

Burnt Village

Posted by: theseus Jun 22 2005, 01:43 PM«

Continued from 011 The Clearing III... The wind picks up, bringing a chill to the new night air, and dispersing some of the mist. Now just one thin column of smoke rises from beyond the next spur of hills. The walk takes a little under an hour. Cresting the hill, a moonlit view of what was once a village comes into sight, cradled by mist. The only evidence of buildings having existed on this blackened land is the occasional soot stained chimney. The smoke rises from the center of the ruins, the stone remains of what was probably once the meeting hall. A nearby cart designed to be pulled by horses is collapsed on one side, the chain that once bound the horses sundered in half. Broken tools, and the sundered spears of the hell-creatures lie scattered across the ground. There are a number of obvious prints in the ground nearby, horse hooves, fleeing human feet and the uglier marks left by the hell-creatures. Trampled near one set of these prints is a fluffy teddy bear, now burnt and smeared with mud. However, there is no sign of the dead. There are no corpses here, and the village is eerily and completely silent in the night.

Posted by: erichenry Jun 22 2005, 02:00 PM«

Arenea stands and surveys the scene. Her nostrils flare as she sniffs the air, as if searching for scent, although what she can be hoping to smell over the smells of ash and mud isn't clear. She picks her way across the scene of devastation, being careful not to obliterate any of the existing tracks as she does so. When she reaches the fallen teddy bear, Arenea kneels down and picks up the stuffed animal. Seemingly without thinking about it, she starts brushing the mud off the toy.

Posted by: Jedric Jun 23 2005, 12:32 AM«

As the village comes into view B'rayth stops in his tracks, lowering his head he appears to shudder slightly and emits a low moan. Moving on again B'rayth virtually prowls around the razed area, his face taut with suppressed emotion. He circles the village looking for signs of any survivors. As Arenea lifts the bear and brushes mud from it B'rayth looks away and closes his eyes. He calls out to her in a neutral voice, Best leave that missy, no use to anyone now." As he opens his eyes to look at Arenea, she sees suspicious moisture in them. B'rayth quickly turns away from the main group and begins searching for sign again.

Posted by: erichenry Jun 23 2005, 12:57 PM«

People were killed here, Arenea says softly to no-one in particular, still brushing the mud off the bear "but they took the bodies with them. There may be one or two corpses still in the ruins, but whoever did this tried to take everyone with them the living and the dead." As she finishes, she seems to become aware of what she is doing with her hands and looks down at the pathetic burnt, crushed and soiled teddy bear she is holding.

Posted by: Reyn Jun 23 2005, 02:26 PM«

People die. Reyn states very matter-of-factly. His voice is not without compassion, he is merely attempting to concentrate on the facts. "What is important here is that the dead as well as the living

were taken away. That means they are either useful to whoever took them, not an appealing thought I admit, or that the manner of their deaths would give away some sort of clue that the perpetrators don't want us to have." Reyn pauses for a moment to watch Arenea with the teddy bear. A look of concern crosses his face, but he soon pulls himself back to the matter at hand. We need to discover what method or portal these creatures are using to enter your world B'rayth. This seems to be something more than just 'collateral damage' on your people.

Posted by: doychi Jun 24 2005, 09:06 AM«

Tu'Tak scans the area, bewildered by the complete lack of life.

Posted by: Jedric Jun 24 2005, 05:13 PM«

B'rayth apparently ignores Reyn as he continues his search for signs of what happened here. After some time he nods, and with an expression part confusion part anger he turns to the others. There were perhaps thirty of the hellcreatures. There were over a hundred men here, and they did try to fight but the b'thrak were too much for them. B'rayth moves several feet to a trampled area. They piled the bodies here, but I can't see what happened to them, it's as if they simply vanished. Pointing off toward the clearing from which they have lately come, B'rayth comments, The attackers left in that direction, so Reyn you've probably incinerated them all already." B'rayth's lowers his head in thought and his frown deepens, I can't find tracks for any survivors, there may not have been any I suppose, but the bodies just vanished!" B'rayth looks up, We should go and report this to Lord G'orhm, I vote that we go now."

Posted by: Sim Jun 25 2005, 04:44 AM«

Yeesha looks around at the tracks. We know where they went, but where did they come from? She wonders aloud."

Posted by: erichenry Jun 26 2005, 11:52 AM«

Arenea tucks the bear into her backpack and stands up. B'rayth's right" she murmurs. "There is nothing to be gained by staying here. We should move on."

Posted by: Curufea Jun 27 2005, 09:05 AM«

Vanished?, says Gideon." Or were they eaten?

Posted by: Reyn Jun 27 2005, 10:45 AM«

Better that than meeting them later working for the other side. Reyn shudders a little at the thought and then adds quietly, "Necromancers give me the creeps." I agree though, we should move on. This is B'rayth's world, so we play by his rules. Which way to this Lord G'orhm?

Posted by: Jedric Jun 27 2005, 09:31 PM«

B'rayth nods to Reyn, Pretty much south, perhaps three hours cross country should do it. It is rough going between here and there though so I think we'll need to think about how we transport R'shall." B'rayth glances at Tu'Tak with a contemplative frown.

Posted by: Jedric Jun 28 2005, 10:54 PM«

B'rayth looks around at his companions looking for at least some reaction. When he gets none he sighs slightly, then walking over to R'shall he calls over Tu'Tak. His frown deepens for a moment before he grins mischievously, I think you need to change into something more suitable Tu'Tak my friend, and R'shall you'll just have to bear it." R'shall merely grunts. Turning to the others B'rayth shakes his head then comments. I'm going south, follow if you will. If one or more of you would help Tu'Tak get R'shall ready I'd appreciate it. B'rayth then walks away across the gorse covered moor.

Posted by: Reyn Jun 29 2005, 08:53 AM«

B'rayth! Reyn calls out loudly." We all realise your need to get moving, and no one would question any impatience you may be feeling at our slow movement, but if you go too far ahead we won't be able to follow. Catching up to him Reyn lowers his voice, Like it or not, for this part of our journey you're our guide. We'll follow, but you'll need to ensure that we travel at the speed of the slowest of us."

Posted by: doychi Jun 29 2005, 03:10 PM«

Finally understanding that B'rayth is telling him that in this shadow demons are feared, or at least despised, Tu'Tak looks around at the others. It looks like B'rayth is suggesting that another form might be better for me in this shadow. As this is the case I will become a large horse. At least large enough for two to ride, so that someone can accompany R'shall." With that Tu'Tak finds a space big enough for a large Clydesdale and proceeds in his transformation." Once he has finished he walks over to Yeesha and nudges her a little, possibly indicating that she should help R'shall up.

Posted by: Curufea Jun 29 2005, 04:49 PM«

Once again Gideon stands in the background, either impressed or shocked at the transformation.

Posted by: erichenry Jun 29 2005, 05:26 PM«

Arenea moves to the back of the group and prepares to take rearguard when they move out.

Posted by: Jedric Jun 29 2005, 05:47 PM«

B'rayth stops as Reyn comes alongside him, his expression is bland devoid of any emotion, in a low tone he answers. I know that Reyn, but if I'd waited we'd still be standing around talking. Help me get them moving, the further we get from this place the better. Without waiting for an answer B'rayth moves off again, he moves to the crest of a low hill where he turns and waits.

Posted by: Sim Jul 1 2005, 06:27 AM«

At Tu'Tak's touch, Yeesha jumps. She regains composure quickly and busies herself helping R'shall mount up. It is not the most elegant process, but they get there in the end. Without consulting anyone, she clambers up behind him and sighs as she settles in. Once settled, she looks to B'rayth and raises her left hand in a fist.

Posted by: doychi Jul 1 2005, 07:56 AM«

With both Yeesha and R'shall mounted Tu'Tak starts after B'rayth, slowly and carefully.

Posted by: theseus Jul 1 2005, 08:34 AM«

Anna, obviously distressed by the ruined village, breaks her gaze away and follows BGÇÖrayth.

Posted by: Jedric Jul 1 2005, 05:12 PM«

Travelling south BGÇÖrayth leads the group on through the moors. The land seems to undulate, suddenly falling into shallow rills and gullies and back up onto more easily traversed regions, irregularly placed outcrops of rock break up the landscape even further. The partyGÇÖs going is made even worse by the dense growth of gorse and heather which annoyingly seem to proliferate in the most difficult places to negotiate. BGÇÖrayth slows slightly at the most difficult places but otherwise seems to take no note of any difficulties the others may have in keeping up, he simply ploughs on. After perhaps an hour of hard going BGÇÖrayth pausing at a low cliff top, he turns and glances back, with a grin he comments, GÇ£Yonder lies Guaine, weGÇÖll be there in an hour or two.GÇ¥ Looking south the party members can see a more inviting landscape, if still a harsh one. Rugged but at least home to humankind, in the distance can be seen fields of crops and what may be cattle a quarter of a mile distant. Guaine is not visible from this vantage.

Posted by: erichenry Jul 1 2005, 10:53 PM«

Arenea travels the distance in silence. She moves at the back of the party, playing rearguard and remaining vigilant. Although it is obvious she does not have much familiarity with the wilderness, her natural grace and economy of movement more than compensate for this. If the petite woman finds the going hard, she does not show it or complain. During the pause, Arenea takes a swig from her waterskin before offering it around to anyone else who wants a drink.

Posted by: Sim Jul 2 2005, 08:55 AM«

Yeesha stows away her journal and digs out a box of pastries. She grabs a couple, and popping one into her mouth, offers the rest of the handful to R'shall as she passes the box down towards the others.

Posted by: Reyn Jul 2 2005, 10:42 AM«

Reyn strides silently along towards the front of the party, perhaps three or so steps behind B'rayth and a good ten to the side. R'shall's sword has been swung experimentally earlier in the journey, testing it for weight and balance, but now sits attached to Reyn's belt. When Arenea's water and

Yeesha's pastries are offered Reyn politely thanks the girls and takes a small amount of each, assimilating the food quickly before returning to his position in the group.

Posted by: doychi Jul 3 2005, 09:19 PM«

Tu'Tak moves round until he finds some suitable food to graze on while everyone rests.

Posted by: Jedric Jul 4 2005, 05:16 PM«

As the food and water is passed around B'rayth takes a small bite and swallows some water. When everyone has had some time to rest, he clears his throat to get everyone's attention then begins to speak. We are nearing the Yarla's territory now and I feel we need to ensure we all agree on the best cover story for each of us, for one thing Tu'Tak cannot be seen in his true form and while his current form is very helpful right now it will be next to useless once we arrive in Guaine.

Posted by: Jedric Jul 4 2005, 05:17 PM«

B'rayth pauses to gauge everyone's reaction before continuing, You will all need to follow my lead, RGÇÖshall and I are known hereabouts, but you are all strangers, foreigners. Perhaps youGÇÖd all best be travellers from Fyak, thatGÇÖs about as far away as possible.GÇ¥” BGÇÖrayth thinks for a moment then nods, GÇ£Yeesha, you should be a visiting Deroi, a priestess of Baith on a pilgrimage perhaps. The Baithists are all women and their rites are held in secret, so no one is likely to ask you difficult questions, as long as you donGÇÖt meet any real Baithists that is, everyone else should be attendants or guards I think.GÇ¥ BGÇÖrayth pauses thoughtfully, GÇ£TuGÇÖTak youGÇÖll perhaps find the form of a hound more convenient for moving around within the city. Does anyone have any objections to any of that?

Posted by: erichenry Jul 5 2005, 12:44 PM«

Arenea shakes her head. Is there anything in particular we need to know about how we should behave in order to maintain this cover?“ she asks in her normal, whisper-quiet voice.”

Posted by: Jedric Jul 5 2005, 07:07 PM«

B'rayth smiles at Arenea. You should have no problems my lady. Women in Kruienne rarely speak their minds, at least not in public, not even Deroi. B'rayth glances sidelong at Yeesha at this point. There are too many things to cover to be sure of avoiding any slips, but I would advise you all to be aware of how you speak and to whom, where possible follow my lead... One thing that has been a problem already is introductions, be formal, if possible introduce yourself to each person you are presented to, proclaiming your name to a group is not correct protocol, Reyn knows what I refer to I think. B'rayth looks across at Reyn. This is especially so when talking to nobles, if a nobleman feels he has been slighted you may be challenged on the spot.

Posted by: Sim Jul 6 2005, 05:01 AM«

Yeesha smiles widely, I understand. I will keep my silence. That can be explained away as a religious quirk.“ She then points to the tattoos on her face. Will these present a problem?“

Posted by: Jedric Jul 6 2005, 07:10 AM«

B'rayth smiles at Yeesha, No, you will fit right in never doubt it!“

Posted by: Curufea Jul 6 2005, 11:41 AM«

As always, says Gideon, “I will endeavour to be discreet and unobtrusive.” He smiles and once more stands aside from the discussion.

Posted by: Jedric Jul 6 2005, 07:47 PM«

B'rayth looks around for more questions or comments, getting none he shrugs and comments, Let's move then.” Led by BGÇÖrayth, the party descends from the moors into the farmlands immediately north of Guaine, in the moonlight they can see that it is a landscape broken up by dry-stone walls, and light scrubby woods. Fields of undetermined crops alternate with rough pastureland inhabited by long horned shaggy cattle and sheep. After some minutes BGÇÖrayth leads the party onto a track that may in fact be the local GÇÿroadGÇÖ. They pass several farms, and coming to a crossroads they see a round built farmhouse that stands nearby, it seems typical of the local architecture, its construction is unsophisticated but robust and is probably several centuries old at least. The farmyard is surrounded by the ubiquitous dry stone walling with a sturdily built gate as the means of entrance. Night has completely fallen when the party finally near Guaine, the city is a mere grey hulk in the distance, but its presence is announced by its smell, a very human odour which is not easily forgotten, it is mixture of animal smells, human waste and general filth. Approaching Guaine, the size of the city promises a population of perhaps 10,000 people. The great wall and battlements are not of a typical medieval style, more an elaboration of the local architecture, and definitely not designed to repel an attack by organised siege warfare. They seem more suited to simply keeping people out, or perhaps to keep the cityGÇÖs people in. A pair of guards stand near the main gate, a guard room at their back, they become more alert as the group approaches and its seems unlikely that they will allow them to pass unchallenged. Beyond the gate is a small square about which stands a mixture of timber and stone buildings, closely packed. It seems likely that this is a very crowded community, and judging from the smell a filthy one. Narrow alleys lead off from the square in many directions, a wider main street lies directly ahead heading toward the centre of the city. A large number of locals are going about their business. Visible above the nearby buildings is the shadow of a keep that apparently stands upon a hilltop at the cityGÇÖs centre; the keep is a squat round structure, and seems almost to be an enlarged version of the nearby farmhouses. Approaching the gates BGÇÖrayth strides confidently forward, the guards move to block the partyGÇÖs way until they see BGÇÖrayth. BGÇÖrayth turns to the party and motions them to wait as he goes forward into the gateway. A guard jogs off to the side and enters the guardhouse, a moment later he reappears with another watchman, an officer, who goes to speak with BGÇÖrayth. After a brief talk BGÇÖrayth returns, meanwhile a guard mounts a horse and gallops off toward the keep. GÇ£IGÇÖve told the captain of the guard there that you all came to my aid during the hellcreature attack, heGÇÖs sent a messenger to the broch so Lord GGÇÖorhm will be expecting us. IGÇÖll tell his lordship that Reyn and Gideon are noblemen of Fyak, acting as escorts to Yeesha and her attendants, Arenea and Anna. The Yarla will no doubt wish to welcome you personally. RGÇÖshall, heGÇÖs also asked for a healer. BGÇÖrayth grins for a second. GÇ£TuGÇÖTak youGÇÖll be taken to the stables. Come.GÇ¥ BGÇÖrayth then turns on his heel and strides along the main street through the mass of GuaineGÇÖs citizenry and the stench and filth; he shows no sign of noticing anything amiss. The streets are quite dark; the only illumination present is light that spills out from nearby windows and of course from the moon overhead. Nearing

the broch a pack of dogs runs in front of BGÇÖrayth, barking and prancing, but they quickly scurry away as BGÇÖrayth unceremoniously boots the pack leader in the rump. As the group reach the gate of the broch a watch officer appears, with a short but formal greeting he leads them into the courtyard.

Posted by: theseus Jul 7 2005, 06:54 PM«

Instead of the expected lord of the castle, a good looking young man with black hair and green eyes shows up. A number of attendants mill about him. Healers direct two hefty looking guards on how to best lift RGÇÖshall onto a stretcher, who is carried in the direction that is probably the infirmary. GÇ£Welcome to Guaine,GÇ¥ the young man says. GÇ£I am Lord JGÇÖlef, and I was asked to meet with you. Lord GGÇÖorhm is pressed by many matters of state at present, but has asked for a private audience with BGÇÖrayth immediately. In the meantime, you will be shown to private rooms to refresh yourselves, and dinner will be brought to you.GÇ¥ He nods to BGÇÖrayth, and looks into his eyes while clasping both of his hands. GÇ£I regretted being forced to become the second for Lord DGÇÖmerg. His argument and duel with you was sheer folly. I tried to stop him before you had to kill him, but he was proud and would not listen.GÇ¥ He releases BGÇÖraythGÇÖs hands. GÇ£Now please introduce me to your companions.GÇ¥

Posted by: Jedric Jul 7 2005, 08:01 PM«

B'rayth accepts J'lef's greeting equably. He makes no comment regarding D'merg. When asked to introduce everyone he nods and turns to the party. Certainly my Lord, I will do as well as I can, I am not a courtier so forgive me my manner. GÇ£ Pausing for a moment BGÇÖrayth breathes deeply before beginning. GÇ£May I have the honour of introducing to you Yeesha of Fyak, Deroi in the service of Holy Baith. She is on a pilgrimage or suchlike, no doubt she can explain that far better than I.GÇ¥ BGÇÖrayth indicates Yeesha as he speaks, before pointing out Arenea and Anna, almost in passing. GÇ£Her attendants are Arenea and Anna, novices of the order I believe. B'rayth pauses looking Yeesha's way as though for confirmation. With a smile towards Gideon and Reyn B'rayth gives a small bow. I am also pleased to introduce the Lords G'dyon MGÇÖkaGÇÖna MGÇÖkall and R'hayn MGÇÖkaGÇÖna HGÇÖspahn, both also of Fyak. They have acted as the Holy one's escorts and guards. Might I also add that RGÇÖshall and I owe them a debt of honour for coming to our aid when we were beset by foes. But that is a matter best left for later. B'rayth then changes position. My Lady, my Lords. May I introduce Lord J'lef MGÇÖkaGÇÖna KGÇÖnerr, Yarla GGÇÖorhmGÇÖs second and also I believe his cousin.

Posted by: theseus Jul 8 2005, 09:38 AM«

Lord JGÇÖlef nods to each person as their name is mentioned. He steps forward to offer Yeesha his steady arm, and to help her off TuGÇÖtak and onto the ground. GÇ£We donGÇÖt have many priestesses travelling through our lands. I hope our hospitality will meet your expectations.GÇ¥

Posted by: Sim Jul 8 2005, 10:54 AM«

Yeesha smiles warmly as she takes his offered hand and allows herself to be helped to the ground. She nods graciously as B'rayth and the Lord J'lef address her, but keeps her eyes slightly downcast, never looking at them directly. She leaves her backpack on the back of Tu'Tak, but keeps hold of the journal she had been attending to on the journey. The quill is now tucked in amongst the decorative

feathers in her hair.

Posted by: theseus Jul 12 2005, 07:35 AM«

Lord JGÇÖlef motions to a stable boy nearby. GÇ£DGÇÖrask will look after your horse, while I show you to your rooms.GÇ¥ DGÇÖrask approaches TuGÇÖtak, making friends with him, before leading him off to the stables. Tu'tak's story is continued in 013 Stables...

http://s4.invisionfree.com/First_Light/index.php?showtopic=81 GÇ£Now if you will follow me, please.GÇ¥ Lord JGÇÖlef says.

Posted by: Reyn Jul 12 2005, 08:46 AM«

Reyn steps into line a pace behind and to the left of Yeesha, placing himself directly behind Lord J'lef as he walks beside her. As they head towards the guest quarters Reyn does his best to memorise the layout of the keep.

Posted by: erichenry Jul 12 2005, 02:57 PM«

Arenea falls into place behind Yeesha; close to Reyn but not so close as to interfere with any move he might have to make. She clasps her hands before her and keeps her eyes downcast, looking at the floor. The cloak falls closed around her like a monkGÇÖs robe. The ease with which she falls into this posture suggests Arenea is used to not drawing attention to herself.

Posted by: theseus Jul 13 2005, 09:04 AM«

Anna looks around her casually, but taking particular note of items that look valuable.

Guest Rooms

[TranscriptGideon7](#)

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