

Campaign Summary: Domhani Ambrethel

The following is an account of many of the events important to the main story arc of the campaign. Please note that this is a summary, and there are likely to be events not included here that are important to other aspects of the evolving campaign and that may come up again. Also, as I was reading back over the early posts, I was impressed by the effort of the players to develop their characters into people – the conversations, the posted thoughts, etc. I think these elements kept the game interesting, made it personal, and would like to see more.

The Players

Party Members:	Athelstan	An alchemist, searching for a permanent cure for his strange wasting illness.
	Béar	A Non-Com in the Queen's army, converted to her service from the army of Ráth Diamhair
	Cerallos	A mountain born priest, hunting his master's killers even as he runs from the men of his village who blame him for his master's death
	Dílis	A traveling musician/storyteller, pursuing a mission for the Queen in order to enter her service
	Gavril	A teacher of history, literature, and swordplay – on the road because as soon as he settles in one place he invariably gets in trouble over a 'misunderstanding' about a woman
	Skáth	A <i>Faeborn</i> , longtime covert residence of the Queen's Palace in Tearmann with an inborn talent for magical Healing (1 ½ ft tall)
NPCs:	Queen Mathair	The newly crowned ruler who united the separate provinces of the island of Domhan
	Gealach Crois	A member of the <i>Bairdéir</i> , the Queen's special cadre of irregular forces
	Naíolann anSíocháin	Commander of the <i>Bairdéir</i> , reputed to be the most deadly swordsman in the land
	Deasaigh Fíoru	Recent party member, now considered a traitor and member of the enemy camp (whomever the enemy really is)
	Illé Sorden and Vyl Corruck 'The Shadow'	Probably priests, attempting to resurrect the worship of an ancient and evil deity An evil creature, first encountered by the party at the Wickshine's Last Inn and again at the Jungle Mansion – escaped both times

The Wickshine's Last Inn

On Mid-Winter Day in year one of the reign of Queen Máthair, the personal quests and goals of each member of the original party led them to The Wickshine's Last Inn, a small country inn that is the last remains of a once prosperous town (famous for its apple brandy).

As the members of the party trickled in one by one, they began making each other's acquaintance in the way people do when they've been on the road alone for awhile. Everything went well, and the guests of 'The Wick' eventually retired upstairs to their beds.

The peace of the early morning was shattered by a woman's scream. The guests of the inn awakened and stumbled downstairs to find the Wick's mistress under attack by her three children, horribly transformed into ghouls. The children were subdued, during which effort Athelstan unintentionally killed one of them.

Very shortly thereafter, the guests became aware of a strange smell permeating the air of the Wick, and almost simultaneously there came a knock at the door. After some arguing, the door was opened to admit Gealach Crois, who rushed into the common room proclaiming himself an agent of Queen Máthair and that he was being pursued by a horde of skeletons.

The guests were quickly organized into a reasonable defense, and battle was joined. During the battle, one of the guests (Eadon Marsh) began screaming in agony, and before the horrified eyes of the guests he was ripped apart as a living shadow of some sort tore its way out of his body. This shadow immediately set about attacking the party as well. Though the cost was heavy, the party eventually won out when two of its members found a smoking censer upstairs in the room of Illé Sorden, Eadon's employer. When they extinguished the censer, the remaining skeletons fell to the ground and the fight was over. There was no sign of Ser Sorden, the apparent instigator of the entire mess.

Cerallos recognized the Censer used by Ser Sorden to summon the skeletons as belonging to his former master, stolen by the thieves that killed him. He took possession of the Censer, and currently carries it.

During the cleanup, Athelstan came upon Gealach in a somewhat suspicious circumstance – it appeared he was doing something to the grizzly remains of Eadon's body. Gealach deflected the questions of the party, keeping his origins mysterious. The party members spent some time discussing their backgrounds in very general terms – the beginnings of true party bonding, but by no means the sharing of their full stories. One fact about each of the characters was revealed – that each of them felt isolated from their fellow man for one reason or another, that each of them felt a need to belong to something, to be tied to a purpose larger than themselves.

After a short rest, the guests of the inn who were primarily responsible for the organization and defense (the party members) were called together by Gealach Crois. He again presented himself as an agent of the Queen, a *Bairdéir* or Warder, and recruited the party to her service to investigate the apparent disappearance of a royal employee who was supposed to be mining for silver in the Wilderlands close to Tearmann. Successful completion of this mission would open the possibility of the group becoming Bairdéir themselves. They were each given a ring to represent the authority given them by Queen Máthair to complete this mission. Each of the party members, hungry for acceptance and belonging to something larger than themselves, accepted the mission and temporarily entered the service of the Queen. Each was given a ring of black iron about ½ inch wide to wear as a symbol of their service, so that their authority would be recognized.

When they left the Wick, the group was also in possession of one of only six bottles of Wickshine's Apple Brandy, the last of the brandy distilled at the inn over 100 years ago.

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### The Journey to the Mines

A few interesting things happened on the way to the mines.

A few days out from the Wick, the party members on watch were drawn away from the group by suspicious noises in the woods. They were beset by huge gorillas, which they bested. On their return to the camp, they found the rest of the party in a strange state of suspended animation, and the little *Faeborn*, Skáth, missing. Skáth was supposed to be on watch as well. The rest of the party was eventually awakened, and decided to investigate the ruins of a manor house found by the watch in their investigation of the gorillas.

Skáth returned to the party shortly after they began their investigation, and brushed off all questions regarding his whereabouts and involvement in the strange state in which his mates were left. Diddious, the bodyservant of Gavril, was kidnapped and the party mounted a rescue expedition. After rescuing Diddious, the group

encountered the strange shadow from the Wick again, along with another group of skeletons. Deciding that discretion is the better part of valor, they left the manor house in full knowledge that they had not thoroughly plumbed its secrets.

Also on the way to the mines, the group encountered a strange party of humanoid praying mantises. After a short fight, the valiant group won out, but in policing the area afterwards they discovered that one of the insectoid creatures had been slain by a long black arrow unclaimed by any in the group. The group's archer, Deasaigh, proclaimed the arrow to be of expert craftsmanship but disavowed any direct knowledge of its origins.

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The 'Silver' Mines

Arriving at the mine site, the party discovered that all of the miners had been slain in some mysterious fashion. Though puzzled about the nature of the attacker, the group searched the bodies and determined that only Vyl Corruck, the person they'd been sent to find, was missing.

Quickly disposing of the miners' bodies, the party resolved to search for the entrance to the mines themselves the next morning and settled in for the night. In the wee hours of the morning, the camp was attacked by a giant constrictor snake – plainly the author of the destruction of the rest of the miners. After a fairly short engagement in which the snake appeared to be getting the best of them, Béar (the party's 'Brick') revealed the skills that make him a force to be reckoned with. In a move of superb strength and timing, he caught the worm's striking head between the ground and his mighty mace *Thanatos*, slaying the beast instantly.

Early the next day, the party found the entrance to the mines themselves. Below the seething, humid jungle of the surface, they found a strange realm of freezing cold, rime covered flint inhabited by a strange race of barbaric seeming warriors frozen in the ice. The footing was treacherous, and there were two constructs of a strange alchemical/magical/mechanical nature lying in wait for them. After what seemed an eternity (but was really only a few hours) of making their way through the oppressive dark and cold and battling terrifying animated corpses capable of unholy feats of magic and cunning, the exhausted group of adventurers discovered a prisoner – a lady who, like themselves, was on a mission for Queen Máthair.

During their discussion with her, it was discovered that Dílis' mission tied into their own, or at least shared some common elements. She was pursuing Illé Sorden, the man who escaped the Wickshine's Last Inn. He was supposedly involved in an attempt to resurrect the worship of a vile and evil god from Domhan's distant past, and the Queen sent Dílis to stop him and return him for her justice. It seemed more than a coincidence that Dílis' target and the party's ended up in the same place . . .

Shortly thereafter, the group discovered a secret entrance to a concealed area of the underground complex. Béar and Deasaigh entered a small chamber and discovered an anomaly that allowed them to enter this area. There, they found the blasted body of Ser Sorden lying next to a round door, and the sacrificed body of Ser Corruck on a very evil appearing altar.

Then disaster struck.

Deasaigh, the group's stalwart if distant archer betrayed them. He took advantage of the party's trust, and used their relative positions to sacrifice Béar on Ser Corruck's altar by shooting him in the stomach, thereby opening the portal. Strangely, his sacrifice seemed to hold no personal animosity to the group, and he allowed them to come to Béar's aid as long as they did not interfere with his progress through the portal or try to follow him. Despite their rage at his betrayal, the members of the group had not trouble deciding that the preservation of their friend took precedence over their desire for Deasaigh's end, and they allowed him to enter the portal and close it behind him unmolested.

Exhausted and heartsick from their losses, the group made its way to the surface and to the capitol, where they will give the queen a report on their mission and decide their next steps. Though physically sound thanks to the healing ministrations of their tiny *Faeborn* friend during their journey, they are nevertheless weary and in need of significant rest and spiritual healing.

The adventure resumes as the party enters the gates of Tearmann, the Queen's home city and the newly established capitol of the entire unified island realm.