Amber (Phage Press) >> Blood Loyalties >> PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban Post by SisyphusX on 05/08/2004 at 21:05:18
You and your pack are resting in a forest glen, in a Shadow still near to Amber. It is late afternoon, and soon twilight will be upon the land and you all will rise for another evening's travel. You are traveling to the lands of the Oran in hopes of mediating some peace between them and the humans nearby, but with the grim expectation that the humans will not understand and will be needlessly aggressive. There has been some sporadic fighting over time, but as of late, it has grown worse. Anlon and Grendel are awake. Anlon seems to be humming something softly to himself - perhaps he is practicing, or perhaps he is simply in a good mood. Grendel is somewhat tense, and he paces rapidly around, perhaps a little careless in his patrols, but he is clearly in an unpleasant mood. Eavan and Lark are sleeping - Lark is somewhat strained by the long journey, and Eavan is gathering her strength for another night of song, as she is leading this journey's travels. (Ordinarily you would lead the travels of the pack, but Grendel became insistent, and you grow weary of fighting him on every issue.) Another half-dozen or so warriors accompany you - two are awake and on watch, four still asleep. It is expected that you will reach the Oran tonight, after a few hours more of travel.
It is then, that you feel what you have not felt in some long time. A warm and buzzing sensation behind your ears - a Trump contact is being attempted. Re: PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban Post by Garvey on 05/09/2004 at 00:54:21 The muscles in Caliban's back tense as the sensation comes over him. He was expecting an intrusion from the outside world, not from within. Caliban rises from the spot under the tree where he was resting and watching. He quietly moves away, so as to not wake Eavan who was sleeping by his side. As he walks away one hand slides to his sword while the other brushes the leaves from his pants.
"Straighten up Grendel, something might be afoot. I'll return shortly." he orders before he quickly heads through the trees to a place with more privacy. When Grendel objects or argues, as he surely will, Caliban fixes him with a stern glance and continues out. He motions to Anlon for him to stay and gives him a slight comforting smile. Once he believes himself to be out of earshot and out of sight of the rest of the pack, Caliban draws his sword and slowly opens his mind to the contact. "Who calls for me?" Caliban says into the contact, readying his mind for conflict. Re: PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban Post by SisyphusX on 05/09/2004 at 02:09:56
Grendel indeed is angry with your brief order, and he snarls at you with teeth bared. But he pulls himself together, and whistles for a few packmates and instructs them on a search pattern. You move off to accept the contact. Your perception slightly shakes, and you feel a slight tang of dullness in your mind as you receive the contact. You've had one or two similar types of contacts in the past, and so you do not fear it. However, it bodes ill for the sender. Gerard looks at you - or at least as directly at you as the several smashed bottles of wine on the floor will allow. He has worked his way through a case of Bayle's Best, and is starting on a fresh one. The room is covered with glass shards, the shattered remnants of a table and a chair, and an entire deck of Trump opened and scattered in disarray. Gerard is sitting on a bed, slumped against the wall. You don't recognize the room at all, but it could be a tavern guest room in Amber or in any of a million Shadows. Gerard's face brightens visibly when he sees you. "Caliban! Oh, sheesh, it's been a looooooong time! How ya doing?!" He shifts a little, and takes a swig from the bottle. "Thought I might shay hello
before the end comes. Feel so goddamned helplessh" He closes his eyes briefly. "But you gotta know - you might be nexsht-t-t. Most of your older family is gone - no freaking clue where they are. Benedict, Random, Fiona, Jululian Shomething'sh trying to take ush all out. No clue what, though - wisshh I had more of a head for all this crap. Feel like a goddamned grunt! " With that, he hurls the bottle against the far wall, smashing the bottle into fragments and yet still putting a sizeable crater in the plaster. He recovers briefly, but you can see tears in his eyes and feel his naked despair and anguish in your mind. You've tried to interrupt him twice, but he hasn't listened. "Well, I think I'm gonna go now. I gotta be the good shon for the townshfolk out there there. But I think you should come back to Amber, at leasht for a while, and FASSHT. It's the mosht real placshe there ish, so it'sh harder to do thingsh to you here. Look me up when you get here - if I'm shtill around, that ish." He starts to slump over, but the contact breaks before he completes his drop into a drunken stupor. When your senses return to the now, Lark has awakened and moved over to you, but is keeping a distance respectful of both your communication and your drawn blade. "What has happened? Is there a problem?"
Re: PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban Post by Garvey on 05/09/2004 at 09:49:21 When he senses it is Gerard on the sending end of the trump, Caliban relaxes considerably, and even lowers his sword, though it remains at the ready. He seems distressed at Gerard's condition and looks dismayed at the bottles littering the floor. "Sir, I" Caliban tries to interrupt at one point, though Gerard apparently doesn't seem to notice. "Uncle, who has" he tries again in a softer, gentler voice, again to no avail.
When the contact fades Caliban quietly sheathes his sword but does not look up at Lark immediately, but instead raises his eyes skyward to the fading light. He is quiet for a few moments before he responds. "I am not sure", Caliban says in a low soft voice. "Trouble rises in the Golden City, and I cannot say whether it is opportunity or the start of a new storm. After this business with the Oran is concluded I may consider returning. My uncle fears for my safety, though that city still stinks of death to me." Caliban pauses and cheers up a bit, "There is probably nothing to worry about. Sounds like we've lost more enemies than allies." he adds half jokingly as they walk back to the others. Caliban returns to the camp with Lark and readies himself for the journey, saying nothing more of his communications. If asked of what happened, he only off-handedly answers, "Unrest in the lands of man." Despite his attempt to act calm and unaffected it is likely clear to the others that a new anxiety has come over him. Caliban quickly readies the pack for travel, seemingly unwilling to sit still any longer. He also assumes his traveling form in preparation for the journey. Presumably Eavan then leads them to the Oran, to discuss the current situation. As they travel he remains fairly quiet as if lot in his thoughts. As
night draws down about them and they dance through the trees, Caliban keeps going over Gerard's words. He opens his mind further to the world around him and tries sense any disruptions in shadow around him. He does not focus strongly enough to keep himself from running however, but rather he simply wishes to ensure that there is nothing unusual going on. When they start to approach the territory of the Oran, Caliban takes the lead position in the pack, but sends several warriors out slightly farther to act as scouts. He then raises his head to the sky and lets out a call to the Oran, alerting them to his packs arrival. He also warns his pack to remain vigilant as this land is at war and there is nothing to distinguish them from the Oran in the enemies' eyes. Re: PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban Post by SisyphusX on 05/09/2004 at 13:03:31
As you return, you notice Grendel talking in somewhat hushed tones with two of your packmates, but he looks to you as you move towards the pack and breaks off whatever discussion he was having. "Is there a problem we should know about?", he asks you, with somewhat sarcastic concern. "Unrest in the lands of man," you reply curtly. "Ah, so you do bring good news." He smiles briefly and chuckles before turning to the horizon. The sun is already past, but the last rays are even now filtering through, sharing their last embrace with the heady tendrils of the night. The pack waits patiently for another ten minutes, breaking camp, and then as the last rays of the sun die to nothing, the change comes over the pack in unison. Eavan sings a song of welcome to the night as you feel the coolly energizing radiance of the moon come into its own. It is not a snarling or a tearing or a rustling that accompanies the change, but merely a nearly-silentmotion. Then, the pack forms up, Eavan leading, you at her right and
Grendel at her left, Lark behind you and Anlon behind Grendel. The other packmates form up behind the leaders, and Eavan begins to sing the song of the travel to the lands of the Oran. As you travel through Shadows along the Songline, you contemplate the feel of the Shadows around you, and you sense a disturbing and disruptive presence, but it feels faint and lingering. You recognize the tang of the ripple, however - a wielder of the Logrus has passed by this way, and not altogether too distantly in the past. It fades away as you keep moving, however, and soon it is gone. But you are the more nervous for it, and you have to marshal your concentration to keep focus on the journey and the immediate environs. You arrive in the territory of the Oran shortly before midnight. Eavan defers the lead position to you again, and you send some of your packmates out to reconnoiter the area before advancing. But it seems all is quiet on your approach - the night is warm and invitingly peaceful. You finally arrive at the borders of the Oran village. Your scouts have not entered, but they await your presence. The mood inside the village is
apparently festive and joyous. There is a bright song of triumph being sung, and many of the younger Oran are dancing gaily around a bonfire. There are few warriors in the village, though, and all the weapons are gone. You recognize Aodhan, an elder of the Oran, sitting by the fire and watching the dancing and the singing. He seems in good cheer, which is somewhat startling to you, as the word to help the Oran was passed from him through the Oran's singer, Sorcha, to Eavan and then to you, and the message was somewhat urgent in its tone. But he bears none of that burden now, apparently. He notices your form and waves you forward. "Caliban! It's good to see you, albeit better late than never. Come! We have some fine food and a story to tell! Bring your pack in and rest in safety." He gestures to the young Oran warriors guarding the village entrance, and they stand aside. Your packmates await your response. Re: PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban
Post by Garvey on 05/09/2004 at 13:31:36 Caliban grows uneasy at this unexpected development. Excepting for a miracle, which Caliban does not believe in, this situtation smells of a trap, though the celebrations of the Oran seem genuine and he senses no deception from them. Caliban listens carefully and smells the wind, hoping to detect anything out of the ordinary. In addition, he tries to sense whether there is any tinge of Chaos or Pattern about, though he does not fully extend his mind for fear of losing sight of the material world. Caliban then shifts to his human form and rises to his feet. "Aodhan, I am glad to see you as well, but what is this?" Caliban yells back, though he does not immediatly move forward. "We came ready for negotiations or battle, but we were not expecting such a celebration." he says as he sweeps one arm towards the festivities. He then advances slowly, trying to keep a bit of distance between himself and his pack, all the while keeping his mind focused, looking for signs of an ambush.
If Caliban sense nothing suspcious, he continues past the guards and into the campground. "You must have a great tale to tell Aodhan." He then waves the rest of his pack forward. Caliban will settle down to hear Aodhan's story, all the while keeping an eye out for some kind of ambush. Re: PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban Post by SisyphusX on 05/09/2004 at 15:34:35 As you extend your senses into the vicinity, you suddenly realize that the trace of the Logrus you felt earlier in your trip is actually still with you, and far more pronounced here. It has a sour sting to someone with as acute a sense as yourself, so there is no mistaking it. A user of the Logrus has stood in this campground, and recently, too. They used the Logrus extensively - the air is somewhat saturated with the residue. You study the surroundings closely as you head in towards the fire to sit with Aodhan.
"Ah, Caliban, sometimes things do not happen as they are expected. Sometimes they are much better." Aodhan offers you a piece of cooked meat as you sit beside him. Your own pack moves into the village, but stays at a respectful distance. Grendel and Lark stop together and start some sort of discussion in low tones. Your own pack is still tense, but the Oran here are relaxed and happy, as if they have not had an opportunity to do so in months. Caliban sits by the fire with Aodhan, takes the meat and, after a moment, takes a small bite. It is pork, and has an unusual spice native to the area. It's quite tasty, actually. Caliban tries not to look overly tense, but still remains at the ready, in case anything surprising should occur. The relaxed mood of the Oran quickly overtakes Caliban, however, and he lowers his guard somewhat. Aodhan continues. "Well, we've been fighting with the Begmans for some few months now. They suddenly wanted more land, and we're not entirely sure why. But in the space of a week, many raiding parties from the nearest Begman fort began combing the area for us. They all had silver
weapons, and we lost more than a few warriors. We tried to fight back, but their defenses are quite strong. We've learned to divide their parties as they enter the forest, and we've captured and slain some of their more careless warriors who strayed too far from their fellows. But it was a losing game - all we were really doing was making the remaining soldiers more wary of our tactics." He rips a piece of meat from the bone and chews slowly. As Aodhan tells of their losing battles against the Begman forces, Caliban nods understandingly. "Well, we sent word to Ballinacor that we needed assistance, and heard that you were coming. We didn't know if your diplomacy and influence with Amber would be all that helpful, but we were growing desperate. But that changed earlier today, with the unexpected arrival of a diplomatic mission from House Helgram." When he mentions House Helgram, Caliban stops eating and almost drops his meat, the hairs upon his neck rising. Fearing corruption at the hands of the Lords of Chaos, Caliban brings the Pattern to mind and peers deep within Aodhan's being, searching for any signs of tampering. He focuses on the very nature of the elder's being, not holding back at all in his search for the taint of Chaos. Aodhan reacts with a small amount of surprise, but then opens himself up to Caliban's intense search. "Go ahead, lad - you'll not find any surprises in there, I'd say. Satisfy yourself, and then I'll go on." In particular, he focuses his attentions on Aodhan's mind. His attentions reveal little in the way of alterations, though it is quite clear that he has been
Aodhan decides to continue his story, even as Caliban intensifies his search for the taint of the Logrus. "I know, we've not had truck with these beings before, but we were in great danger of losing our land and even more of our brethren. And they were civil and friendly and just wanted to speak with us. So, we invited one of their number, their chief diplomat, to speak with us here in our camp. He came alone, and unarmed. Tynnean, his name was. Rather nice, I thought, if a little snivelly at times. Anyway, that's neither here nor there. He came to us with an offer of help. He was on his way to the Golden City, to discuss peacetime trade possibilities with the Amberites, when he noticed that a large party of Begman warriors, armed with silver swords and silver javelins, was heading directly for our settlement. He understood some of the Weir history - he knew that this was quite possibly a massacre in the making. And so, he came to us with an offer of help. He knew of a ensorcellment that would protect us from the effects of silver, if only for a brief time. It would not be of any practical value long-term, as it wears off quickly, but it would be of critical value if we were to mount a counterattack against the Begmans who were preparing to slaughter us. Our warriors were skeptical, so I agreed to a test." He holds up his right forearm to the light for you to see it. There is a light pink area, no bigger than half an inch across. "That," he says with force, "is the result of a silver
dagger having been driven all the way through the arm. It stung a little, but in any other circumstances, my whole arm might have been burned away." He looks at your stunned expression. "We were desperate, but not foolish. I am old, and I won't be hunting any time soon. I needed to know that his offer was genuine." He rubs the mark briefly, then returns to his meal. When Caliban is shown the red mark on the Oran's arm, he shifts his attention to that area, trying to access the nature of the change, how much Chaos magic still remains and whether the healing will persist when the magic is gone. He finds that there is a pronounced effect in the tissues of the arm. Biochemical production has been increased, virtually across the board. Adrenaline, endorphins, and other fuels are increased, and the ordinary buildup of muscle toxins is much diminished. The effects seem to have only accelerated his metabolism - at least as far as Caliban can determine. Once he has concluded his examination, he focuses the Pattern into a flame in his mind and burns away any remaining taint of Chaos in Aodhan's body. "So, with no standing for ceremony, we accepted his offer of help and he pronounced the invocation on all of our warriors. They then charged out to
meet the oncoming Begmans. Tynnean left after that - he is expected in Amber and did not want to arouse suspicion by his delay. This was about an hour ago, and we have already heard the song of our warriors' success. They should be returning in ten minutes or so. They speak of total victory, and we are relieved and thankful. We celebrate their victory, and we are glad to have you with us for it!" He rubs your shoulder. Caliban stands up, shocked by what he has heard. "What have you done? The taint of chaos is all about you; their magics are not to be trusted! You have brought a curse upon all of your people." Caliban fails to conceal the anger in his voice, but after a moment he seems to calm and his voice turns to sadness. "You are victims though, and perhaps it is not too late to rectify the situation. All power comes at a price and I wonder what this may have cost." But then, both of you stop, and turn to face the wind. A scent comes up suddenly, and is overpowering to your sensitivity. Blood. Human blood. As strong as you've ever smelled it, and you've been up close and personal with many a dying human. The smell of Weir fur
and sweat mixed in, but nothing can hide the stench of carnage and death that is approaching. The celebration stops suddenly, and the Oran and your own packmates suddenly tense. The Oran present, which is to say none of the warriors, all move back nervously - some ducking into their dwellings. Your pack takes up defensive positions in the village, but then look to you, for it is your decision how to prepare for whatever is coming. Re: PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban Post by Garvey on 05/09/2004 at 15:43:23 As the Oran retreat to their houses, Caliban pulls his pack about him in a defensive position in case the approaching force is hostile. He avoids any overtly hostile formations in order to prevent any misunderstanding. As a sign of nonaggression, no weapons are drawn. He is careful to prevent the approaching force from outflanking them though and spreads our his pack as needed to ensure they are not surrounded.
Caliban bows slightly to the approaching Weir. "Greetings, Warriors of the Oran. I am Caliban of the Shantallow, and my warriors and I have journeyed far to assist you." Caliban keeps a safe distance and does not become too friendly. He waits for Aodhan to greet the warriors and introduce Caliban and his pack. "You smell of too much death," Caliban addresses the leader of the returning party. "What has happened?" As they talk, Caliban will open his mind to the Pattern and try to sense any signs of the Logrus. He does this casually, though, as he wishes to focus the majority of his attention on the Weirs' story. Re: PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban Post by SisyphusX on 05/09/2004 at 15:50:47
Post by SisyphusX on 05/09/2004 at 15:50:47 The returning warriors stumble and amble into the village. They are in human form, and they are drenched in blood - it drips from their hands and their mouths, it covers their flesh like a gruesome frosting, and their clothes are soaked. Their eyes are vacant and staring, but when you address them, a few of them focus on you, and they seem to return a little more to reality. They look at Aodhan, who is wide-eyed and slack-jawed, and then back at you. One of them begins to speak. "The battlethe battle was a success - at first. We met the enemy in a pincer maneuver, but sent a small number to the rear to disrupt any rallying or retreating by the Begmans." You recognize Cathal, the warrior-leader of the Oran. He has a disciplined and strategic mind, and has skirmished many times with the Begmans before. But his eyes are not as they were - they are open and vulnerable and glazed with shock. He appears to be relying on habit, giving a battle report as he might in any other skirmish. As he continues, you begin focusing your attention on his essence and his condition. "They raised their weapons with brash confidence. But as the first blows fell, and to little effect, a cry went up amongst the Begman warriors, and they
became disarrayed. We easily subdued and overcame what resistance they offered, and soon we had penetrated the ranks and held their leader captive. The warriors surrendered, and dropped their weapons." You start focusing in on Cathal's being, and it still has a remaining suffusion of Chaos. You see some of the same effects as on Aodhan - intensification of the metabolism, resistance to injury - but there is also some other effect interwoven with this magical energy. As Cathal continues, you focus on this new element. "We had defeated them - and we sung the songs to let you know that the battle had been won, and won well. We were gathering their weapons, and Padraic began speaking with the leader to negotiate the warriors' release under terms. It was all going so well" His voice trails off, and he looks up at the moon, full and bright. His face falls, slightly. "It's back. After we had won, the moon suddenly changed - becoming a fiery red that blazed almost like the sun. We became angry - I'm not sure why. It was an insult that the Begmans would come here for the purpose of wiping us out, and it was intolerable in its' arrogance. We shifted into Weir, almost as one, andwe attacked them. They were disarmed, shocked, and helpless. Some of them
Aodhan approaches you, and speaks softly into your ear. "I see your words now - my folly and fear has been betrayed us. I tried to save my people, but it has come at a terrible price. The Begmans will not stand for this, nor will they listen to reason from us. They will mass their armies and come here, burning and pillaging and slaying all they find. We Oran will retreat - there are caves deep in the woods that we have lain in before in secret." He sighs. "But this must be explained to the Begmans - they must be told what has happened, and why. They will not suffer a Weir to speak to them not even you - it is too late for that now. But they are strong allies of Amber, and perhaps one other of your family can be trusted enough to speak with them. I thought at first that you were late, and that you could not help us. But I know now how you can. You must go to Amber, and tell them what has happened. The Lord of Amber must speak with the Begman King and convince him to speak with us - to let us explain what has happened this grim night."
Re: PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban Post by Garvey on 05/09/2004 at 15:51:46 As the last of the spells start to fade, Caliban examines them more closely, truing to memorize the signatures of the spells so he can identify them again later. He tries to preserve the spell as long as possible until he is done studying the spells. Once he is sure he has them securely in mind he allows them to fade and actual wipes them from the Weir's bodies using the Pattern. Caliban listens in stunned silence to Cathal's story. As the story is told, Caliban's expression changes from defiance to disbelief and finally to a combination of sympathy and sadness. He tries to find the words to comfort him, but his lips fail him. Instead, he reaches and clasps Cathal on the shoulder with his right hand, staining it with the blood of the humans. When Aodhan approaches, Caliban turns to face him slightly while still keeping one eye on Cathal. Once Aodhan is done speaking, Caliban replies in
a whisper as well. "I fear you are right. I doubt the court of Begma or King Trevain will believe our story even if I go there to implore their forgiveness. They already hold our kind in ill will. Do not hope to Amber, for what I have heard their is much unrest in their own court and I think all of their attention will be focused inward for a time. I will not abandon your people though. I will do what I can to win the support of the court and bring a peace with the Begmans." Caliban motions for Lark and Eavan to join them in discussion. "Their forces will be likely be sent out during the day tomorrow to seek you out. We should set out as soon as possible. My pack and I will journey with you to the caverns, but I fear that your people will be in grave danger even then. I understand that you cannot abandon these lands, but if you wish I will give refuge to your children and all those who cannot fight in New Fanelia. Your people may always seek haven in those lands. We can either take them now or you may send them later if things go badly. The blood of the humans is on all of us now." Caliban raises up his blood coated hand. After listening to any advice or comments the others have, Caliban will have Eavan mobilize the rest of the pack to help the Oran strike the village.
He will then then go through and cleanse the Logrus magics from all of the Oran's warriors and anyone else in the village that was enchanted. He will also do a quick evaluation of their belongings to see if any of them have also been tainted. Once this is done, Caliban goes over to Aodhan. "I have decided that I wish to survey the damage done in the battle myself, so that I have better prepared to deal with its consequences. I don't wish to risk any of my pack in such a venture, so I will go alone. Eavan can take the rest of the Shantallow to your hiding spot, where I will meet up with you. I will directions to the battleground and then to a spot where I can rendevous with one of your pack who can lead me to the caves you speak of. You can wait here for me, but if I am too long, you must go ahead without me. I can take care of myself. I know magics which can slip me away from trouble if the Begmans intervene." Assuming Aodhan does not refuse assistance and tells Caliban the path, Caliban will then tell Lark and Eavan his plans and head to the battlesite himself. Once there he will survey the massacre and see if the Begmans have yet discovered what has happened. He will also use the Pattern to look for any residual traces of the Logrus or other magics. Before leaving he will say a prayer for the spirits of the departed humans who suffered so
He also questions Aodhan and the others about the current political situation in Begma. "Is Trevain the third still in power? How has he led these past two years. Do you know who his main advisers are and who leads his armies? Are there any sympathizers in his court that you know about?" "I'll head to Amber soon to see what support I can muster there. If I can persuade the Golden City to intervene then perhaps we can avoid more bloodshed. My fear is that if we do nothing then the Begmans might convince their allies in Amber to aid them in a war against our people. That could be disastrous for all of the tribes and would undo any progress we made during the war." Re: PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban Post by SisyphusX on 05/09/2004 at 15:56:14
Cathal reaches up to accept your hand, but he's still sobbing quietly. You see the rest of the Oran warriors stumble into a loose grouping behind him. Some of them are even still in Weir form, but they all have a glassy-eyed stare, a vacantness about them that is disquieting. As you call Lark and Eavan to join with you, you notice that Grendel and Lark suddenly cut off the conversation they were having. Grendel smiles at you, then starts directing some of your own packmates to maintain a perimeter around the village. Lark and Eavan quickly come to you, their expressions a mixture of pain and confusion. They have heard Cathal's story, and most of your conversation with Aodhan, but they don't know what to make of it. Aodhan agrees with your assessment of the situation. "You are right - I will give the warriors some time to collect themselves, but we must be gone soon. I appreciate your offer to safeguard the children, and we may take that offer at some point. But I think we will try to deal with this situation ourselves for the moment." You feel a hint of pained pride in his voice. "We must do as much as we can, so that you are free to do what needs to be
done." He takes your hand, allowing the blood to flow over his. "This is as much my fault as anyone else's - the blood is on my hands, too." His head droops briefly, then recovers. "I thank you for your help, and for your strength. I sense the Oran will need that strength - for a time, anyways. Now, help the rest of the Oran strike the village - I will attempt to recover the wits of my warriors." As you step away, Aodhan begins talking quietly to Cathal in a low and steady tone. You quickly pack what minor possessions the Oran need for the journey, and roughly disguise the clearing so that it will seem as if it has always been empty. If the Begmans believe they are still looking for the village, it will be time for the Oran to reach the safety of the caves. After you are satisfied that all that can be done has been done, you carefully focus on each Oran warrior in turn, cleansing them of the sorcerous energies that remain. It takes hardly any time at all - the energies had largely dissipated as it was. You find minor traces of sorcerous energy at the side of the fire, where Aodhan tells you that Tynnean was standing when he enchanted Aodhan's arm. You find a strong residue from the far side of the fire pit, where Tynnean stood as he enchanted the warriors. And off in the distance, under the concealement of a large and well-leafed tree, you find another minor pool of residue. You also see some footprints, as if someone had stood here for some time. Unfortunately, the tracks quickly disappear as they move
to and from the tree. But it is quite possible that someone had stood here, with a somewhat occluded view of the village, and had cast spells. You estimate that the track is not more than four hours old, which is consistent with when Tynnean was speaking with the Oran. You find no other traces of either Logrus energy or sorcerous energy in the area. Grendel raises an eyebrow when you tell him you wish to be alone at the site of the massacre. "If you feel it is right, so be it. But I would still think there might be danger there - certainly enough that you might risk a bodyguard or two as you work your powers in secret." Those last two words are more snarled than said, as Grendel moves off and organizes your packmates to escort the Oran. The warriors are somewhat recuperated - Cathal and Aodhan have recalled their sanity, or at least what little they could muster. They have not yet washed the blood off their bodies, as there is no way to dispose of the grisly residue at the moment. [The remainder of the turn, including the trip to the massacre site and the journey to the caves, will be posted after you've had a chance to react to this section. Consider it a mini-turn.]
Re: PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban Post by Garvey on 05/09/2004 at 16:06:54 After sensing the Logrus energy on the outskirts of the village, Caliban goes to examine the area more closely. He bends down and examines the ground and then shifts to Weir form, to magnify his senses more fully. He breathes deeply of the ground and the footprints, trying to find any lasting smells of the person who was there. He also does the same in the areas that Tynnean stood. He follows the tracks for a short bit to see if they just vanish or if they continue on foot for a while. When he returns to the village he asks Aodhan if Tynnean travelled alone, or if he had any companions. After Grendel approaches Caliban before he leaves for the site of the massacre, Caliban is silent for a moment before grinning widely. "You think it
too dangerous old friend? You may be right I did not wish to endanger any others of our pack, and I do not wish to travel in numbers. I have never doubted *your* bravery however", Caliban says, lingering on the 'your' for a moment. "Very well, you may join me in this venture." He smiles and clasps Grendel on the back. "It'll be like old times. Your sister can handle everything here." He yells out to Eavan, giving Grendel no time to reply, "Eavan, your brother has volunteered to join me. We will be back shortly." Turning back to Grendel, "Shift, and we will be off. Remember, that we are *avoiding* the Begman forces tonight." With that Caliban will drag Grendel off towards the battlesite with him. Re: PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban Post by SisyphusX on 05/15/2004 at 18:59:54
You step carefully around the small clearing in the forest to which you traced the second energy signature. You move tentatively, not wanting to disturb any trace you might find - but to no avail. Either the person who stood here was <i>very</i> careful not to leave any evidence of his presence - or he flew. You shift into Weir form, and you take a moment to bask in the cool Begman moonlight. You then turn your heightened senses to the area. The only thing you can focus in on is a lingering scent in the air. It's not any of the Oran, and even in your limited experience of the area, you don't believe it's a Begman scent, either. You really can't place the scent after that, so you file it away in your mind, ready to compare when you encounter something similar. You return to the main clearing, and take in the scent of Tynnean as well. No mistaking that - the tang of the Logrus can't be washed clean, at least not to you. You turn to Aodhan, still organizing the departure. "No, none of Tynnean's followers were allowed in the village. His entourage was about six to eight people. Three were guardsmen, two were secretaries, and I believe there was one courtesan. There might have been one or two other people in the wagon they were using - but I never saw it directly. They were not making any attempt to conceal their presence, so they were easily intercepted by
one of our patrols. They were moving along the main path." He points down the same way you came towards the village. "They were watched by a Singer, who would have alerted us to any movements. They remained still the entire time, and then left with Tynnean." Grendel, already in mid-stride back to the main group, stops dead still and turns when you let him know that he will be joining you. His eyebrow raises, and you see a moment of real surprise cross his face. Then, he shrugs, and as he drops his shoulders, he slides into Weir form. "As you wish. We shall go together to see what has been done." You and Grendel move quickly and quietly down towards the site. To find it is no problem at all - the blood trail grows stronger and more pronounced with every step you take. As you slip into the area, you make an overall inspection of the remains. The site is stark, simple, and stomach-turning. Every conceivable injury has been inflicted on these warriors - bite marks and claw marks demarcate the rough edges of wounds and litter the sides of the chunks of flesh torn free. The armor the warriors were wearing did them no good - you even see tearing at the edges of light plate . The weapons appear to have been piled to the side - and even from a distance, <i>that</i> much silver in one place makes you edgy and nervous. But you
spend what time you can investigating the area. There is no trace whatsoever of survivors - there are even a few dragmarks where someone who had briefly gotten away from the killing had been dragged back towards the slaughter - and judging by the amount of blood on that trail, dragged by the throat. As you continue to search, Grendel comes over to you. "There's nothing to find here. But if it wasn't so close to a forest, I'd recommend burning it. I doubt any Begman has seen this sight - if they do, I wouldn't think there's any way you could talk them back down. You can tell that some of the wounds were inflicted after death. Madness took the Weir that did this. I worry for Aodhan and the other Oran younglings - who knows what the warriors who did this are capable of?" Re: PROLOGUE - Droplets of Blood - Caliban Post by Garvey on 05/22/2004 at 17:52:14
When Caliban enters the clearing and stares at the mutilated corpses. "Tyris' blood" he whispers. The smell of death permeates up from the bodies and threatens to stick to Caliban's fur. He wanders around the battlesite, examining the bodies, and looking for survivors. As he wanders he brings the Pattern to mind and looks for any traces of the magic here as well. "What was the trigger for the spell?" he wonders. Caliban nods as Grendel speaks. "This is a grave tragedy. Even our human foes do not deserve such as this; these were dishonorable deaths. You're right, we can't burn the bodies, though I wish we had a way to help their spirits move on. Lets move them together and organize them in a dignified manner. Then we can say a prayer and lead their spirits away." Caliban shifts into human form, and begins moving the bodies. As he and Grendel work he asks "Did the Oran look like they could have done this? When they came back to camp, they looked dead, dead of spirit. At least part of what did this was the magic of Chaos, though I suspect that the magic just drew out some dark portion of their souls."
Once all of the bodies are gathered and arranged, Caliban, with Grendel's help if he feels like assisting, begins to chant out an ancient Weir funeral
song that is sung for one's fallen foes. The chant is supposed to help guide their spirits out of their bodies and into the wild where they can run free. The song is in the old tongue of the Weir, not frequently spoken in these days except by the shamans. Caliban has studied the language, has have most tribal leaders, but has not spoken it in over a year. Because of this, he makes a few minor mistakes, but not ones he judges the spirits will spurn him for. Once done, he turn back to Grendel. "We should return. The Oran need to be gone soon. I fear you may be right about their warriors and the danger they pose. We will stay on with them for a few days to judge them. If they show any signs of danger," Caliban pauses for a moment. "then we will act. Keep a close eye on them old friend, I will need to see where I cannot." They shift back into human form and run back to the camp. Caliban does not speak once he returns, but his expression and the darkness in his eyes carry the burden of what he has seen. If the Oran have already departed, he will head off to the rendezvous point, otherwise he will oversee their rapid departure. In either case he pays careful attention to the tracks laid and makes sure that they are well covered, which by human standards
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You know, one of these days you might not come out of one of these escapades on top. Best to hedge your bets a little when you can.