

Of Elves and Goblins and Such and So-forth

(805-3: Winter)

Cast of Characters:

Cayenne ~ Human Male Warrior (*Leader*)
Avatrice ~ Human Female Mind Mage (*Mil Scientist*)
Gavin's Hill ~ Human Male Celestial Shadow (*Scribe*)
Shiraz Carmona ~ Human Female Earth Mage
Ruby ~ Halfling Female Thief E'n'E
Elisa ~ Dwarven Female Celestial Dark Mage
Sikhura (& kitten) ~ Halfling Male Celestial Solar Mage

The Whys and Wherefores:

We were summoned from our training and duties at short notice by an urgent missive issued by the Guild.

Arriving at the designated meeting room the eager band of adventurers awaited with trepidation the news that was of such great import to call together our fellowship.

After an anxious wait chattering ceased as footsteps approached. Entered a boy of no more than eighteen years dressed as a guild security officer as a whelp dresses as knight, wooden sword and all.

It was with a mixture of bemusement and mirth that we listened to his first mission briefing. However while the messenger was taken lightly the message itself was heavy with dread.

It appears that those brave warriors who fought the mindless hoards in Brastor and had succumbed to wounds were again being preyed upon as they recuperated in the healing springs of Ruby Waters.

Ruby Waters being an elvish village near a lake of pure water, fed from a spring of such clarity that it greatly facilitated the healing process. Located two weeks ride south-west of the Guild via a single road in otherwise inaccessible forested hill country.

Goblins had taken to raiding the road to Ruby Waters cutting off all supplies to the isolated village save those that could be flown in. Grim news indeed!

We were charged by the authority of the Guild in the person of a hairless youth to put a stop to these reprehensible acts and divine whether or not the Dark Mistress had a hand in it.

It was an undertaking that all were keen to accept and see done!

A Chronological Recounting of all that Passed:

Frost the 8th:

It was on the very day that we heard of the terrible events in Ruby Waters that we made haste to the Master of Shadows to obtain magical wings that we might face these miscreants as quickly as possible.

A few short hours later we espied the hills and soon the road that the goblins infested like fleas on a dog.

Diving for an area that seemed a likely location for bandit camps we landed as a well trained unit, combat ready.

After securing the perimeter we set up our base camp against a rocky cliff in those forsaken hills.

The weather was for the most part clear during our time in the wilderness with the trees bared by cold and the ground a mixture of frost and mud.

Frost the 9th:

As soon as there was light enough we set about tracking down goblin sign or spool.

It was not long before our eagle-eyed trackers found the otherwise imperceptible marks of goblin passing.

It was decided to send our Halfling thief, Ruby, ahead to scout the area under the protection of invisibility magics.

After an hour or so when she failed to return we made haste along the narrow path fearing the worst.

After a time we came across a campfire arrogantly burning on a hilltop. Moving closer a figure could be seen in its light with another bundle squirming at its side.

Without a second thought we rushed into the camp and overpowered the startled goblin with ease, rescuing our companion from the would-be dinner pot.

In victory we carried our captive back to our camp, bound him to a tree and slept the sleep of heroes.

Frost the 10th:

After an uneventful night and delicious breakfast that morn we set about questioning our captive in order to discover any link with the Lady Who Shall Not Be Named as per our Guild orders.

The creature was only too ready to confess his association with the Undead Queen and so seal his fate. He also made mention of others that would come after him and so an ambush was prepared and scouts dispatched.

It was Shiraz who flying on an enchanted carpet spotted three more goblins near the first's campsite.

Need-less-to-say we were eager to find out more about our new foe and so questioned the goblin at further length. Unfortunately the fragile creature expired during the conversation and, much to our surprise, exploded!

We can only imagine that the goblin was some sort of suicide scout that was trained to explode if caught. Indeed the goblin shrapnel infected Cayenne, who just happened to be near the creature when he blew himself up, with some sort of wasting disease.

However no slight chill would keep our leader from the fray and so we broke camp after burning the cursed things corpse and marched towards the goblin's campsite.

The creatures had gone by the time that we arrived and as it was growing dark we made camp.

Frost the 11th:

It was a small matter for our rangers to pick up the trail of the goblin party and for the rest of the day we followed them deeper into the barren hills.

Frost the 12th:

We continued to follow the trail and it was close to noon when we came across a small clearing covered in goblin footprints visible to even the untrained eye.

With a wealth of trails to follow we were considering our options when from the north a spire of smoke was seen.

Shiraz made haste in that direction on her carpet and reported seeing a burning wagon, bodies and goblin guards.

With light growing dim in the early winter eve we had to make camp and continue towards the ambush site in the morn.

Frost the 13th:

We came across the crime scene late in the afternoon with no sign of the perpetrators.

It was our solemn duty to respectfully bury the bodies of those that had fallen at the hands of the foul goblins.

Sorrow turned to thoughts of revenge as our trackers once again proved their worth and we struck off in pursuit.

Frost the 14th:

We followed the new trail of six goblins and eight horses (the rangers could tell you which had lost a shoe but the difference in smudges escaped me) and after a while the trail split as the bandits went in three separate directions.

Obviously we followed the trail of the largest group.

After an hours travel that we scaled a rise and came across a fortified encampment of at least fifty goblins all working with some unknown purpose.

It was while we were surveying the scene below that we were reminded that this was their home not ours.

Arrows flew from all directions and confusion reigned as unseen attackers fired from our flanks and rear. I myself was particularly targeted as I was shrouded in invisibility enchantments at the time which the goblins took as a sign of my power and influence.

We escaped both worse-for-wear and wiser after bravely charging the concealed foe. I turns out that the goblins not only shared our ability to turn invisible but could also see those so obscured.

The She Demon of Darkness had rewarded her minions well indeed!

Frost the 15th:

We took the opportunity to travel to the healing springs of Ruby Waters to recuperate, passing through the elvish village on the way.

Cayenne and I were required to stay in the healing mission by the kind monks that ran the hospital for the King's men.

Our leader was recovering from the goblin infestation while your loyal scribe rested after being wounded in the previous day's battle.

Frost the 16th:

Feeling much improved after the gentile care of the monks we spent the day enjoying the hospitality of the elves.

Sikhura and I prepared a gift basket for the monks of the healing mission while the others did business in the village, selling herbs that we had found on the suicide goblin to a wise elven herbalist.

Frost the 17th:

We headed back down the road into the hills when we were again ambushed by a goblin mob, just as we had planned.

We charged to attack and bowled the creatures over with our ferocity and daring.

However we again had to return to the kindly monks as Cayenne had acquired some sort of dark curse.

Frost the 18th to 20th:

Here we waited while our leader recovered.

While it was annoying not to be out in the cold wilderness hunting down goblin bandits we were able to pass the time in the company of a troop of Church Knights who regaled us with tales of the bravery and horrors that they had experienced in Brastor.

With such men as these on our side how can we fail against The Mistresses Mindless Minions?

Frost the 21st:

Refreshed from our rest and eager to return to the hunt we made our way back to the goblin fortress.

Keeping a respectful distance from their encampment we devised a plan to lure them out and full upon them. The advice of our military scientist Avatrice was, as always, invaluable.

Frost the 22nd:

Cayenne volunteered to approach the camp and snipe the goblin leaders with his trusty crossbow in order that they might blindly rush after him and into our trap.

After preparing the ground our brave leader departed on his solo mission.

Only to return an hour later in great haste and as pale as the moon.

It transpired that Cayenne had been able to creep up onto a rise over looking the fort and watched the proceedings below.

Goblins, at the direction of a goblin mage, were loading barrels of an unknown substance onto a wagon with great care. Once loaded the mage would then cast an invisibility enchantment upon the barrels.

It was then that our leader put the plan into effect and shot at a creature working on the wagon. As accurate as always the quarrel struck home causing the goblin to drop the flask that he had been so carefully carrying.

Even before the jug had hit the ground the air was filled with the panicked shrieks of three score goblins. It shattered spilling a black tar like goo of the foulest creation.

From the wagon a corruption spread, burning across the ground at great speed. All whom this darkness touched were slain with neither beast nor plant spared.

From this one small flask an area the size of a small town was devastated. We approached to examine the aftermath and through divination magics learnt that the horrible effects were toxic in nature, created no doubt by The Bitch of Blight.

The goblins (those that survived) had fled and the wagon was nowhere to be seen. We soon tracked it down and upon inspection discovered the barrels still on board and invisible to the eye.

I had decided that the evil substance, that I coined 'Death Goo', was intended for the healing springs of Ruby Waters and set out to warn them immediately.

The others milled about the wagon for a bit before following a few trails that led nowhere then late in the day decided to follow me.

At Ruby Waters I rushed to inform the elves of the impending danger speaking to their herbalist who was most helpful. He even offered me an antidote that he had made from the goblins herbs.

Shiraz had informed the monks at the springs themselves however they seemed not to understand the gravity of the situation, poor dears.

Frost the 23rd:

We travelled to the headwaters to guard against attack when five shadow winged figures were seen flying from the lake towards the goblin encampment (is there no end to their dark powers?).

While looking for a vantage point to better spot any incoming attacker I was assaulted from behind and knocked unconscious.

It was my turn to be rescued from a goblin camp as I came-to to see the concerned faces of my companions in the campfire light, around me lay the corpses of my attackers.

Frost the 24th:

With such a weapon as the Death Goo in the hands of primitive goblins and the fate of the very struggle against the undead at stake it was decided to report back to the Guild with our news.

With the help of the monks we returned to Seagate and told our tale to the powers that be.

When we showed a sample of the Death Goo to the elders even they blanched at the foul substance. We were told in no uncertain terms to destroy all of this abomination and were assured that the sample would be safely stored in the Guild vaults.

With the blessings of the Guild we returned to the frozen hills and prepared for the final show-down.

Frost the 25th:

It was a no problem for our trackers and scouts to hunt down the remaining goblins and follow them to their lairs.

The largest of the two goblin camps was obviously a diversion meant to fool us into attacking their supposed hideout. We convinced the elves of Ruby Waters that they should assault this camp while we took on the elite goblins of the true headquarters.

Our initial observations showed a heavily fortified camp surrounded by palisades and spikes. Beyond elite goblin pikemen guarded yet more barrels, presumably of Death Goo, while archers patrolled the perimeter.

Of the Assault and the Heroics that Followed:

As part of our carefully devised assault plan we had prepared a siege ramp to lay across the barricade as we stormed the goblins last stronghold.

Making no attempt to hide our intentions we charged with yells and battle cries from the tree line. The goblin defenders rushed to the nearest barricade and lowered a wall of pikes or shot a hail of arrows. All was going to plan.

Shiraz summoned from the earth great hands of rock that entrapped the entire goblin front line, squeezed tight like a gold coin in a dwarven palm.

With the closest barricade blocked by our mages powerful magics the party, for the most part, moved around to the next. Shiraz stayed back to cast other spells, invaluable during the following combat.

Meanwhile I worked my way through the forts protective foliage, over the barricade itself then through the camp's tents to engage the goblin mages in hand-to-hand combat.

The main force had by this time scaled the second barricade using the siege ramp and had knocked aside several of the remaining goblins while being pelted with arrows for their troubles.

The goblins had not been idle however. Two goblin mages had been casting shadow wings onto their companions (and mistakenly onto Cayenne as well) in order that they might take flasks of Death Goo in a last ditch attack on the holy springs.

One such creature was bravely wrestled to the ground by Ruby while our other Halfling Sikhura knocked a pike wielding goblin out. However one winged gobo escaped and was immediately pursued by Cayenne on his own fortuitous wings.

Knowing that all was lost the surviving goblins fled either on foot or with magical wings. However they were not to leave lightly.

One of the flying creatures began to bomb the barrels of goo with rocks causing them to splinter and threaten to spill their deadly contents. Like rats fleeing torch-light that camp was emptied of all but yours truly.

As I had the now dubious honour of being the holder of the elvish antidote I felt compelled to do what I could to save the forest from the fate of the Death Goo. I had seen what one flask had been able to do and could not imagine the devastation that four barrels of the unholy liquid would unleash. As escape from such a torrent seemed impossible anyway I rushed forward, vial in hand, and doused the bubbling corruption with the blessed potion, then I ran with the others.

Our efforts were not in vain, Cayenne had stopped the other goblin while we had diffused the remaining Death Goo and defeated the bandits.

Epilogue:

Back at the elven village we were treated as heroes where once some of our number had been shunned. The elves themselves had dispatched the defenders of the false camp with ease and were celebrating their victory when we returned to tell them of ours.

Do not let it be said that elves do not know how to party...

It was with heavy heart that we left our new-found friends and started on the long, if uneventful, journey back to Seagate. We arrived at the turning of the month.

I myself was sorry that Guild meetings only occur once every three months for surely our brave band could have completed two more adventures by then! Ah well, we were forced to spend the intervening months retelling our tale to the patrons of the local inns and brothels, in order to improve the reputation of the Guild of-course.

It was my eminent pleasure and distinct honour to report our deeds to a hushed audience at the Guild meeting where our efforts were received with warm applause and wide praise.