

Torad Report

The thayans came to hire me in the tavern just as expected. The situation on the moors is even worse than expected. The scalies which have been raiding zhentish caravans for years have now taken over almost a hundred leagues of the moors displacing countless tribes who now clash with other tribes for food. Too bad chasing those thieves robbed us of decent caravan guards. We could have made much money with all these skirmishes. We found no trace of the knife-ears behind it all. How and why they would want to turn this desolate swamp into something livable is beyond me. Winter is coming and due to all the wars there is a famine in many tribes. Many venture out of the moors to gather food. The knife-ears have planned well. No parties going north, west or east survive. The elves of the high forest or misty forest must have a good time wiping out the disease stricken, emaciated tribesmen in their ambushes. Only the raiding parties heading south return alive. As the stories spread this is where most tribes go. The scalies don't like the cold so their advance is halted for the moment, but come spring they will overrun the eastern moors with ease.

The thayans send the three of us to trade with the bigger tribes. My companions are Wil, a gladiator who is apparently quite famous in Thay and Cessenta and Ray a slave merchant. We are given instructions on where and what each tribe is to dig up. I don't get what the point is of trading old junk for magical trinkets with their chiefs and Ray making sure many priests, shamans and witch doctors meet with accidents.

The thayans take me to their base around midwinter. They are holed up in one of the larger hobgoblin forts about 40 miles from the scalies. There they have a gathering with many of the chiefs we met. Wil has a hell of time trying to keep the different groups from killing each other off on sight. He is one tough bastard and it doesn't take more than 20 fights before everyone settles down to talk after a week of bickering. Apparently the moors are now to be called "The High Moor mutual defense confederacy" and they are ruled by the "The ruling council" and the "Advisory council". I don't think thayan translates well into common and it doesn't translate at all into orc, goblin and giant. I tell the greenskins we are now the biggest, baddest gang in these parts and they are the boss not just of their lands, but also over the lands of every neighbor who isn't in the room and that the skinny geeks will serve them. They get that. Problem is they don't trust each other so no one is willing to head east to stop the scalies.

Doesn't take the thayans long to come up with a solution. Since the greenskins cannot trust their neighbor who might want more land. Trust the thayans who have no land and don't want none either. They just want their junk for which they will give nice new stuff and they will provide soldiers and officers who don't want to steal anybody's land either. It's a deal. I can't believe my ears, all the greenskins working together without a warchief to unite them.

We draw up a campaign plan and go clockwise around the moors pacifying the area and gathering warriors from our members. Finally I get to do my job digging up kobold and goblin warrens and laying siege to orcish and barbarian hillforts. The new officers and soldiers are working out great, don't break under pressure and keep their men in line. I just wonder how and why the thayans are paying for all this. They are top mercs who must cost a shitload.

After a few weeks I am recalled to the fort to build up the defenses and plan the restoration of some nearby ruins. Well I'm sure the new mercs can handle things, morale and discipline is good and our numbers are swelling as more and more tribes are soliciting to join our warband rather than be overrun. I tried to get it together with a winged babe who is the merc spokesperson. Bitch said I wasn't her type, but she could arrange something for me for a price. As soon as this campaign ends and I get paid I know how I am going to party.

The boss' aide comes for advice: the scalies are massing to the east and two new armies are invading from the west. The thayans are as surprised as I am, especially when we learn the armies are humans, not elves. Wonder how the tree huggers managed to get them to die for them. I tell him

we cannot afford a two front war, so we need a quick decisive victory to stabilize one front so we can focus on the other. But our army needs more time to get used to more complex tactics than the men are used to so we should delay the enemy as much as possible while we grow stronger. Not much later I am told they are going with my plan and guys and gals called tieflings start arriving. Shrewd fellas who apparently bartered for refuge here on the moors in exchange for their help. Apparently they are hunted and abused in other places and need a safe place to live. Their boss comes over to hear me out. Boy that guy knows how to live well! His tent is more like a palace.

Apparently our armies scored a significant victory over the humans, but not nearly as decisive as was hoped. Apparently the same pack of thieves who stole the books now rescued the armies command staff and broke the encirclement. I am glad I'm not with the army. These guys are nasty!

- Apparently the elf commands the skies and strikes with lightning. Could he be a priest of Talos? That would be cool! Perhaps I could work for him!
- Then there is a tiny girl who turns everything into ash and breathes fire. Hah, polymorphed dragon clearly. Must be a scaly agent.
- Then there is some monk dude who punches straight through walls, armour and giants in one blow.
- He probably practiced on their dwarf since he is tougher than rock and as immovable as a mountain.
- They also have a weird assassin who likes dueling people to death in front of everybody. That is a major morale ouch!
- There is also a half-elf slinking around them. She must be the groups handler, clearly a spy.
- Their commander is a fearsome barbarian horse nomad who can destroy a fortress with a single blow from her flail. She ripped a giants head off with her bare hands and now wears his skull as a helmet and drinks the blood of her enemies while her red glowing eyes paralyze her foes with fear.

Fucking heroes always spoiling things for us common folk trying to make a living!

Our remaining forces should be strong enough to defeat the scabies despite our unexpectedly heavy losses. Since the defeat was not as decisive as hoped I am worried they will strike at us from behind once they recover. Our troops have blockaded their supply lines except those to the high forest. We'll see if high forest elves are going to let their puppets starve or not. The tieflings claim they have it handled and we can continue our campaign. Unfortunately we will have to send in all our reserves and second line troops to make sure it all goes as planned.

Just days after the final staff meeting celebrating our victory over the humans and preparing the campaign against the scabies a hit squad arrives. I don't quite get why we would want to terminate their leaders just before ridding us of the scabies but who cares. I'll be glad to get out of here and drink booze which doesn't make my head hurt for days like the bugbear stuff! Still they arrive to late and with too few, but just decide to butcher who ever is left of the leadership. I tell 'em a bit of what I've seen Wil do, but their handler is confident he can take him. Arrogant git.

Best of all they bring a real hottie, but she is too tense just before the mission. Perhaps I get her drunk afterward and have some fun with her. The other good news is they brought a drow. I loved working with the last drow. Great for ambushes and preventing getting ambushed! The handler is one of them tieflings, which is good. They are a crafty bunch.

We go and sneak into the ruins. It all goes smooth and they finish the first one of just as he steps out of bed. But then Wil shows up. I am sitting back to enjoy the show. I remember the time he caught Ray and me cheating him with cards. He tried to spear us on his horns, but Ray literally turned the tables on him. He had the bloody thing stuck to his head while he was rampaging all over the place

trying to get at us. I am waiting for the handler to jump down just after goading him to run up the stairs. Then hide behind the glasswork maybe and see Wil crash through the lab with his fur all on fire, but the idiot gets into a slugging match with Wil. Is he daft?

Ray is *faerie fired* and the whipped with flame tendrils by the hot little beauty. So he won't be causing any "accidents" today. The pretty little thing then unleashes a frigid blast which kills Simon, the master's aide. A moment later Simon's body explodes killing his master. Too bad I always liked Simon. So she is cold and hot. Sounds like fun in bed. As the other three are trying to beat Wil I see the thayan knight get up and drag his master's body away. He looks badly wounded so I finish him off before he can leave with my loot.

Wil kills our handler, only then does the little minx enchant Wil and we decide to sneak away with our loot and our freedom. One less share, good! Smart move from the little pretty, wonder if she was forced to serve the zhents as well. Probably has a *geas* she couldn't kill him of herself. Now how to get the little pretty to celebrate with me? The three of us could be quite the team now we are free. Maybe I could be sheriff again down south. Must be plenty of pretty farmer's daughters and wagon trains looking for protection with all the displaced tribes raiding them.