

Hurssia

Weekend Game: 13-14 August 2014

Player Characters

- Chryssiana (INdran)
- Galar (Chris)
- Jessica (Neil)
- Branwen (Claire) - Knight champion of Queen Tulia
- Radigund (Buff)
- Randall (Marc)
- Skarra (Neil)
- Corwin (Geoff)

Whiteflight is putting down a coup in his homeland.

Thanks to the intervention of Chryssiana everyone who has been rescued from the Box is *not* a vampire. However the liberated party members must pay off their debt to the temple of Tarrak: Drake, Delator (22 years working at the temple), and Serabok (12 years servitude) all have their dues to pay. Elrood and Edward, who owe the church nothing, are also hanging around in Carrasin. The Box has been handed over to the local archbishop of Tarrak, Sammal, in Carrasin. However, Sebrian is still missing, and this leaves Jessica at something of a loose end. Although Chryssiana says that she will help Jessica, she has other business to attend to – and leaves Jessica with her old companions in Carrasin.

[SESSION THE FIRST: 13/08/2016]

5th Year's End 1166

Following events of the last session, the party are summoned to Nyr'Danr by Branwen. Skarra makes sure that Silanus is also invited. Discussion immediately turns to Aragorn's suspected plan of world devastation – releasing the imprisoned dragon god, Lodus, on his death will usher in a dark and terrible time for the people of Hurssia and the world as Lodus goes on a vengeance-fuelled rampage that no one will likely have the power to stop. So what are our options?

1. **Kill the Green Lady.** She's trapped in Ravenloft. We should sneak into the castle, but we would need magic weapons to destroy the wraiths to escape Ravenloft. As for getting into the castle, we might be able to disguise ourselves as the waggoneers who bring in the food. We know where the Green Lady is inside the castle, after all. The Green Lady told Kael that if we release her then she will help us kill the Aragorn... so is that an option? Won't killing Aragorn just cause us more problems? Aragorn's son, Edlianus, is guarding the Green Lady. Does that make things easier, or does it complicate things even more.
2. **Finding about the link between Lodus and Aragorn.** Silanus suggests talking to Mistranis - head of the guild of wizardry in Nyr'Danr. He's not old enough to remember the assassination of Aragorn long ago... but he might know something.

The party opts to go down the path of investigation first. However, the records around the time of Aragorn's assassination are missing, and Mistranis never looked into them. He doesn't know what happened. He does know that Lodus was imprisoned after the assassination attempt... Mistranis will

continue looking for more information regarding the assassination and he will let us know if he finds anything.

Our attention turns to Sir Morleth, ex-chronomancer and now a paladin. He is based in Nyr'Danr so we arrange to meet him at the Temple of Tarrak in Nyr'Danr. Chryssiana speaks to him about time magic. He says he has forgotten all the necessary information (hit on the head) and he destroyed the only spell book.... however, it seems plain to Skarra that does have the magical powers that we need but choosing not to help us. On reflection, perhaps using chronomancy to travel back in time to observe what happened when Aragorn died may cause more problems than it solves.

Mistranis get back in touch. He has arranged a meeting for us in Hornwick a month from now on 1st Freshyear 1167 with an elf called Warriar. He may be able to help.

28th Year's End 1166

We arrive in Hornwick. Randall hires out the entire tavern... we chuck out all the locals. Randall has to set up his entourage, after all. After some discussion, one public room is set aside for use by the local townsfolk. Most members of the party drink to excess. Tolmart (the local ranger) hasn't heard of this Warriar. Skarra goes out into the snow and casts *liveoak* on the nearest oak tree. Just in case.

1st Freshyear 1167

Radigund, Chryssiana, and Silanus feel a bit worse for wear. Around lunch time an elf arrives with a very large dog (a St Bernard). Branwen greets Warriar. He is wearing a mithril armour, carrying a longsword and wearing a backpack. He is not openly showing any holy symbols. Corwin notices there is frost around his clothing, and hair, which might point to the fact he's been at altitude very recently. The dog unsettles Skarra's cooshee, Manadh. There's something unnatural about it. Chryssiana explains to Warriar why we are here.

Becoming suspicious, Chryssiana excuses herself and casts *true seeing*. Now when she looks at Warriar, she notices that the dog is a disguised dragon of a dull grey colour. Warriar himself doesn't seem to be anything more than he appears to be – a human – but Chryssiana doesn't recognise the type of dragon.

"My employer's employer tell us that we have a problem," says Warriar. He reveals that he has been instructed to help us. He says that there is someone within the Slayer's Brotherhood who will be able to help. His 'employer's employer' is very sympathetic to our cause, and setting up the meeting is without charge. However, the Slayer's Brotherhood themselves will likely require payment for any information. Apparently, one of the original assassins sent against Aragorn is still alive... and the Slayer's Brotherhood know the location of this individual. Warriar confirms that his employer's employer was the one contacted by Mistranis on our behalf.

Warriar says that he will meet us in the city square in Nyr'Danr on 5th Freshyear. After Warriar has left, Chryssiana tells the other what she saw... neither Silanus or Randall can identify it – they think that perhaps it wasn't a dragon after all. If not a dragon then what? A demon? Demon of Frossim seems the most likely given the hoar-frost on Warriar.

Is there any antagonism between Frossim and Lodus? We know that Lodus doesn't see eye-to-eye with any god who doesn't see him as head of all the gods. Gods cannot be killed outright, although demi-gods can. The Green Lady is a demigod and could therefore be killed out-right. But how do you

kill a demi-god? Skarra can't quite remember. Can the church of Tarrak find the answer? Chryssiana says that they need to get them to manifest on the prime material and then get killed by a real god. Issiad, Tarrak, and Allaveer would likely be willing to do in the Green Lady for us.

Randall wants a representative of the Slayer's Guild to visit his representatives in Firth. He wants someone from the Slayer's Guild on retainer.

5th Freshyear 1167

We meet Warriar in the main square in Nyr'Danr, and then go south to a very dodgy part of the city. We reach a small stream (actually an open sewer) and follow it to a half-dead willow tree on a small island. There's a pub here called "The Willow Tree". There are four burning braziers outside with people huddled around in the cold evening air. Warriar leads us in, wishes us good luck and warns us not to drink the beer. "Ask for Arnwalde," he says.

Radigund and Corwin are staying outside. Skarra leaves his dog with them. Everyone else goes in. The pub is filled with suspicious looking characters, and many of the spell casters in the party protect themselves. This place stinks. The air and the clientele are all rather unwholesome. We deliver the message, and are quickly ushered through a hole in the wall behind a booth. We meet with an elf and two extremely ugly hobbits, a red-headed lady (likely human) is draped over the elf's lap. We recognise absolutely none of them.

The elf is Arnwalde. We get right down to business. Most of notice that the red-head is glaring at Randall. Are we sure we don't recognise her? Nope, guess not, Arnwalde says that the information we need is closely guarded. Aragorn would still like her dead. He will do us a deal. He has a problem that he thinks we can solve....

Athmath the White... a wizard. Randall has heard of him – he is an Ardinian wizard noted for being insanely powerful, and living in the Castle of Qaidun. Arnwalde wants this wizard dead, and wants his head as proof. Can Randall remember anything else about him? Well he is a generalist mage... and oh yes, he's called "The White" because he is part dragon. Probably better to lead on that, Randall.

Silanus confronts the girl as to why she seems to hate Randall. She is called Engel. She knows Randall, but he can't remember her. Is she otherworldly? Not a fey, Skarra thinks. What is she? A demonic or diabolic creature. Is she the Green Lady? Does she need to have a supernatural origin to hate Randall?

On the way back, someone tries to mug us. Skarra immediately casts *quicken barkskin* and summons two dire lions that completely rips apart the guy who tries to stop us. Corwin notices that that there are about a dozen others surrounding us. Skarra steps to one side. Silanus makes himself invisible as does Randall.

Summoned creatures turn on Skarra (again!). Chryssiana takes one of the thugs and teleports him back to the Temple of Tarrak. Summoned creatures are eventually destroyed and our assailant are either killed or escape.

Back at the temple, Chryssiana drags the perp into her cellar and ties him up. Then she starts torturing him with *cure minor wounds*. Why is it always INdran?

6th Freshyear 1167

The group convenes to answer the pressing question: are we willing to kill this wizard? We decide the best first step is simply to find out more about him. What does Warrion know? Nothing as it turns out. Skarra suggests going to speak with Bishop Sammal. Sammal hasn't heard of him, so summons chap from Guild of Wizardry. This chap has heard of him. Athmath lives 600 miles away from Carrasin in the middle of the desert. His castle is in an oasis. When the paladinic orders of Ardinia need magical support, this is the guy that they go to. So he's a good egg. Athmath lives with a paladin bodyguard and the people of the castle. The party decide they want to talk to Athmath face-to-face, so they send word to the local temple of Issiad.

7th Freshyear 1167

We send a *sending* spell asking Athmath to meet in a neutral location. We meet in the Griffin in Nyr'Danr, go enter a private room. Athmath seems a very pleasant fellow, darn it. Silanus is invisible and notices another three invisible auras – auras that are not with Athmath. An *Invisibility Purge* reveals one who quickly tries to leave. But there are another two in the room. It's initiative time!

A *darkness* spell is cast and the revealed assassin runs out. Corwin pursues. He misses. Skarra dispels the darkness but not the auras on the other two magical effects. Randall charges after the fleeing figure. Galar tries to yank at the foe with telekinesis but fails. Then Branwen is there next to him. But she can't stop him, neither can Radigund and her whip. This perp is teflon-coated. He flees into the main room and then he disappears.

Skarra casts *faerie fire* and reveals a couple of magical sensors. Scrying devices.... One of them belongs to Athmath, who removes it. But what of the other one? Who else was watching? Arnwolde?

Randall and Branwen check around the bar looking for any invisible foe. Skarra sees him. The elf charges across the room and hits him with his *staff of withering*. He ages the perp ten years and withers away his left leg. The villain stabs out at Skarra and then (when it becomes apparent he cannot escape) stabs himself in the chest. The knife was poisoned, but fortunately, Skarra is immune to poison. We do a quick inventory of the dead man's equipment: there is a magical studded leather armour, magic ring, and magic dagger (the one sticking out of his chest).

The second mysterious scrying sensor has also vanished now. We later learn that this sensor was cast by Athmath's apprentice, Ely, to keep an eye on his master.

Corwin looks around outside. No-one seems to be watching.

We go to the palace to avoid scrying. Athmath believes that Sheik Nafeed might be the person who wants his dead because of a long-standing quarrel. We brainstorm ways to get more information and decide upon a tried and true chestnut.

The traditional speak with dead on the assassin:

- *Who are you working for?* A: I am self employed
- *Does Arnwolde know what the assassin saw and heard in the pub?* A: I don't know
- *Who was responsible for the scrying spell that was not killed by Athmath?* A: I don't know
- *Who knows the name of the surviving assassin that tried to kill Aragorn the White?* A: Arnwolde
- *What is the name of the oldest assassin in the assassin's guild?* A: Calliah Spellborne.

Calliah Spellborne is a girl's name. Is she the assassin that we're looking for? Arnwolde did mention a "she" earlier. We could *legend lore* this woman...

Returning to Athmath, we tell him everything. He's heard of the calamity that may be precipitated by the death of Aragorn. He says that he will find out what his patrons want to do about it, and he'll find the information that we need. Although we may need to do him a favour in advance. Always with the favours.

8th Freshyear 1167

Calliah Spellborne is in a monastery two miles north of Nyr'Danr, but not our Nyr'Danr. It is the Nyr'Danr that is in the Netherweald. Skarra recounts the sorry tale of Bishop Lucius of Tarrak. The year is 1167 in the fifth age of the elves. Back in the third age, the lord high wizard of Hurssia and bishop of church of Tarrak was a cocky chap named Lucius who tried to take on the gods. He nearly defeated them. So Tarrak and Orath got together and created an alternative parallel version of the real world that resembled the third age (the one with no humans in it) and trapped Lucius there.

When Lucius found out what happened he got cross and tried escape. He tried to open a link to Oblivion, but that went badly wrong and the result was that the copy of the Third Age Hurssia was transformed into the Netherweald – a nowhere place found between the real world, Ravenloft, and Tarrak's Realm. The Netherweald is a distorted Hurssia now. It is a place that is designed to stop very powerful wizards from getting in and out, which is obviously why Calliah is hiding there: to escape Aragorn. Everything seems to be pointing to the fact that she is the one we're looking for. Fingers crossed.

There's only likely to be one way in and one way out of the Netherweald – a place called Greyveln. This was a pocket dimension created by a wizard, that has links to virtually every known world. A huge city carved out of Orath's realm, there are strict rules against religious people, although we can all go there. Mistranis can help us.

Chryssiana prays to Tarrak for advice. He has none, but he does give her a plank piece of parchment and ask her to fill in a map of the Netherweald as she goes along.

12th Freshyear 1167

Mistranis gives Silanus a black obsidian coin. He is instructed to take the coin, go round the back of Guild of Wizardry, and give it to Eldrida in the *World's End* pub. She'll take him to her bed room, where has to climb into her wardrobe and await further instructions. Whether this is the way Silanus normally spends his evenings is left unrevealed, and but is our only course of action so we all bundle into Eldrida's bedroom.

The wardrobe proves to be a portal to Greyveln, but getting there is not a straightforward as walking through a doorway. There are riddles! And an exact series of instructions that we must follow. Eldrida warns us not to deviate from the path – although she doesn't say what will happen if we do. Her instructions are as follows:

From the wardrobe, walk down a flight of stairs to a shrine to Orath. Then leave a sacrifice (the gem) and go down a corridor. The next room is shrine to Tarrak. Here we must leave another sacrifice in the shape of magic item (the assassin's armour). Then follow the opposite path, and come to square room with obsidian cylinder in the middle. Enter the room and remove one of the golden eggs (avoiding the dangerous snakes). Finally go to the corner of the opposite wall that's illuminated and

say "Open in the name of Tarrak." Then we can step into Greyveln. Eldrida says that we need to remember all these steps as well as the exit point on Greyveln, so we can find our way back. We must repeat all the steps (including the sacrifices) in reverse.

Thus we begin our quest. First we must solve a riddle in order to enter the dimensional walk to Greyveln. The riddle is : "She's the apple of the priest's eye, for she sings out for the sky, ask her to call, and she will take you down to the throne."

It's a BELL. Skarra finds a bells and ring it. Snakes attack. Sepia Snake Sigil engulfs Chryssiana and no-one else. We dispel it and now the doorway in the wardrobe is open, and there are narrow steps leading down. We follow the instructions that were given to us.

We see about six vipers I here. They attack, but we get the egg say the password and climb up the steps to the door. The door at the end are locked. Go through a couple of locked doors and into a zigzag alleyway. There's a lens above looking at us. Silanus casts Arcane Mark on the floor so we can retrace our steps. Then Chryssiana casts *find the path*, which feels like cheating but we're not complaining.

The path takes us out on a shopping street, near to **Jerink's Weavers**. The people who live here are mostly human. Everything here is made of stone, with very little metal or wood on display. The sky is a grey colour with a very muted light. Language is bastardised version of Tursen (so much like normal Tursen). As we go up the street the shops become larger and more expensive. Eventually, we arrive in a very large square (1000 feet across). There are armed guards on patrol here, but they seem very relaxed. They wear plain blue tabards.

Several interesting buildings border this square: a huge tower with a clock on top (this degree of clockwork craftsmanship is unheard of back in Hurssia). Around the base of tower are more guards wearing a metal armour that we have never seen before: full plate. There is a stone columned building to the left, and behind tower are two stone keeps facing each other and surrounded by a wall. We've only seen one inn so far.

Find the Path leads us to this building – possibly a temple – next to the columned building. It is a temple – a temple to Orath. There are two dwarves wearing the breast plates going through the temple. There are also non dwarves coming and going. We are approached by a dwarf. We tell him we're looking for the portal to the Netherweald. He tells us that we need to speak to Master Eysten. We make an appointment to see Eysten tomorrow, and the dwarf suggests that we go and book a room at the only inn and wait until then.

We go to the inn. The guards come in and talk to us; they search us for contraband. They say that there's some items we shouldn't take into the Netherweald. Two people dressed in black come in and talk to the guards who searched us. They exchange a few words and then they leave.

Asking around we learn that casting magic in the Netherweald is insanely dangerous. It lights up like a beacon and attracts all manner of terrible creatures. Access to all gods except Mallus is impossible. Well, isn't that peachy?

Randall asks about the most powerful non-magical weapons he can find. The inn-keeper says "guns" and then explains what they are. Randall's face lights up like an orphanage on fire.

13th Freshyear 1167

The dwarf we spoke to yesterday arrives with another dwarf. This is Master Eysten. He is the runecaster who can open the gate and send us through to the Netherweald. We will get sent through one at a time at 30 minute intervals. We will arrive at a stone circle in the Neatherweald Grusk mountains. A long way to walk to Nyr'Danr! The gate is 10 miles north of the Halls of Clan Gruskan where another dwarf is able to send us back.

Eysten explains that the link to Oblivion splintered the nature of magic. Using magic attracts shadow creatures that are particularly powerful. Gun and nether-iron will hurt shadow creatures and protect you if you wear armour that is made of it. We can buy some from the exchange. Magic weapons and items act like a beacon. Also a chance that magic won't work. Magical abilities such as wildshape will work to Skarra's relief.

Costs 2500 sa per person per journey, so a total of 40,000 sa there and back. Kael will not be accompanying us as he is bonded to magic sword and cannot leave it.

Skarra needs to buy

40 Nether-iron arrows (240sa)

New wood shield (7sa)

Nether-iron scimitar (315sa)

= 562sa

Travel Pot

- Chryssiana: 3800 sa
- Silanus: 12,200
- Skarra: 10,000
- Radigund: 5000
- Randall: 5000
- Branwen: 4000

We check in the magical items to be kept safely

Turn the return 20,000 into 8 gems each worth 2500 sa. That way we'll have the return cash on hand and not get trapped in the Netherweald.

After all the shopping and preparation we head through to a court yard and to another tower. We notice there are gargoyles guarding the roof. We step onto the giant rune one at a time while the runecaster chisels our name into it. Galar goes first. Then Corwin. But we all arrive safely.

[SESSION THE SECOND: 14/08/2016]

It's now the early evening and we press on through the snow. It's ten miles to Clan Gruskan. It's cold, and Branwen is starting to suffer. In the dark we see a pack of feral mountain lions in the darkness. Corwin walks forward bravely to attempt to calm them. Skarra moves forward to assist him. Skarra and Corwin suggest retreating up the path now and not confronting them. But to go around them we need to climb up the escarpment or down into a gully.

Silanus sends up his familiar to scout out the terrain. Vos the familiar indicates that the way up is much more difficult, so we decide to head down into the gully. After some pantomime with the rope we all climb down into the gully.

A little further along we reach an 80 foot waterfall. Skarra turns into an ape and climbs up with the dog and the rope. He holds the rope and Radigund climbs up. Then Corwin climbs up, and falls after about 30 feet. Skarra in ape form hauls up Branwen. Randall climbs. Everyone gets to the top. Skarra remains as an ape

No one apart from Silanus sees the door in the rock face not too far away. Skarra drops the ape form and then we approach the door. Galar knocks on the door. He convinces the dwarves to let us in with his winning personality. We go in down a corridor, there is a balcony above filled with dwarves training muskets on us. Galar explains to our hosts why we have come, as we go down to an underground city. It finally begins to warm up and we are offered something to eat. A priest can be called to tend to any wounds (presumably without magic), and then we can arrange the onward trip tomorrow.

14th Freshyear 1167

We meet the runecaster Master Narvin. He's the one who will help us get back to Greyveln when our mission here is done. We are told that there is an underground canal that runs from Clan Fallador (all the way to Lanmere). However, Clan Fallador is 22 miles away, and the journey will be treacherous. Narvin suggests waiting until the Spring, but we don't have that sort of time. We decide to tough it out now.

We buy provisions to head over the mountains now. Cold weather gear, climbing gear, iron rations 45 sa)

Skarra Buys

- Tindertwigs (12) = 12 sa
- Cold weather outfit (1) = 8 sa
- Climber's kit (1) = 80 sa
- Iron Rations (14 days) = 7 sa
- Coal to last the journey (40 lbs)

Randall buys a pistol, and also tool up with other weapons. Then we head off over the mountains. It's an uneventful day then we camp. We establish the watch order:

Branwen and Skarra
Corwin and Randall
Radigund and Chryssiana
Silanus and Galar

15th Freshyear 1167

We make three miles during the course of the day and encounter nothing untoward – presumably because all the dangerous monsters are too canny to be seen out in this abysmal weather.

At night – during Corwin and Randall's watch – Corwin spots movement of a figures in the dark, about 50 feet from his companion. Randall has also seen a figure, but not the same one. There seems to be quite a few in the dark. They begin to wake everyone up.

It's goblins! Goblins in the dark! Corwin fires and hits one of them. Then there is a terrible roar, as they open fire with their weapons. Goblins with guns! A gun back fires killing one of the goblins. And

another one. Battle is joined. Skarra shoots an arrow and sends his dog into attack. Silanus tosses a grenade... bang on target.

During the fight, some goblins on Silanus explode. All five die. We're not entirely sure why. Galar goes down to gunfire – presumably goblin gunfire. Corwin who charged the goblin leader also goes down. Skarra sends Manadh to help Corwin and takes down one of the eight. Eventually we are victorious and get on with the important business of looting.

When we loot we find: 44 silver aruns, studded leather armour, morningstars, and muskets (five of good quality). One nether iron breastplate, nether iron morning star and masterwork musket.

Overnight we rest for longer and Skarra tends to the wounded.

16th Freshyear 1167

Back on the trail the following day, we see something stuck 30 feet up in a rock face. Radigund climbs up to find a dwarf in a sack. He has been attacked by goblins and then left in a most undignified position. Radigund unties him. He climbs down and introduces himself as Gunther. He was part of a group escorting an elf to Clan Gruskan. Looks as though the elf and the other dwarves were killed by goblins. Who was the elf? Gunther says he was called Toolin, and was probably going to use the gate to Greyvelm. Gunther opts to stay with us.

17th Freshyear 1167

We continue to travel with dwarf, although we are suspicious that he is hiding something from us.

18th Freshyear 1167

Toward the end of the day, the path begins to ascend. There's a good bit of climbing.

19th Freshyear 1167

And now we descend. Skarra takes on ape form again to help his companion. There's a lot of safety ropes. Randall's harness breaks, but Skarra manages to grab him. At the bottom Gunther collapses from exposure. Before we help him we search him, but we find nothing incriminating. We do notice that he is wearing clothes of suspiciously good quality.

20th Freshyear 1167

Gunther recovers. We walk a further three miles.

21st Freshyear 1167

And a further three miles.

22st Freshyear 1167

Just after breakfast, Galar looks down and sees something odd. There's a massive dark patch in the snow. Gunther says that is where he and his fellow dwarves were ambushed by the goblins. Corwin thinks that he's lying! Vos sees evidence of goblin, dwarf, and elf bodies.

Gunther comes clean and reveals he's the clan chief's nephew. On the evening of the 22nd we finally arrive at Clan Fallador. As a reward for rescuing Gunther we get free transport for Lanmere.

[NEXT SESSION: IN TWO YEARS]