2009

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The PCs (including a new PC, Clement Bloodstone) learn that there have been a number of murders of solitary adventurers throughout Volkraad. Although some have survived, the bodies of any would-be assailants have disappeared. The party takes it upon themselves to investigate and decide to use a willing Tonrar as bait. Orlando chooses to spend some time outside the city, where he learns rumours that goblins have been seen in Farsden Forest, and that Remnant forces have hit a number of villages and towns, and seem to be pressing east. Fucius Noran learns that the Duskblades are relocating to the city of Taldan. Tonrar is amused to hear that an angry lynch mob tried to storm the Mandragora embassy - but his humour is short-lived when he learns that the mob was almost wiped out by two Mandragora BattleMagi.

The group patrols the fog-shrouded streets, where even Krato cannot see clearly, although only Orlando and Tonrar have their minds on the job, but the night passes uneventfully with Tonrar reaching Low Market then turning back to return to the Four Coins where the group have their lodgings. The following day, Issaria Snowleaf voices the theory that they should check for any sewer entrances near the killings. The group visit the temple of the Raven Queen, where they find the bodies of some of the victims - some of them exhibit a discoloured puncture wound on their flesh. The group investigates the murder sites and find sewer entrances near many of them, although this is inconclusive. So far the only link between the attacks is the fact that all the adventurers are affiliated with the temple of Pelor and the group returns to the Four Coins.

It is early evening when they return and they find a message from Father Ko Braenon: Meet him at the temple at Moonrise. Whilst Orlando attempts to buy illegal stimulants, the rest of the group wait and at Moonrise they head across to the temple. As they enter the temple confines, they notice something wrong: the temple is in half-darkness, a anathema to the priests of the temple, and it is not long before the PCs find out why. They discover the bodies of several acolytes, murdered by blade; and they find the guards to the Priests living quarters to be slain.

Climbing to the top of the stairs that wind around the outside of the temple, the party is attacked. Just as they get to the living quarters and Ko Braenon's office, Issaria is laid low by a poison dart, paralysing her after she casts *Grease* on the stair from a scroll. The door to Ko Braenon's office bursts open and the priest crashes into the far wall. Bleeding freely he implores the PCs to "Get away!"

His assailants step into the corridor, apparently dressed as commoners, however they are armoured and carrying weapons: Tonrar takes on a burly fighter with a greatsword, Orlando exchanges shots with another bowman, while Fucius Noran and Xantha Lukka take on the remaining fighter. While Issaria struggles to regain mobility, both Fucius and Clement avoid being hit by darts hurled by two rogues on the balustrade that have snuck up behind the party.

When a magic-user appears behind the fighters, the group fears the worst as he casts from a scroll held in his hand. Chain lightning bursts into Tonrar and the other PCs, although they remain steadfast. The magic-user barely has time to curse before Orlando kills him with pinpoint accuracy bow shots.

Tonrar and his opponent are equally matched, and Xantha Lukka's scythe shatters when she misses her opponent. Fucius uses the distraction to channel *shocking grasp* through his blade, killing the fighter with a blow of crackling energy. Meanwhile Clement Bloodstone yells defiance at the two rogues and uses *magic missile* to try and stop them from hurling more darts. He manages to blast the dart-hurler from the balcony, as the other Rogue closes in. Clement is rewarded by the sound of a thump as the other Rogue hits the street

outside.

Fucius charges the bowman and fells him with a well-placed strike. Tonrar hurls himself in to a Norlander wrestling bout with the remaining fighter and Xantha charges into to add her weight. Clement produces his morning star, as the Rogue attacks him with a shortsword. Clement leaps up, braining the Rogue with a powerful blow to the head. Issaria shrugs off her paralysis and launches *magic missile* into the remaining fighter, struggling under Tonrar and Xantha, killing him.

As the party collects themselves, several bloodied temple guards and Paladins rush around the corner. While Xantha Lukka uses her healing powers on Ko Braenon, the Guards confirm the identity of the party - and the PCs learn the priests have been locked in their rooms by the attackers, and many of the guards are injured with several dead. Upon the bodies of the attackers are a few items of interest: a ring of protection +1 and two crystal shards that radiate magic, but of an unfamiliar kind. Of more concern, is the fact that all the attackers bodies have have the symbol of Demogorgon tattooed or branded into their flesh.

A few hours later, Ko Braenon regains consciousness - the attackers were looking for the fragment of text recovered from the Duskblade Chapterhouse. Fortunately it was locked in the temple vaults, but the attackers still tortured him, convinced he was lying. From the little Ko Braenon has translated, it appears that it points part of the location to the millennia-old location of the lost Dwarven city of Dwarrowdelve, ancestral home of all Dwarves - long since lost in the Wildlands. However it is not complete and the only person who may be able to translate it maybe in Koshrak's View...

Keenly aware of the danger, Ko Braenon has ordered several parties to journey to Koshrak's View by varying routes. The PCs are to take the actual text directly to Koshrak's View. Ko Braenon believes that the attacks on adventurers are related, and stresses the danger faced. The group decides to take a ship from Volkraad to Kratishold, where they plan to journey overland to Koshrak's View.

The group takes ship around the coast, making good time. When they pass Stormwrack Keep, hideous laughter is heard from the ruins... However, the ship passes on with no further incident. A couple of days later they into Kratishold - and they are not the only ship at dock. A Lonaraban Hammership is also berthed and the arrival of the PCs ship is noticed, watched by two Red Mandragora from the stern of the Hammership.

Tonrar has a hard time dealing with the presence of the Mandragora in the town, even moreso when he learns that the local priest of Pelor is a Silver Mandragora named Isha'russ. Despite Tonrar's ire, Isha'russ takes them to Aeron Inafel who will provide them with horses to Koshrak's View...

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