

TALISBLANTA

Tales from the Emerald Pentacle

Issue Six

Again, O reader, we return to the Emerald Pentacle in the crystal city of Cymril, for another Tale concerning the exploits of the junior section of Halesowen Boardgamers.

It was Jhang and the red moon was high, a month or so has passed since they returned from the False Forest. Thermite had returned to Arim and Grave was off following up a rumour he had heard. The rest had a rude awakening when they were saddled with a bill for 250 gold lumens for board and lodging. They were discussing finding work when Pulan, the stammering servant of the mage Gennaro, approached their table and informed them that his master had need of their services. Stoopod and K'kree had worked for Gennaro before so they accepted the offer. The job was easy; they were given a sealed scroll and told to take it to the house of Tizun Thane, hard by the Vardune gate. Tizun would reward them with work. On no account were they to break the seal on the scroll. Stoopod took the scroll and off they set.

On the streets they met Cil, a young Cymrilian Euphorica seller, who appeared to clad in no more than a cloud of shimmering sparks! No one was interested in buying Euphorica (a recreational drug popular in the city), although a half-hearted attempt was made to haggle over the price. She then produced some lottery tickets for sale at 1 lumen each, to be drawn at the Magical Fair on 14th Phandir. Everyone except K'kree bought a ticket, Throtal borrowing money off Stoopod to do so.

At this point there was a massive explosion from ahead and a huge, fiery creature burst out onto the street in a cloud of green and purple flame. Mr. Quiz recognised it as being a pyro-demon, Jenny fired off a slingshot at it and Throtal and Stoopod ran in to attack. The creature breathed a huge gout of fire over both of them. K'kree flew up and over its head, as he did so he saw a man standing on a rooftop, watching. Blows from Throtal and

Stoopod finished the creature off; the watcher vanished in a puff of green smoke. When they ran up to the roof, he had gone.

After enquiring as to the way they eventually found the house of Tizun Thane, near to the Vardune gate. K'kree flew up to scout the roof, finding no way in; the others, led by Stoopod, walked in the front door. The house appeared deserted; explorations found a library, with a large statue clad in red iron Kang battle armour, and also a kitchen, with steps down to a cellar.

Exploring the cellar, K'kree found a secret passage; heading down this he narrowly avoided falling into a pit (only because he had the Bracers of Levitation). Steps up led back, through a secret panel in a bookcase, to the library. Exploring back from the entrance hall they found a fountain of sweet water that restored some health; a metal door that they couldn't open, and stairs up. Up the stairs, a corridor led off left and right with doors. They each chose a door and charged in, to find bedrooms. A search revealed nothing of interest (although some of the adventurers took the opportunity to use the chamber pots found under the beds). However, when K'kree entered his chosen room he was greeted with a piercing shriek; the room contained a four-poster bed and sitting up in it, clutching the bedclothes, was a young woman, topaz-skinned and completely hairless. "Who are you", she shrieked, "what are you doing here?" The others came running.

"We want to speak to the manager", replied Stoopod (as they had convinced themselves that the place was actually a hotel of some kind). "Who is the owner and where is he?"

"This is the house of Tizun Thane and I am his... (she coloured)... paramour. I do not know where he is; he often goes for some time, then returns. "

"What is your name?"

"I am Aa., Lysa. Now, allow me to get dressed."

They left the room and were about to investigate the door at the far end of the corridor when suddenly, from below, came a loud crash. Guttural shouts followed, then came a clear voice giving instructions: -

"Search the house. I want Thane alive, but kill anyone else. Keep anything you like."

"! Obey, we do!

(GM: This is where it gets confusing).

Stoopod, Jenny and K'kree ran downstairs, to see several Jhangarans wearing the yellow wrappings of the mercenary, piling in through the door to the inner hall. Throtal ran back to the bedroom where they had found the woman; Mr Quiz stayed on the upper landing. Stoopod went face to face with a Jhangaran and bested him; Jenny hit a few with her sling but then closed

in with her dagger; which she proved to be very proficient with. K'kree hid under the stairs (!)

Throtal received no answer from the woman when he called out, went into the room to find it empty. He ran back to the stairs, to find Mr Quiz downstairs locked in combat and K'kree trying to sneak up the stairs. He called out that the woman had gone; from somewhere outside a voice said "Thane's whore has fled. Search and capture her." The combat moved in the PC's favour, however they were all getting hurt. Stoopod noticed a man (possibly a Cymrilian) who appeared to be in charge, make some gestures and suddenly vanish. Seconds later, first K'kree, then Mr Quiz, were hit with Arcane Bolts. Finally the Jhangarans retreated. Near to the door a levitating figure of a Cymrilian mage appeared: -

"Twice today you have thwarted my plans. I, Aquilane, am sorely vexed by this, and I will not forget. Don't think I won't try. There will be a reckoning." He then flew out of the door.

K'kree recognised him as the man he had seen earlier on the rooftop.

Aftermath, whilst looting the bodies of the slain Jhangarans (who appeared to be carrying far more money than they ought to have been), Throtal came back downstairs in time to see the woman, now dressed, trying to sneak out through the front door. With only a split second to react, he yelled, "Come back and we'll give you some money"; at which point she fled out into the city.

Mr Quiz and Stoopod broke through the metal door by using Mr Quiz's Arcane Bolt to melt the lock, whilst the others headed back upstairs to the metal door at the end of the corridor.

Stoopod and Mr Quiz found a magician's workroom; but the air went suddenly very cold. Mr Quiz felt something brush past him...

Upstairs, Throtal broke through the door, to reveal a blank wall. K'kree investigated and found a false wall, leading to a passage.

Mr Quiz cast a Spell of Radiance; revealing that their opponent was a Shadowcat, obviously here as a guardian. Stoopod attacked it ("Well, it'll die easily"), only to find his sword passed straight through it. It then sucked out some of his life force and started to become corporeal. They both ran out, the cat didn't pursue. They ran back upstairs to join the others.

Upstairs, the passage led to another door. Stoopod found that spy holes along the walls of the passage looked into the bedrooms they had investigated earlier. Through the door, they found themselves in the base of the tower, with three chests and a table. The chests contained substantial quantities of copper, silver and gold; on the table was a small Kasmiran puzzle-box that Mr Quiz took.

Stoopod tried to open the scroll that Gennaro had given them. Both K'kree and Throtal urged him not to; he couldn't break the seal so he persuaded Jenny to do it. When unravelled, the scroll read

"If you are reading this, then it is because you have disobeyed instructions and done something which you were told not to do. Accordingly, whoever broke the seal is cursed with Malador's Maddening Itch. G"

They returned to the Emerald Pentacle, bearing their loot.

Jenny noticed that her fingertips had turned red and felt warm.

Brass Jester

