

# The Story so far

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## Chapter the First: Where in the World is Wang?

### Session One

Sunday, 15th May, 12.30

Game date - 5th of March 3250

This is why Frieheer (or Baron) Alden hired [Thodric Jarl](#), a human (indeed, even somewhat Irolon in looks) mercenary of dubious employment background, straight from the semi-Arab reptilian nation of Zylstan. When you set forth to find a missing sorcerer in the wild and centaur-infested hinterlands, you want an experience mercenary to lead your guards. For while there is much inter-Duchy squabbling and skirmishes, guards tend not to have much campaigning experience in foreign parts. They're more used to beating up their neighbours or impressing the locals. Although it took until session two for Thodric to prove his worth (albeit by cleaving an unarmed, starving monster that had previously been shot by someone else, from horseback). Although he did offer valuable skills and advice on their journey into the Horse Wilds. Especially when they started discovering the partially eaten corpses of Wang's guards.

Meanwhile, [Red](#) wakes up. He's a full monster with two heads and a large stomach full of feline Kartaran guard. But he doesn't know this. In fact he doesn't know anything at all, he has no memories - and only retains some language skills. Which come in handy when he examines the McGuffin in his hand, because he can read the writing on it - even though he doesn't know what it could mean. To add to the confusion, Wang - who was lying next to him, jumps up and runs away. Leaving Red with naught but a bag of odd things and another half chewed guard corpse.

Luckily, along comes a bard named [Cadmus](#), who just happens to be exploring the Horse Wilds ("honestly, Bard's do that") and is willing to befriend this monster (who appears to be able to shape shift) and explain things to him.

Along comes [Team Alden](#) and they all get together under what anyone would class as "dubious plot reasons for a GM to get PCs into the same party". The we proceeded on to "dubious plot reasons for a GM to keep the PCs in the same party" ;-p

Red, named by Cadmus, and now shaped to appear like a midget relative of his, wearing the uniform of one of Wang's guards (which made Team Alden quite suspicious - almost overcoming the "PC glow". Possibly they are just too polite to interrogate strangers in a forest), wanders off to have a look at a wandering band of centaurs. These centaurs were in the way the previous day when Team Alden wanted to follow Wang's tracks, but were now camped further south. Caution (because it is well known the centaurs despise humanoids) and a quick count of the 4 to 1 odds, delayed the further tracking of Wang until a more opportune time.

It was then that everyone discovered Red's inquisitive nature, and the maximum level of unluck he had bought for his character ("unluck" is a game related disadvantage that is otherwise known as "GM's Delight"). Alerted the centuar guards, killed one of them, fled into the forest and dropped the

pouch of the McGuffin. The pouch was picked up by the pursuing tribe when they sought this monster, and ended up surrounding the camp. Team Alden was volunteered by the centaur Chief (let's call him "Tim", because the PC's haven't asked for his name yet) to search the forest for the monster-what-did-they-wrong.

## GM Synopsis

### GM's Session 1 Report

## Session two

Sunday, 12th June, 12.30

Game date - 7th of March 3250

In the morning, that's what they did, spending many a long intercharacter discussion on the odds of centaurs-to-humanoids, what weapons they had, and how many they may be able to take. Strangely enough, they didn't find the monster, because the 8-foot two headed beastie was currently looking like a midget bard. However, Cadmus did trade with a centaur, his one and only sword, for the Pouch of Obvious Plot Device. Back at camp at lunch time, one of the guards - who is also a brewer's apprentice - proved his worth by demonstrating how much centaurs like alcohol. Tim and his centaurs settle down for food, and Alden supplies the drink. Sometime later, Team Alden carries on their way, leaving the drunk centaurs to their own devices (or as Alden describes it "gay horse sex" - which I found amusing at the time, in a very childish way of course).

Tim's troop of nomadic centaurs mentioned these monsters having attacked a fellow centaur tribe in the past. And that tribe being wiped out. So it came as no surprise to the PCs as they continued east, that they started coming across warning markings made by centaurs "beware of the monster, it has horrible pointy, nasty teeth, and many pamphlets on Avon products". Heedless of warnings, as every PC party is (although to be honest, the warnings are more akin to "oooh - possible treasure ahead"), Team Alden proceeded into the Even More Forbidding Forest.

Making camp, they took more precautions than usual, and included some fortifications. Possibly because they had spotted an orange/red shape shadowing them. I think they suspected it was a plot significant monster (possibly because I don't believe in random encounters).

Wandering into camp came a young man, fleeing a caravan that had been attacked by a group of these monsters. The caravan was doing illegal trade between Kartar and the Duchy of Irolo, and Alden had his suspicions that this man may be the missing traitorous heir to the Mark. They placed him in the centre of the camp and kept watch. During this time, Red decided to "come out of the midget" to Alden. Red had some suspicions that this stranger was another monster like himself. After that, Red left the camp to sleep - these monsters revert to their true shape when unconscious, as noted the stranger didn't but he was only pretending to be asleep when Team Alden got him drunk and strip searched him (note - interrogation of strangers that don't have the "PC glow" is likely to happen in Even More Forbidding Forests). Red climbed a tree nearby to sleep.

Further along that night, Baron (I'm not a Mage) Alden chanted (Religiously, only) in his tent (not because they would see the spell gestures, honestly) and there was a great wind (not because of the wind servant sent to bring his bestiary from his castle to him). Later on, there was another great wind as a mysterious book went into Alden's tent. During this time the stranger fled, and Red "Mr Unluck"

the Beast fell out of his tree, right on top of him. Thodric, alert to the stranger, went after him and surrounded them both. Alden tottered up later and cleared up the matter of Red being a "Rakshasa".

Next day, the strange young man lead Team Alden northwards towards where his caravan was attacked. But then he tried to make a break for it, and was shot at by one of the guards. Losing his pretend form, the stranger turned into a Rakshasa. But a rather small and starved one - who had just the time to change shape before Thodric cleft him (and there was much rejoicing).

Red scouted ahead and discovered an entire tribe of Rakshasa, so prudently, Team Alden left the forest.

After further "religious rituals" Alden determined that as yet, Wang had most certainly entered the EMFF, but had not yet left - or at least not within easy reach of the party.

## Session Three

Sunday, 26th June, 12.30

Game date - 9th of March 3250

After camping for another day, the forest became strangely normal. Which intrigued Thodric.

Alden managed to examine the McGuffin and came to the conclusion it was a mind transference device, that had malfunctioned. Wang's mind was in Red's body and vice versa. The cut lengths of hair that connect the main crystal to the anodes, that transfer the different aspects of a mind from one body to another, would need to be replaced. They were made of the tail hair of a unicorn.

Once again Red wandered up near the monster camp - and discovered many tracks.

Getting the rest of the party there, Thodric gave the tracks a profession once-over. Felines, many of them. Going east.

They set forth again on horseback, eventually coming within sight of the group of some 30 or so felines - all appearing identical, except for one holding a staff. The Rakshasa have decided to infiltrate Kartar. With the help of a Rakshasa mind in a feline body, and therefore not prone to change shape when he loses consciousness, they seek to wreak evil in the empire.

But the party has caught them in the open, have superior weapons, a devout religious man who is sure a holy item of his will act very much like a spell cast by one of those damned illegal mages if he but chants and gestures with it, and horses. The horse archer guards are up for it, and the page boys with the pack ponies are left behind.

After a false casting (ahem) use of the holy item, Alden does eventually target it in the centre of the monsters, causing them to scatter, one third coming towards them, one third away, and one third caught to take the effect - which stuns them and eventually knocks many of the unconscious with hordes of biting insects.

The Rakshasa left, including the feline (Wang) with the staff, charge the party - only to be cut down with bow fire (Strangely enough, guardsman Albrecht kept hitting them in the groin, causing major damage) - truly demonstrating the need for armour. Five of them made it to Thodric, who, using nearly all of his endurance (and therefore becoming heavily fatigued) managed to lay about himself with multiple attacks. During the charge, Cadmus shot the feline in the leg. The feline fell to the

ground, bleeding - and after the battle was over, was discovered to be dead.

Red was only slightly miffed he wouldn't be getting his body back. During the time of the battle, Red himself was not present. He decided to stay back - and realised too late that he couldn't cover the distance in time before the battle was over. It took about 4 turns to make short work of the beasts and mop up. They quickly scattered, those that were left.

## Session Four

Sunday 24th July 2005

Current Game date - 12th of March 3250

The bodies of the beasts were gathered together and burned, extra special care taken to make sure that Wang's body left no identifying parts. Red took all of Wang's possessions and now is considerably rich - in Kartaran money. Having it converted to local currency may be somewhat problematical considering the somewhat paranoid nature of the Duchy of Irolo at this time.

The party travelled back as fast as they could to the Duchy's closest march - Uckermark. Eager to get away from the evidence of conflict. Cadmus still keeping the McGuffin safe.

Various campfires were noticed off to the south. Alden saw one more than the others. Strangely enough, even when asleep it nagged at his mind - giving him a troubled night and a headache in the morning.

In the morning Alden saw two sun rises. The normal one, and one from the south. It was a blazing magical disturbance, only viewable by those with the sight. Con-vincing others to scout ahead to see what it was, they discovered a large army approaching their region. In the midst of this army was a single figure, an elf on the back of a unicorn. Could it be the Weeping Prince? Surely not. Aren't all the rumours in a roleplaying update just simple rumours? Does that mean Kartar is really mobilising as well? Surely not. For that would mean dire things to those that lived in the eastern-most region of a Duchy.

The various high priests in the army were hurling magic, after magic at him - fireballs, lightning blasts, high winds, everything they could muster. Which he ignored. He appeared to be travelling to the northeast, the army was there to make sure he caused no problems with the Duchy of Irolo - and possibly to kill him if they could.

They continued past Team Alden, who was, in this case, far less interesting. Whether they do anything when they go past the ashes of the Rakshasa or how they return to the Duchy is left as an exercise for the active imagination of the paranoid.

Sometime later Team Alden approached the fortified and patrolled borders of the Uckermark - to be greeted by one of their roving patrol captains. Alden himself made sure that any suspicious items were in a field of unsuspectingness while they passed the borders - to stay with the Baron Uckermark as befits a noble.

The Baron Uckermark, a fairly politically naive elderly man - with a new young wife who just happens to be a cousin of the current Marquessa. Cadmus even entertained those present whilst the two Barons discussed politics and Baron Bovo Minheim von Uckermark had his assurances that Alden's loyalties lay with the Marquessa to such an extent, that he could count on Alden's support if Constantia ever went after the Duchy herself. Marquessa Constantia being rumoured as quite

ambitious.

Thodric made mention of the Corpsemaster of Uckermark, but in general just lurked in the background, out of sight - too common to entertain thoughts of talking with the nobility, perhaps - and seeing to the quartering of Alden's men in the guard barracks.

Red left his quarters during the night to sleep out of sight of potential gossiping servants who would not likely take kindly to the appearance of an 8 foot two headed monster in their castle. He did try to track down Cadmus, who had left earlier to go bar crawling, and catch up on Bard-gossip but unfortunately - due to a lack of interest in tracking the meandering path of a dedicated drinker through the quite numerous amount of pubs in the town (and the lack of any memory of a town's layout) - Red was not present when Cadmus was mugged.

Bit of a blow that - at that stage Cadmus was still carrying the McGuffin. He lost it, as well as much money to a number of brigands who were intelligent enough to attack him AFTER he was completely off his face on beer and ale.

This sad news was brought back to the castle the next day and started a side quest of inquiry into the disappearing McGuffin. The local constabulary were able to recommend the interrogation of a blacksmith near the docks area based on the description given by Cadmus. However the blacksmith proved unhelpful - as his son, the one most likely to be able to commit a violent crime, due to age, had gone missing. The blacksmith himself had not committed a crime for several years.

Meantime Cadmus and Red were questioning the various patrons of the bars that Cadmus had visited previously, although no further information on who stole Red's brain has yet been forthcoming. Nor indeed who has Thodric's heart, or Alden's courage :)

## GM Synopsis

## GM's Session 4 Notes

## Session Five

Sunday, 21st August, 12.30

Game date - 20th of March 3250

The McGuffin having been lost through tragic luck, the party sallied forth in various guises to retrieve it. The Baron and his grunty bodyguard (Arrgh, name? Something the Bald... :) threatened a poor, unprepossessing, though red-haired, blacksmith who had, in his youth, been something of a troublemaker. Stylish and amusing though the Baron's threats were, the poor, trembling fool turned out to be innocent. Meanwhile, Red and Camdus set forth to search the pubs the McGuffin had been through before that vicious, unprovoked assault robbed the party of it.

Unfortunately, no real clues were turned up. Yet, (I believe) we felt that a town nearby might hold the clues we needed (not to mention the local High Priest of Odin was coming by the castle soon and no-one was really that keen to meet him, which struck us all as rather strange, yet no-one argued about the need to leave), and so we said farewell to our kindly hosts in the castle and rode to this nearby village. There, we found a red-headed man who somewhat matched the description of the foul thieves' leader, but after some short investigations and questioning by our honey-voiced bard proved

that we were once again at a dead-end, this man being obviously the wrong one.

Cadmus, knowing some people who knew some people who might, possibly, have some slight chance of knowing some other people who could just possibly know things, set about contacting his contacts. They said they would get back to him. There was nothing to do then but wait, and the Baron, having been away from home for far too long, needed to settle some affairs, thus we rode back to his city, discussing various things—namely Cadmus's future employment with such a stylish, rich and generous man.

We stayed at a port town for some days. Red, that bastion of strength and multiple forms, got a job that, much to his disgust, paid sod-all. Cadmus continued happily sponging off the Baron, as did his bodyguard, who, however, actually had to pretend to work. At least he got paid a substantial amount, and then spent a substantial time looking through items he could suddenly afford, often with exclamations of joy. :) Cadmus was contacted by some men, and, having obtained from the Baron some money to purchase what they claimed to have for him, set off to see if the McGuffin had been found. The Baron did some business, as did Red, and I think Bodyguard (Damn, sorry, Nathan, really can't remember his name... Take 'Bodyguard' as his name, not an intended insult.. :) talked to some of his contacts.

During the day, smoke was seen over the docks. The Baron immediately sprang into action, ordering fire-chains to be set up. Fortunately, these were barely in operation when the skys clouded over and unforeseen rain put the fire out—the Baron's prayers to Odin having obviously worked nicely. In the fire was found a headless body. Some investigations occurred, proving inconclusive. Party members were distracted by an odd looking priest who seemed to be following them. Whenever they looked around, he seemed to be unobtrusively nearby. Suspicions were raised within the minds of every party member with something to hide from the church—that is to say, none of us, obviously.

Many hours later, Cadmus returned, tired, despite his mighty thews, from bearing a wooden box. Once it was levered open, inside we found a blood-soaked rag wrapped around the McGuffin, though the gems were missing. The blood was soon explained by the presence of a head—the owner's red hair being naturally that colour and not changed by his life's fluid that made everything else inside the box quite tacky to the touch. Our thief had been found, and the McGuffin returned. Much celebration happened.

The next day we rode back to the Baron's castle, keeping a close eye out for that priest. He was not seen, much to our relief. After a few days sponging at the castle, Cadmus received a message from a tradesman at the Port saying a commissioned piece of jewelry was ready for him. Our thoughtful bard convinced the Baron to give Bodyguard the day off, and we rode back to the Port, pausing only to deliver some letters for our kindly Baron. Cadmus quickly picked up his jewelry and then met Bodyguard in the pub of his choice. Fun, it was not, though Cadmus was polite enough not to say that serious drinking among silent men was not his idea of a great time. However, this politeness soon helped to thaw, at least a little, relations between our greatest fighter and our wonderous morale officer. Cadmus even extracted a grunted assent that next time Bodyguard might just, possibly allow Cadmus to choose the pub in which we would have 'a good time'. Cadmus took this as sign of true friendship from Bodyguard, given the friendliest he had ever seen him up to that point was to not gut someone the instant he met them.

Special Guest Writer Torben. The part of Bodyguard was played by Thodric Jarl. Victims were dressed by Generic NPC suits-R-Us. When travelling, PCs prefer Encounter-Free-Shipping.

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