

An Account of the Events Following on from the Earlier Misdeeds of Morgan the Orc.

or

Morgan's Folly Strikes Back

GM: Jill Mitchinson
2nd Thaw to 13th Thaw, 804

Party:

Peter Smith, Human warrior pacted to Uriel
Clarissa, Elven Air mage (Party Leader)
Shiraz, Human Earth mage
Akuji, Elven Necromancer
Morgan, Orc
Motley, Giant warrior (Party Scribe and unranked Party Military Scientist)

The Mission:

Act as bodyguards to a family who are moving home, specifically protecting them against the hordes of Troggs which Morgan stirred up in the area.

Session 1

Day 1 (After the Guild Meeting)

On receipt of a letter from off plane, requesting a Guild party to assist (and specifically requiring that Morgan return and atone for the damage caused), a Guild party as above convened and went off plane with utmost haste (pausing only to breakfast with the Hobbits in the Guild kitchens). Transit involved climbing the kitchen stairs while under the influence of magics - causing the party to descend other stairs in the destination plane. Only Peter was fazed by the transition, and he felt better after clutching the party leader.

Those in the party who have been there before say the order of travel was important, so for reference it was Morgan, Motley, Akuji, Shiraz, Clarissa, Peter.

The plane is populated by Humans and Greater Undead Humans (who act as household servants for the nobles). On arrival the party was met by a small group led by Altair, sent by the family who had hired us. He said something about a decreased area of control, so we had to move quickly out of the Trog zone back to the family controlled zone. We left the Guild after breakfast, and arrived a little before the middle of the night, so already we are a couple of meals down. On arriving at the family home/castle we are offered a hot meal and politely accept. Greater Undead servants rearrange furniture and make us all at home.

The family patriarch, Klingsor, welcomed us but did not talk of business until after dinner (he is waited on by Graysor, his personal Greater Undead servant), then he glossed over the details, but they leave in 3 days time and the journey to their new home required the sacrifice of his wife, and will involve reducing the excessive number of undead they currently have. The party is to protect the family from the Troggs, with whom they have a historical grudge or enmity, and who are now moving into the area in search of their "Goddess made flesh", easy women, and lots of gold - these rumours apparently spread by our own fair Morgan. The family has already sent most of the cattle and servants ahead, keeping just a few footmen/fighters. He also mentioned that we would have to recover his daughter (Kalend) from a hidey-hole behind the bookcases.

As we take our leave for the night, the returning party members excitedly explain that we must all spend the night with a servant (nudge, nudge...), who will protect us from the undead - presumably not the undead that have been waiting on the party hand and foot

all through dinner? In her rush to get upstairs with her choice, Shiraz fails to see the undead servant waiting to trip her on the stairs, but a tumble on the stairs doesn't seem to cool her ardour.

Party sets watch: Akuji (8pm), Clarissa(10pm), Shiraz(12am), Motley(2am), Morgan(4am), Peter(6am)

While Akuji and Shiraz dally with the servants, an undead tries to suck the life out of Clarissa but it is frightened off.

Session 2

Day 2 (Rescue Kalend)

After breakfast, we were invited to chat to Klingsor about what he wanted done, which was to:

- get Kalend out of her hidey-hole,
- find the safest route for the family through the Troggs,
- and escort the family along that route (safely)

The family (Klingsor and Kalend) will be travelling with 40 humans (fighters and footmen), and 3 carts of luggage to the manor of Stillgate, where Kalend is to marry Randall, the son of Lord Longfret Ranolf. On the trip we can consider everyone except Klingsor and Kalend as expendable (he says...). Success will be determined by getting the family to Stillgate, which is where the return portal for the party is. We will leave in 3 days, and it may take a week of travel.

So, with our responsibilities scoped out, we decide to retrieve Kalend before looking for safe routes.

The party kits up, and marches upstairs - only to be attacked by one of the less-friendly house undead. It causes some confusion, a carpet is burnt and pictures broken, but the undead is despatched in the stairwell, which seems to be accompanied by a painful shrieking noise and a howling wind.

The party gains Kalend's bed chamber (the room's undead attendant is beaten, and indicates that Kalend's undead servant is attacking anything that approaches). We approach with care, and Clarissa quickly identifies the fake wall with shelves that hides Kalend.

Akuji and Peter are sent outside to the corridor to use wood warping spells to break through the stone walls, Morgan and Shiraz are outside the room as backup, while Clarissa and Motley break into the wall to reason with the young girl.

Once inside the wall, we perceive that we can't see anything, but Clarissa can feel the daggers being tossed at her. When she ducks Motley can feel them too. They also find the way blocked by a darkness and a locked door (held shut by Kalend's undead friend). While dithering, Akuji and Peter realise that the walls are stone and they must improvise a plan. Motley starts to blast magics at the door in a wild attempt to open it, and Morgan and Shiraz retire to a safe minimum distance.

The combined brainpower of Akuji, Peter, Morgan, and Shiraz quickly realise that if warping wood doesn't work on stone, they should try it on the wooden ceiling instead. Soon they are looking down on Kalend's hidey-hole, where she is sitting on a chair, the room has a few darkneses, and presumably an undead dagger thrower. Morgan and Akuji jump in and swing mightily with their swords, followed by Peter who takes the girl out through the window. Morgan then sets fire to the whole room, and Motley uses a Hellfire to remove the undead servant. Meanwhile Peter catches his breath, takes Kalend off to see her father, is joined by the rest of the party, and then dramatically collapses.

Session 3

After short congratulation, Klingsor takes Kalend off to be cleaned up, and the party repairs to the breakfast room again. Half an hour later the party is invited down to a rather icky part of the manor cellars where Klingsor offers to heal the party of any wounds. He heals Morgan, Clarissa, Shiraz, and Akuji (who glow peachy, green, pink, and pale blue respectively), but the party declares that Peter (concussion, unconscious, broken bones) would object on moral grounds to Klingsor's healing, and he is denied the 30 second instant healing with extra beauty.

Kalend, by the way, looks vague, distant, and drained - as do the large number of undead who float listlessly in the waiting room outside. The magical healing (provided by a large round glowing thing) seems to age Klingsor, but he consumes a few more undead and is looking fine when next we meet.

Clarissa and Morgan propose to cure Peter using the best sleeping draughts available from the kitchen herbs, so he is out of action for the rest of the day, and under strength for at least three more days - we check this with some practice sparring.

More information is extracted from Klingsor in the study, viz:

- We need to take the family from Tweed's Dell (here) to Stillgate. A rough map from some traders is supplied.
- The 40 humans and all the horses will all be "possessed" by undead for their protection. For our protection, Klingsor will have to stay close by them or the undead will become uncontrolled and start to rampage. So dies the "fly away home" plan.
- It is very important that as many of Klingsor's people arrive at Stillgate as possible.

Using the new "map" as a reference, Morgan, Shiraz, Motley, and Clarissa fly off to get our bearings. Akuji and Peter lurk at the manor. We find that the river shown close by on the map is 70 miles away, making the distance to Still Gate rather large.

The air outside the manor's protective barrier is autumnal and nippy. The ground shows interesting ripples (also shown on the map) as though a stone was dropped into a pond.

On the return leg, we find a wounded Trog (busted knee). We pop down to offer help, since the party wants to open negotiations with the Trogs this seems like a good chance to look good. Unfortunately it seems Morgan is our only Trog speaker, and she isn't very good - however the Trog seems mesmerised by her. After a cautionary lightning bolt from Clarissa, we pick up the Trog and fly back to the manor. The party regroups outside the barrier to chat with the Trog.

Session 4

While pondering how to talk to the Trog (who is still staring at Morgan), the party hears horns. As an enormous number of Trogs converge on the party, we release the captive and retreat to the manor barrier - which the Trog armies do not cross.

That night, during Motley's watch, the horns and screams can be heard from the Trog camp. This continues for about an hour.

Day 3

The next morning Motley, Peter, and Clarissa go out to parley with the Trogs. We get a little way beyond the barrier when the horns sound again, and we wait for the Trogs. Again, a large number of Trogs advance, lead by three Trogs mounted on giant, armoured, spiky cats. The Trogs themselves are about 10 feet tall, well muscled, Orcish types. DA on a few reveals:

- Highest Rank: Rk8
- Protection: Armour of Earth
- Highest Ranked Spell: Diamond Weapon
- Alignment: Monarchy

- Protection: Troll skin

Motley greets them and enquires as to their business in the area. They reply that they want us to hand over their Goddess.

"Which Goddess would that be?" we quip.

"You have more than one? We want all of them! They will be taken to the King in the city and tested!" is the excited reply.

We suspect that the Trogs may be highly civilised and organised...

In a second meeting with the Trogs soon after, the whole party has regrouped and it is clear that Morgan is the only thing they are interested in, although they do intend to raze the manor and its "evil presence" once they have her (and the barrier diminishes a little further).

Morgan (and the party) are not very keen to hand her over to the Trogs, so the discussion does not go very well. Motley asks them to leave us alone while Morgan completes a Goddess-quest to move the family away and let the Trogs have at the remains of the manor. They demand their Goddess and blow the details. Eventually they adopt an aggressive posture and cast magic (control person?) on Morgan, forcing Clarissa to sap her.

Session 5

Negotiations pick up a little from this low point. The Trogs will think about this "Goddess on a quest" idea, provided they hear it from Morgan herself, of course they can only just comprehend the Orcish that Morgan speaks to them. Eventually an Orcish translator is brought forward, and Morgan repeats the party line to our hero "Duke Hotty Pants" through the little bejewelled, purple robed not-a-slave orc. Meanwhile, a few DAs show that the skinned things on crossed-stakes forming a square all around the manor are (former) Orcs. Their deaths had kept us on edge for an hour in the early morning... Perhaps they are a different type of Orc from the self-important bureaucrat translating for Morgan? The party goes to consider its position, and (through a small misunderstanding) the Trogs go to sacrifice more Orcs.

While conferring, Clarissa suddenly remembers an underground, Giant-sized city, with a river of death which may just be our way out from under the Trogs. City was full of anti-Trog traps, and the previous party had rescued Kalend from it.

Before meeting again with the Duke, who will answer the Goddesses demands that he escort her on the quest, we talk to a small Orc named Enrico who is to answer Motley's newbie-Goddess-worshipper questions. Important points are:

- the Goddess is taken to a city with their King, and tested for "Goddess-ness"
- the Goddess is a super-magical power source who they want to put into a harness and use to power the expansionist plans of the King. (Party believes they may have seen Trogs popping Morgan into a harness on a previous visit)
- now that the Trogs understand that we have not harnessed Morgan, they believe we are less powerful than they had estimated.
- the sacrifices have all been highly important Orcs (in a religious caste?), and the deaths will make the Goddess more powerful.

Duke Arric arrives, and the balance of negotiations shifts away from the party, however they realise that any of the party who "feel an affinity for the offerings" might do as a Goddess. It seems that our Goddess candidates are Morgan, Akuji, and Peter, and we have until the morning to decide who to hand over.

After the Duke rides off, leaving an army or two stationed on the hills around the manor, the "potentials" step out of the barrier one at a time to assess the blue-shimmering

magic-thing floating above the sacrifices. Morgan excites no activity and returns depressed; Peter attracts the blueness to descend towards him slowly, and he is hurried back to the house before anything bad happens; Akuji steps out and whammo! the blue dives at him, his aura changes radically (last magic to impact is now "Blood Magic"), and the Troggs get excited - so Akuji and Motley drift serenely into the sky.

"Seagate, we seem to have a Goddess..."

Session 6

Akuji claims he is unable to pass through the manor's protective barrier, so the rest of the party take flight to join us in the air. Before flying off to investigate a possible route via the underground city, the party pauses to field test the new, improved Akuji. Akuji leads the party on a singularly bloody and meaningless attack on 10 outlying Troggs. His behaviour is quite variable, seemingly based on the proximity of party members, and the availability of Troggs. It seems his inner Goddess is keen to "train" or "test" any and all Troggs - and this seems to involve killing them. Akuji seems able to perform three actions per pulse including multiple casts, and can make Troggs fall over, or kill themselves. Then he eats their flesh (but this may be normal for the elf?). Privately, the party has become very wary of the new face of our necromancer...

Returning to the mission, the party flies out to the hidden, underground, giant city and enter through an air shaft. We travel along a giant corridor, past kitchens and Trog traps (which Akuji doesn't quite set off) until we get back to (underneath) the manor house. Again Akuji won't go through the barrier, although Morgan reports it is much weaker down here. Motley stays with Akuji, while the rest of the party look for a way up into the house.

Session 7

[Extract from Shiraz's journal]

We are starting the session at the trap door about 2am. Clarrissa, Peter, Morgan and Shiraz go thru the door leaving Motley and a sleeping Akuji waiting outside at the boundary.

We come across several traps and we have to work our way around them. They look like very old traps, set off many a year ago. One trap has lots of steel rods coming out of the walls, parallel with the floor, clearly aimed at strategic points on a trog. The other trap was designed to crush the intruder, as it was a bunch of rubble, barely being held up by a piece of wood that was the width of the corridor. Peter and Morgan carefully work their way thru these, checking for traps and trigger points but as they had already been activated we passed thru ok.

We continued making our way along the corridor and find ourselves looking into rooms that have coffins stored in them - yukky! We proceed along further and find two very large trap doors. We tried the usual technique of opening them - i.e. knocking - but to no avail. We then start to push the doors open - and we ended up in the conservatory!

Altair comes to greet us, very surprised at our sudden entrance. He did not know that the marble floor was hiding a trap door. We determine that are not able to see Klingsor for about 1 hour but that food was available if we needed it. Peter decides to load up with food and together with Shiraz goes back down to get Motley and Akuji. Akuji is still "asleep" at this point. (I think funny things happen to A on the way back - but can't fully recall)

A quick meeting on their return with Klingsor (who is looking very young and vibrant - and we think this is very suspicious) determines that we think the carts could go down the trap door, but that they would need to be brought inside without the troggs knowing and before sunrise. Motley is instrumental to this plan and we go about doing this.

We make up a communication method between us and the house party - foghorn made from a cup thanks to Peter, and it's one blow for trouble/being attacked and two for stopping. Reason for this is that Akuji needs to be kept away from the house party as he's woken and wants to kill everyone in sight and he's being aggressive. All of our party are really tired but we decide to press on. We continue on for about 1.5 hours and then stop. Shiraz and Clarrissa go back to the carts to sleep, then Peter, Morgan, Motley and Akuji sleep ahead of the group. The night passes uneventfully.

(Day 4) The next day is spent walking.

The day becomes eventful when Akuji and Morgan go ahead of the group and come back injured. We know that Akuji is hearing voices in his head and we are worried about this. It turns out that 4 large cats have attacked them. Clarissa and Motley Hobbit with spell walking unseen on them goes ahead to view them. They see a chamber that looks like an encampment of some sort. We notice that the floor coverings have changed and that we have the option of going left or right. We end up going left. Morgan then goes into the encampment chamber and notices a gold inlaid cabinet and some tapestries on the walls. She also reports hearing noises behind one of the doors in the room.

[Extract from Akuji's journal]

Akuji was sapped while under the care and protection of Motley, or it just felt that way. He was then taken inside the barrier and into the house. The undead weren't particularly happy to see him and there was general animosity there. He stayed out of the way. The plan to take the wagons down into the tunnel's was adopted and put in place. This was done and the convoy started moving through the tunnels, while behind us the house exploded / imploded.

The walk through the the tuneels involving long long straights and occasional intersections (Y or T) was uneventful. Once when scouting ahead Morgan and Akuji spotted a fissure in the side and investigated the large amount of goblin bones and body parts. There was a number of dangerous felines on the otherside and an indeterminate amount of loot which Clarissa being the girl she is decided was too dangerous for us and forbade our investigation.

Further on we come to a number of rooms which are investigated. Coincidentally Morgan & Akuji are just by a door they have heard noises from!

Session 8

[Back to Motley's journal]

Morgan and Akuji identify that the noises beyond the door are from "Supreme Undead Orcs" , who the party decide to leave well enough alone, so we slink past the door, leaving a message for Klingsor to be careful when his party goes past the door.

After a while we notice that the giant-cat skin carpet is getting a little wet underfoot, indicating we are probably going under the rivers shown on the map. Eventually the floor becomes quite squishy and we have a full quagmire to wade through. Investigation shows it doesn't get too deep for the carts to get through, and there are Trog detection magics just past the mire. Assuming that we are getting close to something "interesting", the party camps on the far side of the mire, and send messages back to have Klingsor camp on the near side.

Day 5

Assuming that it is morning outside, we rise and shine, purify, or breakfast depending on individual beliefs.

The party move off through the Trog detections, and those party members that had been healed by Klingsor all notice they are very itchy. While walking we pass many more Trog-detects, and the Akuji-scope registers many "Supreme Undead Orcs" in the vicinity.

Then Akuji is hit by magic (some sort of Blood magic) and beserkly charges into the room we are passing. Clarissa goes in in support, and Motley follows to see what the fuss is. The room contains an 18 foot tall supreme undead orc wight, and Morgan later claims to have been negotiating telepathicly with it when Akuji attacks it. The party all take 2 FT damage when the wight screams, then Akuji and Clarissa take a little more from the Black Fire. When the extremely large Dark Sphere enters the room along with another wight, Morgan surrenders on behalf of the party and we try the chatting option again.

We are now talking to 3 wights (the party say one is invisible), and we learn the following things:

- they really dislike the Troggie bits in Akuji (because they are were an ancient race who the Trogs wiped out etc...)
- they can tolerate Klingsor travelling through their tunnels
- they will send along a “guide” to show us how to get outside close to our destination of Stillgate; ensure we do not go near their “centre”; and keep an undead eye on Akuji
- they insist on “telling the fortune” for each party member

So the party agrees to the terms of our new friends, and we follow our guide Roderick along the corridor.

Along the way we pass through an immense cavern with a huge glowing light/magic source in the middle. While walking along a ledge on the cavern's edge several party members shake off the effect of a mind control (from the light maybe?), Akuji (travelling with the main party) is sapped again, and Motley (travelling back with Klingsor's group) flies off to investigate before the party and Clarissa call him back.

Session 9

The mind control also affects several of Klingsor's undead-possesed knights. They become uncontrolled, and skirmishes break out between groups of the knights, others just topple off the ledge as they move towards the light. Klingsor loses 10 knights all told.

Past the cavern, Roderick directs us towards the way out, and says there are no Trogs in the area (estimated as 50 cavern widths). We following his directions and get to another set of giant doors. Outside is night, so we camp.

Day 6

The next day we open the doors, push Klingsor's group and the girls out to head down the hill, while Motley, Peter, and Akuji close and bar the giant doors, and leave through an air vent. Clarissa, Shiraz, and Morgan fly out to scout and see an armoured convoy moving on the road – it seems to be made up of giant cats and humanoids.

The morning is spent moving the carts over rough fields down to the road. On the road we hear screams ahead (around a bend), so the party runs off to see what is happening. We see humanoids (who later DA as gnomes) being attacked by giant cats, so Akuji, Clarissa, and Peter wade into melee to attack the cats. The rest of the party follow...

Session 10

While the party hacks at the tail of the giant cats, the gnomes try to flee, and the cats pursue – until the party gets their attention... The cats seem to work as a unit, and may be working with telepathic commands, especially when the party picks up on the command “surround and kill the new comers”. However, effective Tunelling and Hands of Earth deal with the cats or persuade them to run off.

We pick up the 3 survivors and move off to a join Klingsor. After a little more travelling we camp and try to talk to the gnomes. We learn that they are the rear guard for a convoy of about 60 gnomes (who are not riding giant cats...), the cats ambushed them, and they would like to rest now.

Day 7

At dawn, a rescue party of gnomes arrive to see what happened to their rear guard. We learn from them that the gnomes are traders, convoy is going to Stillgate for the wedding, and they are about 4 days fast ride away. They are happy to have us join the convoy, but we will have to move very fast (and keep going into the night) to catch it.

Session 11

The party travels fast all day, and catch the convoy at dusk. They are four heavily laden carriages pulled by the standard Gnomish dog-creatures, pikemen walking alongside and outriders on dog-creatures. Clarissa does the introductions to their leader, Clarence, who is much warmer to the party once he spots Klingsor. The convoy pushes on into the dusk until it reaches a defensible location. This is their last trading run before winter (when the giant cats become really dangerous), but they couldn't pass up the chance to trade at a wedding.

Before bed, the party members browse through the trader's carts. Once an exchange rate for silver pennies to beads was decided, they purchased spices (Motley), jewelry (Morgan), silks and magic armour (Peter), and anything with a trace of magic (Akuji).

The fourth cart is not a trader cart, and is driven by three humans, all with Bound Wills and a bad attitude. Nobody gets to look inside the cart.

Days 8 and 9

Fast marching along with the convoy. Both mornings started with the screams of an outrider finding a giant cat, the return of the dog-creature, and the promotion of a pikeman to outrider.

Late afternoon of the second day and we are very near Stillgate, when a dust cloud is seen by the high flying Motley. Closer investigation shows it is the welcoming party from Lord Ranolf – which alarms the Gnomes, and by association the party... Klingsor says we will be quite safe, provided we do not get involved in the welcoming ceremony; so we will stop to await Ranolf's people, and the party will protect Kalend, and the Gnomes will continue on to the manor.

Day 10

So now all becomes clear. Klingsor's people and Ranolf's people prepare to have a pitched battle on the flat, while the party is up the slope waiting. Klingsor's undead leave their "possessions", and Ranolf's people break out their undead as well. Soon two large groups of humans and undead face each other across a meadow. Then they fight. Then they stop when Klingsor has no humans alive on his side. Then the ranking Ranolf servant welcomes the visitor, and invites him to the wedding feast.

Towards the end of the battle, Kalend comes out of the coma-like state she has been in during the journey and starts to scream uncontrollably. Klingsor has finished with just 10 remaining undead, including Graysor.

Akuji, who got very excited when the blood started flowing, is allowed out from under Clarissa, and the party continues on with Klingsor to Lord Ranolf's manor – which is much more of a castle really. At the barrier, Akuji refuses to go further, so he and Clarissa wait outside while the group continues to the full welcome from Lord Ranolf Longfret, his wife Occer, and son Randall.

After everyone else goes in to get settled, Lord Ranolf is taken to check Akuji. He offers to cure Akuji of the "spores in his blood", or to try and alter the barrier magics to let the necromancer past. Eventually Akuji declines the cure (keeping his Goddess-ness intact), and Akuji joins the party inside the modified barrier. Everyone is shown to rooms and we meet the formerly living Altair, now an undead called Lucas.

Day 11

After breakfast the party attends the wedding, properly called the "Ritual of Claiming". Guests are seated around a dais. Klingsor is escorted in by two burly types and pauses next to the party to make a very final sounding "thank you". Next, Kalend (being very calm and happy due to a Bind Will) enters with Lady Occer. Finally Ranolf and Randall enter and join the others on the dais. Also on the dais are a man and woman dressed in grey – unlike any other human we have seen, they look old.

After a speech from the fathers the burly servants slit the throats of Lords Ranolf and Klingsor. Those that can, feel a slight buzz. A DA shows that Randall has just received a lot of power. Eventually the party joins in with the polite clapping...

That evening there is dance. All the wives are happy and have a very strong Bound Will in effect.

Day 12

The next day we have traders to chat with. It seems that the old man and woman from the ceremony were what the fourth cart was carrying. The party feels this is a little creepy and no one is looking forward to the final ceremony this today.

The final ceremony has Randall and Kalend on the dais with the grey couple. Lady Occer enters with the two burly servants. After a short speech wishing the happy couple all the best in their future life together, her throat is cut by the burly servants. Now the DA shows that the grey couple have passed "history" to Randall and "fertility" to Kalend. (I wonder if the grey man and woman attend all the births as well?). The crowd clap politely.

Day 13

The next day the party follow Randall down into the cellar. They have a portal and we are happy to return to the guild, once Motley finds the paper that records the party order we travelled in coming to the plane.