

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Session The World of Haze 20220604

### Scouting Debrief

The Crew came back from their scouting expedition and reported to Lieutenant Meersh, who reported to Acting House-Head Shiize.

### Faed

While the Crew was awaiting the results of their debriefing, Faed was approached by an older woman within the House that Faed knew had been friends with her mother. The older woman said that she was very sorry that your mother passed, that they were very good friends, and she knows that Faed has entered into a very different world now where she is going to be doing a lot of really amazing stuff, and she gives Faed a potion.

### New Mission

Lieutenant Meersh returned after having met with the House Head and the other lieutenant and said, "We have decided that we are going to communicate with the other two Houses and mount a joint expedition out to that island. There's going to be a lot happening over the next few days. Ordo has told me that she really wants to get moving on this trip to find the MOT on this island. Your job is to protect her as she travels there, operates the MOT, and identifies which of you may have the ability to activate them."

### MOT Activation Ability

Ordo was very interested in finding out who may have the ability. As exceptional members of House Shatum this was an important mission. It's something that you would normally have been tested for when you were on the Training Island because there's a MOT there, but you weren't tested because if you try before you reach a sufficient amount of development, or you go through a MOT before then, you will significantly diminish your chances of ever having the ability. That was why you did not travel through a MOT while on the Training Island and they sent you to Midlay via ship.

### Midlay Island

Midlay island is about 400 miles in length. Most of the Orcs reside on the end of the island furthest from the mountain. Nearer the mountain the terrain does get rougher, and there seems to reside more unusual creatures. The Crew was looking at about five days travel, and they had to leave at night. The Crew slipped out through an access point controlled by guards who are members of House Shatum. They packed out their armor at first because it was too noisy to wear, but once outside they put it on (except at night when sleeping). They avoided settlements and went through dense woods, most of the time in single file. When it

was time for a rest they found a clearing with a stand of trees in the middle, with elevation, cover, and a field of fire.

### Badger Encounter

After the first morning breakfast someone noticed down on the edge of the clearing a badger looking up at the stand of trees. After group discussion Ordo said, "I think I know who it is." And walked to the edge of the clearing. As soon as she saw the badger she said, "Hey, Alor! Come up here right now!" The badger started up with her tail between her legs. Ordo told her to transform immediately and Alor popped up in human form. She immediately began babbling about how she knew they were leaving, and how it's so unfair, but, that she has news: There's a horse following them. She was hoping that would somehow make her being there okay. She said, "As a badger I can smell really well, and at some point I noticed the horse's scent. The horse moved up to in front of me as you traveled. I haven't gotten close because I didn't want to spook her. I was coming up to let you know. The horse is hiding a couple hundred yards off. She's definitely deep in the woods. I think she's waiting for you to start traveling for the day."

### Alor Joins the Crew

Gundal threw hard questions at Alor, but the Crew decided to let her stay, so Gundal said, "while you're with us, you follow our command. You're part of our crew on this mission. Is that clear?" She looked at Ordo and Ordo gave her The Look, so she said, "Yes, I will." Gundal also told Alor to stay next to him, as though she was untrustworthy, and Ordo told him that either she's a part of this crew, or we send her back. Gundal reluctantly accepted her as Crew for the time being.

### Neigh Neigh

After some group discussion it was decided to have Gundal shout out to the horse. After a little bit the horse appeared at the edge of the woods, then wandered up, also a little bit abashedly, and said her name is Neigh Neigh. She was amazed at the Crew's ability to detect her. When asked what she was doing there she said, "Well, I've been following you guys, but to explain I've got a bit of a story to tell: I've been out in the woods for some time. I was part of the Lupay stable when one day last fall I was being ridden by a Lupay soldier guiding a supply caravan. I was getting weird vibes from him, and when he tried to tie me up to a tree I was not going to have any of that. I ran off shocked that he would do such a thing. I hung back a little watching what was going on and suddenly Orcs

attacked, and this soldier he's not doing anything! He just stood there. The Orcs were killing everybody else and they didn't bother him, and then he just ran off back towards town. I knew I couldn't go back. Ever since then I've been relying on the kindness of some individuals that have been very good to me, but they can't keep helping me, and it's going to be Fall soon. I'm not going to be able to make it out here through another winter. I saw you leave that early morning before first light. I wasn't planning to follow you at all. I was just going to hang out some more. But, when it was early daylight I saw three soldiers from Lupay go out the same exit on horseback, and one of them was the soldier that tried to tie me to a tree! I was curious as to what they were up to. They were headed off in an odd direction. When the soldiers dismounted and the horses stayed behind I went up and talked to the horses. They said that the soldiers were up to no good, and that they were going to go meet some Orcs. At that point I was really curious. I'm not like the other horses. I'm wanting to do more than they do. I followed the soldiers for a little bit and they met up with three Orcs. After they talked for a bit the Orcs took off in your direction. I think those Orcs are going to try and do something to you. It seemed like you needed to know this. I was just waiting for the right time to approach you."

#### **Aerial Recon**

The Crew decided to stay at their current camp where they had elevation, concealment, and a clearing around them, while Ordo transformed into an eagle and took off to scout out where the orcs might be. After a while the eagle came back and transformed back into human form. She said it's not good. About a mile away and spread out wide was a line of Orcs. Maybe as many as 80 of them are headed our way. She also noticed there was some very rocky hilly terrain where they could possibly limit the Orc's access to maybe facing less than 10 of them at a time, and they could have a secondary defensive position in a cave/indentation up high that could restrict how many Orcs can attack down to three at a time.

#### **Ogre Interruption**

Unfortunately as the Crew approached the location three Ogres stood up and threw javelins . They were well positioned with greater elevation above a cliff and behind some rocks providing cover. Alor got hit and was really hurt. The Crew quickly realized they need to bypass the cave. A fog cloud was cast by Bordi to block the Ogre's vision. Gundal's crossbow string broke and everyone dashed for cover behind the hill.

#### **Escape Plants**

Ordo said, "We're in a tough spot. I didn't want to do this but I think this might be our only choice. I can

transform into a giant Eagle but I can't carry but two smaller people. However, I've been hording these magic seeds for years. I only have four left. If you eat one then you turn into a small plant until I release you. I could turn four of you into small plants and then one of you could carry the plants and then ride on my back This might actually be expeditious now that I think about it because we could just fly really far, really fast. And I love flying." Everyone quickly agreed. The two druids rode the eagle. Neigh Neigh agreed to eat a seed, and everybody else was also turned into a plant. Ordo said, "These seeds are really powerful. They were imbued with magic through a very special process that I was not in control of personally. I now have the power to turn you into a small plant any time I want to, You can try and resist (make a save to avoid), but anytime I am touching you and I take action to turn you into a plant, if you're trying to avoid it you'll have to actively resist. My power will last for as long as I live, but once I die you can do it to yourself at will." They left the Ogres and Orcs breathing their bird farts.

#### **MOTs**

After some air travel they approached the mountain, and the two druids and Ordo, in giant eagle form, all started scouting the volcano mountaintop for the MOT. Soon they found along one side an out-jetting that was very flat. In the center of it was a mandala. It's had a big area around it with rough terrain. The MOT itself was about 40 feet in diameter and had an intricate design, like a kaleidoscopic image. The pattern was in different shades of gray, going from deepest black to a very reflective white. While there were bits of rock and other crap that had fallen from the upper mountainside, the MOT was totally clear. There was nothing on it. On close examination you could not tell what the MOT material was. You didn't see any grain or surface texture. You've all seen a MOT before, when you were taken to see the one on the Training Island, but you were told not to go on it. The only way you can travel through one is either by having the ability or if you are touching someone who has the ability who wishes to go there and they have the capacity to carry you. If you have the ability you may also have a capacity for other sentient beings to be transported with you. You can only initiate travel through each MOT once between every dark period. You have to have a complete dark period before you can use a MOT again, If you use it in the middle of a dark period, you'd have to wait another full dark period before you can use it again. You can initiate further travel from the MOT you arrive at, including returning to the starting MOT. Capacity is determined by being on the MOT and having others get on the MOT and touch you; you feel a tingle as long as you have the capacity.

And as soon as a number of people touching you exceeds that capacity the tingle goes away. You know that you won't be able to transport until the number of individuals touching you drops. Everybody stayed off the MOT and then Liedell and Gundal took turns standing on it and determined that Liedell can carry four and Gundal can carry two. Ordo said that there might be five or six other people within House Shatum right now are able to utilize the MOTs.

#### **Training Island MOT**

The Crew traveled through the MOT to the Training Island. These were your old stomping grounds, and it was empty because most of the people had returned back to their respective Houses. The MOT here is also on a mountain. The only two other places Ordo could take you was the MOT on Clae and one that was on the very small island that crashed into Clae.

#### **Clae MOT**

The next day Ordo took them to the MOT that was on Clae, and they found themselves on another mountainside. If it had been a volcano, it was now dormant. The MOT was also on an out jutting of rock that had a very flat surface. Most of it was littered from debris and rocks that had fallen from above, except that the MOT was totally clear. It had nothing on it. Ordo informed everyone that it's not a good idea to stand on a MOT and not use it, because things and people will soon start to become transparent and then disappear and we don't know what happens to them. That's why it's clean. Anything that falls on it eventually goes away. The Crew set up camp nearby and set watches, but the area seemed completely isolated on this side of the mountain. There was nothing to eat and it was barren. The temperatures varied a lot, and there was even more haze. The MOT on Clae is too far away from Voneer to be useful to the humans. Which was one of the reasons why they just put you on a ship to take you to the Training Island. It was faster, and it was safer because you'd have to travel overland far too long.

#### **Crash Island MOT**

The next day they went to the MOT in the Crash Island. The Crew appeared inside a small cave. The perimeter around the MOT was wider by only a few feet. There was an exit passageway that that led outside to show that it was indeed a very small island which was now maybe 600 yards inland. Crash Island is about 300 feet in diameter. It is roughly circular, and was almost in the middle of a derelict village. There were a lot of sagging straw huts, mostly age damaged and falling down. It looked like a small village that had contained maybe a hundred people. The Crew could hear a constant grinding and crumbling because the island is still trying to move. It has ridden up onto the land. The surface of

the island showed some evidence of several year old debris of bones and bits of fabric etc. It reminded everyone a little of the debris found around the trolls nest, but the bones here were heavily bleached, the rags were heavily bleached, and the debris was more scattered, and there was less of it than you would see in active areas. You did see a few boulders that look like they could have been giant sized hand-missiles. They're tossed about willy-nilly, and they're growing moss on the top side They've been here for years. The MOT in the Crash Island works (as far as we know of) like the other MOTs where you can travel to it and from it to any other MOT, but it is unusual in that it allows anyone, even if they don't have the ability, to travel to a specific MOT, and that MOT can apparently only travel back to the this MOT on Crash Island.

#### **Mountains With MOTs**

The Crew got back on the MOT and transported to the special destination that this MOT accesses. The temperature radically dropped. It was much colder. The air felt different. It smelled different. It was still hazy but it was a different kind of haze. When Crew members looked out into the distance they could see all these mountains as far as they could see, all approximately the same height. All of them were incredibly sheer. Most of them had flat tops. Some of them had nests, really, really large nests, not made out of twigs. On the very top of where the Crew was now there was a flat platform that has a huge area around it of about a half a mile wide. The MOT was right in the very middle of it. Off in one particular direction they saw that the closest MOT was maybe a little more than a mile away. It was a little bit lower and it was totally encircled by ring after ring after ring after a ring of skeletons, and they're all standing still.

#### **Stone Tower**

The Crew traveled back to Crash Island. They considered checking out Puhl's Stone Tower about a month away from Crash Island. Ordo said, "I have not been to it. I've been told about it. It was raided many many years ago, and at the time was thought that Puhl died in that attack. There was some sort of stone pig that you can put silver into it and it shits out gold, and there was some objects in there that were too big to move." They decided to leave that for another time.

#### **Training Island and Neigh Neigh**

The Crew traveled to Training Island. When they arrived on the MOT they didn't see Neigh Neigh. But, it was up high where there was nothing to eat and there was no place to feel comfortable. It was decided that Bordi would find out what Neigh Neigh needs. Ordo had her ride on her back and took her down to the training facility to talk with her. They saw Neigh Neigh outside

grazing and landed. At first she ran and then realized it's the giant eagle and came back. It was decided that Neigh Neigh will stay here until the Crew returns. They have requested her testimony in the future.

### **Lion and Elf at Midlay MOT**

The Crew reappeared on the MOT on Midlay Island (this mountain is more of an active volcano) and they saw a lion. It was very surprised to see them all appear and it sprinted away and was soon gone over the edge.

Gundal told Ordo to turn into a giant Eagle, turn those that can into plants, and carry the druids, so they can chase the lion. After taking the time to do all that she took to the air. Bordi, Alor, and the eagle were the only ones that still had useful levels of perception. Ordo was paying attention where the lion might be, when Alor suddenly said, "What's that?" Bordi and Ordo turned to look and saw that a figure had appeared in the middle of the MOT. Ordo circled back to see a strange looking humanoid. The skin color had a shimmery metallic sheen to it (Think Twilight movies). Alor said, "I think that's an elf!" And Ordo started to land. The elf was obviously dazed to the point of not even recognizing what was going on until they landed, but once Ordo landed the elf started moving away off the MOT. It was obviously surprised about everything. Surprised and concerned. Bordi in large cat form ran ahead of it to drop off some food and then move out of the way, but before that could happen Bordi was blinded and the elf passed her by. Bordi reverted to human form and shortly after her vision returned.

### **Banished Elves**

Ordo said, "I don't think the Elvis threatening us, I know that this elf was banished and has been sent here. I'm not going to chase the elf right now." As the Crew watches her expectantly Ordo begins to explain some things, "This was something that I was going to explain at some point, but this situation has precipitated things. Occasionally elves that are apparently banished from some other society and world that does not seem to operate within this world have appeared at MOTs. They're not a part of this world at all, and from the elves that we have had contact with on this world we have learned that they were all banished, every single one of them, and some of them have been through more than one Uprising. That means, as far as we can tell, they are immortal unless killed. What apparently occasionally happens is, an elf will get banished and will appear on a MOT. We don't know why they appear on them and at what MOTs where they do. I've never seen one appear. I don't know of anybody who's ever seen one appear. This is all just stories, but apparently, when they appear, they are seriously compromised. They don't even know their own name. And what typically happens, as far as

we know, is that they try and find other elves like themselves. At that point they begin to learn more about what's happened to them and what's going on. They have lost memory or something like that."

### **Nium**

Ordo appeared conflicted. She wasn't really wanting to explain some things yet. She continued, "I'm going to tell you something where I need to be able to know that you will not spread it around. It's important. When the last Uprising occurred our House Shatum ancestors survived because they were able to float in the air. They were able to survive in the air because they created a structure that floated, and they did that with a unique material called Nium. We've been extracting Nium from the mines. We get other useful metals from there, but the one that really counts, the one that really drives our economy, is Nium. It 'naturally' appears as an unrefined ore that is an inconspicuous stone like material. It's an oxide that when smelted and purified becomes a dull metal. It doesn't have any special properties that are evident, unless it's in contact with magic or in a powerful environmental magic around it. It doesn't register as magical itself but feeds on the magic or the mana in its area. When it does it glows with a purple light and becomes lighter than air. If you have a magical source attached to a weapon that has Nium then the weapon becomes lighter and more effective. If you have it in your armor, then your armor becomes lighter, more effective, and stealthier (You may remove DEX disadvantages). Nium glows a violet purple light when it's activated. It's not something you can easily hide in the activation. It's activated with magic either by pumping magic spell energy into it, being in a strong magical environment, or it being in contact with something that's magical. Magic in contact with it will get drained eventually. The amount of time it takes depends on the magic item. The less powerful the magic the shorter the duration before it's drained. We've found most of our Nium through mining. But even then it's very rare. Gold is plentiful compared to it. Nium is very labor intensive to extract and purify because you have to pulverize it to very fine powder. Because it's such a small fraction in a great deal of material, when you subject it to a magical field whatever rises must not be held down by too much waste, or you won't see it. If the particles are too big, then the smaller particles of Nium inside will be weighted down too much, the purple glow will be obscured, and you won't detect it. It's very, very labor intensive. We hide its existence from most people because we've never had enough of to provide for everyone for the next Uprising. But we're in a bad situation that's rather extreme right now. We had accumulated enough to take care of most of the

House Shatum Nobles, and a large number of support staff before Puhl overran Voneer. Now we've lost almost all of it. That's another very good reason that we need to defeat him and hopefully recover it. The Nium is there."

### **Elves and Nium**

"The elves actively seek out anybody who has Nium and they take it from them. We believe they do this because they are essentially immortal and many of them have lived through previous Uprisings. They know what it's about. They know what's needed for them to survive, because even an elf can drown in the ocean. I met elves once, and they came in a flying vessel. It was powered with Nium. What we know of the elves for sure is that they're very, very interested in getting Nium any way they can. They will attempt to trade magic and information, or anything of value they think you might want in exchange for it, or they will steal it, or they will attack you and try and take. The ones that I dealt with were not to be trifled with, and I've heard that there's even more difficult ones out there. "

### **Fresh Elf**

"The advantage in forming some kind of relationship with this elf is that if it is still suffering effects from his being sent here that keeps it from understanding fully what's going on, then maybe we can learn from it during that time. Maybe we could form some beneficial relationship before it joins a group of elves that are definitely not interested in being a part of humanity."

### **Midlay/Uprising Crisis**

"The most immediate time crunch is that we had to pay the Midlay Minor Houses in Nium, and we have hardly any left. We don't have the means to provide ourselves with food for this coming winter without giving them more than we have, and that's even if they don't gouge us more. We're in a really tight spot. Before we had all these villages. We had production. We had the mines going. We were getting more Nium all the time. Small amounts, but it adds up month after month, year after year. We were where we could almost provide for all of the nobles and a significant number of support staff. The problem is now not everyone can go, and we don't know when the next Uprising will be. There are all kinds of different predictions, from a couple hundred years from now, or 50 years from now, or 5. So far, it's been hard to figure out."

### **Elf Capture**

The Crew considered plans on how to intercept the elf. Based on Ordo's observations from the air the Crew had a pretty good idea where he was going to end up at the bottom of the mountain. They flew ahead and built a fire and had some meat roasting to make it their presence as inviting and non-threatening as possible.

Ordo, while still a giant Eagle continued to look for the mountain lion. But after enough time passed they figured that he had slipped by them. Alor had an idea to turn into a badger and sniff him out. She turned and started tracking. Heading down a slope where there was a creek they saw the elf on the other side. Bordi turned into a lion. The elf dashed away. Bordi caught up and attempted to subdue the elf, but the elf cast a spell that made mirror images of himself, and he also occasionally vanished. Gundal caught up and entered the fray. The action continued and the elf cast another spell and Alor fell. More action and the elf cast a web spell, but both Gundal and Bordi avoided it. The elf continued to cast spells, but to no effect. Right when he was about to move to using his exceptional sword Gundal was successful with a disarm attack and did significant damage to the elf. The elf dropped to his knees and raised his hands. Gundal immediately moved to subdue. The elf did not resist. When stripped of his armor and pouches (they're wizard magical components) they found an unusual dagger, sword, and armor. Even the clothing was unusual. Alor was woken. The elf was given water and food. The elf was definitely paying attention and spoke some words, but they sounded like gibberish to everyone. He was obviously attempting to communicate with the Crew. The Crew attempted to communicate with the elf, but they were not having any success. Maybe if they start moving towards gestures or other things that are not language specific. Ordo was glad the Crew captured the elf alive.

### **Return to Midlay City**

With the elf tied up and put on the back of Ordo as a giant Eagle, and riding with him was Bordi as a house cat and Alor in human form, they flew back to near Midlay city. To hide their arrival a few went into town to bring out a wagon, and once inside the walls with the elf they put him in what they hoped would be a secure setup...

### **Issues**

Safe within the House compound Ordo said, "we have several issues to consider: One is the information we found out about Lupay, and the Orcs in their attempt to kill us. This is going to be touchy. I'm not exactly sure whether or not we should talk to Meersch about that. Meersch has confided to me that he's puzzled by Shiize's actions but I don't know the extent of where he would fall on reporting something of that nature back to Shiize. Also, I'm hesitant to get too much in the middle of this. As senior Druid, I have to have some level of impartiality because I pass judgment on things that happen within the House. As far as the elf is concerned, that's something that that our House will certainly want to keep in-House. We do need to tell

Meersch and Shiize, as well as the other senior lieutenant. We've got the elf in this locked room, and we've chosen the room that I think he won't be able to escape from even with his blink ability, but we're going to have to guard it carefully. That means that you going to have to take turns taking shifts guarding this in a way that will keep him from being able to blink out. Right now he can only blink into rooms that we can have immediate access to. It's well known to be hard to hold on to an elf and, and we've got to find some way to make some sort of relationship quickly.”

### **Treasure**

You learn that the chain armor is magical, the sword is magical and the dagger is magical. There was discussion about how if anyone goes around wearing the elf's stuff in the elf's presence they will have significant challenges befriending him.

Whew! It's time for a nice simple encounter!