

The Curse of Ratho....

(Worts and Boyles)

Ah yet another guild meeting, which means yet another end to training! This time I was quite excited as I knew exactly what I was going to be doing, trying to get Ken (the sentient plant our party bought back last session, sadly deceased) home and resurrected. Galland and I were pointed out to a guild meeting room. Great another mission with pointy ears!

Also present in the room was: Phaeton, a human solar mage whom I had met before. I'd actually heard a bit about Phaeton around the guild, it seems that he has some fear of woman?! Hmmm how unnatural! Next we have Jedburg, clad in armour, A fighter of some kind perhaps?? Sitting in a corner, munching on... Munching on something was Deadwood, he introduced himself as a necromancer, for that I have no doubt! Galland, the overly annoying elf introduced himself to the others as an illusionist! Hah! The only illusion is that he IS an illusionist! Tuning a harp or some instrument in the corner was Brigetta, a member of the newer Bardic college, she spoke with a heavy accent and tripped over her dwarven somewhat but appeared to be tolerable. While Father Rowan was running late Deadwood took the opportunity to explain that he was pacted, and should he die we need only sprinkle some powder over him, the result being the loss of more of his soul, but him coming back to life!! Why did I ever leave the farm to pursue a career in magic?!

He asked us not to tell this to Father Rowan for some reason, there seemed to be a hint of fear in his eyes, speak of the devil a few moments later Father Rowan entered and the Guild representative calmed us all down. It appeared through Speak with the Dead rituals the guild had narrowed down an area where Kens home could be, it was only an area of about 150 miles!! As well as the return of Ken they wanted us to gather information on the surrounding area for diplomatic reasons, and if all possibly set up some sort of political communications. For all this the guild would pay 300sp after tax, as well as up to 40,000sp for information gathered.

With that sorted out Father Rowan was elected party both Party Leader and Military Scientist, while I asked to scribe. Phaeton didn't look at all happy at that and gave a bit of a scowl away, I asked him if he would Co-scribe in case I couldn't write or in case I got too drunk. He said he was going to anyway but it was nice for the offer. A bag of money, around 3000sp was forwarded to the party which Deadwood grabbed hold of and tried to leave, Brigetta barred his way and eventually the money was handed to me for safe keeping. (Mental note: Don't do anything blatant in front of Brigetta!) Father Rowan distributed Holy water vials to the best throwers in the party. Phaeton and I left to check on ken, the guild Herbalist explained to me where to pour the preservative that would keep the body until it could be resurrected.

Meanwhile most of us were heading back to the meeting room, with a lot of warm clothing, as the region we were about to explore was a mountain, it seemed appropriate. When I got back there a heated discussion was going on about how to get there, something seemed to nag at my mind but I couldn't quite place it. Well not till Galland bought Stonewind in with him! Stonewind was an Airmage we met before and it appeared he was travelling back to the encampment of the Children of the traveller and was happy to provide us with our flying needs to there. Phaeton walked in just before this and said he'd appreciate it as it means he would have had to cast wings on us, and we wouldn't have to worry about landing!

Six days of travelling, with nothing but the sea of grass underneath us! I'm beginning to think I'm in the wrong college, what with all the flying I've been doing. Sometime in the evening we touched down, the camp itself was inhabited by about 150 odd people, Tribe Father Uto came up and greeted Stonewind home, and looked quite happy to see the barbarian and invited us all to stay and have dinner. During dinner a white based milk drink was bought out, it was quite weak and I was not the only one to think so! Phaeton however could only manage a sip before spitting it out. No alcohol, no woman, the man must be ready to explode?!

The Barbarians then bought out a black drink called Kumis, comments were exchange that we probably couldn't stomach the stuff, Jedburg offered that I could drink ten and I quite agreed! If theres one thing I'm not risking on this mission is the integrity of the dwarven ability to drink! Of course I also had the money in a pouch sooner than you could cast a quicken spell! I maybe sober, but I'm not stupid. [Note for the following morning: there should be 40 silvers in that pouch!] The drink also had some sort of mushroom in it, must be a flavoring agent, the first 4 were no problem although I felt a little twang. The next couple totally reinforced this twang and bought it up to mild confusion, I had to go on! The Eight went down and I was starting to feel dizzy, but by the Gods its our reputation! The ninth went down and I started to feel incoherent, I think, I can't actually remember! **COULD THE BIRDS AND THE GRASS PLEASE BE SO KIND AS TO KEEP IT DOWN!!!!** Some of use have headaches you know! I think it was on the tenth I fell down unconscious, it seems a vague nodding of my head, which I must admit now was my own doing told everyone I was going for the tenth!

Phaeton!!! If your going to shout can you do it over there!! Oh gods, even my soft leather is screaming at me! One of the fellow tribeswomen came up to me and offered me another drink, and said it would help. I drank it and you know what, it did! At least everyone has stopped breathing so loud! I asked her if she could make me a pouch of this, explaining that I might need it later on! Apparently overnight I had taken a trip, so that dream as a boy had been real! The mushroom apparently transferred the souls for a short time between the two people who had taken the drink. I wondered what the possibilities were for introducing this to the elven water supply at the guild?! Better not.

It was the 7th, I'm pretty sure, yep it is! Still a bit shaky though, if I'm rambling stop me! No I mean it. Stonewind patted me on the back and complemented me, before he cast on us and gave out a hearty laugh! **GODS THE PAIN!** Obviously that hang over cure wasn't 100% effective. We set off towards the where the great wall touched the Inland sea, about noon we set down for a quick bite, and besides, Stonewinds windwalkings had worn off, now it was down to star wings again. Brief moments of flying with Eidolon flashed before my eyes, they say that happens before trouble?! Off in the distance we could see a small fort and some Griffon Riders, the beauty, the grace, the power. I was captivated but the Griffons, one day I must quest for one, I have heard they are intelligent so it would not be to look for a possession, so much as a companion! It appeared he had arrived at small garrison, once the guards had determined we weren't here to invade the country we we're allowed to enter, and that we did. The inn was small and dinky, so obviously not many if any travellers come through here, we ordered some food and drink while Father Rowan organized a couple of rooms.

By now Brigetta had decided to begin our torture by entertaining the locals, Oh well not to matter, I had decided to try the local brew. The ale was to say, complete crap! A bull could have produced something slightly more tasteful! However I hadn't tried the Saki yet, it was served in a small glass, so I thought what the heck, threw on back and coughed slightly! This stuff was

harsh on the throat! Like Dwarven bread that's been cooked wrong, or right for that matter. It was stomachable though and soon the money was on the table. [note: 25 silvers, one for each glass, it better be there later!] The first 18 weren't a problem, the 19th I missed altogether, oops, the 23rd also appeared to be troublesome, but that could have been the tears in my eyes! I managed the whole 25 though (with the 2 spilt ones being replaced), followed by a lie down! Morning again and a dull thud in the back, side and front of my eyes, ears, beard and head! I took another large swig of the hangover cure, although it only really fixed the hoarseness of my throat.

Two more days of travelling [that makes it the 9th] and the only noticeable thing is that Father Rowan has called a familiar, and the ground has begun to noticeably make a transition from grass to tundra.

The tenth arrived and we finally saw the outskirts of the mountains and also heard of deliciously roasted hot meat running below us! Well ok it was roasted YET but it would be! I think the idea of a good meal appealed to us all. I got there just in time to see Deadwood eating the heart, what a vile thing he is! Apparently there was also something else so Brigetta took to the skies, still having duration in her wings, and returned with eight Snow Goblins in tow. Apparently their leader wanted wings from us gods! Phaeton obliged and I also stuck a cursed lesser on him. Wot? You thought I was a completely nice HIHO sort of Dwarf, no, not really! Both Father Rowan and Phaeton were using the old "Glowing hands to fool the yokels" trick, everything we did impressed these saplings, suckers. We asked them about any possible dangers but you know goblins "Oh if I tripped over I'd kill my self!" so it was the usual Wolves, direwolves etc, the only thing on the list to scare me was Yetis! That I don't want to meet.

We set off again and by the 15th had reached the mountains. We got higher and higher I didn't mind too much but that bastard Deadwood keeps complaining! Why don't we just let him live up to his name and burn him?! By the 16th when we actually got anywhere I felt like swapping the restoratives with ale and seeing wot would happen to Phaeton? Perhaps the shock to his and our systems would be too much! Later in the day Phaeton spotted a cloudy dome, covered in snow and said it didn't look natural. Father Rowan once we all got into a place to see it sent his Hawk to have a look, when it returned he said it was warm! We spent most of the day just D/Aing the dome and looking at it with Witchsights, but discovered nothing useful.

The 17th now and we were up a cliff without a troll. Apparently Deadwood had been keeping snakes on his personage, around his trousers, I don't think I've ever laughed so much at the humor we were spreading round, Phaeton left rather hurriedly. There was a commotion with Deadwood trying to flavour the morning breakfast but he was stopped. It was determined the cloud was caused by a rank 20 Binding cloud and it looks like Father Rowan would have to ferry us down, one by one. He didn't look happy. By the time I got down, around third Others were getting out of their clothes and rightly so! It was boiling down here, in fact it was a jungle!

Time to put the talents to work, there were some monkeys which might have seen something, nope, it turns out monkeys are almost as smart as Grass to talk to! Almost! Brigetta was singing something, she said it'll help soothe the beasts. Apparently 2 monkeys just died by Deadwood's hand, vile. Oh well, at least trees can be somewhat better to talk to, trying them the only suggestion they could give was to go down. We set off but this jungle was thick and by lunchtime we hadn't gotten far, we carried on and by night were exhausted! We made a small island by cutting a trench through a part of the river bank, this was to try and stop all the land based insects from bothering us. We travelled for another 2 days finding out some sort of metal

was contaminating the water and also putting up with more of Deadwoods whining!!

On the 21st we finally found signs of life, footprints near the riverbank. They tracked back to a path which we followed until it came to a crossroad. 2 figures were spotted with the witchsights, but Apparently they also saw us too and tried to make a run. Jedburg charged one while Father Rowan put up a wall of thorns, blocking off the others escape. Needless to say within minutes it was all over. Examining the prisoners we discovered something curious, the natives don't actually have colleges, instead they have innate talents, the 2 captives had witchsight at a respectable rank. Around dusk, although its hard to tell time in this place, a hunting party turned up, Brigetta thankfully had means to communicate and their leader Broll introduced himself, he was wondering what we were doing here, so Father Rowan told Brigetta what to tell him, that we were here with a Kenwort body and that we were retuning it, Broll however seemed quite interested in the fact we may have killed it and how we did, I don't think I'm going to like him!

Broll suggested we go back and have something to eat, since a wall of thorns was blocking the way he suggested by stream, Brigetta however said Father Rowan can get rid of it which he did scowling all the time. After we were walking Father Rowan started shouting at her telling her that he was the leader here, not her and that he was annoyed because all the communications had to go through her. Personally I think that was enough but he cast something and caused her pain, that was probably when I had my first doubts. We arrived at Fort Seine, a military camp more than it was a village, infact it was only really a tower built up off the ground. D/aings approved quite a lot of diverse talents from many colleges, also everyone here was infected with that background poison, but I guess they've built up a resistance.

As we sat down and ate, Broll bought out a speaking stick in order that we could all communicate. He formally welcomed us to Naud (The valley) and then explained about the war that they are involved with concerning the Worts (the Plants) and how they wouldn't stop until they are all dead. Maybe is was the food but I was feeling a little sick and decided to excuse myself, actually I was hoping to catch the glimpse of a kenvine and try and talk. After a few moments I started back up the ladder and met the others coming out, they were getting a Priestess to summon a god called Ratho. We headed up to the roof to do just that. The Priestess began some ritual by lighting incense and after some chanting a cry of "Ratho Comes!" shrieked from her lips, the air begun to crackle and it might have been me but things got a wee bit darker. "WHO SUMMONED ME?" The voice boomed, Most of us including me pointed to the Priestess and in a voice of Guild Innocence said "She did!", Course someone I think it was broll said that he was being summoned on behalf of us or some such. The Priestess dropped to the ground and Father Rowan tried to save her but bounced of the now formed whirling wind!

Ratho explained, in that "Matter of fact I am a god!" Tone that he had created the valley and the Boyles and that the worts had only been here under the ice and that they should be destroyed. Some attempt was tried to reason with him but he said we had 9 days to take care of things or else! ERK!

There was some concern over the Priestess Nyrilla, I doubted whether she'd be dead for long. Broll then showed us a map of where the Worts usually are. Father Rowan the suggested

we go outside, it appeared some of us, me included had been burnt by the whirlwind vortex when it tried to inspect us but Father Rowan did not believe it to be a god of any sort, but some sort of hoax. We started off into the nearby forest, hoping to make some contact with the worts, we didn't have to wait

long, one found us. We explained about Ken, why we were here and why Arran should trust us. He relayed a message to a superior (They are quite organized!) Who sent a parrot back with the message of our arrival. We wondered about ideas and places to send them when I mentioned the sea of grass was where we found Ken and Brigetta suggested we move them all there! Both Phaeton and I objected, me, mainly because I saw the damage ken could do but Apparently that only happened if the plant was untrained.

After a while the Parrot returned and we were asked to walk along a path, we did and came across another clearing with two worts there. We told them that we were in need of sleep, they asked if you could wait for others to turn up to carry us which we did. Nearly 3 full days later we came to some farmland, as the worts slept through the day we did as well and by night we were finally reaching another one of those entrance spots. A huge ten foot Wort appeared and ferried us down to the bottom, I went first and put on a lamp, for those less fortunates who can't see in the dark. We all headed off down a fairly long tunnel, which eventually opened up into a room, there must have been at least 20 Worts there!

Kell, the Ruler of Throna welcomed us but we rather needed to get straight to the point. Kell told us they had been in the valley for as long as he can remember, between 300-400 years. Initially they thought the humans were only animal but they proved to be intelligent and they also started fighting the worts. Both Father Rowan and Brigetta started to do their Rituals while Phaeton and I set off to enquire about Ken, unfortunately they didn't have healers of sufficient rank so I went back to where the rituals were being conducted. Father Rowan got an answer to his "Whats in the center of the lake" -

Underwater, a disk of bronze, set in the ground
Before it stands seven figures, humanoid forms blurred by water
One raises its hands, speaks words of magic and works mighty Art
The disk disappears with a violent swirl of water
When the turbulence clears, only six figures remain.

Brigettas made less sense as it was composed of various parts of Wort history. The Worts also mentioned the Boyles on the lake rafts. When Phaeton got back he had to tend to a delicate wound Deadwood had gotten. It appears one of the many bugs Deadwood keeps bit him on the sensitives! We all made comments wondering Phaeton was going to suck out the poison? After all we all know what the healers are like! To make matters worse Brigetta cast Ventriloquism on it and we were in gales of laughter and joking. Father Rowan thought he was possessed so he Hellfired the effected organ. The worts put up Walls around us but the Organ still spoke so father Rowan Hellfired it again and again! three hellfires! it appeared that Deadwood had taken a healing potion though.

It was actually Brigetta aggravating things, finally Deadwood put a wall of thorns around himself, Brigetta admitted to her fun and that was when Deadwood counterspelled the wall of bones and began to cast at Brigetta but she managed to get a spell off to distract him. Jedburg then sapped poor Deadwood.

The worts dropped the walls and informed us they were ready. Jorel ferried us up there while we rested, we were north of the lake and there was a river to the west of us, we decided to setup camp here. All of a sudden there was a scream from Brigetta, over night a centipede had crawled into her bedding and bitten her on the Armpit, most of it except the head had been removed. I cast a trolls skin to help with any damage. Phaeton began to remove the head when the armpit started to moan, Father Rowan again began to cast thinking it was possessed now but Brigetta threatened him with death should he cast that hellfire, he backed down. Deadwood offered her a waters of healing but she didn't accept it.

We flew over the lake, there wasn't any tense moments except when a very powerful fireball nearly hit me, luckily I resisted. We all landed in the water and swam to the shore to the fort, three figures were spotted Unseen so Deadwood calls out "Hello!!", they knew we were there and called out a greeting in reply.

That evening we started talking to Zanaris, D/Aing a few people turned up a curious mix, some had no MA, some did. We learnt that 2 others had also come here before and forced themselves upon 2 women here, it was Garlick and Orion the bastards! After some discussion it was decided that they had come here for a kenwort specifically and that Ken had gotten away. Father Rowan decided we should go take a look at what's sitting in the middle of the lake so soon after we were all 2 a piece in boats rowing towards the middle. Once we got there people were lined up to meet us, Babies, the Elderly, the half clad. Phaeton looked like a Firemage! Flame red. We were each shown quarters, oh great Galland as a roommate! Shortly after a woman with a bowl of steaming water came in, she started to pull out a razor and that's when I pulled out my axe! NO WAY was someone going to cut this beard! She seemed slightly upset but groomed me anyway, not touching the beard.

We were actually being readied for a dinner ceremony, and unfortunately I missed most of the conversation, so just settled by D/Aing everyone. Apparently during the conversations someone had let something slip about some twins, or so I'm told. We headed to the room where the two ladies had been killed and father Rowan and Deadwood performs some rituals. We went back to dinner, where Phaeton seemed to leave with a woman and Brigetta!

About 3am, during my watch I noticed something, not being sure I waited and heard something again. I woke Galland and got him to wake everyone up while I looked. They were trying to cut us adrift! Jedburg was out fairly fast and we both took to the people cutting the ropes. After a short battle in which everyone had some fun we gathered up Zanaris and his stragglers, Apparently the women and children had been sent off raft for fear we would kill everyone. Brigetta also seemed to be talking in a silly tongue. The Speaking stick was bought forward and we took it from them, activating it confirmed they wanted us gone. Zanaris told us where to find the twins and left.

Our guide was pathetic, and quite scared of us. After a while of paddling in the canoes we acquired we reached the twins raft, spotting one of the twins, totally naked Brigetta commented on how "Blessed" he was! When we finally got to talk to Kleta he said he was sick of the valley, he was evading questions about the curse. After a round of banter Phaeton was feeling quite heated up, Kleta offered him something to drink, Apparently the drink was a love potion and Phaeton was drinking it. We of course all spurred him on. After a few minutes phaeton looked more like the woose we know than the Man we were about to meet. Later Atelk also joined us,

he explained with their talents combined it made them Ideal to fish for the shellfish, they also found that the spot above the disk was perfect for sexual exercises. Apparently a year or so after during an exercise one of the partners had touched the disk, she was torn apart by the whirlwind vortex while the rest were scattered. The townspeople had decided that since they had touched Rathos Disk, Ratho will decide the punishment. We offered out help if they would help us explore the disk. They agreed.

For some reason Phaeton became amnesiaced! It must have been during the shimmer forms, oh well, I promised to take a hold of his leash. When we got to the disk I kept Phaeton away how ever there was some sort of Runic language on the disk, some of it looks familiar but a lot doesn't! Damn.

Father Rowan called Upon Chantris to help, and she did! She'd open a portal at a certain time for the plants to go through. Father Rowan explained the situation about us having 9 days and she said that she had gotten us an extension. I asked Chantris if she would mind healing phaeton as he was one of our biggest assets, after a while his eyes came back to the normal him.

Divinations on the disk showed it to be cursed with Whirlwind Vortex, and a gate to the plane of Elementals Water AND fire! Brigetta also recited that seven heroes their will linked could destroy the disk which is also known as Rathos Heart! It was decided this would be a stupid idea, after all we might not be the seven! (Typical Elf!) and so we headed back up. Deadwood started to replenish his bug supplies once he was back on ground, and again he was sapped, so that he could be given a bath! Father Rowen took this time to go through deadwoods things. [At this point I bowed out and an argument took place, for those of you who are wondering what its about it'll all come out at Deadwoods trial. Read the transcripts. But in a nutshell Deadwood was Pacted but he really didn't understand it, Father Rowan accused him of lying and things started to get out of hand.]

While all this arguing had been going on (and a second major argument broke out) the twins had left us. We continued on without them, Brigetta and I went off to beat out a pattern the worts had given us as a recognition code and waited. An hour later a Wort showed up. Another 5 hours of trekking saw us back at the main settlement again, this time we enlisted their help with the curse removals. Deadwood took another opportunity to make a nuisance of himself and scattered monkey crap everywhere! Bastard! The stuff stinks! He was promptly knocked out though and we enlisted two worts to watch over him. It was explained to the worts that Chantris would open a portal for them to cross to the sea of grass but they however would have to accept her as their god, they didn't seem totally understand so we asked if they could gather up all the worts into a meeting place so that Father Rowan could explain fully to them. It took a the rest of that day and night but they came, and finally we got some more sleep in. Once they were all assembled Father Rowan preached to the worts about the virtues of Chantris, this being essential to them being able to use the portal something happened to deadwood, he sank. We all rushed there and started to look around. A few moments later Deadwood burst through a nearby wall, he shouted Ratho and fainted.

Apparently Ratho wanted to know what we were up to so he paid a visit! After discussing various options, one of which Ratho suggested destroying the heart, the Disc in the middle of the lake, however it came down to the decision to either destroy the Demon the Worsts souls had been sold to or the avatar. Mention of the Worts treasure cave was made, OF COURSE! I had forgotten about that. We started making plans to destroy a Wyrms. It was decided to fill the

manatears with hellfire, and attack it from the top of the hole using any spells we could and also by dropping things on it, we prepared.

The time came to face the worm, we set up our plan of attack and earth tremoured the plug sealing the cave of the wyrm. Father Owen and Jedburg entered and both appeared to be fairing well. The creature's breath weapon couldn't reach us but the hellfires didn't have any effect. Suddenly five skeletons popped up, there was something we could do! I released the mana tear. The next round I decided to use the Hellfire ratho had given me [I won't say why I had it] and it worked! Just! We all decided to get down into the cave for round 2 against the Wyrms, the first round had been ok, but an all out attack should do it. We set up walls as defense.

Guess what the Wyrms did after coming through the walls and being hit by star bolts from the mana tears? It charged for me and Brigetta, she dodged but I didn't and was trampled, how I wish I had Earth Door and then I was gone! The battle raged on in my absence and we won. Ratho had saved me from there when I had panicked, his price, pacting to him but he would make it worth my while. The deal he offered me was very good, I decided not to refuse, although to be totally honest I don't think I know what I'm getting myself into. I returned to the party, and Jedburg came bearing down on me asking me "Where the hell I thought I'd gotten myself off to?" I told him that I panicked and that Ratho had Earth Doored me out of there and that I had pacted to him. The others really didn't think much of Ratho, but after all he's a young god, which means that he will change and that he will mature, I don't think I can make any of these people see that though. It appeared father Rowan had double Cursed himself and was mute as well as deaf, and that was going to take Phaeton along time again. The rest of us cleared the debris and found what items looked like were still functional, exploring the rest of this cave turned up nothing else except a few passages leading to nowhere.

Once Father Rowan was healed Brigetta bought up that Deadwood had thrown some powder down the hole earlier, everyone started arguing again over the fact that Deadwood lied, he denied it and Father Rowan said that Deadwood would be kicked out of the guild, if that didn't work then Father Rowan was going to go to the duke, if that failed he'd gather the peasants and do the job himself! On the threat of killing him Deadwood disappeared, Father Rowan said that was fine, he'll be having him bought up on charges anyway. The whole situation had gotten way out of hand again, Father Rowan is far too 'eager' as a Party leader, willing to use Hellfires to rule, I hope I never have to adventure with him again.

The gods, needless to say were not pleased, even Brigetta's god turned up. Unfortunately the tale goes on, for we are now told seek outside the valley, Apparently there are more. So that is where I will end the scribe notes of our adventure, for as you see it wasn't completed, and in a way I feel we're to blame, if we hadn't of gone the Worts and Boyles would still be in their mutual war, where no side was really getting hurt.

The A Part.