Session 26 - The Loistavan Mystery - The Villainy of Zezzek

Outline: Tabitha/Glys lives here. Will help players. She'll remember Nym but Nym won't remember her. She goes by a different name perhaps so no one knows she recognizes them? She'll be disappointed Nym doesn't recognize her won't say anything initially. She'll see the heroes when they first enter town and find a way to figure out what they're doing. She'll go by the name: **Fig**.

**Nym's Backstory**: I am a half-elf rogue. I grew up on the streets of a big city with my best friend Glys. We survived by getting to know the criminal underbelly of the city, but only for our food and shelter. When we were 14 and 15 years old, Glys took the fall for some bad dudes for a slaying we had nothing to do with. We both ran in fear, but she got caught. I miss her terribly and want to rescue her some day and avenge her.

**The city of Loistava: Description:**

Loistava rises from the landscape like a crown of pure light, its spires and domes adorned with thousands of ever-burning magical lanterns, each a different color of the rainbow. The city's architecture is defined by:

**The Luminous Selune Cathedral**: A towering structure of white marble and softly glowing stained glass, its central spire housing the Eternal Flame, said to be the first light ever created.

**The Prism Markets**: Streets lined with crystal-paned buildings that scatter light across the cobblestones.

**The Lantern-keeper's Academy**: Where apprentices learn to craft/maintain the city's magical lanterns.

**The Aurora Bridge**: A long bridge made of translucent stone that glows with slowly shifting colors at night.

**The Halo's Heart Tavern**: Oldest Tavern in town, has magical mugs that have glowing halos that imbue the drinkers with deep peaceful sleep.

**The Dark Tower of Loistava**: Behind the city next to the mountains, it extends up 5000 ft above the ground. Looks to be made of obsidian and basalt rock. Stands in stark contrast to the glowing city beneath it.

**The Dim:** Beneath the radiant surface lies a completely different world, known to locals as "**The Dim.**" Notable Features:

* **The Shadow Market**: A sprawling bazaar where goods of questionable origin change hands.
* **The Darkwater Canals**: Underground waterways lined with phosphorescent fungi and bioluminescent fishies.
* **The Twilight District**: Where those who shun the surface light make their homes
* **The Temple to Shar**: A well maintained temple dedicated to the Goddess Shar. Contains what is rumored to be the only dark flame in existence. The flame puts out darkness that overpowers any light sources in the room. It was a gift from Shar herself to the temple's ancient acolytes.
* **The Echo Chambers**: Vast dangerous caves and caverns where shadow magic practitioners gather. Light is strictly forbidden. Giant Spiders and Giant Moles are plentiful.

**The Contrast:**

* Surface buildings often have basements that extend into elaborate underground complexes
* Secret passages connect noble houses above to clandestine meeting spots below
* Some citizens live double lives: respectable surface dwellers by day, shadow dealers by night

NPCs:

**High Illuminator Solara Brightweave**: Leader of the Luminous Council

**The Shade Priestess**: Mysterious figure controlling underground operations. Head of the Sharian Temple.

**Keeper Dusk**: Neutral mediator between surface and underground factions

**Master Glowsmith Ember**: Creator of the city's most prestigious light artifacts

Encounter 0: Jack?

Encounter 1: Upon entering the city, a shopkeeper/guard answers some questions about the city itself. Describes the above ground features, and mentions the Dim but doesn't go into details on that. Cautions players to stay away.

Encounters 2: At the Halo's Heart Tavern, players overhear the Innkeeper, **Olof**, laments that the all the ale has disappeared again!

*The problem in the Halo’s Heart Tavern is a peculiar one. During the night, all the ale and wine in stock vanishes time and time again. The problem lies with a magic drinking horn that siphons the drinks whenever it is used. The owner Olof Garund is desperate and had to take out a loan to keep his business running. When the characters arrive to take care of the problem, he promises them 100 gp and free drinks for life should they succeed. The ale and wine are stored in very large barrels in the cellar beneath the tavern.*

*If the characters decide to watch the cellar during the night, they witness how the ale just vanishes from inside the barrels as if someone has pulled a plug from a bathtub. With a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check a character can tell that some kind of teleportation magic is responsible. The characters can follow the way of the ale if they jump in the barrels while the beverage is sucked away.*

*After using the portal, the characters find themselves in the magic drinking horn of Istund. (NG male cloud giant MM 154). Istund is surprised to see the characters in his horn and ashamed when the characters tell him about the Halo’s Heart Tavern’s problems. The giant always assumed that the ale and wine he drinks just appear out of thin air. Istund asks them to stay and visit for a while. Before leaving his underground castle he gives them some diamond gems as repayment to Olof, and black gems for the heroes. He stops Grimwald as he is leaving and says hold on, later returns with a wrapping for an axe. He says, this belonged to my father who also welded a magical axe. I have never been able to properly attune to it but I sense that you might be more successful. You all look like good folk; come back and visit some someday.*

Encounter 3: On the way out of Istund's castle, players find themselves lost in the Loistavan Twilight District. After wandering a bit, they find a temple/inn/whatever and can seek help. A half-elf woman named **Fig** offers help. She is dressed like a rogue. If players trust her, she can lead them to the surface. And teach them some about The Dim as well.

Encounter 4: The dark tower ascent: On the way up, ravens swarm from all sides but don't attack. At the top, the tower is eerily warm and dark. Ground is covered with shards of sharp obsidian. A sign indicates this is sacred Sharian Holy sight. Zawn has left a note that reads: "I hope my ravens left you in peace. They were needed to keep this place protected. I must protect the other alter too. -Zawn"

There is a single stone chair. As the heroes approach:

*The thousand lights of Loistava begin to pulse in unison, like a city-wide heartbeat. Each lantern, every magical torch, all the glowglobes and crystal illuminations dim and brighten in perfect synchronization. The entire city becomes aware that something momentous is occurring.*

When sitting on the chair (for Eclipse, Valethor, and Nym):

***Eclipse****: Streams of light begin to spiral up from every corner of the city - gold, silver, azure, and white. They weave through the streets like luminous rivers, flowing upward against gravity, converging on the altar. The light wraps around your legs and body in tender ribbons of radiance. In a sudden flash of green light, the flows all infuse into you and your wand. You feel at one with your wand. You \_know\_ that your wand is now connected with Zawn's wand and that the two must be welded together, hand-in-hand.*

***Valethor****: Their wand begins to sing in a clear, crystal tone. Motes of golden and blue light spiral up your arms like fireflies dancing in a summer evening, each one carrying a whisper of ancient magic. Valethor's eyes illuminate from within, becoming mirrors of pure starlight. There is a brilliant flash of light and your feel the your wands power. You are at one with your wand. You \_know\_ that your wand is now connected with Grimwald's wand and that the two must be welded together, hand-in-hand.*

**Nym**: *Their wand vibrates with deep azure energy, humming like distant thunder. Circles of blue-white-and-red light orbit your body, each ring inscribed with glowing runes that fill you with sensations of power and protection. The air around you crackles with potential. The thundering grows louder and louder. Your hair starts to stand on end and you smell ozone. A sudden crash of red lightning strikes you. You are not injured but feel drained of all energy and collapse onto the ground. You are now at one with your wand. You \_know\_ that your wand is now connected with Moothalamoo's wand and that the two must be welded together, hand-in-hand.*

Fig runs over and catches you as you fall. She looks scared and keeps clamoring, *"no no no, not you Nym, you can't leave me again!" and tears start to roll down her cheek. She brushes them aside and tries to regain her composure once she realizes you aren't hurt.* <discussion?>

Encounter 5: After inquiring in the town (or Fig), it is revealed that the Loistavan tower has an underground counterpart. Fig offers to help navigate them through the dangerous Chambers of Echos.

Encounter 6: After traveling through the echo chambers (possible encounters, time permitting), they can ascend/descend the "light" tower with the help of some gravity reversing spells. On the way up, they are pestered by white doves attacking. At the top, the ground is covered with white/red/blue/green/ yellow/purple granite rocks. A sign warns that this is sacred Selune territory and to not disturb anything. Zawn has left a note that reads "*Doves seemed fitting, yes? I can't stay here and wait though. I discovered this tower was being watched by a wizard riding on a Nightshade, the same one Sharelle used to ride. I am going to lure it away. Wear this dragonfly necklace that I have enchanted with homing magic. I'll be able to catch up with you later. -Zawn*

On top of the tower sits a gray and white granite stone chair. As the heroes approach, the night air starts swarming in circles around them like bats that don't exist. moonlight appears from inky blackness and shines a bright moonray directly onto the chair.

***Grimwald****: Silver frost creeps along their wand, blooming into delicate patterns that seem to contain entire worlds. The frost melts into liquid moonlight that flows upward, defying gravity, coating their wand in a permanent sheen of ethereal brilliance. The silver moonlight spreads like waves in a pond around the alter out into the darkness. Suddenly the moonlight blooms into a brilliant display of stars and constellations that swarm around like moths around a fire. The starlights all grow brighter and suddenly swarm into you and your wand. Then silence and darkness. You feel at one with your wand. You \_know\_ that your wand is now connected with Valethor's wand and that the two must be welded together, hand-in-hand.*

***Moothalamoo****: Black and white halos swirl like smoke rings growing into larger and smaller rings, dancing around the chair and circle faster and faster like water going down a drain. As they get close to your body and wand, they start to merge and emit black and white sparks and crackle with electric energy. You feel at one with your wand. You \_know\_ that your wand is now aligned with Nym's Wand.*

***Zawn****: The granite rocks start quivering on the ground and then start bouncing up and down making rhythmic music like percussive drums beating out a fancy rhythm, the likes of which you have never heard before. Black wispy ghosts of birds fly and dance to the rhythm swarming into you and your wand. The cacophony of noises grows louder and louder and the wispy birds dart in faster and faster and then silence. You feel at one with your wand. ~~You know that your wand is aligned with itself and will be a useful backup should any other wand falter.~~*

Secret missions:

**Moothalamoo**: 1) Do something in character that is kind to Grimwald. 2) Also, if you meet an Innkeeper that is having problems with theft... offer to help them out.

**Eclipse**: 1) Do something in character that is kind to Moothalamoo. 2) Also, if you come across an object left behind by Zawn... wear it.

**Grimwald**: 1) You will meet a Cloud Giant. Listen to his side of the story before assuming ill intent. If you all treat him well, he may have a special reward for you. 2) Also, do something kind for Valethor in character.

**Nym**: 1) You've lost all memory of Glys/Tabitha. Role play this as best you can... including, being extremely confident that you've never met her in your life. Your memories of being an urchin on the street and getting into mischief happened alone, just you. You suspect she's completely lying about ever having known you. (You'll have the chance in a future session to get your memories back.) 2) Do something nice for Eclipse, in character.

**Valethor**: 1) Be the first to sit in the chair at the top of the Loistivan Tower. 2) Do something nice for Nym, in character. 3) Also, if you notice that some ale seems to be magically disappearing from a barrel, jump in and see where it takes you!

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